

Issue 28, April 1983

# Different Worlds

**CW** THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

\$3.00

## Special Player-Character Issue

Detachable Pivoting Microblaster  
Shape Mutator  
Intergalactic Transmitter  
Solar Energy Receiver  
Flamethrower  
Electro-Magnetic Breastplate  
Energy Storage Device

Positronic Raygun  
Detachable Explosive Missiles  
War Blade ("Kidney Slicer")  
Matter/Energy Transmuter  
Homing Hand Grenades  
Good Luck Charm  
Gyro-Jet Boots  
Laser-Guided Missile Launcher  
Spare Power Disc

GAYLE HAMILTON ©'83



Dear Gigi,

Was that really Greg Stafford I saw at Games of Berkeley (store) a week or so ago giving a sales pitch to a couple of kids for *Tunnels and Trolls*? Is this a harbinger of some new inter-company cooperation in the FRPG world? Or does Greg get a sales commission from Ken St. Andre? And what is next? Mike Stackpole pushing *Call of Cthulhu*? Steve Peterson and George MacDonald recommending *Villains and Vigilantes*? E. Gary Gygax saying on prime time television that "*Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* is great, but *Arduin* is pretty good too."? And will Steve Jackson ever find those naked elf women? And what will he do when he finds them?

Yours,  
Concerned Consumer

## I Demand a Retraction

Regarding issue 24 — The Mostali — I have never been so disappointed in my life. After the attention paid to those scurvy trolls, I expected the Mostali to get treated as well. Was I wrong! The trash in *DW* 24 seems to have been concocted as some sort of joke, a joke in very poor taste. I am amazed that *DW* would degrade itself to printing such drivel. Why were the only two articles about Mostali culture written by Greg Stafford, who openly detests the entire race, enough to entitle one article "Why I Dislike Mostali." This seems execrably stupid to me. One would expect such a person to write degrading slander about the Mostali, and this is exactly what has happened. The article's claims, that Mostali are cannibalistic and cannot eat uncanned food, are especially insulting. Dwarven society is not as Greg Stafford seems to believe, a poor parody of Orwell's 1984. The belief that Mostali are nothing more than cogs in a machine, having no free will and no desire for anything except slavery, is totally false. The whole issue's purpose seems to have been to insult Mostali and their culture, dismissing them as being on the level of an anthive.

The "Dwarven Perceptions" article was interesting but not too well thought out. A lateral line may work very well under water, but air does not carry currents well, and wearing clothing or armor would make said lateral line useless. Also, outside air currents would not "blind" a lateral line, assuming such a thing was possible —

water currents do not "blind" fish. An "infravision" sense might work (though the "pits" would be located on the face, probably near, on, or in the nose, and not in the eyes), but I doubt it would be exact enough, for instance, to measure a fever, and it would be even less help in navigating underground than a long pole.

I demand that this slanderous set of articles be retracted, that Greg Stafford apologize for his poor taste, and that serious descriptions of Mostali culture, behavior and religion be given.

Matt Warren

## Milius and Sword Fighting

While I felt that *Different Worlds* 24 was especially good (in particular the Poul Anderson dwarf article) I cannot resist making a comment on the John Milius interview. Mr Milius may know something about modern kendo, but he displays almost complete ignorance of comparable European fighting techniques. His statement that European sword fighting is neither an art nor a skill, but just "lumbering power" is, as anyone acquainted with it will tell you, totally wrong. And to say that a third rate samurai would beat the finest English knight "before he'd made his first stroke" is simply an example of ignorant prejudice. European and Japanese sword fighting are both highly-developed disciplines with their own characteristic advantages and drawbacks. Perhaps Mr. Milius ought to see a couple of European sword fights and see what I mean. Or maybe he should talk to an irate Society for Creative Anachronism member.

Kendrick VanZant  
Irate S.C.A. member

## Mob Leaders for *Gangbusters!*

You would have done much service to us fans of TSR's *Gangbusters!* if you had included stats for that game in your "Mob Leaders" article in *DW* 27. Or do you only concentrate on third world games?

Lawrence Ward  
Geneva, IL

## An Open Letter to Gary Gygax

"This game is unlike chess in that the rules are not cut and dried. In many places they are guidelines and suggested methods only."

—Gary Gygax, "The Game" from  
*Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook*

"Variance and difference are desirable, but both should be kept within the boundaries of the overall system. Imaginative and creative addition can most certainly be included; that is why nebulous areas have been built into the game."

— Gary Gygax, "Preface" to  
*Dungeon Masters Guide*

"The game is the thing, and certain rules can be distorted or disregarded altogether in favor of play."

— Gary Gygax, "Introduction" from  
*Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook*

"Pronouncements there may be, but they are not from 'on high' as respects your game."

— Gary Gygax, "Preface" to  
*Dungeon Masters Guide*

We're a group of people who, every friday night for two years, have played what we have believed to be *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. Now, Mr. Gygax, in your article "Poker, Chess, and the *AD&D* System" in issue 67 of *Dragon* magazine, you have informed us that we have not been playing *AD&D* at all. In fact, according to your article what we are playing can only be best described as "... something else, classifiably only under the generic 'FRPG' catch-all."

In your article you attack not only the practice of incorporating new and different material (not "officially" recognized by TSR Hobbies, Inc.) into the existing rules of the *D&D* and *AD&D* games, but you go so far as to belittle those individuals who take part in such practices.

It's obvious to us that we have been gravely misinformed these past years. It is nice to now know what we have been playing, since it's been a source of considerable pleasure for so long. We do, however, take offense to the manner in which you have chosen to enlighten us. We found the attitude of your article bombastic, self-righteous and condescending.

To quote you: "Serious players will only accept official material, for they play the game rather than playing at it . . .". You are suggesting that, in using our own judgment to screen all new material from many different sources to be considered for addition into our own campaigns and not accepting only official material, we are not serious players. So perhaps you

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# Different Worlds

Issue 28, April 1983

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### Dragons Demand Equality

by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

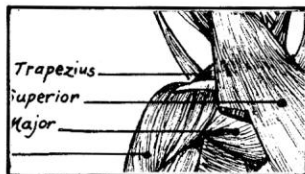
This is a guide for using dragons as player- and non-player-characters for *D&D*.

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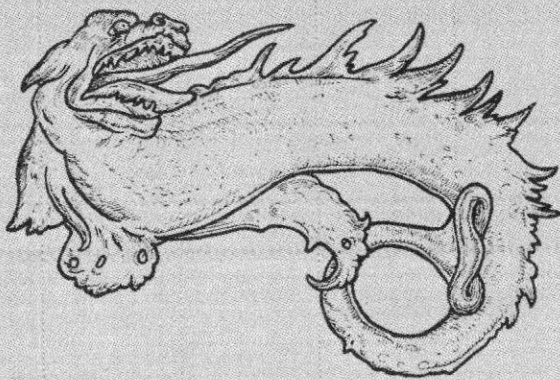


Cover — *Jarnon of Zeffar* — of the primitive and savage blue-skinned Malonians — traveling throughout the known galactic systems, he has adapted high tech weapons from the various cultures he encounters, thus building his own personal arsenal of super weapons and making him the most renowned & feared of all the interplanetary bounty hunters —

by Gayle Hamilton  
Interiors — John Borkowski, pages 20, 21, 23; Roland Brown, page 34; Yurek Chodak, page 27; Dan Day, page 18; David Dudley, page 12; Max Heim, pages 28, 29, 32, 33; Paul Jaquays, page 26; Miron Mercury, page 24; Valerie Olson, page 15; Robin Wood, page 8, 10, 11, 14.

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# Dragons Demand Equality



by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

The dragon is perhaps the most celebrated monster of modern fantasy, judging by the novels, calendars, and figures of various kinds featuring dragons. And, with the significant exception of the dragons of Pern in the McCaffrey novels, the dragon is generally cast in the role of the villain, the terror of the countryside that must be slain. That's a tradition dating back at least as far as the story of St. George and the dragon, and it continues to our time in such forms as the movie *Dragonslayer*. This is probably why the dragon was chosen for the name of the first adventure role-playing game, *Dungeons & Dragons*, and why those and other rules treat the dragon as a monster. That's understandable, both as a matter of tradition and as a matter of simplicity in writing the game. But I think dragons deserve better treatment than game rules usually give them.

Dragons can be intelligent beings. Many folklore traditions claim dragons are among the wisest of beasts. Dragons are simply gigantic and elaborate snakes, and the snake or dragon symbolizes wisdom in literature. In the orient, dragons were given even higher status. In addition to being considered wise and subtle, they were classed among the gods in Chinese mythology. It is from oriental stories that we learn that dragons can change their form and walk disguised among humanity. Also, the concept of the dragon as a god or demigod is possibly where we get the concept of flying dragons, since the gods dwell in the sky in most myths (note that oriental flying dragons have no wings).

The designers of *D&D* would have done better to design the dragons, and other intelligent monsters, as character classes. The original *D&D* rules included a comment that any monster could be played as a character, starting at

first level and working your way up slowly. Yet there are no guidelines at all on how to do this in the rules. Instead, almost all monsters are given at a specific level (hit dice) and set specifications, as if monsters never changed. I assume the designers thought they were giving an average adult for each monster, but one wonders at the results.

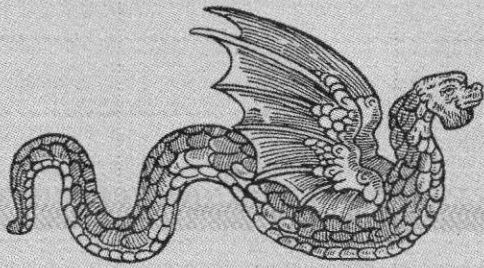
For example, the dragons are given in a range, with usually three levels for each color of dragon. But the levels given are not coordinated with the monster combat table so as to show stages of growth. And the dragons that can use magic are limited to the power equivalent of a twelfth level magic-user, if the specifications for spells for a golden dragon are compared with the spell table for a L12 mage. For an intelligent species, it seems most strange that the rules give no great range of power for individuals of that race. And it is decidedly peculiar that the dragon, that most fearsome of all monsters, was not planned for growth to keep up with characters who rise to the high levels written for humans in the *D&D* rules.

You may blanch at the thought of player-character dragons or griffins or other powerful monsters, and with good reason. Game balance would be close to impossible to maintain if the players had the power of the monsters for themselves. But that does not explain why no planning was made for this in the rules, once the statement was put in the book that the monsters were a possible player-class. Furthermore, it is clear if you compare the way the player-character classes were designed with the specifications in the books for intelligent monsters, the humanoid races and the non-humanoid races were simply not designed to balance each other at a given rate of

growth. Instead, as player-characters go up levels, they graduate to tougher and tougher *races* of monsters, and themselves become the terror of the lesser races of monsters. In a real sense, the player-characters become monsters themselves.

Intelligence is the crucial difference between people and animals, not the shape of the body or the type of the culture. Dragons are people, griffins are people, dwarfs are people, humans are people. Animals start as infants, quickly grow to a level of ferocity and cunning that allows them to survive in the wilderness, and there they stop. So, for unintelligent creatures that do not continue to grow indefinitely in size and strength, the fixed-specifications approach to writing in the *D&D* rules makes sense. But intelligent races start as infants, grow slowly to adulthood, and continue to grow in skill and wisdom and power for most of their adult life. For any intelligent race, the specifications written for them should be written in levels of development, just as was done for humans, elves, dwarfs, and other races in the *D&D* rules. This would include a range of occupations when appropriate — there is no good reason why a particular dragon might not be a cleric of an appropriate god, if dragons in your campaign are not worshiped as gods themselves.

The problem with player-character dragons is to balance the monster's growth so that it doesn't over-balance the power available to player-characters of the more normal races. The choice of disadvantages depends on the shape and normal rate of growth of the specific race you are studying, as compared with the special powers that race has in the game rules. That choice is often difficult since you can't really compare a special ability,



such as the ability to fly, with the abilities of a normal human.

A dragon, in *D&D* at least, has several advantages over a human: it can fly, has natural armor, has three attacks per round using two claws and a bite, and it has the fearsome breath weapon. It also can use magic and has giant size, with the corresponding benefits of high hit points and giant strength, although these aren't specifically addressed in the *D&D* rules.

My solution to handling this most fearsome of monsters as a character was to make it very weak at low levels and make its growth to higher levels painfully slow. The theory behind this approach is that dragons start small and young, and gain the benefits in combat of pluses to hit and damage additions from the combination of gaining levels and growing larger. Furthermore, their advances in the use of magical or clerical spells would be governed by gaining levels, just like humans, but their rate of growth would be very slow by comparison, because their enormously long lifespan makes them lazy at their studies (and besides they like to sleep a lot). To achieve this, I gave dragons an experience point scale four times slower than that of human fighters. As you can see in the Dragon Growth Table, the growth in levels is also keyed to growth in the toughness of hide for Armor Class improvements. This acts as an important restraining factor, since until the dragon reaches Sub-Adult his armor is of little protection against heavily-armed foes.

The division of damage adds by combat class may puzzle people who haven't read my earlier article, "Characters By Category." Briefly, the *D&D* combat system keys combat ability to a single table, and distinguishes between character classes by the number

### DRAGON GROWTH TABLE

| Level | Exp. Pts  | Dragon Age   | Size | HD | AC | CC | Claw | Bite | Breath |
|-------|-----------|--------------|------|----|----|----|------|------|--------|
| 1     | 0         | Very Young   | 2m   | 1  | 9  | 1  | 1d4  | 1d8  | 1d6    |
| 2     | 8,000     | Very Young   | 4m   | 2  | 8  | 1  | 1d4  | 1d8  | 2d6    |
| 3     | 16,000    | Very Young   | 6m   | 3  | 7  | 1  | 1d4  | 1d8  | 3d6    |
| 4     | 32,000    | Young        | 8m   | 4  | 6  | 2  | 2d4  | 2d8  | 4d6    |
| 5     | 63,000    | Young        | 10m  | 5  | 5  | 2  | 2d4  | 2d8  | 5d6    |
| 6     | 125,000   | Young        | 12m  | 6  | 4  | 2  | 2d4  | 2d8  | 6d6    |
| 7     | 250,000   | Sub-Adult    | 14m  | 7  | 3  | 3  | 3d4  | 3d8  | 7d6    |
| 8     | 500,000   | Sub-Adult    | 16m  | 8  | 2  | 3  | 3d4  | 3d8  | 8d6    |
| 9     | 750,000   | Sub-Adult    | 18m  | 9  | 1  | 3  | 3d4  | 3d8  | 9d6    |
| 10    | 1,000,000 | Adult        | 20m  | 10 | 0  | 4  | 4d4  | 4d8  | 10d6   |
| 11    | 1,250,000 | Adult        | 22m  | +2 | 0  | 4  | 4d4  | 4d8  | 11d6   |
| 12    | 1,500,000 | Adult        | 24m  | 11 | -1 | 4  | 4d4  | 4d8  | 12d6   |
| 13    | 1,750,000 | Old          | 26m  | +2 | -1 | 5  | 5d4  | 5d8  | 13d6   |
| 14    | 2,000,000 | Old          | 28m  | 12 | -2 | 5  | 5d4  | 5d8  | 14d6   |
| 15    | 2,250,000 | Old          | 30m  | +2 | -2 | 5  | 5d4  | 5d8  | 15d6   |
| 16    | 2,500,000 | Very Old     | 32m  | 13 | -3 | 6  | 6d4  | 6d8  | 16d6   |
| 17    | 2,750,000 | Very Old     | 34m  | +2 | -3 | 6  | 6d4  | 6d8  | 17d6   |
| 18    | 3,000,000 | Very Old     | 36m  | +2 | -3 | 6  | 6d4  | 6d8  | 18d6   |
| 19    | 3,250,000 | Ancient      | 38m  | 14 | -4 | 7  | 7d4  | 7d8  | 19d6   |
| 20    | 3,500,000 | Ancient      | 40m  | +2 | -4 | 7  | 7d4  | 7d8  | 20d6   |
| 21    | 3,750,000 | Ancient      | 42m  | +2 | -4 | 7  | 7d4  | 7d8  | 21d6   |
| 22    | 4,000,000 | Very Ancient | 44m  | 15 | -5 | 8  | 8d4  | 8d8  | 22d6   |
| 23    | 4,250,000 | Very Ancient | 46m  | +2 | -5 | 8  | 8d4  | 8d8  | 23d6   |
| 24    | 4,500,000 | Very Ancient | 48m  | +2 | -5 | 8  | 8d4  | 8d8  | 24d6   |
| 25    | 4,750,000 | Elder Dragon | 50m  | 16 | -6 | 9  | 9d4  | 9d8  | 25d6   |

of levels needed to go up a line on the combat table. But the system would be better understood if attention was concentrated on the progression lines themselves instead of levels, and so I refer to groups of levels assigned to a given line on the table as a "combat class" when referring to things such as saving throws that *D&D* keys to that operation. Since in *D&D* improvements come in jumps in the combat system instead of small improvements for every level gained, I have keyed dragon improvements from size and strength growth to level gains and combat classes.

The dragon's breath weapon is also keyed to combat class. While *D&D* uses a flat rule of three times a day, this needs to be changed to reflect character/monster growth. I recom-

mend using a rule that limits the breath weapon to once a day per combat class. If you find that excessive at high levels, you might try limiting the breath weapon to once a day per one-half the combat class, rounded up. Thus, a CC5 dragon would breathe 3 times a day, while a CC2 could breathe only once.

I keyed the damage done by a breath weapon to level instead of combat class. The reason for this is that experience has shown that the slowness of growth due to the high experience point cost per level means that the character tends to be lower in level than the average member of the party, and of the average monster. Keying damage to combat class made it too weak. Since I have dropped the *D&D* rules for damage points on breath



weapons in favor of the system used for almost everything else in *D&D*, I made the breath weapon do 1D6 per level. I consider the breath weapon a magical effect by which the dragon converts its breath into a deadly substance at will — otherwise, the limits on its use seem too arbitrary, as do the incredible variety of breath weapon types found in the *D&D* rules. I therefore adopted the same damage rules for breath weapons as for magical spells, which for mass damage typically is 1D6 per level of user.

The saving throw system in *D&D* does not distinguish well between types. It gives different saves for humans depending upon character class, but lumps all monsters together. This makes no sense, and if saves properly vary among members of the same race according to their occupations, the same should apply to monsters who follow those same professions. So I recommend making dragons save as humans, using the magic-user or cleric table, depending upon the dragon's specialty; if you are dealing with a non-spell-using dragon, use the fighter saving throws. In any case, I'd make the dragon +4 against dragon breath, and immune to his own type of breath weapon.

Like the breath weapon, I consider the dragon's ability to fly to be a magical power inherent to the race (as distinguished from spell casting). This is why wingless dragons can fly, as required by oriental tradition. Why, then, do western dragons usually have wings? My explanation for that is that wings give faster speed, so a wingless dragon flies at half the speed of a winged dragon.

You may have noticed that I have not divided the dragons into races, nor have I applied limits on level to types of dragon. As far as I am concerned, any dragon can have any level's rating

on hit dice and armor and melee damage, regardless of the dragon's color and alignment. It's all a question of level achieved by that individual dragon. The Dragon Growth Table specifications apply to every dragon, because that is the only fair approach to treating player-characters. And if that is true, the same obviously applies to non-player-characters as well.

Dragons are supposed to be great terror beasts, which is why TSR gives them a fear power that varies with age. It seems to me that such a beast must rarely be encountered, to preserve its mythological beast status. If dragons really infested the land in such a large number of varieties as are available, which implies a considerable number of each type, they would ravage the food supply, including humanity. In small numbers, dragons would be something humanity could handle.

I believe that dragons should not exist as standard species at all. Each dragon should be unique, and always terrifying if encountered, since the player-characters will never be able to know just by looking at it what its powers are. A dragon's age may be estimated from its size, but that's all is known until the dragon acts. Color, breath weapon, magical ability, even shape may vary from dragon to dragon.

Dragons are rare because they reproduce at great intervals. The female lays one egg every two hundred years, and because the young dragon has poor armor, relatively low strength, and few hit points until adolescence, only about half live to maturity. Every dragon is different because every egg is a mutation of the factors available from the male and female parents and their ancestors, so the young may be different in striking ways from their parents.

Since dragons are unique individuals rather than examples of species un-

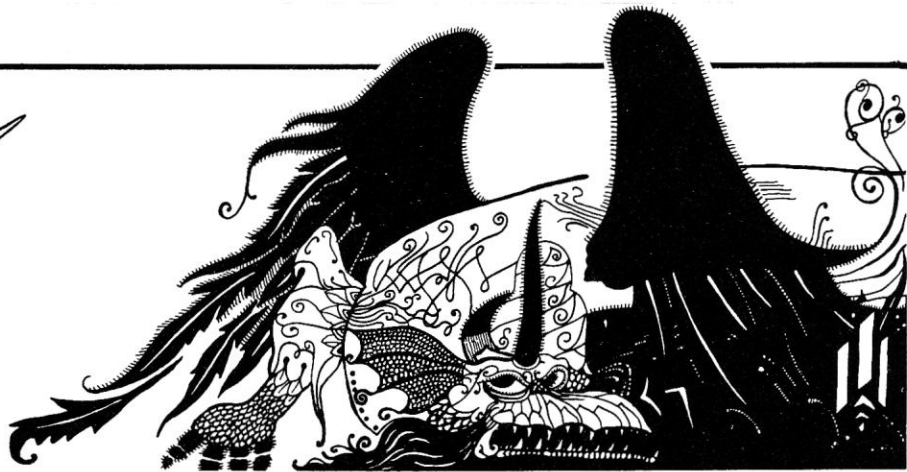
der this approach, you could create a personality and roll characteristics for each one you place in your campaign. That may sound like a lot of extra work, but remember that this is not a casual wandering monster. Dragons are special, and should not be on a wandering monster chart at all, unless you decide that this dragon's lair is in that neighborhood.

You need the characteristics for personality, and also to decide whether the dragon is a spell-user, and if so, of what type. Roll 3D6 each for intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, and charisma, and 2D6+6 for constitution. Strength is already built into the attack factors on the Dragon Growth Table. The chance of the dragon being a magic-user is 90% for INT 18, and 5% less for each point under 18, so with an INT 10 the dragon has a 50% chance of being a magic-user. If the dragon is not a magic-user, use the same procedure with WIS to determine whether the dragon is a cleric. If neither, treat the dragon as a fighter. The idea of a dragon spell singer or other bardic class is also interesting.

To determine the dragon's color, roll on the Dragon Color Table. If your roll is 19 or 20, roll again to pick a second color. A spotted dragon has scales of alternating colors. A striped dragon has alternating rows of

#### DRAGON COLOR TABLE

| D20 | Coloration | D20 | Coloration           |
|-----|------------|-----|----------------------|
| 1   | Red        | 11  | Copper               |
| 2   | Orange     | 12  | Bronze               |
| 3   | Yellow     | 13  | Silver               |
| 4   | Green      | 14  | Gold                 |
| 5   | Blue       | 15  | Gray                 |
| 6   | Purple     | 16  | Pearly               |
| 7   | White      | 17  | Turquoise            |
| 8   | Tan        | 18  | Crystalline          |
| 9   | Brown      | 19  | Spotted (roll twice) |
| 10  | Black      | 20  | Striped (roll twice) |



differently-colored scales. I actually recommend using your own imagination, but this system is useful if you can't think of a particular color or combination yourself.

Remember that shape is also variable. For player-character dragons, I suggest limiting the shape to the traditional one, with an attack of two claws and one bite, which implies two pairs of legs. For NPC dragons, however, you should remember that there is a family of dragon types already in the *D&D* rules, including wyverns, hydras, and the like. So for NPCs, the shape and number of attacks is variable, if you want to experiment.

**Claw Attacks:** Roll 1D100: 01-75% gives 2 attacks, 76-95% gives 3 attacks, and 96-00% gives 4 attacks. Since I prefer to think of dragons as being symmetrical, I assume that when a dragon gets 3 attacks, it is bracing itself with the other member of one pair of claws for some reason, such as to strengthen its attack with a small claw.

**Bite Attacks:** Roll 1D100: 01-75% gives 1 bite, 76-95 gives 2 bites, and 96-00% gives 3. I prefer not to multiply PC dragon heads beyond three, since dragons have breath weapons.

**Sting Attacks:** Roll 1D100: 01-50% gives none, 51-75% gives 1 sting, 76-90% 2 stings, 91-96% 3 stings, 97-99% 4 stings, and 00% 5 stings. The dragon's tail(s) contain its sting(s) if any. They can hit either backwards or sideways to attack foes, thus preventing the sneak-up-from-behind approach. Or they can come over a dragon's head to attack its primary opponents. If a dragon has a sting, roll for the type of damage it does (roll separately for each, if there is more than one sting). Roll 1D100: 01-75% same as a claw, 76-99% same as a bite, 100% same as a breath weapon (damages only the person it hits).

**Breath Weapons:** A dragon's breath weapon is one of its most fearsome theats, for it is an area weapon affecting many potential victims. Its power depends on the dragon's level of power, and the number of times the breath can be used each day depends on the dragon's age. The breath weapon type varies with the individual dragon, since no two dragons are exactly alike. The weapon is produced by quasi-magical means, which is why some dragons have the ability to use more than one type of breath weapon. But it is not a magical spell as such, so protections against magic do not protect against dragon breath. A save vs. dragon breath reduces the damage to half. For types that produce results other than damage points, I suggest having half damage for paralyzation as being slowed, for stoning or death as paralyzation, and for dissolution or other bodily destruction paralyzation plus damage points equal to half

what would have been rolled for a regular breath weapon. Other results, as usual, are up to the GM.

The dragon's will transforms its exhaled breath into a deadly substance. It blows out in one of three forms: (1) a narrow beam the same size and shape as the path of a lightning bolt (but a long column instead of a moving bolt, and with no bounce-back), (2) an area-filling gas cloud the same size as a fireball, or (3) a broad cone of the same size and shape as a cone produced by a magic staff.

Many of the breath weapons listed in the Dragon Breath Table operate like spells of the same name.

The dragon growth system in this article produces a broad range of dragons, making available suitable opponents for practically any level party, if dragons are merely things to fight in your campaign. High level dragons are intentionally made very powerful for exactly that reason. □

#### DRAGON BREATH TABLE

Roll 1D12 for the number of different breath weapons: 1-8 = 1; 9-11 = 2; 12 = 3.

Roll 1D6 for the form of each breath weapon: 1-2 = beam; 3-4 = cloud; 5-6 = cone.

Roll 1D100 for the type of breath weapon:

| D100  | Attack     | D100  | Attack              |
|-------|------------|-------|---------------------|
| 01-07 | Slow       | 63-68 | Missiles            |
| 08-14 | Weakness   | 69-74 | Poison              |
| 15-20 | Blindness  | 75-80 | Acid                |
| 21-26 | Feeblemind | 81-86 | Sleep               |
| 27-32 | Confusion  | 87-91 | Paralysis           |
| 33-38 | Charm      | 92-93 | Level Drain         |
| 39-44 | Web        | 94-95 | Flesh to Stone      |
| 45-50 | Cold       | 96-97 | Death               |
| 51-56 | Fire       | 98-99 | Disintegrate Flesh  |
| 57-62 | Shock      | 00    | Disintegrate Matter |

Slow reduces the victim's speed to half, and Weakness reduces the victim's strength to half normal. Blindness is self-explanatory. Feeblemind not only renders spell-users unable to cast spells, but also makes fighters more subject to confusion and fear (-2 on saves) and makes all victims -2 to hit in

melee from general muddleheadedness. Confusion is the same as the spell, and Charm is the same as the Mass Charm spell. Web is like the spell, but of course is the same shape as the dragon's breath shape. Cold and Fire are self-explanatory. Shock is electrical energy; think of it as lightning in a different form. Missiles is a spray of small particles, rather like a shotgun blast. Poison Breath does damage points at the rate of one die of damage each melee round until either the dragon's level in damage dice has been taken or until stopped by a Neutralize Poison spell. Acid is an acid spray. Sleep affects victims of levels equal to or less than the dragon's level, with a saving throw (unlike the spell in both respects). Paralysis is self-explanatory. Level Drain is one experience level unless saved against. Flesh to Stone is self-explanatory. Death requires saving vs. dragon breath. Disintegrate Flesh destroys the victim's body and once living objects such as cloth, wood, and paper, but not metal or gems. Disintegrate Matter destroys everything that doesn't save.

# Winged Humanoids



illustrations by Robin Wood

by Jane and Morgan Woodward

This article describes a race of winged humanoids, called *gwaefir*, for role-playing. Character statistics are provided for *AD&D*, *The Arduin Grimoire*, *EPT*, *C&S*, *RQ*, *Stormbringer*, *TFT*, and *T&T*.

There are many scattered tribes of winged humanoids, living on various different worlds. It is possible, as some contend, that they arose in different ways, but the majority are so similar in so many important areas that for this article, we will treat them as one. Specifics, of course, will vary. The names and language given here are those of the group I know best.

According to their own legends, this race of winged humanoids began when a beautiful princess of the god of Wind and Storm, named Fanbereth, was imprisoned in a tall tower for refusing to wed a cruel and ugly king, whose name has been forgotten. There she stood at twilight, as the setting sun painted the sky golden and lavender, and raised her arms to the rising wind, praying to be released from captivity.

The storm god heard her, and, placing a pair of wings on her back, he took her up to a mountaintop and renamed her Surinil — Windlover. And this indeed she became. In time she gave birth to twins, a son and a daughter. They were winged, and from them

this tribe believes all winged peoples descend.

They are commonly known by such names as Children of the Wind, Storm Sons, Cloud Walkers, Air Born, and others. But in their own tongue, they call themselves Gwaefir, Mortal Wind. And so we shall call them.

Being descended from a god, they have a natural command of magic, especially those spells involving wind, air, and storm. It has been said that high priests and priestesses can command a storm of truly devastating proportions when threatened by foes. It has also been said that creating this mighty storm which can wipe out an entire army and flood all the land for miles costs the life of the caster. This may or may not be true.

Physically, they resemble small, graceful men and women, with enormous wings on their backs. Usually, they are quite beautiful; and, for obvious reasons, the muscles of their chests are well-developed. The sternum (breastbone) projects more than that of a human, and the muscles of the

wings (pectoralis superior in front, and trapezius superior behind) are located on top of the chest and back muscles of a normal human.

They have fair complexions, and grey or blue eyes. Most have either very light silver blond or dark blue-black hair. A few dark blonds and brunettes can be found, but I have never seen a red-headed gwaefir.

The wings are feathered and have a span of three to four meters. They are usually white, sometimes black, grey, or very rarely barred. The down feathers come down over the shoulders slightly, but they are fine and hard to see unless the light is at just the right angle. The rest of the body has mammalian hair, like a human, and the gwaefir are proper mammals. They bear live young, not eggs, and nurse their offspring.

Clothing is strictly optional. When worn, it is usually light, filmy stuff, more decoration than protection, that won't overburden the wearer in flight.

In temperament, they are happy and carefree, though wary of non-gwaefir (whom they call bare-men — landbound). They are extremely claustrophobic. They say that this is because of the imprisonment of Surinil. Be that as it may, they are reluctant to enter buildings, tend to go into hysterics if they are in a closed room, and will not go underground for any reason, preferring to die.

They still live in tall mountains where Surinil was taken, and the holiest temple is built to the storm god on the spot where her children were engendered. They call this shrine Oremar, Hearthome, but it is known as Wind Temple to outsiders.

Because the gwaefir live above the timberline, their diet and building materials are limited. It has been said they live on the wind alone; and though there is plenty of it, and they need it to thrive, this is not true.

Actually, they eat chiefly lichen, which they farm in sunny valleys, and can prepare in dozens of different ways. Raw lichen has all the flavor of old newspapers, but the gwaefir have secret methods to transform it into tasty dishes. I have, unfortunately, been unable to learn any recipes, but I know that they do not need to heat their food. Gwaefir do not build fires on their mountains, finding the smoke offensive. However, they are know how to make fire, and sometimes do so in the lowlands below the timberline.

