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No foolin’

It wasn’t until the last hour before dead-line that I settled on the subject for this column. Actually, Roger decided it for me while he was putting down the type to finish page 93.

“Not much of an April Fool’s issue, is it?” he said.

No, it sure isn’t. We didn’t have room to include any “foolish” material in this issue, like we have in April issues past, and that’s bad news enough all by itself. (Well, we enjoyed it, anyway . . .)

Speaking of bad news, you ain’t heard nothin’ yet. After three years, Phil Foglio has decided to give himself some time away from the rigors of chronicling Phil & Dixie. The last installment of “What’s New” is in this issue, and that’s reason number two why we’re not in an April fooling mood this year. But maybe it’s fitting that we didn’t upstage Phil & Dixie in their last appearance by using a lot of other funny stuff in the magazine. Most of the jokes in this issue are brought to you by Phil Foglio, and he uses his three pages very well.

With pride in one eye and a bit of a tear welling up in the other, we present in this issue of DRAGON® Magazine the first edition of the ARES™ Science Fiction Gaming Section. We’re proud of what we’re going to be doing from now on to serve the SF gaming public, but at the same time we’re going to miss ARES Magazine just as much as its readers will. Maybe in a month or two, when the memories dim and the space opens up a bit, we’ll bring in our freelance leprechauns to slap together some “foolish” pages. (Some of the stuff we’ve collected is too good to hold onto until next April.) But right now, we just don’t feel like foolin’.
A rare peryton?

Dear Dragon,

In the February issue (#82), I quickly turned to page 10 for the article on perytons. Somehow, the picture just didn’t look right, and on page 28 of the Monster Manual it states that, “its claws...” The picture on page 10 showed hooves, not claws. That would be a rare specimen indeed!

Peter Delaney
Kingston, N.Y.

Maybe not as rare as you think, Peter. When we researched the peryton for that “ecology” presentation, we had a hard time finding information on what this semi-legendary beast looked like. The illustration is based on a passage in “The Book of Imaginary Beings” by Jorge Luis Borges, where that author quotes an unnamed Greek scholar who had this to say about the peryton’s appearance: “The Perytions had their original dwelling in Atlantis and are half deer, half bird. They have the deer’s head and legs. As for its body, it is perfectly avian, with corresponding wings and plumage. . . .”

And that’s where the hooves came from. We decided to go with the unnamed Greek instead of the Monster Manual for three reasons: (1) the “deer’s legs” make for a creature that’s even more bizarre-looking than the one in the Monster Manual; (2) the peryton doesn’t make any appreciable use of its claws anyway (no attacks), so they might as well be hooves if that’s what the Greek says they are; and (3) we just wanted to see if someone would notice.

So, if we assume that the peryton in the AD&D™ game is derived from the Peryton of Greek legend, maybe most perytons should have hooves, and perhaps the one pictured in the Monster Manual is the rare one.

That’s the idea!

Dear Editor,

In issue #82 you had an article called “Enhancing the Enchanter.” In it, an amulet made from a wyvern horn which could detect magic was discussed. Although the amulet was for Dragonquest, I was wondering if the same amulet could be applied in AD&D play; and, if so, what would its restrictions be?

Seth Walther
Marietta, Ohio

Seth, you’ve got the right idea. There’s no reason why a wyvern-horn amulet can’t exist in an AD&D™ universe — and no reason why you can’t make the fairly simple adaptation from DRAGONQUEST™ game terminology into terms used in the AD&D rules. You’ll need a wyvern horn (do wyverns in the AD&D rules have horns? Oh, well . . .) and some kind of powerful magic (enchant an item, wish), and you’ll end up with an amulet that can detect magic in essentially the same ways that the version in the article does. Restrictions? Nothing to worry about, as long as the new amulet is not so over-powerful that it unbalances the game in favor of a character who wears one.

This simple conversion works not only for objects described in DRAGON® magazine articles, but also for procedures and concepts that just happen to be written in the “language” of a certain game. Don’t be turned off by an article that seems to be about a game you don’t play — sure, the words in the article are about that “other” game, but the ideas behind those words may hit you right between the ears if you give ‘em a chance.

Sleeping damage?

Dear Dragon,

I have a question about “Taking the sting out of poison” (issue #82). The run-time for sleep gas was printed “1hp/rd.” Is this to imply that the victim takes damage as well as falling asleep, or was this merely a misprint? (All other sleep poison had a run time of 1 round). Also, was contact sleep poison excluded for a reason?

Brian Dvoretz
Smithtown, N.Y.

The run-time figure for sleep gas should be simply “1 round,” like all the other sleep poisons in the article. The mistake crept into Chris Landsea’s original manuscript while he was meticulously typing out the poison gas table, and never crept back out. I can imagine a special kind of sleep poison that also does damage, but that wasn’t within the scope of the article, and we didn’t mean to give anyone the impression that “sleeping damage” is possible.

I haven’t checked with Chris to find out why he didn’t include contact sleep poison, but I assume the omission was intentional. Maybe the chemists and alchemists of the AD&D world (Chris Landsea’s version, at least) just don’t know how to make such stuff — and maybe the world is better off because of that.

No limb to stand on

Dear Editor:

I’ve been playing D&D and AD&D for six years and have been reading DRAGON for almost as long (since issue #38). Since then, Out on a Limb has dried up. In the beginning there was light — the anti-Monty Hall campaign. After a while, though, everyone’s eyes got sore. One can only read so much on the pros and cons of butchering gods. Finally a voice from the bowels of DRAGON yelled “Enough!” and that was it. The light, so to speak, got boring. . . .

However, all semblance of controversy has died since then. Letters like “I liked” or “I didn’t like” or “Where can I get issue # . . .” are actually
quite dull. This reflects an essence of difference from campaign to campaign. This is to be expected, and all of them are right in their own way. Differences in game theory are far more interesting (while, granted, also next to unsolvable) if for no other reason than it keeps you on your toes. John Stuart Mill, in his essay On Liberty, wrote that opposing views are necessary for three reasons:

1. Correct views block out incorrect ones.
2. No "truth" is complete. Opposing views weed the smaller untruths out of the overall "truth."
3. A correct view is stabilized and strengthened by being challenged.

"Now," you may say, "we show you The Forum, our new column where our readers can get things off their chests." But isn't that what Out on a Limb was meant to be for? Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know, but it seems something is lost somewhere; in the last issue, only one person went Out on a Limb (and I think you were a little rough on him, though I agree with you). Everyone else asked very safe (and by now redundant) questions. I think (and it pains me immensely to say this) that Out on a Limb has outlived its usefulness.

If you won't ditch it altogether, at least shorten it and call it something more appropriate . . . like "Letters." — Ken Marshall

Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Like the letter writer says himself, everybody is "right in their own way" And Ken's observations are basically valid; on the points where we seem to disagree, I think he may simply be failing to see the forest for the trees, and he's a little too preoccupied with nomenclature.

No, "Out on a Limb" isn't what it used to be. It changed because our outlook of the magazine changed, and because our readership has changed drastically since the halcyon days of issue #38. In order to devote as much space as possible to feature articles, we shortened up on the space we allocate for letters to the editor. We stopped (for the most part) printing lengthy letters, with sometimes even lengthier responses, because they used up too much of that precious space too fast.

At the same time, we saw an even greater need for a way that our readers could get answers — clarifications on the wording of an article; the straightening out of a mistake; sometimes a statement of policy — that would help them understand and appreciate the product they're paying for. "Out on a Limb," as our only vehicle for publishing letters to the editor, began to serve this new purpose. If some of the questions and answers we print seem obvious or redundant to you old-timers, try to have patience. - The number of people who read DRAGON Magazine has multiplied by three or four since issue #38, and to that not-so-silent majority, their questions are new, and the answers are, too.

Now, finally we've re-committed some space to the sort of thing we used to put in "Out on a Limb," and in less than original fashion we're calling it The Forums. I would have thought that people like Ken would applaud The Forum; instead, he seems upset because the column for readers' opinions isn't called out on a Limb any more. To that, I have two things to say: First, don't think in terms of what it's called — think in terms of what it is, and try to realize that the old "Out on a Limb" isn't gone after all; it's back, after an absence, under another name. Second, we might just solve the whole problem anyway by changing the names of both of our letters columns. Any suggestions? — KM

Map mistakes

Dear Editor,

I have found an error in "Barnacus: City in Peril" (#80). The text states that there are three tailor shops — 54, 55, and 56. No problem, except that on the map of the city there are four tailor shops — two 54's, a 55, and a 56.

Ken Bender

Townville, Pa.

Dear Dragon,

In "The Ruins of Andril" (issue #81), the maps do not contain a room #38 but the text refers to it. Where is room #38?

Danny Russell

Russell, Ky.

Okay . . . Ken, remove the "54" from the building on the east side of the river (turning it into a residence, or whatever else you want), and now Barnacus is back to three tailor shops. And while you're at it, take out the extra spice merchant (#61) that seems to have set up shop on the east side of the river.

Danny, put a "38" in the chamber right in the middle of the fourth level map on page 54. This room connects the fourth level to the rest of the complex by way of the shaft leading up to the floor of room 37. — KM

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After reading all the letters and articles about other planes that have been appearing in DRAGON recently, I'd like to put in my own two cents:

Having the elemental planes as physical locations where characters can travel and adventure is all very nice for gaming purposes, but a little serious thought shows how flawed it is. Elemental planes should be abstract, all-pervading fields, not places to go and kill creatures. It's all a matter of mechanics: Is there any way to structure the elemental planes so that they make sense? They are obviously not organized in a literal “ring” (as in the Players Handbook) or square (as in Gary Gygax’s new method). These forms are just variations of the planes’ relationships to each other.

This is all very easy to deal with. However, now that we know what the planes are not, what are they? Well, the elemental planes are obviously meant to be vast spaces of infinite substances, extending in all directions and with no real boundaries. It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries). It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries). It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries). It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries). It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries). It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond boundaries).

As far as my campaign is concerned, the elemental planes are abstract, intangible forces surrounding and permeating the Prime Material Plane. These elemental planes give the Prime Material Plane all of its substance, and the Prime Material Plane provides the bonding force which resolves the separate elements into distinct shapes. The elemental planes are non-existent in spatial terms. They are an abstract concept; there is no life on the planes themselves, and it is impossible to go there by any means.

DMs reading this can either use an abstract system like the one I have suggested, or they can take the ever-so-common escape route of saying that the construction of the planes is “beyond human comprehension” and therefore don’t have to make sense.

It would be wise to devote a major portion of the Forum to new ideas rather than criticism which is mostly superficial and based largely on personal opinion. Instead of hearing about what’s wrong with an article, let’s hear about new campaign ideas, magic items, and monsters. “Out on a Limb” seems naturally suited towards criticism, while The Forum could be used more productively as an idea exchange between Dungeon Masters and players. I encourage other readers who agree — or disagree — with my suggestion to write in.

I would like to discuss two items that may or may not be related, depending upon a particular point of view: DRAGON magazine and the GEN CON game convention. Assuming that they are related to a goodly degree, inasmuch as both are results of concentrated efforts of divisions of TSR, Inc., I’ll make my comments with that in mind.

I've attended the last four GEN CONs and have also read DRAGON during that same period. In that time, I have never understood why the magazine published, by TSR has virtually ignored any extensive follow-up of the game convention presented by TSR. (I seem to recall a photo and a small article concerning GEN CON XII, and I know you now publish the pre-registration schedule in the June issue.) With the exception of Kim Eastland’s fine follow-ups on the miniatures’ competition, there have been no articles of any depth that concern the last four GEN CONs. With the weight of subject matter that would be available from such an event, it baffles me as to why DRAGON has not plun-dered this treasure trove of game tournaments, seminars, exhibits, art shows, ad infinitum, and turned your magazine into a complete publica-
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Guidelines

If you’re interested in contributing an article to DRAGON® Magazine, the first thing you need is a copy of our guidelines for writers. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to “Writer’s guidelines” c/o DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147; and we’ll send you back a sheet with all the basic information you need to make sure your manuscript has the best possible chance of being accepted.

Your article, “Taking the sting out of poison” (issue #81), was fantastic, but there was one point not covered. It should be possible to drink a potion of healing or extra-healing to counteract poison already in the system as long as the onset time of the poison is less than the time it takes to find, drink, and have the potion take effect. In other words, feeding a potion to a dead adventurer won’t work.

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Woodbridge, Conn.

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Figures shown above are: 02-921 Non-Human Warrior-Thief (one of four); 02-922 Gnome (one of four); 02-923 Chimera; 02-924 Mage (also comes mounted).
A cast of strange familiars

M-U's best friend comes in many shapes and sizes

by Stephen Inniss

Experienced gamers usually regard additions to a game’s rules with suspicion — and rightly so. Such additions often make play more complicated and time-consuming, instead of improving the experience or making it more enjoyable. Those who have tinkered with the AD&D™ combat system can attest to this problem: Vexing new details start to bog down the game. At best, players wonder what happened to the adventure. At worst, they forget what the adventure was. But fortunately, for meddlers, there are some parts of the AD&D game system that can be improved with a relatively small investment of time.

One such part is the first level magic-user spell find familiar. The results of this spell can be very important, and once determined, they are frequently referred to. Because find familiar is usually cast very infrequently (sometimes only once per magic-user), a more detailed version can offer a real improvement without detracting from the adventure. Expansion and modification of this spell has merit in its own right, and — as is often the case in complex constructions like the AD&D game — the new information can enhance other parts of the game, too.

Like most fantasy role-playing material, the find familiar spell has its roots outside of the game system. Familiars played an important role in the wizardry of folklore, serving as sorcerer’s helpers, or advising people with strange talents. Though some familiars were invisible, most were, or took the shape of, small animals. In Europe, particularly in England, belief in familiars was common. The familiar was attributed to witches, thereby earning an evil reputation. Elsewhere, the view of familiars was less negative. Siberian shamans, for example, were said to employ familiars as guards and guides to the spirit world.

Not only folklore has influenced the game; familiars are popular in fantasy literature as well. In recent works, one need only think of the mage Ged’s otak (little monkeylike creature) in Ursula K. LeGuin’s A Wizard of Earthsea, or the unpleasant companion in Fritz Leiber’s short story “Ill Met in Lankhmar.”

But if folklore and fantasy literature inspired the find familiar spell, then they didn’t provide enough inspiration. Rules for the spell are incomplete and unbalanced. They are incomplete in that the possibilities for normal animal familiars are restricted to a few European creatures without even encompassing the folk beliefs of that continent. It seems to be assumed that a familiar will be summoned near human habitation (where else are black cats found?) and in a temperate climate with Old World fauna. But what if a magic-user summons a familiar in a tropical rain forest, on a small island, or in the arctic? The unimaginative response would be to restrict or eliminate the chance of success. But this seems dull when there might be so many other possibilities. A number of real-world animals would make good familiars in an AD&D setting, and many of these beasts were once actually believed to serve as familiars.

The menagerie described below expands and modifies the group of official AD&D familiars. You may want to make further changes for your campaign, but before you use or alter this material, you should understand how the animals below were chosen. Subjects taken into account include: armor class and hit points, size and combat prowess, adaptability, appearance and reputation, and commonness.

Creatures that deviate sharply from the standard familiar’s armor class of 7 and the standard hit point range of 2-4 (the statistics given with the spell) have been eliminated from the selection below. Some flexibility regarding these statistics is necessary, however. As the spell stands, a lowly toad familiar becomes harder to hit than many humans, and just as powerful as a hawk familiar. We can “justify” this increase in power by assuming the toad gained more ability when it became a familiar. A change for the better is acceptable. A change for the worse, however, seems unlikely. No animal should become weaker as a familiar than it was as a normal animal. The cat, for instance, now has statistics in Monster Manual II which give it a better armor class than 7. Since it is unlikely that only crippled, deficient felines respond to the find familiar spell, the cat — and other animals like it — does not take a cut in AC when it becomes a familiar. An effort has been made, however, to not stretch the original spell beyond reason, so nothing smaller than a toad or more powerful than a cat has been allowed. After all, find familiar is only a first level spell.

Restricting armor class ratings becomes easier when one accepts that familiars are by nature small animals. In the AD&D game, familiars should be no bigger or heavier than a very large cat (16 pounds maximum). There are a number of good reasons for this. Most, if not all, traditional familiars are small, and so are all of the official familiars. Small size is useful to a creature that serves as a guard, scout, and spy (as described in the Players Handbook). Small animals are more easily concealed in dangerous situations, and they’re easier to carry if incapacitated; this becomes increasingly important as their masters rise in level, meeting greater hazards.

Small size may disappoint the sorcerer in search of brawn, but familiars aren’t meant to be bodyguards. None of the normal familiars should be more lethal in combat than, say, a hawk. Certainly, venomous animals are inadmissible. The already great range in offensive capability within the group should not be increased. In any case, a physically powerful companion that serves as a magic-user’s bodyguard would be redundant. Fighters are already a well established part of the game.

Though they needn’t be combat-hardy, familiars should be otherwise adaptable and robust. Without excessive protection and preparation, familiars should be able to go wherever adventurers go: through arctic snowfields, on board ships, across tropic deserts, and into deep, dark caverns. They should be able to survive on simple, prepared rations, or be able to forage for themselves in most places. In general, their requirements should be rather similar to those of humans. The familiar’s existence shouldn’t be dependent on maintaining wet skin, for instance, or on anything else equally unreasonable.

Perhaps the most important consideration in choosing a new familiar is its appearance and reputation. A creature that sometimes serves as a companion of wizards in fable or fantasy is usually fit for that role in the AD&D game. Failing a reputation as a familiar, the animal should look like it might be found in the company of magic-users. It should be arcane, unusual, and mysterious, or have a bad or uncertain reputation (deserved or not), just as magic does. Nocturnal or darkly colored animals are ideal.

Lastly, animals that are very rare or not well known are not included. Besides requiring excess explanation, many rare animals resemble more common species, so they would simply lengthen an already extensive catalog. Any name given here appears in an ordinary dictionary.

The table on the next page can be used for random determination of familiars — just roll 2d20 when the spell is cast successfully. (The official spell has a 25% failure rate, expressed as “no familiar in range,” so check for this failure first.) If a familiar inappropriate to the locale is rolled, check the creature descriptions that follow to see...
Movement and damage
The movement rates and damage values in the table were developed with an eye toward conformity with the AD&D system rather than with the real world. Reducing an animal’s movement rate to a single number inevitably involves judgment, since sprints and endurance are not taken into account. Determining damage per attack is likewise subjective, so the given values need a word of explanation.

The amount of damage done by a small animal’s attack creates a problem. On one hand, even the smallest teeth or claws should undeniably cause some damage, and the AD&D world is one in which halflings can cut down storm giants. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine an animal as small as a weasel seriously harming a human. The combat system is scaled to human sizes, so that one point of damage is considerable. Many ordinary humans have only one hit point between themselves and death. There are a number of ways in which the damage done by small animals could be realistically quantified in the AD&D game; unfortunately, they all involve an increase in complexity that defeats the purpose of a system designed more for ease of play than realism. Critical hits, fractions of hit points, damage varying with the size of the opponent — all of these are unacceptable, so when damage occurs, the minimum amount is one hit point.

Giving a small animal the ability to inflict even one hit point of damage can lead to all sorts of absurdities. In TSR’s module S4, The Lost Caverns of Ts instead, ordinary bats can bite for a single point of damage. Since most bats weigh less than a pound, and their teeth measure a fraction of an inch, these “super-bats” hardly approximate reality. If such ordinary (but dangerous) creatures commonly exist in the AD&D world, one can’t help wondering how an ordinary peasant survives. Statistics in the table above make familiars a good deal more dangerous than their real-world equivalents. This can be explained by the familiar’s abnormal intelligence, and their ability to attack with greater ferocity and cunning than ordinary animals of their type. Less exceptional animals should not inflict this much damage; for ordinary animals, scale the damage down by 1 point. Otherwise, clerics or druids who can conjure or summon animals will be too powerful. I recommend the unmodified values, however, for animals that are extraordinary — the results of a reincarnate spell, for instance, or of a druid’s shape-changing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Senses</th>
<th>AC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bat, large</td>
<td>1”/18”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>1/2/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cat, domestic</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cat, wild</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Civet</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Coati</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td>6”/15”</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>wide angle vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>1”/36”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>wide angle vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>good night vision, olfactory, and hearing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fisher</td>
<td>9”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>superior hearing, vision</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gull</td>
<td>6”/24”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>sharp, wide angle vision</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>21”</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>good wide angle vision, good hearing and olfactory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hawk, large</td>
<td>1”/33”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>very sharp vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hawk, medium</td>
<td>1”/35”</td>
<td>1 pt</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>very sharp vision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By necessity, a large gap in attack power exists between those animals that inflict a point of damage and those unable to do even that (with damage figures of “nil”). The gap can be narrowed if the DM considers that an attack might not be entirely without effect in game terms, even if it does no “damage.” With their abnormal intelligence, familiars could probably choose tender spots for their attacks, like noses, fingertips, and eyes. Such a hit would certainly disrupt spell casting and even hinder fighters (-1 to hit) unless they take some action to remove the annoyance. Those who try to ignore a small animal’s attack risk being tripped up, blinded, or thrown off balance. An opponent will find it difficult to concentrate even on physical activity with a rabbit hanging onto his thumb by its teeth, or an owl flapping in his face. However, animals that cause no “damage” cannot slay even a helpless opponent unless ample time is available. A hawk might kill a sleeping orc, but a hare couldn’t do significant damage before its victim awoke.

Sensory abilities
These powers are not quantified in the AD&D rules, but for the sake of comparison some attempt is made to do so here, since the magic-user receives sensory information from his or her familiar. These notes should also be useful if a druid chooses to shape-change into one of these forms to pick up extra information.

Hearing is described as either good (significantly better than human) or superior (the kind of hearing that locates the slightest sound at 50 paces). The ratings are a generalization, taking into account sensitivity,
audible frequency range, and ability to locate direction. Animals with good hearing have a 10 to 20 percent better chance of locating invisible or hidden creatures (based on hearing alone, when it applies) than creatures with normal hearing — depending, of course, on conditions. Those with superior hearing will be about twice as good.

Animals with olfactory (smelling) abilities above the human norm should have the same improved chances of noting hidden enemies as those with good hearing, depending on circumstances and on how good they are at identifying scents. In addition, those with a good sense of smell can track about half as well as a ranger. Those with superior capability can track equally as well as a ranger. The conditions under which tracking is possible, and any information gained by tracking, will of course differ for familiars and rangers, according to their physical and mental capabilities.

Visual ability involves several different aspects. All animals generally have wider fields of vision than humans, but where this is especially so it has been noted. Such animals should be harder to sneak up on, negating surprise in some situations. Color vision is present only in diurnal animals, and as a general rule, diurnal animals that are active only in dim light do not see color well, if at all. Animals that see well in poor light also tend to have poor acuity, since sharpness of vision and sensitivity to light are opposed to one another. This means that animals with sharp vision will have poorer-than-human night sight. In addition, animals with night vision will not see as clearly as a human in good light. Those animals with night vision can see either one (good) or two (superior) classes better than human on the following scale: daylight, twilight, full moon, half moon, starlight, and cloudy with no moon. By this rough measure, an owl (superior) sees as clearly under a full moon as a human does by day. Remember that there must be at least some light for night vision to be effective.

If any of an animal’s sensory capabilities are not mentioned in the table, it is safe to assume that the creature in question has a performance poorer or no better a human’s in that area.

Familiar descriptions

Many of the animals named in the table represent a broad group. Even if you have knowledge of the animal that’s listed, you should check the description to see what other animals may be included.

Bats are usually some shade of brown, though they may be black or have a red or yellow tinge to their fur. Five percent of those summoned to be familiars are albinos as the spell preferentially selects them.

Most bats are able to navigate by sound — an ability known as echolocation. They produce high-pitched squeaks (or sometimes clicks) that are reflected from their surroundings, creating a fairly detailed and accurate picture of the world about them. In game terms, this ability functions in a 60’ radius. Although it’s not entirely logical, echolocation should not give bats an extra chance of recognizing visual illusions for what they are. The AD&D game does not allow creatures with infravision a bonus for noticing whether an illusion radiates heat, so it must be assumed that an animal with echolocation likewise receives no bonus. In addition, note that a bat’s echolocation is directional, so it is possible to sneak up behind a bat.

Bats that are summoned as familiars come in two sizes, according to mode of life. The smaller bats have bodies ranging from mouse-sized to rat-sized, though they look bigger with their wings fully spread. They are found in any climate that is temperate or warmer. The larger type of bat is found in the tropics, has a wingspan of about five feet, and may weigh up to two pounds.

CIVET: The animals in this category are tropical and subtropical carnivores that look somewhat like a cross between a cat and a weasel, with the cat predominant. They are about cat-sized, and colored much as wild cats are: with spots and stripes, or vague cloudy markings. The category includes genets, which differ from civets in that they lack scent glands and are sometimes tamed and used as mousers. In general, civets are
Fishers can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers.

quite wild and shy and will not be common near human habitations. When this result is rolled for a familiar, a genet will be summoned 100% of the time in a town or city, 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, and 10% of the time in any other area. Otherwise, the resultant familiar will be a civet.

All of these animals can climb well, though their claws are not as sharp and fully retractile as a cat’s. They are less carnivorous than cats, but thrive on meat. Once a week civets (not including genets) can exude a foul musk that has the same effect on those nearby as a troglodyte’s odor (see the Monster Manual).

CROW: This category covers most of the medium-sized birds of the genus Corvus, including common crows, fish crows, carrion crows, rooks, and so on — but not ravens. Crows are found in any climate from subarctic to tropical, in all but the most barren of wastelands. They do not fear human habitations. They measure about 1½ feet from beak to tip of tailfeathers. Crows are black, sometimes with white markings. They are good mimics, and as familiars they can convey messages of three words or less, though they can in no way speak coherently or understand language without magical aid. Crows do well on a varied diet much like that of humans, though they enjoy insects a good deal more. They are class A fliers. During daylight conditions, they are never surprised. If a crow’s hit succeeds, it may (10% chance) blind the opponent’s eye.

