

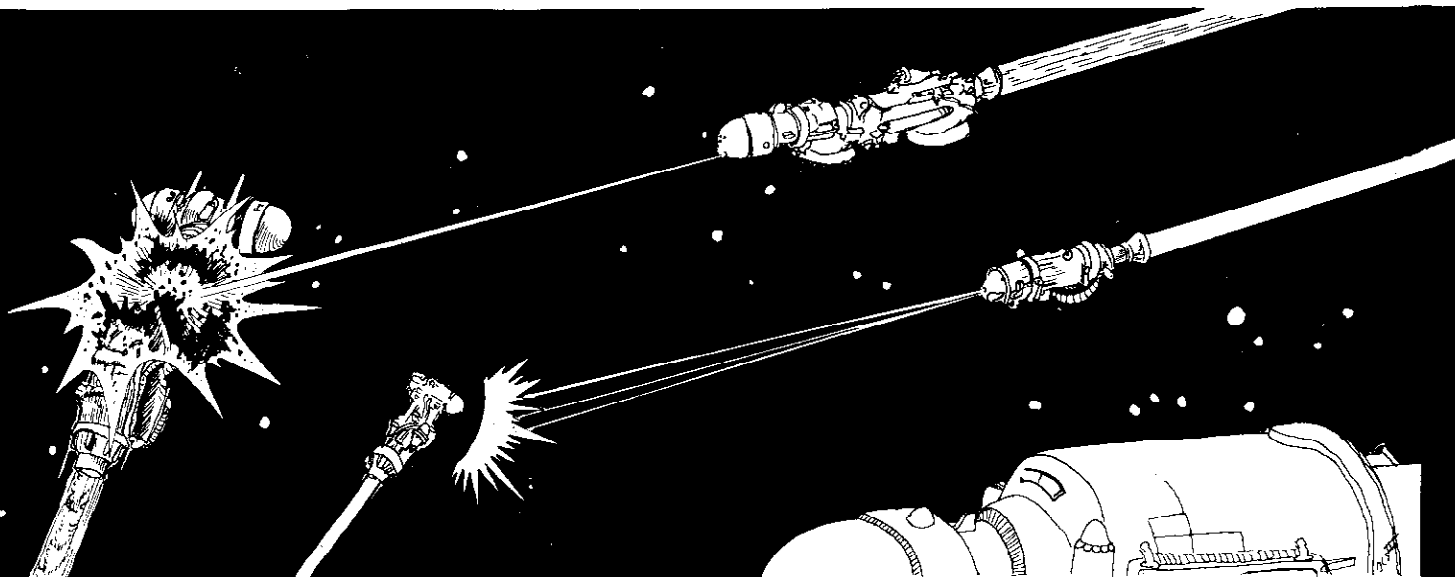
# The Dragon #8

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July

The Finzer Family  
a Tale of  
Modern Magic  
by  
Harry O. Fischer

The magazine of Fantasy,  
Swords & Sorcery and  
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# STAR EMPIRES

It is the far future - - a time much different from our own. Space ships of all kinds and sizes - - peopled by all manner of races - - criss-cross the galaxy, searching for and exploring new worlds. In some places across the vast expanse of space, great star kingdoms reach out and collide in cataclysmic cosmic battles for stellar domination.

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This issue, we're pleased to present the work of Harry O. Fischer, citizen of Nehwon (not *Newlon*, as printed in last TD — sorry Harry). The Finzer family could live right across the street from any of us, and might at this very moment. The dandy cover and excellent interior pictures for this story were done by Bill Hannon, whom we are glad to welcome back to these pages. The story will conclude in #9. Hope you enjoy it as much as we did here.

Because of the length of the Finzer story, there will be no installment of the Gnome Cache in this issue. It is expected, however, that that fine tale will resume in #9. The fate of Fineous Fingers, World Renowned Thief, is less certain. I have been unable to get in touch with JD, and as I write this, I am waiting for a reply to my last card. We hope to see him again in the next issue, but as I have no word, I can only assume that semester finals have in some way interfered with Fineous.

Last issue we told you of a game in #11, which is still true, but in last issue's *Rumbles* I may have misled some of you. The game coming is not the one known as *DIRT*, which has some introduction already through the strip of the same name. *DIRT* has run into some final development snags. The game in #11 will be satirical in tone, but thoroughly playable. The intro to it is in the new comic strip by Tom Wham, also the game's designer.

Also in #11 will be *Ice Magic*, by Fritz Leiber. This is a new, original Fafrhd and the Mouser story. It takes off where the latest, *Rime Isle*, ended in *COSMOS* magazine. The *Rime Isle* tale was excellent, and fans of the duo will be well advised to pick up the two issues of *COSMOS* in which it appears.

In this issue we have started a contest for writers, artists and artist/writers all in one. The details are in the **FEATURED CREATURE** section.

Harry Fischer, Fritz Leiber and Gardner Fox are all guests at GenCon 10, with Mr. Fox the Guest of Honor. All three will be holding seminars and discussions throughout the con. See you there???

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**Editor Timothy J. Kask**

**Staff Artists Dave Sutherland  
Tom Wham**

**Cover by Bill Hannon**

It's Convention Season . . .

What that means for us is being on the road quite a bit in the next few months. It also means spending time on non-magazine projects.

We feel we've planned well, but one can't foretell the future outside of D&D. If one of the issues seems a day or two late, give us a day or two leeway, please. We're only on the road to enable us to meet more of our readers in the flesh. — ED.

## Publisher's Statement

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# Planes

## The Concepts of Spatial, Temporal and Physical Relationships in D&D

by Gary Gygax

For game purposes the DM is to assume the existence of an infinite number of co-existing planes. The normal plane for human-type life forms is the *Prime Material Plane*. A number of planes actually touch this one and are reached with relative ease. These planes are the *Negative* and *Positive Material Planes*, the *Elemental Planes* (air, earth, fire, water), the *Ethereal Plane* (which co-exists in exactly the same space as the Prime Material Plane), and the *Astral Plane* (which warps the dimension we know as length [distance]). Typical higher planes are the Seven Heavens, the Twin Paradises, and Elysium. The plane of ultimate Law is Nirvana, while the plane of ultimate Chaos (entropy) is Limbo. Typical lower planes are the Nine Hells, Hades' three glooms, and the 666 layers of the Abyss.

Assume further that creatures which can be harmed only by weapons of a special metal (silver, cold iron, etc.) gain this relative invulnerability from having a portion of their existence in either the positive or negative material plane at the same time they exist partially in the prime. Therefore, those creatures which can be struck only with +1 or greater magical weapons exist wholly and simultaneously in two planes (one of which is, of course, the Prime Material). So creatures which require attack of a +2 or better magic weapon then exist in three planes simultaneously, and so on. This brings us to the consideration of the existence of magical weapons in other planes and in multiple planes simultaneously.

If it is accepted that the reason that certain creatures can only be hit by magical weaponry is because the creature exists in two or more planes simultaneously, then it follows that the weapon must likewise extend into the planes in which the creature exists. At the very least it must be that the weapon extends into no less than two of the planes in which the creature exists, and these planes are those in which the creature has vulnerable aspects. This makes for a very complex relationship of planes to planes/swords and other magical weapons to planes. A special sword functioning with bonuses against certain creatures, or a special purpose sword, will have existence on only certain planes with regard to its special bonus, or due to its special purpose, but as most

weapons of this type also have a general +1 or better value, they also extend into all planes — or do they?

Perhaps the most reasonable way of handling this matter is to graph the planes which are existent in the campaign in question. Basic bonus weapons extend generally into planes which are once, twice, etc. removed from the Prime Material Plane of play. Those with special bonuses then have a more intense nature in the plane in which the creature they function specially against has its extra existence. And this also explains weaponry which does extra damage to creatures which can be hit by non-magical weapons. Let us assume that these weapons have their special existence on the plane in which the particular creature has its personal existence. Perhaps such planes are more accurately termed subplanes. Each type of creature has its own sub-plane, human, giantish, demoniac, or whatever. Furthermore, similarities of type indicate the same or closely allied planes.

As a side benefit of the use of this system, operation on the astral or ethereal by characters no longer poses such a headache to DMs. As magic weapons exist in those planes which touch upon the Prime Material Plane, any person armed with a magic weapon will be able to attack into the Astral or Ethereal Plane if they become aware that their opponent is operating in one of these planes.

Finally, what of magic swords of special nature or special purpose which are far removed from the Prime Material Plane? I suggest that these weapons can be removed no further than the number of planes from the Prime Material which equals their best bonus stated as a "to hit", i.e. a +2 can be removed by two planes and still retain its magical properties. Certain swords will have special treatment — the sword of sharpness and the vorpal blade most notably. On the other hand, a sword of life draining ability gains no such consideration, for it operates primarily on the Negative Material Plane. In any event, swords removed beyond the plane limit given will lose all of their magic, becoming nothing more than normal weapons. This same "law" can apply equally to those weapons, swords or otherwise, which have a simple "to hit" bonus.

*Continued on Page 28*

**ABSTRACT ART IN THE DRAGON !!?** Not really, this is a 2-dimensional diagram of a 4-dimensional concept. The concept is basically a concept of planes or dimensions and how to travel between them. There are two basic "areas" of planes in the diagram. The inner ovoid and the outer rectangle. There are also two ways to travel to these planes. The *ETHEREAL* will get you to any of the inner planes and the *ASTRAL* will get you to the outer planer.

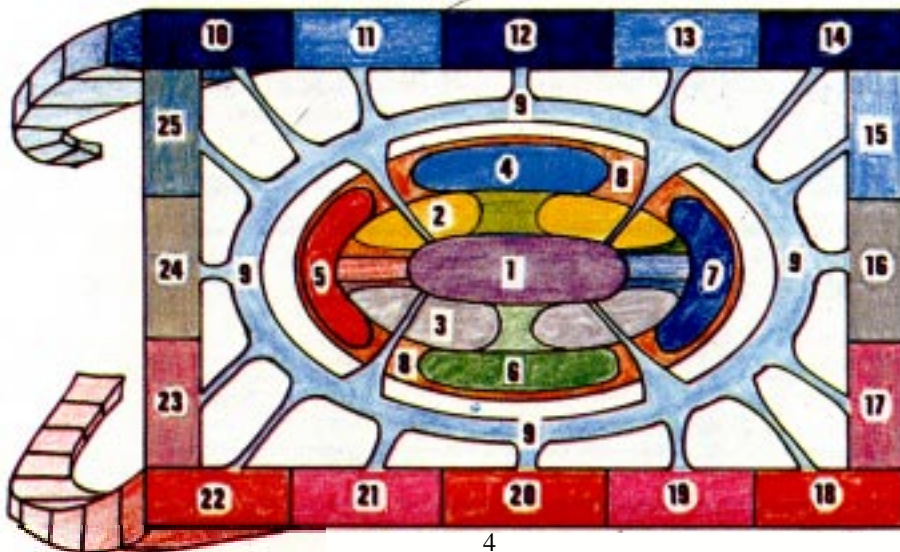
**The INNER PLANES** There are seven inner planes. The first (no. 1) is the Prime Material. The planet Earth and everything on it, all of the solar systems and the whole universe are of the Prime Material. The Fantasy worlds you create belong to the Prime Material. Numbers 2 and 3 are Positive and Negative Material Planes. Numbers 4-7 are the ultra-pure Elemental Planes of air, fire, earth and water.

**The OUTER PLANES** There are sixteen outer planes. The Outer Planes are a collection of the religious and/or philosophical goals (or anti-goals) of mankind and "the other intellectual species".

**The ETHEREAL PLANE** is the transportation "system" of the Inner Material Planes. Travel into the Ethereal is always of a magical nature by using spells or special artifacts. The Oil or Armor of Ethereal, a Wish and the new Vanish spell can be used.

**The ASTRAL PLANE** is the means of transportation from the Prime Material to the Outer Planes. There are two restrictions for the Astral "Plane". 1) The traveler must be in the Prime Material in order to travel into the Astral. The Astral can not be reached from the Elemental, Positive or Negative Planes.

2) The Astral will take a traveler to the first level of the Outer Planes. There are



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS IN D&D

by Tony Watson

## Introduction:

Most D&D campaigns center around a dungeon and most of the players' time is spent in exploring the labyrinth and battling the nasties to be found therein. Rightly so; the depths are the place where the most fearsome monsters, trickiest traps and, of course, largest treasures are to be found.

As well, there is adequate coverage of wilderness adventures, with descriptions and rules especially pertaining to above ground quests and encounters.

Yet, though the rules suggest basing players in a town or village, few DMs. (*Dungeon Masters*) do much to "flesh out" the town and make it a place of interest in itself and not simply a logistics point for characters.

If imagination is used (and there surely should be no dearth of that in any DM), towns can be made enjoyable and worthy of exploration and adventures themselves.

Laying out a town can be time consuming, especially if you are already struggling to find the time to put together your underworld. Yet the effort is certainly worth it. Hopefully the following suggestions can serve as useful guidelines.

## Part I. The Town Layout:

Ideally, the town laid out in a manner similar to your dungeon, and if possible, using the same scale. The multi-use of a graphic and scale system will make transference from the town to the underworld much simpler for the referee. I use a 3'x2' sheet divided into 1" squares, further divided into ten sections and call each tenth of an inch 5'. This makes for a highly realistic scale and a large town. However a regular size piece of graph paper will do just as well; again, transfer from your dungeon system.

A small village will do at first; you can save your ideas for a city of wicked splendor for later efforts. In any case, the size of the sheet you are using, and the scale chosen, will dictate the size of your town.

Now on to specifics.

*seven levels in Heaven and nine in Hell. The Astral can only bring you to the first level of these Planes. A physical form of travel must be used to proceed to the other levels. Travel to the Astral "Plane" can be done with a wish or the Astral Spell.*

**Travel from Outer Plane to Outer Plane** The Astral Plane can be used to travel from plane to plane, i.e. from Heaven to Elysium. A traveler could also move into an adjacent Plane, i.e. Heaven to the Happy Hunting Grounds, just by walking. Travel, by walking, could or should be limited to only one Plane to either side of the Plane that the traveler started in. For example, a traveler Astral Planed into Nirvana, so by walking he could travel to Arcadia or to Acheron.

- 1) Purple, The PRIME MATERIAL
- 2) Yellow, The POSITIVE MATERIAL PLANE
- 3) Grey, The NEGATIVE MATERIAL PLANE
- 4) Lt. Blue The AIR ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 5) Red The FIRE ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 6) Green The EARTH ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 7) Blue The WATER ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 8) Orange, The ETHEREAL PLANE
- 9) Lt. Blue, The ASTRAL PLANE
- 10) Blue, The SEVEN HEAVENS
- 11) Lt. Blue, The HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS
- 12) Blue, The TWIN PARADISES
- 13) Lt. Blue, OLYMPUS
- 14) Blue, ELYSIUM
- 15) Blue/Grey, GLADSHEIM
- 16) Grey, LIMBO
- 17) Red/Grey, PANDEMONIUM
- 18) Red, The 666 LAYERS OF THE ABYSS
- 19) Lt. Red, TARTERUS
- 20) Red, HADES
- 21) Lt. Red, GEHENNA
- 22) Red, The NINE HELLS
- 23) Red/Grey, ACHERON
- 24) Grey, NIRVANA
- 25) Blue/Grey, ARCADIA

If the town is going to be a fairly large one, you should consider whether it will be walled or not. This would be most likely if it were on the border of your mythical country and a sometimes-hostile neighbor, or if it were astride an important trade route or waterway. Also a town of almost any size would have a keep nearby or inside the town itself to house the ruling lord and his retainers, who would serve as the local law and order.

The designer must also decide the local terrain. A river or stream should be nearby for a water source as well as fields for sustenance farming. Is the town on the coast of a lake or sea? Is it an outpost in a heavily wooded or mountainous area? All these factors will determine the local economy and the type of wilderness adventures that players can have in the town's vicinity.

Once these primary decisions are made the actual planning may commence. Since most campaigns are set in pseudo-medieval times, a glance through some books of city plans of that era (and most libraries have at least a few) will be helpful.

The buildings themselves need not be large, or their rooms spacious. Avoid the supermarket syndrome. Most medieval dwellings and shops were small and consisted of only a few rooms. A large block could be laid out and contain a number of residences and shops, since this was often the case.

Second and third floors can prove to be a problem. I suggest these two methods: drawing in rooms and such of higher levels on separate sheets, one per level or, alternately, putting them in on the main map, but in a different color. I suppose you could dispose of upper floors entirely, theorizing that the action would take place on the lower floors anyway. Generally there shouldn't be more than three floors save in the case of a special tower or temple.

As you lay out the various buildings, it is probably easier (and more esthetically pleasing) to group like establishments in the same area. Here are some of the shops that could be included in a business district:

- armorers** — sells, repairs, and fashions armor and weapons
- cobblers** — shoes, boots
- cartographers** — wilderness and dungeon maps available 100-600 gp depending on remoteness of the area
- candlestick maker** — torches, brands, incense, candles
- weaver** — tunics, breeches, shirts, cloaks, blankets
- barbers** — haircut and shave one gp



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**pawnshop** — armor and weapons bought and sold but have a 1 in 6 chance of being defective in some manner; some magic items; prices should be lower than new of course

Various other artisans, such as glassblowers, painters, sculptors and stonemasons might be included if the town is large enough to warrant such types.

Most assuredly there should be a town square that serves as an open air market. Food, wine, packs, rope, household items of metal and wood, perhaps even some magic items should be available. There should be a chance, perhaps 1 in 4, that a foreign merchant or two is in attendance. They might have items of all types that are not available in the village, as well as news and rumors from distant lands. Perhaps they might be interested in finding warriors to serve as caravan guards or rangers to act as guides. Every once in a while a merchant could be hauling something truly bizarre; an artifact, a subdued dragon, etc.

The market place itself should be a hot bed of rumor and local gossip, a good percentage false. It is the meeting place of the common folk, and when your players visit there to outfit an expedition, be sure they hear a few choice bits of information, be they true or not!

Near one of the roads leading into the town, there should be a stable (horses boarded 2-3 gps per week) a smith, and a wheelwright who repairs and constructs wagons and carts. Horses might be available here, for sale or rent.

If your town is on a coast be sure to have a dock section with fishing boats and trading vessels available for hire or seeking crew members or marines. Once again, the gristly old sea hands should be filled with stories and lies about strange lands across the sea or terrible ocean-going monsters, (or maybe even a special island the DM has worked up.) The docks should also be a good place to meet foreigners and visitors. As well as a seaman's tavern, this section should include an open air fish market, a sailmaker and maybe a shop specializing in naval charts and gear.

Another portion of the town should be concerned with the higher classes, such as rich warriors, merchants or bankers. Their houses should be nicely built and guarded, for these types are sure to have treasure lying about.

Either in a special area, or grouped about the town square a few temples are a must. Of course they will be staffed with their attendant clerics and a character of suitable level as a patriarch or bishop. Player clerics may wish to belong to one of these sects. This will encourage participation in the town as whole. If the DM has time he can work out some basis to the religion to "flesh" it out. Naturally temples should be large and ornate, and have a few treasures within them.

