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JULY 1981

ISSUE 12

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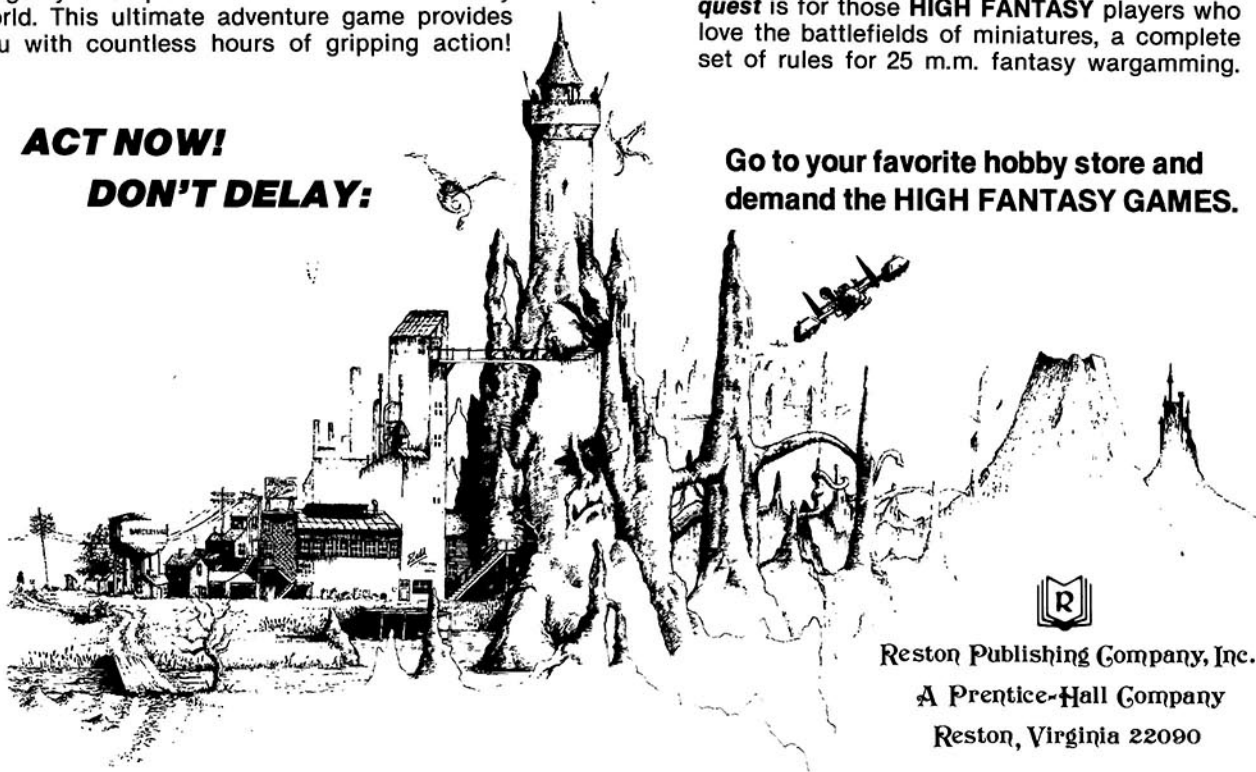


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DIFFERENT WORLDS



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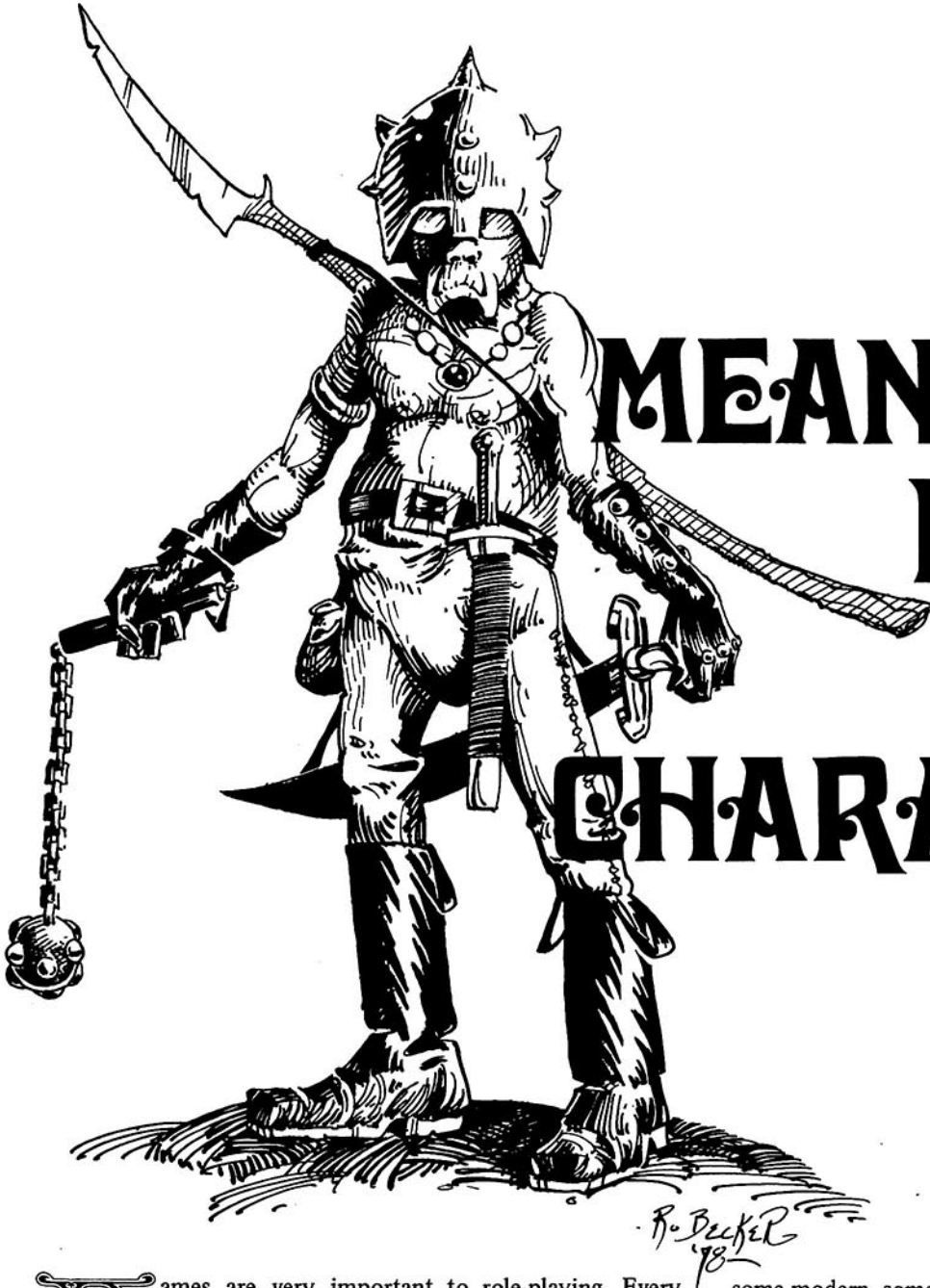
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What's in a name?



MEANINGFUL NAMES FOR CHARACTERS

By Jane Woodward

Names are very important to role-playing. Every character has at least one. And yet these names are often either common to our own day, bad puns, or meaningless constructs from some random table. Historically, names had meanings, carefully chosen to reflect some trait, either real or imagined, in the person. So why not have meaningful names for role-playing characters?

Here is a list, then, of names in various languages for various races of players. The names for elves, hobbits, and some orcs are taken from Tolkien. The rest is a mixture of languages,

some modern, some archaic, including Gaelic, Welsh, Icelandic, and old Norse, among others.

To use these tables, turn to the race you are interested in, and follow the instructions at the top of that section. The elements for male and female names are interchangeable. I have simply grouped them in terms of common usage. Whenever you are fitting two words together, as in the Elvish *Las* (leaf) and *mír* (jewel) feel free to insert a vowel to make the whole pronounceable (i.e., *Lasamír* instead of *Lasmír*). Also, if a prefix and suffix share several of the same letters, it seems to be common usage to drop the letters from the suffix (i.e., *Calad* (bright) and *adan* (man) become *Caladan* instead of *Caladadan*).

Just remember to use good sense, and have fun.

This article is copyright © 1980 by Jane Woodward, who is better known as "Robin Wood," a talented artist whose artwork Different Worlds hopes to have in future issues.

Humans

There are several varieties of human names, and they are also wont to use the names of other races. The first table is a listing of Old English sounding names. Use as many as necessary from Tables A and B to build a name that re-

flects your character. The words in A were generally in front and B in back, but this is by no means a law (i.e., Dern (hidden) + ulf (wolf) = Durnulf for a werewolf).

OLD ENGLISH MASCULINE A

Ald – old
Bald – bold
Baro – warrior
Bera – bear
Brego – ruler
Bryt – bestower
Carl – servant
Déor – fierce, brave
Dern – hidden
Dún – hill
Elf – elf
Eó(h) – horse

Eorl – warrior
Erken – noble
Ever – boar
Fast – firm
Fengel – grasper
Folc – people
Fram – bold
Frea – lord
Frek – greedy
Frum – first
Gar – spear
Gléo – music

Gold – gold
Gram – fierce
Grim – severe
Grima – mask
Guth – war
Hal – healthy
Haleth – hero
Hám – home
Hard – strong
Helm – protection
Here – host
Hild – battle

Hold – gracious
Horn – horn
Isen (Iren) – iron
Leod – nation
Leof – beloved
Mat – gift
Rod (Row) – fame
Saru – skillful
Stark – stiff, strong
Tol – tool
Walda – ruler
Wid – wide, far

OLD ENGLISH MASCULINE B

-a – masculine ending
-bert – bright
-brand – sword
-burg – fort
-fara – wanderer
-fast – firm
-gar – spear
-gard – enclosure
-hame – coat
-helm – protection

-here – warrior
-holt – wood
-horn – peak
-ing – son of
-laf – remnant
-(o)las – people
-man – person
-mark – border(land)
-mer – famous

-mund – hand, protection
-or – one (person)
-red – counsel
-ric – rule
-stan – stone
-thain – servant
-walda – master
-wine – friend
-wulf (ulf) – wolf

OLD ENGLISH FEMININE

Feminine names were the same, but use endings below to differentiate where desired.

-i – feminine ending
-wyn – joy
-mavi – maiden

TEUTONIC MASCULINE A

Abel (Adol) (Ala) – noble
Bevis – bow
Born – bear
Bruna – brown
Con – able
Dago – day
Ever – boar
Fara – traveled
Ful – resolution
Fulk – people
Ger – spear
Gil – pledge

Hal – stone
Hen – home
Her(e) – warrior
Hild – battle
Hu – mind
Ivo (Yivo) – archer
Kay – rejoicing
Lam – country
Le – famous
Leof – beloved
Leon – lion

Man – mighty
Odo – rich
Os – divine
Ram – raven
Ray – wise
Red – counsel
Sig (Sib) – conquering
Tanc – grateful
Vil – will
Vis – war
Wase – servant

TEUTONIC MASCULINE B

-ald (-ard) – strong
-bald – prince
-bert – bright
-brand (-rand) – sword
-frey(d) – peace
-mond (-mund) – protector
-mot – mind
-ric – king
-vase – servant
-ward – guardian
-win – friend

TEUTONIC FEMININE A

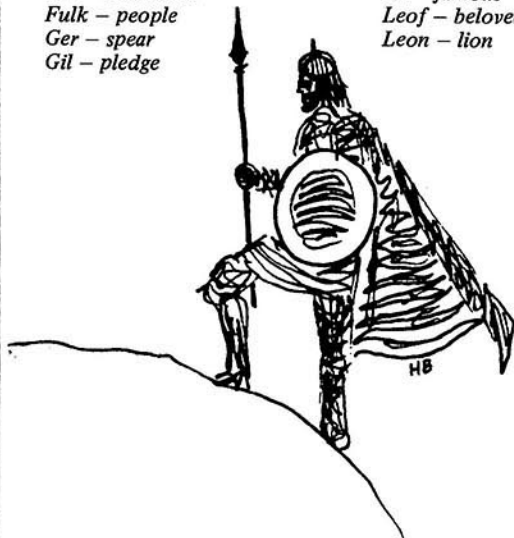
Also use any from above.

Adel (Aline) – noble
Alys – princess
Auda – rich
Brun – breastplate
Clo(t) – famous
Ever – boar
Ern(e) – eagle
Hild – battle
Mil(d) – gentle
Wal – powerful

TEUTONIC FEMININE B

Add to anything above.

-a; -e; -ia; -ine – feminine endings
-sa; -trude – maiden
-yne – queen



GAELIC MASCULINE A

Adharc -- horn
 Aidan -- fire
 Aithne -- knowledge
 Al(d) -- stranger
 Allt (Uillt) -- a brook
 Ard -- high
 As -- out of
 Ban -- fair
 Bàs -- death
 Beag(an) -- little
 Beir -- catch
 Bho -- from
 Bochd -- poor
 Borb -- fierce

Bran -- raven
 Breab -- kick
 Breac (Brice) -- spotted
 Bronach -- sad
 Ceann -- head
 Cearc -- chicken
 Ced -- battle
 Ceud -- the first
 Crùbach -- lame
 Dall -- blind
 Dun -- brown
 Eagal -- fear
 Feaird -- best
 Fion -- wine

Glas -- grey
 Grian -- sun
 Guy -- sense
 Gwyn -- white
 Hugh -- light
 Laidir -- strong
 Leisg -- lazy
 Luath -- swift
 Mar -- like (as)
 Mor -- large, sea
 Ric -- chief
 Rory -- red
 Seas -- stand
 Treun -- brave

GAELIC MASCULINE B

-bard -- poet
 -breab -- kick
 -caraid -- friend
 -ceol -- music
 -cnoc -- hill
 -creag -- rock
 -duine -- man
 -eagle -- fear
 -gille -- a lad
 -lamh -- hand
 -mac -- son
 -maide -- stick
 -sgian -- knife
 -taugh -- axe

GAELIC FEMININE A

Also use any of the above.

Binn -- sweet, melodious
 Boldheach -- beautiful
 Buidhe -- yellow
 Brid -- strength

Bron -- skirt
 Eilid -- deer
 Fraoch -- heather
 Frid -- threaten

Gaol -- love
 (G)wyn -- white
 Maith -- good
 Mìlis -- sweet

GAELIC FEMININE B

-ciuil -- music
 -e -- feminine ending
 -eilde -- deer
 -eun -- bird
 -giva -- gift
 -la -- friend

WELSH

These are from modern Welsh. The pronunciation is a bit different. 'c' is always hard. 'dd' is 'th' like 'this,' 'ff' is like 'ph' in 'phone,' 'r' is trilled. 'th' is like 'think,' 'u' is 'ee' or the 'i' in 'imp,' 'w' is 'oo' (long or short), 'y' is also

'ee' or 'i' (dyn = dean), and, of course, 'll' is pronounced by putting the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth and hissing. The rest is like English. Use this table like all the other human tables.

WELSH MASCULINE A

Araf -- slow
 Arain -- money
 Arwain -- to lead
 Aur -- gold
 Bach -- little
 Balch -- proud
 Brwnt -- dirty
 Buan -- swift
 Byr -- short
 Caled -- hard
 Canu -- to sing
 Carreg -- stone
 Chwant -- desire
 Coch -- red
 Creulon -- cruel
 Crwn -- round
 Cryf -- strong

Draig -- dragon
 Drwg -- bad
 Du -- black
 Gofalus -- careful
 Gorwedd -- to lie
 Gwell -- better
 Gwir -- true
 Gwyn -- white
 Gwynt -- wind
 Gwyrdd -- green
 Hanner -- half
 Hen -- old
 Hoff -- fond
 Iawn -- very
 Lladd -- to kill
 Llawn -- merry

Llosgi -- to burn
 Llwyn -- grey
 Marw -- dead
 Milwr -- soldier
 Mor -- sea
 Nos -- night
 Oer -- cold
 Ogor -- cave
 Poeth -- hot
 Rhad -- cheap
 Rhyfel -- war
 Taith -- journey
 Tal -- tail
 Taro -- to strike
 Tost -- ill
 Unig -- lonely

WELSH MASCULINE B

-brawd -- brother
 -buwch -- cow
 -calon -- heart
 -ci -- dog
 -cyfaill -- friend
 -cyllell -- knife
 -dyn -- man
 -gaft -- goat
 -gwallt -- hair
 -llaw -- hand
 -mab -- son
 -pen -- head
 -plentyn -- child
 -tafod -- tongue
 -tan -- fire
 -telyn -- harp
 -troed -- foot

WELSH FEMININE A

Also use any below

Aderyn -- bird
 Blodewyn -- flower
 Caredig -- kind
 Dydd -- day
 Ffair -- fair
 Hardd -- beautiful
 Noson -- evening
 Twls -- pretty

WELSH FEMININE B

-brenhines -- queen
 -chwaer -- sister
 -dynes -- woman
 -geneth -- girl
 -merch -- daughter



B. HALCROFT © '60

Elves

Elvish names are given in two languages; Quenya, used by the High Elves, and Sindarin, used by Sylvian Elves. All

'c's are hard, 'r's tend to be slightly trilled, and vowels are usually short.

QUENYA

Choose one or more from A, and add at least one from B to make a name you like. Add vowels if necessary to aid

pronunciation (i.e., Linta + lúva + tar = Lintalúvatar, one who has a swift bow).

QUENYA MASCULINE A

Alcar – glory
Alda – tree
Anár – sun
Andavé – greatly
Andú – western
Anga – iron
Atana – of men
Cal(a) – light
Carni – red
Ciryá – ship
Cor – round
Eären – ocean

El – star
Elda (Eles) – elf
Falas – coast
For – right hand
Halla – tall
Harma – treasure
Hilde – heir
Hyar – left hand
Isil – moon
Istar – wizard
Lasse (Lassi) – leaf
Linta – swift

Lúva – bow
Macar – swordsman
Malin – golden
Menel – sky
Mista – grey
Morna – black
Nár – red flame
Nen – water
Ondo – store
Or – high
Orne – tree
Palan – afar

Ráma – wing
Ringa – cold
Romen – east
Sil – white flame
Tar – royal
Taure – forest
Telpe – silver
Tin – shining
Vani – departed
Varda – exalted
Vilya – sky
Voron – steadfast

QUENYA MASCULINE B

-dakil – victor
-(n)dil, -nil – friend
-her – lord
-le – great
-ilo – from, of
-lómē – shadow

-macar – swordsman
-maitë – hand
-mar – home
-mista – grey
-o – from, of
-omaryo – voice

-on – masculine ending
-or – heart, spirit
-ril – flame
-rion – masculine ending
-sar – stone

-tan – man
-tar – one who “ ”
-telcontar – strider
-tur (dur) – lord
-ya – “ ” one

QUENYA FEMININE A

Alcar – glory
Altá – tree
Andavé – greatly
Anna – gift
Anór – sun
Cal(a) – light
Carni – red
Eär – sea
Elen – star
Fal – foam
Fëa – spirit
Fír – mortal
Harma – treasure

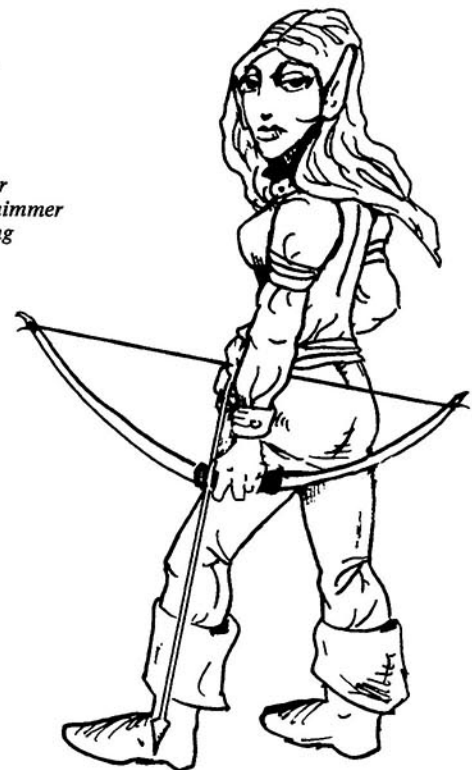
Hfsië – mist
Hwesta – breeze
Isil – moon
Lass(ë)(i) – leaf
Liri – song
Lisse – sweet
Lore – golden
Losse – snow
Nen – water
Oialë (Oiol) – forever
Qesse – feather
Ráma – wing
Sil – white flame

Síl – shine
Silme – starlight
Sinda – grey
Súri – wind
Taure – forest
Telpe – silver
Tin – sparkle, star
Tintil – glitter, shimmer
Undómë – evening
Vani – departed
Varda – exalted
Vilya – sky
Yavie – autumn

QUENYA FEMININE B

-äre – sunlight
-i – feminine ending
-ië – belonging to
-lambe – tongue
-lin (-linde) – song
-lote – flower
-mír – jewel
-ndil (-nil) – friend

-öma – voice
-or – spirit
-riel – woman
-rien – feminine ending
-tári – queen
-tari – “ ”er
-ya – “ ” one



SINDARIN

Use as many as you like from A and B. Usually those in A begin a name and those in B end it, but not always.