DOG: In inhabited areas, the summoned dog is one of the smaller sorts — a skinny mongrel with wary eyes, the “thievish” dog of early classifications that by its appearance supports the theory that domestic dogs carry a strain of jackal. In tropical and subtropical areas away from human habitation, the animal summoned will be a true wild dog of appropriate size. Dogs will not be found outside tropical and subtropical areas unless human dwellings are nearby.

Dogs of domestic origin will be black, pied, or brown with a yellow or reddish tint. Wild dogs will be brindled or plain in pattern. Those summoned to be familiars will be the size of a large fox or small jackal, but with more powerful jaws. In packs they can bring down deer, but these dogs take small game as a general rule. Wild or domestic, dogs will eat nearly anything, though they prefer ripe meat.

FISHER: This category encompasses all of the larger weasel-like animals, including the fisher, plus the larger martens and the mongooses. All are similar in habits and appearance, though they aren’t close

Cock: This term identifies a male bird of the group of pheasants and pheasant-like birds that includes the common chicken. These birds are found in any temperate to tropical area that offers cover. Those summoned to be familiars will be about the size of an ordinary pheasant, and jet black. If domestic birds are summoned, they will represent one of the smaller, more agile breeds, such as the bantam. Always in towns and cities, and 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, the summoned cock familiar will be domestic.

All of these birds are class C fliers and haven’t much endurance (four rounds of flight at most). They are omnivores, but greens and grains make up the bulk of their diet.

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relatives. The fisher family described here inhabits all climates but the arctic, preferring to avoid dense settlements. Mongooses are predominantly found in tropical and subtropical areas, while the others inhabit cooler climates.

All of these animals tip the scale at 2-16 pounds. They measure 2-4 feet in length. The animals can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers. Although these families are skilled at flying long distances over water, they are not particularly agile (class C fliers).

FOX: When a fox becomes a familiar, in temperate climates it is usually of the common red fox variety. Still, foxes can be found everywhere, even in the high arctic. Color of coat and shape of ears and face may vary, but all foxes weigh between 4 and 15 pounds, although their long fur and tails sometimes give them ahefrier, appearance.

Foxes are swift and canny in the hunt, whether the pursuer or the pursued. They have been known to outrun wolves, and few other carnivores can match their endurance. A surprisingly good climbing ability complements their speed. Foxes eat meat and insects primarily, but they will accept some vegetable matter. Like dogs, they seem to prefer a well-rotted meal.

GULL: Birds of this sort that respond to the *find familiar* spell are not the ordinary beachgoers; they’re black. In arctic waters, the summoned bird will be the dark, gull-like skua. Gull familiars always represent the larger birds in their family; small gulls, like those resembling terns, will not be summoned. Gull familiars have wingspans of 4 to ½ feet, and measure 1½ to 2 feet from beak to tail. Birds matching this description exist worldwide, inhabiting areas within 50 miles of any coastline and near any large inland body of water.

Although these families are skilled at flying long distances over water, they are not particularly agile (class C fliers). Gulls can swim, but only on the water’s surface. They eat anything from worms and turnips to carrion and snails, but their favorite entree is fish.

HARE: The hare, with its reputation for sly tricks, is not uncommonly thought to have magical properties. Those summoned by a magic-user are black in color, and abnormally large. Hares are lankier and leggier than rabbits. They can mustering impressive speed over short distances, and perform prodigious leaps (up to 20') at need. The animals have no effective means of attack. They can survive on nearly any sort of vegetable matter, including the juicy parts of bark and twigs. They inhabit the lands from the arctic to the tropics, but they do not live in heavy forests. Their ears are abnormally large, not for collecting sound, but for radiating body heat — a necessary function, because the animals do not sweat or pant.

HAWK: The hawk family, as used here, covers the daytime raptors, from large soaring hawks to comparatively puny sparrows. For game purposes, the birds are classified in three groups according to size. The first class, covering the largest birds, includes the soaring hawks known as buteos or buzzards, plus the largest falcons. The second class, for midsized birds, covers falcons such as the peregrine, plus smaller buteos, and midsized accipiters such as the cooper’s hawk. Larger kites also qualify for the midsized class. The third class, for the smallest birds, includes the small kites and accipiters, as well as the smallest falcons.

The hawk group’s habitat covers the world over, although some restrictions apply. In subtropical and tropical areas, half of the small and midsize hawks are kites. In arctic areas, only the two larger classifications are present.

All hawks usually have gray or brown feathers combined with white. Darker markings are predominant. Kites are generally white. Large hawks are class B fliers; midsized and small hawks are class A. When diving, all hawks are +2 to hit, and are considered charging for game purposes, thus risking a nasty death should an intended victim manage to break the bird’s dive with his spearpont. To make a dive, the hawk must...
have at least 60' of clearance above the target. If this space is available, all hawks can dive to inflict an extra point of damage with each of their talons, but they cannot strike with their beaks at the end of a dive.

To capture prey, hawks use their speed and keen sight. Their prey ranges from rabbits and pheasants to insects. If an attacker’s eyes are unprotected, a beak attack has a 15% chance of blinding one eye. As familiars, they take meat, preferably fresh, for their ration. Hawks are never surprised.

KINKAJOU: These are nocturnal and arboreal animals related to the raccoon. They inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. Although they move slowly on the ground, these animals are good climbers, and they are native only to wooded areas. With their plush brown fur, nimble paws, and prehensile tails, kinkajous seem rather like monkeys. But though their hand-like paws can manipulate objects, they do not exhibit the dexterity most monkeys do. Kinkajous are omnivores. They favor fruit and insects, but familiars also like meat.

LIZARD: The many types of lizards that are suited for life as a familiar are divided into two categories by size: large (3-16 pounds) and small (2 pounds or less — still a respectable size). Large lizards are limited to tropical areas. Small lizards also inhabit subtropical climates.

Large lizards are typically long and slender, and they can move quite rapidly for a reptile. These athletic lizards can sprint at 15” for up to 2 rounds, and they swim well. This group includes the monitor lizards and those which resemble them. If they score a hit with their jaws, they can bring their claws into play, and if they consequently score a strike, they’ll do a further point of damage. In forested areas, a large chameleon (though this animal is not usually considered part of the lizard group) will respond to the summoning 25% of the time. A chameleon moves no faster than 3”, but in natural surroundings it can camouflage itself as well as a pseudodragon does (80% chance of success). Chameleons are good climbers, but slow at it. Large lizards vary in length from 2-4 feet, depending on build and overall weight. They take prey as small as a mouse and as large as a dove, and they will not eat carrion.

Lizards belonging to the smaller category are 1 foot or more in length; if on the shorter side, they are of great girth. Their appearance varies according to their environment, but all are grotesque in form. In tropical areas, half of the small lizards summoned will be abnormally large geckos — nocturnal lizards with very good night vision. Geckos can ascend or descend any surface rougher than polished glass without difficulty. In tropical forested areas, 25% of the respondents to a ‘find familiar’ summons will be chameleons, with all the qualities of their larger brothers as described above.

Small lizards eat anything from large insects to mice. They can be fed lean meat.

MONKEY: The family of monkeys includes all primates of a size that’s suitable for familiars. There are two categories: small, including those of squirrel-size or smaller, weighing 2 pounds or less, and large, which weigh up to 16 pounds. The sorts of monkeys that become familiars only inhabit the tropics.

Small monkeys include marmosets, squirrel monkeys, diurnal lemurs, and the like. Half of those summoned will be nocturnal, e.g. galagos, tarsiers, and small night monkeys. These animals cannot distinguish colors, but make up for it with good night vision. All small monkeys are expert climbers and leapers.

Large monkeys include some of the bigger lemurs, small langurs, and others of similar size. Capu chin monkeys, known for their work with organ-grinders, typify this group. Macaques, baboons, and gibbons are too large to serve as familiars. Of the large monkeys, 15% are nocturnal.

A magic-user who summons a monkey has gained an extra pair of hands — two pairs, if you count the feet. But monkeys are not as proficient at manual tasks as humans are. Such an ability requires mental as well as physical skill, so although monkeys might learn to handle simple switches and latches, they cannot wield tools or weapons efficiently, even if an attempt is made to train them.

Monkeys that are summoned to be familiars are primarily omnivores; some of the smaller ones are insectivores. All can be fed fruit, nuts, vegetables, and some meat.

OTTER: Otters live wherever water supports fish and crustaceans — in streams, lakes, and swamps, and at seashores. Native climates range from subarctic to tropical. Otters are good swimmers, and can remain underwater for up to 7 rounds, 5 when active. In most respects, otters resemble their close relatives, the fishers and the weasels. Any characteristics described for the fishers also apply to the otter, except for

The appearance of small lizards varies according to their environment, but all are grotesque in form.
climbing ability. (Otters can’t climb.) Although otters can grow very large, otter familiars never exceed 16 pounds in weight. Otters prefer crustaceans to fish, but they do well on any meat diet.

OWL: For game purposes, owls fall into three size categories. The largest birds grow to the size of a great horned owl, mid-sized owls are as big as barn owls, and small owls are no larger than a screech owl. Owls live in all climates and on all sorts of terrain, except for small owls, which never inhabit the arctic.

Most owls hunt at night, but in arctic, subarctic, and open areas, 30% of the owls are diurnal. Diurnal owls possess the same sensory powers as hawks.

No owl has a good sense of smell. In fact, owls are so insensitive to odors that they will hunt skunks. In the AD&D game, not even a troglodyte’s odor affects an owl.

Owls have yellow or green eyes and feathers of somber colors. Some arctic owls are an exception, having bright white feathers with black markings. Owls are class B fliers, but they are swift and especially agile, able to move in complete silence. Their feathers are soft, and can muffle the sounds of flight.

PARROT: A bird of this sort that serves as a familiar is neither brightly colored nor delicate. Instead, these are the more somber birds of their kind: black macaws, African gray parrots, or the kea of New Zealand, for example. They only inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. As class B fliers, parrots maneuver with fair ability, but exhibit no exceptional talent. They climb well, however, using beak and claws. The arrangement of their toes enables them to handle objects. As familiars, they can “speak” as crows do. They will eat fruit and nuts, as well as some meat. Those with a predatory tendency relish fat, and at least one parrot, the kea, is said to attack young and helpless sheep.

RACCOON: These animals need no introduction to those living in the Americas, where they are found in all climates and terrains that are warmer than subarctic. Tropical raccoons look thinner than their northern kin, but the difference is mostly fur. Although these little, bear-like creatures may weigh up to 50 pounds as adults, some full-grown specimens weigh as little as 3 pounds. Those summoned to be familiars will be no heavier than 16 pounds. Raccoons are good swimmers and climbers. Their dexterous paws can handle simple latches, buttons, and handles, though not as well as a monkey’s hands would. Raccoons welcome a wide range of foods, a fact of which most farmers are well aware.

RAT: Rats and their rat-like cousins, including a few species of opossum, live everywhere except in some areas with arctic climates; they’ll even invade these if a per-

manent human settlement exists there. Rat familiars are large, but they do not approach the size of the giant rats from the Monster Manual, which seem to be as large as a small to mid-sized dog (according to the damage they do).

Rats are not especially fast, but they climb and swim very well. Given time, they can gnaw through ropes, cords, and even wooden barriers. They eat virtually everything, but treat new foods with suspicion. Of these, they’ll take nothing but the tiniest nibble. If afterwards they feel ill, they’ll avoid anything with the same or a similar taste. The rat’s famed ability to avoid poisons stems from its habits and its good sense of smell.

A rat bite has a 10% chance of infecting the victim with a serious disease, unless a save vs. poison is made.

RAVEN: These are large members of the crow family. They can be found nearly everywhere, though they tend to avoid populated areas. They are usually gray or black, and have the same vocal talents as common crows. Ravens are largely predatory, but as omnivores, they’ll eat whatever is available. Farmers commonly accuse them of harassing or killing livestock, and they are well known for following armies. (Dead soldiers make good meals.) Like crows, ravens are never surprised in lighted conditions, and a hit by a raven’s beak has a 10% chance of blinding an eye.

SKUNK: These animals are common in temperate to tropical regions. Those that become familiars are the size of a small cat, but they have weaker jaws than a cat. Their fur is black with white markings. According to Monster Manual II, skunks can release a 1” x 1” x 1” stinking cloud of musk, which requires all victims in range to make a saving throw vs. poison. Those who succeed must retreat immediately or be considered to have failed the save. Those who fail will be nauseated for 1-4 rounds and must retreat and rest. Each must also save again vs. poison or also be blinded for 1-4 rounds. Normal clothing that contacts the musk must be burned or buried. Flesh, leather, metal, etc., must be washed repeatedly for several days to remove the stench. (Vinegar cuts the smell in 2-3 washings.) Skunks are omnivores, and particularly relish insects.

SNAKE: Snakes that become familiars are not the average grass snake or garter snake; they’re large serpents up to five feet long. These snakes inhabit temperate to...
tropical areas and are typically small boas or pythons, although large individuals of other species may be found. Snakes can maintain top speed over very difficult terrain, and they’re good climbers and swimmers. None of the snake familiars are venomous, but all are predatory. They generally eat such things as rats and frogs, though as familiars they will accept raw meat. Once transformed to familiars, these snakes are immune to common clerical spells that affect their kind.

SQUIRREL: Squirrel familiars are large, black, and always tree-dwellers. They inhabit any area with trees. Squirrels are swift for their size and can ascend or descend rough wooden surfaces easily. They are excellent climbers and leapers. Like rats, they can gnaw through most organic materials. Squirrels eat fruit, nuts, grain, and sometimes insects.

TOAD: The lowly toad is found in any climate but arctic and subarctic, and it will even inhabit desert areas, though this is uncommon. Toad familiars are 6 or more inches long and almost as wide. The largest weigh a pound or more. Toads are usually covered with bumps and tubercles known as “warts,” and though most have a drab appearance, some of the tropical species are colorful. Toads can hop up to 7', swim well, and remain underwater almost indefinitely if they must. They eat insects, but larger

WEASEL: “Weasel” is broadly used here, as was “fisher” previously. That is, several animals are grouped under this heading for game purposes. In subarctic to subtropical climates, the family includes weasels and their similar-sized kin: stoats, ferrets, polecats, mink, and all the rest. In tropical areas, the term applies to the smaller members of the mongoose clan. Members of this expanded weasel family even inhabit cities, where they may be kept as ratters. The ferret, in fact, is a domestic species. All “weasels” measure only 1 or 2 feet in length, tail included, but they are a penchant for attacking an opponent’s throat. Except as mentioned here, they resemble their larger relatives, the fishers.

Adding new familiars

The preceding list of familiars includes most of the world’s contemporary animals that would make suitable familiars in the game. DMs may see fit to add completely imaginary creatures as well, using the animals above for comparison. Or DMs may modify the list to accommodate other environments in which AD&D characters may find themselves. For example, in the age of
animals above would not be present, but mammals of badger size and smaller were present throughout that era. Instead of bats, there would be flying reptiles, probably adapted to daytime flight. There might also be very small animals related to the dinosaurs — bipedal, with good day vision and rapid movement (15"), able to bite for up to 1-3 points of damage depending on size.

If your adventure takes place away from the Prime Material Plane, the normal animal-like inhabitants (if any) would probably be ill-adapted to an adventurer’s needs, even if they responded to a call. Natives of the elemental planes, for instance, would find conditions on the Prime Material Plane uncomfortable at best.

**Encumbrance**

Sometimes a familiar must be carried. Perhaps it is wounded or immobilized, or maybe its master simply wants to plant a rear lookout in his backpack. Whatever the reason, toting one’s familiar requires knowledge of its encumbrance value.

For the sake of simplicity, all small familiars are considered to have an “encumbrance value” of 100 gp when carried, medium and large-sized familiars 200. These values increase by 50% if the animal is “dead” weight. Included in these estimates are any special arrangements made for carrying the familiar. Weasels and the like can hide under a magician’s robes, but a cat is another matter. Certainly some sort of protection will be required to carry even the most cooperative of hawks — perhaps a leather guard like falconers use.

**Raining cats and coatis: falling damage**

All of the familiars in this article are small, so they should take little damage from a fall. This is because the strength of their bones and flesh is greater in proportion to their weight than in humans. In addition, a familiar’s body has a greater surface area in proportion to its weight. Therefore, it will reach terminal velocity — the point at which air resistance prevents a further increase in falling speed — much sooner than a human body.

The upshot of all these assertions is that a rat can probably survive a fall from the roof of a house (and may even be undamaged by the experience), but a man will take damage and might not survive — and a horse would almost certainly perish. Applying these laws to the AD&D system could prove tiresome, and more complicated than it’s worth. But since familiars are so important to magic-users, it’s only fair to give the matter some consideration. Small animals should receive 0-3 points of damage (1d4 -1) from a fall of 20 feet or less and another 1-3 points (1d6, rounded down) for each additional 20 feet, up to a maximum of 6d3.

**Intelligence and death**

Little consideration has been in this article given to what an animal gains by becoming a familiar. It’s been mentioned that some become harder in combat, but the animal may also gain intelligence. The *find familiar* spell states that animal familiars are “abnormally intelligent.” Even the most abnormally intelligent toad is a dull lump compared to a mouse, so it seems fair that all normal familiars be raised to a standard level of intelligence; otherwise, it will be a great disadvantage to have certain kinds of familiars. All familiars, then, gain an intelligence rating of 4 (the highest semi-intelligent rating), plus some limited ability to plan for the future as humans do. Such intelligence will be qualitatively different from that of humans and demi-humans, however; these animals will not be able to learn speech, not as a human would understand it, anyway.

The Players Handbook states that a magic-user loses twice the number of hit points possessed by his familiar if the familiar is ever “killed.” This is due to the tremendous shock caused by unnatural death — but when a familiar dies of old age, there is no penalty to the magic-user. Unfortunately for the familiar, the reverse is not true. When a magic-user dies, for whatever reason, the familiar attached to that magic-user dies, too. This explains why familiars are “absolutely faithful.” Indirectly causing or allowing a master to die means suicide for a familiar; therefore, the health and well-being of a familiar’s master should be the creature’s utmost concern.
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The ecology of the TRAPPER

by Ed Greenwood

"Yes, I can tell ye 'bout the Crushing Death — oh, I may not look like anything much now, boy, but in my day I was a fierce and bold sword-slinger, afore that beholder took off my arm, here . . . oh, yes, big it was, and strong, and we who went up against it just as foolish and headstrong and stuck-up-nosed as you and your friends are now. . . Ah, it's gold ye have fer me? Good, good . . . a respectable sum — and fer that ye'll have a respectable tale. Listen, then — and mind ye, this is as true as I know.

"The Crushing Death in yonder hole is nothing more than a gigantic trapper — yes, I see ye've heard of that name. Mind ye, this one is old, and big; it's been there fer twenty winters at least now, to my certain knowledge, and a lot I've seen go and try to kill it — but I've not seen 'em come out again. But never mind that fer now. I must be earnin' me gold, so listen:

"A trapper is a thin, flattish critter, big enough to cover the floor of a good-sized roomy. Its top, the part ye'll see first, looks and feels like stone, as though lots o' flags was laid down, with little ridges and lines just like the real thing. 'Tis tough an' horny, not real brittle like rock, an' some — dwarves 'n' stonecutters, mostly — can tell it's not stone when they hit it or try to take out a chip. Under its top layer it's a soft thing, somethin' like a jelly-fish, that can change shape and slide around to fill holes and lay on top o' rough ground, bones or such, so the top of the trapper seems to be flat and level, like the floor — until it's too late.

"Yep, they slide around, and that's how they move from place to place, but ye'll never see one move like that when it knows ye're around — they can feel when ye walk on 'em, but sometimes I think they know when ye're comin', too. Your trapper will lay still, jus' like a part of the floor, mebbe with a special little hump in the middle that looks like a box, or somethin' else it thinks you'd like, and when ye reach fer the box, it'll close up around ye an' squeeze ye jus' like yer hand squeezes a piece o' ripe fruit. So, keep a few staves and bars in hand, or ye'll have no room to use your weapons.

"What's that? . . . Well, I never heard o' someone findin' it in time — it can spread itself out almost as thin as parchment at the edges, so ye can't tell where the trapper stops and the real stone starts, unless ye get down an' take to chippin' an' pryin' at the edges, but then the thing'd just roll up around ye, an' it'd be all over . . . "

"When it takes victims, the trapper crushes 'em to death, twistin' around so's they can't move an' squeezin' the breath right out of 'em. Then somehow it gets the body an' other stuff from its topside to its underside, an' it eats what it wants an' keeps or leaves the stuff it can't eat. The thing forms its body around the stuff 'neath it, but stays flat an' hard on top, so ye can't tell the stuff is there by lookin' or walkin' across the trapper. If ye think ye're standin' on one, an' it hasn't made a move fer ye yet, stamp down hard an' jump about — the floor won't give, but ye might hear snappin' an' crackin' from underneath if the bones 'n' other stuff give way. Then ye better jump quick, or ye've had it!

"The trapper eats what it catches by oozin' out some kind o' burnin' fluid it makes inside itself, but this fluid only comes from the underside, so's when yer trapped at least ye don't have to worry 'bout that, too. If it gets on top o' ye, alive or dead, the fluid won't hurt right away, but don't let it in yer eyes — it can blind ye fer days if a lot gets in there. Back when I had me two good arms, I pulled a feller out from under the edge of one just in time. 'He was wet, but he had his eyes closed from bein' knocked out, and the fluid didn't have time to burn 'im. Don't try to save the stuff if ye manage to get some — when the thing's dead or when the fluid's taken out of it, somethin' goes with it, and no matter how ye mix it, or what ye pay your alchemist, the killer juice is just so much sewer-water.

"I seen somethin' more, too — somethin' ye don't hardly ever see, how a trapper makes little trappers. It don't mate, it just eats an' grows an' eats an' grows till it's too big. Then it splits into a lot of little trappers — I said I seen it, and I seen it, I tell ye! — and they all go off their different ways, to find new huntin' grounds. They kin hide, changin' color to match the ground they're on, till they find a good place . . . so, ye won't see one just comin' down the street, but if ye go in there, over yonder, an' poke around a bit inside that cavern, ye might not find the big one ye're lookin' for — but if ye see a little one, be sharp, 'cause there's
bound to be three or four more just' like it creepin' around hereabouts, an' not a cave or ruined hall'll be safe till they're all dead.

"Good luck to ye all — ye'll be needin' it soon, I think! And if ye do come back, wander in here an' tell these old ears how ye killed it — an' I'll give ye this gold right back as payment for the tale!" 

Notes
1. The top surface of a trapper is dense, horny (not brittle), and effectively as hard as stone. It is shaped in irregular, flagstone-like plates or lumps. The trapper absorbs heat and vibration, and thus suffers only half damage, at most, from actual fire; it won't be harmed by normal pressure from being walked upon or prodded, nor does it give appreciably underfoot. It is also resistant (half or no damage) to cold and cold-based attacks; its metabolism does not need a particular body temperature to function, and chilly underground environments are its normal habitat.

2. Small parts of a trapper's rocky surface can be chipped away without the creature being harmed noticeably (no visible wound occurs, just an apparent cavity in the rock); the stony substance grates or rings, like actual rock, when it is struck. Characters who are very familiar with stone (dwarves, gnomes, miners, stonemasons, and sculptors) can usually tell immediately that something is not right when they test the surface — by chipping or striking it, but not merely walking upon it. Characters not familiar with stone may (5% chance) sometimes realize that they have attacked something alive, but trappers are not easy to detect, even when they are being looked for.

Infravision will clearly detect the underside of a trapper whenever the creature is viewed from beneath (through a hole, for instance), rolled up around something, or when the underside is revealed around its edges when it moves. (When it is stationary, the hard top surface covers all of the edges.) The heat-absorbing top surface of a trapper is not revealed by infravision; it always keeps the temperature of its surroundings not revealed by infravision; it always heat-absorbing top surface of a trapper is used as an attack form) and simultaneous-ously transferring it, along a one-way path, to the underside. In its reaction to extreme heat or cold, the top layer acts as a barrier and a permeable membrane at the same time.

3. A trapper can sense — and, because of its high intelligence, usually interpret — even the slightest vibrations, such as a mouse running across its surface; the hard top surface transmits these vibrations to sensory organs in the actual body of the creature before the vibrations are dissipated or absorbed. The trapper is apparently not sensitive to sound waves or odors, but it can sense light up to 4' (40 feet) distant. Light-sensitive patches on the top of a trapper report the presence of light to the trapper's brain, which acts in conjunction with these patches to govern the shifts in color that a trapper's body is capable of (see note #9). The patches can detect very small amounts of light — flickering torchlight or narrow lantern beams, for example — in an area that is otherwise dark, but cannot sense the presence or location of prey by this means if the entire vicinity is illuminated, such as in daylight or when a light spell is in use. Also, full illumination makes it more difficult for a trapper to quickly shift color without being noticed as it moves onto new surfaces. For these reasons principally, trappers prefer to dwell in dark places, and almost always underground.

4. Iron bars or even stout staves will provide a precious few rounds of "safety" from a trapper's attack, if at least one of them is close at hand so it can be used to obstruct the creature's attempt to close around a victim (as a piece of wood might be jammed into a creature's mouth to keep it from closing its jaws). While this bar or staff is in place, the character(s) it protects can still wield weapons against the trapper. Thrusting and piercing weapons are the most useful in this case, since they are used along the axis described by the staff or bar. Weapons that slash or smash are not as effective (-2 on damage, but a minimum of 1 point of damage per hit) because the wielder doesn't have room to swing the weapon with full force. In some cases, common sense must prevail in determining whether a weapon is wholly or partially effective; long pole arms, for instance, would probably be useless.

A bar or staff used as an obstruction (DM's decision as to what is suitable) will automatically afford one round of safety for the character(s) it is protecting. Thereafter, the object must save vs. crushing blow once per round (as "hard metal" or "thick wood," as appropriate), with a cumulative penalty of -3 per round to the die roll beginning with the second save. Thus, a staff of thick wood will "survive" for as long as five rounds before the pressure of the trapper's muscles on its ends will cause it to snap or slip out of position. (The first round of protection is "free"; thereafter, the staff must make saves of 10, 13, 16, and 19 to remain intact and in place for the next four rounds. On the following round it will need to save with a 22, which is impossible unless the save is made at a bonus.)