The most interesting area has been saved for last. This is the darker side of town, a place where honest men are loath to go save in groups (a 1 in 8 chance of encountering a thief or being attacked by a band of brigands, per turn. At least one or two taverns should be located here with their attendant patrons and barmaids. A sleazy boarding house is in order as well. Other points of interest might include:

**soothsayer** — for 20 gps this woman (or man) will "predict" how a planned expedition or exploit may turn out. Once players give a general idea what they have planned the DM will respond, drawing on his knowledge and an accuracy die roll.

**magician** — simply a non-player magic user who will cast spells for a fee (say 50 x spell level).

**brothel** — No thieves' quarter would be complete without one. As well as being a haven for earthly delights it should be brimming with privy information (available for bribes of 10-100 gps). Fees are about 20 gp (35 for the "special"). One to six male patrons of all types and classes will be in the waiting area.

**square** — an open air square where freelance prostitutes, spies, assassins, and thieves can be met. Another good area to purchase purloined items.



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No town or village would be complete without a full complement of taverns and inns. These are the heart of the town and where the nuclei of adventurers meet and discuss their plans.

It is reasonable to assume that each tavern would have its own particular clientele. For example, in my town, one inn is the only place in town to put up elves, dwarves and hobbits, so that visiting characters of this type would most likely be found there. The exact composition of patrons at a given moment can be obtained in a system such as the following:

**Falgrave's** — where non-humans frequent and stay when in town. Falgrave is a dwarf himself and up on non-human gossip. 3-18 patrons, 2/3 of which shall be non-human and 1/2 will be warriors; the rest will be townspeople, nonhumans of other classes. 1-4 will be non-human wayfarers or merchants.

Another inn could be frequented by visiting human merchants so half of its patrons would be men of such class. Another tavern might be the meeting place of local warriors and thus a good place to swap tales and find the non-players to round out an adventure (persons also known as monster fodder . . .).

Other establishments might cater only to clerics or the wealthier classes. The possibilities are limited only by the town size and the DM's imagination.

To round out the town I'll throw in a couple of ideas best categorized as miscellaneous.

**Surgeon** — for a fee of 25 gps the doctor will attempt to cure 1-6 wound points (50% chance of success); for 35 gps he will attempt to cure poison (a one in six chance for success). Maximum of one attempt per day and one successful healing or cure per week. Money paid despite the success or lack thereof, of the attempt.

**Library** — a number of scholars will seek out knowledge among the many tomes and volumes for a fee. The base value of general information is about 100gps with specific facts increasingly more expensive. (Types of knowledge might include legends concerning a certain area or dungeon, or DM created monster, Scribes available to identify and write in languages.)

As the DM develops his town he should keep a town directory, listing the address of the establishment as well as its function. A few phrases describing the interior adds to the color. This should be followed by pertinent info on the proprietor, types of patrons or visitors and their number (as in the above, Falgrave's example). Then as players enter a shop or market the DM can give them a brief idea of the place and make it come alive for them.

*Part II. The Town Population:*

**Once you've got the physical aspects of your town laid out, you're going to need someone to populate it.** These non-player characters will provide the needed bodies to serve as shopkeepers, merchants, tavern owners and patrons, warriors and magic users your players will run into. They will truly serve to flesh out the skeletal structure your previous work has provided you.

It is probably best to roll up a large amount of character first and then assign them jobs and positions in the town as seems appropriate. It is not likely that the village smith would be the possessor of a mere 3 or 4 strength, or that a man with an 18 intelligence would serve as a cook's apprentice. If you can't find the certain person you need from the pool you've rolled up, Fake it! Just supply the needed attributes you want for those particular non-players. You certainly have license as DM to literally create the right man for the job.

The easiest way to keep track of these non-players is to get a small note book and devote it to that purpose. As to the segregation of types, I've found that the headings, "warriors", "magic-users", "clerics", "townspeople" and "specialists" (the latter referring to the myriad of new character types that have lately appeared) suit admirably. Be sure to leave room as you will probably wish to on your initial population base later.

All standard attributes should be rolled for in the usual manner. If you wish to reflect the fact that the adventuring types are more likely to be the cream of humanity, throw 3 four-sided dice for townspeople. Additionally, women, for strength and constitution only (forgive me, any liberated women reading this), and children, for all attributes, can

use two standard dice. Other considerations can be determined on the following chart. Roll once for EACH category.

Die Roll	Alignment	Age	Personality	Loyalty
1	Law	young	Very cooperative, friendly	High
2	Law	young	Cooperative, friendly	Loyal
3	Law	young	Friendly	Average
4	Neutral	Middle Age	Non-committal	Average
5	Neutral	old	Unfriendly	Disloyal
6	Chaos	Very Old	Hateful	Low
Die Roll	Initiative	Level		
1	High	Special		
2	Average	3		
3	Average	2		
4	Average	1		
5	Average	1		
6	Low	1		

*Chart Key:*

**Level** — straight forward, simply the experience level of that character. For "special" roll an eight-sided die and number rolled equals the level of the character.

**Alignment** — Again, just as it appears. I've reasoned that a town is a lawful place just by its nature of structure and emphasis on order in its design. Hence, only a small chance for chaotic alignment.

**Age** — more informational than functional. I only wanted to provide a characteristic to help tell people apart. Add one to roll for each whole group of two levels above 2nd level the character has gained. Add one always, for magic-users.

**Personality** — The hardest, and the one the DM will have to add to the most. This will give a basic idea of how a particular person is going to act when players interact with him. A die roll of 1 here would affect subsequent random reaction die rolls with a +2 when the character is asked to do something, go on an expedition, etc. A die roll of 2 would be a +1 while rolls of 5 and 6 would be -1 and -2 respectively.

**Loyalty** — In a manner similar to personality, this category would affect any rolls for desertion or other tests of loyalty. Low loyalty coupled with a chaotic alignment might result in the character betraying the party to an evil high priest, etc.


**Initiative** — This is to help the DM mainly. Average initiative will mean a character won't be particularly bright or innovative, while high initiative might mean a strong character who could be a leader if the players are botching the show. Low initiative characters have to be told to do everything.

After you have rolled up a bunch of people, enter them in your notebook. In addition to the above material, it's a good idea to list a place or two where the character might be found. To real flesh them out, add a few bits of information about them personally. For example:

*Blatherson of Hillock*  
 Strength 12 — Constitution 9 — Intelligence 13 — Charisma 15 — Dexterity 8 — Wisdom 7 — Align: Law — Age: Old — Pers: Coop/Frnd — Loy: Loyal — Int: Aver — Level: 4 Found in Golden Goblet tavern, likes to tell war stories of his heroics in Goblin Wars (over-emphasizes his own importance), loves a good mug of meade.

More now than just monster fodder, Blatherson is a real, if somewhat Falstaffian, character. By adding these little bits your die roll generated population will take on a little semblance of real people and become more than bodies attributed with certain mathematical characteristics. Your players will actually be able to make friends with certain townspeople, as well as cross others. With the inclusion of personified townspeople your town will literally come alive.

The development of a town can be a truly rewarding experience for both the DM and the players. Approached in the right manner (and the ideas presented here are only offered as suggestions) can be a place of interest in and of itself, and certainly worthy of one afternoon's adventuring.



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# The Finzer Family — A Tale of Modern Magic

by Harry O. Fischer

Magic. A few people will readily admit that they believe in it; many will say that magic possibly existed at one time but is no longer practiced today; more will say, "Nonsense!"

The real truth is that magic does exist today and is practiced and that most people (whether they call it magic or not) not only believe in it, but secretly use some sort of magic, if only in very small and hidden ways.

Ask any man or boy to turn out his pockets (all of them) and examine the contents very closely; you will be sure to find some sort of charm, token, amulet, lucky piece, or coin, or a picture or diagram of some sort. It does not matter if he is a school boy, a scientist, a mathematician, a teacher, a minister, a politician, an explorer, a business executive, an astronaut, a prizefighter, a plumber, a clerk, a jockey, or a gambler; it is a pretty sure bet that he will carry a little or a lot of personal magic with him (the more dangerous his occupation the more magic he is likely to carry). It may be hung around his neck or his wrist, or in his pocket or his wallet, but somewhere you will find it. It may even be tattooed on his skin in a hidden place!

Girls and women are a little different; they may show their magic charms openly as decorations or jewelry and carelessly carry them in their purses; and they may have many of them. But more often their magics are kept carefully concealed in some secret place at home.

This is just a very small (but important) part of magic. The magicians of today are very careful to hide themselves and the magic they do from the public. There are many good reasons for this: if a person or group of persons become known as magicians and able to perform magical things and help or hinder people in various ways they will at once be bothered to distraction by all kinds of demands and requests. People want power, revenge, love potions, cure-alls, wealth, youth and beauty, and help of all sorts; some even ask for death — everybody asks for something. When the unfortunate magician refuses (even the most tiny or easily given wish) the wishers begin to hate him, and if they cannot make him do as they wish, they want to make his life so miserable and dangerous that he is lucky to get away with his skin and bones unbroken.

In times past, a lot of magicians (both real and fake) were not able to hide well enough, or to say "No" firmly enough, or to get away quickly enough when things became dangerous. Some very unpleasant happenings put an end to those poor magicians. Some were burned or hanged immediately (these were the lucky ones!). Others were imprisoned and tortured by those who wanted their secrets or help for themselves alone. It was even more dangerous for a magician to help some people and refuse others. Sometimes a lucky wizard found himself able to enjoy the protection of a powerful king or warlord and was comparatively safe, but only for a while, for this, too, was very hazardous because the magician was always asked for more and more, and still more, charms and spells and miracles until he was finally faced with the impossible and was forced to flee for his life, if there was an opportunity. Sometimes he got away.

Naturally it was not very long until real magicians became quite hard to find and even harder to persuade to work magic. Nevertheless, magic persisted and today it still flourishes — in secret. In the United States there are many, many people who indulge in magic for their own comfort, amusement or safety. There may be a real magician in the same apartment

house you live in, or in the same block, or just across the street; certainly there is one in the same city or town where you live. But who he or she is you will probably never find out! Magicians have become very, very clever in hiding themselves from the public.

There have also been wicked magicians, but they only last a short time and are soon taken care of by the public or by other magicians. The evil ones are generally weak and unsuccessful people with little powerful magic. This is fortunate for all of us. Once in a while a powerful and good magician may go mad and do considerable damage before he is controlled or eliminated, but these cases are very rare. So any magicians you are likely to meet or to know, or to perhaps discover, are almost sure to be honorable, peaceful, and wise people — like the Finzers . . .

\* \* \*

The snow was already almost six inches deep, but the Finzer family has a pretty tolerant attitude towards snow. Margo, that's Mother, likes to just rock in her rocking chair in front of her favorite window and watch the snow sift down; or, even better, to see it blow and swirl in great drift patterns. Of course, the main thing is rocking cozy and warm inside our house. Hal, that's Father, seems to revel in the idea of deep soft snow (so long as he doesn't have to go out and fight it). He is forever retelling about the tunnels and igloos of times past, "when the snow was *really* deep!"

Fifteen year old Andrew looks at a good snow as personal favor. "Money from Heaven," he says. And well he should since he has several regular customers, all of them aged or middling-old ladies whom he has somehow charmed into paying him handsomely for clearing their walks and steps. Swithin, who is twelve, can take snow or leave it alone. He likes to make a few snowballs and throw them at various friends, but since he prefers to be snug and dry and warm, much like a sensible cat, he indulges in this sport for only a very short time. And he is still too small to shovel snow and make the money he so joyously spends.

Gay, the smallest and youngest, will soon be ten years old. Once every winter she manages to almost freeze herself in spite of cautions and commands. Bundled in warm muffler and woolen gloves and socks and her heavy boots, she revels in the cold, building snow castles and forts until she is numb and mildly frostbitten. Grandfather Lucius Finzer, Hal's father, enjoys the snow, as he enjoys almost everything. He particularly likes to clear the snow from the sidewalks around the house, but unlike young Andrew, uses a spell, not a shovel. "I'm not lazy, just practical," he says. Once he cast too powerful a spell and cleared off all the walks for several blocks around. Fortunately, it kept right on snowing pretty hard and no one else noticed. Practical indeed! Grandfather Lucius should know better than anyone that even the Little Magics have their dangers.

Josephine, the cat, hasn't told anyone her opinions about the snow, but by her actions it's easy to tell that it's something she could do without.

Everyone in the Finzer family except Lucius and the cat were together in the front living room. Lucius was in the Tower Room reading; Josephine was about her own business.

Hal, Margo and the children were around the big, low, round table, just right for elbows. The close-shaded reading lamps over Margo's and Hal's armchairs were the only lights. We could tell Hal was

pretty tense: when he snapped his fingers to light a cigar the flame leaped up over a foot high. He got it controlled and puffed twice before he glared around through his thick glasses and said, "We have another minor problem to solve. Margo and I think your ideas may be helpful." Hal always sounds pompous when he tries to be democratic. He does try though. He nodded towards Swithin, who almost hollered.

"It's that Crumbo! I'll murder him! I hate him! He . . .!"

"Calm down!" said Hal, "spare us all the noise. Margo, just what . . .?"

Gay broke in. "I'll help! I'll change Crumbo into a fat little worm and feed him to the fish!"

"Margo", Hal resumed in a louder voice, just what did Crumbo do?" Andrew broke in before Margo could reply.

"If I didn't believe in the First Cautions and Restraints I'd say turn him into an icicle and let him melt!" Andrew knew better but he felt strongly about the Crumbo-Swithin conflict. Both Gay and Swithin were making squeaky sizzling sounds and starting to pound on the table when Margo quietly began, "Crumbo, or Hastings Crummle, is really a nice boy."

"Phooey!" "Feed him to the fish!", Gay and Swithin exploded. Margo went on, "He is oversize for his age. He *does* seem to be a bully and a sneaky one at that. He has nice manners, at least to his elders, and he will probably change for the better as he grows up. But we cannot let him treat Swithin the way he has been doing and get away with it." Margo is very slow to get mad but when she does it lasts until she is satisfied that the cause is removed or changed for the better. She ticked off a finger at a time as she spoke, "Crumbo has pushed Swithin in the snow, at least once a day, for the last three days. Swithin tried to get away from Crumbo, but Crumbo chased and caught him. He stuffed Swithin's pockets with snow; he opened his book satchel and stuffed it with snow; he put snow down Swithin's back and neck, his shirt and boots, and inside his cap. All the time pretending he was picking him up and brushing him off. This is just too much!"

"Don't forget the gloves!" shouted Swithin. "He tore one clean off and kicked it down the sewer!"

Margo lifted a finger for silence, her eyes like blue sparks, "Hal, this calls for your talents. Tomorrow; right now!" As she finished, Josephine flowed from the dark shadows and leaped to the back of Margo's chair. The cat gently nuzzled her right ear; green eyes peered deeply into blue eyes for an instant, then with a faint meow, the cat returned silently into the shadows. Before Hal could answer Margo said, in a very low voice, "That settles it! Josephine says that Crumbo not only threw snowballs at her but that he buried the Pringle kitten in the snow. She just barely dug it, out in time to save it!"

A sort of low hiss came from everybody. Margo gave a cold smile, "Josephine says to please turn Crumbo into a mouse! Well, Hal?"

Hal pointed a thumb at the wall of books behind him, "Swithin, third book, third shelf up, left end!"

Swithin made a blur he moved so fast. It was a small, thick, rather old looking book, well used and very ordinary appearing but the title was blurred. Hal riffled through the pages and then closed it firmly. He held it flat between his palms and slowly slid back the front cover revealing a hollow place inside. There was a jumble of several small objects visible. Hal poked around in them for a moment, lifted one of the objects out and placed it on the table beside him. Everyone was breathing hard and Swithin was



positively fizzing with eagerness as Hal slid shut the book cover and silently gestured to return it to the shelf. Hal picked up the little object. It was a very small, soft leather bag; like a tiny marble sack or pouch. Very gently he finger-tipped open the mouth of the bag and emptied the contents into his left palm.



## Hal Finger

In his plan lay a Charm, a clenched fist, carved in finest minute detail; you could even see the tiny pink fingernails; it was made of polished stone.

"What is it?" all the children spoke at once, "What does it do?"

Hal shook the pouch gently and a folded wad of paper smaller than a pea fell beside the Charm. "Open it up, son; read it aloud."

Swithin, trembling with anticipation, smoothed the paper until it was flat; Andrew and Gay both reached for it but Swithin slid like an eel between Hal's knees, and holding it in the bright light read out, "Double Reaction Protective Charm. Guaranteed if properly used." He stopped and looked disgusted, "I don't want to protect Crumbo. I want to mur . . ."

Hal chuckled, "Yes, I know. If you had the Wand of Power you would go 'zzzzz' and no more Crumbo! Right? Right! But before you blow a fuse — listen! Everyone sit down and relax. The paper, please, sir."

The children drew back to where they had been; Margo went on rocking, silently. There was no sign of Josephine.

Hal continued, "This is a pretty good example of why most people should have no knowledge of Magic, especially children: murder; fish-food; melting; mice and some others. All this to revenge Swithin, who probably isn't so innocent himself. Even the cat!" Hal lifted his thick eyebrows. "This won't be a long speech."

The children sighed gently; it had begun like a lecture.

"This Charm dates way into the past; long before the Old House burnt down and this one was built. This little fist isn't as innocent as it looks." He juggled it on his palm and then clenched his fist around it, "Hit me on the nose!" he commanded.

The children scrambled to their feet; Margo stopped rocking; everyone seemed almost too eager to obey.

"One at a time," said Hal. "And easy the first time."

Andrew had taken a firm stance and cocked his fist.

"Let me! Let me!" came loudly from Gay.

"Since it's my charm I get to go first!" said Swithin.

"Ladies first," said Hal.

Andrew and Swithin reluctantly stepped aside. Gay started a round-armed swing aimed at Hal's nose. She stopped it midway. "Shouldn't you take off your glasses, Daddy? Or at least your cigar?" she asked.

Hal shook his head, but he did remove his cigar. Gay started another swing, her full lips squeezed tightly and her eyes sparkling with joy. About six inches from the tip of Hal's rather short nose, her fist shot suddenly to one side and she spun off balance. Andrew caught her before she fell down.

"I slipped," she hollered, "Let me do it again."

"Nope. Andrew's turn." Hal puffed once on his cigar and sat forward.

Andrew decided on a straight right. He was pretty strong and had oversize hands with big knuckles; he blew on them and measured the distance like a boxer. This was a rare occasion and he meant to make the most of it! He started a powerful punch. His fist travelled about six inches of the foot it was meant to go, stopped as if it had hit a curved pane of glass, turned on him and flashed back. Only a quick dodge of his head saved his own nose. Hal never even blinked. Andrew stared at his treacherous fist with curiosity.

"My turn! My turn!" Swithin was bouncing with excitement. "Let me hold it and you hit me!" He was getting the idea and he liked it.

Hal was getting the spirit, too. "No. Not now. Your turn tomorrow. Try someThing heavy."

Swithin, completely carried away, ran around in a little circle looking for something heavy.

Margo intervened sharply, "Everybody quiet; and please sit down." Her voice, like an icy spray, cooled off the group. They sat. Swithin rolled his eyes, looking for something heavy; he was quite happy. Hal made a cloud of smoke to hide behind and opened his fist. Margo said, "Swithin, bring me your coat. Gay, get me the sewing basket. Andrew, fetch



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the popcorn and the popper. Hal, bring glasses and something to drink. This calls for a little refreshment!"