The lichen is supplemented by game and fruit brought from the lowlands (and cooked there, if necessary) by hunters. Hunting is done, by preference, with the bow or lasso. Gwaefir never hunt their own lands, saying that



animals that choose to live with the wind are too wise to be hunted.

Birds, too, are left alone by most gwaefir, many of whom understand their language and use them as messengers and border patrols. (I understand that in some places, the sky god and the storm god are two rival entities. There, the worshipers of the storm god are required to eat eggs, and the gwaefir do. However, I have not substantiated this.)

Gwaefiric dwellings are open-sided caves worked into cliff faces, or towers built to resemble such caves. Each individual has a room in which virtually all of his indoor activity takes place.

These rooms are often connected by ledges which run in front of them, and are used for sitting and landing. Among family members, a doorway is cut into the cave wall next to the ledge. Over this is hung a "privacy curtain." As privacy in a room with but three solid walls is an illusion at best, and the gwaefir are uninhibited folk, there is some question why these are used. Personally, I am of the opinion that they are simply an excuse to make and display beautiful and intricate hangings.

All furniture and other large implements are made of stone, which is readily available, instead of wood, which has to be flown in from the lowlands at great effort. However, as the gwaefir esthetic sense tends towards lacy complexity and love of color, it is sometimes difficult to remember this.

Furnishing is kept to a minimum; a table, stool, hammock, chest, a set of shelves; and all of that is pushed back against the walls, because who would want to be trapped behind a piece of furniture? This makes the rooms look bare to a human, but is necessary because the gwaefir need room to accommodate their wings.

Marriage, as such, does not exist among the gwaefir. Children generally know who their fathers are, and may even live with them, but that is not important. All gwaefir regard the storm god as their father, and mortal descent is traced through the mother.

Children are usually spaced at least ten years apart. Newborns are completely helpless, much like their human counterparts. Their mothers care for them until the time that they become too heavy to carry comfortably in flight. As they cannot fly by themselves until they are about four years old, due to feather growth and weight ratio, there is a time of two to three years when they are toddlers, but not yet fliers. At this time, they are placed in a special family creche (communal nest), located on the floor of a valley, and raised with their

cousins. All mothers with children in the creche take turns staying with them.

When they become capable of flight, they move back with their mother, or, more rarely, father or other relative, who teaches them all the things they need to know to survive. Although supervision by some family member or another is constant at this stage, it is also very permissive, with most care directed simply to prevent the child from doing injury to himself. Punishment is generally only mild ostracism.

At the age of seven, children are given a room of their own. Supervision is no longer necessary, and complete freedom is the rule. Although it will be nine years until the fledgling is regarded as an adult, all his education from this point on is up to him. Fledglings generally fly in groups, and these are well-socialized. Frequently they go en masse to a holy person for religious education, and spend time hanging around hunters or adventurers.

Sixteen marks the beginning of adulthood. Now the young gwaefir are given adult responsibility. They may join the hunting parties, help in the farming, and reproduce. At this point, an adventurous or curious individual may leave the mountains for a time and travel into the flatlands to learn about the world. This is not discouraged, as the wind goes everywhere, so why not his children?

There, among other races, they are frequently required to fight, and this they do with spear or bow, sometimes with rapier. Heavier weapons are not used, for they would ground the flier. For this reason, armor is also rare. A particularly strong warrior might use light leather armor, usually on the legs, sometimes on the chest or abdomen. When they return, such gwaefir are counted as heroes, and much in demand for story-telling.

Many gwaefir become priests and priestesses of the storm god. They perform the same tasks and rituals as their counterparts among the landbound. Because there are so many of them, they are not accounted any special place among the community until they reach the inner circles, and become high priestesses and high priests.

Others may become primarily interested in farming, hunting, stoneworking, singing, music-making, etc. As no money is required, and anyone working for the community has all his needs met, there is no rank, and it all evens out so everything gets done.

Although gwaefir prize their solitude, they also enjoy congregating. Group entertainment consists of singing, dancing, and storytelling.

The singing is frequently done a capella and may be solo or group. Group sings are always in complex harmony (gwaefir love complexity). When accompaniment is used, it is either a simple harp with only five strings, a recorder, or an instrument unique to the gwaefir, called the *telpelin*. This is a box, with strings of small silver bells within. Levels on the sides of the box control damping sticks covered with felt, that keep a certain set of bells from ringing. The instrument is played by depressing the levers, and shaking the *telpelin* sharply. The bells ring in simple chords.

Gwaefiric dancing is amazingly complex and beautiful, because it is airborne; the dancers move freely in three dimensions. Usually accompanied by singers or *telpelin*, dancing is sometimes done to the wind-given tunes of an aeolian harp. This instrument is made of an open box, with strings set across it, and holes in the back. It is placed so that the wind blowing over the strings causes them to vibrate, giving a soft, sustained hum. There is no player other than the wind itself. (These are often found in dwellings as well. The sound of a cliff-side of gwaefir apartments, with dozens of differently-tuned aeolian harps singing in the wind, is breathtaking and beyond description.)

Major social events such as holy days and sixteenth birthdays, are celebrated by marathon dancing of all the adult member of a community. The dance is roughly spherical in shape, and although dancers may drop out (and later rejoin) the dance as a whole lasts from sunup til sundown; or long beyond if the moon is full. The juvenile members of the community have their own spheres, not as complex as the adults'. But because they make many mistakes in timing and placement, these usually break down, giving the young dancers reason for merriment, and an excuse to go off in search of goodies to eat.

Storytelling is a small group activity usually taking place on the ledges in front of the caves. Normally, one person is the storyteller, and the others listen, but at times spontaneous contests arise, with several people taking turns trying to outdo each other with the complexity, comedy, or wit of their stories. These, naturally, get outrageous very quickly.

The normal gwaefir lifespan is approximately three hundred years due, they say, to their immortal blood. Upon death, they are usually carried to the top of the highest mountains and left for the wind. If this is impossible, such as when a gwaefir is slain in the lowlands, the corpse is burned in a smoky fire. Their souls

may thus rise on the smoke and become one with the wind.

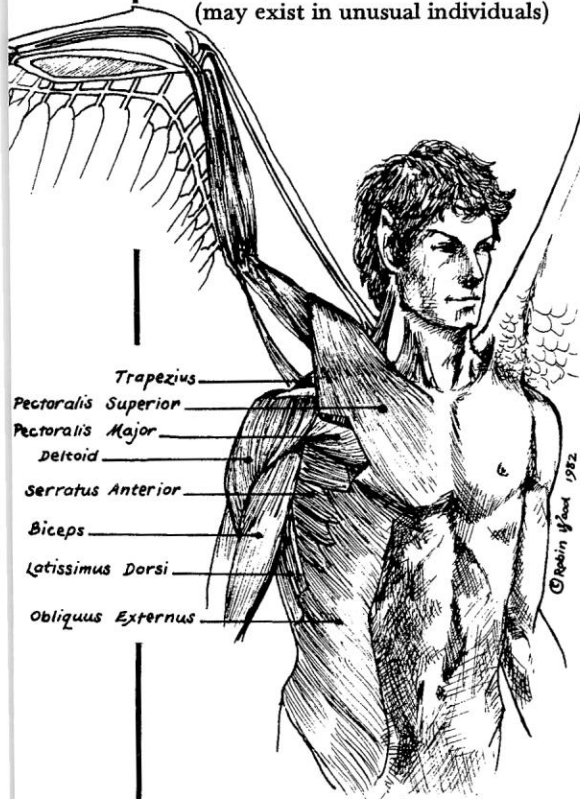
They believe that after a time as wind they will take form as gwaefir again. As all their life is spent with the wind, death is not a time of sadness. The deceased, being in the wind, are not perceived as departed, but transformed. They will fly again someday, rested and refreshed by their sojourn.

The above may interest you in winged humanoids enough to make you want to play one, or include them in your campaign. The rest of this article will present statistics for the gwaefir in a number of different role-playing game systems.

### Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

#### GWAEFIR

**FREQUENCY:** Rare  
**NUMBER APPEARING:** 1-20  
**ARMOR CLASS:** 7  
**HIT DICE:** 1+1  
**% IN LAIR:** 10%  
**TREASURE TYPE:** individual N; in lair G, S, T  
**NUMBER OF ATTACKS:** 1  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** by weapon or 1-8 each  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** +1 with bow  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** none  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 90% vs. air/wind related spells  
**INTELLIGENCE:** high and up  
**ALIGNMENT:** chaotic good  
**SIZE:** M  
**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil (may exist in unusual individuals)  
**ATTACK/DEFENSE MODES:** Nil (may exist in unusual individuals)



### For Player Characters

Gwaefir have the following penalties and bonuses for race; DEX +1, CHR +1, STR -1.

Most are Fighter/Clerics. If characteristics permit, they will also become Bards.

The Bard class for gwaefir works differently than that presented in the *AD&D Player's Handbook* for other races. Gwaefir wishing to be Bards must have a minimum of 15 in DEX, INT, WIS, and CHR; at least 12 in STR; and a CON of 10+. In addition, they must have achieved at least fourth level in fighter and sixth level in clerical ability. At this point, they may begin working on the bard table as shown on page 117 of the *Player's Handbook*; the only difference is that spells are chosen from the magic-user's list rather than druid's, and all spells must be drawn from air/wind magic.

The weapons table for gwaefir is altered to reflect their difference in culture:

**ARMOR:** leather only  
**SHIELD:** small only  
**WEAPONS:** staff, dagger, dart, javelin, spear, long and short sword, short or short composite bow, lasso (if GM permits)  
**OIL:** no  
**POISON:** no

### For Non-Player Characters

In determining the make-up of bands of gwaefir, use the *AD&D Monster Manual* listing for elves, substituting "fighter/cleric" for "fighter" and "bard" for "magic-user" in the description on page 39. Note that groups of more than 20 are only rarely found outside their lair.

Like elves, gwaefir have a 65% chance of befriending from 2-12 giant eagles that will guard their homes.

Gwaefir weaponry in a band is as follows:

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Bow and Spear — | 50% |
| Bow and Sword — | 30% |
| Javelins* —     | 10% |
| Bow* —          | 10% |

\* and lasso if permitted by GM.

Note that the armor class given in the description reflects natural air-borne agility.

Gwaefir always save as clerics.

### Arduin Grimoire

**Natural Armor Class = 7**  
 Int = d8+7  
 Wis = d8+6  
 Chr = d6+8  
 Ego = d4+14  
 Agl = d5+13\*  
 Dex = d2+12  
 Str = d6+7  
 Con = d6+8

\* Agl is halved if not in flight

Speed = AGL + DEX times 5 per round

Magic Resistance = EVEN

Primary Weapon = Bow

Primary Weapon Class = Missile/Thrown

Secondary Weapon Class = Flexible weapons

Save as Priest/Cleric

In all other respects, gwaefir function as Half Elves.

### Chivalry & Sorcery

#### Land of the Rising Sun

These games are so nearly similar that they will be treated as one.

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| DEX = d10+10 | STR = d12+2 |
| APP = d10+10 | BVC = d8+12 |
| INT = d12+8  | WIS = d20   |
| AGL = 3d6+2  | CON = d20   |

Size:

| d20 Roll | HT     | WT  | BP |
|----------|--------|-----|----|
| 1-4      | 5' 1"  | 80  | +2 |
| 5-8      | 5' 2"  | 90  | +2 |
| 9-12     | 5' 3"  | 100 | +3 |
| 13-14    | 5' 4"  | 110 | +3 |
| 15       | 5' 5"  | 120 | +4 |
| 16       | 5' 6"  | 130 | +4 |
| 17       | 5' 7"  | 140 | +5 |
| 18       | 5' 8"  | 150 | +6 |
| 19       | 5' 9"  | 160 | +7 |
| 20       | 5' 10" | 170 | +8 |

If these weights seem high to you, remember that they are not only for the humanoid body, but also for the wings, which range from 15-18 feet in span.

### Weapons

Hunting spear, compound bow, longbow, on the Infantry matrix.

The tables above are based on modified Tengu stats from the *Land of the Rising Sun*, which also has an excellent aerial and lasso combat system for C&S-type games.

If you don't have a copy of *LOTRS*, assume the lasso is not a major weapon in the PC's tribe. The character can gain fighter's experience bonuses and a +2% level weapon proficiency with hunting spear, composite bow, and longbow only.

There are no gwaefir Necromancers, Dance/Chant, or Drug-Trance magick-users. They tend to Power Word, Enchanters, and Primitive Talent magick. There are a high percentage of Cleric/Magick-User combinations and a large number of vocal-type Magick-Users.

If you have the other sourcebooks and supplements, the Bard and associated types are popular among gwaefir. Also, gwaefir Basic Magicks tend toward Air more than the other elements — use the astrological bonus in the sourcebook related to air magick.

### Empire of the Petal Throne

The Hlaka fit the majority of gwaefir characteristics, except for magic-use

and comeliness. To play Hlaka as gwaefir, disregard the cowardice idea and only require ranged combat in preference to melee for player-characters. The gwaefir lack tails, and normally have a high comeliness (d100 + 20, maximum of 100) and otherwise human appearance, as described in the article.

### The Fantasy Trip

ST = 11                      IQ = 8  
 DX = 16                      pluses = 0  
 MA = 8/ Fly 16              SIZE = normal  
 WT = normal to light  
 HTH = normal              HT = normal  
 ST maximum is 12  
 Specials = -2 DX (instead of -4 DX) in flying combat

No more than leather armor allowed.

The following talents are available at "Hero" costs as a one-time option. The player may choose any talent from this list so long as it does not require a higher IQ than he has (and the total talents chosen do not exceed IQ).

Players may only use weapons from the weapons list at the end of the charts, not the "all" mentioned in the rules, reflecting the limitations of gwaefir society.

Any talent marked (R) must be chosen before moving onto a higher IQ list. If more than one (R) talent is listed in a table, all must be taken before any from a higher list can be had.

Any talent marked (A) is automatic, and develops naturally in any character with the required IQ, whether he wants it or not. No points need be expended to acquire (A) talents.

(IQ 7) Knife, Sword\*, Pole\*, Bow\*, Shield\*; (IQ 8) Literacy (R), Net\*, Quarterstaff, Sex Appeal, Throw Weapons, Farming; (IQ 9) Bard (A), Charisma (A), Climbing (A), Priest (R), Alertness (R), Animal Handler†, Missile Weapon; (IQ 10) Naturalist (A), Fencing, Acrobatics; (IQ 11) Physicker, Vet, Woodsman; (IQ 12) Expert Naturalist; (IQ 13) Scholar, Mathematician; (IQ 14) Master Bard (R), Theologian (R), Master Physicker

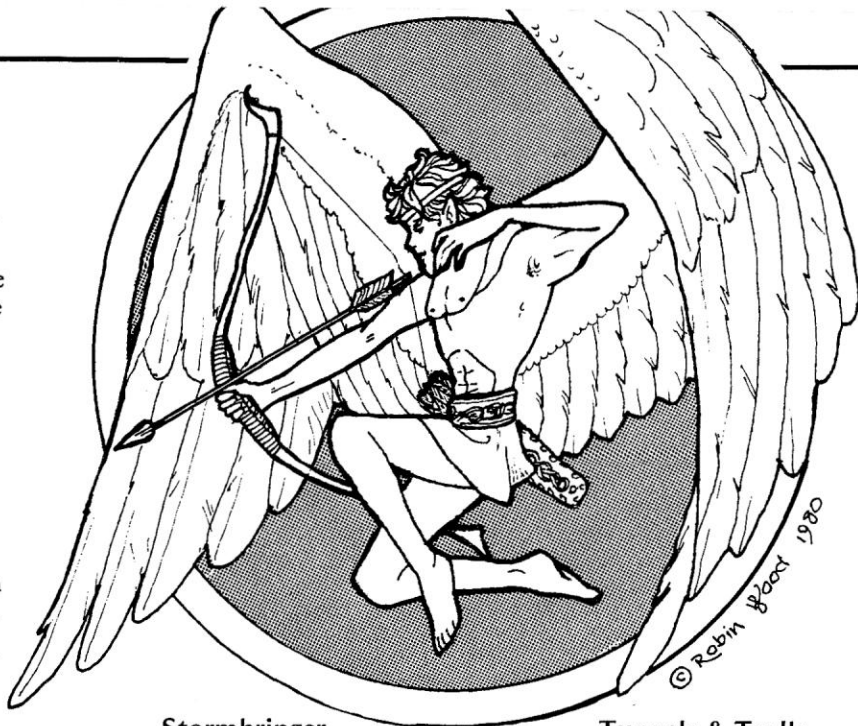
\* Weapons List: dagger, rapier, javelin, spear, smallbow, horsebow, small shield, net.

† only animals of the air and heights are tamed.

All gwaefir are Wizards by definition, and prefer IQ over combat. They fight as Heroes with the weapons listed above; with other weapons and HTH they are treated as Wizards.

### RuneQuest

Treat gwaefir as Wind Children. For lassos, use the explanation given below for *Stormbringer*, and roll 1D10+10 for hit location.



### Stormbringer

Use the Myrrhyn stats, but let the men be described as in this article. Normal weapons are: bow at Warrior base, lasso as second weapon, and spear or rapier as third weapon. Armor is a buckler or leather, rarely both.

Treat the lasso as a projectile weapon with a range of 10-15 meters. The target may dodge if he sees the attack in time. The normal tactic is to swoop out of the clouds with a lasso dangling to get the victim's neck or to use a hover and drop technique.

If a hit is successful, match the attacker's DEX vs. the target's STR on the Resistance Table. Success allows the gwaefir to pull the target off his feet, pin his arms, snatch a weapon from his grip, or whatever he was trying to do. Surprise, as when the gwaefir swoops from the clouds, or in an unseen hover-and-drop adds +20% to the gwaefir's chances to hit.

Damage done during an attack varies with the tactic used. I recommend 1D20+1 for hanging, with the attack ineffective if the victim is wearing a plate metal collar; and 1D8 for a sudden collision with a tree or boulder. If the target grasps the lasso, the gwaefir can release it quickly.

If the lasso is used to pin a victim's arms, he must roll his Agility bonus times 5 or less on percentile dice to get free before the beginning of the next round (a roll of 01-05 always frees the victim). The gwaefir will normally spend this time readying a spear or bow.

If the gwaefir tries to pick the victim up, match the gwaefir's STR vs. the victim's SIZ. If the gwaefir succeeds, he can lift the victim. He must make the roll again for each additional 3m he tries to lift the victim. Once the gwaefir fails a roll, he may not try to lift that victim any higher.

### Tunnels & Trolls

There are no pure warriors or wizards among the gwaefir. By now you should realize that they represent either a Wizard-Warrior combination or a special form of the Rogue class. So, I call their class Gwaefir.

ST x 2/3                      IQ x 3/2  
 DX x 3/2                      CHR x 2  
 Size normal              Weight x 1/2  
 all others normal

Gwaefir do not get the doubling effect of warriors on armor, but may use any weapon from the following list at full dice value: shortsword, gladius, broadsword, rapier, epee, foil, quarterstaff, darts, bola, self-bow, pilum, common spear, javelin, spontoon, and all daggers except the main gauche and sword breaker. Kris are more common than elsewhere, as the storm god guides meteoric stones to his people. Gwaefir function in all other respects as Wizards.

They may not use armor heavier than leather and can carry only bucklers. The only poison they will use is Spider Venom. Their Speed is 2D6+6.

Note that gwaefir are best in overland travel, and can guard a camp. They will never, under any circumstances, go delving proper. But they can be helpful to a battered party breaking through to the daylight with treasure in tow, and a horde of orcs in pursuit. For a price of course.

As with any idea, the GM should feel free to make changes to reflect the needs of each individual campaign within a given system. I have tried to give some light to the complex nature of FRPing by including these systems in which I am experienced. These are ideas to get you started in incorporating a truly age-old idea; "if man could fly!" □



# The Angels

The winged humanoid race called the Angels for the *DragonQuest* role-playing game.

By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

One of the least-known races in the *DragonQuest* world, the Angels are humanoid flyers who normally keep to the highest peaks. Whether they can be classed as "angels" as opposed to "devils" is unclear, even to the angels themselves; while they appear to be neither less nor more powerful than the other races, there is an ethereal, otherworldly atmosphere to them, and they seem to be possessed of considerable knowledge and wisdom. Scholars are unsure whether they were once divine angels, perhaps fallen from grace, or whether they are an offshoot of the elves, with whom they have much in common.

In game terms, the chance of being an angel player-character is 4%. Although they normally live in secluded aeries which no one ever seems to discover, a few have occasionally ventured down to the flatlands, stirred by interest in the outside world. An angel could join a party adventuring in a mountainous area. Perhaps the angel would investigate them out of curiosity, then join the party out of greater curiosity.

The life expectancy of an angel is similar to that of an elf — too great to be of interest to any but another angel. Like elves, assume that PC angels are somewhere in their first millenium of life.

Physically, angels resemble humans or elves, extremely slender, and averaging about five and a half feet tall. There is considerable variation in details between angels, such as shape and construction of the wings, how much, if any, of the body is feathered,

whether the feet are taloned, and so forth. Coloration also varies quite widely. They normally appear with only a bare weapon (and enough harness to hold it) and a small bag holding a few possessions.

Angels frequently seem rather distant from the concerns of the real world. Humans sometimes say, bewildered at an angel's lack of concern or unawareness of some major event, that they are not "of this plane"; and this may well be true, though the statement is not meant literally. Angels do not normally initiate violence, but can fight when forced to with a determination and deadliness that astounds their foes.

An angel's Physical Strength and Endurance are both reduced by 3 because of their light bodily construction (needed to allow flight). Their Willpower, Fatigue, and Physical Beauty are all increased by 2.

An angel's special abilities are (1) an angel may choose no Elemental college of magic save Air and Celestial, and no College of Entities at all. (2) If one chooses the College of Air Magics, or the College of Naming, he pays only one-half the normal experience cost. (3) If one chooses the College of Celestial Magics, he pays only three-quarters the normal experience cost. (4) If one becomes a Ranger specializing in Mountains, he pays only three-quarters the normal experience cost. (5) An angel may fly only if he currently suffers no FT loss on the Encumbrance chart; that is, he can fly only if he is traveling light. (6) An

angel walks at the speed and with the grace of an elf, and flies as does an eagle. (7) All angels are intensely claustrophobic; one can tolerate a large room, but if it becomes crowded, he becomes uneasy. Small rooms will require a WP check by an angel before he could enter. Broom closets, dungeons and other underground edifices, and similar places are unthinkable. The only way an angel would enter such a place is bound and gagged, and such an event could well damage his or her mind. (8) If an angel is flying in combat (which they prefer to do), the chance to hit him is reduced by 20% because of the difficulty in striking a flying object. This is fortunate, because (9) angels cannot wear armor, although they can make use of shields if capable of flight while carrying the weight.

They usually do not wear clothes although the reasons are unclear. One espoused reason being that clothing would interfere with their flying, while others think that aversion is an aspect of their claustrophobia. Still others suggest that the angels are averse to clothing because they are innocent of evil intent and dislike the deception implicit in body coverings. In any event, this trait causes considerable disturbance among most of the other races, especially in view of the ethereal beauty of the angels, and can cause trouble in a typical civilized area. Some angels have been known to wear clothing, especially light, fine gowns. Angels can obtain such gowns from their aeries, and if they know they will be venturing into "civilized" areas, they will generally bring such a gown along.

Angels not only speak Common at Rank 10 (not 8), they also write it at the same rank. Whether there is a separate language of Angelic is not known by other races. (Referee's note: you might settle this in your own mind and then secretly let any angel player-characters know. One interesting possibility is that there is such a language, but that mortal ears — everyone except maybe elves — become hopelessly enthralled upon hearing it.) Finally, angels resist cold and walk on snow (if they bother) as elves can do.

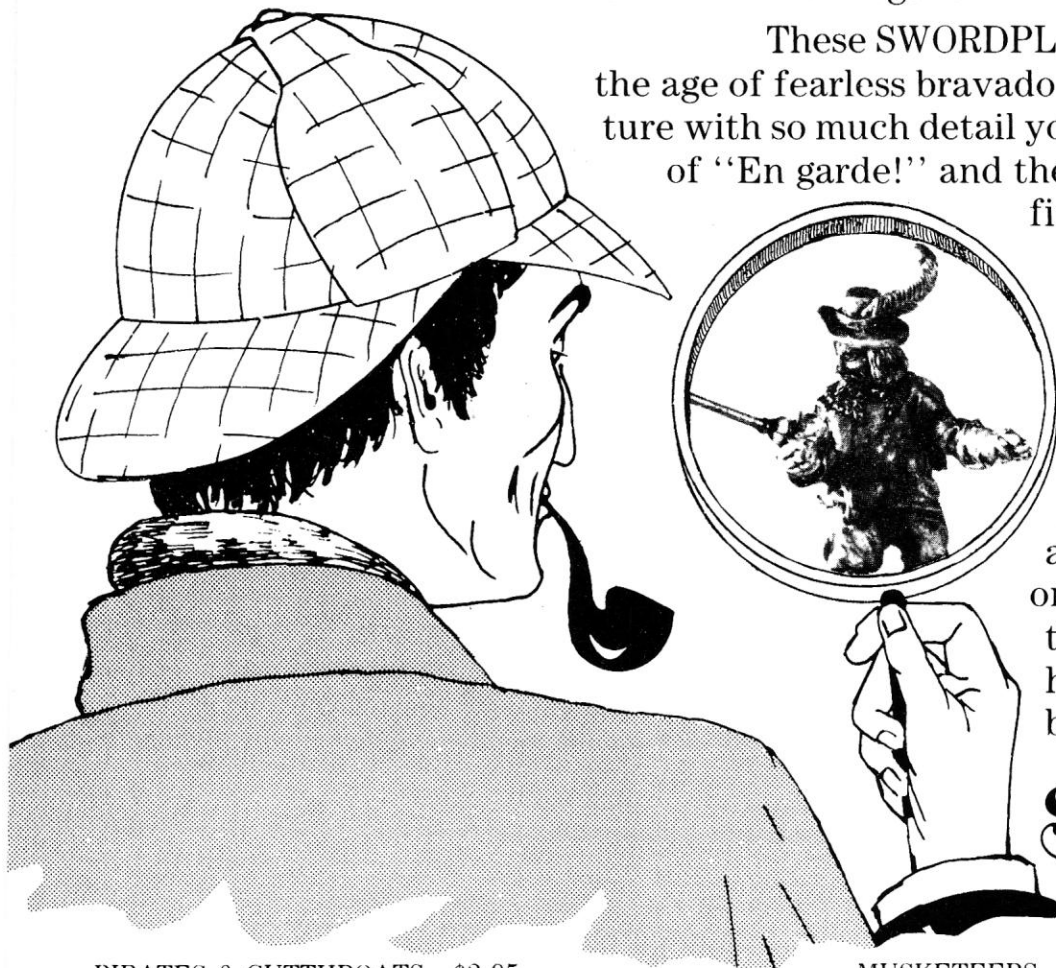
That about covers it. Properly handled, angels can make one of the more unusual races in RPGs because of the mystery of their origins and, frequently, their actions. □

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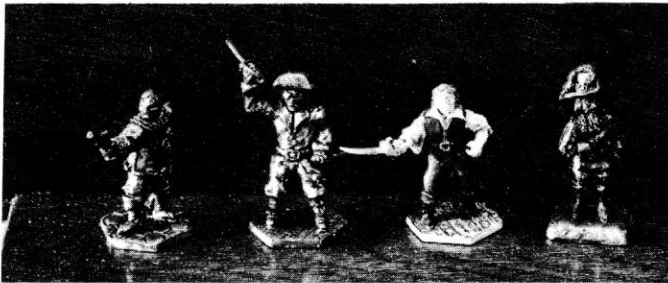
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# Role-Playing Nonhumans

Role-Playing Tips for Elves, Dwarfs, Hobbits, and Other Races



Illustration by Robin Wood

by Mason Jones

When it comes to role-playing, one of the primary problems is the fact that many people has trouble playing non-human characters. In most cases, all the players are doing is running a human wearing a costume.

It is understandably difficult to pretend to be someone else and not all people are concerned with role-playing well. Some players are simply concerned with projecting their fantasies through their characters, which is not exactly role-playing. Those who try can usually manage to bring some semblance of life to human characters, but when it comes to playing members of another race, they have trouble adjusting their perspectives to a nonhuman's viewpoint. It seems as though attempting to put life into another race leaves even the best role-players at a loss.

This is somewhat understandable. We know what a human would do when faced with a certain situation, even if he is from another culture than ours. But another race entirely? That's obviously a different case, and when

faced with it, all we can do is try to figure out what the alien would do.

When playing a non-human, one should really think of the character as a human with a different background — this is really the closest we can come to thinking as the character might. So a nonhuman character, for the purposes of role-playing, can be looked upon as a different human. Look at the culture of the race from which the character comes. Dwarfs, for instance, come from a culture which should make role-playing easy — anyone who has read J. R. R. Tolkien's *Hobbit* or *Lord of the Rings* should know enough to draw any conclusions necessary.

## Dwarfs

Dwarfs are traditionally stolid, tough, and somewhat pugnacious folk. They are practical tinkers and craftsmen who love working with their hands. Their culture has its roots, shall we say, in the earth, and they are inordinately fond of living beneath the ground. They are commonly warriors,

and possess more strength than one would suppose from looking at them. Likewise, they tend to weigh more than their size would suggest.

Wearing a beard is more than simply a custom among the dwarfs. Indeed, most dwarfs would sooner die than give up their beard. The reason for this odd attachment to hirsuteness is unknown, and the dwarfs won't say.

With all the available background material available on dwarfs, no one should have much trouble role-playing a dwarf. Of course, everything mentioned here is simply background information. Imagination is still required to make every dwarf individual.

Besides culture, there are physical attributes which can help define a character. Dwarfs are shorter but often weigh more than the average human. They are made of sturdier stuff than nearly any other race, and are thus less susceptible to disease, poison, and even magic. They also tire less quickly than others.

The dwarven anti-magical nature is another good basis for character development. I would expect that someone as resistant as a dwarf is to magic would have certain feelings towards those who use magic. Coming from a non-magic-using culture might also influence feelings towards such people. Whether these feelings would be of awe or of condescension will depend on the player.

## Elves

All of these attributes have parallels in the other races as well as all role-playing games. Elves, in many ways, are nearly the opposite of dwarfs; tending to live in the wilderness — certainly never underground. They are less inclined toward being fighters or warriors, and more toward magic-using classes. They are theorists, thinkers, and growers, not craftsmen.

I have always felt that elves are somewhat aristocratic and snobbish, and I tend to play them that way — others will certainly have their own opinions, and that is as it should be. Variety of viewpoints assures that not every elf in the world will be the same, as long as people bring those feelings into their playing to give their characters distinct personalities.

On the physical side, elves are even more the opposite of dwarfs, being generally of medium height and light

weight, though not necessarily thin. They are dextrous and agile, rather than solid and tough. They take after the plants they surround themselves with, while the dwarfs are more closely related to the earth and rock in which they live.

### Hobbits

Halflings, or hobbits, are more prone

to be played as humans than any other race I know of. This may be because of Tolkien's descriptions. In most cases, they are played as short fat humans who simply happen to live underground.

Players should try to bring their own opinions into play. Hobbits should be given their own personalities, even if these are no more than the player's own conceptions of what they are like. I myself tend to picture them as happy, cheerful folk, somewhat like the fairies, living outside the rest of the world, and ignoring any troublesome problems that crop up around them.

This definitely goes against the normal conceptions of what an adventurer is like, but those who go by Tolkien will point out the fact that he himself mentioned specifically that hobbits never, ever go adventuring, save a very few, and those go only when forced into it.

Such a view necessitates that the player invent a good reason why his halfling character ever left the safety of his or her home. This is a prime time for developing a personality. The hobbit's motivations for going on the adventure should go a long way toward building the rest of the character.

### Other Races

The other races, trolls, half-orcs, pixies, and so forth, can be brought into shape in the same way. Just figure out their motivations to start. Not everyone is a human, and they're not going to think like one.