5. Apparently our grizzled old adventurer has never seen exactly what a trapper does with the prey it captures. When a trapper's victim is suffocated, or when the victim takes enough damage to be rendered unconscious or killed, the creature relaxes its hold on the prey and then flexes and moves in such a manner as to slide out from underneath the body. Then the creature reverses direction and moves back on top of the victim, loosely encasing it in the more pliant undersurface of its body. This underside is subject to attack by characters outside the trapper whenever the creature is wrapped...
breaks down organic matter. The chemical
leathery “skin” covering the underside is a
the underside is just as hard to damage as
around someone or something. However,
are tensed, are just as difficult to penetrate
with a weapon (AC 3) as the top side is.
6. When a trapper moves on top of an
object, it can use its pliancy and its amor-
phous nature to “flow” over and around the
object, varying the thickness of its body (if
desired) to keep the hard top surface even
and level. The top surface will not give way
under the force of foot-stomping or jumping,
but in places where objects lie beneath it
and relatively close to the top surface,
some of the force of those blows will be
transmitted through its body to the objects
below, and those objects will crack or shat-
ter if they are fragile enough. As noted by
the old adventurer (and the Monster Man-
ual), the trapper can also exercise the ability
to form its body into shapes that appear to be
lying on its top surface. Sometimes, the
creature uses an object it is concealing as a
foundation for one of these “sculptures” —
for instance, using a broken pillar or a log as
the basis for an extension that looks like a
stone bench.
7. The trapper consumes its prey by
moving on top of a victim (see note #5) and
then exuding an acid-like enzyme that
breaks down organic matter. The chemical
reaction caused by the fluid does not begin
until after a victim is exposed to it for five
rounds (which is why our hero was able to
rescue someone “just in time”); then it
begins to burn and corrode, doing 6 points
of damage per round to any victim that is
not already dead. A single man-sized crea-
ture can be entirely consumed in this
way in 2-4 turns; one L-sized creature or a
small group of M-sized victims will take 6-9
turns to be consumed.
When it “eats,” the trapper re-absors
the digestive enzyme along with the sub-
stance it has acted upon, and then the nutri-
ents and the enzyme are separated during
its digestive process. The fluid finds its way
back into the sacs in which it is contained,
until more prey is to be consumed. The
enzyme loses its potency within seconds
when it is exposed to air, which is why a
victim can be rescued without suffering
damage from the acid, provided the chemi-
cal reaction has not already begun. The
enzyme has an immediate effect only if it
gets into a victim’s eyes, in which case the
victim (if he survives) is totally blinded for
1-4 days thereafter; a cure blindness or heal
spell, or similar magic, will offset this effect.
Again, note that a trapper is highly intel-
ligent and will act accordingly — it will not
attempt to “eat” anything but motionless
(unconscious or dead) victims; it will not try
to trap something in its top surface and
consume something else beneath it at the
same time, because the digestive enzyme
loses its “power” when the underside is
exposed to the air. The creature is never
ravenous (it can survive for days or even
weeks without a single “square meal”), but
neither is it ever satisfied; as soon as one
meal is finished, it is ready and quite able to
consume another.
8. The activities of a trapper are con-
trolled through its network of nerves, which
gather together into three or more centers
or nodes. One of these, the dominant,
sentient directive center, is the creature’s
brain. This brain is highly developed, par-
ticularly in mature trappers — able to re-
ceive and interpret sensory input, and
capable of decision-making. (If a trapper
senses the presence of a large party of ad-
venturers, it can and often will choose to lie
quietly to avoid the possibility of being
slain, rather than attacking.) As a trapper
grows larger and older, its secondary nerve
centers grow and develop until they also
achieve sentience — whereupon the trapper
splits into three or more little trappers.
These instinctively move away from each
other to establish their own territories; one
will not knowingly locate next to another
trapper. It is not known if trappers fight
over territory or prey, but they seem to
avoid each other whenever possible.
9. A trapper can alter the color of its top
surface (the underside is always a sickly
mottled pinkish and greenish-white) by
producing pigmented liquid that it stores in
bag-like organs within its body and forces
by muscular action to and from its “stone”
surface. Unlike the digestive enzyme (see
note #7), this liquid does not lose its special
properties when exposed to the air, so it can
be salvaged and used (see note #10). The
trapper’s natural, unaltered top-side color is
that of its underside, only slightly more
brown-grey. It can shift hues through
browns (sometimes with traces of dark
green) to greys, all the way to jet black —
but it cannot make its top surface glossy or
smooth. It can never be white, translucent,
or transparent as a result of pigment shifts.
Trappers can exist under water, and are
known to lie inches deep in partially flooded
rooms or caverns; in such cases, they are
virtually impossible to detect.
10. Speaking of gold pieces, adventurers
who are victorious over a trapper will be
rewarded if they think to recover some of its
pigmentation liquid. It will fetch a hand-
some price (about 6 gp per pint) in magical
markets where it is known as an ingredient in the
making of a robe of blending, and as an
alternative ingredient in the manufacture of
various spell inks (such as that for Bigby’s
crushing hand). Any portion of trapper
flesh (the underside) can be used in the
making of a rug of smothering, rug of wel-
come, or net of entrapment. Some magical
practitioners have claimed, in writing, that
intact trapper brains (preserved in vessels of
nutrient liquids) can be linked to doors, pit
traps, deadfalls, treasure niches, and the
like so as to control their operation, but
details of such arrangements and the proc-
есс of establishing them (if they do indeed
exist) are unknown to most magic-users at
the present time.
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DRAGON 23
FIGURE FEATURE

Text by Kim Eastland  Photos by Scheibe Studio

BROADSWORD MINIATURES
3393 Peachtree Rd.
Atlanta GA 30326

Atlantean Figure Line
Pictured: Atlantean Marines
Sculptor: Bob Maurus

Every once in a while, a DM has need of an elite guard unit, a sort of special palace guard or security attachment. To this end, Broadsword has created the Atlanteans. Currently, there are 7 different assortments, such as Police on Guard, Marines attacking, Captains and Officers, etc. They range from 3 to 4 figures per set, offer lovely animation and armor detail, and come with separate spears. These miniatures are perfect for use as a Mage’s guards or the local constabulary. Suggested retail price: $3.50 to $3.95.

GRENADIER MODELS, INC.
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Dragon Lords™ Figure Line
Orcs of the Severed Hand
   Orc Swordman, Standard Bearer, and Spearman
Sculptor: John Dennett

After a long drought where new Orc figures seldom were seen, Grenadier has unleashed a new horde. These burly Orcs follow a big brute of a leader who has a hook on his left arm, hence the term “Orcs of the Severed Hand.” All of them are superbly detailed and well animated. The set includes a Chieftain, a Shaman, 6 different Warriors, and a Standard Bearer (the last requiring assembly). This set is a must for fantasy monster lovers. Suggested retail price: $7.00.

BROADSWORD MINIATURES
3393 Peachtree Rd.
Atlanta GA 30326

Personalities and Monster Figure Lines
Pictured: Sultan with Magic Carpet, and Naga
Sculptor: Bob Maurus

Unusual magicians seem to have been popular in 1983, and Broadsword’s Hookah-sucking Sultan flitting about on an enchanted throw rug seems to personify the quest for the unique mage. The detail on this figure is nice, and the figure comes in 4 pieces that are easily assembled. The serpentine Naga is a rather large specimen of the species and features a delightfully sculpted face. These are just representations of the high-quality new releases from Broadsword that should be on the “pegs” right now. Suggested retail price: Sultan $4.50, Naga $2.50.
SUPERIOR MODELS, INC.
ALNAVCO, INC.
POB 9 “The Point”
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COULTER-BENNETT, LTD.
12158 Hamlin St.
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Wild Boar with Rider, Bast, Fighting Centaur with Box.
Sculptors: Steve Tofano, Ray Lamb

More unusual offerings from Superior Models! The armored Boar has a Knight mounted on it and makes for a really bizarre cavalry piece (tremendous charge bonus for the Boar alone). Bast, the Egyptian Cat Goddess, is a welcome addition to the few ancient deities out on the market; her face is particularly striking. Meanwhile, the classic centaur has been given a fine animated pose and some neat additions such as the hip quiver and Grecian helmet. The theme of knights and classic monsters is extensive in most of Superior’s new releases. Suggested retail price: Boar and Rider $3.50, Bast $4.50 for three figures, Centaur $4.00 for a pair.

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Dragon Warrior
Sculptor: Ray Lamb

To mark their hundredth new 25mm fantasy figure, Superior decided to release a small series of dragons and riders. Number 100 is a Wizard riding Dragon, 101 is the Dragon alone, 102 is the Dragon Warrior shown above, and 103 is a Dragon Mistress atop her Dragon. The Dragon is the same in every offering. It is one of Ray Lamb’s better creatures and is beautifully detailed. The riders are also great pieces and match the rest of Superior’s quality. Assembly is required, as the Dragons are two-piece and the riders are separate, but the fit is exact and should offer you no trouble at all. Suggested retail price: Dragon alone $8.00, Dragon with Rider $9.50.

SAXON MINIATURES
POB 121
Rockville MD 20850

Space Dragon and Small Space Demon
Sculptor: Conan Scanland

Saxon has been up to their ol’ monstrous tricks again, this time with “space” monsters. These uglies are perfect alien denizens and could also be used as lesser demons in fantasy games. As usual their scale is impressively large and their powerful “hewn” style makes for both easy painting and creative color schemes. The larger space demon (not shown) is also noteworthy and looks like a nightmarish version of the bug-eyed monster. Suggested retail price: Dragon $2.50, Demon $1.98.
THE SLEEPING DRAGON
Joel Rosenberg
Signet 0-451-12574-6 $2.95
The current trend for a number of publishers seems to be the release of novels aimed at the science-fiction and fantasy gaming market. Of the novels written for this purpose, Joel Rosenberg's The Sleeping Dragon is one of the more notable attempts.

The story begins in a college student union where some gamers are trying to get together their next campaign. The gamemaster, a professor on campus, has promised his players something really special for the next adventure. The professor (who is, in fact, a magicker of great power trapped in our world) sends the players to another dimension. Here, they assume the identities of their pre-rolled characters.

Within this new dimension, the players begin experimenting with the abilities of the fantasy characters they have created. Fortunately, Rosenberg is a good game technician, so all the fantasy characters remain true to their respective character classes. Though each character experiences the same set of situations, they respond differently to these situations. This element adds realism to characterization, for no two people really react the same way to a specific event.

The novel abounds with a variety of character-class types: a warrior, a novice wizard, a dwarven warrior, a master cleric, a journeyman thief, a master thief, and a master wizard. The interaction between characters is reminiscent of many a game campaign.

However, unlike what happens in a role-playing game, the characters in this novel are threatened by dangers which are all too real for them. As they struggle to stay alive and seek a means by which to return to their own dimension, the glamor of sword-play and magical combat fades in this barbaric world in which the characters find themselves. Some of the characters die; some are assaulted; some lose their sanity. Those who survive only do so by learning to blend the abilities of their role-played characters with their own characteristics.

Using every scrap of knowledge at their disposal, the characters not only learn to protect themselves but also discover hidden truths about themselves. Herein is the truly novel part of the book. Throughout their adventures, the characters continue to converse and act like 20th-century college students. As they come to grips with this new dimension and search for a means of escape, most of the characters grow and mature, evolving into better people than they were prior to the adventure.

With seemingly little effort, Rosenberg has taken what could have been a fairly trite idea and converted it into an exciting and innovative piece of literature. The Sleeping Dragon is the first volume in a projected series entitled Guardians of the Flame. I look forward to reading the sequels.

THE AQUILLAD
Somtow Sucharitkul
Pocket Books 0-671-45443-9 $2.95
With The Aquiliad, Somtow Sucharitkul has written one of the best science-fiction comedies of the year. Not bothering to preach to his readers as he's done in the past, the author has created such a hilariously hostile book that one simply cannot stop reading it.

In an alternate reality, Rome has never fallen; in fact, it has conquered all of the world it could find, including America. Only one hundred years after the death of Julius Caesar, this alternate Rome has citizens who possess steam-powered cars and boats, and other technological devices. So, it is easy to see that Sucharitkul has prepared his readers to enter a rather fascinating, if not riotous, alternate reality.

America is governed by the Roman Emperor under the guidance of one General Titus, a fairly competent commander by Roman standards, but somewhat of a joke to the native Americans he presides over. Always ready to laugh at Titus is his constant companion, Aquila (the Eagle), an eighty-year-old Indian with more war skill and common sense than all of Rome, save for Titus. Constantly at the mercy of whichever insane emperor is in power at the time, Titus is forever being sent on one foolish, suicidal quest after another, and is always in need of his faithful Indian protector.

By the end of the novel, the pair, along with several other notable adventurers, have faced wisecracking Aztecs, wild Indians, a band of Jewish bigfeet, a brontosaurus and a tyrannosaurus, flying saucers, an interdimensional time thief, and an army of green pigs! Throughout all these adventures, Titus tries to placate his mad emperors, avoid his double-agent wife, master the sailing of hot-air balloons, and talk his best friend Aquila out of wanting to die whenever the weather looks appropriate for it.

Sucharitkul presses each joke for an extra pun whenever he can. He (a native of Thailand) is far more willing to make use of old jokes than an American writer would be, giving each of his jokes freshness by virtue of his audacity. It is this approach which makes The Aquiliad one of the wriest, funniest books to be published within the past year.

THE WAR FOR ETERNITY
Christopher Rowley
Del Rey 345-31052-7 $2.95
The beginning of this novel is almost incomprehensible, with both the narrator of the story and the aliens using unrecognizable words. At first, one wonders what all this babble is about, but as the novel progresses, the plot becomes clearer.

The War for Eternity is a novel about space colonization, a tale in which the mighty attempt to exploit the weak. In an odd way, the novel reflects America's involvement in Vietnam and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Though billed as a science-fiction novel, upon inspection the book appears to be a fantasy story.

Rowley has created a new alien race, the Fein, and an alien world, Fenrille. However, most of the story revolves around the invaders of Fenrille, from Earth, who are not described in a favorable fashion. And there's a good reason for this: The humans are attempting to exploit Fenrille, the only known planet that produces a substance capable of extending the human life span by hundreds of years.
As the novel begins, the space-faring human empire is preparing to subjugate all of Fenrille in order to obtain more of the life-prolonging drug. Made from the nests of a certain deadly insect indigenous only to Fenrille, the drug is hard to come by, since new nests are hard to coax into existence and the drug cannot be synthesized. The invaders believe that it is impossible to produce more of the drug, and Earth ships descend on Fenrille under direct orders to procure as much of the drug as possible and destroy the planet in the process. Defending the planet are the Fein warriors and human pioneers who had settled on Fenrille hundreds of years earlier.

Although many of the devices in The War for Eternity seem familiar — walking trees, intelligent insects, somber warriors with strong ethics — they are only superficially so. Rowley has created a new, interesting world, with equally well developed races to populate it, thereby composing one of the freshest books dealing with a new race of aliens that has appeared on the market in a long time. Though the opening chapter may seem incomprehensible, once you get past that the book is excellent reading.

THE MAN IN THE TREE
Damon Knight
Berkley Books 0-425-06006-3 $2.75

The Man in the Tree is to the recent science-fiction literary scene as Brainstorm is to the recent science-fiction film scene: a quiet, thought-provoking piece of work in which the impact reaches beyond the storyline. In addition, this book can be easily read and enjoyed by anyone as a “mainstream” novel.

Gene Anderson, a mutant who has the ability to transport items from other dimensions into his own, is the protagonist of The Man in the Tree. As the plot unravels, Anderson is equated with the Savior and his life is heralded as that of the Second Coming. Though he is reluctant to consider such possibilities, many elements of Anderson’s life mirror those of Jesus’s. But more important than the theological implications are Anderson’s views about himself, the world, and the multiple universes around him.

Unlike his peers, who must work, Anderson is able to acquire as much wealth as he needs from other dimensions. Obviously, rapid acquisition of wealth makes Anderson’s existence easier. With all the financial worries of his daily life solved, Anderson begins to contemplate problems outside his immediate sphere of influence. Given his abilities, it is not surprising that he envisions means by which to solve these problems. And in his attempts to solve them, he becomes the savior he really does not want to be.

The Man in the Tree is a finely crafted novel, and Knight has created a slow-moving, intense fable about the myriad tangles of growing up and coming to terms with one’s personal and social responsibilities. Because of its insight, this novel is recommended for those who seek something more than an action-packed yarn.

ESCAPE VELOCITY
Christopher Stasheff
Ace SF 0-441-21599-8 $2.95

Like so many authors do with multi-book sagas, Christopher Stasheff started his Warlock series in the middle. After writing The Warlock in Spite of Himself and The Warlock Unlocked, Stasheff has returned to an earlier point in his fictional chronology for Escape Velocity the first novel in the series.

Those familiar with this series will be pleased to know that Escape Velocity is just as funny as the previous offerings, if not more so. Stasheff seems to have gotten his tongue firmly in cheek this time, making good use of it in that position. His planets and denizens appear to be zanier with each stop the protagonists make until the story finally reaches Earth, which turns out to be the strangest place of all.

Stasheff has succeeded in creating a new humorous science-fiction series every bit as hysterical as Keith Laumer’s Retief stories. And though Laumer’s strength lies in short stories, Stasheff’s comedies seem to develop much better in novel-length format. All three books in this series are excellent and can be read in any order.

THE MIRROR OF HELEN
Richard Purtill
DAW Books 0-87997-863-5 $2.50

Everyone knows something about the story of Helen of Troy; most know that she was the cause of the Trojan War. And most of what people remember about her comes from Homer’s epic poems. Unfortunately. Helen of Troy has been labeled as one of the beautiful women of history, then dismissed as such. Rare is the writer who has wondered — and wandered — past the label to what Helen might have been like as a person, not as a legend.

Richard Purtill is one of those rare writers. In The Mirror of Helen, Purtill writes the story of Helen: her childhood, her captivity by an Athenian king, her various adventures, and her dealings and maneuvers with the goddesses. The novel is written in three parts, each one a diary kept by a different person: Alceme, the Athenian who stole her as a child and kept her captive; M’pha, a bull dancer past her prime, but important, nevertheless, to the political affairs of the Greek states; and lastly, Mene- laus, her husband.

Purtill does a good job in the telling of the story. Whether writing as a man or as a woman, the author is convincing as he weaves his characters in the different social milieus. At certain moments, different characters will describe the same events or scenes, but different viewpoints cause the reader to step back in amazement, wondering how such diverse interpretations of events are possible. In this task, Purtill’s hand is a steady one; he unravels each bit of the story in its place, never rushing, never crowding.

In addition, Purtill is also clever enough to give the story a solid description of place and time without resorting to archaic language. His disdain for classical speech patterns helps the tale be easily readable.

For those readers planning a game campaign which might include Greek heroes and gods, this novel is one to buy for game assistance. Purtill understands that nobility is a thing of the soul; either you have it, or you don’t. The Mirror of Helen is a ton-
notch fantasy for adult readers; though sword-&-sorcery tales have their place in the literary market, so also do mature works of this nature.

ALANNA: THE FIRST ADVENTURE
Tamora Pierce
Atheneum/Argo 0-689-30994-5 $12.95
At the other end of the fantasy spectrum is Alanna: The First Adventure, a surprisingly well crafted sword-&-sorcery adventure for younger readers. Though the book is filled with standard devices — the special ability to work magic, the young girl posing as a boy, the evil sorcerer — none of these devices slow or hinder the story in the slightest. With description held to a minimum, the plot advances quickly through finely paced dialogue and action.

Rarely has anyone written for the children's literature market with the needs of young readers so firmly in mind as this first-time author does. Those in their adolescent years or beyond might consider the book a bit tame, but their younger brothers and sisters ought to be fascinated by it.

At first, many of the characters seem stock, but once the task of setting up background detail has been accomplished, the tale progresses smoothly. Though a few of the characters make only a minor appearance in the first tale, they are promised to appear in following ones. But, all in all, the characters are believable and function as the children that they are.

Alanna: The First Adventure is highly recommended for the young reader who is just starting to show an interest in the fantasy genre.

THE DRAGON WAITING
John M. Ford
Timescape 0-671-47552-5 $15.95
If John Ford knew how to write adult fiction the same way Tamora Pierce knows how to write children's literature, his newest novel would have been a marvel. Alas, this is not the case.

The Dragon Waiting deals with an interesting idea: the retelling of the story of Richard III. Who could ask for more in the way of historical novels? Well, those who read this book could. This novel demands more of its readers than an Ingmar Bergman film demands of its audience, but delivers far less.

The novel introduces its four protagonists: Hywel Peredur, a daydreamer who would become a magician; Dimitrios, a young noble who has squandered his imperial life through chance and must now become a mercenary; Cynthia Ricci, an Italian doctor of great skill and beauty who is left homeless by war; and Gregory von Bayern, a German natural scientist who has been turned into a vampire. As the novel progresses, the reader learns to respect the four characters, feel for their unlucky lives, and wonder where their lives are taking them. Eventually, all four characters come together.

Up to this point, the book is a little quirky: it keeps jumping from one point of view to another without much transition. At first, this may be understood as a means to help speed the story along so as to get to Richard's arrival. Halfway through the novel, however, the device becomes tiring, as does the wait for Richard's appearance. Even after Richard appears, his story seems superficial in comparison to everyone else's. Richard's arrival is a mere cameo, a profile against an overwhelming background of people and details. Thus, the story collapses upon its foundation: the events in the life of Richard III are glossed over quickly, while those of the other four characters are delineated in cumbersome detail.

Ford is an extremely talented wordsmith. His problem with this novel is not that he tells the story, but the story itself. Ford's descriptions of settings and characters are marvelous, but his plot wanders and falters repeatedly. Many of his scenes are extremely convincing: action scenes thrilling; terror scenes horrifying; and gentle scenes tugging at the heart. However, by the middle of the book, the reader begins to notice that these thrilling, horrifying, and tugging scenes just don't add up to anything significant.

THE WILD SHORE
Kim Stanley Robinson
Ace SF 0-441-88870-4 $2.95
The Wild Shore deals with life in America after World War III. The country was devastated by nuclear war sixty years earlier. At that time, nuclear bombs had been planted in vans located throughout the country. When the bombs were set off, the nation virtually crumpled. Unable to determine which enemy was responsible for the atrocity, the president chose not to retaliate.

At present, America is a country watched on all borders. Neighboring nations keep America guarded and contained: lasers destroy new roads or railroad tracks when they are completed, and gunboats patrol American coasts. Without nuclear power, electricity, cars, newspapers, and so forth, America has become a vast expanse of land resembling pre-industrial-revolution England, a country of pastoral peace tempered by resentment against the rest of the world.

The novel unfolds through the eyes of Henry, the young protagonist, and his friend Steve. In a way that is at times sad, at times humorous, Henry depicts the turbulence and confusion as his country enters its second American Revolution. By the end of the book, the reader gets the feeling that maybe the rest of the world joined forces to bomb America, because it was a feared superpower and threatened the safety of the rest of the world.

All in all, The Wild Shore is an excellent novel, especially for those readers seeking a story that offers something to contemplate.
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Never the same thing twice

Filling out facts and figures on the rakshasa family

by Scott Bennie

The rakshasa pictured above (he's the fierce-looking one, drawn by Jim Holloway): resembles the creature described in Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend. This version of the rakshasa has a big belly, fingers that curve away from the palms of its hands, and claws that are said to be poisonous. And, obviously, this is a rakshasa who isn't bothering to use his illusion powers right now, preferring to let the poor victim see what he's really up against.
Of all the monsters in the mythology of India, the rakshasas are probably the most famous. The origin of these spirit-monsters is shrouded in mystery and contradiction. One of many legends tells that rakshasas are descendants of the god Brahma (as are all evil, demon-like beings of Indian myth). Another legend says that rakshasas descended from a wife of Kashyapa, a mythic folk-being. Yet a third story offers the most popular explanation, describing rakshasas as the children of the sage Pulastya, a son of Brahma.

In Indian mythology, three varieties of rakshasas visit the earth. The first is a haunting spirit that inhabits graveyards, curses weddings, and kills little children and infants. These rakshasas can enter the mouth of a human while he eats and drive him insane. In the myths, they serve as scapegoats for human maladies. In addition, they are said to have minor powers, such as the ability to animate the dead. Mustard or fire repels these rakshasas. They resemble many European folk-spirits, and are probably the earliest incarnations of rakshasas in myth.

The second variety of rakshasa is that of a monster, an adversary that a hero must overcome on the road to greatness. (The word “rakshasa” translates as the phrase “to be guarded against.”) Just as a hero in Northern European myth kills a troll in his youth as a sign of his future greatness, a hero in Vedic/Indian myth will kill a rakshasa. These rakshasas do not provide the struggle that marks the pinnacle of a hero’s career, but they are very dangerous foes. This second variety of rakshasa is known for its deviousness, and it is capable of assuming different forms with which to deceive its victims. The usual form is that of the creature most trusted by the victim. These are the rakshasas of the AD&D™ game world.

The third variety of rakshasa is by far the most powerful. These rakshasas are similar to the titans of Greek mythology, or the Giant Lords of Norse myth; they are the foes of the gods, capable of battling with and defeating the most powerful of deities. By far the most prominent of these rakshasa-gods is Ravanna, the villain of the Sanskrit epic the Ramayana.

Rakshasas are almost exclusively associated with evil. Whether they tend toward law or chaos, however, is subject to contradictory report. In some stories, where the sanctity of law is the dominant theme, rakshasas behave in a lawful manner, so those who disobey the law appear to be even worse than a rakshasa. In other tales, which emphasize the villainy of these spirits, rakshasas demonstrate a more chaotic nature. But even at their most pernicious, rakshasas seem to follow a lawful system of rule.