The children scurried out. Hal handed over the Charm with the slip of paper and waved on the overhead lights, as he went to the kitchen. By the time he had returned Margo had replaced the small carved fist and the paper back into the tiny pouch. She tightened the drawstrings and whipped it shut with heavy black thread; this was placed in another small cloth bag and also sewed shut.

"Which pocket do you want it in?" she asked Swithin.

"Left one," he grunted. He was helping Andrew set up the popcorn popper and trying to watch Margo at the same time.

"Remember," Hal cautioned, "The Charm will only work when you close your fingers around it. If you let go of it — nothing!"

Margo basted the bag to the inside of the left coat pocket with more heavy thread. She snipped off the loose ends and stuffed bag and pocket right-side-in again, slid in her hand and smiled, pleased with her own neat work.

"Here, try it on." She held the coat for Swithin who almost jumped into it. He shoved his left hand into the pocket and fisted the Charm.

"Just right," he smirked, "somebody hit me in the nose!"

"Poppers ready, Dad!" announced Andrew.

All of them turned towards Hal who was pouring everyone their own special drink: strawberry for Gay, tangerine for Swithin, pink lemonade for Andrew, black coffee for Margo and tea for himself; all from the same special pitcher.

Popping popcorn was always a treat; almost as good as a fine show on the Viewer. The popper was a big copper bowl about twelve inches in diameter and eight inches high. Over the top of the bowl fitted a cover of coarse copper screen held in place by three clamps. Andrew had already poured in the grains of corn. Everyone except Margo watched Hal intently. How did he do it? (Grandfather Lucius didn't even bother with the screen.) Hal made a swift motion with his right hand, a finger twiddle, pointed his cigar at the bowl and, Voom-Whem!, a lovely shock-wave of fresh butter-hot popcorn smell swept across every grinning face. All the corn had exploded at once! And each white, fluffy grain was perfect butter flavored and salted just right. It was hot, too. Andrew took off the top screen and they all reached.

"Remember, Swithin," cautioned Hal, "you can't or shouldn't try to do *anything* to Crumbo. Let him do it all by himself, to himself! Don't forget!"

Swithin nodded, busily munching popcorn; he bent across Gay and whispered in Andrew's ear, "Throw some popcorn at me — hard."

Andrew glanced at Hal who was relaxed again. He noticed that Swithin was still wearing his coat and had his left hand pocketed. He selected a large piece of popcorn and hurled it at Swithin as hard as he could; which wasn't very hard since popcorn makes a puny missile. The white grain almost floated until it got within a couple of inches of Swithin; then it picked up speed and whizzed around his neck, shooting back towards Andrew, going faster and faster. Andrew threw up a hand in front of his face just in time. It hit hard enough to sting.

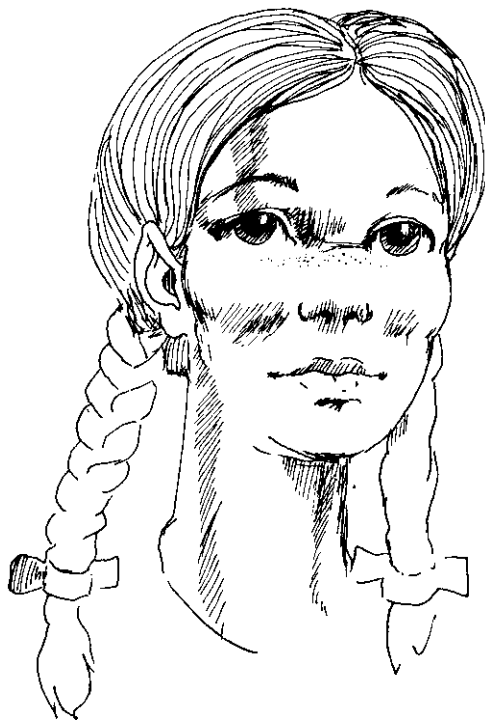
"Do it again!" cried Swithin, delighted.

"Do what again?" Hal asked. He had not been looking.

"Swithin," said Margo calmly, "take off your coat."

"I saw it! I saw it!" Gay would have been glad to report but Hal took the last of the popcorn, vanished the popper, poured out another coffee for Margo and announced, "Drink up. It's bedtime."

It was, too, for Gay and Swithin. Andrew always had something to memorize or extra-special work to do; and anyway he was older. Both younger children looked on this as unfair, but usual. After the routine



Gay Finzer

complaints they were tucked into their own big, warm, soft beds in their own rooms. Swithin hung his coat on the back of a chair where he could easily see it. He would have liked to wear it to bed.

In an hour Andrew, making less noise than usual, said a swift 'Goodnight' and clumped off mumbling to himself. Hal, his eyes enormous behind their thick lenses, reached over and patted Margo on the knee, "You know, Miss M., I don't think that Swithin really wanted to hit me on the nose."

Margo gave him an affectionate look, "He just wasn't able to find anything heavy enough." She got up and kissed him goodnight. Hal sent the pitcher and glasses to the kitchen, darkened the lights, picked up a book and followed her.

Josephine, after making a final check, slipped out through her very own special door and, silent as an owl's shadow, went through black mon-lace towards the Pringle household to see the kitten she had rescued from Crumbo.

The life of a magician was not a bad one most of the time, thought Hal; in fact it was a very good and pleasant life. And it was nice to be able to cope with the smaller problems. Hal carefully placed the Wand of Little Power in his cigar case; it was a clever bit of protective mimicry. He wondered what Lucius was up to now. Lucius was behaving in a very mysterious way lately — reading a great deal and making notes and smiling blandly when Hal questioned him directly, changing the subject with a clever phrase. He would soon find out, mused Hal, Lucius couldn't keep from bragging to his family.

The life of a magician was a good one but also pretty dull: nothing exciting ever happened.

Hal tucked the cover under his chin and went to sleep.

\* \* \*

The next day when school was finally over Swithin ran to his locker, grabbed his books, and threw himself into his coat. He plunged a hand in his left pocket to check on the Charm. Everything was A-OK. He hardly heard the slam of locker doors, the clatter of

boot-heels and the screams and shouts. For a change he was the quiet one.

All day he had had day-dreams: Swingin' Swithin, undefeated Heavyweight Champion of the World; Five-Touchdown Finzer, that no tackler could bring down; Fighting Finzer, that invincible Sergeant of the Marines, striding into a hail of enemy shells; but all these were only dreams to pass the time till now.

He had been told, not once, but three times, and then again, not to use the Charm going to school, or in school, or in any way, no matter what! Hal had warned him again to keep his hands in his pockets and do nothing to Crumbo; nothing at all. This part was going to be the hardest of all. It was only natural to fight back.

Swithin counted the fifty-one steps to the street. He wished on every tenth step that he would meet Crumbo; he hoped he would.

His wish came true. \* \* \*

Hastings Warren Crummle was a very self-satisfied fellow. He felt he had no reason to be otherwise. He lived in the biggest house on the block, with the biggest yard; his father drove the biggest automobile and the most expensive one; his mother was forever telling everyone that they, the Crummles, were related only to the best people; and he himself was the biggest boy that he knew even close to his age. And, in truth, H. W. Crummle, better known as Crumbo to his peers, *was* big.

From a little way off Crumbo might even be called good-looking, but, when nearer to him you could see that his eyes were just a shade too close together, his hair a bit too close to his eyebrows, his narrow nose a little pinched, and his loose-lipped mouth was a little too big. But these were not the really bad things about Crumbo. He was always very polite to the grown-up people and to older, stronger boys, or to those he believed dangerous to him; to younger, smaller, or weaker persons he was arrogant and mean. He hated cats: Mrs. Crummle had always said they were dirty and treacherous animals, and Crumbo had observed that cats had a low opinion of him.

He was not clumsy or slow and awkward as are many too quickly grown boys; on the contrary, he was sure-footed and fast-moving in spite of his size and bulk. He loved body-to-body contact, especially if the other bodies were small and tender.

The 3:30 bus pulled up at the corner with a chuff and a squeal. Two girls and Swithin, his victim, got off. Crumbo had picked his ambush with malice. Unless the victim knew ahead of time where Crumbo was lurking, and walked around a whole block, he had to pass right by the place. Even if he did choose to detour, Crumbo could see right away what he was up to and dash through the alley catching him with ease; and if he was silly enough to try any short cuts — Oh boy! What he gave him yesterday was just a small sample.

Swithin was an almost ideal victim. He made shrill, loud, pleasing noises when his face was rubbed with snow. He was short-legged and unable to run away from Crumbo in the snow. He was stupid and tried to fight back and at the same time never seemed to run home with wild tales about Crumbo — not that that would have done any good.

Even though the Finzers only lived a short block and a half from the Crummles, Crumbo's mother looked down her nose at people who lived in *that* direction and she did not at all approve of those people (six) and their cat living together in a little four roomed cottage. Crumbo had no fears anyhow since he knew his mother would believe his story instead of the truth — she always had.

As Crumbo lurked in the alley-way, Swithin came towards him, walking very slowly, toeing a piece of ice along the slick sidewalk; his books were tucked under his right arm and both hands were plunged in his coat pockets. Swithin wasn't as calm as he looked — he had spotted Crumbo before he had gotten off the bus. He clutched the Charm in his fingers

quite tightly and with all the courage of a scared but real hero he kept telling himself, "It did work with the popcorn." In about three more short kicks his piece of ice would be there and then he, himself. He gave one extra hard kick, took a deep breath and plunged, head up, his fist tightly clenched, into the clutches of Crumbo.

Crumbo usually made it a point to make sure there were no witnesses to his mean, bully acts. Today, however, he failed to notice that the Pringle house across the street from his prospective ambush had the living room curtains open and both the old Pringle sisters were watching Swithin from their rocking chairs.

Now, the Pringle sisters were not nosey, nor were they busy-bodies, but they *did* tend to view all neighborhood affairs as an act put on for their special pleasure, and thus it was that Penny Pringle and her sister Prissy became an audience to the confrontation.

Swithin made his last, hard kick, squared his shoulders and looked straight ahead. Two steps before he reached the alleyway Crumbo popped out, sideways and up like a jack-in-the-box, a big grin on his face, completely blocking the sidewalk. He towered over Swithin like a Goliath over a David.

"Out of the way, Shrimp; don't make me step on you!" Crumbo had no sort of plan except a vague thought of "give him the old hip and shoulder". By just walking towards his victim he could either knock him down or force him into the shin-deep snow. The shoulder part wouldn't work unless Crumbo crouched down quite a lot.

Swithin said nothing; he just looked up into the close-set greenish eyes of his tormentor and squeezed his sweating fist a little tighter, without moving an eyelash.

Crumbo, used to people this size jumping on command, gave him "the old hop" — at least he tried to. The next thing Crumbo knew he was sprawled face down, elbow deep, in snow. He felt as if a truck had sideswiped him. To the Pringles he appeared to have taken two steps and flung himself face down, off the sidewalk, into the snow to avoid Swithin. Swithin saw the whole landscape swallowed by the huge bulk of Crumbo and then all was clear, with Crumbo plunged in the snow beside him. Crumbo bounced to his feet, shook some snow out of his sleeves, stamped his feet and snarled, "Make me slip, will you?" He was crouching now like a football tackler. "This time you get the old 'straight arm'". Swithin was

well aware of what the 'old straight arm' could do to him but he said nothing. He just stood there looking peaceful.

Crumbo charged, aiming at Swithin's left shoulder with his right hand. It all happened so fast that Swithin only saw a blur and the almost complete disappearance of his enemy. When he looked down to the left all he could see were the two black shoes sticking out of a snowdrift.

"Did you see that?" asked Prissy. Penny nodded and added, "Somebody else usually gets in the snow when that one is around. I must say he is very athletic." To the Pringle sisters, it looked as though Crumbo had crouched, extended one arm towards the smaller boy, begun a forward leap, changed his mind, hurled himself into the air, made a neat backflip, and dived, arm stuck out, headfirst into a crusty pile of deep snow.

Swithin, without thinking, reached for a shoe to help Crumbo out; before he touched it Crumbo heaved himself up.

He was purple in the face, snow was up his sleeves, in his ears, down his neck, and stuck in his clipped curls. His arm was numb; he felt like he had smashed into a fireplug that had smashed back with an iron hand much bigger and stronger than his. Crumbo was minus his left glove and a couple of buttons.

Now we must give Crumbo some credit: he was no quitter, nor was he a coward; but he was a glutton for punishment — he came right back up onto the sidewalk for more. He shook off some snow, dug more out of his collar, brushed off his head and stuck out a big fist, waving it in front of Swithin, threatening his nose. Swithin clutched his charm tighter.

"Smell that," Crumbo growled, "I'm gonna sock you for tripping me that way — I'm gonna let you have it!" He cocked his fist and glared like a wild animal.

Swithin, who was beginning to relax and enjoy himself, resumed his usual jauntiness, "Sure, I smell it! It stinks!"

This was the one thing that, unknown to Swithin, Crumbo was super-sensitive about. The somewhat simple mind of Crumbo had become so addled and mixed up by an overdose of TV commercials that he was now using a different deodorant for his mouth, his armpits, and his feet, as well as a special soap all over. He would have fooled a smart bloodhound he had so many different odors. He didn't really need any of the gunk but he was so filled with fear that he felt he must naturally have a bad and powerful stink. If Swithin had kicked him on a boil it wouldn't have hurt as much.

Crumbo let out a little scream of pure rage and started his blow. He turned it down towards the chest. Even in his anger he had sense enough to realize that to sock a much smaller boy in the mouth was no good (it would make tell-tale marks), especially when the smaller boy had both hands in his pockets and so far hadn't moved (even though he *must* have done something to Crumbo).

The Pringle sisters were no longer rocking. They both sat bolt straight and stared out the window.

"The big one has gone loony, look at him!" Penny was excited.

"Be still and look yourself," Prissy retorted out of the side of her mouth like an old convict.

"Wow!" said both together.

Crumbo had heaved himself erect again, jumped around in front of Swithin, made some wicked motions with his fist towards Swithin; then all at once he knocked himself down with a hard left to the jaw and was raining hard punches on his own mouth and nose, at the same time grabbing with his right hand for his left wrist. After several tries he managed to capture his wild left. He ended sitting flat on the icy sidewalk, legs apart, in a very shocked state. Nothing like this had ever happened before; and it hurt, too. He wiped his nose with the back of his hand and



Swithin Finzer

saw a streak of blood.

This last performance delighted Swithin; it had been the first attack he had been able to watch in detail. He laughed out loud with sheer joy.

Crumbo, in pain, bewildered, baffled and angry; unable to figure out just what had happened, made his worst mistake of the day. He *completely* lost his temper and grabbed up a head-sized chunk of hardened snow from the top of a shovelled pile, scrambled to his feet, reared up to his full height, arms overhead, and flung it with all his might right at Swithin's head. He had a wild, mad look in his little bloodshot eyes; a trickle of blood dripped from one nostril and his bruised lips were twisted in a snarl; this time he was out for blood.

To Swithin it looked like an avalanche; to Crumbo, in the split second before he lost track of things, it seemed that Swithin had impossibly caught the oversized snowball and batted it back; to the Pringle twins it looked exactly as if Crumbo had bounced a large chunk of snow off Swithin's head in such a way that it split in two and whammed right back into Crumbo's face. It appeared to be very sticky snow, because Crumbo was staggering around having great trouble getting rid of it.

"That was clever of the Finzer boy," Prissy said to her sister.

"I'm not sure he did it. The Crumble boy threw it!" Penny answered.

They saw Crumbo sink to his knees, sort of pawing himself all over the face and neck and gently keel over on the walk; his head pillowed on the heaped snow. Crumbo looked a mess. Swithin noted that in addition to Crumbo's previous damage he now had snow packed inside his shirt, his pants, and his shoes; one eye was swelling shut and his once crisp hair was wet and dirty. He was short both gloves now, and the heel of one shoe was gone; several more buttons had disappeared and the shoulder seams of his coat were ripped open. He looked sort of pitiful sitting there, braced with his arms out behind him, his legs spraddled out across the walk, his eyes crossed and blood drying on his lip, panting like a tired old dog with tears trickling down his smeary cheeks, too beat even to wipe them away. Swithin knew better than to feel sorry for Crumbo. He stepped between the long legs in the direction of home; stopped, shifted his books to his left, took his right hand out of his pocket and patted Crumbo on the head.

"I take it back. You don't really stink!" and with a leap like a happy rabbit he ran for home.



Andrew Finzer



Crumbo burst into loud childish sobs; after all he was only thirteen years old and not *really* wicked. He slowly climbed to his feet and, not even bothering to look for his gloves and cap, limped off in the opposite direction. He was so filled with self-pity that no thought of revenge was in his mind — yet.

The Pringle sisters began to rock again.

"I can figure out how he did all but the last one," said Penny, "but why did he do any of it?"

Prissy poured them both a glass of tea and sipped. "You tell me when you get it figured out. It's not the first time strange things have happened around a Finzer!"

\* \* \*

Hal heard Swithin trotting up the walk and when he opened the door Swithin strutted into the hall, showing as many perfect white teeth as physically possible his grin was so big.

"Hit me in the nose," he crowed happily.

"Take your hand out of your pocket and I'll be glad to oblige," Hal grinned back.

Gay came clattering down the spiral staircase sounding like a little horse, "I saw it, I saw it all! I was up in the Tower room. Oh boy! Was it swell! Swithin, you were fantastic! I loved it — real neat when you hit him with the snow."

Hal raised an eyebrow at Swithin who shook his head, wiped the grin off his face, and said, "No sir! He did it all to himself, just like you said, Dad."

"Good," Hal smiled. "Off with the coat, so we can return the charm to its proper place. I can tell by the way you look that it worked." He turned to Gay, "Better vanish the stairs next time when you take the last step, little one, it's safer that way. We want no curiosity about stairs in a one floor cottage."

Swithin shucked off his coat and handed it to Hal. "One thing, Dad, will Crumbo ever figure out what happened?"

Hal looked down at his happy, smiling-serious son, "He won't, ever. He will come up with a lot of answers and a lot of excuses, but never the truth. Not Crumbo. This should put an end to your trouble with Crumbo once and for all." As he talked he broke the thread, removed the cloth bag, and checked the little leather pouch. The charm was just as always.. The tiny pink fist looked very harmless. Hal walked over to the book shelves and carefully tucked it away until the next time.

Yes, the Finzers truly were a magical family. For as far back as any records go, and that is several cen-

turies, the Finzers have been magicians, passing their Art from father to son, from mother to daughter, from generation to generation, adding new discoveries and powers and tools of magic. For a long time, in the very beginning, they moved from place to place in England and Europe and with luck and secrecy escaped serious trouble.

Then, in the late 1700's, Great-great-great-grandfather Finzer decided to come to America. It was in 1771 that the first known Finzer, in direct line of descent, landed at the Port of New York on a dismal 16th of April. It was late afternoon when all the trunks and bags and bales, along with his wife and the little boy, who became the grandfather of Grandfather Lucius Finzer, were safe and sound on shore. Otto Finzer, his wife Rose, and their young son Nicholas, had no trouble settling down and leading a quiet life until Young Nicholas (later known as 'Old Nick') passed his twenty-fifth birthday and fell in love. He married Sarah (described as a strawberry blonde of great beauty) against the wishes of her family; and, to spare trouble for everyone, they eloped. They traveled light, both on horseback, and settled in a small town in the Virginia territory. Nick was provident enough to bring along a small pack of magic tools and charms and some powerful spells that made even the rough life quite comfortable.