Differences in culture bring about differences in thinking. Nonhumans are easier to characterize because they usually have obvious traits that distinguish them from humans. While humans in most games tend to be amorphous, a nonhuman can be defined well, allowing a player a base to build on, to add more detailed personality features to produce a real person. □

# Role-Playing Humans

## Individualizing Human Characters



Illustration by Valerie Olson

by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

In his article on role-playing non-humans as characters, Mason James offers some methods for looking at a dwarf, elf, or halfling as something other than a funny-looking human being. It should be added that you can apply the same approach, by using other literary sources, to provide distinctions between different nations of the same race. For example, Poul Anderson's *The Broken Sword* provides a grimmer version of the elves than Tolkien's. I'd like to explore doing the same thing with humans, for human beings come in a great variety of types that are readily available to us to research and utilize in gaming.

Every set of role-playing rules has specifications for personal characteristics. Some of these exist to differentiate the character's relative initial talent in whatever professions the game offers, and they are specified in terms of bonuses or minuses to skills. But they can also be used to define subtle effects on personality, and the game rules seldom discuss these. Using characteristics for this purpose re-

quires knowing what the player-character feels pulled towards or repulsed from in career choices. A sense of humor and reliance on stereotypes may be helpful here, too.

The high Strength, low Intelligence fighter-type is a classic stereotype, but perhaps you haven't encountered it yet in gaming (if you live in Outer Mongolia, for example). A friend of mine loves to run a particularly dumb dwarf who is terrific in battle, but needs to be pointed in the right direction first. This is a major disadvantage in situations when you need cleverness and quick individual solutions to get out alive, and I as gamemaster would never force anyone to choose to take on such a handicap — but she finds the character great fun to role-play, and the rest of the group enjoys the humor and adjusts the behavior of their characters to watch out for the dwarf's known lack of foresight.

A variant of this is the high Strength, low Dexterity fighter. His clumsiness with missile weapons can give him an inferiority complex that will color his

view of other characters who display skill with the bow. Imagine this character's reaction upon encountering Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, for example. Would you fall over yourself in awe? Would you try to ignore him in embarrassment? Would you at-

tempt to arrest him and haul him to the Sheriff? The point is that this one factor can have real personality effects on the character. Discovering such factors and role-playing them to their logical conclusion is one of the things that allows you to make individuals out of characters.

You may not like to deal with stereotypes this way. The fact of the matter is that a personality consists of at least some stereotypical behavior. For purposes of gaming, we are primarily interested in what makes a character behave the way he does. Behavior in gaming often boils down to reactions to encounters and activities calculated to achieve character goals. Personal reactions to encounters are often fixed in advance by biases or prejudices acquired from childhood teaching, personal experiences of good or ill, and things heard during the game in the form of rumors planted by the gamemaster. A bias against another race, nation, religion, or whatever is a stereotype — classing other people by group instead of being willing to deal with them as individuals to be judged by their own behavior.

The character's reaction to campaign stimuli is something that normally develops during the game, rather than being figured out ahead of time. But unless you start out with some pre-set judgments in a selection of categories relevant to the character's chosen profession, you handicap your ability to role-play the character by starting out without a personality. A bias can be a good thing — the universal human fear of the unknown has saved countless player-characters from death. But it has the disadvantage that it is very difficult to change by experience, so you have to be careful what deep-set prejudices you give your character. The ancient distrust between elf and dwarf contributed greatly to Sauron's power. It also provided a lot of interesting interplay in the Fellowship, of course, and if you want to role-play such a prejudice you have that option. (Just remember to be cautious about this if you are the

GM; there is much to be said for not teaching racial prejudice to younger players in your gaming.)

Try developing a new character with leanings in perhaps a half-dozen useful areas. These will be things that

*the character likes more than dislikes,*

since you are looking for areas to explore rather than ones to avoid. Start with your chosen profession. If the character is a warrior, you can select a special type of weapon that the character prefers above all others, and then ask yourself the reasons why that choice was made. If the character is a user of the arcane arts, choose a subspecialty for the character to prefer, such as becoming a master of illusion, or of one of the elements. Decide why that choice was made.

Choices of this sort give a lot of important personality-forming traits, and they come right from the character's background. Once you decide what the character is like now, work backwards to provide reasons for his development. When rolling for a new character, I roll three of them up at the same time. One, I select to play, and the other two become that character's parents. Their professions affect the character's specializations within his own.

**Background is a key part of a character's development, but this is often ignored in game rules. If the rules your gamemaster uses have a section on background or prior experience, use them thoughtfully.** In *RuneQuest*, the rules will tell you whether your character learned to fight in the militia or in a mercenary company. They train different weapons up to different levels of skill; think of them as forming different attitudes, too. A mercenary will be a seasoned fighter, while a militia-trained townsman will tend to think like a civilian — one may tend to fight his way out of a hostile encounter, while the other may tend to out-think the opposition. Are magical spells generally available, or limited to an elite few? Are stealth skills limited to thieves, or are they taught to the more respectable militia scouts? These factors, and others like them, will form your character's attitudes about the people around him in ways that are there for those who look.

Social class is a factor not covered in all game rules, but it is something that can be used in building a person-

ality on your own. Consult with your gamemaster about the nature of the society his game is set in. He may want to forbid characters from being members of the highest or lowest levels of society in his campaign.

*Where the character comes from is* a critical part of his background. The player can select the character's career, and usually gender and social class, but the character's home usually depends on what the gamemaster makes available. This includes not merely the nations of the campaign, but the percentage of the population to be found in urban rather than rural surroundings.

The character's home will set a lot of the character's attitudes automatically. Your parent's enemies and friends become your enemies and friends — until proven otherwise. Your parents' religion will probably be your character's religion, too, unless they sent you to a different temple as a youth so you could learn a different trade (or unless you ran away after being converted to a new faith). Thus your choice of the character's home determines the character's politics.

The home culture also determines what the character was taught. A plains tribe warrior will have learned different weapons, defenses, and tactics from a seacoast tribe warrior. A novice city priest will have one group of gods to worship and from which to select as patron; his selection will be much different from that of a novice shaman among the mountain tribes. Even the magic to be learned in an urban culture may be different in emphasis from that taught among the nomads, or may differ from city to city, tribe to tribe, and cult to cult. The choices will be set by the game rules used and the campaign structure built by the gamemaster. A lot of details of personal attitudes and skill choices will be set by the culture in which the character grew up.

But what do you do if the game you are playing doesn't have a built-in culture setup, and your gamemaster hasn't developed one in any fine detail? All is not lost — but you will have to do the work yourself. Make up your own background culture according to your own perception of the kind of character you want to play. Humanity has developed a rich, well-documented variety of cultures. Choose one to use, or choose a couple and merge them to



taste. Select a primarily urban or rural setting, from which certain career choices would logically follow. A character who spent his childhood in the saddle, Mongol fashion, won't be a city boy. Select a territorial type: mountains, rolling country, plains, river valley, islands, etc. Decide the degree of civilization — how urbanized is the center of culture, how much learning is valued and preserved, etc. Decide what sorts of god(s) would be worshiped there, and select a patron deity the character would worship and appeal to in times of stress, if you decide the character is religious at all.

You don't have to be detailed in your choices while doing this. The point is to set an overview of the character's origin, not to write a book about it. Once you have done this, you can select certain special skill areas for the character to pursue in the game. When you know the type of culture the character comes from, you will think of logical attitudes towards things you run into while gaming even without deciding on them in advance. This is because you've given yourself a structure to work within that you will use for guidance when you need it. You will be thinking *in persona* while solving problems, looking at things from the character's point of view within the character's personal background.

There is as much variety within humanity to choose your character from as there is among the various nonhuman intelligent races offered in many role-playing games offered in today's market. Human is not a category to play; a character's race is only the beginning. Does your gamemaster offer varieties among nonhuman races, such as dark vs. light elves? If so, think for a minute of the races that make up humanity: white, yellow, red, brown, and black. Now think of the different cultures to be found within each color from Earth's history, remembering that some cultures spanned more than one people as empires rose and fell.

Always remember that your character is an individual, different from others of his or her race, tribe, religion, and culture — but formed by all of them, plus experience and training. Think of the character as a set of attitudes and biases, skills and ineptitudes, habits and hobbies, with personal needs and goals. □

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by Sandy Petersen

In both science fiction stories and role-playing games, truly *alien* aliens are difficult to find. Many authors' concept of an interesting alien is merely a cat or dog set on its hind legs and given the power of speech.

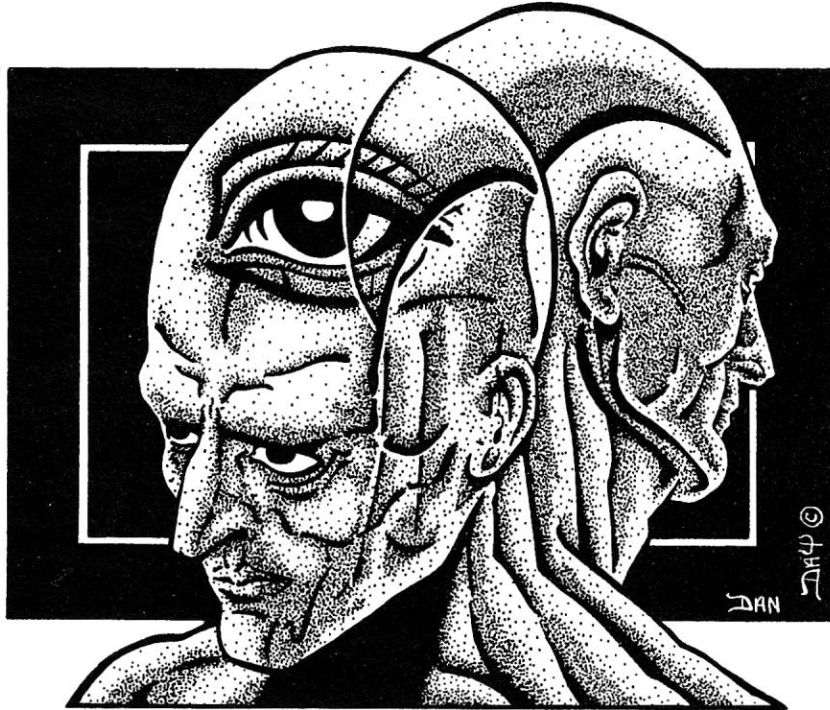
My graduate studies in zoology have given me an opportunity to study many of the unique developments that life has undergone on our own planet, and, almost without exception, these developments have exceed even the most grotesque monsters created for science fiction role-playing games or stories. If our own limited Earth can produce such extravagant prodigies, it is inevitable that other worlds would be equally bizarre. This article is about the senses used to observe the world.

Humans have more than the traditional five senses attributed to them. There are 21 known human senses. Most of these sense organs, operating on an unconscious level, are such things as arterial sensors that measure the concentration of carbon dioxide in our body, or cranial blood pressure. Despite the abundance of such organs, and the generally excellent senses humans possess, many organisms get by with different, superior, or even no such organs.

### Sight

The most important human sense is sight. Humans have a very good sense of sight, surpassing that of most mammals. Also, humans have color vision, something absent in almost all mammals other than primates. Birds, on the other hand, have quite good vision, including color vision. The sight of a hawk is enormously superior to that of a man — hawks can spot objects an inch across a kilometer away.

However, there is an ability more interesting to have than clearer vision — there is the ability to see things that we cannot. The eyes of all vertebrates are similar. A hawk can see more clearly than we can, but does not see things radically differently. Insects can see things that are radically different. Most insects can see ultraviolet, though some lack the ability to see red. This does not mean that solidly red objects are invisible to them — such objects simply appear black, as they reflect no insect-visible light. It is difficult for most of us to imagine what ultraviolet looks like, but some people have found out. The reason for our lack of ability to see UV light lies in the lens of the human eye. Our lenses are opaque to UV light because they have a slight yellowish tint. It is possible that this is so because if our eyes had too wide a range of visible spectrum, we would suffer from



Illustrated by Dan Day

# Other Senses

Perceiving the World Around Us

chromatic aberration — everything we saw would have a little fringe of rainbow light around it: hardly conducive to clear vision. Some people have had their natural lenses removed for medical reasons and have had them replaced with clear artificial ones. These lenses admit UV light, and such humans can see into the ultraviolet. They reportedly also suffer from chromatic aberration.

Still, normally no creatures aside from arthropods can see UV light. This means that only insects see the intricate ultraviolet patterns existing on many flowers, even some that look bland or white to us.

Some insects, such as bees and ants, can do something more impressive than merely seeing a different color. They can see polarized light, and tell what direction it has been polarized in. It is impossible for us even to imagine what this is like. It serves a very useful purpose for the insects, though. When the sun is above the horizon, visible light is polarized at right angles to the sun's position in the sky. Since ants and bees can sense this, they can tell the precise position of the sun, even on clouded or fogged-out days, aiding these small creatures immeasurably in navigation. Other uses for this ability are surely present, but with our poor human comprehension of this sort of sense, we cannot really imagine what. An alien with this ability, possibly raised to a greater degree, might be able to calculate degrees and angles with incredible preciseness — but we

cannot really tell what he would be capable of. Sensing polarized light requires eyes composed of a roughly hemispherical bunch of thin tubes, each with its own optical receptor — the situation for insects and arthropods, but for no other animal type of Earth.

On earth, only three really good eyes have developed. These are the vertebrate, arthropod, and the squid/octopus eyes. All other eyes are no better than mere light receptors — incapable of forming more than the most crude image. Aliens lacking excellent eyes are not only possible, they are probable! Such aliens would require other senses.

### Hearing

The second most important sense for most humans is that of hearing. It is a fact that many animals can hear noises both higher and lower than those sounds audible to humans. Of more interest is the fact that many animals have developed the sense of hearing into a new and different sense — sonar. Sonar seems to be largely restricted to vertebrates, used by all sorts of organisms from birds to bats to cetaceans. By simply listening to the delay in an echo, as well as its strength, bats can fly through a room booby-trapped with thin wires stretched randomly all about. A cloud of hundreds of flitting bats in a cavern flies whirling and continually changing without more than an occasional collision. The tropical oilbird also has sonar, but emits its echolocating noises at a pitch audi-

ble to humans, making their caves extremely noisy. Sea mammals such as whales also use sonar to make their way — they can tell what depth the water is as well as sense the size and speed of approaching objects. A blind-dolphin can use echolocation to pick up a rubber ring flung into a pool by threading it with its snout. I confess that I am awed by an echolocation ability so precise that merely by listening to reflected beeps, the animal can tell where to move to thread the donut. Animals using sonar are usually either nocturnal or seagoing — environments rendering eyes less valuable. An alien dwelling in an opaque atmosphere may well utilize echolocation to find its way. Even if sight would be possible, if the alien is nocturnal, aquatic, or merely blind, echolocation seems to be a valid alternative to sight.

#### Smell and Taste

The sense of smell and taste are of less importance to humans than those of sight and hearing. But, smell and taste are of great importance to other animals. The most importance to a dog is not its sight, but its sense of smell. Advanced senses of smell or taste are very common throughout the animal kingdom, and are much more commonly found than the sense of sight. An ant can sense the inconceivably minute difference in carbon dioxide concentration between that at the tip of one antenna and that at the tip of the other in following a trail to an ant nest. (Humans cannot even smell carbon dioxide.) A male luna moth can follow a female's scent in concentrations as small as one part per billion.

The organs of taste and smell need not be located in their traditional vertebrate positions. Many insects have organs of taste on their feet. This makes sense, as they usually land on their food, and it gives them a chance to detect many poisons before ingesting them. Snakes scent, not with their nostrils, but with an organ located in the roof of their mouth, aided by their flickering tongues.

There are, of course, animals with only a poor sense of smell, such as birds and sea mammals. Birds live in such a rapidly changing environment and have such superior eyesight that their need for (and keenness off) the sense of smell is almost nil. Sea mammals cannot use their sense of smell, for they cannot allow their nasal and sinus cavities to become filled with water any more than can a human. Such a consideration does not affect fishes, however, and many fishes can follow a scent for distances. Sharks can smell blood from several miles

away. In his book, *City of the Chasch*, Jack Vance describes a race of aliens with highly-developed senses of smell; so precise that they can tell from a human's breath where he was two days ago. Such an achievement is not impossible. The sense of smell is a likely candidate for an alien's major sense.

#### Touch

One of the most vital and complex senses of any organism is that of touch. In humans, what we call "touch" is actually a complex of five different types of receptors: cold, pain, pressure, touch, and heat. There are many animals that lack other, more long-distance senses, and must get by with their sense of touch alone, or nearly unaided. Many of these same animals can sense extremely slight differences in texture. One such animal is the ant. Ants have eyes, but they are weak (although they can detect the polarization of light for navigation). Their main senses are those of smell and touch. They must see the world very differently indeed.

Fishes use a long-distance touch. The organ used for this is called the lateral line. It runs along the flank of the fish and consists of a series of pits which are very sensitive to pressure. Using the lateral line, a fish can sense slight differences in water pressure, currents, and directions. It is as difficult to catch blind fishes by hand as it is to catch sighted ones — they can sense your hand's velocity without difficulty. However, if their lateral line is covered, but their eyes are left free, the same fish are relatively easy to grasp. Sharks use such a system to sense the thrashing of wounded fish — and swimming humans.

Humans can sense heat from a distance, and so can boa constrictors and pit vipers. However, their heat sense is far superior to ours. A rattlesnake can sense a difference in temperature as slight as half of a degree centigrade. With its paired pits, it has the equivalent of binocular vision, and can zero in on its prey (warm-blooded mammals and birds) in the darkest night. Their system is much more practical than the "infra-vision" so beloved by many gamers and game designers.

Humans have two other main senses — those of balance and the body sense. Needless to say, there are animals with both superior and inferior abilities in both these categories. The body sense is what lets you know what your body's position is in when your eyes are shut — letting you know exactly where your limbs are without having to look at them. There are a few animals that make do without a sense of balance.

#### Other Senses

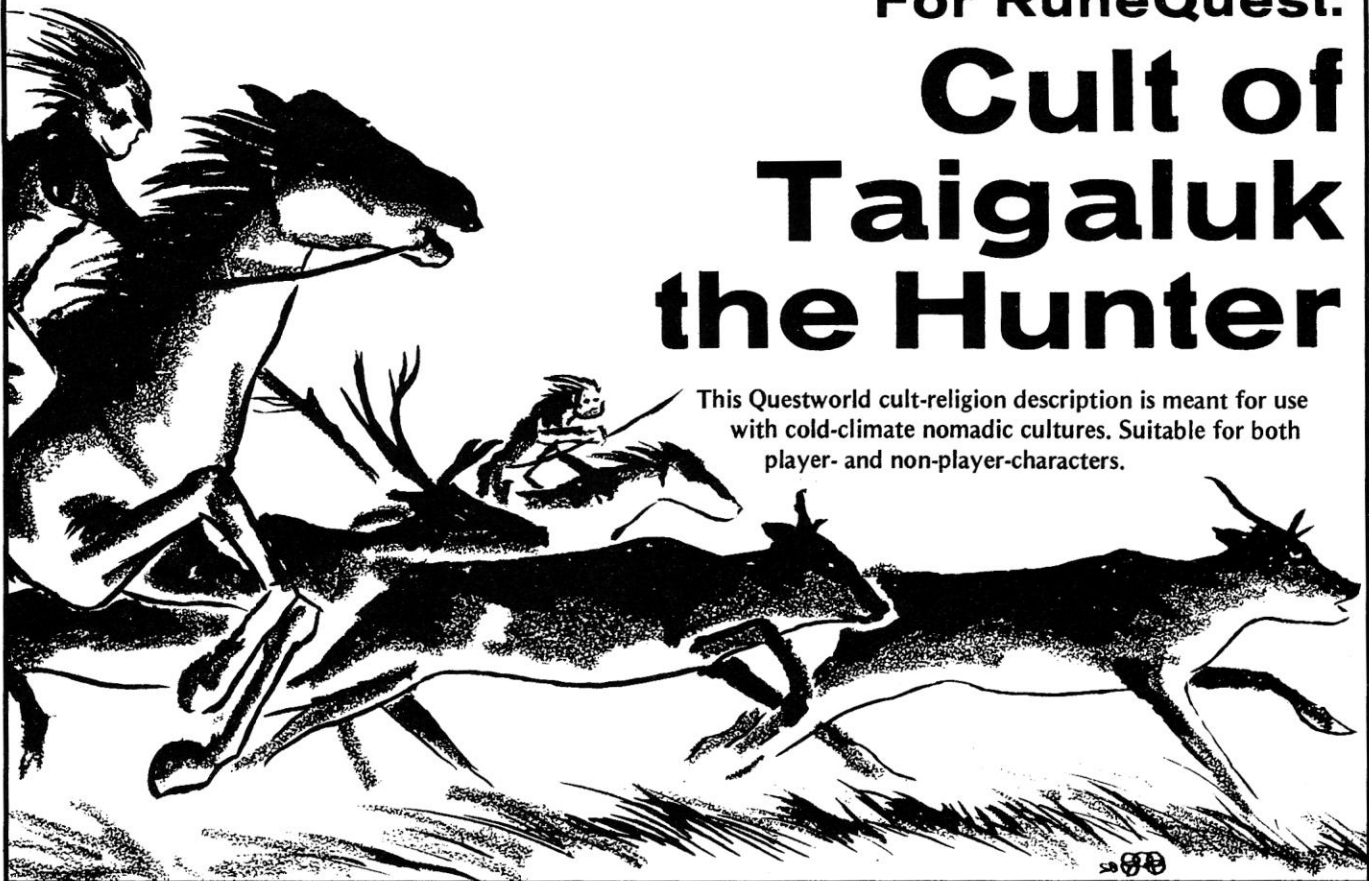
Moving from human senses, we enter the area of the electric sense. There are hundreds of species of fish and rays that possess the electric sense. Only a few can produce a shock. The electric sense is produced by modified muscles. It sets up a field around the fish in a roughly ellipsoid pattern. Anything entering this globe that conducts electricity differently than the surrounding water is picked up by the fish at once. All living organisms fall into this category, as do most other objects.

The electric sense gives electric fishes the ability to sense size, direction, movement, and even estimate composition of objects nearby. It is truly a three-dimensional ability, as it wraps around the object sensed, noting both sides of it, not just the side nearest the fish. Electric fishes can modulate their electric fields, emit staccato bursts of electricity, and communicate with each other. Since fish are hardly mental giants, such messages are no more than the equivalent of "keep off my turf," or "come on up and see me, sweetie," but an intelligent being using an electric sense would surely possess a complex, fast, and effective language of electric pulses. Those few electric fish able to kill or stun prey with an electric discharge use their sense to determine the size of the charge that will be needed. It is possible for such a fish to emit so much power that their 'batteries' become exhausted, and they become incapable of emitting a killing charge for a few hours, though their normal electric field remains.

Some bacteria have been proved to be able to sense magnetic fields, using tiny pieces of iron inside their body. The purpose of this is unknown. Migratory birds are believed by some to use the Earth's magnetic field to orient themselves properly. When magnets are strapped to such birds, their migrations are screwed up. More convincingly, when migratory birds are placed in cages surrounded by a strong magnetic field, they will orient themselves to the field, rather than to true north/south.

There is some evidence that humans can sense very high-intensity radiation, but the mechanism for this is unknown. Such a sense could be useful to an alien that either was endangered by radiation or used it to power an analogue of photosynthesis.

Other senses can be imagined, but the above rendition is a start. It is no more than a very brief outline of a few techniques available to some mundane animals. Who knows what lurks behind the sky. □



Illustrations by John Borkowski

# For RuneQuest: Cult of Taigaluk the Hunter

This Questworld cult-religion description is meant for use with cold-climate nomadic cultures. Suitable for both player- and non-player-characters.

by Greg Wilson

## MYTHOS AND HISTORY

*Before Time* — No tales are told of Taigaluk from the Golden Age, when food was plentiful and easily found. He is first mentioned as the one who taught hunting and the ways of beasts to men during the Lesser and Greater Darkness on the tundra, when the earth turned cold and the world seemed doomed. He hunted and slew many survivors of the Devil's army during the Dawn Age, hating their love of giving pain and senseless killing.

*Since Time* — Taigaluk has remained a solitary god, epitomizing the hunter's way of life. He guides the tundra's quiet loners, giving them a useful place outside their society. There have been heroes in the cult, and tales of particularly cunning or brave hunters are often told at the campfire.

*Life After Death* — Those who follow Taigaluk become one with him after death, to watch and guide those who hunt. No Taigalukna are resurrected, as the practice is abhorrent to this death god. Some may be returned

briefly as beasts to challenge and test those who remain.

Burial is performed, as with other tundra cults, by piling a cairn of rocks upon the dead. Hunters are always buried alone, with no mark on the cairn.

*Runic Associations* — Taigaluk has the Runes of Beast, Death, and Movement.

## NATURE OF THE CULT

*Reason for Continued Existence* — Taigaluk's following is a haven for loners in a society so interdependent that little privacy exists. His teachings provide solitude for those who desire it. In the polygamous northern culture, there are many unattached men who find Taigaluk's way appealing. Hunters occasionally lead groups of lay members for brief periods when there is game on the tundra, and serve as newsmongers or messengers.

*Social/Political Position and Power* — The Taigalukna are not particularly liked or disliked (except by the Erukna, who dislike everyone). They are valued for their skills and teaching, and admired for their resourcefulness

and confidence, but their self-reliance makes them alien to other tundra people.

*Particular Likes and Dislikes* — Cult members show active dislike of those who hunt for pleasure or take joy in pain. This disapproval is quiet, but cautionary tales of men tracked and slain by angered Taigalukna are well-known.

Many cult members dislike chaos and hunt its creatures wherever they are found. Taigaluk does not require this, however, and chaotic beings with the necessary self-control have occasionally gained entrance into the cult.

## ORGANIZATION

*Inter-Cult Organization* — There is no formal organization. During the sacred time at year's end a priest is chosen to represent the cult in whatever business comes up; it is the duty of this priest to settle disputes between hunters and townspeople, and to organize the hunters to deal with Angana (see below). If the need arises, this priest may communicate through dreams with other cult members.

**Intra-Temple Organization** — A temple is usually composed of a single lord or priest, with at most one pupil of initiate status. Often a lord will attach himself temporarily to a tribe, especially during the lean sessions when his skills are most needed. There is no formal arrangement; a hunter will appear, stay for a day or a year, and then leave when the mood takes him. Hunters will usually participate in rituals honoring the Earth, in respect of the Mother of Prey.

**Center of Power, Holy Places** — There are no centers of power or holy places for this cult. A hunter will worship where he finds himself. No hunter will allow observation during worship.

**Holy Days and High Holy Days** — There are no organized holy days within the cult. Instead, once each month the initiates and Rune-status members spend one day in quiet meditation, carving or making tools or weapons which are later left in the tundra as gifts for whoever should find them. A single point of POW is sacrificed each time a major kill is made, but it is left to the member's discretion as to what constitutes a major kill.

### LAY MEMBERSHIP

**Requirements to Join** — To become a lay member of the cult, it is necessary to have survived to adulthood (the seventeenth summer in the tundra). Anyone who participates in hunting may join, although women and chaotic beings rarely do. Usually, if there is a lord to lead them, the men of the tribe will join en masse during the caribou runs at summer's end. Anyone who has deliberately caused unnecessary pain or who has been boastful or vain will not be accepted.

**Requirements to Belong** — To remain within the cult, the lay member must do as the lord orders. He must hunt at least once, whether there is game or not. He may not conduct business or trade while hunting, nor may he wear or use anything of unalloyed Rune metal. Participation in other cults' ceremonies is not discouraged.

**Mundane Benefits** — While in the cult, a lay member may receive instruction in the cult skills from the lord. The lord may teach other skills, but only if there are no other teachers available. The main advantage in being a lay member is participation in the hunt

and a chance to observe and learn from a master hunter.

**Skills** — Most lords will teach any of the following skills: Spear, Bow, Trap Set/Disarm, Track, Camouflage, Hide in Cover, Move Quietly. As mentioned above, other skills may be taught.

The following special skills are taught by the cult:

**Starsight:** Knowledge skill, base 00%, 400/800/1600/3200. This is the use of the stars to navigate — an almost forgotten talent since the closing of the oceans. In the featureless snows, it is essential to survival. This skill is taught by other tundra cults.

**Snow Survival:** Knowledge skill, base 10%, 300/600/900/EXP. The tundra is not as benign an environment as much of the world. To reflect this, a person alone or without equipment in the cold seasons must make this roll

plus his (Snow Survival + Track)/2 or less on 1D100. A boastful or vain person will not be accepted, nor will one with responsibilities which may not be shirked, such as married men and tribal chieftains. From time to time, Taigaluk will accept an initiate who does not meet the above requirements — the southerner Hawkface was found near death after being separated from his caravan on the tundra borders and went on to become the greatest hunter lord of his time.

**Requirements to Remain Initiated** — An initiate must swear an oath to speak to no one until he leaves his teacher or becomes a hunter himself. He must improve to 75% Track within the year; an initiate who does not is expelled from the cult. He must study the cult skills, including the special cult skill of Animal Calls. If the initiate came from a band the hunter was



once per day or take a point damage in each limb from frostbite. This skill is taught by other tundra cults.

**Battle Magic** — The cult teaches no magic to members below initiate status.

### INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

**Requirements for Initiation** — A candidate must have hunted with a Rune lord at least once. The candidate must also have at least 60% Snow Survival and 50% Track, plus at least 40% in Bow or Spear. The chance for acceptance is equal to the character's CON

traveling with, they two will leave together soon after the initiation.

Many hunters' cairns are known to the tundra folk, and often someone who wishes to become a hunter or merely to speak with one will camp near a cairn, as they are sometimes visited by cult members.

**Mundane Benefits** — The greatest benefit of joining the cult is the solitude and self-reliance it requires and encourages. No one becomes a hunter out of thirst for power; the cult's members join because the way of life appeals to them.

**Skills** — Initiates can learn all the cult skills, plus any others known to the teaching lord. This includes all the skills taught to lay members plus the cult special skill of Animal Calls.

**Animal Calls:** Knowledge skill, base 05%, 300/600/900/EXP. This is the ability to imitate animal calls and to understand their meaning, as well as being able to read the body language of the various animals of the tundra. A hunter with this skill will understand what the wolf means when it howls, and can anticipate when the caribou is going to charge.

**Battle Magic** — Hunters teach their initiate pupils magic as a regular part of their training. All the spells available in *RuneQuest* are taught, depending upon what the teaching priest knows, with the exception of Demoralize and Fanaticism, which are regarded by Taigaluk as unbecoming a hunter. The special cult spell of Cover Tracks is also taught.

**Cover Tracks:** Variable spell, Temporal, 100m range, passive, focused. For each point in this spell, 100 meters of tracks made by a single person or beast are erased. To detect such an erased path, the tracker must roll his Track ability less 100% or use Divination.

## RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

**General Statement** — Hunter lords are the greatest and most skilled hunters on the tundra. They worship Taigaluk by living as he did, hunting the tundra beasts and warding to ensure that not too many are slain. They have and will accept little responsibility, except in times of dire need.

**Requirements for Acceptance** — A candidate must have 90% in Snow Survival, Track, Animal Calls, either Bow or Spear, and one other cult skill. He must know the cult spell of Cover Tracks, plus one other spell.

Both men and women may become hunter lords, though few women have done so. When the teacher considers him ready, the initiate is presented to five other Rune-level characters and judged in a test abstracted as the average of the character's Track skill, his Animal Calls skill, and his CONx5 or less on D100. As a final test, the initiate must track one of the assembled lords and priests from sun-up to

sun-up. Once this is done, the initiate's forearms are ritually scarred, he is given a gift by each of the five who adjudged him, and he becomes a hunter lord.

**Restrictions** — A hunter lord is required to teach at least one initiate during his lifetime. Unknown to outsiders, hunters spend most of their solitary time observing beasts, not hunting, but a hunter is required to hunt and kill at least once a month. A hunter lord must always deal fairly with non-cult members and must obey cult priests. He may never use unalloyed Rune metal.