Rakshasas take on no uniform physical appearance. Legend usually describes them as deformed and monstrous-looking. Rakshasa women (called rakshasi) were considered particularly hideous, though rakshasas would undoubtedly object to this description as mere human propaganda. (Beauty, after all, is in the eye of the beholder.)

It is said that rakshasas dwell in the underworld, in a particularly gloomy and dismal place called Patalam. In the AD&D game, this would suggest Acheron as the most likely plane of origin for these creatures, and I have placed them there in my campaign. Some say rakshasas only appear at night, but it is unclear whether this restriction applies only to the first variety or to all of these beings. (Editor’s note: in AD&D game worlds, rakshasas may appear in the day or night without restriction.)

Ravanna, the greatest rakshasa

In Indian mythology, the most powerful of all rakshasas was Ravanna, the King of Lanka (Ceylon). Ravanna had ten heads, and in performance of the pious ritual known as tapas; he began sacrificing one head every thousand years. Through tapas, those who are worthy can gain great favors from the gods. After ten thousand years, Ravanna was about to cut off his last head when Brahma finally appeared and agreed to grant Ravanna a wish. Ravanna desired that no god or demonic being should have the capacity to harm him. Unfortunately, Brahma could not refuse to grant Ravanna’s request. Brahma asked Ravanna about protection from men or beasts, but to this Ravanna replied: “Men! I don’t need to perform a tapas to protect myself from them!” By his own words, Ravanna had sealed his doom.

Ravanna used his new invulnerability to cause great misery. He started many wars on earth, and slew many great warriors. At every opportunity, he humiliated the gods. Finally, the deities could tolerate Ravanna’s actions no longer. Vishnu, the Preserver, created several avatars (earthly manifestations; see the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia) of himself to battle the rakshasa-god — Ravanna’s protection against harm did not extend to harm caused by these mortal representatives of the deity. The greatest of these avatars was called Rama.

Ravanna had a sister called Soorpanakha. She attempted to seduce Rama, and the angry prince mortally wounded her. Before her death, Soorpanakha returned to her brother’s court and demanded that he avenge her. Ravanna did so by kidnapping Rama’s beloved wife, Sita. This act incited a great war between Rama and Ravanna; their armies included many avatars of Vishnu and the finest warriors of rakshasadom. After many grim and bloody battles, Rama slew Ravanna, and the gods rejoiced. (The reader is referred to R. K. Narayan’s Gods, Demons, and Others for a fuller account of this tale.)

In Indian mythos, Ravanna was the ideal rakshasa — the rakshasa king. All other rakshasas worshiped and obeyed him loyally as the champion of their race. In my campaign, Ravanna descended to Acheron after his Prime Material form was slain by Rama. There, Ravanna still rules — but,
shamed by his defeat, he refuses to leave that plane.

Ravanna supports rakshasas on the Prime Material Plane through two kinds of agents: rakshasa knights and rakshasa lords. Rakshasa knights were the vanguard of Ravanna’s armies during the war against Rama, and they continue to provide offensive support for rakshasa causes. The lords lead the rakshasa communities and serve as Ravanna’s priests. Ravanna is accorded deity status in my campaign, but no human or other non-rakshasa may worship him.

RAKSHASA KNIGHT
FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -6
MOVE: 18”
HIT DICE: 9 + 18
% IN LAIR: 15%
TREASURE TYPE: F
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-7x(4)/7-16(3d4+4)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENCES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
INTELLIGENCE: Very
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VIII / 3450 + 14/h.p.

Rakshasa knights are warriors who defend the causes espoused by rakshasas. Swift and powerful, they attack 5 times per round (2 strikes with each claw, 1 bite). Like ordinary rakshasas, rakshasa knights have inherent powers of ESP and create illusion (the latter allows them to assume any form). In addition, rakshasa knights are not affected by spells less powerful than the 8th level. Unlike their ordinary counterparts, they cannot cast cleric or magic-user spells. A rakshasa knight cannot be hit by anything less than a +2 weapon, and a knight takes half damage from weapons below +4. A hit from a blessed crossbow bolt, however, will kill a rakshasa knight if the bolt was first blessed by a good cleric of 5th level or higher.

Rakshasa knights despise paladins. Their deity, Ravanna, was defeated by a paladin (Rama), and they are charged to avenge this defeat. Rakshasa knights can recognize paladins on sight, and they attack at +1 to hit them, also inflicting +2 hit points damage per attack. Outside his lair, a rakshasa knight is found only in the company of a rakshasa lord; a knight within his lair is usually accompanied (90% chance) by 1-4 female rakshasas.

RAKSHASA LORD
FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -5
MOVE: 18”
HIT DICE: 8 + 16
% IN LAIR: 45%
TREASURE TYPE: B,F
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/2-7(+2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENCES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
INTELLIGENCE: High
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VIII / 2600 + 12/h.p.

Rakshasa lords serve as priests and lead the rakshasa community on the Prime Material Plane. Like all other rakshasas, they are immune to spells below the 8th level and have the usual create illusion and ESP abilities. In addition, rakshasa lords have the spell capabilities of a 5th-level cleric, a 5th-level magic-user, and a 7th-level illusionist. They may generate an improved phantasmal force at will, once per attack. A +2 weapon is required to harm a rakshasa lord; a +6 weapon is needed to kill a lord. A rakshasa lord, if encountered outside his lair, may be accompanied (70% chance) by 1-3 ordinary male rakshasas, and perhaps also (55% chance) by 1 rakshasa knight. If encountered within his lair, a lord may be accompanied (80% chance) by 1-4 female rakshasas.

RAVANNA (King of Rakshasas)
Lesser god
ARMOR CLASS: 18
MOVE: 18” (96” with chariot)
HIT POINTS: 366
NO. OF ATTACKS: 10
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+12 strength bonus)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENCES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
SIZE: Variable, but always L
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
WORSHIPERS’ ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil (rakshasas only)
SYMBOL: n/a
PLANE: Acheron (formerly Prime Material)
CLERIC/DRUID: 14th level cleric
FIGHTER: 25th level fighter
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 16th level
THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil
MONK/BARD: Nil
PSIONIC ABILITY: VI
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil
S:24 (+6, +12) I:22 W:15 D:25
C:25 Ch:-6 (24 to rakshasas)

Ravanna, the ten-headed rakshasa king, is the quintessence of rakshasadom. He is gifted with invulnerability to gods, demons, and elementals; only non-deities from the Prime Material Plane can harm him. In battle, Ravanna wields magic javelins that each inflict 2-20 points of damage plus his strength bonus. A +3 weapon — wielded by an “eligible” adversary — is required to harm Ravanna, and any weapon below +6 only does half damage. Ravanna is immune to the special effects of a vorpal weapon or a sword of sharpness, but a magical crossbow bolt of +4 or better, if blessed by a High Priest of Vishnu (or any lawful good deity) and fired by a mortal being who is native to the Prime Material Plane, inflicts 1-100 hit points of damage upon the rakshasa king.

Ravanna is a master of illusionist magic (called yama) and can create a spectral force once per round at will. Only those with an intelligence of 24 or higher are automatically immune to the effects of this spectral force. All viewers not immune to Ravanna’s illusions must save against them at +5. No magic spell below 9th level will affect Ravanna. In battle, he uses the Chariot of Pushka, which moves at 96” and allows its rider three wishes per day.

Ravanna, remembering the humiliation of his defeat by Rama, refuses to leave Acheron. Rakshasa lords are the workers of his policy on the Prime Material Plane. The goals of Ravanna and the lords are first, to ensure that the rakshasa race thrives on the Prime Material Plane, continuing to grow...
in population and influence; second, to gain
desires, Ravanna may also send rakshasas
carries, and then the appropriately blessed crossbow bolt
-1 per die of damage inflicted upon them,
month, when rakshasas are at their most
slay women (symbolic of Ravanna’s abduc-
several, to the Astral Plane to waylay travelers
irregularly, but always on the night of a new
races; and third (for the lords), to pay con-
rakshasas is the nature of their illusion
perhaps the greatest misconception about
 flyer. While rakshasas are indeed “mas-
create illusion
Perhaps the greatest misconception about
rakshasas is the nature of their illusion
powers. While rakshasas are indeed “master-
s to give the species some firepower in battle.
Many people have another problem with the
AD&D game version: Rakshasas are commonly referred to as “demons” in
myth, but the Monster Manual lists their alignment as lawful evil, while demons are chaotic evil. However, this complaint is
based on a fallacy. Rakshasas are considered to be one member of a class of creatures called asuras, a word that scholars translate as “demon.” But in this case, “demon” refers to any creature from the lower (evil) planes, not just those that exhibit chaotic evil tendencies.

In closing, I must acknowledge a great
debt to Dan Ziolkowski. Without his inspira-
tion (especially regarding the rakshasa
lord), I couldn’t have written this article. As
Dan’s campaign was constructed, rakshasas
can be one of humanity’s greatest adversar-
ies in AD&D gaming.

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Demigods™ Cyclopedia, TSR Hobbies,

EDITOR’S NOTE
Normal rakshasas (the ones described in
the Monster Manual) can cast 3rd-level
magic-user spells and 1st-level cleric spells.
To determine the number of spells they can
carry, consider them 6th-level magic-users
and 2nd-level clerics. The effect of their
spells will be the same as for spells cast by a
7th-level caster, since they are 7 HD mon-
sters. They are considered to be creatures
from an outer plane, just as demons and
devils are. In this article, Acheron is named
as their plane of origin.
Should there be any confusion about their
illusion ability, consider this: The ESP
and create illusion powers of a rakshasa are
inherent abilities — these creatures can do
these things at will. The illusion is com-
plete, addressing all five senses, not just
vision. And the illusion only changes the
appearance of the rakshasa; it does not
create an image apart from the creature.
Spell-casting abilities are totally separate
from these inherent abilities. Rakshasas can
equip ESP and create illusion abili-
ties simultaneously but can do neither while
casting a spell.
Other versions of the myths described in
this article do exist; don’t be surprised if, in
a different source, you read something a
little different from the stories above. As an
example, see the artwork at the start of this
article; it was “drawn” from a source differ-
ent from the books the author used for the
story.
Looking at the page, it appears to be an advertisement for Paint Sets and Open Stock products. The page is quite colorful, featuring various paint colors and product descriptions. Here's a breakdown of the content:

**The Armory**

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- Red: Bay

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*Date:* April 1984
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SF/gaming convention calendar

MENTORCON, April 7
This convention will be held in the cafeteria of Mentor High School, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Along with semi-open gaming, there will be demonstrations of miniatures, sports, and board and role-playing games. In addition, a D&D® miniatures painting contest will be offered, with prizes awarded to the winners. Admission is only $0.50, and $0.50 extra is needed for entry into the painting contest. For further information, contact: Mark Malnar at (216)255-4955.

FALCON III, April 7-8
This third annual gaming convention is sponsored by the Cadet Military Science/Gaming Club and will be staged at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Wargame, science-fiction, fantasy role-playing, and popular board game tournaments will be featured, including special seminars and movies. For more details, contact: Cadet Carl H. Bruning, P.O. Box 2022, USAFA CO 80841.

APRICON, April 7
This convention will feature science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, board games, and miniatures and fantasy art contents. Preregistration costs are $4.00; registration costs at the door are $5.00. For more information about this event, send SASE to Richard Howes, 390 North Ave., Rockland MA 02370.

GLENCON II, April 14
To be held at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois, admission to this convention is $3.00. For more information, contact: Steven Silver, 3207 Maple Leaf, Glenview IL 60025, or call (312)564-0688.

UTHERCON 3, April 14
Sponsored by the University Adventure Gaming Society, this one-day gaming convention will be hosted at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. Events will include FRP tournaments, mini-campaigns, seminars, lectures, and demonstrations. A full range of role-playing, board, and strategy games will be available. Admission is $5.00 for registration. For further details, write: David F. Nalle, 3212 Red River #109, Austin TX 78705, or call (512)477-1704.

NEWCON I, April 28
The FRP Club of New Rochelle, New York is sponsoring this convention. Advanced registration is the only means of admission into the convention. The registration fee is $8, and sign-up ends on Friday, April 13. For further details, write to: Sanjeev Khan- na, 173 Mount Joy Place, New Rochelle NY 10801.

PURCON I, April 28
This event will be at the SUNY Purchase campus, 20 miles out of New York City. Featured events will include a tournament dungeon and a miniatures painting contest. For information, send a S.A.S. envelope to Purcon, Box 2344 SUNY-Purchase, Purchase NY 10577, or call (914)253-5767.

GAME FAIRE '84, April 28-29
This year’s Game Faire will take place at Spokane Falls Community College. Inexpensive housing and breakfasts will be provided by local gamers. The school’s cafeteria will be serving food, and snacks will be available at concession booths. Admission is $5 a day or $7 for a prepaid weekend pass; the weekend pass will cost $9 at the door. All proceeds will go to the Spokane Guild School for handicapped children. Events include AD&D™ and RuneQuest® tournaments, miniatures painting contests, game instructions and classes, computer game competition, and fighting demonstrations by the Society for Creative Anachronism. For more information, contact: Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, or phone (509)325-3358.

TREASURE CON II, April 27-29
This convention will be held at the War Bonnet Inn in Laurel, Montana. For further information, contact: Treasure Con II/ Huckster’s Room, c/o Robert L. Dalrymple, 1029 12th Ave., Laurel MT 59044, or phone (406)628-7051.

NIAGARA GAMEFEST & COMPUTER SHOW ’84, May 4-6
For more information about this annual gaming event in Ontario, Canada, contact: Niagara Gamers Association, 223 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6V9.

ONOCON ’84, May 4-6
Described by the organizers as the largest SF/gaming convention in the central New York area, this event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Convention Center in Syracuse, N.Y. Guests of honor will include Frederik Pohl, L. Sprague de Camp, Randy Elliott, Carl Lundgren, and Jay Jay Klein. More information is available by sending a SASE to: OnoCon ’84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse NY 13208.

VIKING CON 5, May 4-6
Sponsored by WWU’s Science-Fiction and Fantasy Club, this event will be held at the Leopold Hotel. Guests of Honor will include Gordon Dickson, Alan Nourse, and Steve Leialoha. For more information, contact: VU 402, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225, or call (206)676-3460.

LITTLE WARS, May 5-6
This miniatures convention will include historical, fantastic, and SF events. It will be at the Willow Brook Inn at the intersection of US Hwy 14 and Hwy 53 in Palatine, Ill. Preregistration is $5.00; prices at the door are $6.00 for the weekend, $4.00 for Saturday, and $3.00 for Sunday. Contact: Todd Fisher, 6908 N. Oakley, Chicago IL 60645.

TEXARKON 3, May 11-13
This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Tall Timbers Resort and Inn in Texarkana, Arkansas. Guests of honor will include Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Sturgeon, Phil Foglio, and Robert Asprin. An art show and auction, video room, D&D® game and costume contests, and a dealers’ room will be featured at this event. For more information about the convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Texarkon, 1021 East 29th, Texarkana AR 75502.

TRI-STATE CON 1984, May 11-13
This gaming convention will be staged at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati, Ohio. For further details, contact: Tri-State Con ’84, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Ave., Cincinnati OH 45208, or call (513)871-2110 or (513)351-9920.

KEYCON ’84, May 18-20
To be held at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, this convention will be highlighted by such events as an art show, video programs and movies, various SF/fantasy role-playing games, seminars and workshops, a masquerade ball, and a Sunday buffet. Robert Asprin will be the convention’s Guest of Honor, with Phil Foglio as Artist Guest of Honor and Nick Burns as Comics Guest of Honor. Registration costs are $15 until April 15, and $20 at the door. For more details, write to: KEYCON ’84, P.O. Box 165, Westwin P.O., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2R 0Y0.

MARCON XIX, May 18-20
Ohio’s oldest science-fiction convention will be staged at the Quality Inn, 4900 Sinclair Road, Columbus OH 43229. This event will include computer, fantasy, and science-fiction games, folk singing, comics, videos, and a dealers’ room. C.J. Cherynh will be Guest of Honor for the convention. Membership fees are $12.50 until April 15, $15.00 thereafter. A buffet brunch will be served on Saturday morning; cost is $7.50. Send all registrations and communications to: MARCON XIX, P.O. Box 14078, Columbus OH 43211-0078.

TECHNICON, May 19-20
This gaming convention will be held at the Squires Student Center, VPI Campus, Blacksburg, Virginia. For more information...
about this convention, please contact: Phillip Morris, D-4 Sturbridge Square, Blacksburg VA 24060, or telephone (703) 951-2830.

GAMEATHON 9, May 25-27
Sponsored by the Schenectady Wargamers Association, benefits from this convention will go to the Hospice of Schenectady. Events will include FRP gaming, assorted tournaments, and an AD&D™ open tournament. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to R. C. Jones, SWA Gameathon, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309.

MIGS V, May 27
The Military Interests and Games Society is preparing for its fifth annual gamesfest. This will be a FREE day of wargaming, in all its myriad forms. Various wargame tournaments and events, as well as a miniatures painting competition, will take place. The event will be held at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, R.R. 2, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. The hall will open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 10:00 p.m. For further information about the convention, please contact: Chris Goldsmith, Secretary, 100 Lorraine Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8T 3S3.

CON-JURATION, June 1-3
Gaming tournaments, a trivia contest, figure painting competition, films, and a masquerade will all be part of this event. Guest of Honor will be Jack Chalker; special guests will include Edward Bryant, Glen Cook, Warren Norwood, and Mike Resnick. Lunch with the guests and a writer’s workshop have also been planned. This year’s convention will take place at the West World Inn in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Admission is $8 until May 4, or $10 at the door. For more information, write to: Con-Juration, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169.

CAMP CON ’84, June 2
This convention will be held at Camp Emmanuel, south of Astoria, Illinois. Featured events will include a mixture of board and role-playing games. Special guests for the convention will be Terry and Carol Sager, creators of Sovereigns of the Sea™ game. For more information, contact: Kevin Sager, Box 833, Astoria IL 61501, or call (309) 329-2934.

GAMEX 1984, June 15-17
At this convention, the first 1,500 people who register at the door will receive a free game worth $10. Featured gaming events will include war, fantasy, role-playing, family, sports, and computer games. Seminars, flea markets, and a special game auction will also be on the convention schedule. For more information about registration and admission prices, contact: GAMEX 1984, P.O. Box 758, Bellflower CA 90706.

DESOLATION CON, June 16
This convention will offer board and role-playing games, miniatures, costume contests, an art show, and a movie room. For more information, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Desolation Con, P.O. Box 297, Richland WA 99352.

ORIGINS 84, June 21-24
This 10th annual national gaming convention will be staged at the Dallas Market Hall-North. Without exception, every major adventure gaming company will be present or represented at the show. Science-fiction and fantasy authors Robert Asprin, C. J. Cherryh, Fred Saberhagen, and Richard Pini will be present for seminars and autographs. Noted boardgame, role-playing, and computer software designers and developers will share their secrets and philosophies. Hundreds of tournaments, demonstrations, and workshops will run throughout the four days. For information, contact: Origins 84, P.O. Box 59899, Dallas TX 75229.

WILCON, June 23-25
Fifty free events will be featured throughout this convention, which will be held in Wilmington, Illinois. Memberships are $4 per day, or $10 for the entire weekend. For more information about this gaming convention, contact: Donald Heck, 1790 Vista Drive, Wilmington IL 60481, or phone (815) 476-7385.
The idea of a “Companion Set” addition to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules first surfaced in 1980. It was just an idea, way back then . . . . Finally, in the fall of 1982, Gary Gygax gave the go-ahead to start revising the whole D&D® game system. The new Basic and Expert sets are now complete, and on the store shelves — to be followed this summer by the outgrowth of that idea from way back when, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Companion Set. This article is a preview of Book 1 of the two-volume boxed set; Book 2 will be previewed separately in a later issue of this magazine.

Before we get going, I’d like to thank Doug Niles and Garry Spiegle for their special work on this project. I know next to nothing about wargames, but I wanted to include the best system we could put to-gether for mass battles. I wanted something that a non-wargamer like me could use easily, but that also would be acceptable to experienced miniatures players. I wanted a simple version, with options that could be added for more realism. And, I wanted it to be easy to modify; everybody applies “house rules,” or finds little things to add that weren’t covered in the original rules. I knew better than to try tackling something that weren’t covered in the original rules. I picked at it a bit, Carl Smith and Mark Acres helped fiddle and polish, and various TSR design staff members playedtest it. The wargamers around here say that it’ll handle anything. Ten bugbears? Okay. Five thousand orcs? Fine. A million dwarves? No problem. Sixty red dragons, eighty-three wyverns, and seven air elementals against nine 25th-level wizards and forty-three wyverns, and seven air elementals usually occur. The characters’ homes may be “assumed” for game purposes, or perhaps they reside in a boardinghouse in their home town. Character levels 1-3 are explained in the D&D Basic Set, and levels 4-6 in the D&D Expert Set.

“Name” small low-level characters (levels 7-14) often travel far and wide. Long journeys, deep dungeons, and special tasks are typical adventures in this range. The character builds or buys a stronghold, or takes rooms in another’s castle in exchange for services or payments. This range of characters is detailed in the D&D Expert Set.

Upper-level characters (levels 15-25) continue the exploration (or conquest!) of the world. PC rulers gain power and wealth, while travelers gather knowledge and fame. Other planes of existence are described in the final D&D game set, The Immortals.

When you think about the game with this sort of “overview,” you can plan what your characters want from their careers. Dungeon Masters usually plan ahead; now it’s time for the players to do that, too.

Companion-level games

So you have a 15th-level character. What are you going to do now?

From this point, your character may travel far and near, or may settle down to rule a land. Both can be exciting, adventurous, and fruitful paths to follow.

Whichever you choose, the games you play will be somewhat different than they have been. Characters in this range have many powers, and can easily handle the more “routine” monsters. Adventures become much more than simple “kill the monster, grab the treasure” affairs. Role-playing becomes more important, and more fun.

Characters become more independent. When the characters started their careers, they needed each other just to survive. But now a few trolls present nothing more than an opportunity for exercise, rather than deadly danger. Now the characters aren’t as dependent on each other; they can survive and prosper as individuals. The persons with whom a character adventures are now more important as friends, and no longer must necessarily serve as bodyguards for one another.

The campaign world plays a large part in D&D games of this range. Although a few dungeon or wilderness adventures are quite acceptable “just for fun,” consider the characters’ reasons for being. Why is your character a professional adventurer? Does your character have goals — power, riches, fame, knowledge? Why is your character venturing into deadly danger every week? What keeps him going?

PART 2: COMBAT

New armor and weapons

The Companion Set introduces two new armor types — scale mail and banded mail — and four new special weapons. New combat rules are also included.
classes (9 to 3, without shield). The list of available armor now goes like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A C T y p e</th>
<th>Encumbrance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Leather armor</td>
<td>200 cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Scale mail</td>
<td>300 cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Chain mail</td>
<td>400 cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Banded mail</td>
<td>450 cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Plate mail</td>
<td>500 cn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 Shield</td>
<td>100 cn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These new weapons are included as well: bastard sword, blackjack, blowgun, bola, heavy crossbow, net, trident, and whip. Complete details and descriptions for each are given in the set.

**Unarmed combat**

Normal armed combat procedures are used whenever a character uses an unlisted “weapon” to attack (such as, in brawls, throwing mugs, tables, and chairs; these are all unlisted weapons).

Unarmed combat is, obviously, combat without weapons (a fist is not considered a weapon). It is usable by all character classes. The attacker either strikes an opponent (with a fist, kick, etc.), or tries to grab an opponent (or jump on, tackle, etc.). Thus, two systems are used; one for “Striking,” including all unarmed blows, and one for “Wrestling,” for all other forms of unarmed combat.

**Striking:** Although any creature may attempt to strike an opponent, few can do it well. A strike can normally result in either a stun or a knockout. Some adjustments apply for size differences, and certain creatures are immune to some or all of the effects (such as those damaged only by magic or silver weapons, non-corporeal and goopy critters, and so forth).

To make a strike, a standard hit roll is used. The base damage is zero, plus strength bonus (if any). The victim must check for stun, and must also make a saving throw or suffer a brief knockout.

**Wrestling:** Nearly anyone can wrestle. As with striking, certain creatures are immune to the effects (notably non-corporeal and goopy critters). A new game mechanic is introduced — the “Wrestling Rating” (WR), calculated as follows for characters: Divide the character’s level by 2, rounding up; apply all bonuses and/or penalties for high or low strength and dexterity scores; and add the character’s armor class, not counting magic or dexterity adjustments.

When two combatants engage each other and at least one of them is unarmed and wants to wrestle, each opponent rolls 1d20 and adds his WR to the roll. The opponent with the higher number has gained the advantage, and either grabs the other combatant (if unarmed) or attacks normally (if armed). If two unarmed opponents are involved, one of them must win three consecutive wrestling rolls — getting a grab, then a fall, then a pin — before the opponent is helpless. Other possibilities abound, of course; the rules in the Companion set cover these.

Various simple and logical adjustments can be applied to all of this, and the situation is a bit more complicated for several opponents of various sizes, some armed. Once a victim is pinned, the attacker may try to inflict damage, if desired, but the victim gets a saving throw, and may break the pin.

By using unarmed combat rules, characters are free to perform acts of heroic fantasy — wrestling huge opponents to the ground, or escaping from imprisonment when no weapons are available. Unarmed combat is actually the most common of all forms of combat, and can now be used as often as desired.

These systems may be applied to any unarmed attack. A giant may attempt to kick a halfling; a character may attempt to use a shield to “bash” an opponent. (Both are treated as strikes.) If a purple worm attacks a town, the guards may all try to pile onto the creature, rather than risking normal combat and being swallowed (though dozens of guards would be needed to stop the monster in this way).

The DM and players should try the systems and decide whether to use them. However, if the DM does not allow unarmed combat, the DM must also decide what to do when characters attempt something of this sort. For example, if a party member is enchanted in some way and attacks other characters, the others will probably want to stop the victim without inflicting damage.
This is quite reasonable, but only an unarmored combat system (or magic) can handle the resulting situation.