Here Great-grandfather Jacob was born. When he was three years old the small family moved back towards the East and settled in a small town. That small town grew into the city the Finzers now live in.

It was Old Nick who refined the way of living of the Finzers in his "Philosophy of Protective Mimicry," a book now known to nearly every magician.

Here, in the foothills of ancient mountains, not far from the ocean, he built the first rooms of the Old House where our present place now stands. When the Old House burned down several decades later, Jacob built the first four rooms of our present dwelling. It is now well over a hundred years old and still sturdy and sound as ever.

The house still must appear from the outside much as it did when it was first completed — a little, low, white cottage snuggled against a small rise in the back; porches front and rear with a hedge all around. The house set close to the road (now street) in front, but not too close. It had privacy from neighbors on one side due to space (about fifty feet) and from the street on the other side, being on a corner. Between the slope of the ground, the distance from the neighbors, and the hedges, it is very

difficult to see inside, even if someone wished to spy.

All sorts of additions have been made through the years. Most of the magical equipment and books were safely rescued from the fire that destroyed the Old House and it was Jacob, who, in the New House, made some of the most wonderful inventions and discoveries that we still enjoy.

By the time Jacob Finzer had grown up and married his wife Jezebel (called Jessie) and fathered a son, Lucius, our grandfather, the Finzers were permanently established as sound, middle-class, no-nonsense, honest, and even rather stodgy citizens of the neighborhood and the town. Due to the teaching and practice of Old Nick, the Finzers were just about the very last family in the community to ever be connected with magic, much less to ever be accused of being magicians; such an idea was laughable. They were considered good neighbors, good, solid citizens, friendly and helpful, and not at all nosy. They were quiet, with well-behaved children, apparently independently wealthy from inherited good fortune, but certainly far from rich — just happy, quiet, and very ordinary people. This, of course, was exactly the goal for which Old Nick had long and patiently worked. Jacob achieved it and Lucius and Hal preserved the status quo until today. If the Finzers themselves were to openly claim to be magicians now, people would only laugh at the idea. Of course there are always individuals like the Pringle sisters who suspect and watch, but since they see something queer in nearly everybody and say so without being asked, nobody pays any attention to them, which is probably just as well for a lot of people.

By the time grandfather Lucius married Grandmother Greta, several rooms had been added to the house by Old Nick and Jacob; Lucius added the Tower Room and the spiral stairway later on. It is very nice and convenient to have all those second-story rooms on one floor; it would truly take a magician to explain the plumbing in that house to an outsider.

Hal says that modern science is just beginning to catch up with some of the practical ideas magicians have known about and used for a long time. The idea of multiple or coinciding rooms is one of them. Modern physics is well aware of the vast spaces between all particles of matter and the fact that these empty spaces are tremendously greater than the so-called solids. It is easy enough for a competent magician to manipulate this space in such a way that two rooms, or even many, can be put in the same space without any sort of crowding or confusion. The same goes for furniture and everything else concerned. It is all in knowing just exactly what to do; like going through a wall or locked door or hiding inside rocks or trees: all very simple with the proper magic.

Hal Finzer was the third son born to Greta and Lucius Finzer. He, as the youngest, elected to stay





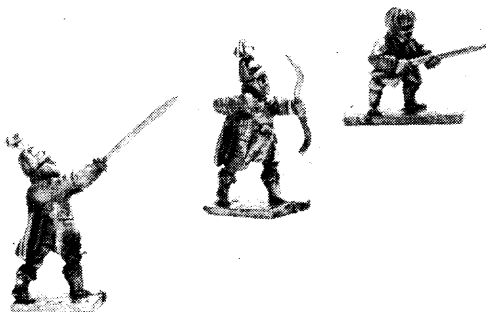
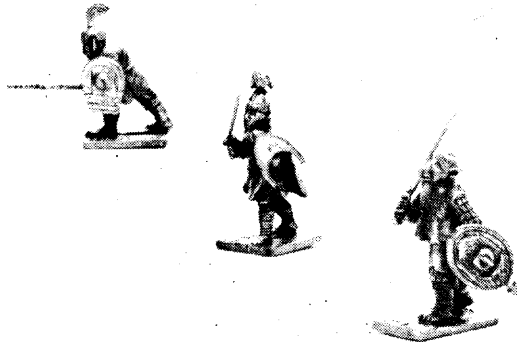
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home, mainly because the older brothers, Fritz and Otto II (named, of course after the original Otto Finzer) were such travellers. Both are possessed by the true wanderlust that still keeps them moving around. They seem to take after Lucius who has a very restless nature and must always do something or go someplace and is never satisfied just to stay put and enjoy a quiet life. On the other hand, Hal is much like Great-Grandfather Jacob and dislikes all the troubles involved in moving around the world and prefers to stay at home and read and cook and just relax and work on new spells, transformations, and recipes. However, it would be quite hard to find a more exciting grandfather than Lucius or more interesting and unexpected uncles than Uncle Fritz and Uncle Otto. They are both big men, over six feet tall and barrel-bodied, with beaks of noses and a sort of Viking-keenness in their grey-blue eyes. On the other hand they look quite different, since Otto is as bald as an egg while Fritz has a mane of thick iron-gray hair.

Otto is also a great collector of artifacts for the Viewer. He was the one who really perfected that device and has always been immensely curious and diligent in trying to find objects that will show the very best scenes possible. Hal and the rest of us really get most of the benefit of his world-wide collecting; hardly a month (sometimes only a week) goes past that a well packaged object, small and carefully protected, does not arrive from some place where he is traveling. Sometimes he has already tried it on the small Viewer he carries with him and has marked some particular area for our benefit; more often we are the first to get to view whatever there is to be seen.

The Viewer is really a very simple device, in fact it could hardly be dignified by the name of mechanism. Ours looks much like a 24 inch tv set from the front, where there is a curved glass, very crystal clear, about three inches thick, but no one could tell that by just looking at it. Inside it is almost empty. There is a little platform furnished with clamps to hold the object to be viewed, a slim wooden rod-tipped with three needle sharp prongs, in a movable holder. A small egg-shaped translucent piece of what may be a quartz or some semi-precious stone is slung in a little wire-meshed golden net, and an ordinary vest-pocket sized flashlight is placed so the light beam shines directly on the suspended egg. There is also a glass eye with a non-human vertical pupil, its iris gleaming black with tiny silver specks, so placed that it stares directly at the front of the cabinet. Scattered around on the bottom (but not at random) are a few dried herbs and twigs. That's all the visible parts inside the Viewer — no wires, no batteries (except in the flashlight) no antenna, and no other connections — but it works superbly when it works at all.

Before Jacob invented the Viewer and Otto perfected it, all sorts of inferior methods were used: crystal balls, pools of ink in water, clouds of smoke, crucibles of molten metals, mirrors, and other polished surfaces. None of these were probably very satisfactory and certainly could never be compared with the full color, almost three-dimensional pictures we are able to see on our Viewer today. This is the way it works:

The object to be used to make the picture is clamped on the little platform in such a manner that the pronged rod can rest lightly on the upper surfaces, that surface being the one that was exposed to the scene we hope to view. The one control attached to the little rod moves it a very tiny bit in any direction over the surface of the object. The "cat-whisker" on an old-time crystal radio set is a close analogy to this. The beam of light is then turned on and if Uncle Otto has made a good find and luck is with us we enjoy some very unusual entertainment. The Viewer works (so it seems) by releasing the captured images and sound to which it has been exposed dur-

ing its existence.

The ideal object to place in the Viewer would be a very hard smooth stone (perhaps a flat cut diamond) which had been exposed to very interesting and exciting events. Uncle Otto would like very much to borrow some of the crown jewels of England or the former Czars of Russia, but he has not yet figured out a way to pilfer the Tower of London or the Kremlin. In fact, Uncle Otto is, in a way, one of the world's most persistent souvenir hunters (some unkind persons might even call him a vandal). He has roamed the world chipping bits of stone from the facings of statues, buildings and ruins of all periods of history; cutting little chunks of wood (even splinters when he could get nothing better) from carvings and altars and anything that looks promising; and procuring small medallions and ornament from the fronts of boxes in famous theaters. In fact nothing is really safe or sacred from, or to, Uncle Otto if opportunity presents him with a chance to add to his, or our, collection.

Everything he has sent, along with the rest of our collection is catalogued and filed. When possible, very good viewings are carefully marked in order to use them again.

Uncle Fritz sends us things from time to time but he lacks the true spirit of Uncle Otto. For instance, Fritz sends us coins and we get views of the inside of graves and vaults and pouches and pockets (with a flash of greedy or worried faces and lots of hands grabbing). Very dull stuff! But, we find once in a while a fight and sometimes an interesting murder turns up, so we keep looking.

He also sends us primitive tools or weapons when he can find them and we have gotten several interesting hand-ax views of early man around his dismal smoky fires, always scared and sometimes shivering, in the pictures we have viewed. But you really can't tell much from such a small sample.

We have seen some wonderful and bloody and horrible and brave events on the Viewer not made-up shows, but the real live events that happened: chariot-races, gladiatorial combats acrobats and dancers and beast-fights in the Circus Maximus in the days of the Roman Empire, festivals in Crete and a wonderful show of the Bull Dancers, parades and ceremonies in ancient Egypt, riots from all over the world, crucifixions, hangings, and great battles. Of course we look for these exciting scenes and pass over the great number of dull, ordinary, routine, everyday happenings that really make up history. On the Viewer we look for headline events. With few exceptions, Hollywood puts on better scenes than History; the sweat, the dust, the milling crowds, and the confusion are not there.

Most of the great men we have been able to identify looked like quite ordinary men (they were of course): tired, worried, sometimes tipsy, bored, and rarely relaxed or happy; but this may be due to Uncle Otto's method of collection.

The sound is sometimes very good; but usually it is confused and unclear. Many times it is just a whisper or a murmur. Once in a great while it is clear and thrilling. Uncle Otto is, of course, working to improve this and perhaps next time he is home he will have the problem solved.

A historian would give almost anything to see and use the Viewer and it is regrettable that we dare not make it available.

Magic has many advantages as well as disadvantages. Hal says that things are getting easier for the magician all the time. What he means is that the risks of using magic are getting less every year. In 'the good old days' (even as little as a hundred years ago) for a magician to have a good reading light was a risky business — how could it be explained? Today any kind of light goes unquestioned. The same is true of many other small Magics that were, a short time ago, very dangerous to use, even privately. Curious and nosy people are willing to go to any amount

of trouble to find out what caused something which they cannot understand or have easily explained, and their curiosity is aroused by very small things indeed!

Today, however, Hal can sit under the big oak tree at the top of the garden and sip a drink as he watches the lawn-mower cut the grass, silently, all by itself. No questions are asked at all — it seems to be a new electronically controlled model with rechargeable batteries and he even has the advertisement to 'prove' it. The Viewer is just another 'color tv' set — new model. And the same for many other small Magics that were once a hazard if not concealed. Nowadays the label 'new gadget', 'electronic device', 'remote-controlled' seems to satisfy just about everyone's curiosity. This is very fine for magicians and quite relaxing for a change.

Through the generations the Finzers have built up a number of rules which have now become part of our way of life. Magic is very uncertain in many ways and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons that so called 'modern' science frowns at the very mention of it. There are special spells that can be worked only by certain persons; if they are tried by anyone else either nothing, or something quite different happens. This sort of thing is maddening to the scientific mind. A lot of magic depends on complete belief and absolute faith on the part of the magician, and naturally this is almost impossible for someone not born or at least raised in the Art to achieve.

All this has good points too, since it makes it impossible for outsiders to go into any of the extra-space rooms in our house, even if they knew about them. It is really awfully hard to teach people to walk through solids and could be embarrassing if someone lost faith halfway through a wall and got stuck. Hal says the results could be disastrous and to remind him to be several miles away when it happens.

None of the Finzer men are lazy and all have prided themselves on being good, if not excellent, providers. But none of them have ever enjoyed routine or hard physical labor, especially Grandfather Lucius.

But, to get back to the limitations of magic: magic may not be used for revenge or to exercise power over others or to show off — all these things are much too dangerous. Magic may be used for pleasures or to extend knowledge, and for all sorts of little things to make life easier. Above all it is not to be bragged (or even talked) about, except within the family, and even that is discouraged except for serious reasons. Magic is very definitely never to be used in any of the fine arts such as music, painting, sculpture, or dancing, nor is it ever to be used in competitive games or sports or any other sort of creative work. Hal, who is a fair chef, includes cooking in this list and refuses to take any magical short-cuts when he cooks. Simmering, Seasoning, and Skill are all he ever uses, although he has been known to enchant a spoon to beat something 300 times and it is very suspicious how he can cook a whole meal and have no soiled pans and dishes and utensils in the sink. He claims that is the way Grandmother Greta taught him to cook — clean up as you go.

Besides all these restrictions, many others must be observed. The house could very well do without outside help but we have always had gas, water, and, of late years, electricity, and have used some of them in order to avert curiosity on the part of the utilities and the telephone company.

Clothes are no problem since Margo is expert at transformations, and given the proper materials and a good example she can whip out a new outfit for any of us in a few minutes. Some things we buy at stores since it might arouse a little suspicion if we never purchased anything (and besides Margo is very temperamental about socks and shoes and neckties for Hal and Andrew). Her skill in this field makes it very convenient when we make excursions through

the Magic Window into a time where present-day clothes will not look right. All that is needed is the material, a fair idea of what is wanted (which she can get through studying various costume books), and one brief look when we are there to make any necessary changes. No questions have yet been asked of us.

I can tell you still don't really believe me. About Magic, I mean. Well, have you ever heard the story about Aladdin and the Magic Lamp? Just a fairy tale you say? Well, let me tell you another story . . .

\*\*\*

Hill Top School was an old school and had many traditions. One was that every year, to raise funds for the football team and other sports, a show was given. All the students from the lowliest freshman to the lordliest senior sold tickets to parents, relatives, friends, enemies, storekeepers, strangers, innocent tourists, or indeed to anyone who could be persuaded, brow-beaten, or otherwise enticed into a purchase. This show, through the years, had become the biggest and most important event of the year, both from a spectacular standpoint and a financial one. And it was always a good show. A tremendous amount of time and preparation went into the performance. Some acts had, literally, several years of experience, starting their ideas and rehearsals in the first year of high school and aiming for a spot on the Big Show in their senior year, or if very good indeed, their junior year.

Of course, everyone wanted a part; a part as big and important as they could get. It would take too long to describe all the planning and plotting, besides the practicing and perspiring, that went into the show. Not only the whole student body was involved, but also the teachers and especially the parents of the various competing acts. This led to some extremely fascinating situations both at school and in the hearts of families and many social groups.

Sides were taken by a lot of people and acts and jealousy flashed its green eyes all over the city. Probably the least concerned were the actual performers themselves since they only worried about the performance.

One man was responsible for the outstanding success of the Hill Top School shows: Clovis VanZant. Mr. VanZant was the calm in the center of the storm. He operated in such a quiet, cool, and easy way that the most nervous and upset persons were soothed by his just being there. He was the librarian of the school; and a clue to his influence and power can be indicated by the fact that the library was a little bigger than the gymnasium. This may seem unusual, but so was Mr. VanZant.

He was not much to look at: medium tall, lean, receding black hair, a mobile thin-lipped mouth on the large side, knuckly long-fingered hands, and a straight high-bridged nose with a little bump on the bridge. His eyes were large, slightly bulged, with almost dark-purple irises — very striking eyes. They had been called hypnotic. He had never been seen in anything else than a bow-tie.

He had the soul of a great producer and he lavished it on this once-a-year event for Hill Top High School.

It was the day of final tryouts: the final weeding of the garden, the selection of the finest flowers. Mr. VanZant was judge and jury; his word was final and absolute. Long ago, there had been a time when this was not true; once a group of irate parents and some other dissatisfied persons had disagreed with this policy and succeeded in placing the absolute powers of Mr. VanZant in the hands of a committee elected from among themselves. This proved to be a very grave mistake. Even after all these years several members of that group still carried scars and wounded memories that were painful and unforgettable, and the Show, that sad year, was so far below the previous level of excellence that Mr. VanZant was begged to return to absolute power the very next

week. He accepted with outward reluctance but inward glee and satisfaction. He had not been challenged again.

Andrew Finzer was sitting in the fourth seat from the aisle in the third row — right center. This just happened to be next to the third seat, third row, right center where Mr. VanZant always sat, whether for assembly, performances, or, as now, in judgement. Andrew had no doubts of his welcome there; he and the librarian were old and good friends. Both respected and loved good books, they were determined enemies at chess (so far this year Andrew had not lost a game), and each had a keen appreciation of one another as individuals.

The pianist switched on her music-stand light and sounded a few chords just as Mr. VanZant slid into his seat next to Andrew. He put on a pair of thick-rimmed glasses, signaled to dim the house lights, and gave one pistol-sharp clap for the first tryout to begin. He ignored Andrew entirely.

The footlights went up and a spotlight picked up a tap-dancer at left stage just as the piano crashed into its opening bars. Andrew could tell the act was good. Mr. VanZant opened a small notebook and poised a pencil without moving his eyes from the stage. Except for the staccato taps and the piano there was no sound. The huge auditorium was empty out front, everyone else concerned was back-stage. This was the way Mr. VanZant wanted it and so it was. The auditorium they were in was very large by any standards, and lavishly equipped. Mr. VanZant had wangled that from the Fifth Fortune of Peter Zorn, the last of the truly independent oil wildcaters, just before he went broke for the fifth time. He had managed the library from fortune number three and was looking forward to fortune number six. He had already applied to Peter for a small atomic reactor, and received a favorable reply from some obscure South American port.

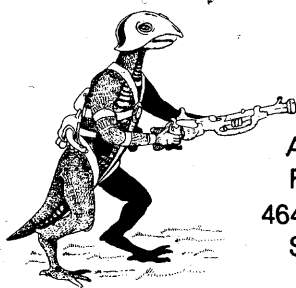
The dancer ended with a flourish and a little mark was made in the book.