**Benefits** — A hunter lord may progress beyond 100%. Any ability in Animal Calls past 100% is treated as Animal Speech, and allows the hunter to converse with animals or birds. Hunters use predators as hawks or lynxes as familiars, disdaining pack hunters as wolves.

## RUNE PRIESTHOOD

**General Statement** — Hunter priests are always male, and they are few. No priest will ever travel with a band of people; occasionally one will appropriate a promising initiate from a hunter lord. Hunter priests, unlike lords, never have familiars. A hunter priest's first responsibility is the hunting of malevolent spirits and monsters of the tundra.

**Requirements for Acceptance** — Any initiate with a POW of 18+ that knows 3 points of Cover Tracks may become a priest. Hunter lords have sometimes been trained to the priesthood. Any cult member chosen by a priest for training must either accept or quit the cult. Chosen initiates or lords become priests the first time they successfully set and use a Spirit Trap against an intelligent prey. When this is done, the person's cheeks are scarred, and he becomes a hunter priest.

**Restrictions** — The restrictions on priests are like those for lords. There are no rules preventing them from associating with bands, but no priest has ever done it. They will not teach magic to non-initiates. It is their responsibility to roam the tundra, waiting for Angana to reappear.

**Benefits** — The benefits of being a hunter priest are identical to those of being a hunter lord, except that priests do not take familiars.

**Rune Spell Compatibility** — All standard one and two-point Rune spells are available to hunter priests. As there is no elemental association, no elementals may be summoned.

**Cult Special Rune Spells:**

**Running:** duration 8 hours, range touch, reusable, one-point spell.

This spell enables the recipient to run at triple his normal movement rate for eight hours, moving at a fast, steady pace. This spell is often used when carrying messages (a service sometimes performed in exchange for a trade good) or when chasing a wounded animal.

**True Trail:** instantaneous, range unlimited, reusable, two-point spell

A hunter casting this spell while examining a trail will know what the maker of that trail sees, hears, and otherwise senses at that moment (or blackness if the trail-maker is dead). A rough indication of the direction of the trail-maker is also received, but no feeling for distance. This spell can be detected by Detect Detection and can be resisted by Detection Blank.

**Spirit Trap:** duration until triggered, range touch, non-reusable, three-point spell

This spell is cast upon a particular spot in a ceremony taking one full day. The caster creates a web of power which is triggered whenever a being with a POW greater than some threshold specified by the caster enters the area, which may be no larger than 10m by 10m. When the trap is triggered, the triggering individual and the spirit of the caster immediately enter into spirit combat, no matter how far separated they are. The triggering spirit may withdraw by leaving the area, but must win a round of combat in order to do this. The caster may withdraw at any time. Detect Magic will show the area of this spell.

Few priests will have more than one trap extant at any time, as suddenly being engaged in spirit combat while in the middle of fighting a snow tiger is rather bothersome. This spell is a cult secret.

## SUBSERVIENT CULTS

**Blue Bear** — Blue Bear was an early hunter priest whose father had been a bearwalker of the tundra. From him, the cult learned this special 3-point spell:



**Animal Disguise:** *duration 8 hours, range touch, non-reusable, three-point spell*

The person this spell is cast upon must have at least a 100% skill with Animal Calls, and must wear the complete hide of the animal to be imitated. While the spell is in effect, the recipient appears to be the animal being imitated when seen or heard. This spell does not shapechange; tracks left are those of a man; instead, it uses the person's knowledge of the way animals move and behave to create a powerful illusion. Anyone knowing Animal Calls can attempt to detect the true nature of the individual under this spell by rolling under their skill minus 100 on D100. The spell is good enough to fool other animals.

#### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

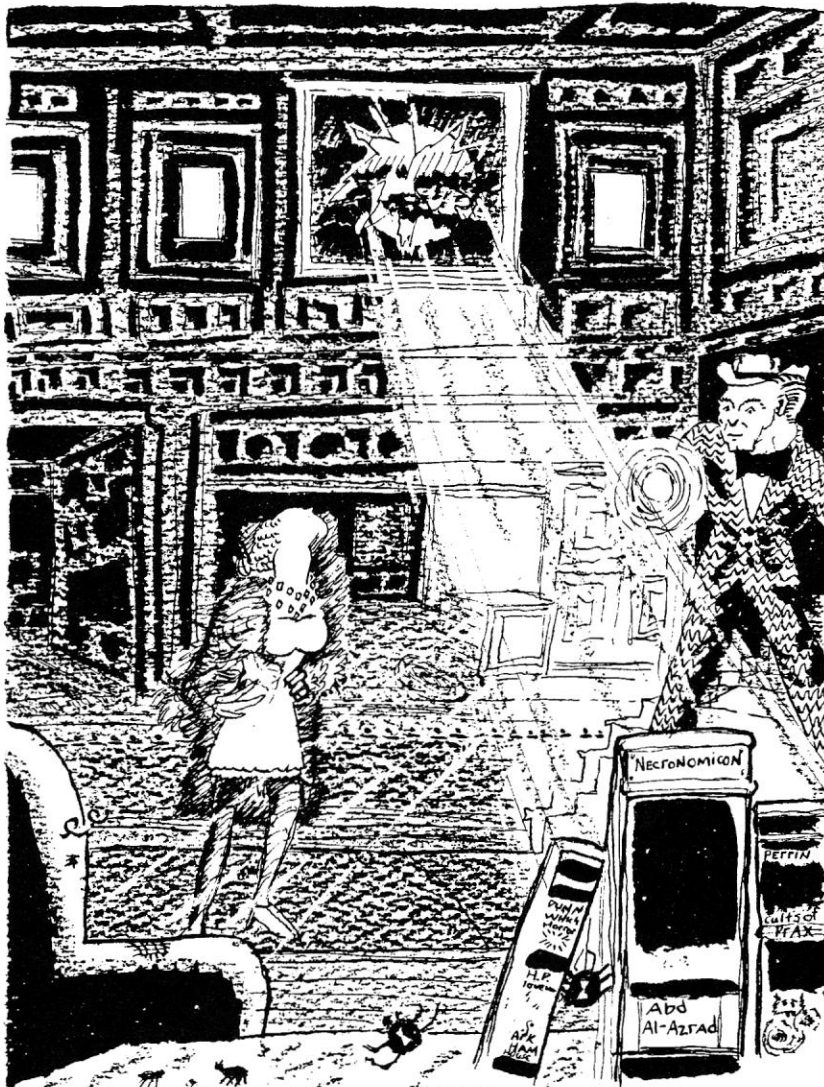
*Angana* — Angana was a hunter who betrayed Taigaluk during the Greater

Darkness, taking up ways of bloody slaughter and indiscriminate killing. He was slain by Taigaluk, but had allied himself with a lord of undead. As a result, he is perpetually reincarnated among the tundra peoples. Initially ignorant of his past, the reborn Angana is always drawn to the cult, and is invariably accepted. Upon becoming a lord, the hunter remembers who and what he is, and resumes his bloody-handed ways. Tales are told among the Taigalukna of Angana slaying lords and priests one by one, considering them the only fit prey for one with an age of experience in hunting on the tundra. Knowledge of Angana's existence and nature is given cult members only after at least a year as an initiate.

Whenever Angana resurfaces, sometimes slowly with a single killing followed by years of calm, sometimes in a mad wave of violence, cult members band together in the most dangerous of hunts. The knowledge that any one

of them might prove to be Angana further reinforces the self-reliance of cult members, and isolates them even further from the tundra society.

*Cult Members* — The cult of Taigaluk is not a refuge for outcasts. It is a way of life which the loners of the tundra society will often choose, to find peace which otherwise eludes them. Cult members tend to be quiet, self-confident, and shy. This shyness may manifest itself as an active dislike of people in general, or more usually as a feeling like that a caged wolf would have whenever they stay in one place or with one group of people too long. Taigalukna rarely show their feelings and never boast, but do not allow their accomplishments to be mocked. Taigalukna rarely go adventuring with others, making the cult somewhat unsuitable for personal play, but it does provide a source of NPCs with useful, albeit specialized, talents. □



# H.P. Lovecraft in *Call of Cthulhu*

by Ed Gore

As most of you know by now, *Call of Cthulhu* is a game based on the macabre works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is set on our own Earth in the 1920s, with a few small additions, such as Lovecraft's mythical cities of Arkham and Innsmouth. The purpose of this article is to allow the characters in the game *Call of Cthulhu* access to Lovecraft's stories as they are published, and possibly even Lovecraft himself.

The nineteen-twenties were one of the most prosperous times the USA has ever had. Businesses of all sorts flourished and grew. One of the new

industries born in the twenties was the pulps — cheap magazines often dealing with science fiction, detective, or horror stories. It is this last category we are interested in. The 1920's were the time that Lovecraft was emerging into the public eye as a writer of stature in his limited field. During the twenties, and into the thirties, Lovecraft's name was commonly seen in the pages of *Weird Tales* and *Astounding Stories*, two of the more popular pulp magazines.

The chart below converts some of Lovecraft's best work into the same format used for the magical books in

*Call of Cthulhu*. Only one of the stories contained an entire spell in it, so I have left off the appropriate column, substituting with a note at the base of the chart.

If H.P.L.'s stories are being read by the characters, then it is not unlikely that they may try to contact Mr. Lovecraft. This is not difficult. Lovecraft was known for his incredible volume of correspondence. If the characters wish to visit Lovecraft in person, that, too, should not be difficult. Except for a brief time spent living in New York, he spent his life in Providence, Rhode Island, not far from Boston, Arkham, and other spots popular among investigators. I have given my interpretation of Lovecraft's statistics, permitting his use as a sage. Lovecraft would not be willing to enter combat or even go exploring old ruins, since he was unhealthy most of his life and was unable to tolerate low temperatures.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, writer and revisionist. Born 1890. Lives at 66 College Ave., Providence, Rhode Island.

|        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|
| STR 8  | CON 8  | SIZ 14 |
| INT 17 | POW 12 | DEX 12 |
| CHA 18 | EDU 17 | SAN 30 |

**SPELLS:** At the keeper's discretion (see "The Shambler From the Stars," by Robert Bloch.)

**SKILLS:** Read/Write English 100%, Read/Write Latin 55%, Read/Write French 35%, Accounting 50%, Anthropology 40%, Astronomy 80%, Botany 30%, Chemistry 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 65%, First Aid 45%, Geology 45%, History 95%, Law 30%, Library Use 80%, Linguist 20%, Occult 85%, Pharmacy 25%, Treat Disease 30%, Zoology 40%, Diagnose Disease 25%, Listen 50%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Track 10%, Drive Auto 20%, Electrical Repair 10%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Camouflage 10%, Hide 05%, Move Quietly 30%, Pick Pocket 05%, Bargain 15%, Credit Rating 25%, Debate 50%, Fast Talk 15%, Oratory 40%, Psychoanalyze 15%, Sing 10%, Climb 55%, Dodge 60%, Jump 45%, Ride 05%, Swim 15%, Throw 45%

**NOTE:** If the keeper actually chooses to use Lovecraft as a character in his campaign, we recommend that his statistics be placed upon a separate character sheet for ease of reference.



Lovecraft was in poor health during most of his life. He was unable to tolerate temperatures, which made him uncomfortable, and sometimes actually ill. He once passed out on the street when the temperature dropped to around 40 degrees.

He was a very gentle man. One famous story tells of a kitten he found one night. He took it into his home and fed it. As he sat stroking it, the kitten fell asleep. Rather than wake it, Lovecraft simply stayed in the chair all night. He is not the bizarre monster some critics make him out to be. He was simply a man unable to cope with the world which had thrust itself upon him — not an uncommon set of circumstances at all, and one familiar to many FRPers.

Lovecraft was never very well off, monetarily speaking. He did not have the self-confidence to write full-time, and charged much too little for his services as a proofreader/revisionist.

This, of course, is only my interpretation of Lovecraft. I did not know

him personally (more's the pity) and must admit that this version is shaded with my own feelings and prejudices. Rather than being Lovecraft as he was, this is Lovecraft as I see him. If you don't care for an interpretation, change it. Some of the skills have been assigned arbitrarily — especially the physically-based ones. I have no idea what H.P.L.'s Move Silently was!

Lovecraft had little formal education, since he had been removed from school at a young age due to illness. He was largely self-taught and was tutored by his aunts and other relatives. He read prodigiously.

I gave H.P.L. a high charisma because of the effect he had on the writers who met him. There are many accounts of men going to meet him, and expecting to dislike him intensely, because of what they had heard from those who had not met him. All left with a great deal of respect and admiration for the man. H.P.L. started many other writers on the road to relative fame, such as August Derleth and

Robert Bloch, both of whom were close correspondents.

Those wishing to find out more about H.P.L. are encouraged to read his selected letters and the biography "Howard Phillips Lovecraft: Dreamer on the Nightside," by Frank Belknap Long. It is the only biography I've read that really does H.P.L. justice.

I would like to thank James Turner of Arkham House for supplying me with the information necessary to complete the chart below.

All of the stories mentioned in this article can be obtained in hardback from Arkham House Publishers Inc., PO Box 546, Sauk City, WI 53583.

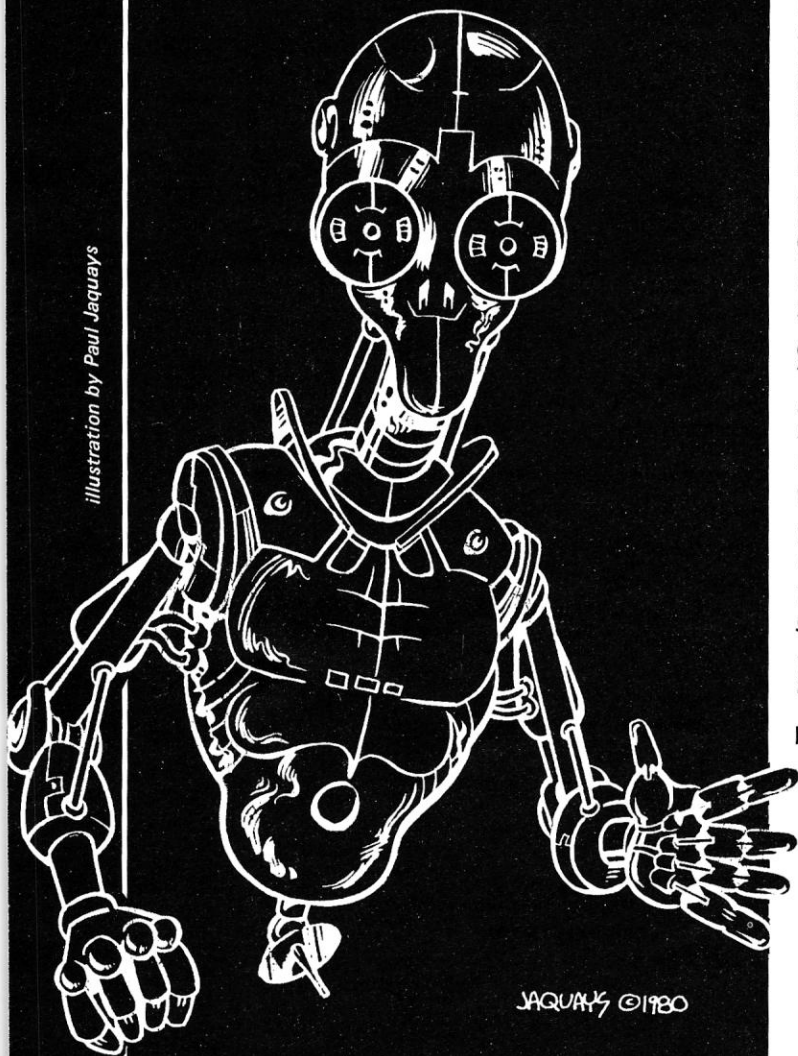
In addition, Ballantine/Del Rey has recently released a series of paperbacks containing most of Lovecraft's stories (a notable exception being "The Call of Cthulhu"), all with excellent cover art by Michael Whelen. These books can be found at most bookstores, or by writing to Ballantine Mail Sales, Dept. TA, 201F. 50th St., New York, NY 10022. □

| Title                             | Written   | Publication & Date   | Cthulhu Mythos | SAN loss |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|----------------|----------|
| Dagon                             | 1917      | <i>The Vagrant</i> , Nov. 1919<br><i>Weird Tales</i> , Oct. 1923     | +3%            | -1D3     |
| The Crawling Chaos                | 1920      | <i>The United Cooperative</i> , Apr. 1921                            | +3%            | -1D3     |
| Nyarlatheotep (poem)              | 1920      | <i>The United Amateur</i> , Nov. 1920                                | +2%            | -1D4     |
| The Terrible Old Man              | 1920      | <i>The Tryout</i> , July 1921<br><i>Weird Tales</i> , Aug. 1926      | +1%            | -1 point |
| The Nameless City                 | 1921      | <i>Fanciful Tales</i> , Fall 1936<br><i>Weird Tales</i> , Nov. 1938  | +3%            | -1D4     |
| Herbert West — Reanimator         | 1921-1922 | <i>Home Brew</i> , Feb-July 1922 (6 parts)                           | +5%            | -2D4     |
| The Lurking Fear                  | 1922      | <i>Home Brew</i> , Jan-April 1923<br><i>Weird Tales</i> , June 1928  | +5%            | -1D6     |
| The Festival                      | 1923      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Jan. 1925                                       | +3%            | -1D4     |
| The Shunned House                 | 1924      | hardcover edition by W. Paul Cooke<br>Athol, Mass. few printed; 1928 | +3%            | -1D6     |
| The Horror at Red Hook            | 1925      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Jan. 1927                                       | +5%            | -1D6     |
| The Call of Cthulhu               | 1926      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Feb. 1928                                       | +10%           | -2D6     |
| The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath | 1920-1926 | hardcover edition by Arkham House<br>in 1942                         | +7%            | -1D8     |
| Pickman's Model                   | 1926      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Oct. 1927                                       | +5%            | -1D6     |
| The Colour Out of Space           | 1927      | <i>Amazing Stories</i> , Sept. 1927                                  | +5%            | -1D8     |
| The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*  | 1927-1928 | <i>Weird Tales</i> , May-July 1941                                   | +10%           | -2D8     |
| The Dunwich Horror                | 1928      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Apr. 1929                                       | +10%           | -2D8     |
| The Whisperer in Darkness         | 1930      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Aug. 1931                                       | +7%            | -1D10    |
| At the Mountains of Madness       | 1931      | <i>Astounding Stories</i> , Feb.-Apr. 1936                           | +10%           | -2D8     |
| The Shadow Over Innsmouth         | 1931      | hardcover edition by Visionary<br>Press, Everett, Penn. 1936         | +10%           | -1D10    |
| The Dreams in the Witch-House     | 1932      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , July 1933                                       | +8%            | -1D8     |
| The Thing on the Doorstep         | 1933      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Jan. 1937                                       | +5%            | -1D8     |
| The Shadow Out of Time            | 1934      | <i>Astounding Tales</i> , June 1936                                  | +7%            | -1D10    |
| The Haunter of the Dark           | 1935      | <i>Weird Tales</i> , Dec. 1936                                       | +5%            | -1D8     |

\* The case of Charles Dexter Ward is the only story to explicitly contain an entire magical spell. This spell is *Resurrection*, and the reverse incantation. While there is only one spell, it has a Spell Multiplier of x3.

# PLANETARY ENCOUNTERS FOR TRAVELLER

illustration by Paul Jaquays



by Mason Jones

When characters are traveling in space, the *Traveller* rules are quite specific about dealing with possible encounters. However, when the characters have the temerity to set foot on planet, the rules end.

Adventuring can be as much fun on-planet as off. Therefore, I developed the following encounter table for dealing with such circumstances. The chance for having an encounter will vary so much that I didn't set any specific chance. The planet, as well as other criteria, will dictate the proper

chance for an encounter. When an encounter is specified, simply roll on the table below.

The table rolled on will vary with the exact area, but all are self-explanatory. Once you have determined who or what was encountered, roll to determine whether they are carrying a weapon, as shown by the percentage chance under the weapon column. This chance will also vary according to the circumstances, such as the law level of a planet, but a basic chance is

given. Other notes about the encounters are given after the chart.

Once the above is taken care of, a reaction should be determined. If the reaction is not pre-set (such as when heavily armed PCs meet police on a law level B planet), roll 2D6, with possible modifications depending on the circumstances. If both encountering groups have Nobles in them, this may make the encounter more peaceful.

Of course, all the above is subject to modification by the referee according to his preferences. □

## Traveller Planetary Encounter Table

| Encounter     | City  | Starport | Wilderness | Weapon? |
|---------------|-------|----------|------------|---------|
| Scout         | 01-05 | 01-10    | 01         | 80%     |
| Pirate        | 06-08 | 11-15    | —          | 90%     |
| Belter        | 09-12 | 16-18    | —          | 70%     |
| Sailor        | 13-16 | —        | —          | 50%     |
| Diplomat *†   | 17-18 | 19-20    | —          | 30%     |
| Doctor        | 19-20 | 21       | —          | 20%     |
| Alien **†     | 21-22 | 22       | 02-03      | 1-100%  |
| Flyer         | 23-25 | 23       | —          | 30%     |
| Navy          | 26-30 | 24-34    | 04         | 70%     |
| Bureaucrat *† | 31-32 | 35-36    | —          | 20%     |
| Alien **†     | 33-34 | 37       | 05-06      | 1-100%  |
| Rogue         | 35-44 | 38-40    | 07         | 95%     |
| Noble *†      | 45    | 41       | 08         | 02%     |
| Scientist *†  | 46-48 | 42-43    | 09-10      | 03%     |
| Hunter †      | 49-53 | 44-45    | 11-21      | 98%     |
| Merchant      | 54-58 | 46-56    | —          | 60%     |
| Army          | 59-63 | 57-67    | 22         | 90%     |
| Marine        | 64-68 | 68-78    | 23         | 90%     |
| Citizen ††    | 69-71 | 79-81    | —          | 02%     |
| Policeman     | 72-82 | 82-92    | —          | 100%    |
| Peasant       | 83-85 | —        | —          | 10%     |
| Thug          | 86-90 | 93-95    | —          | 98%     |
| Criminal      | 91-92 | 96-97    | —          | 90%     |
| Trooper       | 93-95 | 98-99    | 24         | 90%     |
| Alien **†     | 96-00 | 00       | 25-26      | 1-100%  |
| Animal        | —     | —        | 27-00      | —       |

\* This encounter will likely (70%) have guards present, who will be armed 100% of the time.

† This encounter is a possible patron for the characters.

\*\* Aliens are a special case, and as such, nothing is assumed. The aliens can be anything whatsoever, from either the sources available for *Traveller* or the referee's imagination.

†† Citizens are simply normal, everyday people who happen to live on the planet in question.

## Encounter Reactions

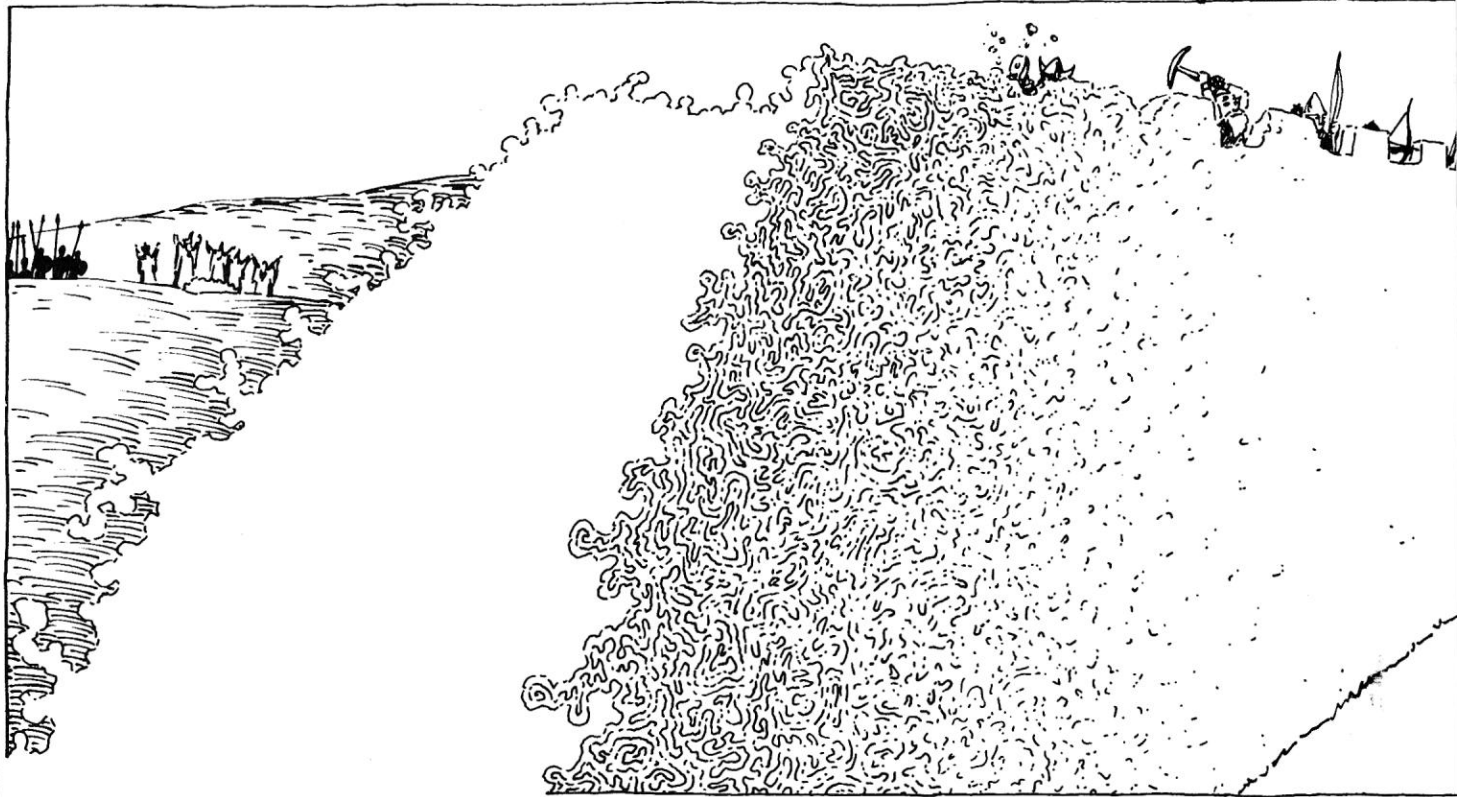
| 2D6 | Reaction  |
|-----|---|
| 2   | violent attack immediately  |
| 3   | attack on a 5+  |
| 4   | attack on an 8+   |
| 5-6 | possible attack — depends on characters' reactions to the encounter   |
| 7   | uncertain or waits for characters' reaction                           |
| 8-9 | interested, possibly friendly, depending on the characters' responses |
| 10  | responsive and friendly   |
| 11  | friendly  |
| 12  | friendly and helpful  |



RuneQuest Glorantha  
**Dragons Past 1**

sketch map by Yurek Chodak

Gloranthen Military Campaigns. Explanations of campaigns and numbered events of note are on page 31.



## Dragons Past: 1

# Gloranthan Milita

by Greg Stafford

*Many of you have expressed an interest in being informed about Gloranthan current events in order to enrich your own campaigns. The following article is the first installment of a regular feature, to appear every five months; to relate the major goings-on of not only Dragons Pass but most of Genertela, the northern continent of Glorantha. The Chaosium house campaign is on a schedule of one earthly month equalling one Gloranthan season — thus, each installment corresponds to a full year of events.*

*This feature will mainly cover the types of events which are likely to generate adventures for player-characters. Since the purpose of this article is to allow your characters to participate in the events of Glorantha, such an emphasis is only fair.*

*The other main topic to be emphasized in this series is the peoples of Glorantha. In addition to an annual calendar of events, some tribe, nation, or religion will also be featured to illustrate important details from that year's history.*

*Scenarios taking advantage of this historic outline must still be written by the gamemasters; either from scratch or adapted from published sources. These can be integrated, as far as motives and effects, into a larger-scale campaign, thereby giving the verisimilitude of a whole world.*

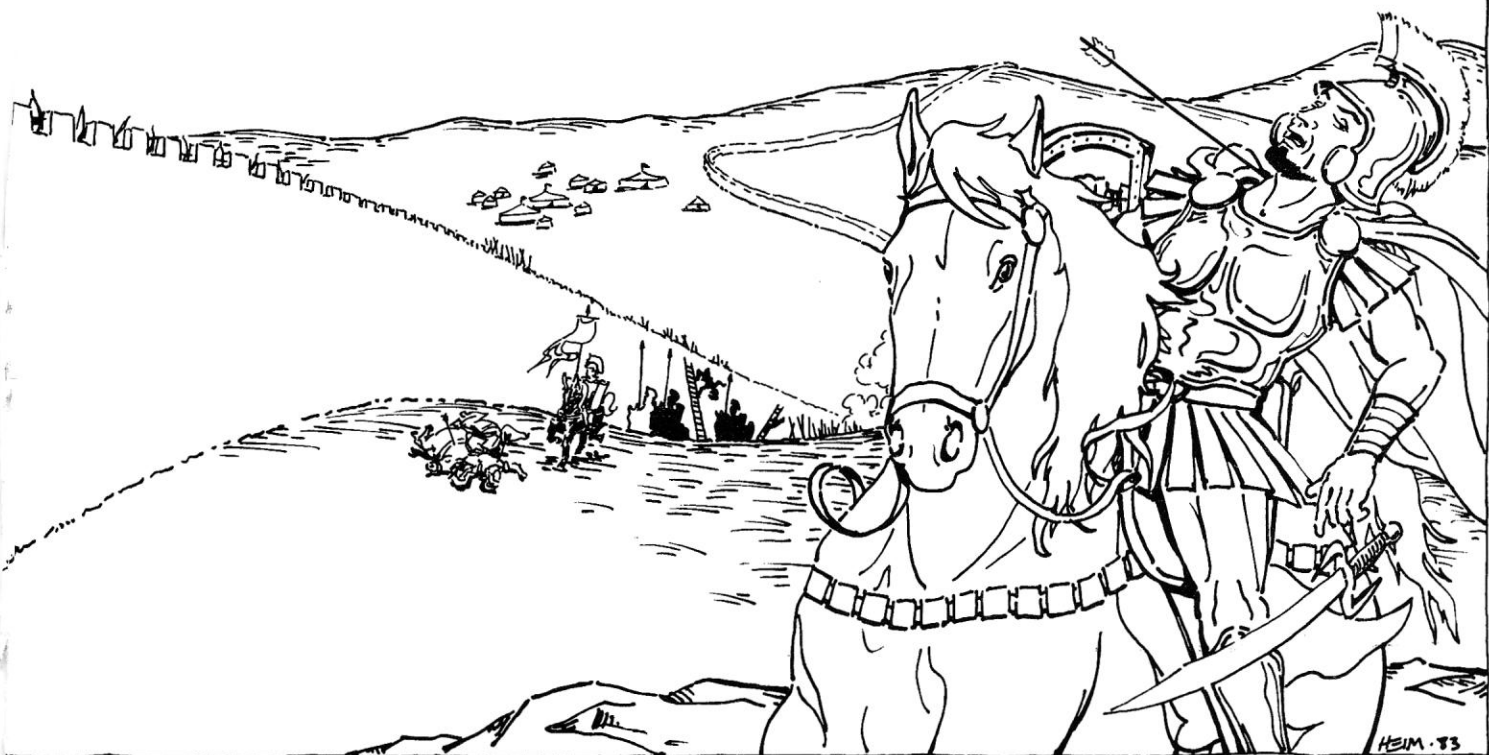
### The Campaign

My campaign is mostly limited to a small region of the continent of Genertela. Other parts of the map are also alive, sometimes, with mini in-house campaigns which come and go. But most of the action, the sparks which will ignite the ferocity of the Hero Wars, will begin in the Dragon Pass region.

An overview of this area is critical to an understanding of the historical events. The following are outlines of the more important local political entities and societies.