**PART 3: STRONGHOLDS**

Part of Book 1 (also known as the Players’ Companion) is used to explain the typical staff in a castle or stronghold. Some typical servants (servants) are: armorer, barber, carpenter, cellarmen (wine stewards), cook, dairyman, falconer, forester, gardener, groom, kennelmen, miller, portalman, potter, poultryman, stonemason, and weaver. Many peasants are also needed to work the fields, perform menial tasks, and handle other routine jobs.

Most rulers have advisors to handle the many details of the dominion and stronghold, and to advise the ruler as needed. The most common advisors are the artillerist, castellan, chaplain, engineer, guard captain, herald, magist, chief magistrate, reeve, squire, seneschal, and steward. Other officials may be needed for the proper handling of a stronghold or dominion, including a bailiff, chamberlain, equerry, magistrates, marshalls, provosts, sheriffs, and wardens.

When a ruler is the liege of another ruler (a Count or a higher rank), the lesser ruler may send his children to the liege as servants and for training. A squire is the son of a noble, acting as a servant while being trained as a fighter. A lady-in-waiting is the daughter of a noble, acting as a servant while being trained in housekeeping by the matron of the household, and in search of a husband at the same time.

**PART 4: CHARACTER CLASSES**

Each character class description gives the usual information on hit rolls, saving throws, new spells, XP needed per level, and the usual information on hit rolls, saving throws, the resulting situation.

A neutral cleric may, if desired, become a Paladin if certain requirements are met. First, the fighter must swear fealty (allegiance) to a lawful church to gain paladin status, and may thereafter be summoned by the church leaders at any time. The title is gained, a paladin can detect evil at a range of up to 120’ once per round; can turn undead as a cleric of one-third the paladin’s level; and, if the paladin’s wisdom score is 13 or higher, he can cast cleric spells, again as a cleric of one-third the paladin’s level. A paladin may only travel with a limited number of hirelings, and must assist anyone (except evil creatures) that asks for help. “Assistance” never involves donations of money or items, but only service for a short time.

A neutral wandering fighter may become a Knight. The fighter must swear fealty to royalty (a prince, king, or emperor); in return, the ruler will declare the character a knight. That ruler then becomes the knight’s “liege.” Lawful and chaotic fighters may become knights if they do not become paladins or avengers (see below), whether this is by choice or by failure to meet the requirements for those two categories. If summoned by his liege, the knight must obey as quickly as possible. If the knight ever refuses (or swears fealty to another liege), very severe penalties are applied. A knight may visit any castle, of any territory, and demand sanctuary; the castle owner must then give the knight a place to stay for up to 3 days, along with food and drink. Finally, if a call to arms sounds, the knight is required (in most cases) to immediately travel to the ruling castle of the territory, and serve as ordered by the ruler.

A chaotic wandering fighter may become an Avenger if certain requirements are met. To become an avenger, the fighter must make an alliance with a chaotic church. (This is not a swearing of fealty, but a loose agreement of loyalty and support.) The avenger may be summoned by the church leaders at any time. An avenger can detect evil and cast cleric spells as a paladin does (see above). An avenger can turn undead in the same manner, but may choose to control them instead of gaining the usual result. Though an avenger cannot have human or demi-human hirelings, the character may try to recruit a chaotic monster; if this attempt is successful, the creature will follow and obey the avenger. Finally, the avenger may demand sanctuary from any chaotic ruler, and may get sanctuary from others by pretending to be a knight.

Some new combat options are made available to fighters of all types, and to demi-humans as well — if they learn them from human fighters. These are: multiple attacks, possible whenever an attacker’s adjusted hit roll is 2 or less against a given opponent; smashing, where the attacker accepts a penalty to hit, but if the attack succeeds he can add his entire strength score as a damage bonus; parrying, which affords a defender extra protection (attacks are -4 to hit) against most attack forms; and disarming, an “attack” that does no damage but forces the defender to “check against dexterity” or drop his weapon.

**Magic-users**

A land-owning magic-user may build or seize a tower, with interesting results. A dungeon may be built beneath or near it. The dungeon is most often constructed by specialists in mining who are hired by the magic-user, but it can be created magically if the proper spells are known and used. When one or more levels of the dungeon are completed and thereafter left open, monsters will start moving in to live there. Shortly thereafter, low-level adventurers will start arriving to seek their fortunes. Most magic-users with dungeons visit them once each month (or more often), gathering any magical treasures that remain. If too much treasure is taken from the creatures, they will probably move out soon thereafter. Occasionally, if this is done quietly and secretly, the magic-user may take some of the monsters for use in magical research and potion making. This must be done carefully, lest the remaining monsters be scared away.

A land-owning magic-user may wish to become a Magist. This is a powerful position in any castle or stronghold. The magist advises the ruler in matters involving magic, and handles the magical needs of the ruler and the stronghold. A magist may go on normal adventures if the ruler gives permission. The ruler knows that a more experienced magist is a more powerful magist, and will usually give permission if the magist’s services are not urgently needed at present.

**Spells notable:** The maximum damage produced by any single spell — including fire ball, lightning bolt, and delayed blast fire ball — is 20 dice, of the type specified (usually d6). This is very important for game balance, and should not be disregarded. For example, without this limit, a high-level magic-user could instantly slay any other magic-user by surprise, regardless of the results of the saving throw!

**Thieves**

A thief who wishes to settle down must contact the Thieves’ Guild. The guild will help establish the thief as a guildmaster for
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The rules deal with Superpowers, Secret Identities, Combat, Encounters, Hero Creation, and more! VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES comes as a boxed set with the rulebook, introductory adventure, reference screen, and dice for only $12.50.

Rulebook alone ........................................ $6.00
Introductory Adventure (Crisis at Crusader City) $3.50
Additional Adventures
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DRAGON 41
a new branch of the guild (perhaps in a faraway town where no guild currently exists), or may send the thief to an existing guild to fill a vacancy. Income will be gained from the activities of the guild members. The character can, at some point, ask for control of a larger branch of the guild (and this is recommended when the character reaches 18th level), and may eventually become a powerful official in the guild headquarters.

Skilled (high-level) thieves are always needed for difficult and unusual adventures, and the guildmaster thief is the person contacted by adventurers when such jobs are available. The guildmaster thief may choose to take the job, or may allow one or more of the guild members to have it, but the guildmaster gets first choice in any case.

A wandering thief is known as a Rogue. A rogue must remain a member of the Thieves’ Guild, though he need only visit the guild headquarters once a year. A rogue can never become a guildmaster of an existing guild (though a new branch may be started with this goal in mind). However, a rogue may visit existing guildmasters and obtain local information, tips, and rumors.

Demi-humans
All demi-human adventurers are very limited in levels of experience and hit points. Elves are simply incapable of learning the arts of powerful magic (spells of higher than 5th level), and no demi-human can match ahuman’s “staying power,” as indicated by hit points.

Though their history is long, demi-humans have never developed the art of combat to a high degree. However, humans did concentrate their talents in this area. In locales where demi-humans and humans interact, experienced demi-humans can learn additional fighting skills from their human friends. Thus, the player of a demi-human character should keep track of experience points earned after the character’s maximum level is reached; as this figure increases, combat ability improves accordingly (as given in each class description).

Each demi-human clan has a sacred item, called a Relic, which is kept in the center of the clan stronghold. The relic is tended by a keeper and 2-8 aides. A Forge of Power rests at the heart of every dwarven clan; it may be used to create a dwarven lens and the extremely rare oil of darkness. A Tree of Life stands at the center of every elven clan; it may be used to create an elven lightship and oil of sunlight. A Crucible of Blackflame rests at the heart of every halfling clan. Blackflame acts as the reverse of normal flame; it burns cold and dark, igniting things that normal flame does not burn, able to burn ashes and leave behind whole items. The Crucible, a pyramid-shaped wooden container, may be used (along with the Blackflame itself) to create a web of shadows and the extremely rare oil of moonlight.

The position of keeper is hereditary; each keeper passes the secret knowledge of the tending and use of the relic to his or her son or daughter, never writing down any details, lest they be stolen. This secret knowledge includes how to construct a special item, as given in each class description.

A demi-human character gains resistance to some special attack forms when the character acquires a certain number of experience points. When this resistance is gained, the demi-human automatically takes half damage from the attack given; a successful saving throw (of the type applicable) drops that to one-quarter damage.

With these rules in use, experienced demi-humans can often hold their own when adventuring with humans. Though their hit points are fewer, their special abilities, resistances, and competitive combat ability allows them to survive and compete.

Summary
The D&D Companion Set contains lots more information on the above topics. And this is only a summary of Book 1, the Players’ Companion. Book 2, for Dungeon Masters, has the “War Machine” mass combat system, new treasures, detailed campaign information, notes on the elemental planes, and (of course) new monsters — including the new undead, and dragons that can eat 15th level characters for breakfast. Watch for the second preview article for details.
The Twofold Talisman

Adventure One:
The Heart of Light

A tournament adventure for the AD&D™ game
The Twofold Talisman

by Roger Moore, Philip Tatercyznksi, Douglas Niles, & Georgia Moore

The Twofold Talisman is an RPGA™ tournament module for the AD&D™ game. It is played in two parts. Players must complete each adventure in four hours (real time), using the eight pregenerated characters provided with this text. During the adventures, players may only consult the Players Handbook; tournament rules permit no other references. Optionally, Dungeon Masters may adapt these scenarios into their campaigns with little trouble.

Players’ introduction

The travels of your party have brought you to Jalkive, the capital city of a small kingdom. The eight members of your party are close companions; you trust and rely on each other completely. In Jalkive, you plan to take a break from the rigors of adventure and spend some of the wealth you have gathered. Entertainment is plentiful here — for those who can afford it. The local citizenry, however, has little wealth; the residents of Jalkive live in poverty under the rule of the city’s powerful guildmasters.

While you relax at a local inn, chuckling with your companions over great exploits past, a hooded stranger slips quietly into a chair at your table. “I must speak with you,” he whispers, “on a matter of gravest urgency. I am the servant of the wizard Mekkari, and I contact you on his behalf — for the good of the city of Jalkive.

“You must know that the guildmasters exert great power here. They tax us outrageously, and only those accepted by the guilds can hope to attain wealth or power. My master Mekkari is a powerful magician who rebelled against the guildmasters. For this, they banished him from the kingdom and confiscated his belongings.

“Some of his possessions were special indeed. My master owned two gems of extraordinary power, the Heart of Light and the Ebon Stone. People say that these talismans maintain the balance of good and evil in Jalkive. I cannot say whether this is true, but I do know that with the gems, my master may be able to undo the guildmasters’ power.

“The unfortunate thing is that Mekkari does not have either of these stones now. For all his good qualities, he is more than a little forgetful. Although he knows the Heart of Light is hidden in his country mansion, he has forgotten where he put it. The guildmasters don’t know about the failure of his memory, and they have set guards before the estate to prevent him from returning, but have not ordered their soldiers to enter his home for fear of the traps and guards within. As for the Ebon Stone, the guildmasters have seized that gem and carried it away.

“Mekkari has authorized me to assemble a group of stalwart souls who would attempt to enter his mansion and recapture the Heart of Light for him. In the name of Mekkari, will you help us?”

The stranger tells the truth; of that, you are sure. Whether for a possible reward, for the lure of adventure, or simply to assist someone in need, you decide to undertake the mission.

DM’s introduction

The servant gives the adventurers two drawings. The first portrays a white gem of tremendous brightness; the second shows a deep black stone that suggests mystery and danger. Players do not need actual drawings of the gems, but characters who have viewed the drawings will recognize the real Heart of Light and Ebon Stone when they see them.

The servant also gives the party directions to Mekkari’s mansion, located in the hills several miles from Jalkive. If this module is played as part of a campaign, the adventure may end at the conclusion of the quest or may be continued in any manner the referee sees fit. In tournament play, the first adventure ends when four hours (real time) have passed, or when the characters escape from the mansion and think they have obtained the Heart of Light.

The servant doesn’t know how, or whether, Mekkari may reward the adventurers for the quest, but in response to a question on this topic, he will say that his master is generous to those who serve him well. He asks the player characters to leave at dawn the next day. The DM may invent an appropriate reward if using this adventure in a regular campaign, and may invent his own NPC version of the wizard Mekkari, if desired. The servant is a 0-level human, AC 10, with 4 HP.

The DM should distribute character information to the players before the Players’ Introduction is read to them; players should make spell selections for their characters, using the lists of available spells at the end of the module, after the introduction is finished. The character information sheets list the equipment the characters carry; nothing more may be added before the adventure begins. The spell lists contain those spells available to the magic-users, clerics, and the illusionist; no other spells may be substituted in tournament play. In a campaign setting, spell-casting characters should select and obtain their spells for the day before the adventure begins.

The players should be told that the saving throws on their characters’ sheets reflect all bonuses for constitution and magic items. However, the “to hit” information shows only the characters’ base scores; bonuses for strength and magic must be added when appropriate.

The approach

The following text should be read aloud to the players to start the adventure:

“When the sun rises, the gates of Jalkive already lie far behind you. Ahead, the wide main road curves gently through lightly wooded hills. A few miles from the city, a narrow lane branches off from the main road; you follow it, leaving the merchants and other travelers behind. The lane, poorly maintained, twists steeply upward through the woods. No other travelers come into view. The lane narrows even more as it continues to wind sharply upward. Then, a large house suddenly looms into view as the party rounds a sharp corner in the path. A 10-foot-high wall is visible about 100 feet away, and from what you can see the wall is still quite a distance from the mansion itself.”

Players may now decide to either have their characters: 1) leave the path and scout around or 2) follow the path toward the wall.
Scouting around

If they scout around, characters will discover that the 10’ wall completely encircles the mansion, except for where a large front gate is set into the stone, at the point where the path intersects with the wall. Thieves can attempt to climb the outer wall, and when they make it up to the 2-foot-wide top edge, they can help others up with a rope. When the characters get to the top edge, the DM should provide players with a hand-drawn sketch similar to the cross-section diagram reproduced here, depicting a rough-textured slope on the inside of the wall that extends down into an empty moat. This sketch should not be identical to the diagram printed on this page, because that would give away the illusionary aspects of the sloping wall and the moat.

From the vantage point on the top of the wall, the characters look down upon a complex illusion. The rough wall is actually smooth, as indicated by the gray area on the diagram, and water and fish fill the moat to a depth of 10 feet. If characters touch the rough wall, it will feel smooth; the illusion is not removed by physical contact. Only dispel illusion or dispel magic will make the wall appear as it actually is (if the dispel is successfully cast against 14th-level magic). A dispel magic cast upon the ditch will reveal the water, but the fish will remain hidden beneath its murky surface. Detect illusion will show what appears to be an empty ditch with a very smooth slope dropping into it from the wall. (In tournament play, all dispel magic will be successful automatically.)

The fish are quippers (AC 8; MV 9”; HD 1/2; HP 1; D/Att 1-2). Whenever a character slays a quipper, another quipper comes to take its place. The DM doesn’t have to keep track of the fish, since hundreds live in the moat, and hundreds will still be there to attack no matter how many the characters kill.

The sharply sloping inner wall is completely frictionless. Unless descending characters hang onto a rope or somehow secure themselves, they will slide down into the water as soon as they move out onto the sloping surface. After a character lands in the water, 1-20 quippers will attack that individual in the next round. If any quipper attacks successfully in the first round, a full 20 quippers will attack in the following round, biting twice each round. If all the quippers attacking in the first round fail to hit, it is only 40% likely that they will attack the same character again on the next round.

If a character wears leather or magical armor, he can swim to the opposite side of the moat and climb out in one round. He cannot climb back up the frictionless wall without a rope, but the opposite wall of the moat is rough; a character can climb that side without assistance.

A character who wears any non-magical armor other than leather will automatically sink to the bottom of the moat in the same round that he falls in. In one round afterward, he can make his way to the rough slope on the other side and then climb up in 1-4 more rounds.

At the start of each round after the first, the DM should roll 1d20 for each character in the moat to check for drowning. If the result surpasses the character’s constitution, the character drowns. After five consecutive rounds in the moat, a character will drown automatically, even if he passes all of his constitution checks. Characters can be rescued before they die, of course.

Note: Quippers will first attack characters who sink underwater. An underwater character can counterattack only with a spear, dagger, short sword, or similar thrusting weapon; swimming characters can only use a dagger. No other weapons work in the water (as per underwater combat rules in the DMG).

Approaching the gate

If characters come along the lane and approach the front gate directly, the first things they will notice are two large statues of apes, apparently made of pink stone, standing before both sides of the front gate. The statues — actually stone golems — will notice any character who comes along the lane to within 60 feet of the doors. The guildmasters had these golems installed here to keep Mekkari and his allies away, and also paid to have magic mouth spells cast upon each of them. Once and only once, to each character who approaches, the golems will ask, “Friend or foe?” For good results, the character should answer as if the question were “Friend or foe of Mekkari?” If the character answers “foe,” the golems will turn and push the doors open, allowing that character to pass without resistance. If any character answers “friend,” the golems will stand blocking the doorway, and will attempt to keep the “friend” from entering. No second chances are possible where this answer is concerned.

The golems will not hinder any character who scales the outer wall and gets across the moat (see “Scouting around,” above), regardless of how that character may have answered the question. Anyone who doesn’t answer and then tries to get through the doorway is treated as a “friend.”

The golems will not attack “friends” with intent to kill, but will stand blocking each side of the double-doored iron gate. If a “friend” attempts to get past them or tries to attack one of them, that golem will throw off a slow spell that affects the offending character for 20 rounds. Each golem can do this only once, and the magic offers no saving throw.

Then, with the slowed character and each offender encountered thereafter, the golems will try to grab characters and throw them away from the gate, needing an 8 to hit (grab) AC 0. The grab does no damage, but the toss will be a distance of 10-60 feet, and the character will suffer 1 point of damage for each 10 feet thrown.

The golems serve primarily to harass the party; none of the player characters in the tournament game can effectively attack a stone golem, which forces them to take the tougher route into the mansion (over the wall). In any event, if the golems are somehow neutralized, none of the tournament PCs (singly or in a group) are strong enough to force open the massive iron doors. If a “friend” somehow manages to slip past the golems and move through the gate after they have opened it, the golems will not pursue that character into the area inside the wall.
The path to the mansion

After characters overcome these obstacles (moat, gate, or both), they will notice a path parallel to the inner bank of the moat. This path encircles the mansion grounds; other paths diverge from the main route periodically, leading off into the woods. These secondary paths appear to have been designed for scenic walks, and wind lazily through the trees.

The trees stand 20' to 50' high. The paths measure 5' across, and are somewhat overgrown with weeds. Eventually all of the secondary paths run into another inner path, which circles a smaller moat. The mansion lies beyond. Clear water fills this moat, revealing fish swimming below the water’s surface.

If a PC approaches the inner moat, fish congregate in the water like a small mob, gazing up with open mouths and following the character as he walks. The fish resemble quippers, but they’re a harmless species. The moat is 10’ deep, like the outer moat. If anyone tries to swim across, the fish act just like quippers, nibbling frantically at the character but inflicting no damage. (DMs should roll dice as if the fish were attacking, but ignore the results). The PCs may cross this moat like the previous one, except that either bank can be climbed. Otherwise the situation is the same, including chances for drowning.

The characters cannot jump across this moat. If they don’t want to swim it, they can try to cross the wooden bridge leading to the front side of the mansion. An unarmed elf stands on the other side of the bridge, dressed in green clothes. For reasons detailed below, the elf cannot be surprised. Unless characters attack him, he will act in a carefree, casual manner. He offers absolutely no response to questions, though he watches the characters carefully. If a character casts a spell on the elf, see the description below. Detect evil/good has no effect. Detect magic reveals that the elf is magical.

As soon as a character sets foot on the bridge, the elf will point at him, and instantly the PC must save vs. spell (as for will-force magic) or be seized with fear for 6 rounds. Once stricken by fear, the PC will run into the woods to hide; he won’t come out until the fear wears off or a remove fear spell is cast upon him. The elf can inflict fear once per round within 180’, affecting one victim at a time.

Anyone who reaches the other side of the bridge finds the elf facing him at a 30’ distance. The elf will shake his head and motion for the party to leave the area. If this order is refused or the elf is attacked, the “elf” shows his true nature; it is actually a polymorphed green slaad. The slaad will attack fearlessly until the characters flee or die, or it is slain.

The slaad’s statistics are: AC 3, MV 9”, HD 9+3, HP 35, D/Att 2-16 bite/3-8 claw/3-8 claw. A +1 or better weapon is needed to hit it. Its special powers include: ESP (which prevents surprise in tournament play), cause fear, polymorph self and detect invisibility. Other slaad powers have been constrained by spells that Mekkari’s enemies placed upon the creature. The slaad can use one of its powers once per round at will. It has 50% magic resistance.

The green slaad cannot enter the mansion or cross the moat; it is forced to stay on the inside of the moated area next to the mansion. If slain, the creature disappears completely. It has no treasure.

The mansion

A set of heavy oaken doors serves as the only entrance to Mekkari’s mansion. The outer walls are enchanted to be super-slick, but they appear rough. They cannot be climbed.

A knocker with an imp’s face is bolted to each of the oaken doors. If the characters approach, one “imp” asks the following questions of the lead character:
1) What is your name?
2) What is your quest?
3) What is your favorite color?
The character’s answers do not matter;
the doors are not locked, and they can be opened at any time. Attacking the knockers has no effect; they are here to delay the party. The PCs can safely ignore them.

**Special notes on the interior**

1) Everything in the mansion radiates a magical aura, though most objects do nothing unusual. Magical effects, where they exist, are at the 16th level of ability.

2) All ceilings are 10’ high.

3) Characters must roll to open doors as usual, but all inhabitants of the house may open doors just by touching them. If a door is left open, it closes in one round.

4) *Locate object* will not reveal the location of the Heart of Light, but will work on any other nonliving object in the house.

5) When random items are called for, turn to the list at the end of the adventure and roll for a result listed there. In non-tournament play, extra items may be added.

6) Characters cannot cut through walls, ceilings, or floors in the mansion, though they may damage or destroy any of the thick oaken doors in the interior if they want to.

---

**1: Entry hall**

10’ x 40’; 4 doors; thickly carpeted.

In this room, footsteps make no sound. A 10’ wide stairway leads up to a landing, then branches up to the left and right. A door stands on each side of the entry hall; both doors are closed. A *continual light* spell illuminates the hallway from above the center of the hall. Oil paintings of men and women line the walls; anyone who touches them discovers they are wet and smear easily. In each picture, the eyes of the subject seem to follow the party.

*West alcove:* A full suit of plate mail armor including a closed helm stands here. A halberd is clutched in the glove. If a PC touches the suit, he takes 2-8 points of electrical damage. Then the armor falls apart, and the halberd tumbles into the alcove. Neither the suit nor the halberd is exceptionally valuable.

*East alcove:* A huge stuffed wolf, 4’ high at the shoulder, stands in this alcove. The wolf does nothing but look dangerous.

A thorough search of the entry hall produces one random item after 10 minutes, but nothing else.

---

**2: Library**

15’ x 15’, plus tower 20’ in diameter; 2 doors; thick carpeting.

Bookshelves line the curved wall in this room, extending from floor to ceiling. There seems to be no way to reach the higher shelves. A 5’ diameter circular table rests in here, over which a *continual light* spell has been cast. Six chairs line the walls in the square part of the room (2 in each corner).

Standing right where the “2” is on the map is an animated ogre skeleton (9’ tall; AC 7; MV 12”; HD 5; HP 30; D/Att 1-10; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, or cold attacks; fire does normal damage; blunt weapons do full damage, but sharp ones do half damage; holy water does 2-8). The skeleton wears black robes and an iron crown, and carries a huge staff. The creature strongly resembles a huge lich. Clerics cannot turn the skeleton, because of the special enchantments placed upon it.

When the party enters the room, the skeleton looks down on them, awaiting their orders. The skeleton only follows orders to: 1) retrieve books from the shelves; 2) attack intruders (if told to do this, it attacks the party); or 3) keep standing and do nothing. If the party gives no commands, the skeleton just stands and watches. If attacked, the skeleton defends itself with the staff.
Half-elf magic-user/thief 4th/6th level
HP 27 AC 2 front, 6 rear Armor: leather with +2 ring

Str 13 Int 17 Wis 15 Dex 16 Con 15 Cha 16
Move base 12’ Hor. 5’2” Wt. 105# Age 36 Al N

Saving throws:
Par/poison Pe/poly R/S/W Breath Spell
11 15 12

(vs. fear: 11)
Languages: Alignment, common, elf, gnoll, gnome, goblink, halfing, hobgoblin, orc.
Special abilities: detect secret doors 1 in 6 within 10’ (2 in 6 if searching); infravision 60’; +4 to hit from behind, with triple damage; 30% resistant to sleep and charm.

Bend bars/lift gates: 4% Open doors: 1-2

Base number to hit AC 0: 16
Weapons: Short sword +1; damage 1-6/1-8 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).
Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3; +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1’/2’/3’.

Proficient in: both weapons listed.
Thief abilities: pick pockets 65%; open locks 52%; detect traps 45%; move silently 47%; hide in shadows 42%; hear noise 20%; climb walls 92%; read languages 30%.
Magic items carried: +1 short sword; 2 ring of protection (to AC only); pearl of power (2nd level spell).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50’); belt purse w/30 gp; thiefs tools; 4 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40’ radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 3; 2nd level 2. (Choose from magic-user spell list.)
Half-elf magic-user 7th level

HP 35  AC 2 front, 4 rear  Armor: bracers of AC 4
Str 12  Int 14  Wis 15  Dex 16  Con 17  Cha 11
Move base 12”  Ht. 5’8”  Wt. 104#  Age 56  Al N
Saving throws:
Par/poison  Pet/poly  R/S/W  Breath  Spell
13  11  9  13  10
Languages: Alignment, common, elf, gnome,oblin, halfing, hobgoblin, orc.
Special abilities: detect secret doors 1 in 6 within 10’ (2 in 6 if searching); infravision 60’; 30% resistant to sleep and charm.