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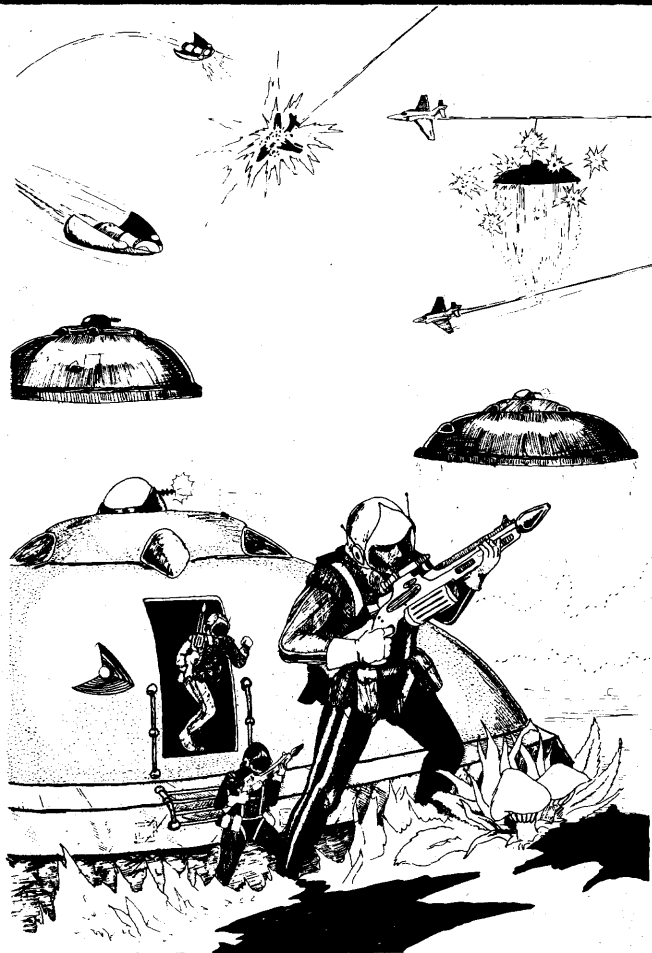
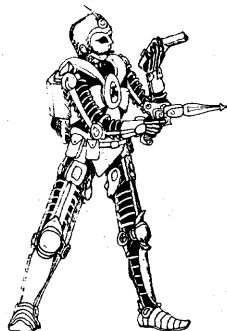
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Another sharp clap and this time the curtain went up on a partially set stage; the lights changed around and the piano began a soft melody. There was a delay and the curtain came back down again. Mr. VanZant gave a sigh and that was all.

Andrew took a deep breath. "Sir," he began, "I would like your permission to try out."

Mr. VanZant slowly turned his head and looked sadly at Andrew, "Et tu Brute" he murmured, "and what sort of light fantastic do you plan to trip?" This was an unkind cut since Andrew was sometimes called 'Boots' because he always wore thick soled, heavy engineer boots.

"Not a dance, Sir. It's all done in front of the curtain; no music except a little build-up stuff, and," he paused, "no props." Andrew knew well of Mr. VanZant's aversion to having 'things' on stage, especially devices that could cause trouble and confusion if they went wrong. Andrew continued softly, "Something new, I know you will like it."

"What is it?" asked Mr. VanZant. Just then the curtain went up and a very clever pantomime act began. The pencil poised again. Andrew kept quiet and thought as he watched, too.

Andrew had had a very difficult time persuading Hal to let him even *try* this. If it had not been for Margo, who added her persuasion to Andrew's, Hal certainly would have refused. The whole thing hinged on whether or not the few little Magics Andrew would perform in public could be easily and simply explained without arousing any undue concern or curiosity in the audience, or in anybody else. Margo won the day by pointing out that the "tricks" Andrew wanted to do all looked like very old and often performed acts, that had been done by professional magicians ever since the original Robert Houdon. And she had pointed out it was all for a good cause and furthermore she would like to see Andrew on the stage. After hearing that, Hal became mildly enthusiastic and produced the necessary small spells that were required. He spent several hours cautioning and coaching Andrew in their use and demonstrating the proper way of using them. Andrew had a natural flair for this sort of thing in a quiet deadpan manner that fitted very well with his more often used nickname around school, the "Brain".

It was a very apt name too, because Andrew was indeed excellent in mathematics, English, science, or anything else requiring brains as opposed to brawn and size. He played a good game of blindfold chess and was a precise perfectionist in mechanical drafting and shopwork, a mediocre swimmer and impossible at most sports, but always got straight A's in everything, even Gym (Coach was fond of his puny, but always trying, efforts).

Hal finally produced an old opera hat, one of the sort that flattens like a pancake when urged and opens into a respectable-looking shiny top-hat, and concentrated all the spells into it. The hat was the only thing Andrew really needed on stage but Andrew pleaded for a wand so Hal provided a pencil-sized one to please him.

The curtain went down again and another mark was made in the little notebook. Two girls disguised as something came out and nodded to the piano player, waited a couple of bars, and started to sing. Mr. VanZant winced slightly and closed the notebook. The eyes shifted to Andrew and a tiny whisper asked "What?"

"Magic. Three acts!" whispered Andrew.

A visible shudder convulsed Mr. VanZant. "Oh no!" he said quite audibly. And then, after a pause, "Nevermore!"

Andrew expected something of this sort. He had discussed past performances of amateur magicians with the librarian before, over the chess-board after a game. There had been the unforgettable performance of Tommy Cox who had become so trapped and tangled up with his magic table that a mechanic and a hacksaw were necessary to get him loose. The machinery had devilishly grabbed his fingers at the

very first attempted trick and gone into wild action producing bouquets of flowers, streamers of paper of all colors, goldfish without bowls, jets of water (plain and colored), several live and stuffed animals, and some startling explosions. In a vain effort to master his monster Tommy somehow entrapped his remaining hand and stood paralyzed in spotlighted desperation until the spell-bound operator ran down the curtain. Luckily the audience, except for a very few, considered it the best comic act of the evening and kept applauding for an encore. Poor Tommy never even got to take a bow.

Another older, but even more embarrassing, memory was the infamous performance of Lester Hurley, the only child of the then mayor. Lester was well-meaning, very aggressive, and overly ambitious, if not downright reckless. His fate involved a hat, six raw eggs, an expensive watch, and an alcohol lamp (the hat and the watch were conned from innocent victims in the audience). Lester was never quite able to figure out how what happened did happen, but it did. These memories flashed like rockets through both minds.

Andrew spoke again, "Just take one look, please. I guarantee these are first-rate."

Mr. VanZant started to shake his head, heard the last shrill notes of the duet, and said with the instant decision of Caesar, "All right. One time. Impress me!" He clapped again and waved for some house-lights to give Andrew time to get on stage.

Andrew vaulted into the orchestra pit, paused to whisper to the pianist, and climbed up over the foot-lights. He produced a flattened opera hat from inside his jacket and bowed to Mr. VanZant as if he were a full house, then waited for the lights to be put right and snapped open his hat. With a flourish he produced a black cloth, unfolded it to 3 x 6 feet in size, and smoothed it out about two feet above the stage floor. The hat remained suspended in the air where he had left it floating.

Faces were clustered in the wings on both sides of the stage as Andrew reached inside the hat and pulled out a small object. He called to Mr. VanZant, "What kind of fruit to you want? This seed will grow into a Magic Tree and produce any kind you wish for." He held out his hand palm-out, "No, don't tell me — just think of it very hard." Andrew placed the Magic Seed on the black cloth and wondered what Mr. VanZant would dream up. Andrew made a few impressive passes over the seed. All he could see of Mr. VanZant was the little white blur that was his face.

Suddenly the seed popped open like a clam shell and the thin stem sprouted out and up; in a matter of seconds it was higher than Andrew was, tall. It grew, first small, then, rapidly enlarging three-lobed leaves. Green blossoms turned into fruits of some sort. Andrew identified them just as they turned blue and then a dark purple — figs!

Andrew was almost as surprised as Mr. VanZant who clapped loudly, had the lights turned up and who was standing up cupping his mouth with his hands. "Throw me a couple," he yelled.

Andrew obliged, and, noting that the faces peering through the curtain and peeping from the wings were getting closer, he rapped the tree sharply with its forefinger. It vanished like a pricked balloon into the seed-shell. He picked up the shell, dropped it into the convenient hat, swiftly folded the cloth and pushed it after the seed. He then reached out, snapped the hat flat, bowed to the wings, the audience, and the open-mouthed musician, and sauntered off stage down the steps back to his seat.

Mr. VanZant was chewing thoughtfully when Andrew sat down. He offered the remaining fruit but Andrew could tell he didn't really mean it, so he refused. Andrew felt pretty smug and even looked it. Mr. VanZant clapped again and the lights went down and the curtain came up. This time it was a small minstrel show and very good too.

Mr. VanZant whispered, "I really am impressed.

How many more acts? And are they this impressive?"

"Two, answered Andrew, "Even better; I'll show them to you later, too many people back there."

Mr. VanZant agreed with a nod. "How did you know I would choose figs?" he murmured, "the rest I can figure out. O.K., in my office, tonight at seven." Andrew slipped out the closed doors before the music stopped. He heard another clap just before it locked shut. He felt very confident and happy.

\* \* \*

Hal, Margo, Swithin, and Gay were enjoying themselves entirely. The seats were excellent (12th row right center), and the show was better than any show before and Andrew was magnificent. He looked dapper and professional in his evening clothes and his magical manner was most impressive. The first act with the tree went off perfectly. Hal had a moment of apprehension when Andrew produced oranges, lemons, and then, of all things, a fig. The plan called for one fruit but it went off very well. The fig went to Mr. VanZant who munched it up at once.

The levitation act had given a brief moment of fear to Hal when Andrew almost let the girl assisting him (Mamie Potts, the only female chess player in school, and firm admirer of Andrew) float out of reach. But Andrew cleverly snagged her with the hoop used to demonstrate that no wires were attached and finished the act with distinction. No one, not even Mamie, suspected anything unusual.

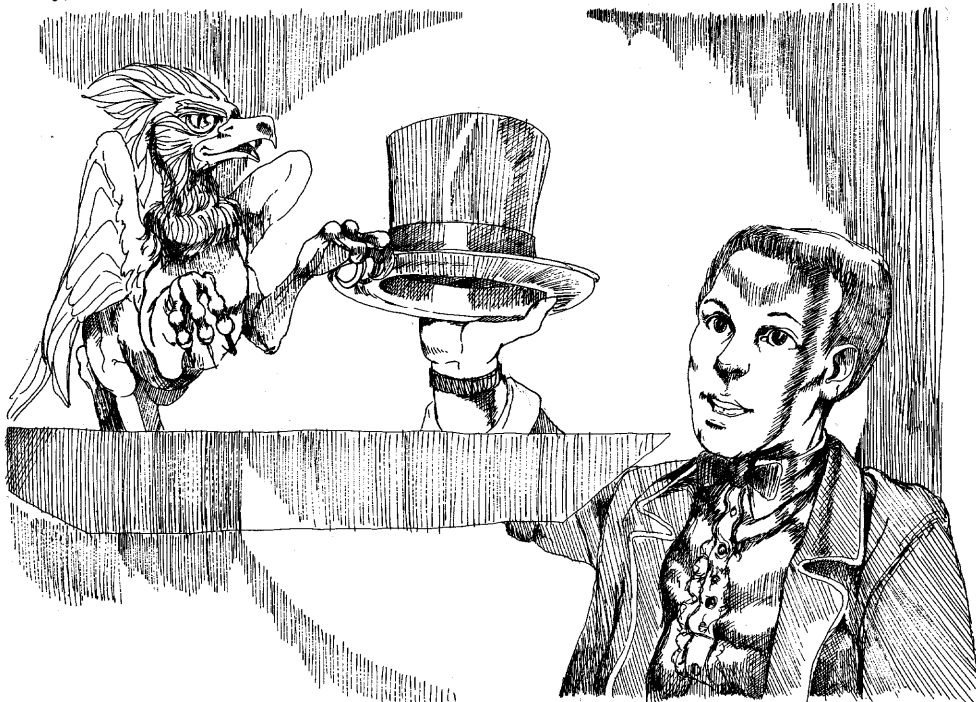
Andrew's last appearance was due any minute now. He was in the program three separate and distinctly different places and all the Finzers were proud. The big curtain went down. Andrew was waiting at stage left for his cue from the orchestra conductor; he was feeling more than a little cocky, and why not? Margo had done a wonderful job on his clothes and he had carried off two acts without a hitch. And if applause meant anything he was the hit of this show. His favorite magic of all was coming up next in just a minute.

He clasped his flat hat under his arm and checked the braided black cord that attached it to his left button-hole. All was well. The cue came and he walked slowly with just the tiniest bit of a swagger out onto stage. A ripple of applause greeted him as he reached centerstage and made a deep bow. He pushed up both sleeves with the practiced gesture of a real professional (he had certainly spent enough hours in front of mirror to get this just right), snapped open the hat, flourished it, and placed it ceremoniously in the air at his right hand waist high. He withdrew the black cloth, unfolded it, and smoothed it in front of him. The whole audience was spellbound; he had them in the palm of his hand — only the Finzers and Mr. VanZant knew what to expect next.

He inverted the hat, touched the center of the cloth and slowly lifted it up. The music was playing high-dive stuff. The spell would create a most charming and delightful creature there: a tiny, white, winged horse — a miniature Pegasus about six inches tall at the shoulder with impossible white, pink-tinged, wings fit for a noble bird, a flowing mane and tail, and minute jet black hooves. The spotlight centered in below the hat as Andrew lifted it slowly for dramatic effect. The spotlight was to stay on the little winged creature as it flew, at command, twice around Andrew on the stage, and then over the audience before finally returning to the hat again.

Andrew peeped down expecting to see the intelligent black eyes of his little partner and almost dropped the hat in sheer surprise. There was a sort of horse there, but it was a complete stranger! In place of black eyes were huge yellow ones, like a small owl's. The front legs ended in talons instead of hooves, the wings were much larger in proportion and flamed orange and crimson, the neck was longer





and covered with feathers, and there was a great yellow crest on its little head. This was definitely not his little horse but some other strange magical creature.

Andrew stepped back a pace in sheer astonishment. He heard a gasp from the side of the stage, and, collecting his wits, made a futile gesture over the little monster. Then he realized it was growing! With every heartbeat it got perceptibly larger: cat-sized, small-dog-sized, then the size of a Great Dane. Andrew clapped the hat on his head for no reason. The audience was still quiet, only Hal leaned forward, tense with recognition.

The beast was now the size of a small pony and Andrew felt panic closing his throat, then, instantly remembering that he was the great Magician and that this was his Magic, he did a very brave (or perhaps foolish) thing. He leaped up to the black cloth, threw his arms around the strange creature's neck and vaulted onto its back. He just made it. By this time it was the size of a small horse and the enormous wings, still folded, swept far behind the flowing tail. The tremendous yellow eyes looked clamly into the pale blurs over the footlights. The audience sat frozen, held rigid as if by some spell. Only Hal Finzer moved. He slid into the aisle and began to weave a counterspell, but it was too late.

Andrew heard a faint, small voice and even in his terror he obeyed. He reached up and slapped the hat, which flattened. He felt a flash of relief as the animal stopped growing — at the same time he sensed the gigantic size of his mount. It stepped to the floor of the stage and the whole proscenium seemed to quiver. It lifted a steel clutch of ruby tipped talons and examined them curiously with one monstrous orange-yellow eye. Andrew felt the muscles of the creature tense under him coiling like huge cables as it crouched down. Then, like a bolt from an unimaginable catapult, it sprang, slanting up to the roof.

Andrew only had time to close his eyes and hope. With less sensation than would come from bursting out of a soap bubble, the monster and Andrew were into the open air high above the city. Then with one great wing beat, no more, they rose wheeling higher and higher, the fantastic wings spread far, almost beyond belief, soaring in great up-slanting circles.

Andrew felt the cold creep into his clothes and the bitter wind bite his cheeks. He began to shiver and hitched closer to the great feathered neck. He became aware of being watched and gingerly opening one wet eye saw that his peculiar steed was peering around at him.

Then he heard a voice, a very mild and surprising-ly pleasant voice, deep and resonant, saying politely,

"Slide back. Don't climb my neck. Just slide down a little bit." The great eye blinked at him. Andrew noticed it was a sideways blink and then realized who (or was it what) was speaking to him. He relaxed just a little and wiggled his rear end backwards, holding on tightly with hands and knees. He had not yet dared to look down, but he felt very high and unsafe and scared. The voice spoke again, "About that much again and we've got it made." Andrew slid down another foot and found himself in a very comfortable saddle-like seat deep in warm downy feathers and felt secure for the first time. "There, isn't that much better?" asked the voice close by in the darkness. The eye came closer and then disappeared.

Andrew, feeling much better, leaned back in his soft chair-like seat and asked in a very calm way, considering everything that had happened, "What or who are you? Where are we going? And why?"

The eye came back and the voice replied, "Please, one question at a time. Number one, I am classified as a Hippogryf, which makes me entirely mythological, some would say fictitious, however, when I appear I am somewhat difficult to deny. My name is Sharlumanugash (Shar-lu-man-u-gash) which goes a long way back in time. But just call me Charly, if you please. Number two. We are going up, but not much more or you will run out of air. Number three and last: this you may know as well as I do. All my orders say is to pick up Hal and bring him back to young Lucius. You are Hal Finzer aren't you?" The voice ended on a worried note.

Feeling a bit bold, Andrew said, "Look Charly, my name is Andrew Finzer; Hal is my father and 'young' Lucius can only be Grandfather. But he is at home, too busy to come to my show. What ever can he want? And why did you have to come the way you did? What will all those people think? Take me back!"

"Oh, oh, oh, in trouble again, and 'young' Lucius with his terrible temper! Forget about what those people think, they won't believe what they saw anyway, they never do! Anyway Lucius is in bad trouble, if it is Lucius. We can't go back now; you carried the Gateway with you. We must go on. Lucius said to hurry back as fast as I could fly. Hold on now and cover up!"

The eye blinked again as a sort of cape of feathers rose up to protect Andrew. The great wings began to flap slowly, then faster and faster; there was a sort of 'thruumm' and then complete silence. All Andrew could see was grey fog anywhere he looked, and he wondered where he was going. He felt close

to tears but he was excited, too. Then he began to relax. And, then, cozy, snug and warm, he leaned back and closed his eyes; he was a very tired Magician.

\* \* \*

Hal Finzer was the only person in the audience who fully grasped what was happening. He had recognized Sharlumanugash almost as soon as the creature had appeared. This visit could only mean one thing: Lucius was in trouble. How Lucius had managed this in such a short time would have to wait; indeed must wait. The spectacular growth and startling disappearance of a gaudy mythological monster, not to mention Andrew, from in front of some two thousand people, was a real threat to the Finzer way of life. This episode would have to be explained, covered up, in some way concealed or passed off as ordinary, as part of the show. And since the show must go on, it would have to be done now; immediately!

Hal acted in a split second. He leaned over, grabbed Swithin under an arm with one hand, clapped the other over Swithin's mouth as a precaution against a squawk, lifted him bodily into the aisle, and hustled him silently to the rear of the auditorium. The spectators sat with staring eyes looking at the empty stage where the spotlight still focused on the black cloth. A few were looking up towards the roof. All were caught in a spell of wonder. Even as Hal pulled Swithin swiftly down the aisle, he spun a persuasive spell at the orchestra conductor to signal a roll on the snare drums. He sent a charm to the light-man to have a spotlight cover the center aisle at the lobby door.

By this time he had managed to explain to Swithin what must be done. "You will look like Andrew for about fifteen minutes," he whispered very fast and distinctly, "I can't hold a good illusion any longer with all these people."