SINDARIN MASCULINE A

Aear – sea
Aglar – glory
Amrûn – east
An(d) – long
Ang(ren) – iron
Annu – western
Anor – sun
At (Tar) – king
Bara – home
Beleg – mighty
Bor(u) – steadfast
Bre – quick
Brui(n) – loud
Cal(a) – light

Calad – bright
Car(an) – red
Celeb – silver
Con – hero
Cú – bow
Curunír – wizard
Dagor – battle
Draug – wolf
Drú – wild
Dún – west
Edhel – elf
Eithel – source
Él – star
Er(e) – lonely

Eryn – forest
Falas – coast
For(o) – north
Galad – tree
Gil – spark, star
Glam – foe
Glor – golden
Gul – sorcery
Gwae (Gwai) – wind
Gwath – grey
Hal – tall
Hir – lord
Lar (Lor) – old
Ithil – moon

Las – leaf
Mal – golden
Menel – sky
Min – first
Mith – pale grey
Mor – black
Naur (Nar) – fire
Nen – water
Nim – white
Palan – afar
Ro – high
Thoron – eagle
Waith – grey

SINDARIN MASCULINE B

-adan – man
-aiglin – peaks
-amon – hill
-atar – father
-bar – home
-barad – tower
-bor(n) – steadfast
-dan (-dain) – maker
-degil – victor
-dir – sight

-dol – head, hill
-dor – lord
-e(n)(i) – the
-edain – men
-fin – hair
-galad – tree
-dring – hammer
-lor – golden
-gon – stone
-gul – sorcery

-hen(n) – eyes
-hir – lord
-(h)orn (-gorn) – tree
-(h)oth – people
-ian – “ ” one
-iel – like (as)
-ion – masculine ending
-las(s) – leaf
-magor – swordsman
-mellon – friend

-mîr – jewel
-n(dil) – implied devotion
-on – great
-ril – white flame
-ris(t) – cleaving
-sarn – stone
-thoniel – kindler
-ui – “ ” able
-vagor – swordsman

SINDARIN FEMININE A

Aelin – pool, lake
Alph – swan
Amrûn – sunrise
Annu – sunset
Anór – sun
Bereth – queen
Bor(a) – steadfast
Bre – quick
Brethil – beech
Cal(a) – light
Calen – daylight
Cel – running
Celeb – silver
Cú – bow

Dîn – silent
Drú – wild
Dú – shadow
Dui – flowing
Edhel – elf
Eithel – spring (water)
El – star
Er(e) – lonely, alone
Eryn – forest
Estel – hope
Ethuil – spring (season)
Fân – cloud
Fim – slim
For(a) – north

Fuin – night
Gal – green
Galad – tree
Gil – spark, star
Glin – gleam
Glor – golden
Glos – pure white
Gwae – wind
Gwain – new
Hith – mist
Iavas – autumn
Ithil – moon
Las – leaf
Lôr – dream

Loss – snow
Loth – flower
Luin – blue
Mal – golden
Mel – love
Menel – sky
Nar, Nór – sun
Nen – water
Nim – white
Per – half
Tasar – willow
Tih – star
Ui – everlasting

SINDARIN FEMININE B

-bar – home
-bor(n) – steadfast
-cuivië – awakening
-e(en)(i) – the
-fin – hair
-galad – tree
-lor – golden
-hen(n) – eyes
-ian – “ ” one
-iel – like (as)
-las – leaf
-loth – flower

-mellon – friend
-mîr – jewel
-miriel – jewel, bright
-peleth (-beleth) – waning
-ren – “ ” ish
-riel – woman
-ril – brilliant
-ros – foam
-thoniel – kindler
-ual – twilight
-wen – maiden



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Hobbits

Hobbit names are divided into four categories, depending on the social class in which the names were generally used.

- 1) High-sounding — old families, aristocracy
- 2) Short, meaningless — middle class
- 3) Old English sounding—male peasants, small tradesmen

- 4) Flowers and jewels — females

The Bucklanders used a fifth type, Celtic sounding, which I think is essentially human, and have included them in that group.

HIGH-SOUNDING

For aristocrats and nobles, choose one from A, one from B. Arrange vowels as necessary for easy pronunciation

(i.e., Gund (battle) + bald (bold) = Gundobald, bold in battle).

HIGH-SOUNDING MASCULINE A

<i>Adal</i> — noble	<i>Hild(o)</i> — battle
<i>Band(o)</i> — band, banner	<i>Ilbe (Albe)</i> — elf
<i>Ever (Eber)</i> — boar	<i>Isem</i> — iron
<i>Fast(o)</i> — firm	<i>Od (Aud)</i> — wealth
<i>Ferdi (Frede)</i> — peace	<i>Ragin</i> — counsel
<i>Fili</i> — very	<i>Rod</i> — fame
<i>Flam</i> — flame	<i>Rufus</i> — red
<i>Fort(in)</i> — strong	<i>Sigis</i> — victory
<i>Geron</i> — old	<i>Theud (Theo)</i> — people
<i>Gund(o)</i> — battle	<i>Wilja (Wili)</i> — wish

HIGH-SOUNDING MASCULINE B

<i>-bald</i> — bold	<i>-hard</i> — strong
<i>-bard</i> — battleaxe	<i>-mund</i> — hand, protection
<i>-berht</i> — bright	<i>-nand</i> — bold
<i>-brand</i> — torch, sword	<i>-ric</i> — rule, reign
<i>-bras</i> — arm	<i>-tios (-tos)</i> — men
<i>-fons</i> — ready	<i>-vacar</i> — watchful
<i>-gar</i> — spear	<i>-wulf</i> — wolf
<i>-grim</i> — fierce	

HIGH-SOUNDING FEMININE A

Use this or use names from the masculine lists, substituting 'a' for 'o,' and adding ending such as 'a,' 'e,' 'ia,' 'ie,' or 'ida' (i.e., Gundobald becomes Gundabaldia).

HIGH-SOUNDING FEMININE B

<i>-rid</i> — travel
<i>-gard</i> — protection
<i>-munda</i> — pure

<i>Aid(e)</i> — old	<i>Meneg (Menag)</i> — much
<i>Hild(a)</i> — battle	<i>Ros(a)</i> — rose

SHORT, MEANINGLESS

Used by hobbit middle class, and the pattern for most upper class diminutives (i.e., Gundobald = Gundo). Choose

one from A and one from B.

SHORT MASCULINE A

<i>Bal</i> —	<i>Mar</i> —
<i>Bil</i> —	<i>Mat</i> —
<i>Bin</i> —	<i>Mil</i> —
<i>Blan</i> —	<i>Min</i> —
<i>Bo</i> —	<i>Mos</i> —
<i>Bung</i>	<i>Mo</i> —
<i>Dro</i> —	<i>O</i> —
<i>Du</i> —	<i>Oth</i> —
<i>Fal</i> —	<i>Po</i> —
<i>Fos</i> —	<i>Pon</i> —
<i>Fro</i> —	<i>Por</i> —
<i>Grif</i> —	<i>Pos</i> —
<i>Hu</i> —	<i>San</i> —
<i>Lar</i> —	<i>To</i> —
<i>Lon</i> —	<i>Ti</i> —
<i>Lot</i> —	

SHORT MASCULINE B

<i>-bo</i>	<i>-go</i>
<i>-co</i>	<i>-ho</i>
<i>-cho</i>	<i>-lo</i>
<i>-do</i>	<i>-mo</i>
<i>-fo</i>	<i>-to</i>

SHORT FEMININE A

<i>Bel</i> —	<i>Hil</i> —
<i>Chi</i> —	<i>Lin</i> —
<i>Co</i> —	<i>Ni</i> —
<i>Do</i> —	<i>Pris</i> —
<i>Han</i> —	<i>Tan</i> —

SHORT FEMININE B

<i>-ba</i>	<i>-na</i>
<i>-ca</i>	<i>-ra</i>
<i>-da</i>	<i>-ta</i>

He left a name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.
Johnson.

HOBBIT SURNAMES

Hobbit surnames were used extensively, and fall into five types; old names, living places, physical or mental charac-

teristics, occupation, and plants. Except for the first, they usually do not reflect social status.

OLD NAMES OF ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES

As far as I can tell, they don't mean anything. Choose one, or make up something similar.

Baggins
Boffin

Bunce
Maggot

Rumble
Took

LIVING PLACE

Choose one from A and one from B.

PLACE A

Banks – slopes
Brock – badger
Burrow – burrow
Cot – cottage, hut
Grub – dig
Hay – fence

Long – long
Sand(y) – sandy
Small – small
Tunell(y) – tunnel
Under – under

PLACE B

-burrow – burrow
-cot – hut
-heaver – mover
-hill – hill

-hole – hole
-house – house
-ton – town
-ward – guard

CHARACTERISTICS

Choose one from A and one from B.

CHARACTERISTICS A

Brown – brown
Fair – light, comely
Fallow – yellow
Good – good
Gold – gold or very
Green – green, plant grower
Old – old

Proud – proud
Puddi – puddle
Sandy – sandy, reddish
Strong (Stor) – strong
Two – two
Whit – white

CHARACTERISTICS B

-bairn – child
-body – body
-child – child
-foot – foot
-girdle – belt

-hand – hand
-hide – skin
-lock(s) – hair
-toes – toes
-worthy – worthy

OCCUPATIONAL

This is a very short list. Any occupation except Smith is applicable. Smith work was done by wandering dwarves.

Butcher
Gardener
Hayward

Hornblower
Miller
Roper

PLANTS

Another very short list, any plant name is suitable. In fact, any plant part is suitable.

Appledore – appletree
Butterbur – a tree
Ferny
Goatleaf – honeysuckle

Heathertoos
Pickthorn
Thistlewood
Maywort



Orcs, goblins, and their kind

These tended to name their spawn with a mixture of corrupted Dark Speech, Norse, and any local languages. In this list, elements of Dark Speech are marked with an asterisk (*). Choose one from A. Add one from B if you feel like getting fancy.

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ORCA

Áburzgur - manure
Blög - blood
Bogi - bow
Bölvag - curse
Bungo - bulge
Búrz* - dark
Daga - dawn
Dofna - numb
Draugur - ghost
Drep(a) - kill
Durb* - rule
Dý(s) - quagmire
Eitur(ir) - poison
Ekla - lack
Egur - destroy
Flagz - monster
Gaddur - thorn
Gagna - helper
Galín - crazy
Gash - gash
Ghâsh* - fire
Gimb* - find

Glíma - wrestle
Gnýja - rage
Gón(a) - stare
Gore - gore
Grafa - dig
Gris - pig
Gul - yellow
Gúl* - wraith
Göltur - boar
Grub - grub
Haft - fetter
Haltz - lame
Hatz - harsh
Hatur - hate
Hnífur - knife
Hrizg - pain
Hrjá - harrass
Huka - squat
Hundur - dog
Högg - hit
Illa - worst
Illfýsi - malice

Illska - evil, hatred
Inras - attack
Jargza - bury
Jarn - iron
Kasta - throw
Kaugzi - rouge
Kjáni - (little) food
Krimp* - to bind
Kúga - force
Lúg* - tower
Lug - lazy
Mattugur - powerful
Marzg(i) - crush
Mölvá - break
Nagli - nail
Nazg* - ring
Njoshari - spy
Ógnir - terror
Ónreinn - dirty
Ókurt - rude
Olog - large troll
Orka - power

Óvani - bad habit
Ragur - coward
Raugz - red
Rífa - demolish
Rýk - dust
Raendi - robber
Sharkú - old man
Sjuk - sick
Skagza - hurt
Skamma - scold, revile
Skessa - troll woman
Skrigz - creep, crawl
Skraefa - coward
Skugga - shadow
Slime - slime
Smá - little
Snaga* - slave
Strigz - war
Thrak* - to bring
Uruk* - soldier
Velgia - nausea
Vesall - miserable

ORCB

-ari - evil spirit
-ash* - one
-auga - eye
-bag - pitiful
-bál - fire

-bug - insect
-búrz* - dark
-dyr - animal
-grá - grey
-haz - dependant

-hai* - people
-hál - slippery
-hugi - mind
-höm - buttock
-kista - chest

-kjaftur - shout
-laga - magical
-þfl(s) - strong
-rat - rodent
-stor - huge



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Dwarves

The use names of dwarves were all borrowed from other races, chiefly the Northmen. Their inner, 'true' names were never revealed to anyone of an alien race. This is a

list of the words frequently chosen for use names by the dwarves. Mix these as you will, feeling free to double or modify consonants, or add or subtract vowels as needed.

Al – all
Alf – elf
Andvari – breeze
Ann – blade
Aust – east
Bal – burning
Bard – battle axe
Bifurr – trembling
Blain – black
Bofurr – knave
Bomburr – bulging
Bori – borer
Brand – sword, torch
Brim – brim
Dainn – dead-like
Dís – sister
Dolg – battle
Dori – borer
Dufr – nodder
Durinn – sleeper
Dvergar – dwarves

Dwalinn – torpid
Eiken – oaken
Farin – traveled-one
Fili – file
Fimbul – great
Fithr – wizard
Fíbi – bay, marsh
Forn – ancient
Fráegi – famous
Frar – swift
Frosti – frosty
Fund – found
Grand – sorcery
Gim – fire
Ginnar – deceiver
Glo – glow
Gro – grow
Hannarr – skilled
Hepti – handle
-(h)le – shelter
Hor – high

Horn – horn
-in(n) – “ ”ing
-(i)s – “ ”one
Jari – warrior
Kili – wedge
Litr – ruddy
Lofars – stooper
Lóni – lazy
Maeztr – master
Mim – think
Mót – rage
Náinn – corpse-like
Náli – axle
Nar – corpse
Nithi – old moon
Nipingr – pinch
Nóri – peewee
Northri – north one
Nyi – new moon
Nyr – new

Nyráthr – ingenious
Oinn – fearful
Onarr – starer
Ori – furious
-ri – one
Skjald – shield
Sognir – roaring
Suthri – south one
Thekkir – beloved
Thjófr – thief
Thorinn – bold
Thráunn – stubborn
Thrasir – eager
Thror – boar
Vargr – wolf
Vestri – west one
Viggr – spear
Vind – wind
Virfir – dyer
Vitr – wise

KHUZDAL

The secret language of the dwarves, Khuzhal, was not willingly taught to others, and not even used by the dwarves themselves except for lore. It had a system using three

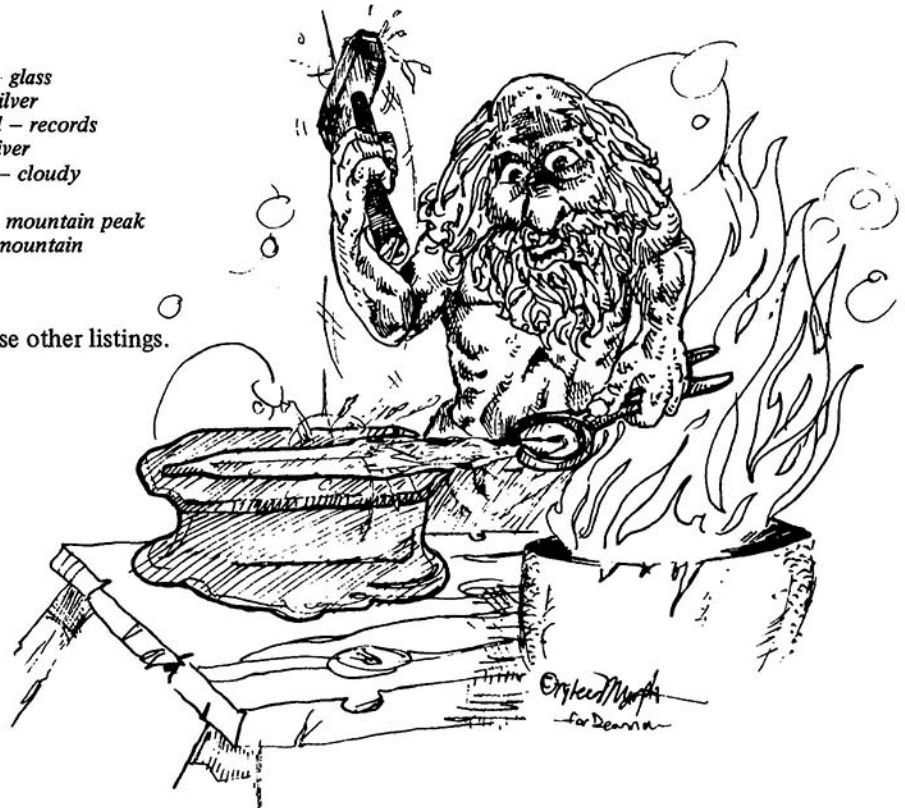
consonants as a root, and adding vowels to form words. Following is a list of words and their meanings in Khuzdal.

KHUZDAL NAMES

Amênu – upon you
Azanul – shadowed valley
Baraz – red
Baruk – axes
Bizar – rills
Bund(u) – head
Dûm – mansion
Khazad – of dwarves
Khazâd – dwarves

Kheled – glass
Kibil – silver
Mazarbul – records
-nala – river
Shathur – cloudy
-u – of
Zinbar – mountain peak
Zirak – mountain

For more dwarven names, feel free to use other listings.



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Haltz - lame
Hatz - harsh
Hatur - hate
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Hrjá - harrass
Huka - squat
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THE FULL CIRCLE

A Preview to the Thieves' World Game

By Robert Lynn Asprin

Literature, particularly fantasy, has always had a major influence on role-playing games. Tolkien's orcs, dwarves, elves, and dragons (or interpretations of them) have appeared in the pages of nearly every fantasy role-playing (FRP) game since they first appeared, and the associated magazines have supplied a steady supplement of characters well-known to readers of Moorcock, Lieber, and Howard.

This is not surprising. Gamers are notoriously well-read, and more often than not the characters created by the fantasy authors display a degree of colorfulness and depth which cries out for reader-created adventures. The melding of these two areas of interest has been natural and inescapable. Much more noteworthy is the recent emergence of literature inspired by various FRP games. Andre Norton's *Quag Keep* comes to mind immediately as an example. She captured on paper an exceptional FRP adventure and published it as a novel.

In this light, my "shared-setting anthologies" *Thieves' World* and *Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn* simply show another half-turn of whatever wheel it is that rolls back and forth between fantasy gaming and fantasy writing.

For the unaware, the anthologies I write of provide a town (specifically a backwater town named Sanctuary) — a town complete with a history, street maps, political situation, and a stable of stock characters. All the authors who write for this series are instructed to use Sanctuary as their setting. Moreover, they are encouraged to use not merely the characters from the town's common roster of princelings, functionaries, and petty thieves, but those characters specifically created by the other authors.

Sound familiar? It should. The parallel between the way my anthologies were made and the way FRP games are played is not entirely coincidental.

For many years I had one major complaint regarding Heroic Fantasy: the duplication of effort. If one set out to write a Heroic Fantasy novel, the first requirement was to ignore everything which had gone before. Forget Robert E. Howard's detail in building the Hyborian Age. Ignore the marvelous city of Lanhkmar that Fritz Lieber set in the sinking bubble of Newhon. Disregard the countless other creations already abounding in literature and start over. Build your own geography, history, political structure, religious system, monetary system, magic system, etc., etc., *ad nauseum* — and then you can write your story. This is a major reason why so much fantasy winds up as trilogies or open-ended series. Once an author has put that much effort into establishing a setting, it's very difficult to let it stop with just one book.

When I first thought of bucking the system, I was going to do a collection of stories, all set in the same place, but each told from the viewpoint of a different character. The story lines would overlap and a major crisis would affect all the characters equally, but differently. I'd always been fond of Japanese cinema, especially *Rashomon*. But then I encountered FRP games!

Actually I've followed their development and growth eagerly. I've followed them all: *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Tunnels & Trolls*, *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Bunnies & Burrows*, and, of course,

... In Sanctuary... you'll find slavers, mid-wives, fortune-tellers, caravan masters, blacksmiths, guardsmen, herbalists, madams, minstrels, storytellers, and, surprisingly enough, children.

Chaosium's *RuneQuest*. While each game has its strengths and weaknesses I did learn one very important lesson in my days as a Game Master: no matter what potential I saw in a situation, the players would invariably see something different — usually something far more exciting than what I'd thought of.

I realized that my original plan of authoring a collection of short stories bypassed the greater potential of the basic idea. If I wanted stories from different viewpoints, the best way to get them was get different authors to write them that way. I thus discovered the sub-franchised anthology, and with that revelation *Thieves' World* was born.