Base number to hit AC 0: 19

Weapons: Staff +1; damage 1-6/1-6 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).
Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3; +1 bonus to hit (for strength);
range 1”/2”/3”.
Dart; damage 1-3/1-2; +1 bonus to hit (for strength);
range 1½”/3”/4½”.

Proficient in: all weapons listed.
Magic items carried: bracers of protection, AC 4; l l staff; wand of fire
(4 charges).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3);
cloaks; rope (50’); belt purse w/30 gp; 6 darts; 2 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40’ radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 4; 2nd level 3; 3rd level 2; 4th level 1. (Choose from magic-user spell list.)

Dwarf fighter 7th level

HP 57  AC 2 front, 4 rear  Armor: +1 chain mail
Str 18/95  Int 11  Wis 12  Dex 16  Con 17  Cha 9(7)
Move base 6”  Ht. 4’2”  Wt. 156#  Age 142  Al LG
Saving throws:
Par/poison  Pet/poly  R/S/W  Breath  Spell
6  11  8  12  9
Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, gnome, gooblin, kobold, orc.

Special abilities: 3 attacks per 2 rounds; detect slope 75%; detect new work 75%; detect sliding/shifting wall 66½%; detect stonework traps 50%; detect depth underground 60%; detect direction of travel underground 50%; infravision 60’; +1 to hit vs. gobolins, half orcs, orcs, hobgoblins; -4 to be hit by ogres or larger humanoids and giants.

Base number to hit AC 0: 14

Weapons: Battle axe +1; damage 1-8/1-8 (+6); +3 bonus to hit
(for strength & magic).
Hand axe; damage 1-6/1-4 (+5); +2 bonus to hit
(for strength); range 1”/2”/3”.
Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3 (+5); +2 bonus to hit
(for strength); range 1½”/2½”/3½”.

Proficient in: all weapons listed, plus mace and short sword.
Magic items carried: +1 chain mail; +1 shield; +1 battle axe; potion of water breathing.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); rope (50’); belt purse w/50 gp; 2 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40’ radius and burn for 6 turns.)

The Twofold Talisman  Character Sheets

(Reproduce or photocopy these pages, then cut apart)

Halfling thief 6th level

HP 35  AC 7 front, 7 rear  Armor: +1 leather
Str 14  Int 8  Wis 10  Dex 13  Con 16  Cha 6
Move base 9”  Ht. 3’0”  Wt. 60#  Age 41  Al LN
Saving throws:
Par/poison  Pet/poly  R/S/W  Breath  Spell
8  11  9  15  12
Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, elf, gnome, gooblin, halfing, orc.
Special abilities: detect slope 75%; detect direction of travel underground 50%; infravision 30’; +4 to hit from behind, with triple damage; surprise on 1-4 if 90’ from rest of party.

Base number to hit AC 0: 19

Weapons: Short sword +1; damage 1-6/1-8 (+1); +1 bonus to hit
(for magic).
Dart +3; damage 1-3/1-2 (+3); +3 bonus to hit (for magic);
range 1½”/3”/4½”.
Dart; damage 1-6/1-3; range 1”/2”/3”.

Proficient in: all weapons listed.
Magic items carried: +1 short sword, detects precious metals within 10’; +3 darts (3); boots of levitation.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50’); belt purse w/30 gp; thieves tools; 3 darts. (Torches illuminate a 40’ radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Human fighter 7th level

HP 50  AC 1 front, 4 rear  Armor: chain mail
Str 18/50  Int 13  Wis 10  Dex 15  Con 16  Cha 14
Move base 9”  Ht. 6’2”  Wt. 175#  Age 28  Al CG
Saving throws:
Par/poison  Pet/poly  R/S/W  Breath  Spell
9  10  11  12
Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, elf.
Special abilities: 3 attacks per 2 rounds.

Base number to hit AC 0: 15

Weapons: Two-handed sword; damage 1-10/3-18 (+3); +1 bonus to hit
(for strength).
Hand axe; damage 1-6/1-4 (+3); +1 bonus to hit
(for strength).
Mace +1; damage 2-7/1-6 (+4); +2 bonus to hit
(for strength & magic).

Proficient in: all weapons listed, plus long sword, short sword, and dagger.
Magic items carried: +1 shield; +1 mace; +1 ring of protection; potion of invulnerability.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); rope (50’); belt purse w/50 gp; two-handed sword; 2 hand axes. (Torches illuminate a 40’ radius and burn for 6 turns.)
The books in the library are written in common, elven, and dwarven, and concern history, geography, and politics. Like practically every other object in the mansion, they’re covered with dust.

If the PCs search the library, they discover one random item after 10 minutes, or two after 20 minutes.

3: Parlor
15' x 15'; 2 doors; thick carpeting.

Pink silk wall hangings adorn the walls of this room. A long couch sits against the west wall, facing a huge mural of field flowers to the east. If anyone sits on the couch, the doors in the room swing shut and become wizard locked. Flying insects begin to pour out of the enchanted picture, attempting to sting everyone in the room. Characters cannot effectively swat the insects, because too many of them appear. After 10 rounds, the little pests return to the enchanted picture to wait for their next set.

During the insect attack, characters take 1 HP of damage per round, unless they repel the attack or escape. Dispel magic or a knock spell will open the doors (success automatic in tournament play). A strong character may also open them; if his or her strength score is 18/91-99, the chance for success is 1 in 6. If strength is 18/00, the chance for success is 2 in 6.

4: Great hall
10' x 50'; 5 normal doors, 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

A continual light spell illuminates the great hall. If a character enters the hall, roll d6 to determine the hall’s inhabitants. After every 30-minute period, roll again if a character enters. Results for each die roll are as follows:

1) 6 giant rats (1' long). The rats attack if they outnumber the party, otherwise, they flee to room 12. (AC 7; MV 12'; HD 1; HP 4 each; D/Att 1-3)
2) 4 giant ants (2’ long). The ants always attack. (AC 3; MV 18"; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)
3) 2 volts. They always attack. (AC 3; MV 6’ flying; HD 2+1; HP 10; immune to electrical attacks; D/Att 1-4; if bite hits, the volt cannot be removed from the victim's neck and drains 1-4 HP per round thereafter; also will lash at victim with tail for 2-12 electrical damage once it is attached; no "to hit" roll needed for tail)
4-6) Room is empty.

5: Storeroom
10’ x 10’; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

Shelves line the walls of this darkened room, holding linens, tools, and empty jars. After characters search for 1 turn, they find a jar with a large, cut gemstone inside. The stone is clear, like a diamond, but any dwarf or gnome would know it’s cheap quartz crystal (1 gp). The crystal bears no resemblance to the Heart of Light.

The door opposite the entryway bears a sign marked “To the Furnaces.” The door is warm to the touch. Anyone who opens it must save vs. poison or die. During the insect attack, characters take 1 HP of damage per round, unless they

6: Minor laboratory
10’ x 25’; 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

This room is completely dark. It is filled with workbenches, shelves, and cabinets, all of which contain alchemical equipment—bottles of strange liquids, unknown powders, etc. A large stone urn covered by a lid stands in the southwest corner of the room. Removing the lid requires the same die roll as opening a door. The moment the lid is off, smoke pours out of the urn, filling the room and any areas beyond an open door. The smoke fills the available area in 1 round, effectively blinding all characters for 1 turn (10 rounds) thereafter, after which the smoke begins to fade. Blinded characters have a -4 “to hit” on all attacks. DMs may place a small monster here in non-tournament play.

If characters smash the alchemical equipment, they have a 25% cumulative chance per round of setting off an explosion for 4-16 points of damage per character, inflicted upon everyone in the room. Anyone who drinks or eats a substance from this room must save vs. poison or die.

A careful search of the room reveals one random item per turn until three items are found.

7: Servant’s bedroom
20’ diameter tower, plus 10’ x 10’ area; 1 door; thick carpeting.

This room contains a bed, bookshelves, and chairs. A careful search lasting at least 1 turn will produce a slip of paper with these words: “Remember to return Mickey’s beholder to him as soon as possible.”

Under the bed lies a box (locked and trapped) that contains 100 platinum pieces. A thief may try to open the box and remove the trap (a poisoned needle, save vs. poison at +2 or sleep for 24 hours). A note lies inside the box, reading: “Put this with the rest of the cash down in the furnaces.”

Characters will find nothing else in the room.

8: First aid room
10’ x 15’; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

The door to this room bears a sign that says “Do Not Open.” Anyone who opens the door discovers that it is actually a huge killer mimic (see below), and the PC’s hand sticks to the doorknob. The door then punches the character for 3-12 points of
damage per round, attacking until it is slain. Once the mimic dies, the character stuck to the doorknob can pull free. The mimic (AC 7; HD 9; HP 45) is large. Only two other characters besides the one stuck to the door may attack it.

A large table stands inside the room. A jar rests on the table, with a yellow smiling “happy face” for a label. The jar contains five applications of Keoghtm’s ointment (heals 9-12 points per application, plus cure poison and cure disease).

The room contains nothing more besides the secret door in the west wall.

9: Secret room
10’ x 5’; 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

A fear spell strikes any character who goes through the secret door (save vs. spell applicable). If the save fails, the character runs (or tries to run) for 10 rounds to get out of the mansion and into the surrounding woods. Opening a door takes 1 round, but crossing a room takes essentially no time at all.

Anyone who saves vs. spell and enters the room finds a small teddy bear labeled “Pooky” in the south part of the room. Pooky acts like a ring of protection +3 for anyone who carries him.

The room contains nothing else.

10: Kitchen
10’ x 50’ plus 20’ diameter tower; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

The kitchen is extremely hot. Under the illumination of a continual light spell, characters can see that the room is in complete disarray. Shelves line the walls, and a round stone table sits under the light. The table’s surface is magically hot; if touched, it inflicts 4 points of damage. Rectangular paper boxes lie all over the kitchen, filled with moldy food. Empty wine bottles litter the floor, all of them labeled “Mad Dog #5: Our Best For Live-Alone Bachelors.” Rat droppings cover the floor, though no rats are present.

Two giant warrior ants wait in the west end of the kitchen, and will attack anyone who enters. (2’ long; AC 3; MV 18”; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)

Careful searching reveals one random item per turn for a maximum of two turns. The first item includes a note asking “Where is Mickey’s beholder? It was in the museum yesterday, but seems to have been moved. Your faithful butler.”

11: The itty-bitty room
5’ x 5’; 1 door; hardwood floor.

The door is marked “Express Exit.” Inside, the room is dark and completely empty. Anyone who steps inside must save vs. spell or be teleported outside to the two pink stone apes (golems) at the front gates. The pink apes challenge the newcomer(s) immediately. Of course, at the adventure’s end, this quick exit could prove very useful.

The stairway next to the room ascends to the next floor, 15’ above.

12: Dining room
30’ x 20’; 5 doors; hardwood floor.

A crystal chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling, suspended over a 20’ long, 5’ wide dining table. Numerous continual light spells shine from the huge fixture. Many landscape paintings hang on the walls, and dust covers everything. The table is bare, and twelve chairs sit around it – labeled “Sleepy,” “Grumpy,” “Doc,” “Dopey,” etc. (Make up names as needed.)

Three volts hide in the bright chandelier, but no one can see them until they levitate down, surprising opponents on a d6 roll of 1-4. They will attack immediately. (AC 3; MV 6’ flying; HD 2+1; HP 10; immune to electrical attacks; D/Att 1-4; if bite hits, the volt cannot be removed from the victim’s neck and drains 1-4 HP per round thereafter; also will lash at victim with tail for 2-12 electrical damage once it is attacked; no “to hit” roll needed for tail)

Searching the room reveals one item after one turn of searching, but nothing further.

13: Closet
5’ x 5’; 1 door; hardwood floor.

Expensive silverware fills this closet. Picking up all the items takes only one turn. However, if PCs take the treasure out of the mansion, the silver becomes extremely heavy. Anyone who carries even a single fork will be suddenly pinned to the ground by the weight. The victim stays pinned until the silver is discarded.

14: Lounge
10’ x 15’ plus 20’ diameter tower; 2 doors; carpeted floor.

The lounge is very dark. Chairs line the walls of the tower, all of them facing a small table on which a 12-inch-diameter crystal globe lies. Moldy food and rat-chewed paper litter the floor. Next to the globe lies a note that reads, “Mekkar, I know you’re busy, but I want my beholder back. Mickey the Great.”

If anyone touches the crystal ball, it activates; a picture forms inside. Voices come from within, speaking a strange language. Viewers can see an oddly dressed, hysterical red-haired woman, arguing with a dark-haired man. He speaks very quickly, while unseen people laugh continuously. If a character watches this scene for more than 1 round, he falls asleep, as if hit by a sleep spell. He sleeps for two hours, unless someone (or something) wakes him by force. The show seems to go on forever, except for interruptions once every turn in which the words “I Love Lucy” appear briefly before the scene re-forms again. Once activated, the ball cannot be turned off.

If characters search the room for one turn, they will find two random items.

15: Museum
30’ x 20’ plus 20’ diameter tower; 3 doors; hardwood floor.

As characters reach the top of the stairs, they can look into a large area lit by two continual light spells. Lining the walls are suits of armor, weapons racks holding every sort of polearm, and several stuffed animals (grizzly bear, moose, manticore, spotted lion, and minotaur). Nothing happens unless the PCs touch something. Then the minotaur comes to life (he wasn’t really stufed), snatching a huge axe off the wall behind him. He attacks until slain. (8’ tall; AC 6; MV 12’; HD 6+5; HP 40; D/Att 1-10 (halberd) plus bite for 1-4)

A search of the room reveals the following message on the floor: “Hovering above this plaque is a dreaded beholder, which is held here by mighty spells and cannot escape.” Nonetheless, no one is over the spot, of course.

After one turn, the search reveals one random item.

Characters will notice that the door to 18 is marked “Treasure Room” in 145 different tongues, including all the languages that the PCs can read.

16: Plant laboratory
20’ x 15’ plus 20’ diameter tower; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

A darkness spell keeps the plant lab dark. The spell renders torches, lanterns, and infravision useless in this room. But a dispel magic, light, or continual light spell negates the darkness completely, though the spells cancel each other out and another light source is needed for illumination after the magical darkness is gone.

The room smells awful. Dozens of growing trays with mushrooms line shelves about the room. Eating one of these mushrooms has no effect on a character.

A large black box rests in the room; it is wooden and measures 7’ x 3’. A character who opens the box will find a layer of dirt within, which appears recently disturbed. If characters do anything more than open the box (e.g., move it or touch the dirt), they will awaken a huge warrior ant that rests below the surface. The ant will leap out, landing on a nearby character and attacking. Because it has stayed in the room for so long, the ant is white from a fungus infestation. Except for the fungus, the ant has all the qualities of a normal giant warrior ant. (2’ long; AC 3; MV 18”; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)

If fighting in the dark, both the ant and the characters have a -4 “to hit” on all attacks.

17: Magic-user’s library
20’ x 15’; 2 doors; hardwood floors.

Opening the door to this room alerts a shrieker in the center (AC 7; MV 1’; 3 HD; 15 HP). After the shrieker goes off, the characters will also hear sounds of running feet with the shouts of men-at-arms coming from either area 19 (if the characters enter from 16) or area 16 (if the characters enter from 19). The approaching guards seem to get closer and louder for 3 melee rounds, and then the sound ends entirely (it was just an automatic alarm). The shrieker screams as long as someone stays in the room, unless it dies first.
Bookshelves line the walls of this room. All books bear such weighty titles as The Art of Necromancy, Liches and Wights of the World, and Guide to the Lesser Planes of the Abyss. However, fully half of all the volumes here are book covers placed around old copies of Playef Magazine and comic books. Characters must spend 10 hours here if they wish to sort through all the contents. After one hour, they will find a book with an scroll pressed flat between two pages. The scroll contains these spells: read magic, hold portal, light, magic missile. All spells are at the 6th level of effect. Characters will find nothing else of interest.

18: Treasure room
10' x 20'; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

The treasure room (a dubious title) contains copies and mock-ups of eight major magic items. Three of them are harmless duplicates of the Crown of Might, Hand of Vecna, and Mace of Cuthbert. The other five imitations have special powers: the Axe of Dwarvish Lords is a +1 battleaxe; the Invulnerable Coat of Arnd is +1 chain mail; the Sword of Kas is a cursed short sword that always misses its target; the Wand of Orcus does 1-8 points of damage to anyone who picks it up, once only per character; and the Heart of Light is really a glass gem (actual value 1 gp) with a continual light spell cast on it.

Each artifact is sealed in a glass case on the wall, with a little card beside the case that identifies it. The cards do not mention that these aren’t true artifacts. Dwarves and gnomes can identify the glass gem as a fake after 10 minutes of inspecting it from outside the display case, or immediately if the display case is broken open for a closer look. A character who takes out the drawing of the Heart of Light and looks at it again now can recognize the gem as false if the player can open the box at any time without triggering the runes as long as they don’t read them.

A 3-inch-diameter gem lies inside the box. The gem appears to be made of dull, cloudy glass. If a player character touches the gem, it begins to glow brightly (see the description of the Heart of Light near the end of the module for details).

21: Magic-user’s storeroom
15' x 10'; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

Cabinets and shelves fill this room, housing all kinds of jars. Each jar is labeled with the name of a spell, but a one-turn search will reveal that all but two of the jars are empty. The jar marked “ESP” contains 42 copper pieces. The one marked “Fear” is full of chicken feathers. If a PC stirs the chicken feathers, he finds a note at the bottom, which states: “Collected from the Giant Chicken of Bristol by M. Python. Do not eat these!” Any character who eats a feather is instantly polymorphed into a chicken, unless he makes a save vs. polymorph successfully. The chicken character stands 1 foot tall. Dispel magic removes the spell, but a system shock roll is required.

Characters may detect a secret door behind one set of shelves. The door contains a vertical slot about 1 inch high. If someone drops a copper piece in the slot, the door opens (nothing else will open the door). The coin falls into room 23, alerting all creatures there to the PCs’ presence — but the PCs will not know this.

22: Storeroom
10' x 10'; 1 door; hardwood floor.

Characters must pull this door outward to open it. On a roll of 1-3 on d6, the party notices nothing unusual about the room, except for a metal cylinder in a far corner. Otherwise, the room appears empty. On a roll of 4-6, characters see a thin film that covers the space in the open doorway like a soap bubble.

A gelatinous cube fills the room, and it cannot leave. Characters who walk into the room take 2-8 points of damage if the cube penetrates their armor. They must save vs. paralysis or be sucked into the cube and polymorphed. The effects of cold are reduced, as per the Monster Manual.

If characters slay the cube, it falls apart into a gooey mess, flooding area 24 and the stairs leading downward from there. Movement through area 24 requires a roll of 3d6; if the result surpasses the character’s dexterity, the character falls down, taking 1 HP of damage. Check for falling once per round for any character in this area. Any attempt to descend the stairs results in an automatic fall and 2-12 points of damage. The character can make it to the first floor this way, albeit in a damaged condition.
A metal scroll tube lies inside the closet. If a PC removes the stopper, he'll find a parchment inside the tube which reads, "Mickey — Sorry about your beholder, but I haven't got the faintest idea where it is now. The Heart lies in the attic. Mekkari."

The room contains nothing else.

23 : Main alchemical laboratory
20' x 20' plus 20' diameter tower; 3 doors + 1 secret door; hardwood floor

Anyone who enters this room sees the smashed remains of a laboratory. So much litter, debris, and trash lies in here that two giant scorpions can lie in hiding; they will surprise anyone who enters on a roll of 1-4 on d6. The scorpions can be surprised, too, but at normal odds. The room is dark, but not because of magic.

Statistics for the two giant scorpions are AC 3, MV 15' ; HD 5+5; HP 30; D/Att 1-10/1-10/1-4 + poison (save or die). The scorpions can attack three opponents at once. They know the room well, and have no "to hit" penalties in the dark.

The door to area 21 appears to be normal, but if characters open it they discover a brick wall with a small vertical slot one inch high. If anyone drops a coin through the slot, a secret door opens, providing access to area 21. Nothing else will open the secret door.

If characters search the room, they find one random item per turn until six items are located.

24: Upper hall
15' x 20'; 5 doors; hardwood floor.

This area is bare of detail, except for a large statue of Mekkari which looks very imposing. The statue portrays a fierce, brooding mage with a bald head and a beard, wearing heavy robes. If characters check the back of the statue, they may find a little secret door there, which opens to reveal a compartment. The compartment holds four wine bottles, all labeled "Mad Dog #5." The labels are false, however; the bottles really contain potions of healing (each will cure 2d4+2 HP).

25: Mekkari's bedroom
15' x 20' plus 20' diameter tower; 3 doors; carpet on floor.

A huge waterbed mattress takes up the entire tower area, and clothing litters the room. Paintings hang on the wall, depicting dragons, 20-sided polyhedral dice, and the Greek god of war.

The party may not notice the invisible beholder when they enter; it hovers 6' over the bed. At one time, it belonged to Mickey the Great, an old friend of the mansion's owner. Mekkari magically bound the monster so that it cannot use any of its eyes' powers except telekinesis. When a PC opens the door to the room, the beholder catches the first person to cross the threshold. It picks up-the character (as long as the victim weighs less than 250 pounds) and pulls him over, intending to munch on him for 2-8 points of damage per bite. A telekinesis

character attacks at -4 "to hit," and loses all shield and dexterity bonuses. The beholder becomes visible when the telekinesis attack begins.

Anyone who runs up to slash the beholder discovers that the waterbed causes characters to have extremely unstable footing; at the start of each round, all characters on the bed must make a roll of 3d6. If the result exceeds the character's dexterity score, he falls and loses all attacks that round. The beholder stays above the bed. If it eats one character (that is, reduces the character's hit points to 0 and bites it for one more round thereafter to swallow it), then the beholder goes for another one. Characters can only attack the beholder's body, not its eyes, because of its elevation.

Statistics for the beholder are AC 0; HP 30 (in central body); attacks as 10 HD monster.

If characters search the room, they will find an empty crate labeled "Beholder Yummies," plus a total of 1,234 gp scattered on the floor.

26: Zoo/animal laboratory
15' x 30' plus 2 alcoves; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

All of the animals in Mekkari's mansion were originally kept in this room. Dozens of empty cages lie scattered about. A huge vat of algae lies in the western alcove. If characters disturb the vat, it becomes a large evil 15' radius. Characters must make a saving throw vs. poison or take 1-6 points of damage each round. All blunt weapons do full damage. Part water and lower water spells do 1-6 points of damage each.

After the PCs search the room for 1 turn, they find one random item.

Twenty random items
1) Wand of secret door and trap detection with 3 charges.
2) Clove of garlic (very smelly).
3) 4 silver-tipped darts.
4) A sprig of wolfsbane.
5) A bottle of green-dyed water (non-magical and harmless).
6) 3 unlit candles (when lit, each will burn for 3 turns).
7) 16 gold pieces.
8) A 1944 FDR campaign button.
9) A chess pawn (jade) worth 10 gp.
10) An animal tooth.
11) A ring of protection +1.
12) A jar of paper paste.
13) 10 copper pieces.
14) 3 iron spikes and a hammer.
15) A paper note that reads, "You're getting warmer!"
16) A bronze, 1-foot-tall statuette of Demogorgon.
17) A paper note that reads, "You're getting colder!"
18) A 100 gp gem.
19) A tinderbox and flint.
20) A 50' coil of rope.

Roll 1d20 to determine the nature of a random item. When an item has been found, cross it off the list. If a subsequent roll calls for a deleted item, nothing is found (don't roll again).

The Heart of Light
The stone at first appears to be a 3-inch-diameter glass "gem" of dull color and cheap value. Touching the gem has these effects:
1) The gem radiates light in a 60' radius, as a continual light spell, for one hour after each time it is touched.
2) A good character who touches the gem will have 2-8 HP of damage healed; an evil character will be shocked for 2-8 points of damage, and neutral characters will not be affected. The healing or damage will only affect a given character once per day.
3) After the gem is touched, detect good will reveal the gem's good alignment.
4) Any character who touches the gem will automatically know it is the Heart of Light; he also knows that the gem must be removed from the mansion and taken to Mekkari immediately.
5) And, when the "glass" illusion is dispelled by a touch, the Heart of Light is revealed as a 100,000 gp value diamond that would make the most jaded dwarf drool.

Spell lists for tournament characters

Illusionists
First level: change self, color spray, detect illusion, detect invisibility, light, wall of fog.
Second level: blindness, blur, detect magic, invisibility.
Third level: dispel illusion, paralysis.

Magic-users
First level: burning hands, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, feather fall, hold portal, light, magic missile, read magic, sleep.
Second level: continual light, detect evil/good, detect invisibility/invisibility knock, lesliate, web, wizard lock.
Third level: clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, haste, slow, water breathing.
Fourth level: charm monster, dimension door, fear, remove curse.

Clerics
First level: bless, cure light wounds, detect evil/good, detect magic, light, protection from evil, remove fear, sanctuary.
Second level: chant, find traps, hold person, know alignment, resist fire, silence 15' radius, slow poison, spiritual hammer.
Third level: continual light, create food and water, dispel magic, locate object, remove curse.
Fourth level: cure serious wounds, lower water, neutralize poison, protection from evil 15' radius.
The RPGA™ Network Player Ranking System

The details of this system for scoring AD&D tournaments first appeared in issue #11 of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. It attaches a numerical rating to each player’s, or each team’s, performance in a tournament, but at the same time leaves plenty of room for the judgment of the referee.

Here’s how it goes: The referee gives each participant a score of 1 to 10 in each of eight basic categories and four “bonus point” areas, then multiplies the score by a modifier for that category, and totals all the modified scores to get the participant’s final rating.