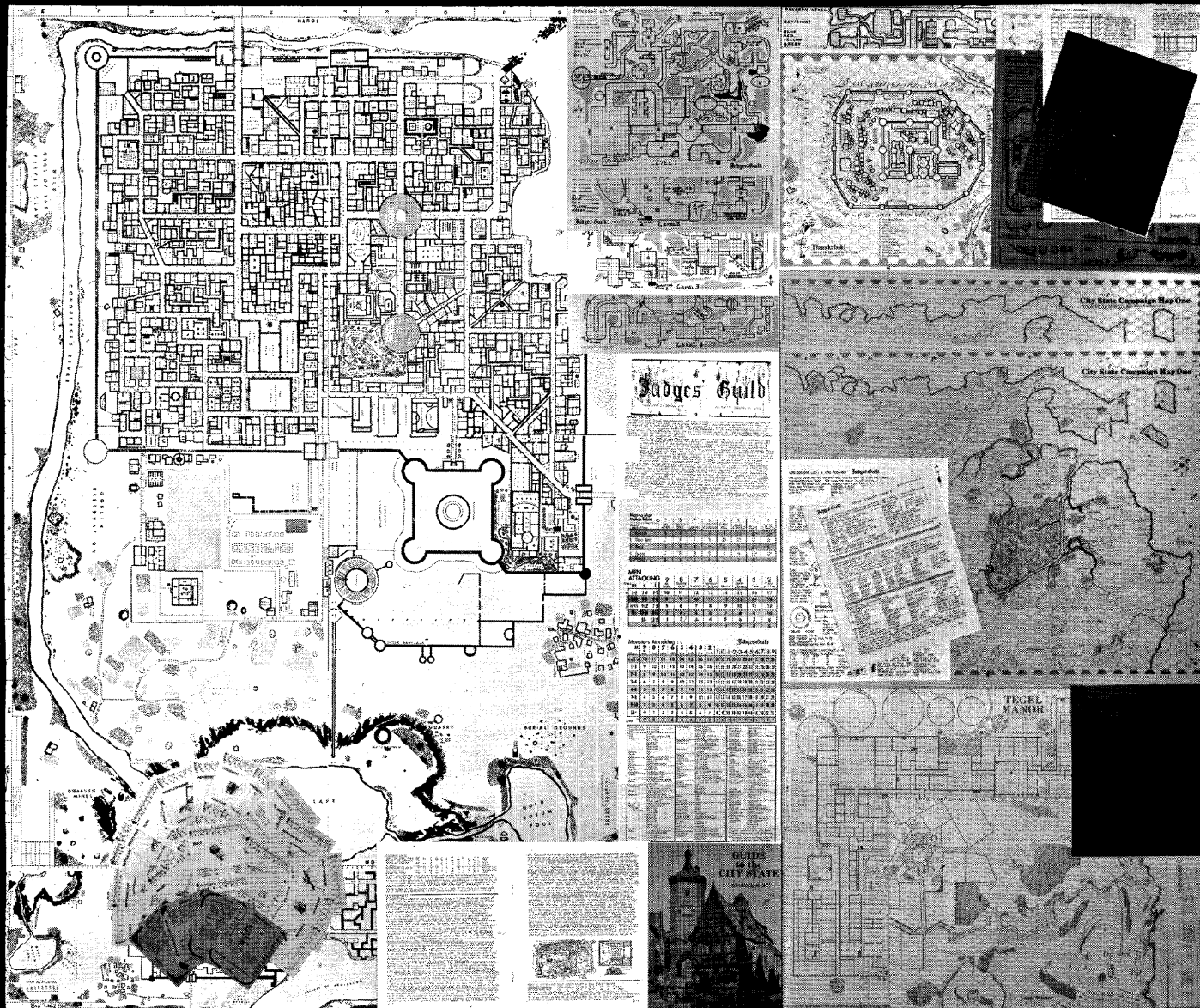
They were under the balcony, past the last row of seats, and Hal pushed Swithin into the archway against the closed lobby door and let him loose. Swithin, eyes gleaming, panting for breath, wiped his mouth on his sleeve and looked eager as Hal sketched several passes with the little Wand.

All this took place silently and very quickly; no one in the audience had noticed anything unusual, yet. Hal said, "walk fast, but don't run. Go through the orchestra directly to the stage. Take your bows. Be sure and get the black cloth. Get outside. Right away. You've got fifteen minutes, or less. Understand?"

Swithin nodded emphatically; he had no doubts. He was a born ham. The drums were rolling louder and faster as Hal stepped behind a post and shoved Swithin front and center. He conjured a small thunder-clap, a cloud of bright green smoke and a flash of golden light. The spot-light swung and picked out Swithin. Every head turned and eyes peered as he stepped from the dissolving vapor and a rising murmur of approval was heard.

Dapper in his evening clothes as he walked, just short of a run, through the audience down to the stage, followed by all eyes, Swithin calmly climbed the low rail, vaulted on top of the grand piano, and skipped over the footlights to the stage. The spotlight had followed him perfectly. He bowed in all directions to a great burst of applause. He swaggered center stage and deftly folded the black cloth, suppressing a desire to wave it like a bull-fighter's cape, and tucked it into his pocket. No one noticed the absence of the hat. The audience kept on clapping and Swithin was really enjoying himself, just as if he had earned it all himself.

Mr. VanZant gave a puzzled sigh. He felt both relieved and angry: relieved that the magic act had worked out on schedule, and angry because Andrew had changed the act without previous notice. He signalled for the show to go on and the curtain dropped as Swithin took a final deep bow and strutted off stage left.



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Hands patted him; voices congratulated him, "Say Andy, that was cool!" "How did you do it?" "We were watching all the time; how did you get to the lobby?"

Already the memory of the impossible was fading from the minds of those closest to the event. Swithin just grinned, and pushed gently past to the boys' dressing-room. The next act was going on as he rattled down the iron stairs. He slipped on Andrew's top-coat and quietly left by the stage door waving a cheery goodnight to the door-keeper. The heavy fire door clicked shut just as he changed back in size and shape to Swithin.

No one was watching as he walked as fast as he could towards home; the too large coat was flapping in the cold wind. He was still grinning when he pounded up the wooden steps and slipped in the front door.

In five minutes all the available Finzers were gathered in the book-lined front room for a conference. Margo, Gay and Swithin were perched on the edge of the sofa by the fireplace, and Hal stood, leaning an elbow on the mantel, facing them. Josephine was crouched between Gay and Margo.

Hal spoke, "I don't think there is anything to worry about. At least not yet. Sharlumanugash, or Charly, is an old Servant of the Family, A Slave of the Ring.

He is seldom called on to serve, and I, personally, am not familiar with him. Lucius is not in the Tower Room. In fact he is nowhere in the house. There is only a short note saying, 'Through the Magic Window on the track of important Magic. Back before ten o'clock tonight. Will have a surprise for all of you. Signed, Lucius.' That's all." Hal cleared his throat. "We at least know that Andrew and Charly are on their way, somewhere, to Lucius. The question is where and when is Lucius?"

\* \* \*

Lucius Finzer, Master Magician, father of Hal and grandfather of Andrew, Swithin, and Gay Finzer, grandson of Nicholas Finzer, had been admiring himself in the full-length mirror that walled one whole panel of the Tower Room. He preened and peered like a vain, courting, love-bird. Actually it was a practical and necessary inspection because he was just about to go through the Magic Window into a different space and a past time and he wanted to make sure his clothing was as near proper as could be.

He felt quite comfortable in the soft, thin-soled, half-boots of dark green leather. They were roomy and snug in just the right places in spite of the pointed and slightly turned up toes. The loose baggy pants of lighter green were belted with a black leather belt clasped shut with a dull-finished silver buckle. The dark-blue shirt, high-necked and collarless, intensified the blue of his deep eyes. Over his lean shoulders draped a white scarf, long enough to be used as a headcloth or wound into a small turban, and overall was a knee-length cape of dark-blue soft wool.

Very handsome; he complimented his good taste and decided he could do no better. There was nothing that would not fit the time he believed he was going to enter. But, there were a few more preparations to make before he started his quest.

Lucius sat at the massive table he used as his desk and looked at the objects neatly arranged on a rectangle of gray velvet: the Wand of Great Power, The Book of Spells (a thick, tin-paged, soft-covered volume), a much smaller, thinner book labeled "The Magic Window — Notes and Comments", and a heavy gold ring set with a small amber sphere.

He picked up the Wand with a deft and practiced motion and transformed the thick book into an old postage stamp. This he carefully tucked into the smaller book which he flipped open at a marked page.

He read the clear script aloud in an almost sound-

less murmur: ". . . and it is wise to instruct The Power of the Window in such a manner that there can be no possible misunderstanding of the exact meaning. The Power of the Window seems to take joy in obeying exactly — no matter how painful, ridiculous, futile or indeed fatal the consequences may be for the giver of instructions."

Lucius paused and reviewed the exact words he intended to speak to the Magic Window. They seemed to cover what he desired. He leaned back and thought about some of the events and adventures the Finzers had experienced by using the Magic Window: the time Old Nicholas had requested that it open in the palace of Minos, Overlord of Knossos, in Old Crete, in a private, quiet, and unguarded place. It did. Old Nick stepped out into the bottom of a cistern full of water. He had quite a time getting back, but that is a tale in itself.

Many things were known about the Magic Window and each generation discovered new facts; hence the book of notes and comments.

I. The Window would not open on any future time.

II. Only those beings and objects that went through the Window could ever return through it. (This was a tremendous safety factor since apparently no microbe or even molecule could come from the past into the present. The window was closed to heat, cold, moisture, light, and any other sort of life as well as more solid materials. The record showed that several Finzers had escaped mobs, wild beasts, and numerous unpleasant and dangerous things by prompt leaps back through the Magic Window.) There was a definite disadvantage in that it was impossible to tell what conditions one was stepping into, since, unless the Window was fully penetrated, no clue was given — the silver mist that was its surface blinded the adventurer until the last finger or toe was entirely through it.

III. The Window must not, under any circumstances, be moved (even slightly) from the position or place where it was entered. Two Finzers were lost in the limbo of some unknown past before this was established and only Old Nick ever returned after such a mishap, and then not by means of the Magic Window. The window was now solidly bolted to the thick steel plate, in turn bolted to beams in the floor.

IV. It was not sure that the past times explored were the same times leading to our particular present. Carlos Finzer (called the Mad) had gone back in a fit of insane curiosity and beheaded his own Grandfather when said Grandfather was a child of six. Upon his successful return to the present he discovered nothing had changed and in attempting to return to that past again he disappeared for good, to the relief of his family.

V. The Power of the Window gives the gift of understanding and of speaking the tongue of where-ever and when-ever it opens. This is true only to the extent of knowledge that is already possessed. The Window does not increase knowledge — it trades only on equal terms. The slow of speech and understanding are not improved in any way. Unhappily, no memory of this gift can be carried back to the present.

There were many other notes and minor regulations and hints and speculations, but Lucius had reviewed enough. He closed the thin book, transformed it, and tucked it away.

It was by means of the Ring that Lucius intended to return with his loot out of past time. He was planning to steal Aladdin's Lamp!

As we all know, the Lamp had been finally lost or destroyed according to all the available histories, so Lucius planned to pilfer the Lamp before Aladdin ever used it. This would not only be simpler but, so Lucius told himself, more moral, more ethical, and somehow fairer. He felt no qualms about doing this: all magic is a fair game to a magician.

He slipped the Ring on his finger, breathed on the

amber ball and rubbed it gently with the palm of his hand — three strokes to and fro. He recited the words:

"Mighty Slave of this Ring  
Obey at my command!  
Hear my call; come,  
And hear what I demand!  
Sharlumanugash appear!"

He pronounced the last words with a great roll of the R's in the proper manner. Lucius thought that this was pretty doggerel, even for poetry but, since it had been translated from some very old and forgotten language long, long ago, he dared not change a syllable. Charms were like that.

The setting of the ring lit up with soft glow, much as if a tiny bright star had flamed inside it. There was a movement. A minute speck floated into view. The speck grew and increased to the size of a tiny gnat. It gained visibility and speed as it approached the surface of the amber jewel. If a perfect fly embedded in clear golden amber should slowly beat its colored wings it might look somewhat similar, but not much since this was not a fly or any sort of insect. The creature dissolved through the amber film with a burst of speed, after one final wing beat, like a dolphin breaking from the sea, in a tremendous leap. It hovered for a second and landed, clutching to the sphere. It was twittering and piping shrilly with barely audible fife-like sounds. As Lucius watched it grew rapidly to the size of a canary. With a motion of the Wand he checked the growth.

The being, Slave of the Ring, was indeed a strange dwarfish monster. Over large yellow eyes, gave it a solemn, yet fierce look; the front legs were much like a falcon's, only heavier in proportion to size, and the very sharp red-tipped talons looked dangerous. The hind legs were golden hooved and horsy-looking and armed with needle sharp spurs. The wings were tremendous in proportion to the rest of the creature, and the colors of the sleek plumage were gorgeous, almost dazzling in their brilliance. Burnt orange and fire-engine red in the wings with lightning jagged streaks of jet black. A long neck with a snow white ruff turning to glistening green lower down. The shiny black muzzle was well fanged with sharp, incurved teeth. Up-slanting brows, over the great vertical-pupiled eyes, pure white and jagged, gave the beast a dangerous look. A crest of almost incandescent yellow flared on the top of its head. It glowed like a faceted jewel.

Lucius was fascinated when suddenly he realized that the gaudy little monster was examining him as he was it; staring just as coldly and intently.

Lucius spoke, "Hail, Slave of the Ring."

"Hail, Master," a sweet, surprisingly clear voice replied. "When to?" it asked.

"No when," said Lucius, "I was merely testing."

The little monster spat a snort of golden dust motes like a Fourth-of-July sparkler, stamped a tiny golden hoof on Lucius' knuckle, glared angrily, and said, "You called me out of time for nothing? Master, indeed! You must be Young Luke Finzer — last time I saw you, you were in knee-pants and such tricks could be forgiven — but even in a short time like sixty years people are supposed to learn something. Testing? For what?"

"Calm down, Slave of the Ring," soothed Lucius, "You should be happy for a change. Don't you get bored in there all alone?"

"Look; where I just came from there's plenty of action, I'm full battle size, my own boss, and there is lots of company. Master," it paused sarcastically, "how about calling me Charly? That 'Slave of the Ring' sounds square. If you were somebody's slave you would feel differently. How about it? How is Old Nick?"

Lucius grinned and gently lifted his fist to eye level and said, "If that's the way you want it Charly, we will discuss it later, but not now. I called you to tell you that we are going through the Magic Window —

together. Tell me, if we travel so, you in the Ring on my fist, can you come back carrying me and an object from time past, either thru the Window or otherwise? The records tell that Old Nick once travelled with you."

Charly tapped himself on the breast with a talon, "For me, that's no problem, but anything you bring back you will have to carry."

"Why?" asked Lucius.

"Beats me," said Charly. "I can take anything back but anything there I just can't bring future-wise. Won't work. Reasons? None that make sense; just a fact."

"Then, if I find an object and you carry me, we can return to the future with certainty?" questioned Lucius.

Charly shifted impatiently, "Yes, for the second time. Now, where and when do we go?"

"Later, Charly," Lucius cut him off. "Farewell until you hear my command, O Slave of the Ring. Go!"

Charly gave a little snort of sparks again, as Lucius pointed the Wand at him, and piped, "Look here . . ." then he shrugged with his wings, "To hear is to obey, O Master." He sprang into the air, flipped and dived and diminished instantly into the amber jewel, disappearing considerably faster than he had come out.

The golden star-light faded as Lucius tucked away the Wand of Power securely in his belt and slowly but decisively stood up. He was ready to try his luck at an improbable venture. He thoughtfully slipped the ring on his finger.

All his long and intensive reading and research about Aladdin and the Lamp had convinced him that there was only one ideal time to gain possession of it. This was the period just after Aladdin had returned home from the cave where his wicked uncle had entombed him when Aladdin had stubbornly refused to pass over the Lamp. All versions of tales and histories agreed that a definite period of time, from several hours to several days, had passed before Aladdin first rubbed the Lamp and so found out about the Jinni and the Magical Powers it controlled. Lucius had decided that if he went through the Magic Window at a time one half hour before the return of Aladdin from the cave he would be able to, by one means or another, buy or otherwise procure the Lamp and then, by means of the Ring and Sharlumanugash, he would be master of all its great Magic and Powers. And those Powers would be fresh, strong, and unused, not only for the sake of the convenience and luxuries the Jinni would supply, but also for the pleasures of watching a Jinni from the far past cope with the twentieth century. It should prove amusing and instructive to all concerned.

Lucius walked across the Tower Room and slid aside the crimson drape that covered the mysterious silvery-sheen of the Magic Window. The Window was massively framed in black polished wood. It was placed opposite the large conventional mirror in the eight-sided Tower Room, but it reflected nothing. The silver shimmer was exactly six feet high and three feet wide, the floor in front of it was bare and polished. It sat close to the wall, exactly six inches away, for purposes of dusting and convenience — the Finzers were ever tidy. Anyway there was nothing to see from the back side — nothing at all! One could reach around the frame and twiddle fingers through the mysterious surface and in the past various Finzers had boldly stepped from the back side through the Window; since there was no sensation and nothing whatever occurred, no one bothered any more.

However, when one went through the window under proper conditions it was as if it had never existed: invisible, untouchable, and impassable to anything that had not properly passed through it. It was always wise to carefully note and even mark the exact spot or area of passage; to lose track of it was

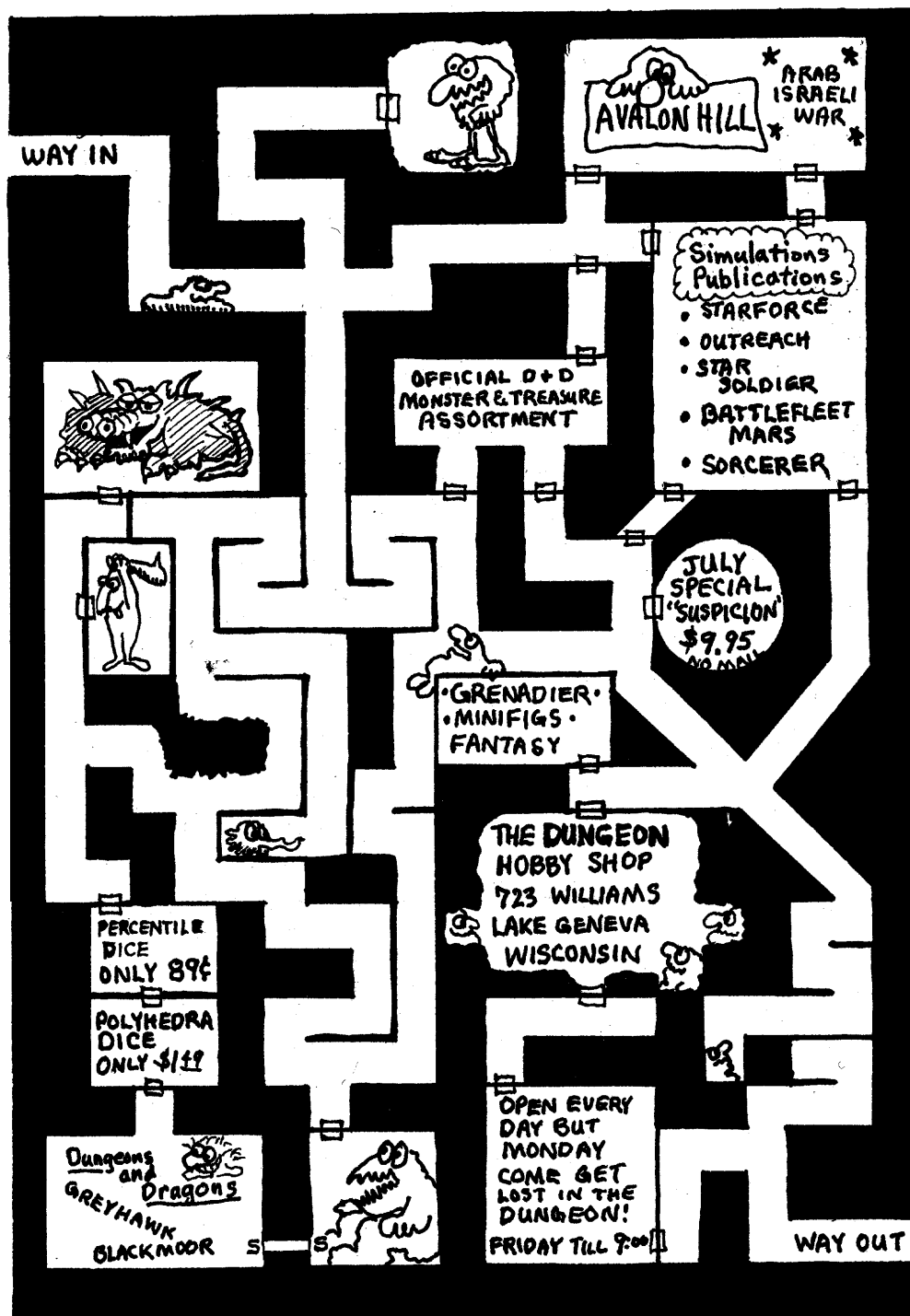
to become stranded in the past you were visiting. Whenever possible the outlines were marked with chalk — there was no harm in this and it gave a certain security.