**Aggar** (50% Orlanthi, 50% Lunar) Population 250,000. A rough land of craggy hills and steep valleys, mostly untamed. Its hilltops and frontiers are still occupied by Orlanth-worshipping barbarians who regularly exert their surly independence. The valleys are ruled by the Lunar king whose loyal subjects include the lowland farmers, the small populations of the cities, and the merchant class. West of Aggar lies chaotic Dorastor, and north of it lie other Lunar provinces.

**Tarsh** (80% Lunar, 20% Orlanthi) Population 500,000. A land of rolling hills and lush valleys. It is ruled by a Lunar king whose dynasty has provided peace and security to the dominant farming culture for many generations.



# ary Experience for RuneQuest Player- Characters

**Stinkwood** (90% Other, 5% Orlanthi, 5% Lunar) Population 60,000. The Stinking Forest is a haunt of nonhumans, mainly the tusk riders, whose nearby holy place exerts a compelling presence. This is also the lurking place for many trolls from nearby Dagori Inkarth, dwarfs from Greatway mountain, dragonewts from their nearby city, and chaotic monsters from nearby Snakepipe Hollow.

**Prax** (75% Praxian, 10% Lunar, 15% Other) Population 200,000. Prax is a semi-arid plain further troubled by various godtime curses. It is inhabited by Praxian nomads whose unique culture suits them to the harsh life.

**Sartar** (60% Orlanthi, 30% Lunar, 10% Other) Population 250,000. A barbarian culture worshiping Orlanth, similar to the Hendriki of the south.

**Grazelands** (80% Grazelander, 20% Other) Population 100,000. A nomadic barbarian culture which occupies the ridged lands and defies all incursions by would-be farmers. Grazelanders worship the sun, horses, and earth deities, and have a traditionally close relationship with Ironhoof the centaur.

**Ditali** (60% Orlanthi, 20% Caladraland, 20% Other) Population 250,000. A barbaric culture which occupies some rich river valleys and the surrounding hills. It is a lush, heavily forested area which supports many clans in its wilds, and

which sits upon the east-west trade routes to the Solanthi and beyond.

**Caladraland** (70% Caladraland, 20% Insular, 10% Other) Population 450,000. A barbaric culture which leads a horticultural existence on the rich slopes of their volcanic ranges of hills and mountains. They worship the gods of the volcanoes they live upon above all else, and recognize an elected High King for a term of years. They are stubbornly traditional and their magic has allowed them to maintain independence throughout history. They speak a local dialect similar to the Orlanthi.

**Esrolia** (65% Orlanthi, 15% Insular, 20% Other) Population 2,000,000. A densely-populated, heavily-farmed land ruled by a number of female-led clans who form a council which selects a High Queen, or Matriarch. Though labelled Orlanthi, they are heavily earth-oriented.

**Heortland/Hendrikiland** (85% Orlanthi, 15% Other) Population 500,000. A high plateau of good farming land, surrounded and broken by hills and woods. Traditional peoples, though the valleys are influenced by the Malkioni military culture.

**Islands** (80% Insular, 20% Other) Population 60,000. Sea-going fishermen and coastal peoples. They speak the

local dialect, but as often use their own ancient watery language, called Boatling by those who do not know it. Pharaonic believers elect an annual president, but real power is in the hands of the High Admiral who rules the fleets.

### Integrating Glorantha with your Characters

Established player-characters are likely to have a long history of adventures of their own. In being fitted into Glorantha, their personal history should be integrated with what has occurred. For that reason I have included a chronology of events. The referee and players should sit down with the list of adventures performed by the player-characters and work out which year each event occurred. Players should also have their choice to participate in historical adventures which occurred but which were not played out, such as uprisings or battles. Be sure to note the time and dates your characters earned their mercenary or militia experience and figure out which side they fought on.

The result of this work will be that your characters will feel much more a part of the world's events. Their daily activities and inner feelings take on meaning when contrasted to the large world they are playing in.

New characters begun for this campaign have an easier time, for they have not been committed to much action. New characters in our games are generally no more than 21 years old and have, at most, served 5 years of mercenary service. Decide what side the mercenaries fought on and then consult the appropriate column to find out the battles which would, or might, have been seen.

New characters' childhoods can also be charted by these past events. Such early occurrences would shape ambitions and prejudices. Figure out what your character's parents were doing during his formative years. If nothing else, you can discover which sets of events launched the player-character into a life of wandering and homeless insecurity. Was his home burned by an invasion or raid? Is his motivation

national, clannish, or tribal? Did he desert his family without a backward look, or has he returned to see how they have fared? This is an era of many troubles, and there are many reasons for a character to become a wanderer.

### Reading the Army Activity Chart

This chart shows the annual activity of thirteen armies between the years of 1602 and 1620.

The year is given in the column on the left side. To see what occurred in a given year, simply find the date, then read horizontally to see where each army was engaged.

The armies, mostly originating from the previously described areas, are listed horizontally at the top of the chart. Their political boundaries are approximated in the Dragon Pass area map. To follow the history of a particular army, read the list vertically, from top to bottom.

### Places

There are twelve major locations each capable of mustering an army at this time. Those are listed along the top of the chart, plus the Lunar Provincial Army. There are also some other locations which did not have armies of consequence but appear as victims of raids. Home means the army was in its land of origin.

### Activities

There are five types of activities which appear on this chart. Each has a vaguely specific set of implications. Many variations in intensity occur.

**Invasion** — Indicates large numbers of troops, and an intent to commit to full battle, but not necessarily an intent to occupy land.

**Raid** — Indicates small groups of varying sizes in battles for plunder and damage rather than decisiveness.

**Defense** — Protective measures, usually in one's homeland, which will shift to any appropriate method of defense necessary.

**Garrison** — Protective measures taken, usually in homeland. Indicates a period of peace without significant military activity.

**Civil** — Indicates that combatants are engaged in decisive military activity to settle internal political disputes.

Note that it is possible for a nation to be home and raiding at the same time; this indicates internal dissent, commonly interclan feuding and normal cattle raiding among nomads.

Example — Dorgrim the Loud was born in 1598. The youngest years of his life are off-chart and uneventful for him. He was age 4 when Boldhome fell to the Lunar army. He was ten when the Righteous Wind of Orlanthe worshippers was persecuted, and twelve when the Telmori were defeated by the Lunars. Three years later, surviving raids by tusk riders and Hendriki warriors on his land, he reached maturity at 15, in 1613.

At this time, Dorgrim decided to join the mercenaries. Liking horses, he applied to and was accepted by a unit sponsored by the Grazelanders. In the next five years of his enlistment he saw action raiding within Sartar, then fought in Tarsh for a couple of years against the Lunar army. Then there were two years of boring garrison duty until discharge in 1619.

ARMY ACTIVITY CHART

| YEAR | Aggar         | Tarsh              | Stinking Forest | Dagori Inkarth | Prax             | Sartar        | Grazelands         | Ditall                   | Caladraland     | Esrolia         | Heortland      | Islands       | Lunar Provincial Army               |
|------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1602 | Home Garrison | Sartar*1 Invasion  | Balazar Raid    | Stink. Raid    | Sartar*1 Home    | Sartar*1 Home | Sartar*1 Home      | Garrison                 | Garrison        | Garrison        | Garrison       | Garrison      | Sartar*1 Invasion                   |
| 1603 | Home Civil    | Home Tarsh         | Home Defense    | Dagori Raid    | Home Defense     | Home Civil    | Esrolia Raid       | Home Caladraland         | Home Defense    | Home Defense    | Home Defense   | Home Defense  | Sartar Garrison                     |
| 1604 | Home Defense  | Aggar Invasion     | Home Defense    | Stink. Raid    | Heort. Raid      | none          | Esrolia Raid       | Home Civil               | Home Garrison   | Home Defense    | Home Defense   | Home Defense  | Sartar Garrison                     |
| 1605 | Home Garrison | Home Heort*3       | Tarsh Invasion  | Heort*3 Raid   | Heort*3 Invasion | none          | Esrolia*2 Invasion | Home Civil               | Esrolia*2 Home  | Home*2 Defense  | Home*3 Defense | Home Defense  | Esrolia*2 Invasion/Heort*2 Invasion |
| 1606 | Home Raid     | Stink. Invasion    | Home Defense    | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Civil*4  | Home Defense       | Caladraland Invasion     | Home Defense    | Grazelands      | Home Defense   | Home Defense  | Sartar Defense                      |
| 1607 | Home Defense  | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Civil*5  | Home Defense       | Home Defense             | Home Garrison   | Home Grazelands | Home Garrison  | Home ( )      | Sartar*5 Invasion                   |
| 1608 | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Defense  | Home Defense       | Home Garrison            | Home Garrison   | Home Grazelands | Home Garrison  | Home ( )      | Prax*6 Invasion                     |
| 1609 | Home Garrison | Stink. Raid        | Home Defense    | Home Raid      | Dorastor Raid    | Stink. Raid   | Esrolia Raid       | Caladraland/Esrolia Raid | Home Defense    | Home Defense    | Home ( )       | Home ( )      | Prax Raid/Heort. Raid               |
| 1610 | Home Defense  | Home Garrison      | Home Defense    | Stink. Raid    | Aggar Raid       | Heort. Raid   | Prax*8 Defense     | Home Defense             | Ditall Invasion | Ditall Invasion | Home ( )       | Home ( )      | Prax*8 Invasion                     |
| 1611 | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Balazar    | Stink. Raid    | Home Civil       | Home Civil*9  | Home Garrison      | Home Defense             | Home Ditall     | Home Ditall     | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | Prax Garrison/Sartar Garrison       |
| 1612 | Home Raid     | Home Garrison      | Home Vanch      | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison            | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | As above                            |
| 1613 | Home Garrison | Sartar*10 Invasion | Home Raid       | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Home*10  | Sartar Invasion    | Home Defense             | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | Sartar*10 Invasion                  |
| 1614 | Home Garrison | Home Balazar       | Home Raid       | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Home     | Tarsh Raid         | Caladraland*11           | Home*11         | Home*11         | Home*11        | Home*11       | Ditall/Esrolia                      |
| 1615 | Home Raid     | Home Tarsh         | Home Defense    | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Grazelands*12 | Home Invasion      | Tarsh*12                 | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Sartar    | Home Defense  | Grazelands*12 Invasion              |
| 1616 | Home Raid     | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison            | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | Home Sartar                         |
| 1617 | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison            | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | Home Sartar                         |
| 1618 | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison            | Esrol.*14       | Home*14         | Home*14        | Home*14       | Home Sartar                         |
| 1619 | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Home Garrison | Home Garrison      | Home Garrison            | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison   | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison | Home Sartar                         |
| 1620 | Home Civil    | Home Defense       | Home Tarsh      | Home Garrison  | Home Garrison    | Heort*16      | Heort*16           | Esrolia Invasion         | Caladraland     | Home Defense    | Home Defense   | Home*16       | Home*16                             |

## Events of Note

A number of events are noteworthy for their importance or curiosity value. They are marked on the lists with an asterisk (\*) and a number, and their descriptions can be found below.

\*1 – The Boldhome Campaign (1602). The Lunar army invaded the kingdom of Sartar with great success, seizing the supposedly impregnable capital city by force and ending that legendary kingdom's history.

\*2 – Building Wall Battle (1605). A major thrust by the Lunar army to invade the Holy Country, striking at heavily populated Esrolia. Countering with magical strength, the Pharaoh stopped the Lunars by inflicting a decisive and humiliating defeat.

\*3 – Feint to the Sea (1605). Minor thrust of the Lunar army reached the city of Karse and laid siege, but withdrew without permanent success. The Lunar victory was clear over the Hendriki defenders.

\*4 – Annihilation of Maboder (1606). Amidst the widespread Sartar clan disputes and tribal wars, the struggle against the Telmori stands out. The Telmori wiped out a whole tribe under their fangs.

\*5 – Conquest of the Telmori (1607). Duke James Wulf, a Lunar general, led a brilliant campaign, and tracked down the wolf-people in their own territory, using great personal heroism. The Telmori sued for peace but not before taking extreme losses.

\*6 – (First) Invasion of Prax (1608). The Lunar army hopped from oasis to oasis but was raided and harried until it accepted peace before being allowed to enter the Paps. Despite propaganda, this was a nomad victory.

\*7 – The Boar Hunt (1609). Persistent raiding by the tusk riders rallied their foes, and many lands sent their best hunters and warriors to hunt down the raiders. Success was, as usual, questionable.

\*8 – Conquest of Pavis (1610). The Lunar army, better prepared and equipped this time, marched into Prax and defeated the nomads in battle, then occupied the surrendering city of Pavis.

\*9 – Defeat of the Righteous Wind (1611). Cruel civil war in northern Sartar climaxed when the Duke of Alda-Chur suppressed the Orlanthi cult in all that realm with fire, sword, and blood.

\*10 – Starbrow's Rebellion (1613). Outraged by Lunar presence and urged by social unrest, the Sartarites rebelled in strength, but were soundly defeated by the Lunars.

\*11 Greymane's (First) Raid (1614). Led by a renowned warrior, a barbarian army plundered the border cities of the Holy Country.

\*12 Grazelands Campaign (1615). A squabble broke into open war between the Grazelands and the Lunars. The former, aided by Ironhoof's people, managed to evade and frustrate a massive invasion force.

\*13 – Lion King's Feast (1616). A large army from the Holy Country was ambushed and slaughtered by the Ditali barbarians.

\*14 – Greymane's (Great) Raid (1618). The Solanthi warlord led a massive army through Ditali and deep into the Holy Country, taking great plunder and avoiding a decisive battle.

\*15 – Volsaxi Campaign (1619). The Lunar army invaded northern Hendriki lands and took the city of Karse.

\*16 – Conquest of Heortland (1620). The Lunar army decisively defeated the Hendriki army in battle and accepted their surrender.

## Previous Experience

Previous experience constitutes the player-character's youth and militia or other experience that was not played within

the campaign. Special events during childhood, and time spent at home, can be found by reading the Places table vertically. During childhood these events form a backdrop and may include things the player-characters heard their fathers talking about. When an adult, past the age of 15 or so, these events take on more importance, since the characters will have to share in the defense of their homeland.

Player-characters, by definition, are extra-ordinary characters, wide-traveled and weapon-skilled in comparison to the mass of peasantry and urbanites about them. Characters may choose to avoid certain conflicts even though expected to lead and fight among the local militia. I certainly give them permission to so refuse, and thereby fail to increase their experience with the world. Just note it on the character sheet and see how others react to it in game years to come. But, in general, an action-oriented character will seek these opportunities to add to his history and experience.

One method for obtaining previous experience uses the Places table to get background events that intruded on the otherwise smooth life. Anyone with militia experience, living in a trade, or hanging around when the enemy appeared, should use this method. I recommend both the Battle and Death sections as well.

The second method follows the characters right through their military history, including serving as a knight, thane, noble, or other military class. A character who is a rich noble will have served all his military class, even including the section titled Mercenary Experience in the RQ rules. Simply put, the function of the noble class in the RQ previous experience was to serve as a standing army. Thus, their practical experience is the same as serving in the army. They serve in their home army. They may, of course, join other units, like normal player-characters, but are less likely to do so. Doing so would surely cut them off from their deliciously high annual stipend.

| YEAR | PLACES   |          |                 |                |           |           |            |          |             |          |           |          |
|------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|
|      | Agger    | Tarsh    | Stinking Forest | Dagori Inkerth | Prax      | Sartar    | Grazelands | Ditali   | Caladraland | Esrolia  | Heortland | Islands  |
| 1602 | Agger    |          | Trolls          |                | Clan      | Lunar*1   |            | clan     |             |          |           | Pirates  |
|      |          |          | Raid            |                | Raid      | Invasion  |            | Raid     |             |          |           | Raid     |
| 1603 | Civil    | Agger    |                 | Tuskers        | Clan      | Civil     |            | Clan     | Ditali      | Graze.   | Prax      | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     | Raid     |                 | Raid           | Raid      | Invasion  |            | Raid     | Raid        | Raid     | Raid      | Raid     |
| 1604 | Tarsh    |          | Trolls          |                | Clan      |           |            | Civil    |             | Graze.   | Prax      | Pirates  |
|      | Invasion |          | Raid            |                | Raid      |           |            | Raid     |             | Raid     | Raid      | Raid     |
| 1605 |          | Tuskers  |                 | Heort.         | Clan      |           |            | Civil    | Pirates     | Lunar*2  | Lunar*3   | Pirates  |
|      |          | Raid     |                 | Raid           | Raid      |           |            | Invasion | Raid        | Invasion | Invasion  | Raid     |
| 1606 | Clan     |          | Tarsh           |                | Clan      | Civil*4   | Esrolia    |          | Ditali      |          | Prax      | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     |          | Invasion        |                | Raid      | Invasion  | Raid       |          | Invasion    |          | Raid      | Raid     |
| 1607 | Tuskers  |          |                 |                | Clan      | Lunar*5   | Esrolia    | Pirates  |             |          |           |          |
|      | Raid     |          |                 |                | Raid      | Invasion  | Raid       | Raid     |             |          |           |          |
| 1608 |          |          |                 |                | Civil     | Tuskers   | Esrolia    |          |             |          |           |          |
|      |          |          |                 |                | Invasion/ | Raid      | Raid       |          |             |          |           |          |
|      |          |          |                 |                | Lunar*6   |           |            |          |             |          |           |          |
|      |          |          |                 |                | Invasion  |           |            |          |             |          |           |          |
| 1609 |          |          | Many*7          | Clan           | Lunar     |           |            |          | Ditali      | Ditali   | Lunar     |          |
|      |          |          | Invasion        | Raid           | Raid      |           |            |          | Raid/       | Raid/    | Raid      |          |
|      |          |          |                 |                |           |           |            |          | Graze.      |          |           |          |
| 1610 | Prax     |          | Trolls          |                | Lunar*8   |           |            | Pharaoh  |             |          | Sartar    |          |
|      | Raid     |          | Raid            |                | Invasion  |           |            | Invasion |             |          | Raid      |          |
| 1611 |          |          | Trolls          |                | Civil     | Civil*9   |            | Pharaoh  |             |          |           | Pirates  |
|      |          |          | Raid            |                | Invasion  | Invasion  |            | Invasion |             |          |           | Raid     |
| 1612 | Clan     |          |                 |                |           |           |            |          |             |          |           |          |
|      | Raid     |          |                 |                |           |           |            |          |             |          |           |          |
| 1613 |          |          |                 |                |           | Lunar*10- |            | Solanthi |             |          |           | Pirates  |
|      |          |          |                 |                |           | Invasion/ |            | Raid     |             |          |           | Raid     |
|      |          |          |                 |                |           | Civil     |            |          |             |          |           |          |
|      |          |          |                 |                |           | Invasion  |            |          |             |          |           |          |
| 1614 |          | Graze.   |                 |                | Clan      | Lunar     | Pharaoh    | Solanthi |             |          |           |          |
|      |          | Raid     |                 |                | Raid      | Raid      | Raid       | Raid*11  |             |          |           |          |
| 1615 | Clan     | Graze.   |                 |                | Heort.    | Lunar*12- |            |          |             |          |           | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     | Raid     |                 |                | Raid      | Invasion  |            |          |             |          |           | Raid     |
| 1616 | Clan     |          |                 |                | Heort.    |           | Phar. *13- |          |             |          | Lunar     | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     |          |                 |                | Raid      |           | Invasion   |          |             |          | Raid      | Raid     |
| 1617 | Clan     |          |                 |                | Clan      |           | Civil      |          |             |          | Civil     |          |
|      | Raid     |          |                 |                | Raid      |           | Raid       |          |             |          | Raid      |          |
| 1618 | Civil    |          |                 |                |           |           | Tusker     |          |             | Solanthi | Civil     | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     |          |                 |                |           |           | Raid       |          |             | Raid*14  | Invasion  | Raid     |
| 1619 | Civil    | Tusker   |                 |                |           |           |            |          | Ditali      | Graze.   | Lunar*15  | Pirates  |
|      | Raid     | Raid     |                 |                |           |           |            |          | Raid        | Raid     | Invasion  | Raid     |
| 1620 | Civil    | Tusker   |                 |                |           |           |            |          | Ditali      | Graze    | Lunar*16  | Pirates  |
|      | Invasion | Invasion |                 |                |           |           |            |          | Raid        | Raid     | Invasion  | Invasion |



Many characters join the mercenaries, as outlined in *RQ*. They will have joined a unit which originates from one of the lands shown on the chart. It is not possible to sign up for a temporary hitch with the Lunar Provincial Army. People who are hired during campaigns to serve as native scouts, local skirmishers, and random or permanent mercenary units would be hired through one of these nationally-oriented groups.

It is possible to join the mercenary unit of another nation, as long as the usual requirements are met, and the character has the necessary minimum requirement of speaking the native language at 30% to be able to obey the offices. In such cases, a character may find himself raiding his own homeland.

Remember that joining a mercenary unit is done for hitches of three, five, or seven years at a time. Characters should remain in their unit despite a distaste for its actions, such as raiding your homeland or discovering it will be on the wrong side in an upcoming battle. It is possible to refuse, but to do so is to desert the unit and become a man with a price on his head. Such a price is small, but high enough when your character is in the area concerned, or that mercenary unit is nearby. Fine stuff for role-playing, if you like looking over your shoulder all the time because your gamemaster likes to have random appearances of bounty hunters armed with arbalest at 95% with Blade Venom 15.

When a character serves in the mercenaries or in his national army he will still have a troop type, as outlined in *RQ*. For reference, the types are heavy infantry, medium infantry, light infantry, heavy cavalry, medium cavalry, and light cavalry. These differences are based on different armor and weapons for each unit.

The type of unit they are in will affect the chances for characters seeing action in each type of battle. Some troop types have a higher chance of actually fighting than others. Light cavalry, for example, have the greatest chance of fighting in a raid, but heavy cavalry is likelier to fight often in an invasion.

### Battle Skill

The skill of Battle is a knowledge skill. It defines the in-action savvy and behavior of the characters during a fighting period that involves many people. Individual prowess and morale is lost in mass actions, and even the boldest Rune lord who has never been in a mass action may fail to recognize the signs and take the proper actions. The appalling truth of these fights is that one is likely to die through no fault of their own, especially if he knows not what to do.

Battle skill may be learned, but only up to 50%. Anything past that is gained only through experience. Its cost is 400/800/EXP.

The Battle skill measures the chances that the character will survive during an engagement. When the charts show such an engagement, simply roll 1D100 and consult the character's Battle skill. Here is a chart which will show the results of the engagement for your character. The last column of Earned Skills lists all the skills that the character is allowed to check for experience and possibly increase. The category of "Very Poor" is the opposite of a Special roll. It is figured by taking 1/5 of the chances of the character's missing his roll and subtracting from 100. If the character rolls equal to or higher than that number, he gets a Very Poor result (unless, of course, he has fumbled). For example, a character with a Battle of 70% has a 30% chance of missing his roll. 30/5 is 6, so the character has a 6% chance of getting a Very Poor result. 100-6 is 94, so if the character rolls 95+, he will get a Very Poor result. Of course, if he rolls 99-00, it will be a fumble instead.

### Battle Results Table

| Roll Type    | Result                                | Earned Skills   |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Critical     | Fought well, and with notable heroism | Best 3 weapons, POW. Battle goes up 5% automatically. |
| Special      | Fought well                           | Battle, weapon, POW                                   |
| Successful   | Fought competently                    | Battle, weapon  |
| Unsuccessful | Saw action                            | Battle  |
| Very Poor    | Fought poorly, took wound             | Battle  |
| Fumble       | Character killed                      | None  |

*Notice that unless a character fumbles, he gets a chance to increase his Battle skill just for being present in a battle.*

### Death

The proximity of death is a constant specter in *RQ*, and one which greatly enhances the role-playing. Characters are difficult enough to roll up without having to do it weekly,



and when one puts so much work to determine his previous experience it is a shame to kill him out of play.

But I still urge you to do so. It adds greatly to the meaning of the characters' lives.

Death is not always irreversible in *RQ*, and when a character is slain using this previous experience procedure, it is assumed that he returns, somehow.

Most of the resurrections are done by player-characters. Self resurrections are assumed to be Divine Interventions. If a character has not joined a cult by this time, or belongs to a cult that does not allow resurrection, he cannot be brought back. A character without a cult may be wise to avoid battles. Cults such as Humakt do train one in the Battle skill, making their deaths less common.

In any case, self resurrection will cost points of permanent POW. The amount of POW lost is figured by rolling on the Rune lord Divine Intervention table. This is a special roll, and should never be used outside of previous experience. I agree that it is a shame to kill off characters out of play and this is a plot device to prevent that.

If the Divine Intervention cost reduces the character to one or less points, then the character's POW is assumed to be, instead, two. This makes it very difficult to increase in Power, but death is a costly thing, and it will give your character a healthy respect for his life during play.

### Special Modifiers to the Battle Skill

History records spectacular results for some battles, where in one or occasionally both combatants turn tail, leaving their backs open to pursuit and wholesale slaughter. In larger battles, as opposed to common raids, this is very important.

Some battles have special modifiers added to them. These are awarded to either the winning or losing side. All types of units are affected equally.

The number shown on the Historical Modifier table should be added to the *number which is rolled* for the Battle Results Table. In such cases, the number rolled shows the individual actions of the character, but the modified

number shows what the end result for the character was. Thus, even the best Lunar fighter at the Building Wall Battle has a fair chance of dying anyway.

If the number rolled is increased to over 100, the character dies. If the number rolled is decreased to less than 01, it is treated as a special result. In all cases, positive modifiers lead to greater casualties and negative ones lead to smaller casualties. Obviously, some battles resulted in increased casualties for both sides. □

### Historical Modifier Table

- \*1 – Boldhome Campaign: Lunar victory = +20%; Sartarite defeat = +50%
- \*2 – Building Wall Battle: Lunar defeat = +40%; Pharaonic victory = -10%
- \*3 – Feint to the Sea: Lunar victory = -10%; Hendriki defeat = +25%
- \*4 – Maboder Wars: Telmori victory = -25%; Sartarite defeat = +10%; Maboder defeat = +65%
- \*5 – Telmori Campaign: Telmori defeat = +25%; Lunar victory = 0%
- \*6 – (First) Prax Invasion: Lunar defeat = 0%; Nomad victory = -15%
- \*7 – Boar Hunt: Human forces = 0%; Tusk riders = 0%
- \*8 – Pavis Conquest: Lunar victory = 0%; Nomad defeat = +25%
- \*9 – Righteous Wind Civil War: Orlanthi defeat = +25%; Lunar victory = 0%
- \*10 – Starbrow's Rebellion: Sartar defeat = +10%; Lunar victory = 0%
- \*11 – Greymane's (First) Raid: Solanthi victory = 0%; Pharaonic defeat = +10%
- \*12 – Grazelands Campaign: Lunar defeat = +15%; Graze-lander victory = 0%
- \*13 – Lion King's Feast: Pharaonic defeat +50%; Ditali victory = -25%
- \*14 – Greymane's Raid: Solanthi victory = 0%; Pharaonic defeat = 0%
- \*15 – Volsaxi Campaign: Lunar victory = -15%; Hendriki defeat = -10%
- \*16 – Hendrikiland Conquered: Lunar victory = +50%; Hendriki defeat = +50%



# VIOLENCE IN ROLE- PLAYING

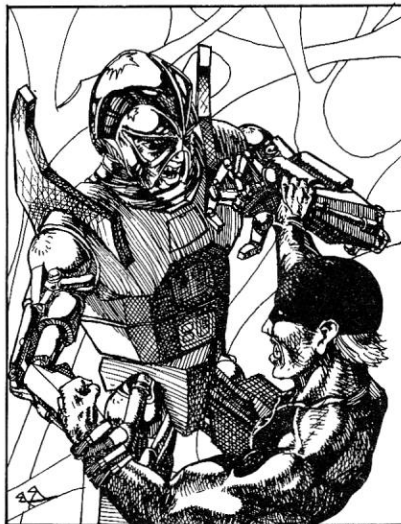
## THE LESSONS OF TELEVISION

by Michael B. Kelly

Fantasy role-playing games resemble television in many respects. Both forms of entertainment focus on a fictional story. Both present episodic stories with the same characters appearing each week in different situations. Both media ask that you identify with a character and his or her actions. Both compress time between significant events to facilitate interesting story-telling.

Fantasy role-playing games may affect its participants more powerfully than television affects its viewers. Television and radio are passive media; the audience pays attention while the performers deliver the message. Television images show explicitly what occurs, leaving little room for viewers to exercise their visual imaginations. Radio and books require greater audience participation; from a voice or a description the imagination builds a picture of what occurs. Fantasy role-playing games require this same imaginative participation, and more; the audience creates the story. Whereas other media present a story fully developed through to its climax, fantasy role-playing games invite, even command, the players to take an active part in determining the story's outcome. This active participation increases the identification between player, character and his actions.

The parallels between fantasy role-playing games and television offer intriguing analogies from which role-players may benefit. For example, a study of television script writing techniques might help gamemasters



create better adventures. Similarly, acting techniques might offer insight into character motivation and improve players' style. Analogies to television, however, also offer warnings of potentially dangerous side effects of gaming such as violence in role-playing games.

The link between television and violence has been well documented. Those interested should examine the Surgeon General's report, *Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence*, issued in 1972, it is the most thorough report on the subject to date. The evidence in this report demonstrates a link between violence on television and in society in two ways. First, specific examples of crimes copied from television show a direct link between television and violence. Second, indirect studies indicate that people who watch more television show a greater tendency to react violently in real situations.

Fantasy role-playing games also affect the way people behave in real life. For example, most readers are probably familiar with at least one acquaintance who talks only of fantasy role-playing. This person can go on for hours about a character's latest exploits, the political situation in several different worlds (but probably not this one), the relative merits of *RuneQuest*, *DragonQuest* and *Arduin Adventure*, the next spell a character intends to research, etc. Books and movies are, to him, sources for dungeons and new monsters. To him, a weekend evening without a game is boring beyond belief. He eats,

drinks and sleeps role-playing. For him the game does not end when the game-master says go home — the analog of turning off a television set. The game enters every aspect of that person's life.

To some extent this description is autobiographical. It describes a degree of fanaticism many players go through in their enthusiasm for role-playing. Certainly not all such people are violent; probably very few are. The game, however, has affected the way in which these people behave outside the game setting in much the same way that television shows like *Roots* or *Holocaust* dominate conversations during their first wave of interest. Less extreme examples can be easily found. How many game terms have crept into your friends' vocabularies? Walking past a construction site recently, a friend asked me what level spell it would take to create a hole that big.

I once lived through a more dramatic example. One of my students, who regularly plays role-playing games, pulled a knife on another. He later explained that he wanted to recreate the thrill he felt playing *Dungeons & Dragons*.

There is also the Dallas Egbert incident. Mr. Egbert was a 15 year old computer genius at Michigan State University who played live *D&D* in the steam tunnels beneath that campus. He received a great deal of publicity when he disappeared. A private investigator expressed the erroneous opinion that Egbert had died in the tunnels during a game. Mr. Egbert was found in Florida, but committed suicide a year later. His disappearance and suicide were probably unrelated to role-playing games. Nonetheless, he stands as an example of a person who carries the game beyond the realm of imagination and fantasy into real life. Miniature figures and battleboards were not enough excitement for him and his friends. They had to act out adventures in the nearest equivalent to a real dungeon setting.

Dallas Egbert is not the only person who acts out fantasies in this way. Organized life-size *D&D* has been described in *The Space Gamer*, no. 26, Jan.-Feb. 1980 and *Alarums and Excursions* no. 47, July 1979.

Acting out a game is exactly the sort of fun-to-life carryover that can be dangerous. Violence on television

Illustration by Roland Brown

is no problem if watching television satisfies the viewer's appetite for violence. A person's need for excitement, however, can extend beyond watching to include acting. Then, and only then, are the interests of others at risk. When a gamer is no longer content to imagine a dungeon, but must walk through one, he has taken the first step toward bringing the game into reality. When combat must be acted out rather than imagined, injury is possible. When even that fails to satisfy the taste for adventure, what is the next step?