Basic categories

A. Reaching event objective: Did the character/s accomplish the objective set down for them at the beginning of the event? (x1 0)
B. Teamwork: If this was a team event, did the players work in the best interest of their team? (x8)
C. Role playing: Were the characters played the way they should have been role-played (with respect to class, character intent, alignment, race, etc.)? (x7)
D. Rule knowledge: Did the player/s display an exceptional knowledge of the game rules? Subtract from this score for repeated attempts to “referee” the event themselves. (x6)
E. Character/s survived: Score within the 1-10 range based on remaining hit points of character/party; 10 = no hits taken; 5 = half of hit points taken; etc. (x5)
F. Reaching secondary objective: Did the character/s accomplish any alternate objectives set down for them at the beginning of the event? (x4)

G. Ingenuities: Did the player/s come up with any creative or ingenious ideas that helped the party without distracting it from its purpose? (x3)
H. Individual risk taken: Did the player’s character assume any risks for the party? Subtract for any such actions taken needlessly or foolishly (x2)

Bonus point areas

1. Fun: Was this group fun to play with? Would you like to run these players in a group again? (x2)
2. Power abuse: Did the party achieve its goals without using excessive, “heavier” magic, weaponry, or other resources? Subtract points for powers used in a wasteful or inefficient manner. (x1½)
3. Treasure: Was the treasure found by the party an important aspect in the event, or did it just weigh them down or waste their time? Score high for treasure found, if that was all or part of the party’s objective, or for treasure that was found and used to accomplish the objective. (x1)
4. Determination: Should any extra points be given to this team or player for the determination and identification of magic items, runes, machines, etc.? Do not confuse this with the established goals of the event. (x½)

And yes, in case you players are wondering, there is a Judge Ranking System that goes along with this; see The Ebon Stone in next month’s issue of DRAGON® Magazine for the second half of the package.
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He did not look a great deal like his poster-portrait, but only Petrie noticed that — or cared, once she had — and Petrie was odd by anyone’s counting. What mattered the most to everyone, Petrie included, was that he had come at last. Three weeks after his pictured announcements, here he was in town: the World Famous Kitemaster, Warlock of the Clouds, Advisor for the Crowned Heads of Exotic Realms (both earthbound and cloudrimmed), Master of the Winds. To Petrie, this last title was by far the most important. Oddly, not even she wondered why such an exalted personage should waste his time and fabulous powers awebinding the residents of Tailie’s Landing.

As a ward of the Orphanage of St. Dudley, Petrie sat in a designated area of the tent with her fellow orphans and Sister Ignacia Marie. Maintaining her continued presence with rigid stillness, Petrie stared at the Kitemaster as if her huge purple eyes were velvet-lined cages in which she would keep him for herself, forever.

He was tall, though not so tall as his picture had promised, and slender to the edge of emaciation. His hair and beard were curly, but the red-brown curls of the poster were, in reality, more than merely speckled with grey. He was dressed in a blue-and-white pinstriped tuxedo. His shirt was only three snowy ruffs: one at each wrist and a larger one, pinned with a bluestone brooch, at his slender throat. The cape Petrie had hoped for was not immediately in evidence.

As he spread his arms wide, Petrie noticed that his fingers below the lace were long, slim, and callused by lightning. On the third finger of the left hand — on the side where Petrie sat — he wore a battered silver band.

Petrie held her breath as he gestured — barely more than a whisper-ripple of outstretched digits. The lanterns dimmed. The slightest, most delicate of breezes moved around the tent, feeling cool to sweaty bodies. Petrie sniffed as it touched her, smelled vanilla and ozone.

He crooked a finger and the little breeze, obedient as a puppydog, ran to him, swirled about his trouser legs for a moment, then stilled. Petrie imagined she could see it — a creature rather like a dog, if dogs were made of white feathers and ice — curled about the feet of the Kitemaster, grinning at the audience with canine good humor. The suggestion of a movement from the Master claimed Petrie’s attention again, so she left the little breeze — unseen or not — to its own devices.

As the lantern light had dimmed even further, the audience drew in upon itself. The lantern to Petrie’s left winked out, then its partner across the tent. One by one, with ritual solemnity, the lanterns extinguished themselves until the tent was in total darkness.

The Kitemaster allowed the darkness to remain only long enough for his audience to know fully that it was dark. Then he called into being — by means Petrie would have given much to have seen — a blaze of blue light. It hung in the air, seemingly solid, a foot or so...
from the wooden planks of the rough stage and three long arm-lengths in front of its summoner.

He allowed the audience to marvel a moment, then gestured again. This time, a pillar of red light came into being next to the blue one. Petrie leaned forward in her seat as far as her wariness of Sister Ignacia allowed, then held her breath so the act of breathing might not disturb her sight.

The magician moved again — yes! The light formed tiny particles of color, smaller than bumblebees, but behaving very similarly. Gathering in upon themselves, the particles formed a pillar of light, this one butter yellow, floating beside its fellows on the stage.

Lowering his hands, the Master slowly moved back from his creations — Petrie thought that he moved carefully in order not to tread upon the breeze at his feet — and invited the audience to examine his servants until they tired of the sight. Petrie sighed. A long time would pass before she could look at the scene before her without some wonder, but free-floating pillars of color were not what she had longed to see. She leaned farther forward, straining to see through the purple fog that filled the space between the blue and red pillars, longing to know if the puppybreeze was still in its place on the floor. She yearned for more.

A hand gripped the back of her neck — a grip she knew all too well. Sister Ignacia, no slave to wonder, snatched Petrie out of her chair and marched her toward the back of the tent. Experience told Petrie it was useless and worse to struggle; however, as it became clear that the nun was intent upon setting her outside the tent, the child began to fight. Doom if sunlight entered this place now! Even the lingering rays of sunset were a danger. She did not question how she knew it, but the knowledge was plain in her.

Sister Ignacia simply exerted a bit more pressure, added a little more push. Petrie planted her feet, locked her knees, felt herself moved forward in spite of it, and then fell back upon the often overlooked weapon of a naturally silent child — she screamed.

Suddenly, a bitterly cold wind whirled into the tent, the canvas flaps snapping angrily back and forth against the tent’s sides. This wind shook the very foundations of the entire structure as if it would collapse upon itself. Loose coats, empty chairs, and other items free from restraint flew across the inside, smacking against the wooden frame and cloth walls of the tent. Shouts of terror were voiced from frightened members of the audience.

As if stung by something cold, something fearsome, Sister Ignacia released her grip on Petrie. Taking advantage of the chaos, Petrie dove back toward the depths of the audience. Her attempt to hide proved successful, for she was swept up by the unruly people as they rushed blindly toward the sides of the tent in order to escape from the unknown menace.

Again, scream pierced scream as people felled people. Then, as if on cue, the previously extinguished lanterns flared back to life; the crowd paused in its flight, while members sought their individual bearings. But, from nowhere, another flailing wind assaulted the panicky mob and herded it out of the tent.

Once outside, people continued to dart from the tent as if it were afire. Those unfortunate enough to be next to a certain exit route were forced to eddy around the unmoving black bulk of Sister Ignacia Marie. Still not quite sure what had happened, Sister Ignacia peered myopically about, hoping to find her charges.

A way, she’d gotten away at least, thought Petrie ruefully, nursing her torn palm. She’d be in hot water if she tried to go back to the orphanage now, though. Sister Ignacia would not be much amused by her misbehavior: from her scream to her determined elusiveness and lying willfulness that had closed her ears to the calls of the nun and her housemates. Petrie shook her head, closed her eyes briefly. Being here was more important.

After fleeing the ruckus of the show, Petrie wandered into a nearby farm. But the farmer’s field did not contain the item of her search. Though she wasn’t quite sure what it was she sought, she felt confident that she would find it.

Frustrated, Petrie decided to climb a large oak near an, old tool shed so she could get a better view of the surrounding land. Once up in the tree, Petrie planted herself down on a sturdy limb about seven feet from the ground. Surveying the fields before her, she spied what seemed to be a wagon in an adjacent glade, northwest of where she sat.

With mounting excitement, she began to clamber down the tree. In the process, however, Petrie missed her footing. Trying to grab another branch in order to secure herself, Petrie only managed to tear open the palm of her right hand and tumble to the ground. After landing on her hands and knees, she stood up slowly. When she assessed that her damaged palm was the only hurt she had incurred, she darted toward the glade, attempting to ignore the pain in her hand.

Once she entered the glade, she quickly found the Kitemaster’s wagon. It now stood before her.

Seeing a light come on in the window of the wagon, she dropped behind a small bush.

The wagon door slid open, spilling light onto the steps and the grass below, and the Kitemaster stepped out and down. Purposefully, he strode forward until he was halfway between that square of light and Petrie’s hiding place. He was dressed as he had been at the tent show, and the hoped-for cloak was now fastened about his throat, flung back behind his shoulders.

Stopping, he placed his hands on his hips and tipped his head to one side. “I am pleased that you were able to come here this evening,” he said, seeming to address the entire clearing. “At least one has come at the risk of losing her home.” He turned once slowly around and nodded as if satisfied. “I would like to invite you inside, if I may. There are refreshments.” He tipped his head briefly to one side — such behavior reminded Petrie of the orphanage cat, which would tilt its head when it sensed that one of the orphans was speaking directly to it — nodded again, and turned
back toward the lighted square of the wagon door.

This was what she had come for! Petrie leapt up from behind her bush and ran after the Master. She caught him at the bottom step; yet, when he turned and smiled, she saw that she shared his attention with another.

But the Master did not allow time for more than that quick realization. With sure magician’s timing, he bestowed his wonderful smile upon them both, murmured a welcome, turned, and led them up the stairs into the wagon.

Petrie followed the Master, keeping her eyes resolutely on the sweeping black cloak before her, refusing to acknowledge the other climbing beside her.

He motioned them toward his couch-bed as he moved to the kitchen of the small living quarters. Here, he gathered food and utensils. At last, Petrie turned unwillingly to her fellow petitioner.

He was older than she, tall and much too slender. The whiteness of his skin spoke of illness, and lank black hair was already threaded with white. His eyes were black and fierce, his hands clenched into fists at his sides. Petrie forced herself to meet his glare steadily, though something within her cringed from that contact.

“Here you are, then.” The Master’s voice pulled them around to watch what he was doing. He set down a plate filled with cheese and bread, a pitcher of milk, and three yellow glasses. Relieved of these burdens, he reached slender hands to his throat, undid the fastening of the cloak, swirled it off his shoulders, and hung it on a hook on the wall by the bed. He gestured to them again, indicating that they should sit upon the blue-and-white coverlet.

After a moment, Petrie did. The boy remained standing for a heartbeat longer, then sat as well, far removed from Petrie. The Kitemaster sat on the floor by the laden table, his long legs crossed in front of him.

Smiling, he pushed the plate of cheese and bread forward. “Eat.” He poured milk into glasses: one for Petrie, one for the boy, and one for himself which, when filled, he held in his hands and sipped from time to time.

Petrie, remembering that her last meal had been the scant orphanage luncheon some hours ago and that her next meal time was by no means certain, helped herself to a slice of dark bread and a slab of butter-yellow cheese. She bit into it with satisfaction and a sigh.

The boy was staring at the plate as if he’d seen no such thing before. As well he might not, Petrie thought, suddenly noticing the fineness of his trousers, the softness of his shirt. Hesitantly, he put out one hand and selected a slice of bread. Copying Petrie imperfectly, he laid a piece of cheese carefully on the bread and bit into it. Chewing slowly, he neither sighed nor seemed especially satisfied.

Petrie took a swallow of milk. Though she tried not to bolt her food, she found it finished too soon. Regretfully, she picked up her glass, drank more milk, and set the empty glass upon the table. Much comforted, she leaned into the corner of the couch, drawing her legs into a curl beneath her.

The Master moved, as he had not done all the time Petrie had been eating, and placed his glass down on the table with a small click. “Well, now. Would you like to tell me why you’re here?”

Petrie blinked and looked thoughtfully at the Master. His taffy-colored eyes were warm and guileless. She felt a slow rise of the fine hairs on her nape. Didn’t he know?

But the boy was leaning forward, his thin, nobknuckled hands clenching his nearly full glass in a grip that surely should have shattered it. “I’m here to learn the . . . the Power. I came because I could feel it . . . . Because I want it. To learn how to use it—”

“Ah.” The Master nodded politely, then flicked his eyes to Petrie. “And you, child?”

Petrie licked her lips. Words were never easy; she preferred always to rely upon eyes, face, gestures. “I came because I . . . needed. . . . to come. I . . . .” She closed her eyes as if visualizing the words would make the speaking easier. “All my life I’ve loved the winds. I . . . I used to go outside in windstorms, just so I could stand and feel them rushing past, smell the different wind smells.” She opened her eyes, looked into the Master’s warm brown ones. “They lock me in now when the wind starts to blow.”

“Oh, child . . .” Petrie felt his sorrow for her as clearly as if he’d reached out and touched her hair.

Blinking back unexpected tears, she tried to finish, though somewhat lamely, “And I wanted to see the puppybreeze again, if I could, sir. Perhaps touch it—”

Next to her, the dark, sickly boy snorted. “The puppybreeze,” he mimicked, some of the fierceness of his eyes flickering in his voice. “That’s the kind of power a girl would see! Why, that wind must have been the very least of those the Master commands!” The boy turned his black eyes to the quiet Master, demanding confirmation. “Isn’t it so, sir? That that wind was the least?”

The Master knelt his brows and bent his head. His long fingers were laced together across his legs. It seemed to Petrie that he studied the worn silver band on his left hand for a long time before he raised his head to answer the boy’s question. “It is not for me to know what is least and what is greatest. I have my skills, my secrets, and those that do my bidding. But I am only Kitemaster, my son; I must judge worthiness in measures of loyalty and long service and affection.” Pausing for a moment, Petrie saw that his hands were no longer clasped and that one finger was rubbing the face of the silver band. “There are
those who serve me because they must. And, when the
day comes that I am too old, when my will is no longer
the stronger, those will turn on me — perhaps, even
rend me - because I had dared enslave them in my
youth and in my pride.” He looked at the dark-haired
boy. “It never does to gain power by force, my son,
though all who are powerful sooner or later must do
so. It is better by far to command through love. A hate-
filled servant is an unsheathed sword. . . .” He tipped
his head to one side. “Do you understand what I have
said to you?”

The boy nodded, replacing his still-full glass on the
table with a stuttering thunk. “That the more power-
ful you are, the better you are able to hold strong
servants.”

“Ah, did I say so?” murmured the Master, one eye-
brow sliding upward toward his greying curls. Then a
rueful smile touched a corner of his mouth. “Well,
perhaps I did, at that.”

He looked at Petrie, his smile broadening and
becoming less bitter. “So then, it is my understanding
that the two of you would learn the ways and the whys
of the winds, is that so?”

Petrie, unable to say anything over the thudding of
her heart, nodded. Of course that was what she wanted
— had wanted — for all her life. The truth of it
resounded in the depths of her mind.

“Yes!” The intensity of that one spoken syllable
caused Petrie to flinch back into the safety of her
corner, all the concerns of her real — her wind-less —
was upon the floor, his brown eyes were level with her
heart, nodded. Of that two of you would learn the ways
and the whys of the winds, is that so?”

Petrie blinked at him, feeling worthy of the stupidity
— had wanted — for all her life. The truth of it
resounded in the depths of her mind.

“The Master nodded. “Very well, then. Class begins
tomorrow evening. I will see you here when the sun
goes down.” His eyes touched them both.

“Yes,” the boy repeated with much less intensity,
then jumped up like an ineptly managed marionette.
He avoided Petrie’s eyes altogether, executed a frail
bow to the Master, and was out the wagon’s door in
two strides of his long legs.

Slowly, Petrie uncurled from the safety of the couch
corner, all the concerns of her real — her wind-less —
life crowding back. How will I get back to St.
Dudley’s? Mother Superior will kill —

“Petrie.”

Startled, she looked at the Master. Seated as he still
was upon the floor, his brown eyes were level with her
violet ones. For the second time in an hour, Petrie the
Silent, Petrie the Wooden, blinked back tears.

“Sir?”

“You hand wants attention, child. I should have
seen to it before now, but —” He gestured toward the
doors, and Petrie nodded understanding. It was best,
somehow, not to call attention to a hurt when that one
was about.

The Master uncoiled himself, reached a hand
down to her. Without pause, she slipped her own hand
in his, slid from the bed to her feet, and allowed herself
to be guided to the kitchen. Seated on a high stool, she
patiently waited as the torn palm was washed,
sprinkled with dried medicinal leaves, and bandaged
with a clean white cloth.

“Thank you.” Fearing the tears would show for yet a
third time, she slid off the stool, not daring to look up
at him. To have a hurt looked after with such care! She
took a step toward the door.

“Petrie.” Again her name, though she had not told it
to him.

She turned. “Yes?”

“Where will you go? The orphanage is closed to you
now, isn’t that so?” The Master stood where she had
left him, making no move toward her. The expression
of concern on his young-old face wrung her heart.

“I don’t know. I — if I go back to St. Dudley’s, they
won’t let me come here again. . . .”

“You must come back, Petrie. You must learn all
you can learn of the ways of the winds. You must.”

Petrie took a step back toward him, feeling puzzled
and concerned. “I must? But . . . there is the boy . . . .”

The Master smiled his bitter smile and shook his
head till the reddish curls danced. “Authberk walks the
left-hand pathway, Petrie. You and I walk the right.
Since he has the Sight and the Talent, he has the right
to demand my teaching. I cannot withhold it from
him. As I have never trained such a one, however, I
would not choose him as my successor.”

“You? . . . But, sir!” Petrie took another step and
another. Without realizing that she moved, she laid
one hand upon a blue-and-white sleeve. “You’re not
going to . . . die?”

This time he laughed and covered her hand with his.
“Die? Not for some time, I should think. But it is a
difficult trade. Many who have the Talent, who have even
the Will, fall short of completing the study. There will
be much time for learning what I have learned before
the day when those I took in pride have the strength of
will over me.”

has the right to demand your teaching —”

“I must test both of you. If both pass, I have the
right to choose between the two of you and to direct
Authberk to a Master who walks his own road. If either
of you fails, I must perforce take the other to train, for
it is time — nay, past time — for me to take an
apprentice.”

“Why did you wait so long, then?” The words
escaped her before she knew she would speak them, but
the Kitemaster seemed to take no insult.

Instead, he shook his head and smiled his warm-taffy
smile. “I could not find a student with the Sight, let
alone the Talent or the Will.” He laughed and began
to chant softly, “I looked for thee in far Cathay; I
looked for thee in Rome; I searched for thee upon the
Moon . . . And found thee at thy home.” He smiled
again. “I had forgotten that if one is searching for
greatness, one needs look in small, unlikely places.”

Suddenly, he moved, laying aside the towel with which
he had dried his hands. “You cannot return to the
orphange. You have no other place to go. Therefore,
you shall stay here.”

Petrie blinked at him, feeling worthy of the stupidity
the nuns claimed she possessed. “Here?”

“Here,” he affirmed, moving to the couch-bed,
laying back covers, and plumping pillows. He gestured, light gleaming off the dull silver of his ring. "You will sleep here." He gave one final thump to a pillow. "So, I —" he gestured again, indicating the floor athwart the door — "shall sleep there."

Petrie opened her mouth to protest. She sleep in a bed so luxurious and the Master sleep on the floor? He cut off her protest with a wave of one graceful hand.

"Enough. For tonight and tomorrow, you are my honored guest. Should you prove to be acceptable as an apprentice, we will make permanent arrangements later." He bent by the couch-bed, pulling pillow, blanket, and comforter from a hidden storage area. Then he nodded at the bed and said, "Sleep well."

Petrie moved obediently, kicked off her shoes, lay down, and pulled the clean sheets over her. She heard the Master rustling linens over by the door, out of her sight. By the time he had put his bed to rights and moved over to the corner to extinguish the lamp, she was asleep. So, she did not feel him lay his hand upon her head or stroke her short golden hair.

Though the puppybreeze observed all of this with great interest, it made no move to leave or to attack. As Petrie sat and was at last still, the feathery tail reached in his pockets and pulled out a tortoise-shell comb, an ebony brush and a silver, rectangular mirror. Petrie caught her breath and slid slowly from the bed to the floor, never taking her eyes from the reclining puppybreeze. Carefully she edged to the tumbled covers and lowered herself to the blanket.

Petrie shook herself, looked up into his eyes. "These things . . ." She stammered to silence, forced herself to begin again. "What if I don't have the Will . . . or the Talent? What if I'm not fit to be . . . your apprentice? What if —"

The kind hand on her shoulder tightened; again perceiving it as a token of comfort, she again fought tears.

"Petrie. Listen to me, eh?" He waited for her nod. "Now. These things, as you call them, are freely given gifts. No reason exists why you should want for adequate clothing, especially since I have the means to provide you with better. It has little to do with whether or not you will pass the test. They are yours, whatever happens." He paused for a moment, brows pulling slightly together. "As to whether you have the Talent fear not. The wind that drove the crowd from the tent last evening — do you remember?" Again, he waited for her to nod, echoed the gesture himself. "Yes. That was not of my calling, Petrie. Nor had it the feel of a servant of the left-hand way. It was your wind, child, so do not fear you lack the Talent. The Will is harder to judge. That is why there must be a test."

After he had lifted his hand from her shoulder, he reached in his pockets and pulled out a tortoise-shell comb, an ebony brush and a silver, rectangular mirror. "These are yours, as well. Go on now and have your shower. Breakfast will be ready when you return."

Petrie nodded. Clutching her gifts to her, she turned and followed the puppybreeze out the door and down the steps. At the bottom, she stood still, letting the thoughts race through her head until she could see the pattern they made. Then she forced her feet to move and went after the gamboling puppybreeze, which had run around the far end of the wagon to the shower stall on the other side.

Sunset came quickly, indeed, for one used to days filled with chores and prayers. Petrie ate two meals with the Master and did such straightening and dusting as there was, much to the man's secret amusement. The rest of her time she spent outside in the sunshine. Within sight of the wagon at all times, she relaxed with the puppybreeze at her side.

"Stay in the vicinity of the wagon, child. They are looking for you in the town." He'd told her that at
breakfast, watching as she stuffed whole segments of oranges into her mouth at once. Petrie had not asked if the townfolk had noticed him buying clothes for a girl of about her height. He was Kitemaster; she assumed he would not make such a common blunder.

As she sat on a grassy rise a short distance from the wagon, she reconsidered this morning’s conversation, while the puppybreeze seemingly slept with its head upon her knee. As Master of the Winds, he would know his own servants, surely, and would know whether he had called her wind. He would even know, through his studies, how a left-hand — an evil — wind must seem. Petrie frowned, her hand slowing in its gentle rubbing of the little breeze’s ear. The pup sighed in its sleep. If it had been her wind, it did her little good. She did not know how she had called it to her. In event of such a test as the Master spoke of, a wind she did not know how to command was as useless as no wind at all.

The shadows were deepening toward sunset. The pup at her knees suddenly sprang up, flung itself skyward. She felt a cool breeze brush her cheek, smelled vanilla and ozone — she was alone.

A twig cracked in the brush at her back and she jumped to her feet, turning toward the noise. The brush crackled again and Authberk stepped into the clearing.

Petrie felt some measure of horror leaving her, to be replaced immediately by wariness, by something approaching fear.

He barely gave her a glance and pushed by, heading for the wagon. Fighting her revulsion, Petrie followed, caught up, kept pace. They reached the bottom stair together as the door opened. The Master stepped out, black cloak settling about his shoulders, and motioned them to stop.

“The lesson will be given outside this evening.” He gestured, pacing down the steps as if he were performing the opening moves of a difficult sleight of hand. “Over there, I think.”

Avoiding each other’s eyes, Petrie and Authberk gave way and moved to the spot he indicated. The Master was with them in a moment, smiling at both. “First, you will learn the technique that enables a Master to remain centered in himself so that he does not lose his core of identity, no matter how strong the forces he fights.” He looked first at Petrie with his stern brown eyes, then at Authberk. “In this or another study, this lesson is the most essential of all the lessons you will learn. Mastery of this skill depends upon Will more than Talent. Thus you learn that, in the reckoning of mages, Will alone is counted more dangerous than Talent. Talent backed by disciplined Will is a power that will give pause to any mage or master.” He looked only at Authberk, now. “For there comes a day when even the strongest Will wavers. Do you understand me, my son?”

Authberk nodded; a fire shone deeply from within his dark eyes.

The Master sighed, then spread his arms wide, the cloak leaping back over his shoulders. In each open palm, he held a gem: a red stone in the left hand, a blue one in the right. And the gems each gave off their own glittering light. “Boy, look you to the red stone. Do not take your eyes from it. Child —” But Petrie had already fixed her eyes on the blue gem, though the light from it hurt her head.

“This, then, is how it is done, my children...” The Master’s voice came from a long, long way, faded into the blue that was all around her, that permeated her. Floating in a warm sea of azure light, Petrie felt something enter her skull, enter even the depths of her mind where the truth was held. She felt the something enter that deep part of her and — twist. Petrie screamed, or tried to. Within the blue there was no sound.

Then it was gone, over. She stood on her two feet upon the grass, barely ten feet from the Master’s wagon. She sensed the boy standing to her left. The Master himself stood before them, unsmilign, cloak concealing his hands.

“So” — he nodded — “let us sit. There will be refreshments, then a test.” He turned to the swaying boy. “My son, you should know that this test will determine whether your studies with me can continue. There are three possible outcomes. One is that you alone will pass; in this case, you will become my apprentice and learn all that I can teach you. The second possibility is that you both will pass. In this instance, I will take responsibility for seeing that you are situated with a Master of kindred persuasion.” He paused, the boy’s fierce eyes never left his own. “The third possible outcome is that you will fail, my son. If that should happen, I will send you home. Before I do, however, I will ask you once again to look into a gemstone I have. When you do, the desire to envelop the Powers shall leave you. The Sight will remain as a source of delight to you only. I have found it less cruel that way.” He reached out a hand. “Now do sit down, please.”

Petrie followed that command; her legs suddenly felt rubbery. But the boy remained standing, hands clenched into fists at his sides. “And her? What if she fails?”

The Master tipped his head. “Much the same. However, since she has no home to return to, I shall take responsibility for finding her one. Is this satisfactory?”

The boy nodded jerkily. Then, as if his legs would no longer hold him, he collapsed onto the grass.