Lucius glanced at himself for one last time. He decided he would look better with a turban; the scarf dangled and it was much easier to convert from turban to scarf than the other way around. He wound a neat twisted flat coil, tucked tightly the ends, and again turned to the Magic Window.

He inserted the bolts that held the frame of the Window immobile. Then Lucius spoke to it in a clear conversational voice, "It is my desire to enter the time of that Aladdin who became owner of the Magic Lamp. I would step into the space between his dwelling place and the next dwelling place if that space is dry, at least three feet wide and free from pitfalls and traps of all descriptions. Also there must be headroom for me to stand upright and a free pas-

sage. If the conditions are not so, try at the back of the same house. If none of these places meet the descriptions I would enter, under the same conditions, across the street. The hour of the day shall be exactly one half hour before Aladdin discovers the powers of the lamp." He paused and continued, "This must be that same Aladdin described in so many tales of the East; not some pre-historic fire-finder of ancient myth." Lucius thought this last rather clever and stepped cautiously into the silver mist. He held on to the frame with one hand for a moment, grasping the Wand of Power with the other.

To be continued in TD 9 — Available in Sept.



## Sneak Preview

## Introduction to: Gamma World<sup>©</sup>

Excerpt from "The Black Years" — Hald Servin, 2562

Man, from *Australopithecus africanus* and *homo erectus erectus* to *homo sapiens recens*, has existed on earth for hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of years. During this time, one skill, one particular talent has set him apart from every other creature — his ability to conceive and create tools. Indeed, man has been defined as "the tool-making animal."

From chipped rocks and polished bones to neutron bombs and computers, man has constantly been redesigning, improving, and refining his tools to meet his ever-changing needs. Some have been toys for children. Some have improved his life style. Others have been necessary for his survival. A few have nearly caused his extinction.

Late in the 23rd century, mankind's existence was unparalleled. The rape of the earth's beauty and resources in the late 20th and early 21st centuries had been halted and reversed, due to man's tools. Disease, poverty, hunger — all were things of the past, due to man's tools. Man had reached for the stars, and attained them, due to his tools. And yet, in spite of man's tools (or perhaps more accurately, because of them), the idyllic life of the 23rd century was marred by one fatal flaw

... With man's tools having conquered the rigors of simple survival, he was able to turn his energies to more esoteric considerations — religion, political ideology, social and cultural identification, and development of self-awareness. These pursuits were not harmful in themselves, but it soon became fashionable to identify with and support various leagues, organizations, and so-called "special interest" groups. With the passage of time nearly all the groups became polarized, each expressing its views to a degree that bordered on fanaticism. Demonstrations, protests, and debates became the order of the day. Gradually enthusiasm turned to mania, and then to hate of those who held opposing views and ideas. Outbreaks of violence became more frequent, and terrorism started to appear.

Reconstruction of the events from 2290 to 2309 has been difficult due to the lack of intact records, but historians now generally mark September 16, 2297 as the beginning of the period now popularly known as the Shadow Years. On that day, some 5000 members of the League of Free Men had staged a demonstration for the purpose of promoting their concepts of a united world government. At the height of their demonstration, a small neutron bomb was detonated in their midst, killing over 3000 of the demonstrators. Rumors held opponents of world government, a group known as the Autonomists, responsible for the terrorism, but no guilt was proved.

The League of Free Men made no public accusations, but three months later on December 23, 437 known Autonomists were assassinated in separate locations, and in addition, the three main offices of the Autonomists were the targets of the release of a newly developed nerve gas. The nerve gas was responsible for approximately 3,000 deaths, the majority of which were Autonomist office personnel, but at least 120 of those killed had no connection with the Autonomists. Blame for the killings was placed on the Free Men organization, but again no positive guilt was proved. The failure of official investigations to convict the organizers of the mass murders created a wave of vigilante action. Retaliation followed retaliation. The problem was compounded as the terrorism spread across national boundaries — retribution by one group would appear in a country half-way around the world.

As the vigilante action continued, various governments attempted to prohibit and disband suspected terrorist organizations, but the attempts only drove the groups further underground. This led many countries to declare martial law in a last desperate attempt to control their populations, but the groups had grown too powerful and had too many resources upon which to draw (both economic and political). Although there are no records to substantiate the accusations that some governments gave covert aid to certain groups in an effort to change the balance of power, certain circumstantial evidence seems to indicate that this did occur.

In the chaotic final months of the Shadow Years, in 2309, a new organization calling themselves Apocalypse announced its existence with the now famous Ultimatum:

"Peoples of the world — man appears bent upon destruction of a civilization that has taken centuries to build, and quite likely upon his own extinction as well. If that is his will, so be it! We, the Apocalypse, demand an immediate cessation of this insane violence, or we will end it ourselves — with a violence you cannot conceive.

"We have the power!"

"The choice is yours!"

The exact identity of the Apocalypse was, and still is, unknown. Some have theorized the group was composed of scientists, some believe it was a special military group. Whatever its constituency, few believed the Ultimatum when it was issued and the fighting continued — until five days later, on April 17. At exactly 1200 hours, Greenwich Mean Time, the capital cities of each of the 131 nations of the world turned into craters of radioactive slag, by means still not determined.

The Apocalypse spoke to the world for the second and last time:

"Peoples of the world — you have been warned.

"We have the power!"

"The choice is yours!"

Again, due to lack of records, it is not known how the location of the Apocalypse base was discovered, or who initiated the attack. Some evidence indicates the action was a joint effort by nearly all the surviving terrorist factions and vigilante groups — man uniting for the first time in the Shadow Years. In the end, though, on May 1 a massive attack was mounted against the Apocalypse base. In turn, the Apocalypse retaliated with a fury never before witnessed on the face of the earth. Oceans boiled, continents buckled, the skies blazed with the light of unbelievable energies.

And suddenly it was all over.

The civilization of man had been slashed, burned, crushed, and the pieces scattered to the dry winds. Whether or not the Apocalypse had intended to completely destroy all life on the planet and had been crippled in their efforts in the attack mounted against them or if they simply had not had the power is debatable. Some scholars contend that the Apocalypse voluntarily stopped their promised destruction when they witnessed the horror they had unleashed, and then destroyed themselves. At the time, and even now, the question is a moot point.

What *did* matter was that man survived. The Black Years that followed the Shadow Years were spent struggling to continue to survive in a suddenly savage and vastly changed world. The process was a painful one, filled with nearly as much terror and violence as the Shadow Years.

The devastation wrought on May 1, 2309 had changed the very fabric of life on earth. The weapons and devices of the Apocalypse had completely obliterated some forms of life, mutated others to the point where they could not be recognized as what they had once been, and had developed new abilities in others. Man was not immune to these changes.

But through it all, the death, the pain, and the horror, and facing the prospect of an unknown future, man continued to search for his lost knowledge, struggled to rebuild his self-destroyed civilization, and strove to regain his tools.

For during the Black Years, those who held the tools, held the power. . .

from "The Black Years"  
Hald Servin, 2562

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## A RE-EVALUATION OF GEMS & JEWELRY IN D&D

by Robert J. Kuntz

The following tables are meant as value determination substitutions for the D&D tables. Those of you gamemasters and players that like realism in your finds of precious gems and minutely carved and crafted jewelry will probably like these tables. They are meant for those sticklers that make D&Ding more interesting, in my mind. For those that like the fast-pace, *roll-it-up-and-get-it-over-with* type of gaming with no extra added realism to brighten up their gaming day, I suggest that these tables are not for you.

### Table A — Carat Determination:

01-30	1 carat
31-60	2 carats
61-70	3 carats
71-75	4 carats
76-80	5 carats
81-85	6-9 carats
86-90	10 carats
91-95	20-50 carats
96-98	20-70 carats*
99	30-80 carats*
00	100 carats*

\*Roll again: 86-98 = 100-300 carats  
99 = 200-500 carats  
00 = 500-1,000 carats

### Table B — Gems Basic Values:

01-10	10 G.P.
11-20	20 G.P.
21-30	25 G.P.
31-50	50 G.P.
51-60	75 G.P.
61-70	100 G.P.
71-80	125 G.P.
81-90	150 G.P.
91-95	175 G.P.
96-00	200 G.P.

### Table C — Description/Listing of Types:

#### 10 G.P. - 25 G.P. Value:

1. Amber
2. Carnelian
3. Coral Pieces
4. Jasper
5. Onyx
6. Turquoise
7. Agate
8. Chrysocolla

#### 50 G.P. - 75 G.P. Value:

1. Amazon Stones
2. Adventurines
3. Azurite
4. Bloodstone
5. Smoky Quartz
6. Chalcedony
7. Fluorite
8. Malachite
9. Rhodonite
10. Rock Crystal
11. Rose Quartz
12. Chrysoprase
13. Citrine
14. Cyanite
15. Essonite
16. Hyacinth
17. Jacinth
18. Kunzite
19. Serpentine
20. (Roll Over)

#### 100 G.P. Value:

1. Diopside
2. Lapislazuli
3. Morganite
4. Rubellite
5. Spinel
6. Zircon

#### 125 G.P. Value:

1. Idicolite
2. Nephrite
3. Peridot
4. Pyrope
5. Rhodolite
6. Spessartite
7. Alamandines
8. Tourmaline (red)
9. Demontoid
10. Aradite

#### 150 G.P. Value:

1. Pearls
2. Alexandrites
3. Amethysts
4. Aquamarines
5. Jade (Jadeite)
6. Topaz
7. Tourmaline (green)
8. Star Sapphire
9. Tanzanite
10. (Roll Over)


#### 175 G.P. Value:

1. Emerald
2. Opal
3. Sapphire
4. Blue Tanzanite

#### 200 G.P. Value:

1. Diamond
2. Cymophane
3. Ruby

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**Table D — Jewelry Composition (metal):**

01-20	Bronze (10-40 G.P. Value)
21-30	Copper (20-80 G.P. Value)
31-40	Silver (100-400 G.P. Value)
41-50	Gold (500 G.P. - 1,000 G.P. Value)
51-60	Gold + Silver Filigree (500 - 1,500 Value)
61-70	Electrum (1,000 - 2,000 Value)
71-80	Platinum (1,000 - 3,000 Value)
81-85	Platinum + Electrum Filigree (1,000 - 4,000 Value)
86-95	Mithril (1,500 - 4,500 Value)
96-00	Mithril + Platinum filigree (2,000 - 5,000 Value)

**Table E — Jewelry Composition (# of gems):**

01-25	2-12 gems (may not go over 5 carats)
26-50	3-18 gems (may not over 10 carats)
51-75	3-36 gems (may not go over 20 carats)
76-90	2-20 gems (no limitations)
91-95	3-24 gems (at least 5 carats)
96-99	3-30 gems (at least 10 carats)
00	10-40 gems (at least 20 carats)

**Table F — Jewelry Types:**

01-10	Rings
11-20	Bracers
21-25	Bracelets
26-30	Chalices
31-35	cups
36-40	Tankards
41-50	Earrings
51-60	Necklaces
61-70	Tableware
71-75	Candelabra
76-80	Anklets
81-85	Neckbands
86-90	Mirrors
91-95	Snuff Boxes
96-00	Statuettes

*Example of Determining Gems and Jewelry:*

**Gems** — 3 gems are found. The judge decides whether he will roll for them as a group or separately. He decides for rolling them as a group. He rolls the percentile dice and consults table A. A 55% was rolled indicating that the gems are of 75 gold piece value per carat. The judge rolls the dice again consulting table B. The roll is 77% indicating that each of the gems are of 5 carats each. Elementary math solves the rest for 75 G.P. x 5 (carats) x 3 (gems) = 1,125 gold piece value for all three gems. If one wishes to add extra realism he could then proceed to table C and see what type of gems he has acquired by rolling on the 50 G.P. - 75 G.P. table.

**Jewelry** — 3 pieces of jewelry are found and the judge again decides to roll them as a group. He rolls a 63% and consults table D. This indicates that he has electrum (base) jewelry. He then throws the dice again to see how many gems are set in each piece of jewelry. Rolling for them as a group he throws a 20% on table E indicating each piece of jewelry has 2-12 gems each of no more than 5 carats per gem (though this number could be less it cannot go over five carats.) The judge then refers back to tables A & B for basic values and carat determination of the gems on each piece of jewelry. One might then go to table F for determining the type of jewelry found.

One might say that this could get a bit involved if one ran into a horde of dragon treasure containing 42 gems and 34 jewelry. This contention I agree with and these tables are primarily aimed at the smaller finds of gems and jewelry, not at those that would have you rolling all day. As for myself, just to roll up special jewelry or gems once in awhile is a treat!

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## So, You Want Realism in D&D?

by Brian Blume

We at TSR have heard several people express a desire for a system which gives more realism and variety to the method for determining the natural abilities of player characters in D&D. After minutes of exhaustive research, we have come up with an optional system which is designed to replace the old method of rolling three dice for each of a player's abilities. This system is guaranteed to make a player character conform more to the abilities of the actual person owning them and will provide a great variety in these abilities from person to person.

**STRENGTH** — To determine strength, go to a gym and military press as much weight as you possibly can. Divide the number of pounds you lifted by ten; the result is your strength rating.

**INTELLIGENCE** — To determine your intelligence, look up the results of the most recent IQ test you have taken and divide the result by ten. This number is your intelligence rating.

**WISDOM** — To determine your wisdom, calculate the average number of hours you spend playing D&D or working on your D&D Campaign in an average week. Subtract the resulting number from twenty and this is your wisdom.

**DEXTERITY** — To determine your dexterity, go down to the track at the local High School and run 440 yards. Subtract your time in seconds from eighty, and the result is your dexterity rating.

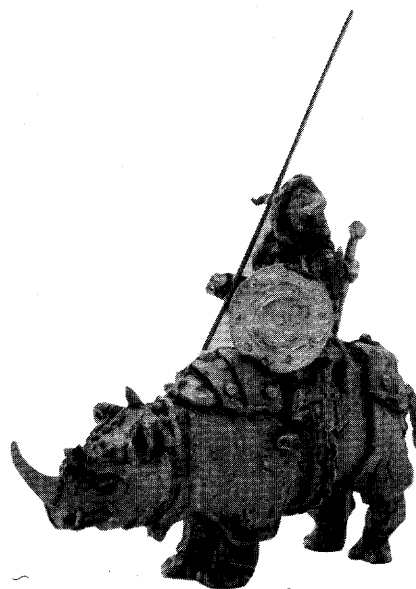
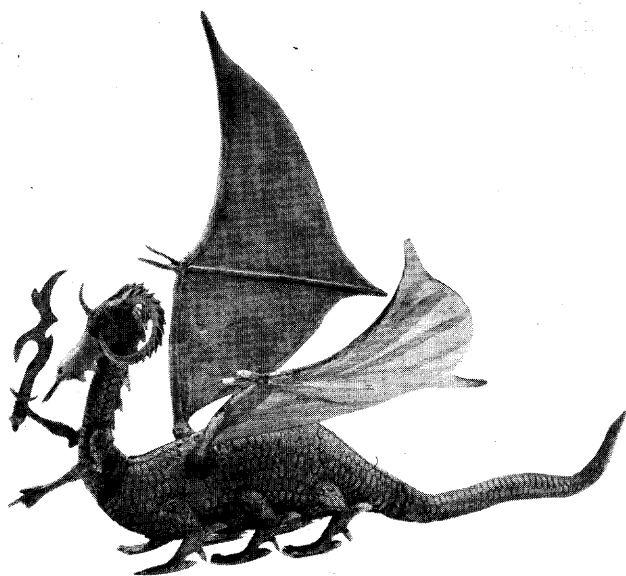
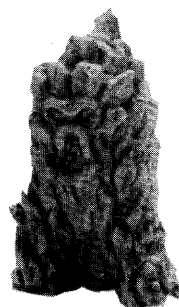
**CONSTITUTION** — To determine your constitution, figure out the number of consecutive number of months you have gone without missing a day of school or work due to illness. The number of months is equal to your constitution rating.

**CHARISMA** — To determine charisma, count up the number of times you have appeared on TV or have had your picture printed in the newspaper. Multiply this number by two, and the result is your charisma rating.

In order to try out this system, I tested it by figuring my own ratings. The results are interesting (I think?).

- STRENGTH - 8**
- INTELLIGENCE - 12**
- WISDOM - 19**
- DEXTERITY - 4**
- CONSTITUTION - 9**
- CHARISMA - 14**

# FROM THE FANTASY FORGE



top — The five beauties in the top group shot are by Garrison of England. The Hawkman on the left is reminiscent of Poul Anderson's Ythri, while the two women figures are apparently inspired by Frazetta, without being steals. All five are worthy additions to the most exclusive of armies. *Supplied by THE DUNGEON Hobby Shop, Lake Geneva*

middle left — Meet the elementals from Grenadier: l to r Earth, Water, Wind and Fire. This is an area that most manufacturers have steered clear of, but Grenadier has done an admirable job on a different subject.

middle right — This wicked-looking miss is the female adventuress from Ral Partha. This figure was the first female/player figure, and has since spawned a host of imitators. Congratulations are in order for

Ral Partha for having been the ones to first recognize the large number of lady *D&Ders*.

bottom left — this is the monstrous Sro', the EPT equivalent to a dragon. This monstrosity is over 100mm tall at the horns, and around 135 mm long from nose to tail! (Remember, the *Legions of the Petal Throne* line is 25mm) His massive sword hilt is over 50 mm off of the ground/table. Made by The Old Guard, this sextipedal horror is awesome even as a lead figure.

bottom right — this is one of the *DRAGONTOOTH MINIATURES* Rhino Riders, of which there are three or four. The line is billed as 25 mm, but must qualify as the biggest claiming that distinction. The dwarves of this line stand nearly 25mm tall, which makes them perfect for use with 40 mm figures.