The possibility that someone will take gaming too far and attempt to reenact the slaughter of an orc seems remote. But let us not forget that people whose emotional stability is sufficiently tenuous to make suicide possible do play these games. We are not a community consisting only of fully-developed, stable, well-adjusted personalities. We are a diverse population of creative people, ranging in age from 7 or under to 65 or more, varying in taste, maturity, emotion, etc., as widely as any group of people with well developed imaginations.

Playing fantasy role-playing games does not inexorably lead to a life of crime, but such games nurture in some people a taste for violent adventure not always satisfied by imagined violence. Very few people will ever follow this progression, just as very few people ever copy television crimes. The potential, however, should be recognized and faced squarely by those who play fantasy games.

Dramatic examples, however, are only half of the analysis. The more pervasive, subtle, and therefore serious problem arises from repeated exposure to the concept that violence is the only solution to problems. The problem comes from consistent recourse to violence in games. It affects us not by a sudden uncontrollable impulse to hurt someone, but by turning our thoughts toward confrontation rather than conciliation, simple answers rather than thoughtful, creative ones. Violence insidiously infiltrates our minds, and makes itself a tolerated, if not welcome, visitor. Once the company of violence is acceptable to us, instinct may do the rest.

It should not be necessary to point out just how pervasive violence has become in FRP. Fantasy role-playing games originated as a variant of min-

iatures ancient warfare. The first 'characters' were generals who commanded armies in battle. A glance at any rules system will tell you just how significant combat is in the minds of the game designers. Weapons charts, armor classes, fumbles, criticals, blows per round, strike rank, damage, etc.; these are but the tip of the iceberg. Most spells are aimed at killing or incapacitating an opponent.

Fantasy role-playing games appear to be a more powerful medium than television. Because the player is actively involved in the role-playing game, rather than passively watching television. Any message conveyed concerning violence seems more likely to affect the player rather than the watcher. If this is true, then the same process that causes television viewers to display violent behavior probably affects gamers as well.

The danger that fantasy role-playing games increase violent behavior suggests an evaluation of the need for violence in these games. If it proves unnecessary to use violence, or as much violence, in games, perhaps gamemasters can reduce the amount of violence in games without sacrificing the quality of the gaming experience. The two reasons for emphasizing violence in fantasy role-playing are realism and convenience. Neither reason is compelling.

Fantasy role-playing games need not be realistic in all respects. It hurts to say this since I am an ardent realist in many respects. But I, and most other gamemasters, sway from historical reality in order to improve the game. The mere existence of creatures such as elves, dwarfs and dragons displays one aspect in which every game differs from reality. The existence of magic represents another. The Middle Ages were notoriously sexist times, yet most campaigns permit female warriors alongside men. Whether you cite Amazons or Joan of Arc as a precedent, the fact remains that reality takes a back seat to game considerations.

Moreover, most games contain an unrealistically high amount of violence. Certainly, the Middle Ages contained numerous wars and jousts, but never during planting or harvest season, rarely during winter, and not every year. Even at war, one did not do battle every day. As for monsters, Frodo and Sam encountered fewer

enemies while strolling through Mordor than some parties encounter in an evening on the town.

Violence does make it easier on a game master. In television, a fight or chase scene takes very little effort or creativity from the writer. Dialogue stops, the action starts, and without much intellectual output five to ten minutes pass. If there isn't a fight, someone has to spend hours deciding who says what to whom and why. That requires greater character development, or greater plot development, or both. If a gamemaster decides the dragon will attack, the ensuing battle may fill a reasonably exciting hour or so. If the gamemaster decides the dragon will talk to the party, he must also decide what the dragon will say. Why will this dragon talk to the party? Does it want something it cannot get for itself? An extended conversation requires that the GM know more about the dragon. To prepare for such a conversation is work; to wing it is even more difficult to do well, if somewhat less time consuming.

Convenience hardly justifies the violence. At one extreme, a game-master who cannot take the time to prepare an adventure should run games less often. With more time between games, he can prepare more thoroughly. Others can gamemaster to fill the gap.

Some game aids provide superb background for the presented NPCs. *The Free City of Haven*, by Gamelords, Ltd., and *Thieves' World*, by Chaosium present myriad opportunities for well thought out, interaction between characters and NPCs. As these aids become more popular, others will follow. Such game aids do not write the plot for the GM, but they can fill in the personalities of the NPCs quickly, relieving the gamemaster of much work.

Adept use of defensive magic, such as illusions, can avoid many confrontations. Challenges to personal combat may avert mass battles. Many hazards can be circumvented.

The key to all of these suggestions lies in creating an environment in which direct, violent confrontation is not always desirable. Players can find an enormous number of techniques to avoid violence. The game master must help players by making it possible for them to avoid battles and

discouraging players from relying too much on violence.

When violence results in death and suffering people try to avoid it. Television helped turn public opinion against the war in Vietnam by graphically displaying its results. Unfortunately, most games minimize the horror of violence. When player-characters regularly survive combat, or can be easily resurrected when they die, violence loses its most appalling aspects. Final death and disfigurement become not only rare but also temporary. Fantasy literature is full of heroic survivors, yet even Gandalf died. In fact, he is the only character in the *Lord of the Rings* who returns to life. The Bible is the only work I know of in which more than one character returns from death (Jesus and Lazarus).

Character longevity can result in personality development over time. The problem is not that characters survive, but that characters survive an inordinate amount of violence without feeling any of the loss that violence inevitably leads to. If characters had to choose between a short violent life and a longer, less violent one, perhaps violence would not be so prevalent in fantasy role-playing games. As it is, many players have characters that live by the sword but do not die by the sword — at least not for long.

Experience systems may also encourage violence. Many games grant experience only for killing or fighting an opponent, or taking his wealth. Gamemasters could offer experience for any beings encountered, or intentionally avoided. Yet another possibility is to offer experience for additional activities to compensate for experience lost by not fighting. For example, experience for casting spells, using stealth abilities, or role-playing an interesting personality might minimize incentive to attack opponents.

The arguments in this article are not airtight. Proof in either direction is impossible today. The danger that fantasy role-playing may increase the violent tendencies of a growing number of people should be noted, discussed and considered. If gamemasters begin to emphasize nonviolent solutions to problems, and encourage players to think before they act, perhaps we will never see a scientific study correlating violence and fantasy role-playing games. □



photo by R. Fields

# Live Role-Playing

AS PRACTICED BY THE INTERNATIONAL FANTASY GAMING SOCIETY

by Mark P. Simmons

Welcome to a new aspect of role-playing games. No, I don't presume to say that live-scale games have never been played before; in fact, the role-playing genre has been around ever since *Homo erectus* could afford the time off from food-gathering to tell a story. However, a group in Boulder, Colorado has organized a rules system and a way of setting up and playing outdoor, one-on-one scale adventure games that work.

The system works because it has all the elements of a good game: play balance, an interesting era and accompanying emotions, opposing sides, the possibility of winning or losing, an important spot for each player, and other features. The game also works because it is thoroughly and intricately orchestrated, with pre-game preparations taking a minimum of four months to complete. Safety and workability go hand-in-hand in the system, yielding a clean, quick-running game that emphasizes role-playing first, then brainwork, then combat skills.

## The Players

First and foremost are those brave souls who actually play the game. Using FRP nomenclature, they're called player-characters. They are the main ingredient, and by bringing in their imagination, desire for competition, and sense of fairness, they help the game be great. Each player takes on the role of a character, creates a back-

ground (which is then filed with the I.F.G.S.), costumes if he/she likes, and role-plays what he/she creates during the game.

Second, and perhaps more important are the non-player characters. These are defined as actors playing their roles; they're all the people and creatures you and your party meet during the game (so far we've seen everything, from an old sage, to an ent, to a talking sphinx). The most important rule of thumb for non-player-characters is that they are not playing against the player-characters, they are merely setting the atmosphere and scene for the players. Their role may or may not involve combat, but will always call for acting skills, even to the extent of role-playing death.

Next come the gamemasters and scorekeepers as judges. Usually one gamemaster and two scorekeepers accompany each party of player-characters throughout the game, judging the role-playing, arbitrating problems, missile fire, melees, and anything else the game designer throws at the players. Each judge wears white (a color usually forbidden to player-characters and non-player-characters) and carries the standard I.F.G.S. scoresheet on a clipboard. Judges have to do a lot of work. But there are fringe benefits, such as being able to run as a player-character in the first playtesting of the adventure, and gaining full experience

points, and then getting more experience points for judging. Being able to watch other players' and non-player characters' strategies and tips is quite enjoyable.

The most important person is the game designer. He writes the game, sets up the theme, time period, goal, and many other details, besides coordinating everything involved in his game. The game designer has responsibility for making a challenging, fun game, both from a logistics standpoint and from the view of the players. He/she answers only to the Board, but in many ways: including consistency of mythos, balance, the money system, and the nature of magic items introduced in his game.

The I.F.G.S. Board, the designers of the rules, sponsor and oversee the game. They really are players, too, in a broad sense, because it is their responsibility to ensure the integrity of the overall system. They ensure that magic items introduced by a game designer are playable and won't overtax future game designers. They make sure that excessive wealth doesn't destroy playability. They arbitrate suggestions and protests to the Board. Among many other items, they are responsible if anyone gets hurt during a game. Thus, they set up emergency medical technicians, make sure each team has a first-aid kit, fulfill other safety precautions, and, just in case, have insurance to cover any injury if it ever happens during a game.

### The Combat System

Before any weapon is allowed in a game, it must first undergo a safety test by the Board. The test is simple — one gives the weapon to a Board member or representative and he flails the player with it several times (head hits are totally illegal). If the player is unhurt, the weapon is usually okayed for game use. Otherwise it isn't. Period.

The principal components of weapons are  $\frac{3}{4}$  or 1 inch diameter plastic pipe and foam rubber. A lot of glue and duct-tape are the key adhesives. With these basic components and some ingenuity, player-characters and non-player-characters have come up with safe daggers, swords, morning stars (add rope), flails, axes, clubs, staves, bo-sticks, saps (add a sock), tridents, pole-arms, and maces.

Combat itself is fairly simple. If you do more than just brush the target

with the business end of your weapon, you score damage mainly proportional to the mass of the weapon. Most weapons score one, two, or three points of damage. Each creature has an assigned number of life points and can sustain that much damage before dying. Additionally, each appendage can be hit for two points and still operate, but any more will require disuse of the appendage. Critical hits haven't been included, mainly because we've found no way to police them as yet.

The most difficult part of combat is the role-playing of hits. This is just something the judges have to watch for and score accordingly. The player-character who role-plays a hit well gets bonus experience points.

### The Magic System

Player-characters have been classed this way: non-magic-using types are Fighters and Thieves. Magic-using types are Druids, Magic-Users, Clerics, and Rangers. Most anyone can use a magic item, but the casting of spells can only be done by the proper class, and each class has unique spells. The variety of spells usable by each class gets larger as the characters go up in levels, which happens as the character earns experience points.

The above could be applied to many FRP systems currently available. What makes the system unique is its application in the live game. First, each spell must apply. The recipient must be able to role-play the effect. Second, the caster must maintain the attention necessary for the particular spell. If concentration is interrupted, the spell doesn't come off, or is negated. Lastly, because of role-playing of the above, the magic system isn't all-powerful. Each and every class in the game has a purpose and importance, and each has ways of surviving as well as weaknesses to protect.

### The Missile Fire System

No one actually fires an arrow during the game. Instead, a ten-shot archery test is done by each player-character before the game, with each hit counting for a ten percent accuracy during the game. All hits on the target count towards the player's Marginal Hit Percentage, and each bullseye counts additionally for the player's Exact Hit Percentage. During the game the archer simulates nocking the arrow, and calls out the target as he/she pre-

tends to release the arrow. Each player-character and non-player-character are required to have one major color showing, and the target can thus be easily identified, "arrow-red" for instance, where the player-character or non-player-character in red would know they were the target. If an exact hit is attempted, the firer calls out the location desired, for instance, "arrow-red-left arm." In any case, the closest judge calls out "hit" or "miss," after checking the pre-rolled hits and misses section on their scoresheet for that archer.

Other missile weapons come under two categories: those which require a pre-game test and those which do not. These last are actually thrown during the game, and include: acid flasks, holy water, oil, and rocks. To simulate these, two-inch bean bags of appropriate colors are used. Acid flasks are red, holy water white, oil is black (for flaming oil you must affix a red streamer to the bag before throwing it), and rocks are brown.

The list of pre-game tested weapons include bows, shuriken, darts, and crossbows.

### More About The Organization

As I.F.G.S. is under two years old (inception came about June, 1981, though John and Vicky Cade, the founders, were running similar games for two years before that) there are many areas that have yet to be developed, and there are some rough spots. In the works are guilds for player-character classes, topping-out spots for character abilities (some are assigned, some aren't yet), and a simple, finalized saving throw system.

Rough spots include the lack of experienced judges (though we can usually coerce enough gamemasters from the over 200 I.F.G.S. members — recruitment of scorekeepers comes mostly from latecomers to a game who can't get on a team and are also too late to be non-player-characters), weak spots in role-playing, such as the difficulty in getting players to role-play when they are hit, and as yet primitive special effects. These last are developing steadily, but won't come close to what I deem perfection until low-cost 3-D holography is available.

There's so much more to tell about I.F.G.S.. I'll just have to recommend that you contact I.F.G.S. for more information. I.F.G.S. is a non-profit organization and can be contacted by writing to PO Box 3492, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Or you may phone us at (303) 494-2178. Keep in mind any time difference should you call. □

# Contact

## Top Secret

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Espionage being a relatively solitary and secretive affair, it was only natural that someone make an attempt to play *Top Secret* solo.

I did, and promptly ran into a gray area: although there are rules governing the reaction and use of Contacts, there isn't much to define who the contact is and how he/she fits into your operation. There was no reason to include such rules, of course; NPC's are the referee's responsibility. On the other hand, the referee can be caught off-guard occasionally by players who go to places not anticipated and inter-

view people not created, so any rules allowing the rapid generation of a contact could be of considerable use to the harassed referee as well as the intrepid solitaire player.

Herewith is presented exactly that: a series of tables to create a contact in terms of who he is and what he has that the agent desires.

It should be noted that the tables are intended to recreate flavor, not historic or actuarial precision — I'm well aware of the fact that 20% of the population is not aristocratic, for example, but spies in espionage stories

continually find themselves tripping over barons, comtessas, and the like.

Anyway, the Relationship table is probably the most important: roll to see what relationship the contact has with the agent's organization.

The second item to determine is the contact's sex. One might reasonably expect a 50/50 chance of male/female, and a good case can be made for that ratio. In very romantic spy campaigns, agents may run across members of the opposite sex more often — say 65% of contacts are sex opposite to that of the agent.

The next item is the contact's age. Like sex, this is a primarily cosmetic attribute, but, like sex, will tend to influence the usefulness of the character's Charm skill on the agent. The Age Range table below gives ranges of age; either fill in a random number in the range rolled, or just leave the age description as an approximation.

The social status of the contact is the next item up at bat. This governs quite a few things implicitly, such as method of contact, where the contact takes place, to some extent the reaction of the contact to the agent, and vice versa, and so forth. See the Social Class table.

Finally we get to the heart of the matter. The exact information being sought by the agent is, of course, determined by the situation rather than by a random table; however, the form which that information takes can be determined by a table, to wit, the Form of Data table. Two of the entries require that the roll be made again, this time with a required result of less than 61 (keep rolling till 01-60 is rolled). The agent then retrieves the material he/she desires in the form of the second roll, but requires cryptanalytic help to decipher it. If "personal memory" is rolled here, perhaps the individual has memorized a mysterious phrase, or the information is buried, accessible through hypnosis. If a Clue is rolled, this indicates that the contact cannot actually provide the information, but can direct the agent to another contact who might have it.

That should about cover it. Of course, as with any tables in a RPG, a certain amount of imagination is needed to augment these, but they should still prove useful in your *Top Secret* campaign. □

### 1D100 Relationship

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 01-05 | Same Agency   |
| 06-15 | Different but friendly agency   |
| 16-30 | Neutral, open to reason   |
| 31-45 | Neutral, open to highest bid  |
| 46-55 | Third party (50% with no real interest in agent's assignment)   |
| 56-65 | Competition (i.e., agency competing with agent for same goal; possibly friendly and open to alliance) |
| 66-75 | Unfriendly (not member of opposition, but poorly disposed towards agent)                              |
| 76-00 | Hostile — member of the opposition  |

### 1D100 Social Class

|       |                    |
|-------|--------------------|
| 01-15 | Criminal           |
| 16-20 | Lower class        |
| 21-30 | Middle class       |
| 31-40 | Upper middle class |
| 41-50 | Upper class        |
| 51-65 | Nouveau riche      |
| 66-80 | Wealthy            |
| 81-00 | Aristocracy        |

### 1D100 Age Range

|       |                    |
|-------|--------------------|
| 01-05 | Less than 18 years |
| 06-10 | 18-20              |
| 11-40 | 21-30              |
| 41-80 | 31-40              |
| 81-85 | 41-50              |
| 86-90 | 51-60              |
| 91-95 | 61-70              |
| 96-00 | over 71 years      |

### 1D100 Form of Data

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 01-25 | Personal memory of contact                                      |
| 26-35 | Written record, including photos, maps, etc.                    |
| 36-45 | Microdot; as per written record, but harder to find and utilize |
| 46-50 | Tape; an aural tape giving the information                      |
| 51-60 | Computer memory   |
| 61-80 | Encoded (roll again)  |
| 81-00 | Clue (roll another contact)                                     |

# Adventure by Design

## GAMEMASTERING TIPS AND SCENARIO DESIGN

by Sandy Petersen

Often, a gamemaster wishes to infuse his players with some emotion — usually awe, amusement, or fear. As author of *Call of Cthulhu*, I feel most qualified to write on the emotion of fear in role-playing. How can one give his players a “creepy” feeling as their characters crawl down some dark tunnel? The following are some rules I have learned. Use those that you like, and add some of your own, and your players will be sure to feel the chills necessary for a truly horrifying role-playing experience.

Fun and humor are some of the most important aspects in any role-playing experience. Nonetheless, it can be carried too far — at least by the gamemaster. I have found it advisable to keep from being too flippant when running an adventure which is meant to be frightening. Even the most carefully crafted monstrosity in FRP is merely some numbers and perhaps a little sketch written up on the gamemaster's record sheet. Flippancy can spoil the illusion which I have tried to set up; mocking my horrors lets the other players see my grim creations for the paper-and-pencil that they really are. Of course, humor should not be forbidden when a grim aura is being tried for, but the fun must be from a deeper source than mere mockery or fun. However, a little bit of comic relief can even add to horror at times, especially when it is black humor. I hope that I will never forget the hilarious burial at sea in one of my *Call of Cthulhu* runs — the hapless corpse had been found in such poor condition that he was sent off in a hatbox! Generally, though, humor must be restrained in a horrifying situation and flippant remarks are often out of place, especially those made by the gamemaster, who thereby spoils his own effect.

The greatest horror that humans can know is fear of the unknown. This can be applied by refraining from letting the players know their

foe's powers or resources. One of the greatest disasters that can befall a horror-minded gamemaster is for his players to gain too great a familiarity with the various standard monsters in his campaign. “Oh yes, that's a mindflayer. He has a psionic mindblast to watch out for, and he has a magic resistance of 90%. Quick, Fred, turn to page 70 of the *Monster Manual* and look him up. Boy, he sure is tough!” But he won't be too frightening with that amount of knowledge available to the players. In my *Call of Cthulhu* runs, I try to keep even the identity of the Investigator's foe a secret as long as possible. This causes them to tread carefully, look behind themselves often, and sets up an appropriate feeling of paranoia among the players. This is especially effective when the players start to suspect that someone they already know is really the secret enemy. Who can it be? The fear of the unknown or unknowable can work well to increase horror.

It is important for a gamemaster to keep from continually using the worst threat that he has available to him in a try to scare his players. If the most dreadful monsters of all are continually assaulting the characters, what is there left to use to frighten them? Familiarity breeds contempt, as much with monsters and sorcery as with anything else. If you are able to make orcs or trollkin into dangerous threats for the player-characters, the players will react with creditable fear and hopelessness when you bring on great trolls and vampires.

Know the different varieties of fear, terror, and horror that you can use as a gamemaster. For example, I believe the most horrifying threat in *D&D* to be, not red dragons and iron golems, but life-draining undead. All that a dragon or demon can do to your paladin is kill him, a fate he has faced many times in the past. But a wight can sap him of experience points: his

meat and drink, nay, the entire reason for his existence. If your players are good at role-playing, they will be able to apply this principle (of different types of horror) to their characters better. In practical terms, it makes little difference to the player whether his *T&T* rogue is poisoned in his sleep or eaten by rats. But it would certainly make a great difference to the character. By emphasizing the more horrific aspects of a particular threat, rather than the merely awe-inspiring or terrifying, it is easier to encourage role-playing, and more enjoyment in a frightening scenario may be had by all.

Players must understand that you, as the GM, are perfectly capable of slaughtering their characters at any opportunity. This does not mean that one should be a killer gamemaster — remember, familiarity breeds contempt, even with death. Rather, the players should understand that their characters lead a charmed life, and that you will not pull their chestnuts out of the fire if they get into a dangerous scrape.

Encourage role-playing. This usually means that characters will need to survive for some time in the campaign, allowing the players to develop a rapport and personality for them. This may seem to conflict with my comments in the last paragraph, but it doesn't. A player cannot be expected to feel trepidation for a character that does not feel real. They must be able to understand and know their characters, if not like them. Any player-character that has been around for a time should take on definite form in everyone's mind. The criteria I use to see whether a character is cardboard or living is to ask whether his player knows the hair color of the character, and what he would look like in modern dress (this last is only usable in pre- or post-modern games of course). If a player can snappily answer back, “If Brack lived today, he'd be a sleazy gangster with a loud suit and a pink carnation,” I feel secure in knowing that the player has enough rapport with that character to feel fear for him.

Remember that implied threats are as good as the real thing in causing fear. The crime of assault does not entail shooting someone — merely waving a gun can get one arrested. You don't need to kill a character to make his player afraid; putting him in danger of bodily harm is enough. Of course, you should be ready to carry through on the threat now and again just to keep the danger alive. □

# Books & Role-Playing

*Hecate's Cauldron* edited by Susan M. Schwartz, DAW, 1982, \$2.95.

Reviewed by David R. Dunham

The cover of *Hecate's Cauldron* says, "thirteen new stories of the world of witches." This isn't quite true — not all the stories are about witches (even if you consider male warlocks to be witches) — but the stories all deal with magic. And they are all good.

These stories are a diverse lot. They range from a tale of an inept juggler who meets the Russian witch Baba Yaga while looking for new hands to a 20th century girl who makes a pact with the devil; from a man who rescues his love from hell (a retelling of the legend of Persephone with twists) to a witch who saves a fusion power plant from disaster, to what happens when the gods of a very orderly planet prophesy the coming of the Sage of Dissolution. There's even a Deryni story by Katherine Kurtz.

Medieval witchcraft may have originated from religions older than Christianity. Several of these stories deal with the triple goddess, worshiped by many ancient peoples: maid, mother, crone; Diana, Selene, Hecate; waxing, full, and waning moon. Galad Elflandsson provides a tale of the conflict between a devout follower of Freyja and the forces who Christianized Norway.

In Charles Saunders' "Ishigbi," an African witch seeks vengeance on her twin brother, a healer. She sends undead after him, but he counters them by summoning crocodiles from the river. (The next event from the story is interesting enough to describe here, but is something of a surprise. Skip to the next paragraph if you don't want it to be given away to you before reading the story.) The witch turns into a lioness and the healer touches her with a statue of his god. She rips out his innards, but he just smiles. As she begins to die in agony, he explains that he had bled his soul into the idol, binding their powers together, and had then reanimated his body. This sort of ability could make people wary of attacking a priest or temple.

Probably my favorite story from this anthology is "The Harmonious Battle" by Jessica Amanda Salmonson. It's the tale of Azo Hono-o, a minor character in *The Golden Naginata*. Azo is a warrior who has just lost her left arm in combat. She heals in body but not in mind, and is sent by a

mountain spirit to finish her healing in the Secret Land. The Secret Land, though accessible from the real world, is not part of Naipon. It's a land where no rain falls, and illusions are rampant. Here Azo fights a demon and his three retainers, who return as better fighters when slain, knowing more of their opponent's fighting style. To defeat the demon, Azo must first defeat herself. This story fits my conception of what a heroquest could be. (Heroquesting isn't limited to *RuneQuest's* Glorantha, by the way.) It takes place in a special world, where symbolic actions and supernatural beings are of great importance. Jage Carr's "Reunion," in which the hero passes numerous tests to reach the underworld, is also heroquest material.

Whether you read it for the sake of the stories, or to get literary flavor and ideas for your campaign, *Hecate's Cauldron* will be worth your time. □

*Lady of Light*, by Diana L. Paxson, Timescape Books, 261pp, \$2.75

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

This is the beginning of what is likely to be a trilogy of novels, but it stands very well by itself as a source of ideas for gaming. The novel sets the main characters and their culture, and establishes both goals that are going to be long-term matters and other goals that are solved in this volume. The characters come alive as complex personalities with individual needs and problems, and their struggles are believable. More important, even when it is obvious that these are special people moved by powerful forces, they don't seem fated to succeed, a common failing in many fantasy novels. Diana Paxson is an author to watch.

The novel is set in a post-catastrophe feudal society located in what looks a lot like central California, complete with an occasional freeway support tower. But it is not clear whether it is really *our* California, since the mythology of the world's creation may or may not correspond to ours, depending on how you look at it. Christianity apparently did not survive the cataclysm, if it existed at all. Instead, in the Celtic tradition, there is a cult of the triple goddess and an undefined god who probably corresponds to the Master of the Hunt. In addition, there are Guardians who are spirits of the four Elements, and behind all of

these is a Maker of All Things, of which the Lord and Lady are halves. A complex pagan religion that should be familiar to students of European mythology, and one that might very well have survived from California with its present-day interests in ecology and the modern revival of Wicca.

Religion is the source of magic in this culture, and the emphasis in this novel is on the role of religion in motivating and molding the thinking of the people. If magic in the traditional sense is going to be used, it will appear in later volumes. The handling of religious rituals is, to me, the greatest interest in the novel. It is difficult for people raised in a monotheistic culture to imagine how a pagan people would think, and this is precisely where Diana Paxson has excelled in this book. Any gamemaster using polytheism as a campaign element can learn by reading this novel.

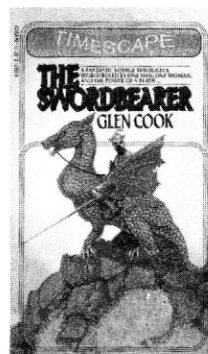
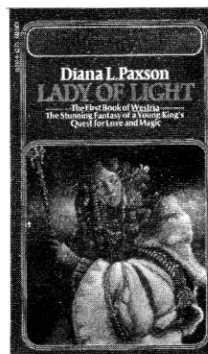
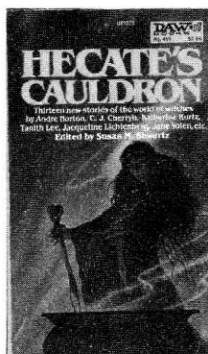
The novel is a love story. The King of Westria, a good-sized kingdom whose patron goddess of the same name is an aspect of the Lady, is unmarried. Although he has mastered the four elemental jewels that were the gifts of the gods to his ancestors, he needs a queen who also has the ability to use the jewels before they can be used at full power. He also, on the mundane political level, needs an heir to fulfill his duty to his people to continue his line. The story has Cinderella elements, for while Faris, the heroine, has strong latent magical talent she suppresses it. And she is convinced that her fire-scarred left arm is such a mark as to make her too ugly to attract the King. They are attracted to each other anyway, and after overcoming complications she is accepted as queen and rushed into magical training, despite misgivings among the priests.

What makes *Lady of Light* a standout in a crowd of fantasy novels is that it is written like a good historical novel. The plot elements do not turn on any of the usual things recycled from Tolkien. There is no quest for a magical widget, and there is no Ancient Evil other than human folly. Instead, there are struggles between nations and within nations that a student of history, particularly English history, will recognize. And while there are signs and portents, they arise as things understood within the culture as communications from basically benevolent gods. The religious magic that overlays the politics is both a source of wonder and a part of everyday life for these people. This has the feel of a real society with real people, and it would make an excellent structure for a fantasy campaign for any GM that uses it, with many directions to develop for adventures. □

*The Swordbearer*, by Glen Cook, Timescape Books, 239pp, \$2.75.

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

"A young man, driven from his home by invading soldiers, finds and is possessed by an ancient soul-draining black sword created by a goddess he had never heard of before. He becomes evil and cynical through his experiences in the wars that follow, killing his sister and his lover, but eventually escapes





from the power of the sword." If that was all you knew about this novel, you could justifiably condemn it as being derivative and shallow — and you would have missed one of the most interesting fantasy novels of the year.

Glen Cook has become a prolific writer. He is best known for the *Dread Empire* trilogy of novels (plus several short pieces in the same setting), and has also done a series of science fiction novels. It is inescapable that he has been influenced by both Moorcock and Tolkien, but the important fact is that his book builds on what he learned from them instead of merely copying them. Thus, while the dread captains of the legion of the dead that menace the hero of this novel have something in common with Tolkien's Nazgul, their origin and purpose is different (and is left somewhat in the dark — I expect there will be more about them in subsequent volumes of the trilogy).

The sword is much like Elric's Storm-bringer, in the sense that it is black, it drinks souls for power, it forces the holder into a quasi-berserkergang in battle, and it provides strength to the holder in return. But Moorcock never developed the soul-eater idea any farther than the final horror of the victims. Cook reasoned that if the power of the victim passes through the sword into the holder, then the soul must also go into the holder. Not only does this strain the user terribly, especially the first few times, but you then have a question of the incoming personality taking over the holder if he is weak or unlucky. It is the addition that makes *Swordbearer* a notable development in the literature from which we draw our role-playing ideas. The hero becomes, over a period of time and battles, a repository of the knowledge of his victims. Most of them fade away with time, but two of the strongest personalities become part of the hero's interior struggle to grow up and survive in a countryside torn by invading armies of the living and the dead.

The ideas are not the only possible benefit of this novel, although the magical concepts used to move the plot along and their mythological background could very well be adapted in role-playing campaigns.

Cook also has skill in drawing personalities. The two main ones in this story are the younger son of a country baron, who must handle the realities of war much too early, and a tired old dwarf campaigner who's seen it all before but is driven by duty, who is the custodian of the sword during the periods between its chosen champions. For it is the sword, and the Goddess behind the sword, who is the activating factor in the transformation of the young man into a hero who must see his ideals die along with several people he loves, two at his own hands. The dwarf also changes during the novel, from an awesome creature of legend with an immortal's long view of human politics, to a person in his own right whose problems the reader can sympathize with.

Cook's mythology comes out rather odd to my taste, but this is due partly to the fact that instead of recycling existing materials he is trying to build something different as the background for the social conflicts that move these characters. The book is full of interesting ideas. It's also a good read. □

# Game Cons

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# REVIEWS

ARCHAERON GAME SYSTEM □ JONRIL  
FCI CONSUMER GUIDE  
THE LOST CITY  
THE SOLOMANI RIM □ DWARVES

## THE ARCHAERON GAME SYSTEM: MODULE AGS-C1 "WARRIOR" AND MODULE AGS-F1 "MAGE"

by Wilf Backhaus  
Archaeron Games Ltd  
\$6.00 each  
Reviewed by Steven List

Wilf Backhaus, co-designer of *Chivalry & Sorcery* is publishing a new FRP game system which he calls *The Archaeron Game System*. It is being presented in modules that can nominally be used with other role-playing games as well as in the AGS itself. So far, these cover combat and magic use.

In the designer's opinion, other FRP systems have combat rules which are too simplistic, reducing the players to mere dice rollers, or which are too complex, requiring too much bookkeeping and calculation on top of the dice rolling. After reading his combat rules, though, it is hard to see how he can consider them much of an improvement in either case.