Fortunately I was already a published author at the time I got this brilliant idea. My circle of friends included a fair number of notable authors and artists. I figured I could talk them into it, but I was unprepared for their excitement and willingness to contribute ideas far in excess of the stories I was paying them for. James Oddbert, who drew up the maps of Sanctuary, huddled with Joe Haldeman, Gordon Dickson, and myself and from that late night conversation came the personality of Sanctuary itself. Andy Offutt proposed not one, but two sets of gods which we all accepted virtually unchanged. John

Brunner sent the magic system by airmail from South Pether-ton in England. Poul Anderson provided a set of economic notes worthy of Washington, D.C., and Phil Farmer gave us the money system to make the economy go. Phil also extended our already lengthy list of "controlled substances" and gave us insight into our civil laws.

A complete account of the contributions would fill a separate volume and even that wouldn't get to the readers whose comments will be incorporated in further volumes of the series. There has been so much input in putting the volumes together that I feel I can say that Sanctuary is the most realistic town in fantasy literature without feeling I'm just congratulating myself (I'm congratulating a lot of people).

So far I've refrained from mentioning any of the characters. One of my greatest prides is in the variety of characters who have been prodded into existence. While you'll find the traditional magicians, adventurers and thieves in Sanctuary, you'll also meet some people who don't normally show up in a Heroic Fantasy environment. In our town you'll find slavers, mid-wives, fortune-tellers, caravan masters, blacksmiths, guardsmen, herbalists, madams, minstrels, storytellers, and, surprisingly enough, children. Sanctuary is alive!

The response to *Thieves' World* and its sequels has been personally gratifying. *Thieves' World* is into its second printing and has been on science fiction bestseller lists; it was also nominated for Balrog and World Fantasy awards in 1980.

However, the title of this piece is "Full Cycle." I was doubly pleased when Greg Stafford contacted me about converting the first two *Thieves' World* volumes into a gaming format for Chaosium. Doubly pleased because I was not only glad that someone else recognized the gaming potential of my anthology but because it was Chaosium expressing the interest. In the past I had been impressed by the imagination Greg had shown in *White Bear & Red Moon* (now *Dragon Pass* in its fourth edition — Ed.) and fascinated by the company's largely successful efforts to keep the appropriate dream-like atmosphere in their boardgame of Michael Moorcock's *Erlric* series. I had often thought that if I had the choice, I would choose them to make Sanctuary into a game.

As an example of the innovative work which has endeared

Chaosium to me, the *Thieves' World* game package will contain character specifications for all the major FRP formats, not just for their own *RuneQuest*. This means that whatever format a Game Master favors, Sanctuary is still their town without adapting or juggling anything. Now that's a game publisher, and I'm glad they're my publishers.

So the cycle is complete twice over. We have Heroic Fantasy providing the inspiration for the FRP games. Then the games influence a shared-setting anthology. Now that anthology is available in role-playing format. 'Round and 'round it goes... and for all our sakes I hope it never stops.

Robert Asprin is the author of Bug Wars, Another Fine Myth, and, of course, the editor of the multi-volume Thieves' World adventures.



BERSERKERS



By Laurence J. P. Gillespie

ext to the troll, the berserk is probably fantasy gaming's favorite Norse monster. He figures prominently in *Dungeons & Dragons*, pops up repeatedly in *Chivalry & Sorcery* and its supplements (and is persistently misspelled there), and is one of the unsung heroes of *Tunnels & Trolls*. Just about every "revolutionary new combat system" to hit market includes rules for going berserk. And if APazine adventure writeups are any indication, the berserk is also a popular character class. Despite his widespread acceptance, however, the berserk's true mythic potential remains sadly under-utilized by many Game Masters. Like the popular version of the troll, the fantasy game version of the berserk is only a pale imitation of the villain that has chilled saga readers for twenty generations.

Who or what is the berserk really? This question has more than one answer, actually. The source of the berserk, the legends and sagas of Old Iceland, provide us with at least three main versions of him. There are several inconsistencies and contradictions to be found, both within and between these versions. All three, however, are in general agreement on some of the broader aspects of berserk character.

The character of most berserks is usually a function of their power, the *berserksgang* or "going berserk" mentioned in so many sagas. By and large, the fantasy role-playing stereotype is accurate here. That is, the popular picture of a warrior suddenly going wild with battlelust, striking out blindly in all directions, ignoring pain, hopeless odds, and the pleas of his own friends (sometimes), is pretty close to the mark. Most fantasy games simulate this to some degree, the most accurate so far being *T&T*. Even *T&T*, however, leaves

out certain details that might be of interest to all those lovers of berserks out there.

As noted by many, the berserker, when berserk, ignores pain, wounds, and all those other little distractions so annoying in combat situations. He becomes as strong as a bear (which according to one Old Norse formula had the strength of six men). He pays no heed to his own defense, but goes all out to slaughter everything in sight. What most game systems ignore, however, is that he is able to do this because he is invulnerable to normal edged iron weapons, according to the sagas. Once he's berserk, they just don't bite on him. In fact, hitting a berserker when he's berserk is more likely to give you a broken sword than anything else. What's more, many berserks are also immune to normal fire. Consequently, the right selection of weapons can mean the difference between life and death when you're up against a berserker.

To use his powers, though, the berserker must go berserk. And this is not as easy as it sounds. Berserkers usually have to go through formidable rituals of shield-biting, yowling, and extreme physical exertion before they can do their thing. As it is, this all looks pretty ridiculous, which may be why most sagas depict berserks as morons. To make matters worse, once triggered, the berserk rage is not something you can turn off like a faucet. As any veteran *T&T*er knows, there are times when only an elvish smile or a blackjack can keep the berserk from turning on his own friends. In Halifax, for example, a GM once managed to wipe out an entire party of high level berserks with one kobold. The berserkers attacked the kobold, went berserk, killed it,

and then wiped each other out, since there were no more kobolds left to fight.

The berserksgang is also very exhausting. If taken to the limit, it should reduce the berserker's strength and fatigue rating to zero. Needless to say, a strength of zero can be a decided liability if you're still stuck on the fourth dungeon level, or in some orc-infested wilderness 50 miles from nowhere. What's more, in older berserks, this sort of profound physical exertion has even been known to set off heart attacks. There is a good example of this in *Egil's Saga*, where one berserk never recovers from the ship-clearing rampage he goes on to avenge his favorite son.

The berserksgang is also bad in that it retards the development of defensive skills. After all, if you're invulnerable to edged weapons, why bother learning how to avoid them? Most berserks find out too late that they're not immune to all weapons. As it is, when a berserk is attacked with something not covered by his immunity (i.e., anything magical, naturally blunt, or dwarf-made) he usually gets wiped. That's why most of the smart hero vs. berserk villain battles in the sagas are so anticlimatic. The smart hero simply gets something heavy and blunt (like a big stick) and bats the living daylights out of the former terror of the countryside.

Since fantasy gamers are not normally so clever, berserks can be very effective against them. Unfortunately, a number of game systems, most notably the original *D&D*, are not capable of simulating things which are easy to hit but hard to damage, which is the key characteristic of the berserk. For systems in which the to-hit number is not affected by armor

... his men went without mailcoats and were frantic as dogs, or
wolves; they bit their shields and were as strong as bears or boars;
they slew men, but neither fire nor iron could hurt them.

class, give the berserk the best armor class possible (against normal edged weapons), but treat him as a first level novice fighter for the purposes of defense. Where magic weapons, etc., are concerned, determine the berserk's armor class according to whatever he is wearing at the time. If he's a true berserk, though, he won't be wearing armor, since he knows he doesn't need it.

In fact, what the berserk wears has a lot to do with how he began. To be sure, the origin of the berserk rage really goes too far back to be traced with certainty. *Heimskringla* (Snorri's famous collection of Norse myth, history, and literature), however, credits it to Othinn (Odin), as something he inspired in his followers during the first terrible wars between the Aesir and the Vanir. . .

... his men went without mailcoats and were frantic as dogs or wolves; they bit their shields and were as strong as bears or boars; they slew men, but neither fire nor iron could hurt them. This is called the berserksgang.

(*Ynglinga Saga*, chapter 6)

To fully appreciate the role of the berserk in the Viking world, it's helpful to know something about his relationship to Othinn. As it is, many seemingly irrational aspects of berserk behavior make a lot more sense when examined in the context of the Allfather and his aims.

Many authorities believe Othinn to have been associated with the berserksgang since its inception. One interpretation of his name, "Othinn," lends great credence to this theory. This interpretation derives it from Old Icelandic adjective *othr*, which means "raging, furious, intoxicated." The ability to impart the berserk rage was cited as one of Othinn's main powers in Snorri's *Heimskringla*.

There are other reasons why berserks should be Othinn's men. Both have similar goals. Othinn's most fundamental purpose is to spread chaos through Middle Earth (in order to swell the ranks of the war-slain *einherjar*, the force which will fight for law at *Ragnarok*). Berserks, for their part, are the epitome of chaos. It is their ability to abandon all social and mental restraints, and to go completely crazy, that makes them what they are. Both, too, are dangerous anomalies in peacetime, Othinn seeking constantly to start wars, and berserks acting in ways that often start fights. Just like Othinn, the more a berserk kills, the happier he is.

They even associate with the same sort of people. Berserks, if not on their own, are most likely to be found in the retinues of kings and jarls — precisely that class which Othinn favors most. Indeed, as the sagas make clear, most common folk have little use for either Othinn or berserks.

The aura of terror projected by most berserks may also be the function of a link with Othinn. In the sagas, their fear-inducing power usually far exceeds that warranted by their physical characteristics alone. It seems likely that their power to terrify was yet another gift from Othinn, whose own terror-inciting power was legendary. As it was, people fighting berserks always knew they were up against Othinn's representatives on earth. And it was no secret to the viking that Othinn decided the course of all battles.

There are also hints that berserks enjoyed a measure of legal protection in pre-Christian Scandinavia, which again may be a function of their Othinn link. Berserks, like gods, were permitted things beyond the pale of mere

mortals. One of the most concrete demonstrations of this is found in the sagas, where it is noted that the practice of challenging a man to a duel for his wife, farm, etc., was banned after the coming of Christianity. This favorite practice of berserks clearly lasted well into historical times, despite the considerable social disapproval it seems to have incurred. How it was able to persist for so long is unknown, and indeed, is so irrational as to suggest an element of pagan, presumably Othinn-oriented, ritual.

The social origin of the berserk raises questions far beyond the scope of this article. Hilda Ellis-Davidson, in her *Scandinavian Mythology*, has suggested that berserks originated as society's first professional warriors during the Migration Period, which would no doubt produce another tie to the wargod in the popular mind.



The early poems, though, tell little of Othinn's relationship with berserks. They tell us only that berserks serve Othinn in Valhalla (berserks will have the unenviable job of holding Hyrokkin's wolf-steed when she comes to launch Balder's funeral ship). Like his berserks, Othinn is seldom seen in armor. Not until the end of time will he wear it, and even then it seems to serve a ritual, rather than a protective, function.

What does this mean to all you Othinn-worshippers out there? Well, for starters, it is clear that the berserksgang is Othinn's gift to men. Thus, if you want to be a berserk, just remember who gave you that power, and what he wants. Othinn, like the rest of the Norse pantheon, is a hard god to offend, but if you do so, forget about being a berserk (or anything for long).

How does a berserk keep Othinn happy? Simply kill lots of great warriors. The more you kill, the more he gets to fight at his side at Ragnarok. If you can, start a war somewhere. Last, but not least, be mature about it when Othinn decides to wipe you out. If he betrays you, it means he needs you more than the guys you can kill for him, which, in the end, is quite a compliment. Think about it.

One possible meaning of berserk, "bear-shirt," may have originated when berserks wore bearskins (instead of armor) into battle. In many cultures, bearskins are thought to impart the bear's strength and ferocity to the wearer. This sort of belief is very compatible with traditions that we know did exist in pre-Christian Scandinavia, too. Unfortunately, our literary evidence for this is scanty. There are no account of berserks wearing bearskins into battle, at least not in the sources that survive today. There are accounts, however, of berserks known as "Wolfskins," and the etymology of their name is a lot sounder. There are also many traditions of warriors wearing wolfskins (usually for shapeshifting purposes). So it seems quite probable that bearskins were thought to work the same way by the original berserks.

If you don't like that theory, another suggests that berserk means "bare shirt," because berserks supposedly scorned all forms of torso armor when going into battle. Whether this was historically true or not, in the sagas few if any berserks wear such armor. Whatever their origin, berserks occupy a prominent position in the sagas, appearing there more often than almost any other monster.

Saga treatment of berserks is not perfectly consistent, however, posing problems for those looking for a guide to role-play. There is really not one kind berserk depicted in the sagas but three, which may be stereotyped as the Beach Bully, the Supernatural Foe, and the Great Hero.

The most common type is the Beach Bully. He is virtually the only kind of berserk to appear in the Family Sagas. He is generally loudmouthed, usually stupid, and always obnoxious. He likes challenging people (especially old men or teenagers) to duels, with their girl friend/wife, money, or farm as stakes (berserks seldom have any of these, so it's a one-sided deal at best, usually). He also goes in for terrorizing isolated farms, attacking lonely travelers, and picking fights in bars and public gatherings. He is, in a word, a Turkey.

As such, he can be a lot of fun in gaming for the GM. The true berserk is never at a loss for an opening line to start a fight with, either. And no matter what cowardly players do, he'll always find some way to be insulted by them ("What you sneezin' funny like that at me for, boy? CRUNCH!"). Since even the rawest novice fantasy gamers usually know what berserks are like, this often results in neat grovelling scenes by low-level player-characters. If not, at least the GM will swiftly discover which of his players are suicidally heroic.

Berserks are also fun because they're so bombastic. This makes them relatively easy to play. Unlike many fantasy stereotypes, it's almost impossible to spoil a berserk's character by overacting. In fact the very nature of the varmint forces the GM to ham it up.

As noted above, the Family Sagas contain lots of examples of berserker behaviour, if you believe in "method role-playing." For those with neither the time nor inclination to read sagas, the histrionics of professional wrestlers are another good approximation of berserk behavior. The fellow who nearly took Luke Skywalker's head off in that spaceport bar, and *Get Smart's* Hondo also share a lot in

The true berserk is never at a loss for an opening line to start a fight with, either. And no matter what cowardly players do, he'll always find some way to be insulted by them.

common with Old Norse berserks. Just play 'em strong, play 'em mean, and play 'em dumb and you're not liable to go far wrong.

The second class of berserks are the Supernatural Foes. When it comes to assigning them powers, anything goes. This is the berserk of the later Icelandic fantasy sagas, where the term is stretched until it becomes practically meaningless. The romances, for example, use it to describe giants, half man-half animal monstrosities, shapeshifters, and worse. This kind of berserk usually drops by when some prince is on an impossible mission to India or Ethiopia, or some such, and either loans him his army of 50,000 trolls for the weekend, or challenges him to a duel. If the latter, the berserk usually loses, and either gets killed or becomes the prince's faithful friend for life. If the berserk wins, he knocks the prince out and rips off his girl friend. Either way, we're left with little information about his personality. Considering that this class of berserk can do everything from shapeshifting to spellcasting in melee, he probably doesn't need one!

The basis of the Great Hero type of berserk is also relatively slim in Old Norse literature. They appear frequently in the battles of *Heimskringla*, but usually the reference is to the effect of "King So & So ordered 'Send in the berserks!' and then they raged forward so that nothing could withstand them." This doesn't tell us much about their personalities either. As it is, the best source of berserk heroes comes near the beginning of some of the Family Sagas, when the ancestor of the protagonists are being discussed. The opening chapters of both *Egil's Saga* and *Grettir's Saga* contain a number of heroic berserks, though these become stereotypes again, once the main characters arrive. What's more, both Egil and Grettir have many features of the berserk in their personality. Both tend to go a little crazy in battle, Egil taking on entire armies on occasion, and Grettir fighting off five or six men at times. Both sometimes lose control of themselves in combat, often with grave results (Egil's men were afraid even to speak to him once he got going). Finally, both have strong ties with the uncanny, and an incredible resistance to injury. In the final analysis, though, neither can be classed as true berserks. Both Egil and Grettir had a human side, a depth of character totally lacking in the shield-biting bozos they fought so often.

Were berserks heroes? To most saga authors, apparently not. Most saga authors seem to have had high regard for the virtues of self-control and moderation, qualities berserks are not exactly famous for. In fact, since berserks often personified the blind, unreasoned violence which wiped out so many saga heroes, it is not surprising they got such bad press.

Since there is such a diverse array of berserks in the sagas, in the end their characterization is still up to the individual GM. If you want to go with the overwhelming majority of saga depictions, some variation on the Beach Bully theme is clearly in order. If you like Great Hero berserks, instead, you can find some support for this position in *Hrolf Kraki's Saga*, *Egil's Saga*, and *Heimskringla*. Or, if you're a high energy power tripper and want berserks with lots of exotic powers, the berserk of the later fantasy sagas and the romances may be more to your taste. Whatever kind you use, you'll probably find the best source of information on the berserk remains the original source: the Icelandic Sagas.

BERSERKS IN FRP

It should be evident from the above that berserks can be much more than just another instant bad guy. For them to realize their full potential, however, the GM must pay attention to detail. If he really wants to have berserks on his world, he must simulate their personalities and their popular mystique as well as their hit dice. Otherwise, he'll wind up with monkeys, not men. Admittedly, the following points about berserks may not be easy to reproduce with dice and tables, but with a little GM-improvisation, who knows? . . .

1. Berserks scare the hell out of people. Just about anyone short of a superhero, whether player or non-player, should be frightened of them. If they're not, you're not running berserks right (one of the toughest fighters in Norse literature, a guy who used to hunt undead trolls for fun, was decidedly cautious when it came to tangling with berserks).

2. The power of the berserk can be harnessed for peaceful purposes. A guy in Iceland once used two to build a road for him. What would-be contractors haven't solved, however, is the problem of getting berserks to do this. Most consider such work beneath them.

3. According to one interpretation, it is the eye of the berserk which blunts weapons, not his skin which turns them. Here the old hidden sword trick could come in mighty handy, since the berserk would not be able to blunt what he can't see.

4. Berserks attract followers in proportion to their success in looting and pillaging (say 1D6 per level the berserk goes up?). These are usually young ne'erdowells, punks, etc., of the sort you'd find in a motorcycle gang. Most are mediocre fighters at best, liable to rout like orcs if their leader is killed.

5. Berserks, like most other Norse monsters, have a much greater chance than normal of walking after death. Death does nothing to mellow their personalities either. In fact, some of the most evil undead to be found in the Norse sagas were berserks during their original lives.

6. For people who use Christianity or something similar in their campaigns, there is a wealth of material available on Christian vs. berserk interaction. Though the legends are far too involved to go into here, the general thrust of them is that no berserk is a match for a cleric of the True Faith. Touching a berserk with a crucifix usually causes the berserk rage to leave him. Berserks have no immunity whatsoever to hallowed fire and I imagine (though I can't recall an instance of this) that a blessed weapon would be just as effective against a berserk as a magic one (*D&D* clerics, at least, with their propensity for blunt weapons, are well-equipped to deal with berserks).

And if you want to get really far out, according to Cleasby-Vigfusson's Old Icelandic dictionary, there were even evangelical berserks during the Christian era. No kidding. Somehow, I just can't picture Billy Graham sporting an iron helmet and battleaxe, but I

guess that's my problem. Certainly that could add some spice to a clerical system, though. . .

7. In the sagas, berserks are constantly insulting people. To encourage this is a fantasy gaming context, give berserks the power to drain experience points from other player-characters by insulting them. How many points per insult is up to the GM. In my campaign, I have impartial players grade berserker insults on a 1-10 scale, just like in the Olympics. Victims can regain these points by making snappy comebacks, but they do so at their own risk.

SCENARIOS

As a further aid to berserk characterization, a couple of scenarios involving them are outlined below. Most of the details are in keeping with, if not borrowed from, the sagas. They are thus designed for low level worlds, not power-trips.

SCENARIO ONE

The party is drinking off the latest expedition proceeds (up here that's good for three, maybe four beers) when a 50-ish lady, greying at the edges but still very proud, walks into the bar.

"Are there any men here?" she asks.

Silence. Some of the locals ignore her, some mutter a snide remark or two, but none answer. If nothing else happens, she then approaches the party.

"Are there any men here?" she asks. "Is anyone here up to a test of his manhood?"

She will address this to fighter types, avoiding magicians, thieves, and other obvious perverts.

If she gets any affirmative answers at all, she will explain.

A gang of berserks is terrorizing her farm (an hour's walk up the road). Her husband, a renowned dungeon delver, and something of a local legend, has been dead for many years, and her kin have all drifted away. She wants the berserks driven off her farm (that's Old Norse for "killed") and has been driven to the straits of begging aid from complete strangers. That's all there is to it.