## Featured Creature

### Name that Monster!

(in two notes or less . . .)

On the right is a nasty specimen of monsterhood drawn by Erol Otus, Esteemed Monster Drawer. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to name and identify the monster, give specifications (hit points, attacks, etc.) and no more than 350 words of history, characteristics, habits, special abilities or whatever.

The winner will receive at least \$25, in the form of cash and various certificates from TSR and Ral Partha, and there will be at least five additional prizes. All entries become the property of TSR Periodicals, and will not be returned. Any entry deemed usable by TSR Periodicals will be paid usual rates, in addition to any prizes. All runners-up and the winner will be printed in a future issue.


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*Next month we will announce FEATURED CREATURE CONTEST #2, for artists or those thinking that they are.*



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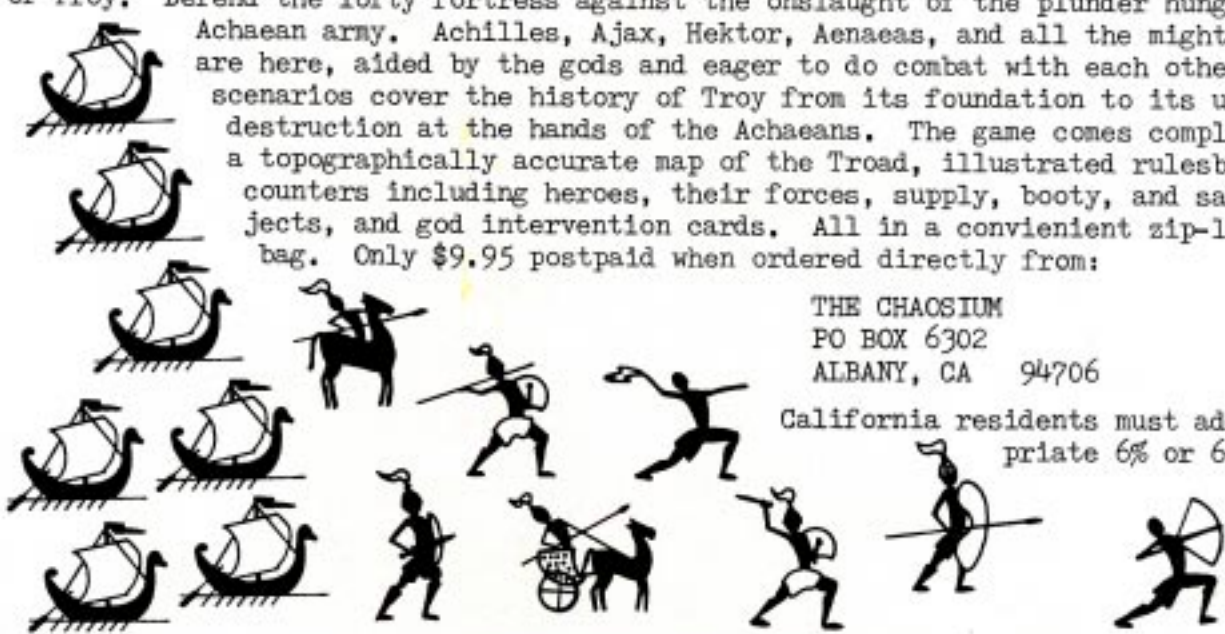
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Designers Forum

# Still More Additions to MA

by James Ward

## MUTANTS-PLANTS & ANIMAL

Type	#	Armor	Class	Movement	Hit Dice
JAWED LILLY PAD	1	4		0	10
FUNGUS DOME		5		3	15
RED PUFF BALL	1-10	8		0	1
STALKERS	1	3		9	9
RADIATION VINE	1	6		0	
ISLAND PLANT	1	2		0	20
JAWED CREEPING VINE	1-2	3		8	10
REFLECTOR BRAMBLES	1	2		0	8
SPEAR TREE	1-6	8		0	9
POISON THORN GRASS	9,000	7		0	4 collectively
TIGEROID	1-6	2		24	12
GORILLAOID	1-10	6			16
BULLEROID	1-4	2		18	12
RABNER	1	8		4	5
BLUMER	1	2		12	19
CARRIN	1	7		9/12	15
KERASK	1	4		7	7
GYGARANT	1	1		10	10
SOTHERLAN	1-4	4		12	5
WARDENT	1	6		8	13

## Mutated Plants

1. **JAWED LILY PAD:** This mutated plant stands nine feet out of the water, with a jawed flower cup at the top able to swallow a human whole, crushing the life out of them. Hidden under the water, the plant has 5-50 grabber vines with a reach of fifty feet. The plant is fully intelligent, is telepathic, and has the De-evolution mutation. The plant has 1-12 special throwable spear tendrils, also under the water. They have the power to symbiotically attach themselves to beings and the plant can then make a mental attack on the stricken creature. The controlled beings will then drown themselves in the water. When the spear casts miss, they snake their way back to the water and the lily.

2. **FUNGUS DOME:** This mass of fungus material forms a dome, usually about ten feet tall, with a radius of seven feet. Brown in color, the dome has six 20 feet tall columns of what appear to be sand. These columns are controlled by the dome and will strike, with crushing force, those that approach the dome. A 200 yard radius of sterile earth surrounds the dome and under this earth are 50-1,000 sacs of water, used to fight fires. The dome has the following mental mutations: Mental Paralysis of all within a 200 yard radius, Force Field Generation, Absorption of radiation, and Telekenesis of weights up to 750 pounds. The mutation feeds on all types of protein and enjoys destroying any type of plant life.

3. **RED PUFFBALL FUNGUS:** These one foot wide balls of fungus release all their spores at a touch when fully adult. The spores react on any iron based substance where they completely rust the metal in seconds. If picked just before the adult stage, they will only break open when struck sharply.

4. **STALKERS:** Nine feet tall, these mobile plants think of nothing but food. They have one large central maw that emits a constant acid that easily breaks down all protein matter. The mutation has three tendrils stingers that have an effective range of six feet from the plant with an intensity 12 poison. Two other powerful tendrils can grasp & hold the beings that the plant stings.

5. **RADIATION VINE:** This plant is able to imitate exactly any radiation near it and thus be unaffected by radiation damage. Shamans have sometimes used this plant in place of color bands, as the leaves will activate as the band. This mutation is only found within radiation areas and is usually orange in color.

6. **ISLAND PLANT:** This single creature (plant) covers a 300 yard area having the appearance of a jungle. The outer parts of the creature are tangle vines and poison berries (intensity 8). Within 150 yards of the

center are 1-20 squeeze vines every 30 yards, with contact poison sap on them, (intensity 12). Poison throwing thorns and sword bushes guard the last 50 yards to the center of the island, the sword bushes all being stationary. At the center of the plant sits a huge beak that eats all the meat the rest of the plant kills. This is the main mental control area with the following powers: Force Field Generation, Cryogenics, and Telekenesis of weights up to 1,000 pounds.

7. **MANY JAWED CREEPING VINE:** This mutation has hundreds of thorned jaws along its surface. The adult creeper has a circumference of ten feet and a length of up to ninety yards. The plant is usually found in heavy tropical regions and often burrows into the ground. It will then completely uncoil itself (in a spring action) from the ground to attack its prey. The mutation has eye stalks in the shape of flowers that perceive up to 50 yards away. In judging this creature, treat the coils as ten weapon class three strikes. Each strike does two dice of damage. The creature can be found in several stages of development with the smaller creature having the smaller the number of strikes.


8. **REFLECTOR BRAMBLES:** This mutated plant has 1-10 squeeze vines, stands 20 feet tall, is 40 feet long when adult, has flowered sensors all through the bush, with a range of 50 yards, and an attraction odor. It has only one mental power magnified many times, the ability to reflect almost anything. It can negate the following energy states: heat, cold, radiation, electricity, protein disruptor blasts, paralysis charges, laser blasts, mental blasts & sonic blasts. Mental attacks have no effect on the thing. When attacking on its own treat the vines as clubs for hitting. When any single vine hits, the being is pinned and other vines will begin crushing the trapped creature.

9. **SPEAR TREE:** This mutated plant has 2-20 limbs that can shoot from its trunk like spears for distances of up to 60 yards. At the tip of each spear limb is a needle sharp seed pod that always breaks off when the limb penetrates protein material, (treat each hit as doing 3 dice of damage). The plant's sensing organs are found at the top of the tree. The seeds will sprout in 1-4 days if the body remains undisturbed. The tree seems to be a large pine with no needles on the missile limbs.

10. **POISON THORN GRASS:** Bright blue grass with barbed tips, these barbs are all poisoned (intensity 9). The grass grows in large ten feet by ten feet patches among normal grass areas.

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**Mutated Animals**

1. **TIGEROID:** This cat has a unique muscle system that allows it to strike for 8 dice of damage with either paw, run for hours at speeds of up to 100 miles an hour, and leap hundreds of yards in the air. Its fur is resistant to sonics, lasers, protein disruptors and radiation. The tigeroid can also use the sonic mutation. The beast has Heightened Intelligence, the Life Leech mutation and a Telekenetic Arm with the tigeroid's strength mutation.

1. **MOUNTAIN GORILLOID:** This beast already has heightened strength, it has a poison resistance gland that gives it a 18 for chart use, and its skin reflects radiation. The mutant can Life Leech, has Heightened Intelligence, has the De-evolution power, and the Repulsion Field. Unfortunately for it, the creature's metabolism has been speeded up forcing it to eat constantly, and it is mentally defenseless.

3. **BULLEROID:** This mutation already has the partial carapace and it also has huge outsized legs allowing it to run 150 miles an hour for hours at a time. It has 8 huge horns, forming a crown on its head, and its fur is resistant to poisons and acids. Illusions of any type have no effect on the animal, its first attack is always a Death Field, and it has a Dual Brain.

4. **RABNER:** This mutation was a rabbit, until it lost its legs and head to mutational change. It now appears as a ball of fur from which three tentacles appear when it attacks. The creature has the following other mutations: double Heightened Strength (so that now it hits with this mutation for 4 dice of damage), Heightened Dexterity, and Heightened Precision. The Rabner, while not intelligent, has the following very effective mental abilities: Mental Defense Shield, Will Force, and a Military Genius mutation. The mutation is omniverous now, moves along the ground with a rolling motion, and will fight any size creature for food.

5. **BLUMER:** This mutated animal appears to be a plot of tulips in thick grass. When beings come within 30 yards of it, the fake tulips cast themselves at the victim at the rate of 1-6 cups per melee round. These cups are razor sharp shells of bone, (treat as swords for damage). The creature levitates (modified into flying) towards any fleeing prey shooting its cups all the while. When the prey is dead the Blumer lands over it and many jaws devour the dead victim, in seconds. The grass is extremely hard, making excellent armor for the mutation. It is not intelligent, but has the flying Levitation mutation.

6. **CARRIN:** This animal stands erect and is about eight feet tall. The mutation is fully intelligent and has the following mental powers: Heightened Intelligence, Telepathy, a Mental Defense Shield, and it is an Economic Genius. It has effective wings and usually weighs about 100 pounds. It can Regenerate itself, and has quills (poison intensity 12) that it casts from its body (at a range of 30 yards while the creature is on the ground). The creature is usually found with a large number of mutated flying followers helping it.

7. **KERASK (WOLVERINE):** The mutation looks like its non-mutated cousin, but is greatly changed. Its claws are poisoned from a gland in the paws (intensity 9) and it has fangs that are also poisoned (intensity 11). The creature is fully intelligent, and is able to fight with the Mental Blast and the Life Leech mutation at the same time. It always fights to the death in any given battle and likes eating things much larger than itself.


8. **GYGARANT:** This huge (40 feet tall) reptile is known on all levels for its triple strength Sonic Yell. Its jaws can completely engulf any six feet tall or less creature. Its bite does six dice of damage. The beast also has the following mental powers: Intuition, Will Force, Molecular Disruption (it uses only when near death), Absorption of all heat forms, Reflection of all energy blasts, a Mental Defense Shield, and it can Teleport. Any illusion of any type always works on it.

9. **SOTHERLAN:** This creature is four feet tall and builds elaborate nests in very small trees. It attacks only beings with colorful fur pelts or plumage, with devastating success. Its beaked mouth does five dice of damage and its taloned arms rip for one die each. The creature Regenerates and uses Precognition before eating anything.


10. **WARDENT:** This former human has regressed to a small (3 feet tall) furry bear-like creature with the following mental powers: Heightened Intelligence, Telepathy, Telekinesis, Mental Defense Shield, Will Force, Mental Control over Physical States, Heightened Brain Talent, and it is a Scientific Genius. The creature has no special physical abilities except constant hunger, not only for food but valuable objects others may have.

**Planes (cont. from Page 4)**

As of this writing I foresee a number of important things arising from the adoption of this system. First, it will cause a careful rethinking of much of the justification for the happenings in the majority of D&D campaigns. Second, it will vastly expand the potential of all campaigns which adopt the system — although it will mean tremendous additional work for these DMs. Different planes will certainly have different laws and different inhabitants (although some of these beings will be familiar). Whole worlds are awaiting creation, *complete* invention, that is. Magical/technological/whatever items need be devised. And ways to move to these planes must be provided for discovery by players. Third, and worst from this writer's point of view, it will mean that I must revise the whole of D&D to conform to this new notion. Under the circumstances, I think it best to do nothing more than offer the idea for your careful consideration and thorough experimentation. This writer has used only parts of the system in a limited fashion. It should be tried and tested before adoption.



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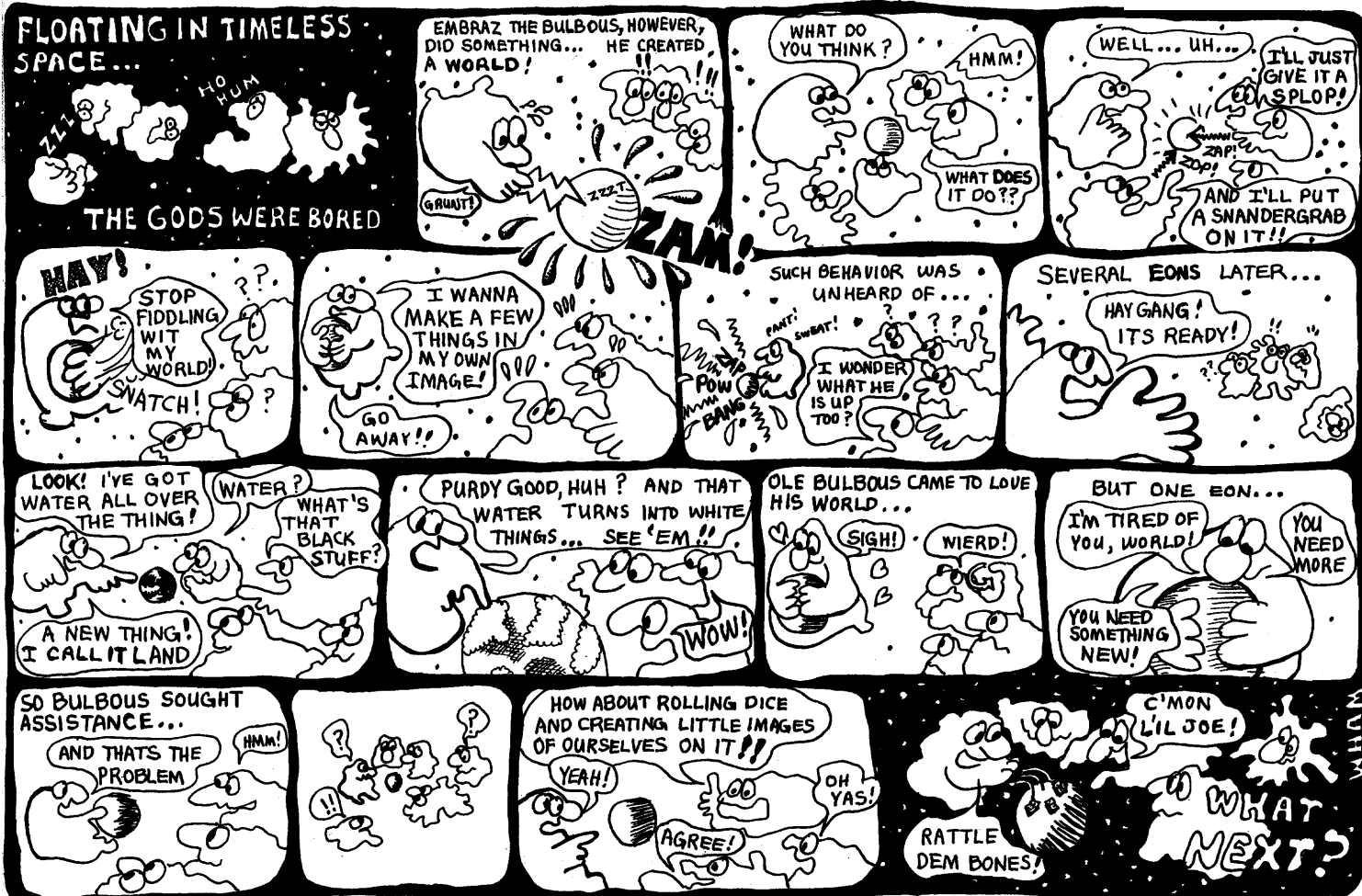
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**WarCon VIII** — July 1-3, Oklahoma City Univ, Smith Chapel (lower level), Okla. City, OK. Many tourneys — Star Guard, D&D, Star Trek, WRG Ancients, Medieval, Western Gunfight, Colonial Skirmish, Gladiators, Video Game competition on Advent Video Beam, more. \$7 for weekend, \$1 discount for pre-registration. Contact A.H. Albert, 3230-NW 50th St, Okla City, OK 73112

**CinciCon VII** — July 15-17, 1977. Junior Achievement Hall of Free Enterprise. reservations to motels should be made early. CinciCon VII will have movies and computerized games, besides the not-so-normal spectrum of games, auctions and exhibitors. For info, write: CinciCon VII, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

**Tacticon II** — July 16th & 17th, 1977, Dunfeys Royal Coach Inn, 7000 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas. Events are Panzerleader, Diplomacy, EPT, D&D, Movies Auction, Seminars, Miniatures, Door Prizes. Contact Dennis Wolff, 915 Silber Rd. #329, Houston, Texas, 77024, 1-713-688-0531

**Midwest Military Historical Society** — July 16&17, Commons Hall, Park Ridge Inn, Park Ridge, Ill. Sat. 9:00-8:00, Sun. 10:00-6:00. Ancient, Medieval, ACW, Napoleonic, WWII — Armor, Naval & Air — Fantasy & SF. Contact Tony Adams, 301-N. Wille St., Mount Prospect, IL 60056.

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Suddenly another guest rushes into the room and grabs your arm with a sense of urgency. "Come quickly! Doctor Fenn is dead!!" Puzzled and suddenly filled with fear, you rush into the parlor. There are all the other guests - - and on the floor, Doctor Fenn's lifeless body. The other guests eye you suspiciously . . .



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