*Warrior* is rather restricted, as it is limited to European-style combat from roughly 500 to 1500 AD. While this milieu can encompass *D&D* or *T&T*, not to mention *C&S*, clearly such games as *Bushido* or *RuneQuest* are excluded. However, players of already complex games are unlikely to wish to trade in their expertise for a new variant system, so *Warrior* would mostly be used with the simpler systems, if at all.

In this module, a player can only be a human (noble, middle class, or rabble) of one of the following "races": Northern European, Mediterranean, Black/African, Oriental, Other. Percentile dice then determine one's father's status, sibling rank, and body type (Endomorph, Ectomorph, or Mesomorph), and size (short, medium, or tall), along with height and weight. One then generates ten Primary Characteristics by rolling 1D6 modified by body type and size. These are Strength, Agility, Dexterity, Stamina, Mental Approach, Deadliness, So-

cial Attitude, Piety, Sensitivity, and Greed. In addition, there are eleven more attributes, some directly computed from Characteristics, while others are influenced by them. These include Endurance, Coordination, Shock Resistance, Behavior Pattern, Education, Charisma, Lift Capacity, Combat Potential, Marksmanship, Vision Base, and Armor Capacity. There is also "Spending Habits" determined by a dice roll modified by Greed and social status. While many of these attributes have quantified functions, most also serve as a guide to role-playing. To emphasize this, in the AGS what most games call a player-character is called a persona. Generating one is relatively quick using these rules, but a lot of material is provided for the player to work with.

Inexperienced personas start at age 16 (age 10 if Noble) but prior experience may be obtained for newly created personas if desired. The rules for this are contradictory. One rule determines the years of experience by rolling 1D20. Another rule asks one to roll 1D100 to obtain a percentage which is compared to the age of the persona. Actual type of experience (which determines the number of skills obtained) is determined by dice rolls and can be as a local or feudal levy or as a mercenary in a local, national, or international campaign. In addition, a persona may have a number of "class skills" based on his social status and spending habits. These skills include such combat-related ones as Swordsmanship, Archery, and Riding, and general ones such as Social Graces, First Aid, and Diplomacy. My favorite is Foul-Mouthed Speech, "the skill of cursing, swearing and using crude language to stun the hearer." In this case "stun" is not just figurative, it is functionally equivalent to being clouded upside the head!

Skills are rated using an Expertise Level ranging from 0 to 9. Usually, successful application of a non-combat skill requires rolling the EL or less on D10. Weapon skills are treated differently. The Base Attack Value of a persona is his Combat Potential plus his weapon EL. This, possibly reduced by the defender's Base Parry (½ his Base Attack plus Shield Value) or other factors must be rolled on D20 to score a hit (more on this later). When determining actual skill ELs, dice are rolled and a table consulted.

ELs can be increased by a successful die roll once a year (a "periodic check") or after a use of the skill (an "extraordinary performance check," awarded at most four times a year at the referee's discretion). New skills can be acquired in the course of play by making a successful check roll after training by a suitable NPC.

Rules for foot and mounted combat are supplied, written so they can be resolved with counters or miniatures on a hex or square grid, or no grid at all, at a scale of 1 hex/square/centimeter = 1 yard, and 1 turn = 15 seconds. Combat is resolved as described above. If a hit has been scored, one then cross-indexes the attacker's Combat Potential (with a plethora of modifications) with weapon type to yield no result, or a Light, Serious, Grievous, or Mortal Wound, each of which results in a reduction of Endurance. A persona dies only when Endurance drops to zero, so a "mortal" wound may not be fatal.

*Warrior* is not a simple combat system, except possibly in comparison to *C&S*, and in many ways undercuts itself. The detailed calculations and procedures for determining the numbers used in combat are belied by the simplistic treatment of weapons and armor. It also suffers curious lapses, such as a persona's Lift Capacity, which is translated by a table into a percentage of body weight which the persona can carry with no ill effects. Horses, too, are rated by the pounds they can carry. Yet the only weights given to the player are those of his persona and his money (gold ounces). None of the weapons, armor, or other equipment are rated by weight anywhere in these rules.

*Warrior* is an interesting set of rules for developing a persona, and as such can be a good FRP aid. As a combat module for use in another game system, it is more trouble than it is worth. Once the rest of the Archaeron Game System is available, it may be better integrated, but for now it is mainly a curiosity.

What of *Mage*? While it naturally has many elements in common with *Warrior*, there are changes from the other module not directly related to magic use. A persona can be an elf, dwarf, halfling, or goblin, as well as a human, but humans alone are subdivided into races. In *Mage* the races are



... on the appropriate table below to ... decided upon a 1D100.

| RACE              | DIE ROLL | CLASS    |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Northern European | 01-15    | = Noble  |
|                   | 16-65    | = Middle |
|                   | 66-00    | = Rabble |
| Mediterranean     | 01-12    | = Noble  |
|                   | 13-60    | = Middle |
|                   | 61-00    | = Rabble |



Northern European, Mediterranean, Black/Mulatto, Amerind/Mestizo, Oriental, and Other. Parental status and sibling rank are ignored, but class and body type are retained. Primary Characteristics remain the same, as do the Attributes, some of which are optional for magic-users. There are four new Attributes as well: Visionary Capacity, Demonic Control, Psychic Capacity, and Magic Potential, all derived from the Primary Characteristics.

There are nine modes of magic users, 3 each of 3 types. The Psychic Talents (Mediums, Seers, and Natural Psychics) are "naturally magic," without benefit of training or religious commitment. The Ordinary Magic Users (Conjurers, Thaumaturges, and Enchanters) use innate ability plus "external factors such as potions, ritual, chants and formulae." The Theurgists are clerics who have been endowed with powers by their respective deities (as opposed to the majority of "ordinary clerics" who are businessmen of no supernatural ability). The modes for Theurgists are Symbolist, Mystic, and Necromancer. Actual of what mode a persona becomes is left to the player, assuming the qualifications of the desired mode can be met. Anyone can be an Enchanter, "your typical magician," while each of the others demands certain minimum values in one or more attributes. Once the mode has been determined, a formula is provided to calculate the mage's "magic potential."

Mages are rated by Magic Level, Degree, or Rank (all of which seemingly refer to the same thing). These levels run from 1 to 10 and have the names of Novice, Neophyte, Student, Scholar, Adept, Magician, Wizard, Sorcerer, Mage, and Archmage (leading to awkward classifications like "Wizard Necromancer" or "Magician Thaumaturge"). These names in turn correspond to Expertise Levels 0 to 9. Once a year a mage can attempt to increase his magic level if he meets the minimum EL for the new level and rolls a prescribed amount on percentile dice. Initial EL is determined by cross-indexing a die roll with one's years of experience on the EL table. The mage's Magic Potential increases by a previously calculated amount with each increase in level, while all spells are learned at the current EL value.

A magic user may attempt to learn a new spell once a month. The chance of learning a spell is calculated differently for each type, but is based on Magic Potential and money invested for Ordinaries and Theurgists. Psychics are served by Magic Potential, Behavior Pattern, and time spent meditating. The spells themselves are of assorted potency. Some are common to all magic users, while many are available to only one or a few of the modes. Some may produce wounds on the target (e.g., fire or poison spells) instead of, or in addition to other effects. The actual method of applying spells varies with user and spell type and involves more calculations and dice rolling. The list of spells is lengthy, and seems to cover all the standard cases.

Complicated as is *Warrior*, it is the soul of simplicity alongside *Mage*. The use of this magic system in an actual role-playing campaign seems pointless. So much time and effort must be diverted to resolving the magic

use that the players may as well be attempting magic on a real-time basis. The rules suggest *Mage* be played as a magical contest in an arena-type situation. This may be a bit more practical, but for ordinary use it is too complex and time-consuming.

*The Archæron Game System*, based on these two modules, seems to have some promise as a source of ideas for character generation and role-playing nuances, but it appears not to be a playable FRP system in its own right. Until more modules and source information is made available, *AGS* cannot be played on its own, so this judgment is to some extent unfair. However, it is valid to say that these two modules fail in their stated objective of providing improved systems for use in other game rules. □

### JONRIL: GATEWAY TO THE SUNKEN LANDS

by April Abrams and

Raymond E. Feist

Midkemia Press

\$10.00

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

*Jonril* is the latest city resource to be published by Midkemia Press, who have also published *Carse*, *Tulan of the Isles*, and *Towns of the Outlands*. *Jonril* consists of an 8½" by 11" book 65 pages long not counting the cover. The light, coated cover is illustrated with a clearly reproduced color drawing of the city. Also included is a 17" x 22" black and white map to the city.

The book begins with an introduction which explains the notation conventions used in the text. There is a glossary of historic and place names included which refer to the parent FRP campaign in which the city of *Jonril* was developed. A social history of the town's customs is also included in the front. The bulk of the book consists of a listing of individual buildings and detailed descriptions of the occupants and their activities. The book ends with a table of adventure possibilities, a set of maps showing *Jonril's* setting in the Midkemia campaign world, a price list, an index of establishments listed by type, and an overview map of the city showing the various districts.

The 17" by 22" city map is printed on heavy stock folded and loosely collated into the book. There is no keying information on the map beyond the names of some of the streets, making it a good reference for players whose characters are exploring the town as a new place. Using this map as given is very hard for the referee, however, since he has to keep track of the characters, and also flip through the 44 pages of town descriptions, first to see what code letter applies to a particular building, and then to find what plot-enhancing delights are keyed for that location. I just photocopied the map, and wrote in all the building code numbers, and color-keyed the functions on the copy.

The description of the individual buildings in town is organized by districts, which are coded A through M. Each district is either Rich, Merchant Class, or Poor. The

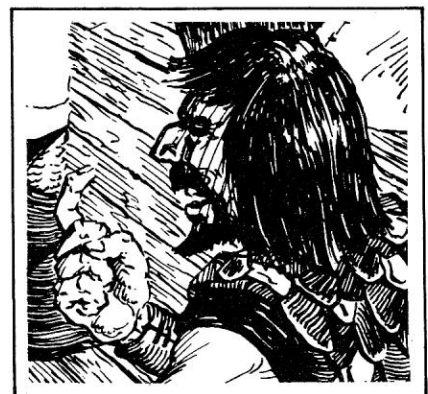
buildings in each district are numbered serially, so that each building in town is referred to by a letter/number code, the letter representing the district, and the number giving the precise building within the district. The detailed descriptions of the buildings are then in numerical order. The buildings are characterized first by the businesses contained within, such as "sailmaker," or "spice merchant."

This is followed by the name of the establishment and a description of the proprietor and his activities and connections in town and elsewhere. Some buildings are characterized as residences, and are given no further description. Each district forms a chapter within the book which also includes a map of the district with each building coded and a summary of the types of businesses shown.

The social structure of *Jonril* is revealed by individual listings, as well as by the general history. *Jonril* is a typical adventurer boomtown organized to exploit the wonders found inside a nearby area of magical plants and potent monsters. The town is under the joint rule of a military leader called the Captain, and the heads of four acknowledged leading commercial families called Great Houses. While the original city was started with adventurers' treasure, an individual referee could just as easily change the base to mining, crops, or some other traditional source for wealth. Within the town, the major pastime for the Great Houses is to remain on top of the heap, and for lesser families of commercial bent to expand their holdings to become Great Houses in their own turn.

I'd expect a real town set up like *Jonril* to last for maybe a dozen years before all the top people murdered each other, but it does make an interesting backdrop for adventuring. The actual complexities of social/commercial life in *Jonril* would do justice to a large city of five or ten times its size.

Some vital statistics: *Jonril* is a large port, sending adventurer-owned valuables downstream to New Tulan, where they are transhipped to ocean-going vessels for export. The city is about 1200 feet in breadth and averages 1000 feet in width. No population is given, and merely adding up all the specified NPCs would leave out store clerks, servants, unemployed, and so forth who are composed in the smooth running of the city. Using Midkemia's own rule of allowing five people for each mapped building gives a total of 2095 people, from 419 named places.



Jonril comes across as 'just another' Midkemia city, really much the same as Carse and Tulan. It differs from these two places in setting — it is to be the town near the Sunken Lands adventure which is to be the subject of a future scenario book. Jonril is a good example of a merchant oligarchy, and if I ever needed one in my campaign for some reason, I will make Jonril fit into the situation rather than create one from scratch.

Jonril is a well-done, workmanlike adventure aid. It provides a complex, realistic city adequate to most role-playing needs I've come across. The authors have outdone themselves in weaving a net of relationships between the major inhabitants of Jonril. The town is well laid-out, and the businesses are realistically selected, placed, and described. □

### THE FCI CONSUMER GUIDE

by Steve Harmon

FASA

\$6.00

Reviewed by Tony Watson

This item is an informational supplement to *Traveller*. Presented in the guise of a product research report on equipment and accessories by the Freedomian Consumer Institute, this play aid seeks to provide the *Traveller* player and referee with data on a wide variety of common and less common products. The result is a considerable augmentation of the *Traveller* Book 3 equipment section. A referee confronted with a situation wherein the players attempt to purchase an item not listed in Book 3 would have to work up some rules and figure out what he feels is a fair price. The *FCI Guide* should help; it may well list the item, or a close equivalent. My guess is that most referees do what I do and look up a similar item to that desired and extrapolate performance and price. The *FCI Guide* will, if nothing else, provide a larger base for such extrapolation.

The 48 page volume is divided into ten sections, eight of which deal with products. They are: camping gear, personal gear, life support devices, tools, vision aids, communication gear, weaponry and accessories, and clothing. Examples of camping gear included are snowskies, food analyzers, and a climbing kit. Personal gear includes attache cases and umbrellas; while life support listings center on vacc suit accessories, such as helmets, patches, and support packs. The

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The EPLS Bag, sometimes nicknamed the life support chamber which can provide 4 hours in case of depressurization. The plastic bag which is pulled out by zipper seal and is pressurized by activated and strobes on each side of the device. An oxygen tank, built into the unit which is stackable and maintains

tool section lists drills, solder, hand tools, and so on. Vision aids are not the title-suggested binoculars or infrared goggles, but a wide range of camera and video equipment. Communications gear ranges from a concealable listening device to a 10,000 credit relay satellite. The weapons section runs toward the esoteric, including such things as remote control mounts and a variety of cane weapons (shock, sword, even hypodermic). No new type of weapon is introduced. The last section is at the same time mundane and useful. It lists a large number of articles of clothing: five kinds of socks, ship's clothing, hats, even underwear.

Pertinent information for each of the items is listed in each entry: length, height, weight, diameter, (whatever is appropriate) and of course, price. All entries, save for clothing, have a brief explanatory paragraph outlining its purpose. Some of these could have been more fully explained in game terms; the referee still has to make judgments as to function, especially given the inventive uses a player-character might decide to put these items to. Most refs are going to find quibbles as to price, tech level, or what have you, but by and large, the booklet contains useful information even if some of the items are obscure at best.

Therein lies the *Guide's* real appeal. Any *Traveller* group with a little imagination could come up with this equipment and performance parameters as the situations arose. The *Guide*, though, will save the referee valuable time by providing him with a readily available source of equipment for everyday use.

My only complaint is with the price. FASA produces good *Traveller* material, but at premium prices. GDW's supplements sell for \$3.98, about two-thirds the price of corresponding FASA products. □

### THE LOST CITY, B4

by Tom Moldvay

TSR Hobbies

\$5.50

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

This adventure intended for the *Basic D&D* rules was written for new players who are not familiar with *Expert* or *Advanced D&D*. The product comes in the familiar TSR format of a 32-page pamphlet loosely inserted in a cardboard cover. The cover has color paintings on the outside and maps and charts related to the scenario on the inside.

An introduction recapitulates some parts of the *Basic D&D* rules and sets the background for the adventure. The story goes that once there was a flourishing city-state whose prosperous citizens raised a great pyramid in honor of their great king. When excavating the sub-basement, the workmen breached the crypt of a great demon who proceeded to return this bit of civilization back to the nomad era, through the physical destruction of the city works, and through the corruption of most of the survivors to a cult of illusion and self-indulgence. Some survivors are reviving the worship of the traditional gods of the city-builders.

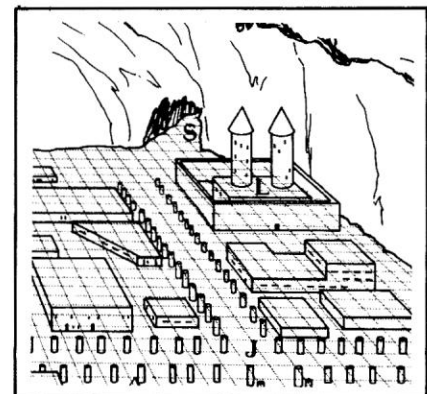
The players are not told all of this directly. Their characters, they are informed, have been involved with a caravan which was hit by a sandstorm. When the storm abated, the adventuring party found itself lost, both from the caravan and from any recognizable landmarks. Eventually, they stumble onto the ruins of the once-great city and find entry through the top level of the great pyramid.

Exploring the pyramid is the main element of the adventure. The pyramid is organized into dungeon-like levels, each level being a condominium for different sorts of monsters. Near the top of the pyramid are the headquarters for the three human factions trying to rebuild the city. The adventurers may join one of the factions (but apparently, the party may not split among the different factions). The factions give the adventurers a base to which to return to eat, sleep, and re-study spells. The adventurers can explore downward into the pyramid, slaughtering monsters and eventually discovering the underground city. No mention is made of how the three factions themselves obtain food and water in their little rooms, stuck between the desert above and the inhospitable dungeon below.

The pyramid dungeon ranges in standard difficulty from level one to level six. The monsters are set in the usual classical dungeon style, one or more of a single type to a room, with no provision of a reasonable food source, nor with a really logical reason for their presence. Presumably, the demon had something to do with the presence of the monsters, but I'd be much happier inflicting this on my players if the monsters belonged in the dungeon, making a logical whole, instead of just being in the way. Perhaps 20% of the encountered monsters could be justified in the pyramid section, mostly the undead creatures drawn to the demon and the crypts, and needing no food.

An interesting feature of the adventure is the underground city which may be reached from a side passage in the pyramid. It is located in a cavern, and is perhaps three by four blocks of buildings large with a lake and some suburban buildings to round out the picture. The author seems to think that the little lake and the few buildings of the city could support a lot more life than I do.

The adventure rules conclude with a section on expanding the adventure and setting it as the beginning of an ongoing campaign. There is a section of new monsters, some of which are standards in other versions of *D&D*. The book ends with a glossary of



words which may be unfamiliar to grade-school children, a listing of prefigured beginning characters, and a selection of standard back-packs for players who don't want to custom-fill their own.

*The Lost City* disappointed me since I expected better work from Mr. Moldvay, and because I wanted an adventure which really was centered around a lost city. It depends on what you expect an adventure to be about, I suppose. I don't mind interesting monster-slaughter, but I also enjoy role-playing and problem-solving. I think it's a shame that an introductory game such as this one should be so heavily skewed to one phase of adventure gaming, at the expense of the others. □

## THE SOLOMANI RIM

by John Harshman

Game Designers Workshop, Inc.

\$5

Reviewed by Ian R. Beste

Number eleven in the series of GDW's *Traveller* supplements, *The Solomani Rim*, 48 digest pages long, contains displays for the sixteen subsectors of the Solomani Rim Sector, a region consisting of 400 planets (including Terra) and 1,3366 trillion inhabitants. This sector is also the setting for GDW's wargames, *Invasion: Earth and Imperium*.

As this region has been long occupied by man, population and technology levels tend to be fairly high. For example, of the 18 planets in the Sol Subsector, six have a population code of 9 or A (Terra itself rates an A) and fourteen have Tech Levels of D, E, or F, all considered to be "above average Imperial." (Terra rates an F.)

Many worlds are occupied by the Imperial military as a result of the Solomani Rim War, events discussed in the "Introduction." The border between the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation runs through five subsectors, providing a very convenient playground for all sorts of illegal activities for a player to indulge in.

This supplement is very similar to the earlier *Spinward Marches* (Supplement 3) but contains historical background, of the sector, sketchy details on an alien but humanoid race, the Vegans, and the

subsector displays present more information. Imperial Research Stations are now marked, as well as Naval Depots and Scout Way Stations. Universal Planetary Profile (UPP) codes for three new types of atmospheres are given ("dense, high", "ellipsoid", and "thin, low"). The Remarks section of each planetary entry now notes off-planet control and ice-caps. Red Zones are now marked in red (I am glad that GDW can now afford a color plate in their print runs.)

*The Solomani Rim* is useful for anyone who plays more or less in the Marc Miller Imperium as presented by GDW. For those who don't, *Rim* may be useful for inspiration and planetary names. GDW admitted, in Book 0, *An Introduction to Traveller*, that supplements are there to save time for players and referees. If you need 400 planets, this supplement is a good deal. Otherwise, *The Solomani Rim* is for dedicated *Traveller* referees only. □

## DWARVES

by Paul Karczag

Role Aids (Mayfair Games, Inc.)

\$10.00

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

*Dwarves* is an adventure-game aid about dwarfs. It is avowedly written for the *AD&D* game system, although there are statements in the book that this is not an officially approved project. The book is 96 pages long, square bound with a hard paper cover.

The book begins with general information about dwarfs, centering on a particular community of the creatures in an underground city called Ostohar. There are chapters on dwarf lore, character background tables, city and wilderness maps and encounters, and an adventure for tough dwarf adventurerers.

The "Dwarf Lore" chapter begins with a chronology of the 30,000 years of dwarf history in the region of Ostohar, leading up to the adventure found later in the book. A chapter entitled "Life in Ostohar" covers the ordinary aspects of dwarf life, from family through the arts to military tactics. Unfortunately, there is little strange or inhuman about these dwarfs. The book *Gnomes* by Wil Huygen, described a more lively and interesting race than these dwarfs. This is followed by a selection of magic items and artifacts, and a chapter on dwarf religion.

The dwarf gods are covered in the manner of *Deities and Demigods*, giving hit dice, armor type, and character class for the worshiped beings. Some of these gods are amusing, and could be useful in a campaign, but few are well-characterized enough to be identifiable as necessarily and uniquely dwarven, rather than just the gods of mountain-dwelling humanoids.

Next follows a set of background tables for dwarf characters in the style of *Chivalry & Sorcery*, concentrating mostly on the family background of the character. The occupations are slanted towards those prac-

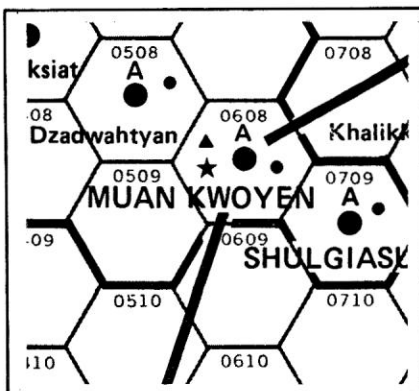
ticed around Ostohar, but they probably could be used for dwarfs anywhere.

The plans for the city of Ostohar are well thought out and look very workable. Ostohar has a fortified surface level on a mountain cliff, and three underground levels, leading down to the mines and refineries which give an economic base for the dwarf community. The surface-level buildings are moderately well-detailed, although the lower levels are given only brief notes — perhaps there is more to dwarf society than the author is willing to tell? At any rate, strangers to the dwarf community are unlikely to find that much of their business takes them deep underground anyhow. There are also notes on adventures and encounters in Ostohar, and maps and notes on some other human and dwarf towns in the surrounding lands.

The balance of the book consists of scenario notes for a dwarf quest. This is a long overland encounter-type journey leading to the top of a mountain. Here the adventurers ascend a magical mountain, traverse a *Lost World* type valley filled with large dinosaurs, attain the castle of the evil menace and recover a lost artifact. The author notes that the adventure took upwards of forty hours to run at a convention and suggests ways of compressing it. My feeling is that the quest is an interesting one, doubtless, but that it has relatively little to do with dwarfs, except that it is set up and run by members of that race. There is no reason that the exact same quest couldn't be run from a human or other race setting.

The same criticism applies to the entire book. The strong points of *Dwarves* are the plans for the underground city and the prior history charts, which take up a relatively small portion of the book. The rest of the material is nice to read through, once, and some referees might find the adventure notes useful, but there is little in this book to recommend it to referees or players looking for background material for their dwarfs in the way that *Trollpak* defined the race of Dark Trolls. Given the size of *Dwarves*, one would expect a lot more content than actually exists — a shame, because the author has obviously spent a lot of time and work on this book, and some first-rate developmental work by a company such as GDW or Chaosium could have transformed this text into the masterpiece it deserves to be.

In summary, *Dwarves* does not live up to its pretentious format or heavy price tag. The world still awaits the definitive book on dwarfs. ■



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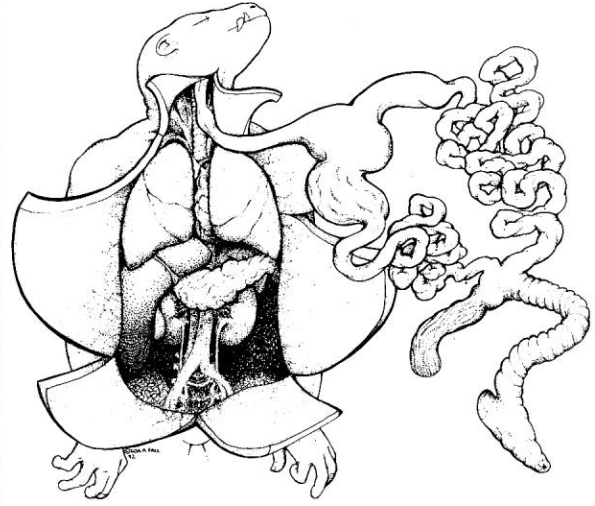
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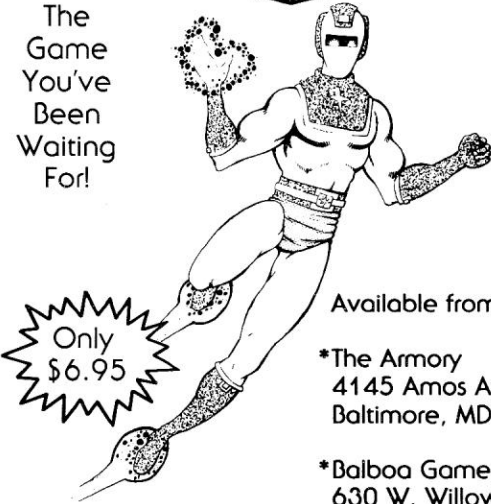
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# Upcoming Projects from Chaosium

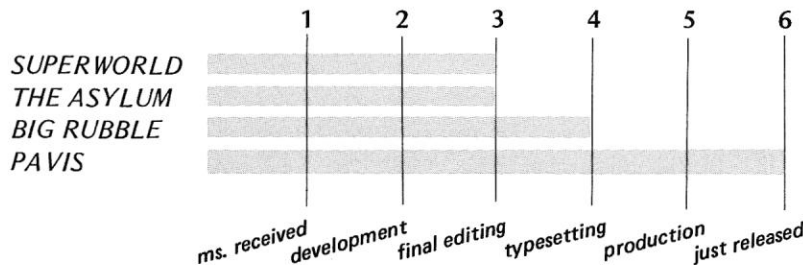
by Charlie Krank

We present this column to keep *Different Worlds* readers up-to-date on upcoming projects. The information below is as current as possible, and only includes projects which we are confident we will be publishing in the next six months.

There are six main steps that a product must undergo before it sees publication. These steps, used on the Status Report table below, are as follows:

1. Manuscript Received. We have a working copy of the manuscript and are studying it to see if it meets our approval.
2. Development. We are testing and completing an accepted manuscript.
3. Final Editing. Now satisfied that the ms. is as we want it, final production notes are made and the artwork is assigned to an artist.
4. Typesetting.
5. Production. The typeset material is laid out, re-edited, final corrections are made, and the whole project is sent to the printers. They photograph the work, make blueline proof copies which we check, and then print it.
6. Just Released. We have gotten the product's parts from the printer, it's been collated, wrapped, and shipped off to the retailers.

## STATUS REPORT (as of March 3, 1983)



### Pavis

The final product contains three books and two maps. We haven't seen the bluelines yet, but should have them in the next week. The feel of the package is good, the format ties the books together well. The bureaucracy section seems to be particularly amusing. Of special interest is the 40-page Cradle scenario. It is the most spectacular adventure that we have ever published.

### Big Rubble

This is a companion to *Pavis*. The total length of the piece has not yet been determined. Judging by the pile of typeset material sitting on Lynn's desk, this may be boxed, but we would like it to be a book of 80-96 pages.

### The Asylum & Other Tales

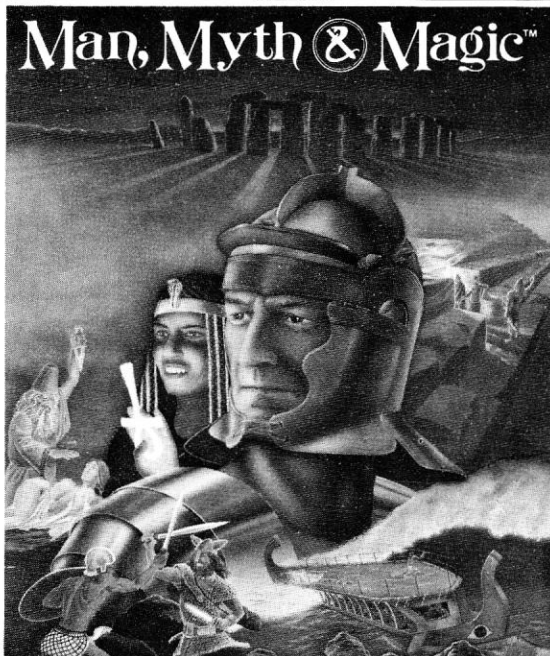
Another *Call of Cthulhu* adventure book. Once Sandy has finished his editing, it will go to Lynn for final editing and formatting. In a week Sandy should begin typesetting it. The book looks to be slightly shorter than *Shadows of Yag-Sothoth* - maybe 64 pages

### Superworld

At least a 600% expansion of the *Worlds of Wonder* game Steve has completely revamped the powers and mechanics (at least 5 times, judging from the papers flowing into my basket). He has sent copies of the final manuscript to blind-testers. Their response should be soon. All of our testers seem enthusiastic. □



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Other new *Traveller* publications are **Starter Edition Traveller**, **Library Data N-Z** (Supplement 11), **Nomads of the World-Ocean** (Adventure 9), and issue 15 of **The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society**.

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# Quick Plugs

Every issue of *Different Worlds* presents capsule descriptions of new products. Publishers are encouraged to send samples of their products for announcement in this column.

## ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

**CASSIOPEIAN EMPIRE** — This 16-page book comes with two character sheets and an errata, and sells for \$9.50. Designed by Raymond Norton, half the rules involve character generation (similar to *Traveller*) and the rest cover space craft, aliens, robots, star systems, and an Empire. Published by Norton games, 590 Corte Amino, Fountain CO 80817

**HEROES OF OLYMPUS** — This is a reissue of a previous edition, now in a larger box with a new cover. It also now includes a set of iminatures sculpted by Richard Kerr and a reprint of a *DW* article that adapts the game to *Thieves' World*. Published by Task Force Games, 1110 N Fillmore, Amarillo TX 79107.

## FOR V&V

**OPONENTS UNLIMITED** — Designed by Stefan Jones, this 24-page book is presented as a playing aid. It contains encounters, eight individual supervillains, and four villain groups with maps to three of their headquarters. Sells for \$5, available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, PO Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576.

## FOR AFTERMATH

**OPERATION MORPHEUS** — In this scenario, players take the role of volunteers to a cryogenic suspension experiment that woke up a hundred years later. They find

the world in ruins and have no idea what happened. The idea is to survive. Designed by Phil McGregor, the 56-page book mostly contains descriptions of the university the player-characters wake up in. Priced at \$8 and available from Fantasy Games Unlimited.