Put some thought into the description of the farmyard. Put a body somewhere, of a cow, or maybe even a thrall. Have a young child crying hopelessly somewhere. Scatter broken casks and burning things all over the place. Think about the weather. Maybe for contrast you want it to be a brilliant sun-drenched day. Or maybe for emphasis you want driving rain. Think of an old widow walking five miles in a rainstorm. Make your players think of it too. Or if you're a Bradbury type maybe you want a looming thunderstorm, just ready to break at the right moment. Whatever the weather, the berserks will be drunk, smashing crockery, mindlessly destroying. One may be prancing around in the widow's best cloak, a beautiful, colored thing of fine English wool.

When the heroes arrive, check berserk reaction. It probably won't be instant attack. The berserks may even be friendly drunk. They may ignore the party, or may even invite it to join in the festivities. Naturally, the reaction of the head berserk is of key importance here. If he's well-disposed to the newcomers, his lackies will fall over each other

Berserks scare the hell out of people. Just about anyone short of a superhero, whether player or non-player, should be frightened of them.

trying to be friendly. If he's not, well, things could turn ugly quite fast.

Moreover, even a friendly reaction may not last very long. Berserks being berserks, they will expect (i.e., demand) fawning synco-phancy from the party. If they don't get it, this too will produce trouble very fast.

The exact makeup of the berserk band is, of course, up to the GM. In *Heimskringla*, my campaign, I've gotten the best results with first, second, third, maybe even fourth level berserk leading a gang of 1D6+1 rabble (pseudo-berserks). This is, however, on world where player-characters higher than first level are virtually unknown. Whatever his level, the berserk should be a much better fighter than any of his companions. And his companions should rout like orcs (or at least test morale) if he is killed.

PERSUADING THE PLAYERS: The GM may encounter some difficulties getting players to go on this miniquest. Particularly if they're conditioned to money-oriented dungeon-only games, which may offer ten times the reward for half the risk. Simply challenge the manhood of your players. Lay it on real thick, too. Use words like manhood, courage, and guts at least five times in every sentence you utter. Since your players probably have mild real-world tensions in this area themselves, they won't need to do any role-playing at all. If you can make them feel ashamed of turning down this poor widow, you can bet their characters will be in the same boat.

If the players in question are women, there's still some chance of shanghaiing them into this. Just have the widow ignore them, but make sure she addresses her most impassioned pleas to the nearest male fighter, no matter how uninterested he is. If there's a woman warrior who can resist the temptation to leap to her feet and shout "Maybe there's no 'man' willing to help you, but here's a woman that will try!", I'd be interested in meeting her.

SCENARIO TWO

The players are sitting in the bar, mead-room, Varangian Legion Hall, etc. An extremely tough looking berserk goes up to each of them in turn and asks belligerently "Do you think you're my equal?"

If anyone says yes (that's never happened in *Heimskringla*), berserk will challenge him to (a) fight, (b) trade sword-blows, or (c) strike the helm he's wearing.

OPTIONS: If berserk pulls (b), you might consider a Gawain and the Green Knight routine (i.e., berserk gives the player first blow, and stands calmly while his head is cut off. Then he picks up his own head, reattaches it, and says he'll return the favor one week/month/year hence - could be a nice kickoff for a quest).

To be really sleazy in (c), make the helm one of the magic kind that breaks anything which hits it. What better way to part a too confident fighter from that +3 family heirloom!

SCENARIO THREE

The party is preparing to leave after several days of superb hospitality at a rich young farmer's house. Only one thing has marred the festivities, the continuous weeping of the farmer's kid sister, a strikingly beautiful young maiden of 18 charisma. Just as the party is about to depart, it "slips" out that a berserk has challenged the farmer to a duel for the hand of his sister. The duel is scheduled the following day, and the farmer, a handsome but completely inexperienced fighter, is heading for certain death. His sister is heading for certain dishonor. Will the best fighter in the party fight the duel in his place?



Berserks are also fun because they're so bombastic. This makes them relatively easy to play. Unlike many fantasy stereotypes, it's almost impossible to spoil a berserk's character by overacting.



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Zargonians

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The Zargonians are the figure series by Bearhug Enterprises, Inc., PO Box 12, Mission, KS 66201. The series was designed by Daryl A. Shirley, president of Bearhug, and the figures were painted by James Mirick. The concept behind the Zargonians is to provide figures for gaming that are inexpensive, light in weight, and don't have to be painted. They are intended to provide an alternative for gamers who are hesitant to use the more traditional cast lead figures.

Zargonians are die-cut figures printed in color on 6"x7" cardboard sheets 1/16" thick. Most come with 24 figures to the sheet, each figure 1 1/2" tall and 3/4" wide, each figure on the sheet is different. Sets are \$5 for three identical sheets, or about seven cents a figure. Even if you have many sets of figures, you can usually get away with one Zargonian Stand Set I of 48 plastic 3/4" stands for \$5, unless you plan mass battles. Each figure has a painting of a character or creature that is about 28mm tall, a typical size for lead figures. Zargonians are used by detaching the figures from the sheets and placing them in the plastic stands to hold them vertical on the battleboard or gaming table.

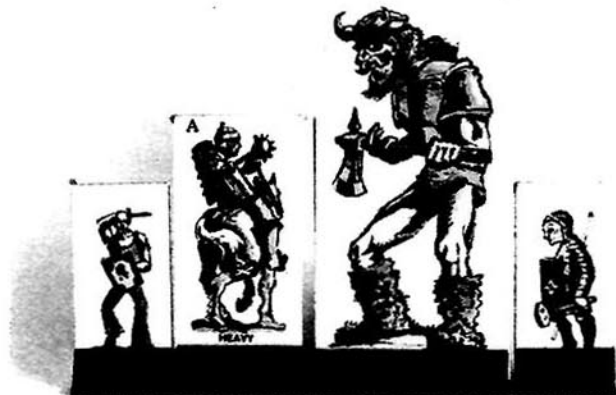
Different Worlds 9 reviewed Bearhug's initial release of Zargonian monster figures, Creature Sets I-XII. This time we review four new lines of figures. These include the expansion of the concept of die-cut figures to its logical best use, making really large creatures easy to carry around.

The first new line is the Character Sets, of which the first two are now available. They consist of three sheets of 24 figures each, 1 1/2"x3/4", per set, the same size and using the same stands as the Creature Sets. However, unlike the Creature Sets, the Character Sets have three different sheets per set, so you get a total of 72 different figures per set. There is a great profusion of characters in these two sets, including a small sprinkling of monsters, apparently as last minute additions to the list that didn't make it onto the Creature Sheets. Character Set A contains one Succubus, one Lamia, one Ghost, one Ranger, two Druids, three Monks, six Thieves, three Assassins, three Paladins, twelve Clerics, 18 Magicians, and 21 Warriors. Character Set B contains one Banshee, one Lich, one Hag, one Paladin, three Rangers, two Druids, three Monks, six Thieves, three Assassins, 13 Magicians, 15 Clerics, and 23 Warriors.

The figures come in both sexes with a wide range of weapons and armor. Most are human, but there are a few elves and dwarves. The sparcity of the last two races, however, is more than made up for by the existence of Creature Set-I of Dwarves and Creature Set VII of Elves. There appear to be about 25 females in the 138 character figures (it is sometimes ambiguous), which is one complaint I'd like to see repaired in later sets. Another is the fact that most of the character figures are lightly armored. This doesn't matter for the thieves and assassins, of course, but the 44 warriors are often difficult to separate out from the others just by appearance. Only 24 of the figures are in obvious armor, mostly Clerics, and these are in chainmail; there isn't a plate-armored figure in the group.

These figures are useful and worth using, despite my nitpicking. My sense of lack, in what has been issued so far, is from my preference for heavily-armored warriors and clerics (in *Dungeons & Dragons* they tend to wear plate armor and carry shields). However, the existing figures are very nice for thieves, druids, mages, rangers, clerics, and others who wear chainmail.

One thing that struck me strongly about these character figures: these are not Beautiful People. James Mirick decided to heavily individualize his figures, and indeed you will have no trouble telling one from another. But in the process he included in his line every sort of range of body shape, tall and short, thick and thin, long and short hair and no hair. It works, but you won't find any idealized heroic types. This may trouble some players until they get used to it. But Game Masters should



love the idea once they realize that these figures are ideal for representing specific non-player characters for the player-characters to recognize again when they are encountered later on.

The next type of figure is the large creature line, lions and tigers and bears, and they come 15 to the sheet at 2" tall and 1" wide. They are \$5 a set of three identical sheets. These need the Zargonian Stand Set III, 45 stands for \$5, each 1" wide. Large Creature Set I contains three Dragon Cubs, three Andro-Sphinx, three Crio-Sphinx, three Cyno-Sphinx, three Hieraco-Sphinx, three Chimerae, three Brown Bears, six Lammassu, six Sheddu, and twelve Centaurs (three female). Large Creature Set II contains three Unicorns, three Pegasi, three Manticores, three Nightmares, three Ki-Rins, six Minotaurs, six Ax Beaks, nine Griffons, and nine Hippogriffs.

Large Creature Set III contains nine Trolls, 15 Ogres, and 21 Bugbears (which might also serve as more intelligent and armored ogres). Large Creature Set IV contains three Poisonous Snakes, three Constrictor Snakes, three Flightless Owls, three Slugs, three Dire Wolves, three Winter Wolves, three Tigers, three Sabre-Toothed Tigers, six Spotted Lions, nine Lions, and six Yeti.

Large Creature Set V contains three Mounds, three Invisible Servants, three Beholders, three Couatli, three Gorgons, three Stalkers, three Lopeies, three Rakshasae, three Ropers, three Hulks, three Weirds, three Will O'Wisps, three Wind Walkers, and six Dimension Beasts. This set contains some of the stranger and more interesting beasts in the line. Large Creature Set VI contains 15 Light Cavalry, 15 Medium Cavalry (wearing chainmail) and 15 Heavy Cavalry (wearing plate armor). These are all seen from the front or the rear, in order to fit on the narrow 1" wide pieces, and are 35mm tall on the average. You might prefer to have them on wider pieces and seen from the side, but they work reasonably well in use; you merely have to remember which way the figure is pointing, and allow for some extra space to the rear of the horse when grouping figures on the battleboard.

The third type of figure is the Giant Creature line. They come six figures to the sheet, and are 3" tall and 1½" wide with paintings averaging 65mm tall, quite large when compared with the 28mm character figures. These need the Zargonian Stand Set II, each 1½" wide, 36 stands for \$5. Giant Creature Set I contains three Hill Giants, three

Stone Giants, three Frost Giants, three Fire Giants, three Cloud Giants, and three Storm Giants. Giant Creature Set II contains three Djinni, three Efreeti, three Air Elementals, three Earth Elementals, three Fire Elementals, and three Water Elementals.

Giant Creature Set III contains three Lion Worms, three Land Sharks, three Cave Bears, three Spirit Nagas, three Water Nagas, and three Guardian Nagas. Giant Creature Set IV contains three Crocodiles, three Fire Lizards, three Subterranean Lizards, three Minotaur Lizards, and three Treants.

Giant Creature Set V contains three Clay Golems, three Flesh Golems, three Stone Golems, three Iron Golems, three Two-Headed Giants (Ettins), and three Titans. Giant Creature Set VI contains some of the worst monsters of all, Demons. It has three each of Demon Types I-VI. Incidentally, all the creatures are nicely and colorfully drawn in the Large and Giant Creature lines. Also, it should be mentioned that the slight printing difficulty in the first Zargonian print run has been solved; all were printed sharply.

The last of the new types of Zargonian figures are the largest of all, the dragons. These figures are 3" tall and 6½" wide, and come six to a set, for \$5. The dragons require two stands each, of any size. Dragon Set A contains one each Diamond Dragon, Red Dragon, Silver Dragon, Blue Dragon, Black Dragon, and Copper Dragon. Dragon Set B contains one each Ruby Dragon, Gold Dragon, Green Dragon, Brass Dragon, White Dragon, and Bronze Dragon. Some have wings, some don't but are shown flying anyway (Asian dragon style). Some have long spikes, some have horns, all have large teeth and claws. The ruby and diamond dragons look spotted, with triangular spots of different colors, but the intended effect is probably a crystalline faceted effect. Every dragon is shown with a complete background painting, unlike the other figures. They obviously received a lot of loving attention.



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- City of Valla, Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set,
- Dungeons & Dragons Expert Set,
- The Toughest Dungeon in the World,
- Thieves' Guild I, II, and III,
- Slave Pits of the Undercity,
- Sewers of Oblivion

REVIEWS

STOVER
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THE ISLE OF DREAD

David Cook and Tom Moldvay
TSR Games
\$6.00

This is a dungeon module that was originally distributed in *Dungeons & Dragons Expert Set*, but is available separately.

The product consists of the usual TSR cover folder with a rules pamphlet loose inside. The inside of the cover contains the maps for the one dungeon adventure included in the book. The rules begin with the description of a geographic area several hundred miles across. It is an expansion of the overland map featured in the *D&D Expert Set* rules. The map is centered on the city of Specularium, and includes countries exhibiting every conceivable form of government, ranging from magocracy (government by magic users) to syndricracy (government by associated guild chieftains) with the more usual forms also included. From Specularium, the adventurers are led south by a treasure map describing the Isle of Dread with promise of great treasure and high adventure. The adventurers obtain a boat, sail over the seas experiencing encounters with sea monsters and other fauna, and arrive at the island. The island itself is mapped on a hex-style map with the standard terrain features and specific encounter areas noted. There are three random encounter tables for different parts of the island, in addition to 24 special encounter areas where specific monsters are placed. There is a map of the central plateau, the ultimate goal of the adventurers. This area also has a separate random encounter table and a new set of special encounters. Finally, there are the tribal village, the lake, and the lost temple, which is mapped out in dungeon scale. The book concludes with a listing of new monsters, including several dinosaurs and prehistoric mammals, in addition to the mandatory new intelligent monsters.

Many of the encounters on the island are entire adventures in themselves. They involve such things as pirate lairs, tree villages, magic-using giant spiders, tiger people, living dinosaurs, etc. All necessary stats have been drawn

up for these adventures, and many of the diagrams (village plans, monster lairs) appear in the center of the book. Any of these secondary adventures could be the focus of a single evening's gaming.

One feature of the *Isle of Dread* which deserves special mention is its anthropology. The various tribes on the island have been given depth by the inclusion of information which goes beyond the usual rulebook entry for tribes: the government of both the sea coast tribes and the tribe at the lake on the plateau have been worked out according to well-known anthropological models (mostly ones reported by Margaret Mead in her books). One of the tribes is a matriarchy, with power in a tribal queen, with war chiefs and medicine men as advisers and subordinates. Another tribe takes direction from its gods, as interpreted by tribal chiefs and priests. This very basic detail is refreshing, and I hope that it will not be the last anthropology we find in the fantasy role-playing field.

There were a few things I didn't like in the adventure. First of all, the authors decided to make the isle a lost world-like area with dinosaurs wandering around. TSR has not solved the problem of how to do realistic dinosaurs — very few fantasy rules have, of course. Even 36 hit dice doesn't convey the sheer disastrous hugeness of a brontosaurus or a tyrannosaurus rex. Also, the island is too small for all those dinosaurs, along with everything else there. When I ran the adventure, I quietly dropped the saurians, although I did leave in the giant mammals. Another problem area is the native villages at the south end of the island. Despite the nice cultural details which I have praised above, the actual village adventure seemed poorly worked out in comparison to the other parts of the adventure.

I liked the concept, design, and execution of this dungeon module. There have been only a few campaign/adventure books among the scores of products published for the hobby, but this is one of the best yet available. The map is flexible in that many sorts of adventures could be worked into the terrain as it is shown. There are many different types and patterns of landforms depicted. Many of the encounters specified for the *Isle of Dread* could be dropped intact onto other parts of the map.

Isle of Dread is overall an excellent product. For my needs, it is probably the best of the modules TSR have produced. Many GMs

will find it a worthwhile purchase.

Anders Swenson

PLUNDER

Rudy Kraft
Chaosium Inc.
\$5.95

Although it isn't part of the official title, the blurb on the front cover describes this volume perfectly as the "*RuneQuest* Book of Treasure." The basic concept of *Plunder* is so simple that you might be inclined to dismiss it as unnecessary, as the first half of the book is tables providing randomly assembled treasure for use in *RQ* gaming. I think that a bit of reflection will let the GM realize just how dull it is putting treasure descriptions together, particularly those that get improvised during gaming. Once you realize this, the usefulness of this play aid makes it attractive. And the special items table plus the "Treasure of Glorantha" in the back of the book are worth the cost, all by themselves.

The first half of the book consists of tables of treasure, ten tables of 64 different treasures (an 8x8 matrix), each table representing a different level of treasure factor according to the *RQ* rule for valuing a monster's treasures. This is designed to help out the poor GM who has been going bonkers producing random treasures of the usual sort, and would be happy to have a method of avoiding the normal calculations so he or she can use native creativity on more interesting things. This is rounded out by the special items table, for those few treasures that have these. The special items consist of 100 scrolls, potions, crystals, and matrices of varying use and value. Some of these are crocked either partially or wholly, to keep your players suitably cautious.

The second half of the book is more exciting, if necessarily less often used. These are the Treasures of Glorantha, which are often rare or one-of-a-kind items that are probably best used to provide flavor to the campaign by letting the characters hear rumors of them over the tavern table, or meet an owner of one who is obviously too powerful to jump to acquire the item (either inherently or in terms of the relatives who will come hunting the killers). Yet the treasures are, by and large, not out of balance, and most of them come complete with cult associations that provide effective limits on their use. Other limits are the tendency of certain races to take offense and kill the wearer, such as a suit of dragon-ewt skin armor. Use this at your own risk, in other words. Neat.

Plunder is a useful idea, and well done. I recommend it to all *RQ* GMs.

John T. Sapienza, Jr.





RUNE MASTERS

William R. Keyes
Chaosium Inc.
\$5.95

This is an extremely impressive book, and most *RuneQuest* players as well as GMs will want to own a copy. *Rune Masters'* overt purpose is to provide the GM with ready-made non-player-characters at the Rune level for use on their adventures who have advanced sufficiently in the campaign to make this reasonable. And this it does, in great and loving detail, with one Rune Priest, one Rune Lord, and one Rune Lord-Priest for each of the 15 cults that make up *Cults of Prax*. Each comes equipped with full specifications as to characteristics, race, sex, background, weapons (with specs for both right- and left-handed use in case one hand is disabled, interestingly enough), spirits both allied and bound and what each is attached to, battle magic and Rune magic spells known by the master and the spirits, skills, languages, magic items, potions, wealth, and equipment. Each of these Rune Masters can be altered slightly for variety, to provide a host of Rune level NPCs. The timesaving this allows is well worth the cost of the book.

But there is more than that, and I don't mean simply Mr. Keyes's new character sheet and the monster sheets, or Luise Perrene's very attractive illustrations for each set of Rune Masters. The real heart of *Rune Masters* is the essays that begin it, nine pages of fine print in which Mr. Keyes gives highly condensed advice to the reader on playing *RQ* to the hilt. Most of it is phrased to the GM's point of view, but it applies equally to the players in many cases. The text is divided into an introduction and four chapters.

The chapter titled "How to Create a Rune Master" gives detailed instructions on how to do just that. You may wonder why Mr. Keyes bothered with this, since he had created 45 of them in detail, filling most of this volume. The reason is, from the ground up, for the edification of the reader. It also helps the user add more characters of Rune Master status to those found in the book, step by step. The chapter titled "How to Create a Retinue" describes who would be likely to accompany a Rune Master in his or her travels, and why, and gives rules for creating them and their skills. Two of the sheets in the back of the book are for this purpose, while the Mk 5 *RQ* Character Sheet is for use with the first chapter, the Rune Masters themselves.

The chapter titled "How to Play a Rune Master" is really a continuation in depth of the first chapter, moving from raw specifications to the personality and powers of a Rune

Master. This is for the benefit of the GM trying to play a Rune Master who has never gotten a personal character up to this level, and thus lacks practical experience at it. This need is effectively filled here, or at least as well as book learning can be expected to do so. The chapter includes suggestions on best combinations of spells and tactics, which is of interest to the players, too. The last chapter continues this idea, and is titled "Group Melee Tactics." It gives ideas for group organization for NPCs to follow, battle commands to standardize on, team tactics within the group, and spell combinations to try as tactics. This is, again, good advice for player characters as well.

The section on inverting spells is very interesting, but should be approached with caution by both players and GM. The idea behind this is to use spells in unusual ways to produce results that the *RQ* authors probably did not have in mind when the rules were written. One example which ought to work is casting Fanaticism on an opponent. This increases his attack odds against you, but it also prevents him from using defensive magic if you catch him in time, and prevents him from parrying your attacks on him. Get the idea? Beware of attempted inversions that pervert the intention of the rules, however, Mr. Keyes recommends using Fireblade on the sword of that giant, who normally does 2D8+5D6 damage, in order to reduce the damage to a flat 3D6 because of the spell. This is rule lawyering of the sort wargamers are fond of, but it makes little sense in terms of the spirit of the rules. And this particular example was changed out of existence in the errata sheet for the second edition of *RQ* (send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706, for a free copy), by providing that the Fireblade spell replaces normal weapon damage but not any damage bonus — so the giant whose greatsword you thoughtfully applied Fireblade to will now do 3D6+5D6 when he hits you!