## FOR T&T

**DEATHTRAP EQUALIZER, LABYRINTH, NAKED DOOM** — These are reissues of solitaire adventures 2, 3, and 4. They now come with new color covers. All retail for \$4.95, available from Blade, PO Box 1210, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

## FOR ANY SYSTEM

**QUESTION OF GRAVITY** — Designed by Jerome Mooney, this 32-page book describes a dungeon delving adventure for three to eight characters of second to fifth level. Five non-player characters are provided, and eleven locations in the starting village are described. The dungeon itself contains 66 encounters with several random events and encounters. Available from Role Aids, PO Box 5987, Chicago, IL 60680.

**ANGMAR** — This 48-page book describes the barren plain to the north of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. Designed by Heike Kubasch, it also comes with a 22"x17" double-sided map. The rules provide information on Angmar's climate, flora, fauna, people and cultures, politics, and several places of interest. Retail for \$10, and avail-

able postpaid from Iron Crown Enterprises, PO Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

**UMBAR** — Designed by Brenda Spielman, Umbar is a coastal oligarchy to the south of Tolkien's Middle Earth. The 52-page book comes with a 22"x17" double-sided map and describes Umbar's political organization, ecology, economy, city, several towers, several organizations, a religion, several castles, a village, and more. Available postpaid for \$10 from Iron Crown Enterprises.

*The following seven modules are published by Entertainment concepts, 6923 Pleasant Dr., Charlotte, NC 28211. They are available for \$2.50 each except the last one, which is \$6.50. They are derived from the Silverdawn PBM game for use with regular role-playing. They are all designed by Jim Dutton.*

**HIGH RANGER GUARD** — This 8-page book describes the elven forest patrol force. Contains a description of the forest, the guard, and encounters.

**BAVENLON** — This 8-page book describes a forest and its inhabitants. It also contains a description of a temple, special adventures, and encounters.

**SOCIETY OF SORCERY** — This 8-page book describes an organization of mages. Rules cover history, membership, organization, missions, and new spells.

**THE PLATEAU** — This 12-page book describes a high-level adventure to defeat an evil cleric. There are 15 encounters and a random encounter table.

**SEARCH FOR THE LOST CITY** — This 12-page book describes a jungle adventure. The adventure has 24 encounters and a random encounter table.

**SEARCH FOR THE CRYSTAL SWORD** — This adventure takes place on an island. The 12-page book describes the island, the magic sword, six encounters, a random encounter table, and more.

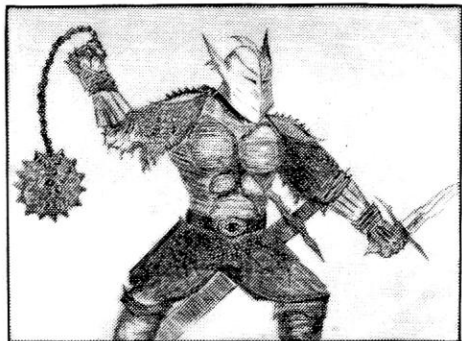
**THE WORLD OF SILVERDAWN** — This 16-page book comes with a 22"x17" map. The book describes its countries, cities, forests, hills, mountains, and swamps.

**THE CURSE ON HARETH** — This material is designed to provide campaign-oriented material for gamemasters. Designed by Wm. John Wheeler, it consists of 80 loose-leaf pages, two 11"x16" maps, and a 22"x17" map. There is information on the region and village of Hareth, random encounters, personalities, a thieves' band, a shrine, a manor ruins, and a keep ruins. Available from the Companions Inc., 245 Water St. Bath ME 04530 for \$12.95.

**DUNGEON FLOOR MODULES** — These are 20 approximately 9"x11" sheets with four different patterns of dungeon floor plans printed on them to be cut apart and used during play. They include pools, doors, passageways, rooms, secret doors, pillars, docks, rope bridges, spiral and regular stairs, pits, diagonal passages, etc. Available from Kabal Gaming Systems for \$5.

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**CARDS OF POWER** — This is 66 pages of loose-leaf material with 24 cut-out cards. Designed by Wm John Wheeler, Peter L. Rice, and others, five decks of cards are described that have magical effects when played. There is a section of other magical items. Available for \$7.50 from The Companions, 245 Water St., Bath ME 04530.

**TRAPS TOO** — Edited by Paul O' Connor, this is a second collection of deadly traps. The 101 traps are divided into room traps, corridor traps, door traps, trapped items, and trapped things. Available from Flying Buffalo.

**JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD CASTLE** — A dragon coerces the adventurers to rid a castle in the sky of its inhabitants. This 16-page adventure is designed by G. L. Whelenbater. The castle has six levels and 83 places to explore. Available for \$2.95 plus 50 cents postage from Reilly Associates, PO Box 17144, Rochester NY 14617.

**ABOARD THE DEATH SHIP** — This is an adventure taking place aboard a derelict starship. The adventurers must piece together clues to discover the vessel's origin. This 20-page book is designed by Gary E. Reilly. The ship has five decks and 100 places to explore. It is available for \$2.95 plus 50 cents postage from Reilly Associates.

**AGE OF SAIL SERIES** — There are four supplements available. *Heavy Warship* has 24 deck plans; *Heavy Merchantship*, *Medium Warship*, and *Medium Merchantship* have 13 deck plans each. They all come with 28 identical pages of looseleaf instructions on their use and reference materials. Available from Wizard Guild Games, 2440 Athens Ave, Redding CA 96001. They sell for \$4.98 each, add \$1.50 for postage and handling. California residents add 6% sales tax.

**MIDDLE EARTH** — This is a 16-page campaign and adventure guidebook with a 24" x 36" full-color map. Designed by Peter C. Fenlon and Terry K. Amthor, it features an overview of Tolkien's world, notes on inhabitants, language and culture, magic, adapting to role-playing campaigns, trade routes, climate, etc. Available for \$9 from Iron Crown Enterprises Inc., PO Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902.

**CLAW LAW** — Contains 12 sheets of reference material. This is basically a combat system for animal attacks. It also includes martial arts. 95% of all attacks are resolved by two die rolls. Available from Iron Crown Enterprises Inc.

#### MAGAZINES

**IMAGINARY REALMS I** — This 28-page premiere issue edited by Susan B. Khas contains articles on centaurs, fiction, computers, traps, a random *RuneQuest* character generator for the Apple computer, a creature description, book reviews, and a review of *Star Frontiers*. Single copy price is \$2, published monthly. A one year sub of \$15 gets you in the Fantasy Fellowship. Write them at 3827 N Greenview, Chicago IL 60613.

**NETHERWORLD CONTINUUM 5** — This 40-page magazine is edited by David Semkow. Articles this issue are "Secrecy in Role-Playing," a review of *Invasion of the Air Eaters*, "Role-Playing Aspects in Board-

Gaming," "A Look at *Space Opera*," "A Few Words on *Cosmic Encounters*," "Creature Features," etc. Sub is \$8 for four issues, single copy price \$2. Published quarterly by Twin Cities Game Masters' Association, PO Box 14630, University Station, Minneapolis MN 55414.

**DRAGON LORDS 12** — This issue contains articles on sea adventures, reviews of magazines and miniatures, women in role-playing, a scenario, con report, and more. Edited by Ian Marsh et al, 28 pages. Write Ian at Avalon, Grams Rd, Walmer, Deal, Kent, England CT14 7PU for their complicated ordering instructions.

**JOURNAL OF TEKUMEL AFFAIRS** — Contains articles on the Pe Choi, a merchant's tale, and the Kevuk language in the current issue. Published bimonthly, single issue price is \$1. Available from Jeff Berry, 2408 First Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55404.

**THE EXPLORER 6** — Edited by Clarence Horine, this 16-page magazine contains reviews of *Space Opera*, and *Barbarian Prince* along with the *Starmaster* video game, a weaponsmaster character class, monsters, magic items, a scenario, etc. Sub is \$10 for six issues, single copy for \$2.50. Available from Explorer Publishing, 1824 Yorktown Rd, Lexington KY 40504.

#### PBM

**ARENA COMBAT** — Designed by Duane Wilcoxson, the game simulates man-to-man combat with archaic weapons. The player chooses a helmet, armor, and weapons. Rulebook and initial setup costs \$3.50, turn fee and player rankings is

\$3.50. Available from Schubel & Son, PO Box 214848, Sacramento, CA 95821.

**STRATEGIC COMBAT** — Designed by George V. Schubel, the game involves production, diplomacy, movement, and combat. Rulebook costs \$2, setup is \$3.50, each turn is \$3.50. Available from Schubel & Son.

**HEROIC FANTASY** — This is a dungeon delving adventure with a nine-level maze of rooms. The game includes potions, hidden doors, magic, combat, rescue parties, etc. Available from Flying Buffalo, PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252-1467.

#### BOARDGAME

**GRAV-BALL** — This game simulates a tactical man-to-man sporting event in the future. It is played in a zero-G court, and the two six-man teams try to score points by throwing a 5 kg stell ball into the opponents goal. Comes boxed with thirteen 15mm miniatures, a 11" x 17" map, 56 counters, a 12-page rulesbook, a pair of dice, and play aids. Designed by Fred Bently and Ross Babcock, it is available from FASA, PO Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680-6930.

**BORDERLANDS** — This boxed game designed by Jack Kittredge, Peter Olotka, and Bill Eberle, comes with an eight-page rulebook, a 20" by 24" map, 240 counters, a die, and zip-lock bags for the counters. This is a strategic fantasy boardgame. The game involves development of resources, production, trade, transport of resources, diplomacy, etc. It is for 2 to 4 players. Available for \$20 and \$2 shipping from Eon Products, RFD 2 Sheldon Rd, Barre MA 01005. Mass. residents add 5% sales tax. □



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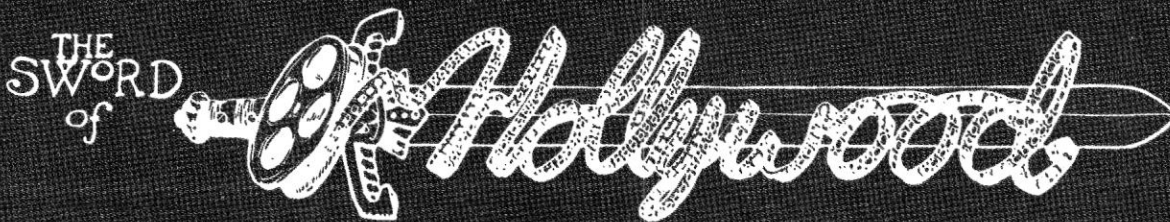
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# Cinema News & Reviews



by Larry DiTillio

Welcome to another page of scintillating, cinematic serendipity courtesy of your Lost Angels connection.

**RUNEQUEST MOVIE?** — Yes, yes, yes. No doubt Gigi will get this announcement before me but since I have been sitting on this story for some two years now I think its only fair I get a word or two in as well. A movie based on *RuneQuest* has been in the works for some time. The script is by the multi-talented Christopher Gore (writer of the film *Fame*), a resident of Lost Angels. I spoke to Chris about getting an exclusive interview for this column and he was totally amenable. However, since at present the film is still shuffling around in deal-city, Chris did not want to compromise anyone and asked if I could wait until my next column. I agreed, so look for that interview next issue.

**D&D ON YOUR TV?** — No, I am not talking about *Mazes & Monsters* which was everything I thought it would be (namely awful), but *Dungeons & Dragons*. It seems that TSR has approached several major animation companies here in Hollywood with the idea of doing a cartoon show based on the game. No deal has been consummated yet, but I know for a fact that at least one company is planning such a series without calling it *D&D*. Meanwhile on the feature film end, I have heard that James Goldman might be penning the script for the *D&D* movie. Goldman, who wrote *Robin and Marian* is certainly a good writer, so if its true I'll set my expectations high. Who would have thought our pleasant little pastime would ever go mass media?

**AND BARSOOM TOO?** — Yes, fans of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Someone has licensed the rights to use Burroughs Martian madness on celluloid and plans to bring it your way soon. Seems logical. I'll keep my agents on the job and try to find out more as the year progresses.

**THREE FROM CANADA** — In case you didn't know it, our neighbors north of the border are very successful at film production. The Canadian government actually subsidizes its native film-makers, something we could use in the U.S.A. In addition, many American companies shoot in Canada, both for the cooperative attitude of officials and the stunning variety of wilderness locations. Two films of interest to gamers are currently underway in Canada and as a hands-across-the-border gesture I thought I'd mention them here.

*The Dead Zone* is a cinematic version of Stephen King's novel about a man who gets the power to see the future and with that

power he spies a hideous fate for mankind. David Cronenberg, the man who had heads blowing up in *Scanners* is the director. The second one is *Space-Hunter*, an outer space thriller-diller brought to you by producer Ivan Reitman (*Animal House*). My guess is you'll see both toward the end of summer.

**MAY 25th** — What's so special about that date? Its the scheduled opening date for *Return of the Jedi*. Is Darth Vader Luke's father? Will Han Solo return from being freeze-dried? Will Princess Leia crop her hair and go punk? We'll all find out on May 15th. Care to get in line now?

**STAR TREK III** — Word on *Star Trek III* is that Leonard Nimoy will be involved, not as Mr. Spock but as *director* of the third movie in the *Star Trek* series. The tentative title is *In Search of Spock*, but I'm willing to bet that will be changed. By the way, here's a little irony for you. *Star Trek II* was originally going to be called *Revenge of Khan*, but that was changed because Lukasfilm felt it was too close to the upcoming *Revenge of the Jedi*, which turned out to be named *Return of the Jedi*. Isn't the movie business weird?

**A CONAN WE CAN LOVE** — *Conan II* is in the scripting stage and the writer is none other than Roy Thomas, the man who penned so many first-rate Conan stories for Marvel Comics. Hooray. I have no doubt that Rasally Roy will correct everything that was wrong with the first Conan movie and give us an event worth waiting for.

**HANDS-ON ANIMATION** — Ye Ole Sword recently had the distinct pleasure of working on a half-hour animation teleplay for *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, a cartoon show based on the DC comic and Mattel toys of the same name. The show will hit the airwaves come September. Most television animation is confined to the genre known as "saturday morning," i.e., kid-oriented cartoons. The name of the game on saturday morning is *cheap*.

Writing a cartoon show is both great fun and an exercise in extreme frustration. First off, where a half-hour of live action calls for 24 pages of script, a half-hour of animation requires about twice that. This is because the writer must detail every single shot so the animator can draw it. If you think it is easy, try it. Take a simple action — Bonzo the Barbarian charges the Evil Dragon Loxnabagel — then set that down in a quick series of descriptions that make sense and can be drawn. If you did it, now do it for 48 pages and wham-bam you have an animated script.

However the challenge of writing single shots is nothing compared to the restrictions

faced by animated shows, restrictions laid down by the Television Network Standards and Practices Code. Standards and Practices affect all network TV shows, but none so rigidly as cartoons. The reason is, naturally, the audience. Cartoon shows are aimed at mainly little kids. The age range is five to twelve years old. To write a cartoon show, you have to gear it toward the bottom half of that range, i.e. it has to make sense to a five year old.

When you get to the action part of the show obviously the main appeal, the censorship swells to immense proportions. To wit: no one can hit anyone; no one can make use of anything that is in any way shaped like a gun; no one can express an overt intention to hurt and no one really gets hurt.

There are methods for getting around the limitations. For example: a sword blow can be caught on a shield or staff and the recipient of the blow can be knocked back; ramparts can be blasted away by photon beam fire, dropping the villains off (as long as you don't show the villains hitting the ground); people can fall into holes, wells, or anything else.

On some shows you can use a gun, but it can't fire bullets, only beams or rays and the preferred thing is to have the firing device look like something else entirely (a wand, an amulet etc.). An absolute no-no is characters saying things like "destroy them, kill them, annihilate them, rip their lungs out (especially that, I know)."

But destruction of property is okay. You can blow up buildings, space ships, and walls to your heart's content, just as long as no-one visibly gets hurt. I call this the *Star Wars* method of violent non-violence. If you think about it, there must have been several million deaths in *Star Wars*. Alderaan's destruction alone would account for a few million and certainly the Death Star had at least a few thousand crewmen aboard when Luke blew it to atoms. Yet most people would not count *Star Wars* as an overly violent film.

I appreciate people's desire to protect children from the true ugliness of violence, but at the same time ignorance is a futile shield at best. This is where I am really at odds with saturday morning cartoons. They work on the theory of showing it without showing it, while patting themselves on the back for their kindly natures, and content in their protection of childish psyches. It's a true fool's paradise. Kids are smarter than TV execs think they are. They know they're getting a line. If you don't believe it watch a bunch of ten-year-olds play an RPG sometime. Now we're talking violence!

Next time out, *The RO* movie. ☐



# Gossip

Dear Tadashi,

Thanks for the press pass for the HIA show at Anaheim. I did warn you that I would attend when the Super Bowl was playing, so it's your own fault that you missed me. I don't think anybody recognized me, including that hairy guy at your booth.

There was lots of news there. First of all, Heritage Models is definitely going out of business; they are waiting for the Texas courts to decide how they must liquidate. HOWIE BARASCH, president, will probably start a software distribution company when he finishes the paperwork, as well as continue that gossip rag of his. ARNOLD HENDRICK has already taken a job with Coleco, perhaps programming Granddaughter of Donkey Kong.

More bad news came from Martian Metals. They recently lost their *Traveller* license, and their *RuneQuest* license just before that, and then the day before the HIA show their factory burned down! Bad luck comes in three's. Hope you were insured, Forrest.

Grenadier Models now will be doing the *Traveller* miniatures. They bought the molds and masters from Martian (apparently sent before the fire). They also released their *Call of Cthulhu* figures there. Take a look especially at the adventurer's set — some of the best sculpting in years. Too bad the box doesn't look better.

GERRY KLUG showed off ads for his RPG game based on James Bond 007. An Origins release, it will include three separate booklets and a GM's shield, all to be sold separately.

I saw the first issue of *Gameplay* magazine, published by JAKE JAQUET, the former editor of *The Dragon*. It is certainly a slick one, and if the U.S. is ready for a magazine which covers everything from FRP theory and reviews to Monopoly variants and reviews of home arcade games, then this is sure to make it. Reminds me of *Games and Puzzles*, the fine British magazine. Recommended. Best of luck!

Quick Sights at HIA: the new cover for *Heroes of Olympus* gets my vote for the worst of the year. My vote for best cover goes to Blade's *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*. I also saw the pre-release of *The King Arthur Companion* — very pretty!

JON WILLIAMS' *Promotions and Prizes*, a historical RPG based on the American Revolutionary War, was released by FGU. He writes good novels, but I hope this edition is better written than his first try.

Good to hear *DW 23* is back in print. I heard that subscribers didn't like this single-theme issue, but that the newsstand sales were phenomenal. I guess the reprint should do well, too.

Congratulation to SANDY (*Call of Cthulhu*) and WENDY PETERSEN on the birth of their latest offspring, ARTHUR BRANDOCH DARWIN PETERSEN.

Hero Games had another office-warming party, this time for their latest address (92-A 21st Ave., San Mateo, CA 94402). Aren't they warm enough after the last one? They are seeking a new manufacturer to license their *Champions* figures, too.



Did anyone see the December *Wall Street Journal* story on TSR Hobbies? TSR reported sales of \$14 million in 1981 and \$22 million in 1982. TSR plans to double their size over the next two years via a needlepoint company, their already successful Endless Quest books, and a line of plastic toys. They say they'll hire another 100-150 people next year, so send in your application now!

I saw the line of TSR toys at HIA and they were really ugly. I understand the management was disappointed at their reception, but are confident that DUKE SEIFRIED can sell anything.

TSR's GARY GYGAX, BRIAN BLUME, and KEVIN BLUME concede that they lack management experience, and the Blumes are rumored to be taking an MBA correspondence course. I recommend reading Fisk and Barron's *MBA Handbook* — it's all I ever needed.

Game Lords should have the second volume of Haven, *Secrets of the Labyrinth*, out by now. They are also working on a series of science fiction scenarios.

Mayfair Games is whipping up a licensing storm! They have plans to turn two Hugo winners into games: *Forever War* and *Down Below Station*. But other folks tell me that it's easier to get licenses than to fulfill them. Some long work days are ahead! They continue their line of Role-Aids with *Dark Folk*, some parts of which are written by author ROBERT ASPRIN.

I heard someone is willing to sell a first edition of TSR's censored B3 module, *Silver Princess*, for only \$200. Wow! Such a bargain, how much for a photocopy?

GREG COSTIKYAN is reportedly designing a game based on the *Horse Clans* series by Robert Adams. The rights are owned by Fantasy Games Unlimited.

Greg Costikyan is also organizing independent seminars for the Game Designer's Guild for next Origins. The dinner is the Saturday night of Origins, so reserve your spot. The menu should be Mexican food, plus alternative dishes for gringos.

Ral Partha will be releasing 25mm figures for WENDY PINI's *Elfquest*. The Superior 57mm figures will be discontinued.

Do I hear wedding bells for JOHN T. SAPIENZA, JR?

Avalon Hill reports a 15% drop in game sales — no wonder they are hot to get an

RPG into their line! Rumors are thick on that subject. Rumor says they are also trying to buy *The Fantasy Trip*, *RuneQuest*, *Adventures in Fantasy*, and *DragonQuest*. More is better? They will release RICHARD SNIDER's *Perils & Plunder* at Origins (but would you play a game called *P&P*? And besides there is already one *P&P* out from Yaquinto.). The box cover will be an industry first: naked nipples. I think I'll change my vote for the worst box cover as soon as that one is released.

I also heard that some company is proposing to set up a role-playing division for Avalon Hill, somewhat akin to Victory Games' deal. Who is that?

Avalon Hill has procured a gangster game, mostly designed by STEVE LORTZ, but I hear that DAVE ARNESON's name is on it to promote sales. Is that really necessary? Is Steve's name on it, too?

There isn't a single big East Coast convention this year. Did the brouhaha over GenCon East scare everyone off, or is it the depression? And TSR is making threatening noises over Origins appearing in Detroit again — too close to their turf. Do I sense another gang war in sight here? Editorials at ten paces? I hope not.

Magazines come and magazines go. *Oracle* has died, and the *Maninga Chronicles* begins. This one promises a continuing story where readers contribute ideas and actual text. It will also include the usual reviews, variants, etc.

GDW announces a newsletter, *The Workshop Letter*. No subscriptions, but the latest issue is always available for a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

*Call of Cthulhu* surges onward. In addition to the Grenadier figures mentioned above, T.O.M.E. plans to release its first licensed supplements, *The Arkham Evil* and *The Dunwich Horror*.

And my gratuitous mention of Chaosium: there are still no release dates for *Pendragon*, *HeroQuest*, *Ringworld*, *Elfquest*, or *Lankmar*. No promises; no disappointments. Why didn't I think of that?

Love,

Gigi

meant something else when you wrote in the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide*: "As a participant in the game, I would not care to have anyone telling me exactly what must go into a campaign and how it must be handled; if so, why not play some game like chess?"

Its interesting that you originally chose such an analogy to the exacting parameters of chess; for it appears that what you were trying to convey was that *D&D* and *AD&D* are not bound by precise and irrefutable rules. Yet, in this article you reverse yourself and criticise those of us who have enthusiastically built upon the excellent existing parameters with material that fleshes out and brings to life areas that you barely touched upon in your rule books. In fact, later in the *DM Guide* you state: "Others will think of things I didn't, and devise things beyond my capability." So how is it now that we find you attacking the very same thing that you promoted not so long ago as well as trying to tell us exactly what can and cannot go into a *Dungeons & Dragons* game?

... Maybe we have missed the obvious intent of the game? (We might have been having too much fun to notice.) Or, more precisely, what we have no doubt missed is the dictum that the only legitimate changes that can be made only come with the TSR-Gary Gygax stamp of approval. Your present attitude bespeaks a very definite change from one of a seemingly open, sincere and inventive mind to that of a closed, stuffy and short-sighted one.

Perhaps if you addressed your article to tournament games, some of what you had to say might apply. We might even understand your gripes. But you appeared to address your criticism to all of us that improvise, add to and modify areas that we find unsatisfactory in our own gaming activities. . . .

In your article you state that "The *AD&D* game system does not allow the injection of extraneous material. That is clearly stated in the rule books." We have pored over both the *Players Handbook* and the *DM Guide* seeking such a statement. We have found none. The fact is that we have, instead, found numerous statements encouraging the creativity of the dungeon master and the players as well as directing readers to other game material sources as you wrote in the "Preface" of the *Players Handbook*: "Many readers will want more material. There is a wealth of commercial and fan material available for fulfilling such needs." This indicates rather that

the game is mutable to the desires and enjoyment of its players. Do we detect a change of heart here? Just what is your definition of "extraneous" material? Since TSR owns *Dragon* magazine, and you so vehemently proselytize "official" *AD&D* material, why then does the *Dragon* regularly offer such a vast amount of non-official material to its readers?

We take particular offense to your closing statement that "Far too often, extraneous material tinkered onto the existing *D&D* or *AD&D* campaign will quickly bring it down to a lower level at best, ruin it at worst." To the contrary, the materials we have chosen to use in our own game have enriched and enhanced all aspects of the game we play and has fleshed out your own admittedly sketchy guidelines for certain areas of the *AD&D* game.

... In closing, we would like to thank you for showing us the light and error of our ways. While we continue to play an FRP game or "hodge-podge system" as you put it in your article, we no longer call it *AD&D*, and furthermore we have all decided that, in all good conscience, we will no longer advertise our own games as such — TSR Hobbies will get no more free advertising from us.

Yes, Mr. Gygax, the choice is ours.

Merle Parnell, Kevin Postel,  
Paula Delconte, Scott McIntyre,  
Cherie Friedman, D. Bayhille,  
Debbie Langurud, Maureen Grillo,  
Carol Ashley, Mikel Hansard,  
Steve & Brandie Brenner,  
Gary Hembree.

### In Defense of the Reviewer

I would like to comment on Dave Nalle & associates' letter in *Different Worlds* 26.

Don't drum C.D. Martin out of your corps of reviewers. I didn't buy *DW* 23, and so didn't see the original review; but many of the criticisms Nalle et al. complain about as unfair, are criticisms of *Ysgarth Rules System* which I would have made myself. Therefore I suspect that the review was accurate even though it was based on an older (\$2 cheaper) edition.

Dave Nalle is invariably a nice guy face to face, but his attitude toward reviews has become opportunistic recently. I'd sooner see *Different Worlds*' reviews continue as dispassionate evaluations, rather than becoming puffery on a you-scratch-my-back basis.

My own impression of the *Ysgarth* system, based on Dave's own campaign, is as follows:

1. *Ysgarth* is an "improved" *D&D*. Unfortunately many of the improvements add detail and complexity with

a little gain in realism and great loss of ease of play. Think of your favorite with all the extra, added-on accuracy rules which have never been proposed for addition to that system and *D&D* too! That's *Ysgarth*. I support the statement "Great detail in combat resolution does not mean realism."

2. The rules are not as unclear as original *D&D*'s rules, but that's not saying much. I had plenty of questions about them which Dave answered face to face. But without Dave Nalle there to interpret them, anyone else trying to GM or play *Ysgarth* is likely to be frustrated. The simplest example of the problems in them is lack of a rule on rounding: since the charts for die rolls vs. characteristics have entries for every third number, is a four rolled under the 3 column or the 6 column? These rules need an editor other than Dave himself; he is too familiar with the contents to appreciate the problems. Naturally he doesn't have any trouble with them.

3. The *Ysgarth* character sheet makes the *RuneQuest* character sheet look simple and seem quick to fill out. The sheet is a mass of abbreviations whose meaning does not stick in the mind. There is no central reference chapter on how to fill it out, either. And after it's done there are problems interpreting it in play.

4. The *Ysgarth* background is Dave's campaign, and anyone who likes *RuneQuest* can't complain much about that on principle. It's not all there in the basic booklets, and much of it is only in Dave's head. Much of it is sort of grisly — much like I sometimes create myself — and if the original review objected to that, I must come to *Ysgarth*'s defense; backgrounds don't have to be suitable for the moral and social guidance of six-year-olds.

In summation, although Dave Nalle has a real gripe or two, I must disagree with his thesis that *Ysgarth* "is a simple and consistent system, which achieves maximum realism with minimal mechanics." That's not a recognizable description! The rules are consistent, and that's all. Dave Nalle's skill as a gamemaster compensates for rule flaws as far as the other signatories of his letter are concerned, but can not do so for all players of the game.

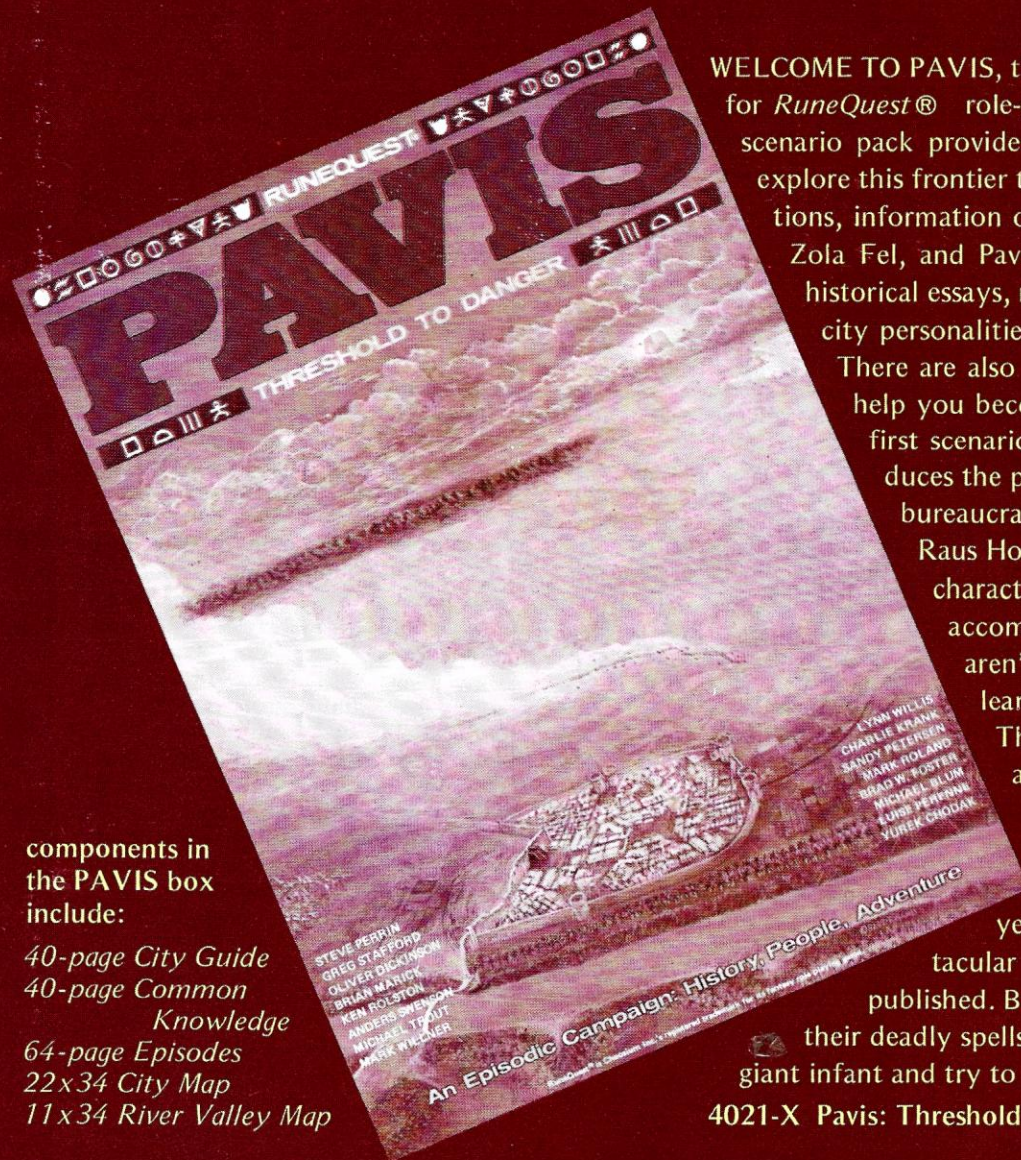
Ian L. Straus  
Austin, TX

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