Rune Masters is an unabashedly minimax book (a wargaming term for "minimum risk/expense and maximum gain"), a fact that may bother some *RQ* players. The 45 NPCs listed come equipped with far more in the way of POW-storing devices and bound spirits than is suggested as normal in the *RQ* rules or in the text of *Cults of Prax*, resulting in some of them having on call over 100 points of spells. I think Mr. Keyes covered this in his introduction, when he commented that it was written that way on the theory that it is easier to cut items off a list than to invent additions. But the users of this volume should bear in mind the actual power level of their campaigns, and use judgment when taking sample NPCs from Mr. Keyes's lists. His advice on tactics are definitely more on the wargaming than the role-playing side of the hobby. He can also be criticized for giving the Rune Masters of the cult of Chalana Arroy (the healers cult which prohibits members from learning combat skills) extensive weapons skills (even though they have lower skill percentages than average). This must be changed to be usable, to meet the requirement of *Cults of Prax* that healing arts be learned in place of the normal weapons skills in this cult.

These criticisms of details are relatively minor, and are easily correctable by experienced *RQ* players. The value of this volume is in its advice on how to play *RQ* with tactical skill taught by a master. This is delightful book — highly recommended.

John T. Sapienza, Jr.

CITY OF VALLA

John Scott Clegg
\$3.25

The City of Valla is a two-map set depicting the city of Valla. It consists of two 23"x17" color maps.

The City of Valla is a part of the World of Dyon series, but can be used in any campaign. The city contains everything a band of adventurers might need to outfit an expedition and makes a good base of operations. Since there is no booklet with it, the GM can stock the buildings with the types of characters he/she wishes the party to meet. By changing the labeling on the buildings the GM can also make another city in a short time.

By reading between the lines (or in this case studying the map), it becomes apparent that Valla is the headquarters for the Moorian Army and contains the Royal Winter Palace of the Kings of Moorria. Most of the shops and buildings are those you would expect to find in a city that is overflowing with soldiers and nobles. There are numerous armor and weapons shops as well as large temples and public buildings.

There are shops selling everything from glue to musical instruments, over twenty inns, a dozen public houses (taverns), gaming establishments and brothels provide lodging, entertainment and information for the interested adventurer. There is even a hospital to aid in the recovery of major wounds.

For the priests there are over a dozen temples of various types.

For the magic user there is the College of Magical Arts and the Magic Shop.

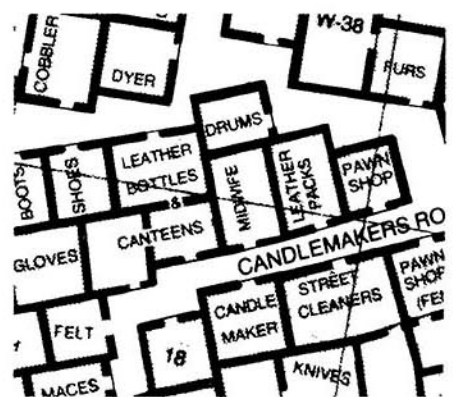
For the sage there is a library, a school, and a university.

There is an over-laying grid that makes it easy to locate places once you are familiar with the layout of the city. An interesting feature that I have never seen before is the careful use of grey shading to indicate areas with roofs. It is a vast improvement over so many city maps currently being marketed.

There are a few things that I did not understand when I first bought *The City of Valla*, but many of my questions were answered when I obtained the other products in the series. *The Tombs of Valla* explained most of the animal names and much more background about the country of Moorria.

I hope to see more products in this series especially a guide book to Valla. (I would like to know what is in the mysterious "Serpent's Tooth Tower.") Even without the guidebook, the city is a fascinating addition to my collection. It is worth far more than what the publisher is charging for it.

Jackie Selck



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS BASIC SET DUNGEONS & DRAGONS EXPERT SET

TSR Games
\$12.00 each

The original *Dungeons & Dragons* was published in 1974 as a boxed set of three digest-sized rulebooks. Since that original publication (which is still in print) there has been a steady stream of new material for *D&D*. First was the series of digest-sized supplements; starting with *Greyhawk* and ending with *Gods, Demigods & Heros*. Then the *Advanced D&D* series was published. It incorporated many of the rules suggestions found in the supplements, and added some new rules to produce a game of daunting proportions. *AD&D* is largely a game for enthusiasts. With the recent publication of *D&D Basic Set* and *D&D Expert Set*, the wheel of game development has come full circle. These new games, which fit together, comprise a clean game with explicit rules. They should be the easiest to learn and play of all the *D&D* games which have so far been published.

The games are being initially marketed as boxed sets, each containing a rulebook, a dungeon module, a set of polyhedral dice, and a crayon (along with some TSR promotional material). While the various rulebooks and modules are now packaged in boxed sets, we expect that they will also be available as separate items.

This review will discuss the actual Basic and Expert rules. The module included with the Basic set, *Keep on the Borderland* has already been reviewed in *DW 8*. The module included with the Expert set, *Isle of Dread*, is reviewed separately in this issue.

D&D Basic Set is concerned with beginning characters (levels 1-3) and with the development of the classical dungeon-crawling sort of underground adventure. *D&D Expert Set* discusses characters of up to the 14th level, and also discusses the outdoor adventures which can occur between and on the way to the dungeons. Both books are organized in a similar fashion: the introduction, player character information, spells, the adventure, the encounter, monsters, treasure, and dungeon-master information. Each book has both a table of contents and an index.

The introduction serves to introduce the new player to terms and practices which are in the text. The introduction to the Expert rules also has a chart containing some rule changes which must be noted by readers who own an older edition of *D&D Basic Set* (the one with a blue-toned picture of a dragon on



the cover). A change in the alignment system from the earlier edition is also discussed (alignment has been revised to a simple Law-Neutrality-Chaos system). Optional rules are discussed for encumbrance, weapons, monsters, and treasure placement.

The section on character information is concerned with the development and abilities of player-characters. *D&D* adventurers must follow specific career patterns which mandate a standardized development of special abilities, depending on the path followed. For humans, there is a choice of fighter, magic user, thief, or cleric. Adventurers who are not strictly human must follow special advancement charts for their particular races rather than participating in the human categories: there are special categories for adventurer dwarves, elves, and halflings. The listings of the various character class abilities are all in one place, rather than randomly spread throughout the texts of many volumes, as was the case in the previous *D&D* games. Alignment is discussed in detail — the fixed alignment of a character is a guide to the limits of behavior imposed on a character by his culture and morals. The possible languages which the characters might know are listed, and the section ends with tables of weapons and equipment which may be purchased and used by the characters.

The game continues the system whereby spell users (clerics and magic users) are assumed to have the energy patterns for specific magical or divine effects contained within their minds, to be cast as needed. The mage does not create the spell as he casts it, rather, he creates the spell as he studies his magic book (over a period of hours), stores it in his head, and releases it at the crucial moment. Magic users and clerics may use more spells, and have access to more complex spells, as they advance in level. The spell-use chapters list dozens of spells both for magic users and for clerics. In general, the *D&D* magic system contains the most powerful spells of all the FRP games, although in some respects it restricts use by characters more stringently than do the other sets of rules.

The next chapter deals with the adventure itself. Encumbrance is covered here, along with other details which are important to the game, but which don't seem to fit elsewhere. Such topics as light, opening doors, hiring retainers, traps, and wandering monsters are covered in this section, as well as the topic of giving experience points. In *D&D*, experience points are given to characters for performing various deeds on their adventures, mostly for killing monsters and gaining treasure. When a character has accumulated a given quantity of experience points, he is promoted to a higher level, and is assigned enhanced abilities. Thus, as the characters see more of the world, they become better able to deal with it. The Expert rules deal with many of these same topics. They also deal with organizing the context in which a particular adventure takes place, covering such topics as base towns, the character of the countryside between places, the construction of campaign maps, and the complex question of overland movement rates.

In the encounter chapter, the Basic rules explain how melee combat occurs between the player-character parties and the various GM directed monsters. Saving throws, combat tables, and morale charts are found in this section. The Expert rules cover these same topics in depth, plus the added rules of monster re-

actions, overland travel, and the evasion of pursuing monsters.

The monsters chapter deals with the creatures which inhabit the world. The Basic rules list 102 monsters, and the Expert rules list another 101. The monsters are described with all pertinent data, including a new statistic: the morale rating. This is the die roll used for a party of meleeing creatures to determine whether to retreat. Other more usual stats include relative armor class, hit dice, attack damage, etc.

The selection of monsters is well balanced, as such lists go. We were gratified to see that a generous selection of weak and non-intelligent monsters were included. Many monster lists seem to be composed of a succession of vastly intelligent races with marvelous powers which are a challenge to even the toughest adventurers — this is ecological nonsense, and also makes for a boring campaign.



The chapters on treasure list the relative size of different monster hoards, amounts of money and the probability of magic items. Rules are given for the evaluation of gems and jewelry found in the treasures. The main part of this chapter, though, is the list of magic items and their description. In *D&D*, the finding and collecting of magic items is an important concern of adventurers — it is the only way a player can individualize his character's prowess, and many campaigns are constructed assuming that the characters will have magical augmentation. The items given are themselves pretty standard for *D&D* — with some changes and a few additions. Both books give data for money and jewelry. The Basic rules list only a few of the possible magic items — the Expert rules mention many more items, with both greater diversity and more overall power.

The last chapter of both books is called *dungeon-master information*. The intent of these chapters is to give the GM of a new campaign a basis for creating adventures for his players to run in. In Basic rules this chapter describes how to set up a classical dungeon, which is generally a series of caves and tunnels. These are presumably the remains of a once-great complex now filled with random horrors which have moved into the ruins.

There are wandering monster charts and advice for placing both major monsters and treasure. There are charts for randomly filling the less important areas of the dungeon with enough material (monsters, treasure, and traps) to maintain the interest of the players.

The Expert version of this chapter goes beyond the dungeon to describe the creation of entire worlds, or at least enough of the world to fill in the spaces between the dungeons. A base map is given, on which simple overland expeditions may be run, and the chapter gives



examples of above-ground adventures. There are suggested terrain symbols, rules for overland movement rates, surprise, escape and evasion, and tables for random inimical beings to be found on the cross-country trek. There are also tables for those wandering monsters to be found on deeper levels of underground dungeons. Finally, there is a section describing water-borne adventures.

The Basic and Expert rules are well edited, clear, and consistent, all that a good game should be. They have been improved over previous versions with the addition of the monster morale rules, and the revised monster lists. In addition, there is an editorial improvement: these rules return to the free-form spirit of gaming which was advocated in the original *D&D* boxed set, and was absent from the recent *AD&D*.

The sections intended for the novice GM are also very well done. The prospective GM is taken through the mechanics of constructing and populating both dungeon levels and outdoor areas. While most GMs will quickly outgrow the advice given in these booklets, and while many experienced GMs will consider the chapters to be trivial, the novice should find them to be helpful. The chapters on player actions are well written and give the new player easily understandable information on what the game is all about.

There are some problems. First, while the rules have been worked out and have been better defined than in any previous edition, *D&D* is still a simplistic game. It was the first one in the field to be published, and the basic game system has many crude areas which have been refined in other games. Foremost among these crudities are the fixed character classes, the combat system, and to a lesser degree, the magic system.

Many commentators have found the fixed character-class model to be inflexible and unrealistic. The easy jargon of levels and experience points generally reflects the fact that some individuals are better at their professions than others, and that the amount of experience an individual has acquired relates to the difference in competence, but the measure of this experience as it is defined in *D&D* and the way it is applied to increase the character abilities do not stand up to rigorous criticism.

The *D&D* combat system has the basic problem that it doesn't model the actual mechanics of armed combat as well as later game systems do. The combat tables assume that different types of armor vary the probability of scoring a hit, but that once a blow lands, it damages its target the same regardless of armor type. While the general result is that characters encased in heavy armor suffer less from the same series of blows than do characters in lighter armor, the process is difficult to

visualize and very difficult to modify for special circumstances not covered by the rulebook.

The magic and clerical systems in *D&D* are very similar to each other. In contrast to some game systems, *D&D* could almost be said to have only two slightly different magic spell systems, and to be almost lacking in a clerical or religious system. The magic spell system has the virtues and defects of extreme simplicity; many local campaigns have modified it in one way or another without catastrophic results to game balance. The main problem with the rulebook magic system and most of the modified rules, including the window-dressing rule changes found in the *AD&D Players Handbook* is that they don't seem to have much to do with magic as it is attempted by either historical mages or most of the fictional wizards of recent literature.

As it happens, there are a lot of happy adventure gamers who find the above criticisms to be irrelevant and immaterial, and who continue to enjoy playing *D&D* because it is a good set of rules for an enjoyable game. Because the game is very popular, there are many published aids. *D&D* was the first FRP game played by the great majority of adventure gamers, including the authors of this review. The new *D&D Basic and Expert Sets* should be a smooth introduction to the hobby of adventure-game playing for vast numbers of new players and an enjoyable addition to the libraries of experienced players. We recommend this version of the game over the previous editions, especially for beginners, because it is clearer, better organized, and more refined.

Anders Swenson and Douglas Law



THE TOUGHEST DUNGEON IN THE WORLD

Ken St. Andre
Judges Guild
\$4.00

The Toughest Dungeon in the World is a programmed solitaire adventure for use with the *Tunnels & Trolls* rules. The book is 32 pages long including cover.

The uninitiated may be surprised to see a reference to the game *Monsters! Monsters!* which appears on the cover. *MIMI* is a subset of the *T&T* rules which features player-character monsters which gang up to attack human communities. As *MIMI* is a complete game in itself, with all necessary rules, one could play this module by referring to either rules set.

This adventure is a reverse twist on the usual dungeon game where the human characters enter the dark caverns to slaughter the

monsters and cart away their gold. In *The Toughest Dungeon in the World*, one plays a monster, typically a troll, who must lurk in the deep caverns until he has defeated enough monsters and human adventurers to accumulate 10,000 gold pieces of treasure. But the true magnitude of this goal can be seen when players find that the usual loot from a single tough encounter is only 3D6 silver pieces! The troll is going to be busy for a long, long time at that rate. The fiendish author has made it unlikely that the player will get very far at his task before the troll is mercifully killed off by his environmental competitors, other monsters, or the human adventurers.

The format of this solo adventure is the usual series of programmed paragraphs. The base of this adventure is a series of locations inside a string of caverns. The player-monster wanders somewhat aimlessly through the caves (depending on the roll of 1D6 in some cases), occasionally finding parties of exploring humans or surprising monsters in their lairs. When the troll kills something, it can take it home to eat. At intervals, the troll must take time off to sleep, hoping that his treasure won't be stolen before he awakes, if he wakes up at all! The life of a dungeon monster is very, very hard indeed.

I understand that some corrections submitted by the author were not included in this text. While the adventure seems good enough as it stands, I did find some rough spots. One problem was in the area of adventure points. In mainstream *T&T*, adventure points (a new term for experience points) are awarded according to the monster rating of the vanquished foe. All the creatures in this particular adventure are defined by individual characteristics, not by a monster rating, so there is a problem. One solution is to simply count up the combat adds of the dead opposition, and calculate a projected monster rating and take points accordingly. Another way is to simply sum all the standard characteristics of the opposition and take that total as adventure points.

As part of my playtest for this review, I ran six good trolls. Four of them succumbed to Weapon Blight, one of them was transmogrified into a Source of Ultimate Evil, and the last one escaped through a secret door into the woods above, survived the wrath of 10,000 elves in the surrounding woods, and is now enjoying the adventures in the city of Kazan!

All of the encounters in this adventure must be created individually by the player. A cunning formula, which assures that each monster of a particular species will be tougher than the last, must be used. To do this, it is necessary to keep side records on monsters of eight different species.

In evaluation, this is a well done adventure with a crazy theme that everybody should try. Pity the poor troll, cowering in the dank depths, trying to get a small fortune together so he can escape to the outside world, free from the clutches of dungeon existence! It may make you want to take a troll to lunch.

Anders Swenson





THIEVES' GUILD THIEVES' GUILD II THIEVES' GUILD III

By Richard Meyer, Kerry Lloyd, and
Michael Watkins

Gamelords, Ltd

\$9.95, \$5.95, and \$5.95 respectively

The *Thieves' Guild* line is dedicated to the proposition that it can be fun to play thieves if the scenario is designed for that kind of play. Most of the material published in these three packs consists of scenarios in which thieves and/or bandits can use their ingenuity and skills to add to their wealth. They are well done and worth your attention.

The scenarios are directly compatible for use in *Dungeons & Dragons*, and instructions are provided for converting characters from *Chivalry & Sorcery* and *RuneQuest*. In addition, Gamelords has provided a complete set of rules for running characters generated in the company's own *Fantasy System* role-playing rules. The *FS* rules are more complex than *D&D*, but it is obvious that these packs represent Gamelord's development of the original *D&D Greyhawk* thief class into a game in itself, and the operating rules are a direct evolution in thinking, if not mechanics, from the original *D&D* rules. This is what makes *TG* directly compatible with *D&D* or *Arduin* characters.

THE RULES

You don't get the full *FS* rules in *TG*, that is too much to expect (they weren't completed at the time the first *TG* packs were published). What you get is basic combat rules, to run thief or bandit characters and handle NPC fighter opponents. The combat system is an attractive simplification of the original *D&D* system, with modifications. Armor is rated from armor class 0 for no armor up to AC 10 for plate armor. Every weapon is rated by the number needed to hit AC 0 (HACO). To figure out what you need to hit, you don't look at a table, you merely take your weapon's HACO and add the target's AC number (subtracting the target's Dodge Defense, if any) — you would already have adjusted your weapon's HACO to account for any magical-plus-to-hit it has. The combat rules also include critical hits and fumble rules.

One thing the *TG* rules do very successfully is explain why a thief might or might not want to do something. For example, the *Greyhawk* rules simply forbade thieves from wearing heavy armor or using shields, *TG* takes the time to explain why a thief would choose to avoid them. They then provide penalties for loss of effective coordination and re-

flexes while wearing heavy armor. Since these affect thieving skills, the reasons for sticking to light armor quickly sink into the player.

In addition to regular combat rules, *TG* rules provide for special methods of attacking from advantage for the thief, who will naturally prefer to avoid placing himself in danger. These include backstabbing, coshing, striking from concealment, and the use of poisons. Coshing can be an attractive alternative, the blackjack system, as it can provide a prisoner who, alive, may be worth ransom.

Magic is minimized largely because thieves are not spellcasters. They can, however, use scrolls at some risk, so a list of spell descriptions is provided in *TG I*. An outline of the magic system for mages, with another list of spells with more complete specifications, is provided in *TG II*. Some of the spell names are taken directly from *D&D*, complete with the original misspelling ("Dispell Magic"), but the spell writeups and the effects of the spells are different. The mage rules are a spell point system in which spells are knowledge that stays in the mage's memory for use. Spells can be repeatedly used as long as the mage's energy (represented by spell or "Tau" points) hold out. They can also be played as additions to the *D&D* spell list if you prefer to use that magic system.

Equally important to the thief as combat or magic ability is his or her skill in other things. A thief may learn a legitimate trade as a cover for nighttime activities, or to retire from crime and go straight — either way, you need to learn guild or mercantile skills to carry this off. Other skills are directly useful to thief, such as locksmithing, trap use, reading and writing, armor construction and repair, blacksmithing, swimming, first aid, etc. There are also the thieving abilities as a class: trap sensing, trap handling, lock picking, pocket picking, moving silently, hiding in shadows or other cover, climbing, and listening acutely. The thief skills are learned by becoming a thief, and they are directly affected by the experience level of the character. The first skills mentioned are optional choices made in the initial creation of the character. Each skill is explained in detail and help the player create an in depth character.

Certain skills are affected by the character's race and personal characteristics (strength, intelligence, etc.). Every race is described in some detail, and all are illustrated (most only the head) for comparison. A table for adjusting the initial rolled personal characteristics according to the character's race and sex is given. *TG* uses ten personal characteristics: strength, coordination, reflexes, stamina, discretion, intelligence, talent, magic resistance, magnetism, and appearance. These are rolled on 3D6, and a table for converting existing



characters created in different systems to *TG* is given. There is also a system for determining the character's family background and the number of background skills the player has to choose from, plus some automatically learned. It is a detailed and attractive system for generating an *FRP* character, not only for thieves but other character classes that we can expect to see when the *FS* itself is published.

The saving throw system is interesting. Magic resistance is a rolled personal characteristic, and it does not change as you go up levels. To save against the effect of a magical attack, you roll 2D12, and to save you must have rolled equal to or lower than your MR. Since you roll MR on a 3-18 range and your roll is in the 2-24 range, saving a character with average MR is less than even odds. Other saving rolls are made against other personal characteristics, such as rolling against coordination to see whether you successfully jumped onto the rolling stagecoach during a robbery.

TG I provides extensive guidelines for ransom of prisoners, disguises for use in casing an establishment or actually carrying out a job, fencing stolen goods, dealing with the local thieves' guild and what is likely to happen to non-members, and the effect of getting caught by the law (including a table of judges and the odds of severe to light sentences, as well as the likely effects of a bribe). *TG II* adds rules for hiring NPCs for your party, including a mage or two and the rules for playing them (for the GM).

TG I and *II* together give experience point systems for thieves, fighters, and mages, including detailed instructions for awarding points for various activities. One interesting point is that the promotion table is identical in EP per level for all classes. Apparently, Gamelords decided that using different tables for different classes was more trouble than it is worth. Judging from the complexity of some other sets of rules, there may be something to that.

Another aspect of the rules section of the *TG* packs deserves separate discussion. The packs are not books at all, they are looseleaf pages, punched for insertion into a three-ring binder. What this means is that Gamelords can always reissue a page, or a section, or even an entire chapter in revised and improved form at a later date, and all the buyer needs to do is pull out the old pages and insert the new pages to be completely up-to-date with the *FS*. Rules changes are an inevitable development in any system, but no other company has provided for it in advance. The results may not be as impressive as a rulebook, but they are certainly a lot more useful. My congratulations to Gamelords and how about other companies coming up with modular rules systems, too?

TG I was computer-typed using a condensed typeface that is a bit difficult to read until you get used to it. *TG II* and *III* were done using more conventional type, which is easier to read but also small print. Considering that this is the product of a small new company, I think it is a very reasonable presentation.

The packs are profusely illustrated by Janet Trautvetter, including front covers. The illustrations are of variable quality, but show imagination and attention to detail, as well as a sense of humor, and they both illustrate what the rules are talking about and make the pages attractive to look at. Janet's drawings, and there is about one to a page, are a real as-

set for *TG*.

THE SCENARIOS

On to the scenarios, which are, after all, the main attraction of the series. These are divided by category into chapters, so that there is a place in the open-ended *TG* system for adding more in the future. "Bandit Scenarios and Highwayman Adventures," which might have been shortened to "Highwayman Scenarios," take place on the highway or near it. The encounters are broken up into four groups, farmers, merchants, travelers, and warriors. It is up to the players to devise tactics to separate the people they encounter from their wealth at the least risk to the character-bandits. Farmers have the least to steal, and therefore get the least attention. With the merchants the characteristic *TG* thoroughness comes out. This section has eight complete scenario-encounters, with a short description of what the players should be told and a longer description for the GM telling what the merchant's trade is, the names of all the members of the party and their weapons skills and other applicable skills in a fight or ambush, the goods carried and their value, and other useful details. There is a textile merchant, a master tanner, a silversmith, a spice merchant, some fur trappes, a weaponsmith, a copper-smith, and a jewel merchant. Not only is this done in loving detail, including possibilities of ransom for prisoners, but the examples given in this group should give the GM lots of help in designing future scenarios along the same lines.

The selection of travelers is similarly varied. Once again, eight complete scenario-encounters are detailed, consisting of a group of escaped prisoners and the sheriff's posse chasing them, a party of traveling players, a group of pilgrims, a bunch of beggars, the royal herald's party, a single 300 lb. fighter who is unafraid to walk alone, an animal trainer, and the household of Lady Feanori, daughter of a mage of great renown. The section of warriors is shorter, with four groups of varied abilities and strenghts. Each section ends with a table containing complete specifications for every member of each group in *FS* notation.

"Cat-Burglary Scenarios and Second Story Adventures" is the reader's introduction to the city of Haven, where light fignres and silent steps are of more value than a highwayman's fighting skill. The first section is the Stree to Silk Veils, on which are located six large bordellos as well as lesser establishments, taverns, bars, shops, and houses, all of which offer potential scenarios for later development. The one offered in detail is Heligor's jewelry shop, whose contents, staff, and traffic during the day is given in detail. The personalities of the main inhabitants are des-



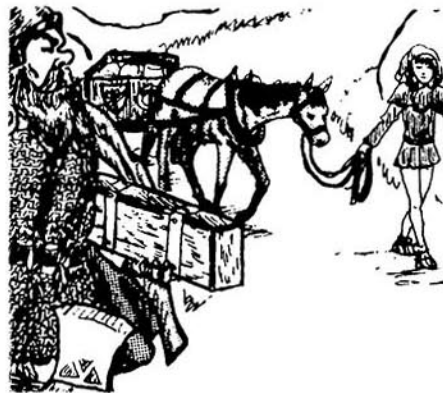
cribed, along with the rooms they are most likely to be encountered in, as are the security provisions. There is likely to be more than one attempt on the shop, either as cat burglars or as armed robbers, so all this detail leaves open numerous opportunities for scenarios in this one shop.

The second section of this chapter is the Magic Books & Scrolls shop. This is a few blocks away from the Street of Silk Veils on Magic Street, the section of the city where the mages ply their trade. By day, they sell diverse enchantments to their clientele, while in the evening experiments are likely to make themselves heard occasionally. . . Magic items of all kinds are for sale here, and there is even an entire shop that specializes in invisible goods. Like the Street of Silk Veils, Magic Street is described in terms of a list of landmarks, each with its own paragraph or description to provide jumping-off points for scenarios of your own devising. Similarly, the size, nature, and frequency of patrols of the constabulary is given for Magic Street, but in addition to the City Watch the mages have their own security, a watch-mage on duty in the audience room of the Mage's Guild with crystal balls for observing prowlers, keyed into alarms on each building. Of course, the thieves probably don't know the details of all this.

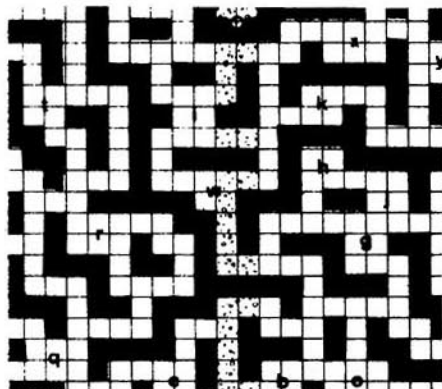
The shop and its staff are described in great detail, as are the displays and the contents of each room, and the traps that guard each part of the building from the hopeful thieves. Because this is the magic scroll shop, a list of magic spells that might be on scrolls stolen from here is given, with both a random roll chart for filling scrolls and books, and a list giving the effects of each spell. Remember when using this list that should the thieves get away with a magic scroll, they still have the excitement of trying to use it later without it backfiring on them.

"Armed Robbery Scenarios and Pursuit Adventures," consists of only one scenario setup, although, because of its nature, you could easily work several games out of it. You are given the description of the couriers sent by a major jeweler to other shops around the city. The thieves must first follow the couriers around to find a good place to rob them, and then carry out the robbery. The couriers are skilled fighters, and are protected by magic spells. Along the route, various stops are described, and a list of twenty random encounters are provided to liven up play. Several of the stops have small maps of the interiors, should the thieves decide to follow the couriers within. These include shops, a warehouse, and a temple. Full data on the people found in these places is given in the standard *TG* table at the end of the chapter. In addition, full maps of the interiors and street maps of the pertinent sections of Haven are given. The interior maps are well drawn, although I do wish the scale of the squares had been specified (they are 2½', an odd size). The street maps are somewhat crude, but serviceable.

TG II provides the first of the system additions. "Additional Rules" gives the first modifications to the combat system, plus hiring rules, and an introduction to the *FS*'s magic rules, in brief, for the use of the GM in running mages hired as NPCs by the thieves in the heavier scenarios. Chapter 6 gets some new additions to the farmers, merchants, travelers, and warrior groups, adding in sum about 50% to the total possible encounters of the chapter.



The bulk of *TG II*, however, is the addition of a new chapter, "Temple-Looting Scenarios and Tomb-Robbing Adventures." The basic setup is a valley of tombs, richly laden with wealth of the dead. It was guarded originally by the Guard of Death, an elite band of 1000 warriors. But they were withdrawn in later times to defend their home city. For a period, the valley was defended only by the elaborate traps in each tomb complex, and the occasional wild creatures and the rumored ghouls and other monsters that dwelt there. Still later, a red dragon named Hranugh settled in the halls of the Guard of Death, who through the years grew in size and power. And wealth, of course. Four eras are given in the writeup, so as to give the GM a selection of inhabitants and defenders to call upon to bedevil the poor thieves. The Guard is described in detail, and could be used for creating other scenarios for wilderness adventures outside of the normal *TG* setups. The dragon, of course, is unique and his personality is described sufficiently to allow players to try cleverness to survive an encounter with Old Red. (Would you believe a hypochondriac dragon?)



Two different tomb complexes are given, to get you started in designing your own. The first is rated at a lethality factor of 40%, and the second at 65%. Each has an elaborate system of traps, with automatic resets on many traps. There are panels hidden at several points which contain safeties and reset switches. I find that puzzling, since once the tomb is sealed it is supposed to contain nobody but the dead, and I recommend that the GM ignore the specified safety devices, or turn them into trapped panels, with the reset devices working on their own after random intervals. Let the thieves "safety" traps they discover in other ways. Each tomb is fully described for each room and most halls, seven pages each. At the end of the second tomb description is a list of magical treasure items to be used in populating the tombs, in addition to those items included in the text. There is also a des-

cription of the Monastery of the Guard of Death, which is a third fully-detailed scenario source in this pack.

Each of the two tombs and the monastery is mapped just as the scenario maps for *TG I* are. This section is the worst part of the pack, unfortunately, as the maps are incompletely filled in (some rooms are not identified by their necessary key letters or numbers to match them to the text description), and some of the rooms simply do not match their descriptions. However, since a map is better than nothing, I suggest that you go through the text and mark each room appropriately until you know which is which. Then change the text descriptions of the rooms to match the way they are drawn on the maps, and you will be ready to go.

TG III continues the system by adding further material, this time expansions of the lock picking and pickpocketing rules.

There are two scenarios in this pack. The first is a burglary of a wizard's tower. This one is a real gem, a party exploring a "dungeon" that towers above the ground instead of tunneling within it, where everything is there for a purpose. You are introduced to the village nearby first, then the gardens within which is a magical maze containing a puzzle and several hazards, which must be passed to gain entry to the tower. Once there, the party must evade the mage's magical servant and survive the traps. The mage himself is likely to be missing, for the party came on the rumor he was off on a trip to seek ingredients for one of his never-ending experiments to restore his lost love, Sharella, to life: it is unlikely that a party of thieves would confront a mage in his lair willingly.

The tower is fifteen levels tall, each level about 32' in diameter. Certain powerful magic items are to be found within, for those with the daring to attempt them, but beware their danger. One of the neatest dangers is an image of Sharella, against whose beauty the onlooker must save against, or fall in love with the image and remain stupified until discovered by the mage upon his return. A number of would-be thieves have fallen into Tsitsiconus' service this way, to be sent out on missions to bring back needed materials. There are living quarters, an alchemical laboratory, a demon-summoning chamber, a library with a mechanical librarian, a museum, an observatory, and treasure rooms, the prime treasure of which is — Sharella, lovingly preserved in a glass coffin. Certain things can be stolen with only normal danger, but the one who takes any object that belonged to Sharella, or shatters her coffin to rob her body, will be hunted to the death by Tsitsiconus! This is excellently done, and could be the scene of a series of adventures, exploring the mage's tower as he is gone on a series of trips. I think this is my favorite scenario in all of *TG*.

The second scenario in this pack adds "Pickpocketing Scenarios and Cutpursuing Adventures" to the series, of which the initial scenario is "The Duke's Dress Ball." One of the thieves acquires an engraved invitation to the grand ball put on by the Duke of Haven to honor the betrothal of his niece. Everyone of consequence and wealth will be there — a field day for pickpockets, or it could be a burglary attempt of a guest's rooms, instead. There are lots of opportunities here. Like the wizard's tower, the Duke's Ball setup has gotten a lot of development and polishing. A general background is supplied as to the Duke's family situation, the reason for the engage-



KOBOLDS are degenerate hobbit stature but greenish-brown most kobold color in underground a result, the hearing and normally height their daylight decidedly poor kobolds are snakes, who make excellent pickpockets, C. However, since virtually all tawny know this, kobolds are universe

ment, and the complications that can create interplay and conflict between and among the NPCs at the ball. The Duke's estate is described in detail, five pages worth. Then descriptions are given for 55 NPCs likely to be encountered during the ball. There is a lot of material for the GM to use to put any disguised thief through the wringer in trying to play the part of someone who is entitled to be at the ball. Plus, of course, there is listed the personal possessions that the thief may try to lift during the ball, their value (and likelihood of being too recognizable to be fenced afterward) and where they are located. The NPCs described are usually in family groups, and the descriptions are so good that any GM could steal these and work them into any kind of FRP campaign as NPCs. It's an excellent job of character creation, and ideal for running the Free City of Haven as the site of your *TG* campaign, as all of these people are prominent citizens.

But what do you do to GM a grand ball, you may be wondering in dismay? A good question, and one for which Gamelords has offered aid. Not only have they provided descriptions of the locations of the guards and what they are protecting, there are also guidelines for strolling entertainers, servants, and party-crashers to give you ideas. In addition, there are four pages of preplanned encounters which, although you will still have to think through likely outcomes depending on the type of role the thief in question is pursuing at the time, will at least give you a wealth of ideas to start from. There is also a helpful chapter on the effects of strong drink (a natural hazard at grand balls), the standard *TG* chart of pertinent statistics on everybody mentioned in the text, and maps of the Duke's estate.

Gamelords, Ltd., may be a young company, but their first three installments of the *TG* series prove they can maintain a high level of quality. Their scenarios are well planned and well conceived, and their game rules work. I recommend *TG* for any group that is looking for a way to give role-playing thieves more depth and more fun, and for GMs who are looking for scenario ideas and game rule variants to apply to their own campaigns.

John T. Sapienza, Jr.



SLAVE PITS OF THE UNDERCITY

David Cook
TSR Games
\$5.00

Slave Pits of the Undercity is *Advance Dungeons & Dragons* Dungeon Module A1 of a four-part series of modules that expand the plot themes which begin in this booklet. The entire series is from a tournament dungeon originally run at GENCON XIII. Despite the module's fragmentary character, the adventure has a self-contained coherence, and will stand by itself.

The adventure does not depend on the exact game system for its enjoyability, in fact, I played it using *RuneQuest* rules to have something to play when we didn't have a new *RQ* adventure to run, and we didn't want to take the trouble to invent something for ourselves. The adventure for the most part does not require the intervention of gross, unpredictable magics but rather uses quite ordinary physical phenomena to test the ingenuity of the players.



In this adventure, the characters have been hired, or inspired, to investigate a slave trade which seems to be centered in a ruined city along an infrequently traveled coastline. No plan of the city is given; it could be a total ruin, or something like Robert Asprin's Sanctuary, a slummy thief's den. In any case, the adventurers find themselves in front of a devastated temple which is the entrance to the headquarters of the notorious slave trade. Progress through the complex is entertaining. A series of ruined rooms and corridors give way to rooms made dangerous by the presence of monsters. After negotiating the first level (by no means as easy as the classic dungeon first level in the various *D&D* books, the adventure is for character levels 4-7), the player-characters, either by blundering or by following some sort of information, find their way into the tunnels of the underground portion of the complex. There are many byways at this level, some of which include portions of the old city's sewer system, inspiring the name of this adventure. The adventurers must then blunder around (unless they again have a map or other clues) until they find the person in charge of the local slave operations.

Once found, the chief slaver is quickly butchered and the party leaves the complex and returns to its employer. Presumably, information found among the slaver's papers will provide the clues to direct the adventurers to the next adventure, Module A2, *Secret of the Slaver's Stockade*.

I've never run a tournament dungeon for a

convention, so I can't judge if the tournament material included in this book is very good. I do know that it seems to take up a great deal of space and that I'll never use a bit of it in my own campaigns. I suspect that any tournament GM using this book would have to do a bit of work to make it really usable, as anybody entering the tournament would have had the opportunity to purchase the module beforehand to check everything over. I personally do not prefer to enter fantasy role-playing tournaments because I concentrate on the nonzero-sum aspects of FRP which allow everybody, including the GM, to enjoy playing without competition. And I get enough competition in the rat-race in the non-FRP world, thank you.

Slave Pits of the Undercity is a reasonable adventure. If you like to purchase published modules for your campaign, you will probably find that the quality of this adventure compensates for its relative brevity, considering the price.

Anders Swenson

SEWERS OF OBLIVION

Michael Stackpole
Flying Buffalo Inc.
\$5.95

Sewers of Oblivion is the 13th of the solo adventures written for the *Tunnels & Trolls* rules. The adventure takes place in the labyrinthine sewers beneath Gull, the City of Terrors.

In common with the other solo *T&T* adventures, this volume consists of a series of numbered paragraphs. The adventure begins at the first paragraph. As the player makes decisions in the course of the game, he is direct-

ed to other paragraphs in the book until his character either dies or arrives at the end of the adventure.

This adventure is set in the sewers beneath Gull. The character arrives stripped of money and magic items, and is cautioned not to use magic spells in the sewers. Movement between various parts of the sewers is accomplished by the means of a boat propelled by a small demon. The encounters in the sewers consist of wandering monsters and various adventures in side rooms off the main channels.

The sewer monsters come in all levels. The main danger from many of them is that after fighting them off, the character will find himself infected with one or more diseases. These diseases are well thought out and realistic. The diseases possible are staph, pneumonia, dysentery, cholera, hepatitis, plague, malaria, yellow fever, rabies, and osteomyelitis — an adequate selection for any campaign! Any GM who wants to organize a medically reasonable disease system could do worse than to use Stackpole's rules as a beginning.

The side encounter in the sewers range from easy to deadly, from trivial to complex. They are all amusing to read (never mind that your character was just killed off by this neat trap) and many can be overcome by careful consideration of just what was related in the history of the sewers by the author. There are many areas which will prove deadly to the first to third level characters I am used to playing with (I only play solo *T&T*, and after about their third level, the characters tend to meet with fatal accidents). One playtest character of mine left the dungeon safely on his first run, but got electrocuted the second time he tried to leave. It seemed to be unsporting to leave the dungeon twice through the same

exit.

Once a character leaves the sewers, there is a final surface to survive before the end of the game. Once again, these vary between relatively safe situations, which only require a simple exercise of the player's own intelligence to dangerous combat situations which only a tough character could possibly handle.

At the end of the game, the character is purged of disease (one way or another) and awarded experience points for the adventure as a whole. There is a sliding scale, and characters who started weak and survived get more points than those who started out tough.

If I have a complaint about this adventure, it's the inordinately tough random encounters. Of course, many players have tough characters who need this sort of challenge. Players who lack well-developed high-level characters could take some of the tough types from the back of *City of Terrors* (solo dungeon 9).

I like more about the *Sewers of Oblivion* than I disliked. A whole lot more. A lot of the encounters are problems for the player to work out. The only problem with these is that once you've figured out the solution right, it is easy to remember (my answer to this is to not play any one solo adventure more than once every two or three months).

The *T&T* solo adventures by Flying Buffalo are generally very good and this one is no exception. *Sewers of Oblivion* is a good buy for the solo *T&T*.

Anders Swenson



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I am a thief. . . .

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Hi, fans, the ole Hollywood Sword is back again with more scintillating fantasy news from the spires of Lost Angels.

By LARRY Di TILLIO

STOP THE PRESSES TYPE NEWS: Frazetta fans (and who isn't) prepare to have your wildest dreams to come true! Mr. Frazetta, in collaboration with Ralph Bakshi, the animation genius who gave us *Lord of the Rings*, is currently designing a feature film to be based on his drawings. It's called *Fire and Ice* and is currently being pre-sold here in Lost Angels. Tentative date of its appearance is Christmas of 1982. Can you hold out until then?

STAR TREK ON THE LAUNCHING PAD: Last column I told you that Gene Roddenberry, creator of *Star Trek* was negotiating to bring it back to the tiny tube in the form of 90-minute/2-hour episodes. I can now tell you that Paramount has given the go ahead to producer Harve Bennett to produce a two-hour *Star Trek* movie that could begin shooting as early as this summer. Mr. Bennett was the power behind *The Six-Million Dollar Man*, but hopefully he will treat our favorite Enterprise with a little more delicacy.

Word is that William Shatner will definitely be back as Captain Kirk, but that is about the extent of the word, except for the fact that Mr. Roddenberry himself will not do more than consult. This is a polite way of saying that no one wants Mr. R. around but as *Star Trek's* creator he has to be given some job. Its one of the little uglies we face all the time in this entertainment business and if Mr. Roddenberry is listening, Sorry Gene!

MORE FROM SPACE: In the works at present for television is a series called *The Phoenix*, concerning an alien with eerie powers for 'the good of mankind'. Who knows, it might turn out better than the description.

On the film scene, science-fiction/space opera is still very much alive and well. Prepping at the moment is *Blade Runner*, a futuristic bounty-hunter yarn culled from Thomas Disch's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. *Blade Runner* will be directed by Ridley Scott who did the same chore on *Alien*. (By the way, 'prepping' is a term for pre-production and means that the final casting, set-building etc. on a film is underway. It is the step just before actual shooting and when a flick is prepping it means it is going to be shot. This still does not mean you will ever see it, but at least there is a chance! I know that sounds weird, but this is a weird place.)

Still developing is the film of *Dune*, being scripted by its author Frank Herbert. *Dune* is one of those books that could make a fantastic film IF... Hopefully with Frank Herbert, that big IF will pan out and we will all be blown away by sand worms, spice blows and the multitudinous heroes and villains of the epic. By the way, if you haven't tried the game of *Dune* and you liked the books, you should. I haven't heard much in the game world about the *Dune* game and that's a shame. It's a nifty way to spend an evening. You needn't have read the books to play, but it does add considerably to the fun.

Another classic in development stage is Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*, which last I heard was being penned by the world's smallest giant Mr. Harlan Ellison.

BACK TO EARTH: The number of announced sword & sorcery type projects here in Tinsel Central is absolutely staggering. Gearing up for a big, big box-office trend in this genre, nearly every company and studio in town has one or more sword-slingers in the boiler. Some of the proposed titles for the future are *The Dragons of Krull*, *Trellnor the Wanderer*, *The Sword*, *Alaric the Avenger*, *Beastmaster*, *Thongor in the Valley of Demons*, and *Dorn*.

That last, *Dorn*, is supposedly being scripted by former comic book scribblers Roy Thomas (*Conan the Barbarian*) and Gerry Conway (*Spiderman*) for Ralph Bakshi.

Dont psyche yourself up too much for all these flicks because every time Hollywood smells a trend coming, announcements of films in that genre start popping out of the stonework like maddened centipedes only to take critical hits when the wizards of film-land declare the trend finito.

Nevertheless with MGM's *Clash of the Titans* and Disney/Paramount's *Dragonslayer* leading the trend this summer we should get off to a healthy enough start, i.e. plenty of sword & sorcery for everybody for awhile. This all depends on these films being smash hits, but since both studios are sinking large gobs of cold cash into publicity I think we



Stay back you fiend! A scene from the upcoming *Dragonslayer*.

Paramount Pictures and Walt Disney Production

can count on that. Of course all the cash in the universe can't save a turkey, so let's hope the creative guys have done their job right.

GOOD NEWS: The *Conan* film is finally shooting in Spain. In addition to Arnold Schwarzenegger in the title role, the film features James Earl Jones, Max Von Sydow and Mako, a most impressive array of talent. Director and screenwriter is John Milius. Milius shares screenplay credits with Oliver Stone.

For those of you who don't know it, John Milius directed the absolutely classic adventure *The Wind & The Lion*. That flick showed his flair for handling a larger-than-life hero so I have great hopes for his rendition of Conan.

THE FILMED GAMES: There is a game running around college campuses where the idea is to simulate assassinations by poison, bomb or gun, while at the same time avoiding a simulated assassination on your person. Sounds like great fun on a slow Saturday night, but as is to be expected, Hollywood has struck. They've taken the all-in-fun assassination game and are making not one but two films based on this. *Tag* (The Assassination Game) is already in production. The other film I saw mentioned only briefly so the title eludes me. Of course the concept of the films is that some psycho begins playing for real. It's a concept I can do without, just as I can do without the spate of maniac girlkiller movies currently passing themselves off as horror films. Perhaps we should start a don't-let-them-maim-your-games-or-your-brains-movement. I guarantee some idiot somewhere thinks that the way to make a movie about FRP games is to show some maniac running

MGM United Artists



Animator Ray Harryhausen with mechanical model of medusa's head.

around doing it for real and the way things happen in film it just might turn out that way (if a film about FRP is ever made!).

On a lighter note, producer Debra Hill has gotten the rights to do a film based on *Clue*. The film is to have a character named Detective Parker solving a mystery among people named Colonel Mustard, Miss Scarlet, etc.

Possible director is fright-king John Carpenter (*Halloween, The Fog*).



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An exciting role-playing boardgame where players take the roles of wagon masters leading wagon trains across the American West. The game comes with seven historical scenarios of varying length and is playable for one to eight players.

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Highly playable solo and including a point scale for victory conditions, OREGON TRAIL is ideal for tournament and club use. This fast-paced new game even includes systems for dealing with the various aspects of the hostile environment and encounters with the various Indian tribes. Each Indian encounter can be met and dealt with in several ways, depending upon the abilities and choice of the wagon master/player. Peaceful relations and trade or hostile action are all possibilities. Even weather, disease, river crossings and exploring for new mountain passes play important parts in this game of travel and exploration where speed must take second place to concern for survival.

OREGON TRAIL is available from better shops or direct from: Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc., P.O. Box 182, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576. The price for these many hours of enjoyment is \$13.00 postpaid.



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MICROS: Melee, Wizard (\$3.95 each, boxed MicroGames, each a game in itself as well as being basic magic and weapon rules); Death Test, Death Test 2, GrailQuest, The Treasure of the Silver Dragon, Security Station (\$3.95 each, boxed MicroQuests, programmed adventures for one to six players with advanced or basic Fantasy Trip rules.

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The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start as the chief of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Caravan merchants.

As chief you will know many secrets of your people and their lands, but there will be much you have still to learn of the lost secrets of Crane. It will be you who decide if your people will remain in their familiar homeland or begin a journey to new lands as you strive to increase your herds, train warriors, and learn of the ancient lost secrets that can move your people toward prosperity and dominance.

The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and KingLords.

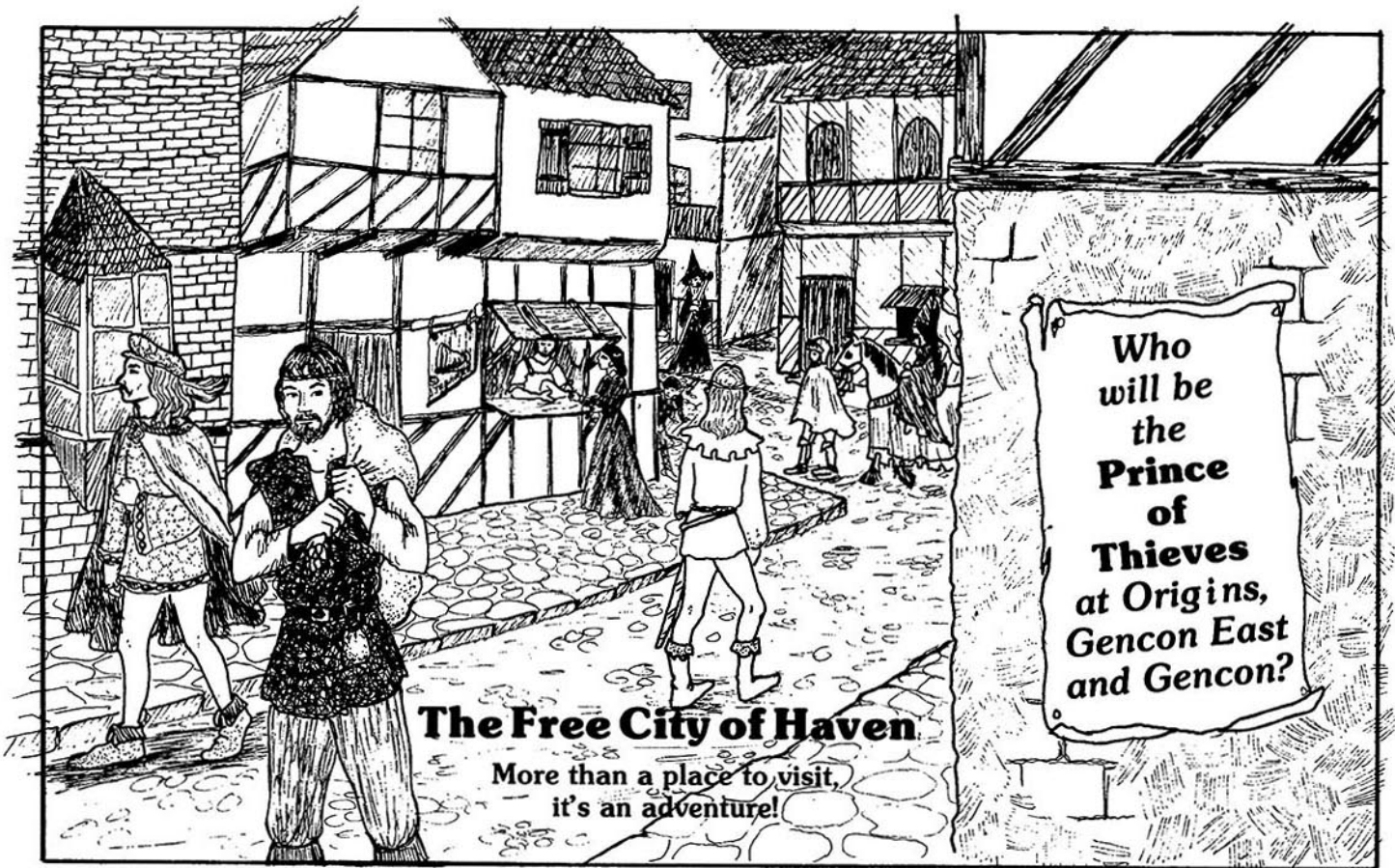
The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle, goats, and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a huge bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The game's objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The **Tribes of Crane** may be entered for \$10.50 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are \$3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased for \$3.50.





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QUICK PLUGS

LEVIATHAN — This is a *Traveller* adventure designed by Bob McWilliams. The adventure deals with a commercial voyage of exploration into unknown areas. This 48-page book describes for the most part the ship the adventurers are travelling in. **THE BEST OF THE JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY** — A collection of articles from the first four issues, all of which are collector's items, this was published to fill the need. **TRADERS AND GUNBOATS** — This provides detailed deck plans for common starships that ply the space lanes for trade, profit, and combat. Designed by Marc W. Miller, it is 48 pages. **TRIPPLANETARY** — Comes with a 28"x22" plasticized map, 76 counters, 8-page rulebook, grease pencil, and a die. This is a new version of a game first published in 1973. Designed by Marc W. Miller and John Harshman, there are eight two-to multi-player scenarios. All published by GDW, 203 North St, Normal, IL 61761.

STAR FLEET BATTLES EXPANSION — This provides additional rules, errata, and clarifications to the boxed edition. There are also additional new weapons, ship types, and scenarios. The 36-page book also comes with 54 counters and ship charts. Price is \$4.95. **SWORDQUEST** — Designed by R. Vance Buck, this boxed game consists of a 17"x22" map, 108 counters, 16 pages of rules, and a die. There are one, two, and three player scenarios. This is a revised edition of an older game. Both are published by Task Force Games, 405 S. Crockett, Amarillo, TX 79106.

THE PALACE OF ONTONCLE — This first adventure for *Dragonquest* is designed by Peter Herzig. The adventure is a raid into a ruined palace occupied by an evil magician and his henchmen. The 24-page book details an extensive palace and its surrounding area.

THE BLADE OF ALLECTUS — This second adventure for *Dragonquest* is designed by Nick Karp. The adventure is to rescue from an island a duke who was kidnapped and tortured. The 24-page book details an island and its inhabitants. **THE SWORD AND THE STARS** — This is an SF boardgame of empire building. For one to five players, there are ten scenarios. Designed by Eric Smith, the boxed game contains a 24-page rule book, 17" x22" map, 400 counters, 56 cards, and a die. Play involves governments, event cards, resources, taxation and exploration, communications, intercepts, stargates, treaties, etc. **DAWN OF THE DEAD** — One player moves humans through a mall destroying the zombies and trying to secure the buildings. The other player leads the hungry horde of zombies after the frightened humans. Based on the movie, the game comes in a box with a 17"x22" map, 100 counters, eight pages of rules, and two dice. The game includes berserk zombies, super zombies, and random zombie entrance. Designed by John H. Butterfield. These games are available from SPI, 257 Park Ave. So., New York, NY 10010.

THE COMPLEAT TAVERN — This is a role playing aid facilitating the running of taverns. There are 24 pages of rules, an 11"x17" interior map of a tavern, and cut out furniture. Designed by Kerry Lloyd and Richard Meyer, there are price lists, gambling, brawling, etc.

Price is \$3.95. **THIEVES GUILD III** — This edition contains, for \$5.95, lockpicking and pickpocketing expansions, and two more scenarios. Designed by Richard Meyer and Kerry Lloyd, it is 64 pages long. Both are available from Gamelords, 18616 Grosbeak Terr, Gaithersburg, MD 20760, Maryland residents add 5% sales tax. Include \$1 for P&H'

SEWERS OF OBLIVION — Another solo adventure for *T&T*, this 48-page book describes an adventure where the object is to find a way out of the labyrinthine sewers beneath the City of Terrors. Designed by Michael Stackpole, there is a special section on diseases. **T&T GAME MASTER NOTE-BOOK & SCREEN** — This has the features of a regular 3-ring binder that also stands up as an easel/screen. There are two sheets of reference tables. Price is \$10. Both from Flying Buffalo Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

PIECES OF EIGHT — This 24-page book expands the rules to *Skull and Crossbones*. Designed by Gerald Seypura, Patrick Stevens, and Scott Bizar, it includes new rules for physicians, voodoo, Indians, additional weapons, and three new scenarios. It sells for \$4.50. **GROUND AND AIR EQUIPMENT** — Designed by Edward E. Simbalist and A. Mark Ratner, this is an expansion to *Space Opera*. This 40-

the American West following any of seven historical routes. The components include a 22"x28" map, a 16-page rule book, a pad of character sheets, eight plastic markers, a ten-sided die, and two six sided dice, all in a box. Designed by Leonard H. Kanterman and Steven J. Ulberg.

BEST OF WHITE DWARF SCENARIOS — Reprinted from past *WD* issues, these are twelve scenarios for *D&D*, *Traveller*, *Rune-Quest*, *Gamma World*, and *C&S*. It sells for \$4. **THE BEST OF WHITE DWARF ARTICLES** — Covers mostly *D&D* articles, it is a collection from three years of *WD* issues. Along with the articles there is a special collection for the Fiend Factory, Potions, Tricks and Traps, etc. This also sells for \$4.

A FISTFULL OF TURKEYS — Comes in micro-format similar to the Steve Jackson games. It comes with a 7½"x6" board with 42 counters. The game recreates a one-man war against turkeys. Designed by Some Turkey, it is available from Some Turkey Games, PO Box 40, Cedar Park, TX 78613, for \$1.95.

Continued next page



page book sells for \$5 and has rules for armored vehicles, anti-aircraft fire, bombing & strafing, scramblers, flamers, area jumpers, dazing, and much more. **OREGON TRAIL** — This is a role-playing boardgame for one to eight players. The purpose is for each wagon master to cross

DUNGEON DRAWINGS SET 1 — A set of thirty 5½"x11" drawings of dungeon scenes for displaying various dungeon scenes visually. There are various drawings of rooms, corridors, and entrance ways. Drawn by Russel McCormick, available for \$5 from Dungeon Drawings, 3813 Stonewall Ct, Independence, MO 64055.

BASIC ROLE PLAYING — Now available separately, this second edition 16-page book was originally included in the boxed version of *RuneQuest*. An introductory guide for people unfamiliar with role-playing games, it now contains counters for dice and figures and a battleboard. Price is \$3.95. **DRAGON PASS** — Formerly *White Bear Red Moon*, this is a completely revised version. It now comes with 32 pages of rules, 34"x22" full-color map, 300 double-sided counters, and a six sided die. There are nine scenarios for one to three players. This edition is designed by Robert Corbett and Greg Stafford. In a box for \$15.95. **CULTS OF TERROR** — This book contains nine dangerous cults for use with *RuneQuest*. Not for player characters, this 96-page book contains horrifying examples of chaos in the *Cults of Prax* format. Sells for \$9.95. All are available from Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706, with \$1 per order for P&H. California residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax.

APOCALYPSE — "The Game of Nuclear Devastation", the 22"x16" mounted board features Europe and North Africa. There are

700 counters and 36 plastic markers representing armies, nuclear missiles, radioactive areas, and cities. The four page rules include missile firing, effect of a missile explosion, how to add extra armies to your empires, how to attack enemy-held regions, etc. Boxed for two to four players, designed by Mike Hayes, it is published by Games Workshop Ltd.

SECURITY STATION — MicroQuest 5 for *The Fantasy Trip*, this programmed adventure features becoming a treasure seeker on Earth after atomic devastation. The game comes with an 8½"x14" map, 48 pages of adventure, counters and a die. Designed by John W. Colbert, it sells for \$3.95. **THE LORDS OF UNDERNEATH** — This is a two-player boardgame of fantasy tactical combat in an underground labyrinth. The 24-page rules cover solitaire play, surprise attack, pursuit, morale, locked doors, flight, treasure, mercenaries and uncontrolled movement. The map is 12"x14" with 84 counters and a die. Designed by Keith Gross, it sells for \$3.95. **FURY OF THE NORSEMEN** — Designed by Kevin Hendryx, this is a two player game of Viking raids in the tenth century. The 16-page rules simulate plunder, capture, berserkers, torching, leaders, missiles, combat and Divine Wrath for the clergy. The game also comes with a 12"x14" map, 126 counters, and a die, all for \$3.95. **FANTASY MASTERS' CODEX** — This is a computerized guide to *TFT*. This is a 120-page book that indexes and sorts things like potions, gas bombs, spells, jobs, race, etc.

Retails for \$9.95. **FANTASY MASTERS' SCREEN** — This is a 25½"x11" screen printed on cardstock. It has various charts and tables with saving throws, weight of characters, turn sequence, etc., for *TFT*. Sells for \$2.95. **INTERPLAY 1** — Edited by Tracy Hallowell who says "*Interplay* is a blatant house organ, dealing only with Metagaming products", this new 32-page magazine contains articles to that effect. Digest-sized, it is bi-monthly with a year's subscription for \$9. All are available from Metagaming, PO Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761.

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN — This is a fantasy boardgame for two to ten players. It comes with 143 counters, eight pages of rules, two dice, and a 27"x22" mounted map, all in a box. Rules include wizards, sighting, hunting, gargoyles, bombardments, etc. **FURIOSO** — This is an unofficial scenario for *D&D*. Designed by Davy Davis, this 64-page book has 27 encounter situations in a mission to find and destroy a fearsome weapon that could destroy the world. Sells for \$7. Both are available from Dimension Six, Inc., 4625 So. Sherman St, Englewood, CO 80110.

HAZARD — This is a 22"x34" map with notes for use with *Superhero 2044*. The maps and notes describe the area dominated by Australia. There are more monsters and organizations. Price is \$2. **ASTROGATORS CHART-BOOK** — A 96-page book of blank maps and map keys for use with SF games. There are

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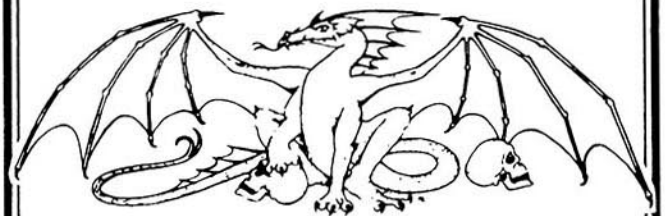
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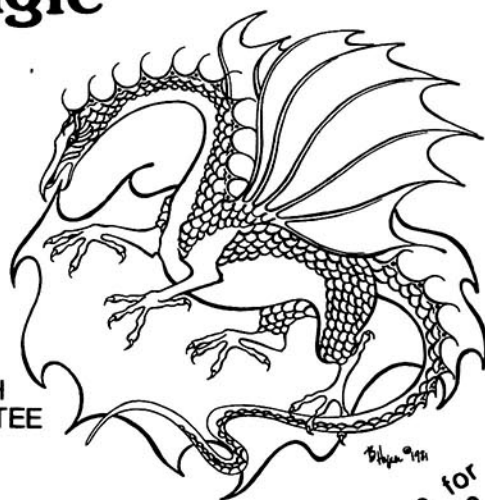
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THE BEST OF BOARD WARGAMING — This 194 page book by Nicholas Palmer covers all aspects of board wargaming, from the prolific operational games to SF games, from the monster-sized games to the beer-and-pretzels variety, from realistic games to computer simulations. The major part of the book is taken up by reviews of new games since Mr. Palmer's first book, *The Comprehensive Guide to Board Wargaming*. \$16.95 from Hippocrene Books, Inc., 171 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016.

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special rules for escape, special knowledge, alarms, cameras and monitors, dogs, intercoms, etc. All are published by TSR Hobbies, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.



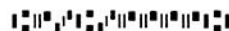
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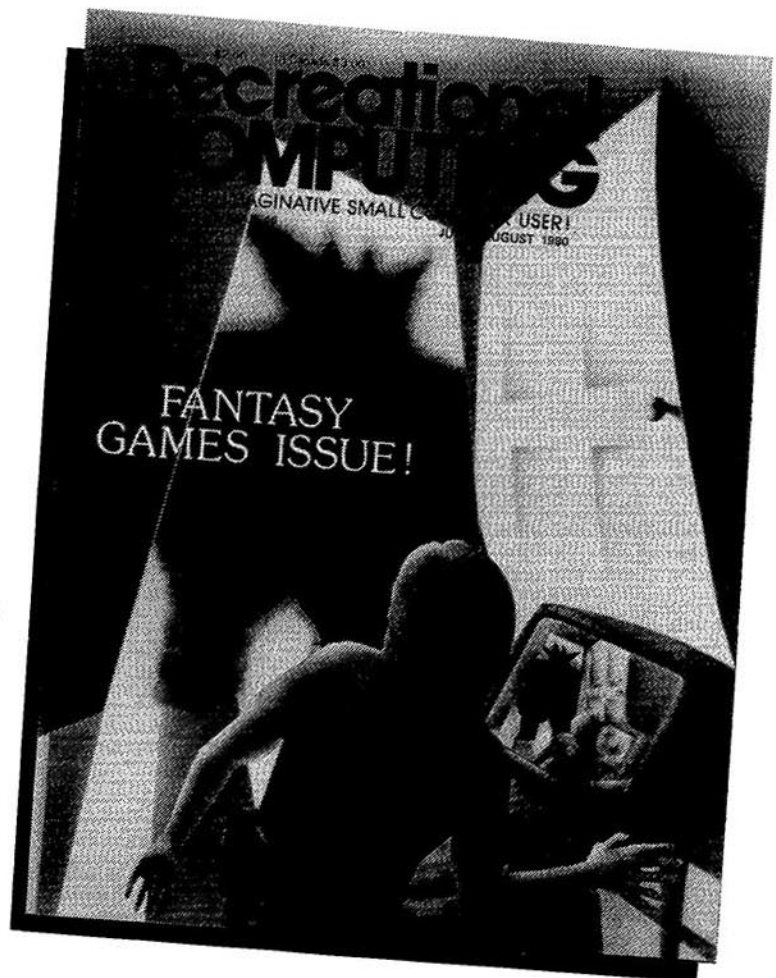
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DIFFERENT VIEWS

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BUGS IN REVIEW

Dear Tadashi:

I appreciate the favorable review of our microcomputer games, *The Temple of Apshai* and *The Datestones of Ryn*, in *DW 11*, but I would like to correct a few points.

First, while I designed the basic *Dunjon-Quest* system and wrote some of the books, credit should also go to Jim Connelley for the programming and Jeff Johnson (author of "The Fourfold Way of FRP" in the same issue) for the specific scenario/dunjon design of both *Apshai* and *Ryn*.

Second, while *Apshai* was our first FRP game and we are still finding (and correcting) minor bugs in it, there is nothing wrong with the innkeeper and his prices. The biggest problem with doing a computer game is that, whenever anything unusual occurs, people presume it must be a bug. More often, it is (a) player error or (b) designed effect. In the case of the innkeeper, if your offer is too low — insultingly low, in effect — the innkeeper will get offended and *raise* his prices. Furthermore, your character (as opposed to the player) may be a poor bargainer: e.g., if he has a high Ego and low Intelligence, he is a stubborn clod, and the innkeeper may treat him accordingly — and raise his prices. In *Hellfire Warrior*, the sequel to *Apshai* (and a distinctly better game, in my view), you will also run into similar problems if you spend too much time at "nickel-and-dime" bargaining, haggling over every gold piece; the proprietors of the Armory, Apothecary, or Magic Shoppe will eventually conclude you are wasting their time: the result is increasing tight-fistedness on their part and, finally, raised prices. But all this is, indeed, "supposed to happen."

Jon Freeman
Automated Simulations Incorporated
Mtn Vw, CA

UNBIASED BIAS

Dear *DW*,

I have been a reader of *Different Worlds* from issue one. Up until recently I have been very impressed with the content of your articles and unbiased editorial style. The former is still improving with every issue but the latter has taken a disturbing turn as of late.

We all need to remember that everyone plays their own FRP game because they enjoy it! It has been my experience that each style of FRP has something to offer and that by playing each, one can incorporate some of their best aspects into the FRP system you prefer.

I would also like to respond to Steven Horst's letter in *DW 10*. There is more to FRP gaming than philosophy, there are usually a

few mechanics involved. I think *DW* has an admirable goal in striking a balance between methods and mentors. Steven also needs to remember that not all charts deal with combat resolution. Many help the novice GMs deal with unusual situations (such as deity intervention). A few even help experienced GMs with hastily organized games.

I don't think any magazine needs to (or should) sacrifice one aspect for another. I still think *DW* is the best up and coming fantasy mag around. Keep getting it together.

Kurt Giesselman
Charlottesville, VA

A BIASED PERSPECTIVE

Dear Tadashi,

My ghod, but that Jeffrey A. Johnson sure is a smart lad! His article "The Fourfold Way of FRP" in *DW 11* was a work of *near* genius.

The first section of his article, particularly the graph, is quite similar to the first part of the piece I did for my 'zine ("Oiling the Squeak 2.5" in *A&E 66*), though we differ greatly from where we go from there. Since I have a somewhat unique perspective (and very strong biases of my own) I'd like to offer my own views on Mr. Johnson's article (views which are more fully developed in the article I cited above).

(1) The concept of game graphing is one I find most sound. Mr. Johnson's conception of it is flawed, however, for the following reasons:

(A) To quote myself (humble I ain't): "... while there is *some* truth to the notion that Power Gaming interferes with Story Telling, and Role-Playing interferes with Wargaming, it is incorrect to look upon these as opposites which never meet." Unfortunately, this does seem to be Mr. Johnson's view, as he places them at the extremes of a shared axis, thus placing them in opposition.

(B) Role-Playing is not "pure fantasy"; it is the *simulation* of a persona just as Wargaming is the *simulation* of combat. Both are similar in their goals, not opposites — even if they use very different "mechanics" to achieve the desired simulation. It is not difficult for me to accept them as both belonging to a "realism axis," but it is impossible to see them as belonging at opposite ends.

(C) My comments in (B) above apply to the opposition suggested by the "goals axis" as well. Also, I take issue with the statement that it is the players which are responsible for Power Gaming: "... campaigns which cater to the player's values lying near the Power Gaming extreme ..." Yes, but who is it that allows a campaign to do such catering? The GM! The Gm, and the GM only, creates the conditions for a Power Gaming campaign.

I further take issue with the implication that the GM opposes the players (and the subsequent implication that to do otherwise is a sign that the GM has "lost control" of the campaign). While there is tension created between the story as created by the GM and the actions as decided upon by the players, this is only a part of the collaborative process of an FRP game, and does not have to be a case of opposition between GM and players. (For a more extensive development of this idea of collaboration, see my 'zine in *A&E 60*.)

(D) A further demonstration of the weakness of Mr. Johnson's system occurs when one tries to graph a world using it (as I tried when using a similar two-axis approach while working on the early stages of my own article). Since it is a two-axis graph it should be theoretically possible to accurately graph a campaign as a single point. Try to do this with any campaign that you are familiar with and you will see for yourself the distortions that result — for example, if (using the Cartesian coordinate system) you placed a point at 3, 3 on the graph, you are describing a world with *no* Role-Playing or Story Telling elements — a virtual impossibility in my opinion. No, the only way that I have found of coming close to an accurate graphic representation of a world is not a point-and-two-axis system, but a plane-and-four-axis system (as again described in my 'zine).

(E) As a final capper to this part of my response, let me take issue with another of Mr. Johnson's ideas related to his graph. While I agree that extremes are undesirable, a perfect balance of the game elements would be much worse. This is made clear by Mr. Johnson's own graph — a balance directs us to just one point on the graph, that in the center: 0, 0. Which is exactly what a balanced campaign will lead to — the zero point of stagnation.

(2) While there may be such (since there are hundreds of campaigns under the sun), I have never encountered any game in which players did any adventuring *except* to secure for themselves "honor and increased social stature within the campaign world." These are what experience points, skill increases, and loot represent. While I agree with Mr. Johnson's point about sharing with NPCs, this tag at the end of the paragraph weakens his argument considerably.

(3) Finally, my last complaint is that the article seems to me (and I admit to being a radical) to be far too conservative. All it boils down to is a reshuffling of ideas already presented by Messrs. Blacow and Pulsipher. Mr. Johnson's view that, "One cannot (and *should not*) claim a 'One True Way' philosophy if there are other players in the campaign who desires otherwise" is like most such oft repeated dogma cliched malarkey, and is un-

doubtedly responsible for the blandness of his article. While One-True-Wayism *is* to be avoided when discussing FRP in general, it is certainly permissible in the particular, giving the discussion some thrust, a particular point of view. And the concept of applying such a statement to a campaign leaves me aghast; a GM *must* be allowed to establish his or her own philosophy, his or her own One True Way in their own campaigns, or they will never be effective as GMs. It is only by having the strength to follow through with one's own vision that art is created, and progress is made. Not by compromising oneself and sticking to the straight 'n narrow.

Mr. Johnson did a good job of presenting his views. However, I feel he stopped his thinking short everywhere along the line.

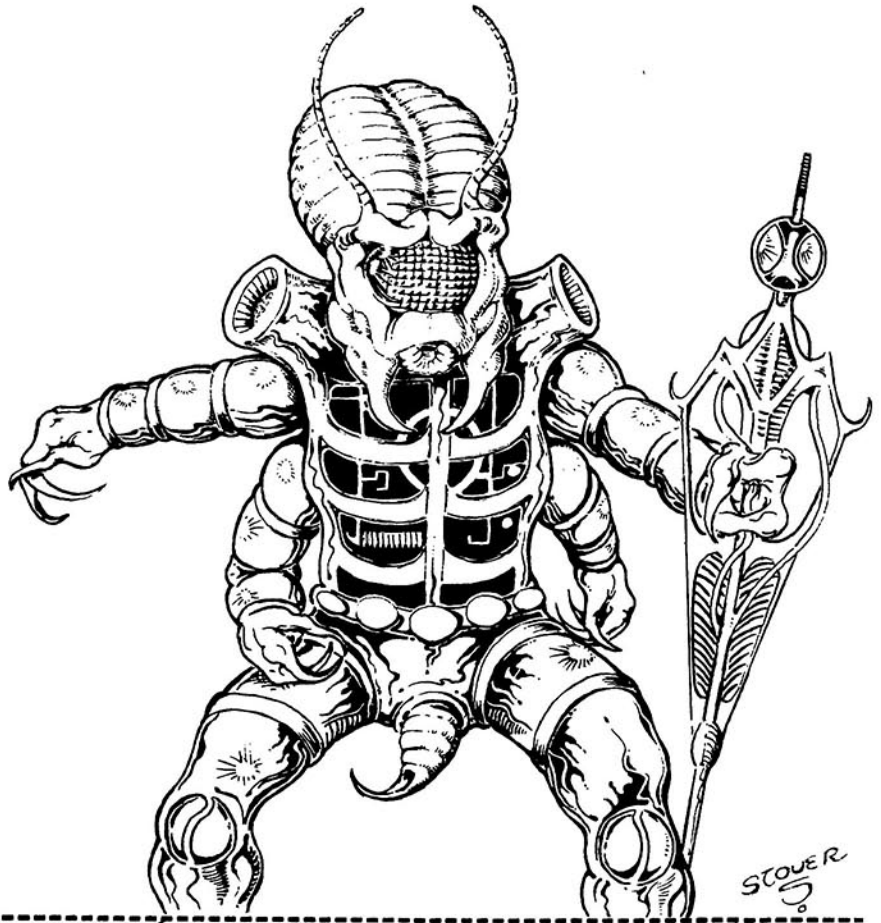
Scott Bauer
Pittsburgh, CA

A FAN WRITES

Dear Tadashi,

I would like to thank you and your fine staff for producing *Different Worlds*. Your magazine has been a great help to me, both as a reference during game sessions and as a varied sourcebook of interesting and fresh information. As I have been teaching a class on role-playing games at a local college as part of their continuing education program, I especially appreciate your earlier issues which contained many articles explaining just what role-playing was and "how to do it." I also deeply appreciate your emphasis on the *ideal* of role-playing as a useful pastime, rather than an inordinate emphasis on any one single rule system as the apotheosis of what the "game should be like." Bravo!

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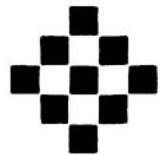
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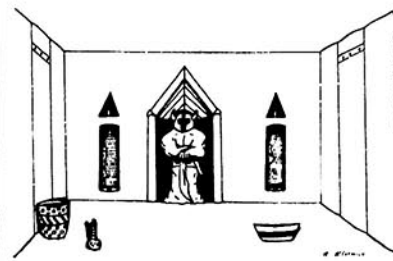
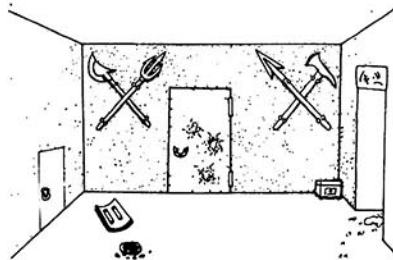
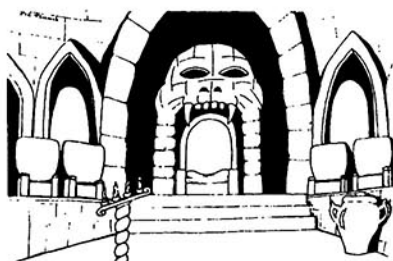
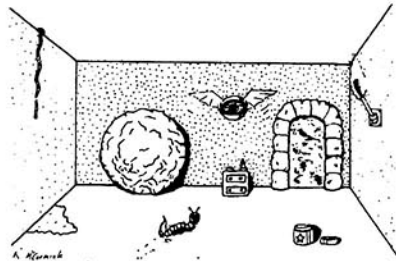
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Dear Tadashi,

So *DW* is finally going monthly! (And I get the exposure I deserve!) Congratulations to you, and to your new assistant editor, YUREK CHODAK. With a Japanese-born and a Polish-born heading a major FRP magazine, Chaosium really is living up to its reputation for being different. That was a good idea to hire STEVE PERRIN to do development work: if he can develop *RuneQuest* he can develop anything!

Some recent happenings around the conventions: DUNDRACLONE will be put on by the DUNDRACON people—Labor Day at the Oakland Hyatt . . . let's hope this one doesn't get cancelled. ATLANTICON, on the other hand, has been cancelled, and now everyone can attend GENCON EAST with a clear conscience and without wondering whether or not they should have gone to the other con, etc.

While MIKE STACKPOLE has returned to Flying Buffalo, PAUL JAQUAYS will remain with Coleco in exotic Connecticut. I have it from good authority ('good authority' is just south of 'a source high in the administration') that Coleco will do a *T&T* electronic game, perhaps competing thereby with Mattel's *D&D* electronic game. In the interim of the corporate struggle, Paul will marry RUTA VACLAVIK. Congratulations to both and I am waiting for an invitation.

Board-Craft Simulations will be releasing *Castle Keeps* and *Village & Ramparts* this summer, both compatible with their very useful *Fantasy Paths* lay-down schematics for FRPers. Chaosium's *Basic Role-Playing (3rd ed.)* is included as a freebie now with *Fantasy Paths*.

Rumour says that TSR has fired a dozen or so employees for 'bad attitude.' Can such a thing be? My ears are open: does this pre-empt a corporate shift of emphasis, such as happened at SPI, or is this massacre without a theme?

Having sold *The Space Gamer*, and having been both happy and unhappy about the results, Metagaming has released the first issue of its NEW magazine, *Interplay*. The title comes, I'm told, from portions of words having to do with bedroom games, but alas the copy I got doesn't seem that lively. Let's start a campaign to bring back the old *TSG*, say from issue 13-14 on back. (To be sure, had they named the magazine *Forecourse*, everyone would think it was about golf.) Congrats to TRACE HALLOWELL as the managing editor.

Artists Take Note: BORIS VALLEJO will be judging the first *AD&D* painting competition

at GENCON XIV this year.

Following their four initial releases, Games Workshop (and they are busy little elves) has announced three new games for this year: *Troll Tavern*, in which players fight mad, drunken duels, *Deathcars* (with super cars, shotguns, grenades, ramming bars, etc., and a dangerous track), and *Star Hunters* (a tactical space combat game). Well, doesn't sound like any of these will be on my must-list, but I am your basic hoity-toity.

Get well, BARRY GOLD, and recover completely!

Tadashi, it is my understanding that Chaosium has rejected TWO offers for *RuneQuest* movies—is so? What do you need to accept, a visitation from On High? Gigi advises that you take the money and forget the karma. Does it have to be THAT right?

And final MENTAT note: now it will cover all aspects of computers, not just gaming. Those interested contact Brian Burley, Box 266, S. Orange NJ 07079. Ho-hum, this reminds me of my first husband—not interesting any more.

TSR's *Star Frontiers* is by DAVID COOK and LAWRENCE SCHICK—sorry! That will teach me to accept an item at fourth remove: the only name I had before was Schick's. It's an SF RPG, right?

BRYAN HINNEN and CHUCK ANSHELL have left Judges Guild for greener pastures. JG is rumoured to be looking for more outside designs—nascent designers take note. My eyes will be receptive to further memos from those involved.

ALAN L. ABRAMSKY is writing a book on painting miniature figures. He could use your help and if you are interested, write him at 5 Muirfield Ct, Roanoke, TX 76262.

DAVE ARNESON reports that he has settled (happily) with TSR. Only rumor puts a label on the settlement, but I bet that if you put five zeros after a number, you would be in the right order of dollar magnitude. That kind of money could capitalize quite a game company.

Where is GREG COSTIKYAN? This vice-president of the Game Designers Guild hasn't been heard from in a while. People who know his whereabouts please contact the other officers of the Guild.

Gamescience has released their Microhedra 20-sided dice. Dice-happy LOU ZOCCHI also reports he is working on a 32-sided die.

32-sided die?

Congratulations to TSR for their knock-out booth at HIA—Atlanta. As the guy whose photos I saw said, "we don't even have enough

room to store anything that big!" The state of the art in set deco!

Martian Metals will be doing GREG STAFFORD's *Troll Ball* game complete with miniature figures conceived by WILLIAM CHURCH and sculpted by STEVE LORTZ.

Now that the 'errata' has been published (well, in dropping more than a column of type, they left out all the fantasy results except for supplements, sniff), Gigi will cast a few grumbles at the *Space Gamer* survey. Why does she bother? —because she likes the survey and wants it to continue. HOWEVER: the thing is too big [nearly 2½ pages of 8 pt. type], too arbitrary [why is one title surveyed and another one not surveyed], and too badly defined [is *Junta* an F&SF game? is *North Atlantic Convoy Raider*?]. Most of all I don't see computer games yet as legitimate F&SF, since the scope both for daring and for interesting background material is negligible—they seem to me about as evocative as chess or Monopoly (Monopoly probably describes its universe much more completely than any computer game. Now, Tadashi, I know that you're a partner in a computer game company (which I didn't see surveyed, by the way—want to protest?), and I know that you like computer games, but there are plenty of computer mags on the market now, just like there are lots of historical game mags. I just don't find computer articles any more interesting than an article, say, on double-entry bookkeeping, and I don't see any reason to play against a system when I can oppose or befriend real live computers with a whole bunch of RAM and very interesting peripherals and software! For you who have not seen the survey, a column or so is taken up with computer games—not nearly enough to have earned these comments, but I'm tired of waiting for a decent excuse.

OK, these gadgets have magnificent potential, but so do we all.

Ad Astra Dept.: now that Martian Metals has settled lucratively with the *Dragonslayer* movie people (Martian proved to have the trademark for dragonslayer, and an oops to Hollywood), SPI has gotten the game rights to the flic. This is somewhat ironic. SPI originally announced *DragonQuest* as titled *Dragonslayer*, so now same title different game. The Texas aliens are also the new owners of the North American rights for *RuneQuest* figures.

Two solid rumours: what game designer has contracted to do a beginning FRP game for a major book publisher? (Hint: the game is basically already out.) And what design pro keeps sending his original ms without keeping a copy, and what post office keeps losing it in transit? (Hint: even Gigi keeps a hard copy of her work when she gravely sends it to you via USPS.)

He's back! Tim Kask reappears with an announcement that he's going to be the editor of *Adventure Gaming* magazine. Not as original as *Different Worlds* but then not everyone is. *AG* is going to cover all aspects of adventure gaming. He tried it with the *Dragon*, perhaps he'll do better this time.

DAVID RITCHIE has given his resignation to SPI. The consensus isn't in as to why he's quitting but my contribution to the rumor mill is perhaps *DragonQuest* isn't selling well.

Love,

Gigi
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