The Master turned toward the wagon. Through the open door came a tray laid with cheese and bread, orbited by three yellow glasses and a pitcher filled with milk. Petrie leaned forward, discerned a wind that reminded her of the picture of an octopus in the orphanage’s bestiary.

The tray arrived and was laid between the three of them. After the milk was poured and handed around, the pitcher left with the tray. At a nod from the Master, the wind removed itself to the wagon. The Master sat cross-legged upon the grass.

“Eat.”

This evening, however, Petrie had no appetite, so the meal was soon done. The Master caused the
octopus-wind to remove tray, pitcher and glasses. Then he stood, motioning Petrie and Authberk to do the same.

"Now the test. I will cause winds to come against you. You will not try to control them, only to withstand them." He took a step backward, and his cloak snapped back over his shoulders in a sudden gust. "It begins!"

Petrie saw the storm wind hurtling toward her from the Master's outflung hands. A lean, black-cat shape it was, open mouth showing teeth like icy rapiers. Petrie braced herself, felt the weight of it crash into her, rooked — and held. She barely had time to see the next one — was it in the form of an elephant from the bestiary? — before it hit her. The third she never saw at all.

In the end, all she could do under that onslaught was to retreat to the depths of herself and chant, unlike any prayer the nuns had ever taught her, "I am Petrie, I am Petrie. I am Petrie! I am —"

Windlessness. Petrie dared to open her eyes. The Master stood before her, cloak shrouding him, brown eyes smiling. With difficulty, she turned her head. Authberk hunkered down on the grass. There were tears on his white cheeks.

Petrie turned back to the Master, brows pulling together in amazement. "I . . . did not fail?"

"You did not."

"But . . . but I did nothing. I ran."

He shook his head, the smile in his eyes traveling to his lips. "You held."

Their eyes touched for a moment, then the Master broke contact and moved toward the boy.

"Authberk."

The boy looked up, then flinched back in what might have been terror. When the Master held up a comforting hand, Authberk hurlsed himself to his feet.

"No!" he cried. "I won't look! You can't make me forget! You won't take it away! I'm strong! I can call — look!"

Glancing at the sky to the north, Petrie heard it coming — a monstrous wind, black and nearly shapeless, its ravening mouth drooling sleet. The grass in the glade flattened out as it came, and the curtains in the wagon twisted and snapped. From inside the wagon came the sound of breaking glass.

Petrie cried out in horror, saw the Master leap in turn and catch the boy by both shoulders. Somehow, she heard the murmuring words over the wind's approach, knew that Authberk's saving was now the Master's greatest responsibility. She glanced again at the wagon, saw the flicker of flames on the curtains. The oil lamp had broken!

Petrie cried out again, this time in anger. In the deep portion of herself, she heard the hunting cry of an ice-and-feather dog. Up high she saw the pup harrying the monster and nipping at its heels.

The monster flipped one careless limb. The pup spun over and over. Petrie threw up both her hands, heedless of the imitation of the Master, and called in the deep part of herself, demanding allies to drive off the enemy!

And they came. Petrie felt them rush past her. Saw the cat-wind — the one that the Master had first hurled at her — and the elephant-wind, and the others that must have tried the temper of her Will. Past her they rushed, leaving behind the smells of cinnamon, warm fur, and wet leaves. Up into the sky they went and had at the monster.

Hal ted and surrounded, the monster-wind flailed out, seeking to break free. The elephant-wind stopped that blow, and the cat-wind leaped in, teeth gleaming.

Petrie slammed her hands against her outer ears, but that did not cut off the death scream of the monster. It reverberated in the depths of her. Then, it was gone.

The other winds drifted for a moment, then were gone, too.

Petrie shook her head. Suddenly remembering the burning curtains, she turned toward the wagon.

"That's taken care of. A little damage, mostly to the curtains. Nothing irreplaceable was lost. My thanks to you, child."

She turned toward the Master, blinking stupidly.

"Authberk?"

The Master gestured. "He's on his way home. He remembers nothing."

Petrie frowned. "He was strong."

"Perhaps he was. But he had not the Will to withstand even two of the winds I sent him. He had no core of strength on which to build." The Master paused, bent his head, and considered the silver band. "Only weakness relies on power from without to accomplish its will." He looked up then and reached out his hand. Petrie slid her own into his.

"Let us go inside and sleep, child. Tomorrow we must travel."
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Labyrinth makes good as Haven's offspring

Can “Son of Haven” (actual title: Secrets of the Labyrinth) live up to the standards of its predecessor, the excellent Free City of Haven? Yes, with a few minor exceptions.

Free City, in case you don’t remember, is the first of (eventually) three volumes from Gamelords, Ltd., that describe life in the big city. The volume creates much of the backdrop for Gamelords’ Thieves Guild series. When it was published, Free City of Haven provided the most detailed city ever produced for role-playing, and since then it has become something of a classic in the field.

Secrets of the Labyrinth is the second “big city” volume. Like its predecessor, it is filled with the rampant punning that I’ve come to expect — if not demand — from Gamelords. Some of the best (or worst) puns in this volume include: a jailer named Turin Kheay, two burly fellows named Bick Dutkus and Smubba Blith, and a mercenary commander called Edditor ben Bova.

In addition, you can stroll down to Marcus Neeman’s warehouse or Honest John’s Used Horse Stable, then have your fortune read by Myrddin, or even join the mercenary company of Bonorbenztreezantymietzneangan.

Besides puns, this volume contains an assortment of well-designed scenarios. Some are quite original; others are inspired re-makes of old themes. What, for example, do you do if you’re inspecting a bottle at a junk dealer’s when the bottle decides to look back at you? Or what if the three dwarven Boltar brothers — Arkin, Balkin, and Corvin — request your assistance in transporting their “mail-order” brides? And what happens if an elf approaches your party and asks for aid in preserving the Mithril Throne?

All of the scenarios in this volume are clever. A successful scheme will rely some- times on force, but more often on bluff, counterplot, and illusion (both magical and mundane). Truth is often disguised in the real world, and Gamelords observes this rule in Haven. While playing some of these adventures, I remembered one of Errol Flynn’s opening lines: “Believe only what you see — and then only half of that!”

Also in this volume, we get a close look at the operation of the Hand. Much detail is supplied, along with some material that just begs to be played, even though it’s not given in scenario form. The contents neatly dovetail information in the first Haven module and Thieves Guild 4.

Grumbles

The Free City of Haven (soon to be re-released as Haven: The Free City) is loose-leaf and three-hole punched. Secrets of the Labyrinth, however, is magazine-folded and stapled. If the new volume were used alone, the magazine format wouldn’t be a drawback. But when the volume is considered the sequel that it is, the new format is annoying. The page numbering scheme from the first volume is continued here, but there is no longer any convenient way to ensure that all the pages are in consecutive order, unless you slit the magazine and put the holes in it yourself. I’ve heard that the magazine format allowed Gamelords to shave the retail price. I may accept this change — I never like to pay more than I have to — but that doesn’t mean I won’t grumble about the inconvenience. Besides, looseleaf packaging lends itself to future revisions and additions far more easily than other formats.

Grumble number two: The material presented here often refers to other playing aids in the Thieves Guild series, but the player may not have those products. For example, the volume refers to tailing rules, the Master Council, and the origin of the Hand — all topics from Thieves Guild 4. It also refers to the sailing rules from Thieves Guild 6. The referenced products are indeed excellent playing aids, and it could be said that any self-respecting gamer should have them. Some don’t, however, and I prefer to see all background for an adventure in the same volume. On the bright side, you can play all of the scenarios in Secrets of the Labyrinth without the reference material, and adding more background might have raised the price or caused other material to be excluded. So I guess I’ll accept the situation, again, but I’ll still grumble.

I have other complaints about the Secrets of the Labyrinth, though they are admit- tedly minor. Gamelords still has a proofing problem with the small section maps. For example, a road on map #11 disappears into the middle of a block on the neighboring map (map #5). A few inches above this error, the reverse occurs. But compared to the complaints about the format, this is nit-picking.

Secrets of the Labyrinth contains 80 pages of description and 10 pages of maps. The maps, 11 in all, are printed on heavy card stock. The product sells for $12.95 (suggested retail).

Overall, Secrets of the Labyrinth is an excellent volume, as is its predecessor. The things I’ve complained about are perhaps analogous to being handed the title to a new car and complaining because it’s a Ford instead of a Mercedes. I want perfection (or at least my idea of it). Yet, in an imperfect world, I guess I can’t expect a perfect game aid. And until perfection comes along, I’ll take the Haven products.

— Reviewed by Arlen P. Walker
FRP’s gilded chestnuts
The older they get, the better they become

Reviews by Ken Rolston

Why revise a classic game?
Some do it to keep up with the “state of the art.” Others revise a game to correct problems found in the original. Revisions give old games new looks, and they can offer competition for new releases. The revision may expand and supplement its predecessor, or it may simplify and refine it. It can reach new buyers and provide a better value. Then again, a company may revise a game just to create new product — a crucial key to every game company’s survival.

A gamer anticipates such revisions with ambivalence. On one hand, he looks forward to improvements and additions. But on the other, he questions the impact it will have on his current campaign, not to mention the dent it could make in his wallet. Will he have to revise the PCs and NPCs? The campaign background? Will his players need the revised materials, too? Will supplements for the earlier version still be available? And will the ones he already has become worthless?

TSR has revised the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, and Fantasy Games Unlimited has published a new version of its CHIVALRY AND SORCERY™ game. Soon Chaesium will release a new edition of the RUNEQUEST® game. These revisions show that FRP game design is far from stagnant; on the contrary, it’s still evolving, and certain trends are evident:

- an increased emphasis on developed wilderness and campaign backgrounds, as opposed to dungeon adventures
- higher standards of presentation and editing
- a view of the gamemaster as a story teller and entertainer, instead of a competitive referee on the wargaming model.

The major challenge still facing FRP game designers is to reconcile the desire to create something that’s both comprehensive and comprehensible. The more ambitious the project, the more difficult it is to organize and present the game mechanics in an understandable fashion. The converse is usually true as well. The two games reviewed below illustrate the conflict these qualities can produce.

CHIVALRY AND SORCERY™

New boxed edition, $20
New supplements:
C&S Sourcebook, $8
C&S Sourcebook 2, $6.50
Swords & Sorcerers, $6

Chivalry and Sorcery is a classic and comprehensive FRP game, rich in historical detail and chivalric romance. The game was revised to broaden its appeal, but the presentation still shows problems, and the audience is still limited, because of the bulk and detail involved. This game is committed to comprehensiveness, at the expense of comprehensibility.

The new edition includes several changes. Some of the systems from the original version are gone. Others have been revised and moved to the supplements, notably the sections on fantasy miniatures warfare and designing outdoor adventures. And detailed character skills have been added to the section on character generation.

The revised C&S game is a boxed set containing three books and a character sheet. Book One includes essays on role-playing, gamemastering, and campaign design, but most of its 56 pages are devoted to character generation. Book Two, also 56 pages, contains the medieval campaign background systems, as well as clerical abilities and responsibilities. Tournament and individual combat systems are also included. Book Three contains the magic systems, plus profiles of demons, beasts, monsters, and NPCs.

C&S holds a legendary status in the hobby field; its reputation brands it as a complex and complete system for a sophisticated elite. Tiny print, convoluted presentation, and occasionally ambiguous rules made the original edition tough reading. On the other hand, the game offered realistic game systems and an excellent model for campaign play, both of which were far superior to anything the competition had put out. C&S set a gaming standard that was often admired, but seldom achieved.

FGU revised Chivalry and Sorcery to reflect the state of the art and address some presentational problems. Particularly, the company intended to create a version of the game that all gamers could use. The revision only partially meets the first two objectives. The third objective is unrealistic (and therefore unattained), considering the ambitious content of the game.

In the revised edition, C&S is still the most difficult and time-consuming FRP system on the market, when played at a level that fully exploits its virtues. Character creation is lengthy and involved, and the campaign-scale background is even more so. (Some improvements have been made in the first area, however, most significantly a larger section with model NPC statistics.) The game lacks a sample adventure — a standard inclusion in almost all state-of-the-art FRP games. This forces the GM to create an adventure from scratch, without a model. For players, creating a character and learning the basics calls for a significant effort; for the gamemaster, preparing a full-scale campaign and mastering the rules is a major project.

C&S still requires sophistication to learn and play, perhaps even more so now. For
example, the original sections on dungeon design are omitted from the new edition. This campaign chauvinism reflects C&S’s elite audience; most of us entered the hobby as dungeon crawlers who later graduated to large-scale campaigns. Though I feel that dungeons may be a developmental stage in the growth of a FRP gamer, C&S implies that serious gamers just don’t do that sort of thing.

In its attempt to broaden the game’s audience, FCU has improved the presentation of the product to some degree, but it still falls short of current industry standards. Typographical errors, charts without titles or capsule explanations for their use, relatively few examples illustrating the applications of game systems — these are not the features of a state-of-the-art fantasy role-playing game. Other problems exist as well. It’s difficult to reference the material; jargon and abbreviations are used in the text, but the game has no glossary, nor an index. Not one narrative example of combat is included. Most unfortunate is the lack of a procedural approach to character generation or melee and magical combat. A systematic structuring of these activities, reinforced by reference lists, repetition, and example, would make the systems easier to handle.

But even with all of its shortcomings, C&S continues to offer the most comprehensive and powerful FRP game mechanics, with superior detail, plausibility, and historical background. The powerful campaign design rules have no equal in the hobby. The magical and clerical systems are the most detailed and credible (modeled as they are on legend and history). You can adapt most of these systems to other FRP game campaigns, though they should be most effective in a full-scale C&S campaign.

Playability must be defined in terms of a game’s audience. A comparison with the AD&D™ game, one of C&S’s major competitors, may prove instructive. The AD&D game probably has the same amount of detail as C&S. Both games are equally difficult to master at sophisticated levels of play. In the AD&D game, systems are much simpler, and combat is more rapidly paced. But AD&D’s campaign systems lack the coherence and realism of C&S’s historically based models. Each member of the audience must determine which factors are most important to him.

Three new supplements for C&S are now available. The 72-page C&S Sourcebook, largest of the three, contains essays on monster design, economics, trade, and commerce. The material within also expands and revises the old sections on outdoor adventures and miniatures warfare. The 52-page Sourcebook 2 contains miscellaneous systems for doors, locks, break-ins, etc., along with an unusual strategic warfare system using only paper and pencil for battlefield, siege, and naval engagements. Last but not least, the 36-page Swords and Sorcerers expands the C&S world with Viking, Mongol, and Celtic cultures.

Swords and Sorcerers is particularly impressive. Anyone using the Viking, Mongol, or Celtic culture in an FRP campaign would find this book worthwhile. Each culture is detailed in its personality, social background, and magical or fantasy aspects. Of all the C&S rule books and supplements, this one could be the most valuable and easily adapted to other systems. The Sourcebook also contains important information. In addition to the topics given above, it contains movement rules and major supplements on foresters, physicians, and healing. The miniatures rules make no reference to the role of magic on the battlefield — a serious omission for a fantasy miniatures system — but otherwise they’re attractive, since C&S is the only major FRP game with an associated large-scale combat system.

Of the three supplements, Sourcebook 2 is the least interesting. Except for the aforementioned strategic warfare section, it offers little of importance.

How might C&S have been improved? The designers could have sacrificed more comprehensiveness for greater clarity. They could have focused more attention on making the systems easy to read and understand rather than powerful and inclusive. More systems could have been relegated to the supplements to make room for an example of a developed C&S adventure illustrating game systems and adventure design.

C&S is still the most demanding FRP game for an elite audience. What the material lacks in presentation, it makes up for with unsurpassed treatment of chivalry, sorcery, and the FRP campaign. No other FRP game approaches the power and detail of its systems. The essays on role-playing and gamemastering are required reading for enlightened FRP gamers and designers. This is the wrong product for the beginning or casual FRP gamer. For the intermediate gamer, it may be useful as a supplement and sourcebook. But as a complete campaign system, the virtues of C&S are only fully realized in the hands of the superior gamer — one who’s serious, sophisticated, dedicated, and familiar with medieval history, legend, and fantasy literature.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game
Basic Rules, Set 1, $12
Expert Rules, Set 2, $12

The new D&D® Basic and D&D Expert Rules Sets are first-class revisions, improved in every way over their predecessors. With a more modest ambition than C&S, the revised D&D game succeeds better in achieving its well-focused goals, with substantial improvements in game design and presentation. The new Basic Rules set contains a Player’s Manual, a Dungeon Master’s Rulebook, polyhedral dice, and a dice marker. The new Expert Rules set contains the Expert Rulebook, an Expert module (The Isle of Dread), dice, and a marker.

Even though the old Basic and Expert sets were ostensibly revisions of the original three-booklet boxed D&D® game that kicked off the fantasy role-playing boom, I had always suspected that they were just bait to get gamers involved with the ADVANCED D&D® game. With the publication of these two revised editions, I am beginning to see that the D&D game can really stand on its own, as a separate system perhaps even superior to the AD&D system. As well as satisfying the dictum that “fewer rules mean more fun,” the revised D&D game’s simplicity makes it more coherent and less ambiguous than its predecessor.

The D&D Basic game introduces the gamer to essential mechanics and dungeon adventuring. The Expert set offers additional mechanics and takes the gamer out of the dungeon, into wilderness and campaign adventure. This organization lets the designer focus on the beginner’s immediate needs, introducing more sophisticated game concepts gradually. Improvements in the presentation of these new editions stand out immediately,
particularly those in layout and illustration. Dramatic and skillfully executed artwork (a far cry from earlier illustrations) embellishes the material. And as soon as you begin reading, other improvements are evident.

The 64-page Players Manual in the Basic Set starts with fantasy adventure: a brief narrative scenario introduces the general game concepts. Before the player has even had to understand character generation, he has traveled through a programmed adventure that demonstrates and explains game mechanics in action. The gamer learns through action and example, rather than through rules reading — an ideal situation for an adventure game.

After this introduction, the gamer learns how to design a character. Character generation is organized as a procedure with a checklist. Only seven classes (cleric, fighter, thief, elf, magic-user, halfling, and dwarf) define characters in the revised edition. Character progression is still only covered to third level. Most of the rule changes balance or constrain PC powers: clerics have no spells at the first level; magic-users start with only two spells; elven racial advantages are balanced by slow promotion.

The rest of the book introduces several more game systems learned by wise advice on how to succeed in dungeon adventuring and how to get along with other players.

The 48-page Dungeon Masters Rulebook, also part of the Basic Set, contains an introductory dungeon, partly organized as a programmed adventure and partly left to the DM as an exercise. Ten pages of procedures and rules are arranged alphabetically under 30 topics, which can later be referenced by index. Though many of the topics cover game mechanics, quite a few (like “Arguments” and “Complaints”) offer practical and humane advice on handling common FRP problems. After familiar sections covering monsters and treasures, there is a short section on dungeon design, describing the features of a good dungeon and outlining several scenarios.

The Expert Rulebook is divided into two sections, one for the player and one for the DM. The player’s section offers new rules, equipment, and advice for wilderness adventuring, as well as advancement charts and spells for characters. Some changes have been made in spell lists and powers, mostly to correct original oversights. The Dungeon Master’s section contains additional rules, monsters, and treasures, but most significantly, it also contains a sample FRP campaign setting, complete with hometown, local, and large-scale maps, plus brief notes on human and non-human societies, politics, commerce, and travel. Also included are twelve scenario ideas set in the sample campaign background. The scenarios reflect a broad range of FRP gaming styles.

The Expert module, Isle of Dread, provides a good FRP wilderness adventure, with plausible native societies, geographical obstacles, and not-too-terribly implausible monsters. The action style resembles the old “lost continent” movies, with natives, monsters, volcanoes, and abandoned temples of malevolent gods. The maps and player materials are abundant and well-rendered, and a number of alternate scenarios for the module’s setting are suggested. The motivations and external relations of the indigenous intelligent races are not delineated well. In addition, some of the encounters seem a bit contrived, and the package is more a collection of encounters than a coherent wilderness expedition. Still, the module provides a varied wilderness setting for fantasy daredevils, and there is plenty of room for DM improvisation and scenario development.

The new D&D Basic Set is extremely well presented, written in a simple, clear style. It’s full of examples and organized for easy understanding, requiring a minimum of time and effort to play. It emphasizes the dungeon-crawling style of FRP gaming. Sophisticated gamemasters and designers have turned their backs in scorn of this “gauche” FRP style, but it is the simple, unsophisticated adventure that originally drew most of us to the hobby. Dungeons, are initially simpler for the gamemaster; obligations of realism and logic can paralyze improvisation and inspired frivolity.

The D&D Expert Set is equally well presented, and it’s a little more sophisticated. The Expert rules offer progression to coherent, plausible campaign backgrounds, and they provide an excellent example for the use and emulation of the developing Dungeon Master.

Both of the revised sets are excellent. The systems are clearly stated and well organized for reading and reference. You can have a lot of fun with them, but they are neither detailed, realistic, complex, nor complete enough to satisfy many serious FRP gamers. They probably won’t support a “high fantasy” campaign without considerable GM improvisation or additional supplements. And the magic systems will never be free from serious logic and self-consistency problems. However, the D&D Basic Set is an outstanding introduction to FRP action-adventure, and the D&D Expert Set is a more-than-respectable introduction and example for wilderness and campaign play. Many casual gamers will never need anything more than these sets.

BUYER’S GUIDE

CHIVALRY & SORCERY™ is for historically-minded, ambitious, and serious gamers. Anyone who would be an expert in FRP games will find C&S required reading. For those who rank between beginners and dedicated experts, systems like the AD&D game and RUNQUEST will still be more appropriate.

The D&D Basic Set is the clear choice over the competition for any beginner and casual gamer — a light entertainment potentially leading to increasing sophistication. The D&D Expert Set is a logical follow-up purchase; enthusiastic gamers will exhaust Basic’s three levels of progression in short order. Experienced gamers or veterans of other complex and well-supplemented systems will probably find both packages too elementary.

Both of these game revisions are sufficiently changed to be incompatible with the older editions, but in each case the improvements justify purchasing the new edition, and a minimum of revision will be needed to use the rules in an established campaign.

CAPSULE REVIEWS

STORMHAVEN (Blade, $12): GM adventure pack for role-playing in a modern setting, with prepared stats for Blade’s Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes™ and Hero Games’ Espionage. Includes detailed floor plans, like those in Citybook 1. 56-page GM book devoted primarily to personalities and room descriptions. Scenarios are bare outlines, requiring heavy GM prep or improvisation. 25 cardboard heroes. Good presentation. Better-developed scenarios would have increased the value.

THE ARKHAM EVIL (Theater of the Mind, Inc., $8): A first-class Call of Cthulhu adventure campaign. A literate mystery, with distinctive settings, well-motivated and delineated NPCs, and insidious horrors. The central narrative is skillfully interwoven with dramatic subplots, resulting in a complicated and intriguing mystery-adventure. Undistinguished art and production should not detract from the value of a scenario from a small game company.

MONSTER SQUASH (Tri-Tac Games, $1.50): Marvelous game, great fun, ridiculously cheap. Sort of a tabletop version of monsters miniatures warfare, only you design your monsters from modeling clay and mangle them during combat. Eight pages of rules. Simple, humorous, and gratifyingly primitive.

TOWNS OF THE OUTLAND (Midkemia Press, $7.95): A 1981 release, Six populated FRP villages: a desert oasis, a smugglers’ cove, a northern trading center, a tribal hill fort, a woodlands crossroads, and a mining camp. Plausible communities, distinctive personalities, good potential for role-playing and adventure. A model for FRP town and village design, and handy reference for quick scenario preparation or emergency improvisation.

WEAPONS AND ASSASSINS (Palladium, $4.95): Inexpensive, well-illustrated introduction and reference to the Middle Eastern Order of Assassins, the Indian Thuguee cult, and the Japanese ninja. Traditions, techniques, and weapons. Useful as NPC and PC background for campaigns with assassin cults and guilds.
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Welcome to the ARES™ science-fiction gaming section.
Starting with this issue of DRAGON® Magazine, we continue our coverage of science-fiction role-playing and boardgames; every month we’ll have the best articles from game experts and you, our readers. Our editorial direction is unchanged from our former magazine format, and we look forward to continued feedback from you on how and what we’re doing.

The first of a special series of articles makes its appearance in this issue. The best-known world apart from our Earth is the Moon, our only natural satellite. How are the destinies of Earth and Moon intertwined? What does the future hold for us as the human race expands into outer space?

We contacted a number of game designers to help on a special project — to describe the Moon as an inhabited world, according to the future histories of the major SF role-playing games. On the next page begins Edward E. Simbalist’s essay on Luna in the universe of the SPACE OPERA™ game. Stay tuned for other “points of view” in future issues.

Ed Greenwood offers a report on the Zethra, a new NPC alien race for use with the STAR FRONTIERS® rules. A mystery to Humans and Sathar alike, the Zethra travel through the Frontier Sector on missions of their own; only their unpredictability is predictable.

Our boardgaming feature, from Jerry Epperson, is a three-in-one package of variations on the STARFIRE™ game: simultaneous movement, advantage movement, and three-dimensional warfare. Role-players and boardgamers alike would do well to look this over for ideas they can apply to their own games and adventures.

Read on, and enjoy!

My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light!
Moon, take thy flight!
A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Act V, Scene I

— The editors

ARES™ Section 84
THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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ON THE COVER
The giant lunar crater Copernicus, 95 km across and 3-4 km deep, stands out in this observatory photograph. In the future history of the SPACE OPERA™ game, Copernicus becomes the home for a major lunar colony and industrial complex. Photograph courtesy of Yerkes Observatory.
Lunar statistics

- Star System Coord: 000/00 GSE 14.33/+000
- Stellar Primary: G2V main sequence star
- FTL Conversion: 10,000 LS (light seconds)
- Planets in System: 10

Luna’s past

On July 20, 1969, as the result of a crash program by the old American NASA, Apollo 11 landed in Mare Tranquillitatis; two astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, undertook the first manned lunar expedition. After five more landings, the national will of the USA to conduct manned operations beyond close earth orbit declined for several decades.

The Soviet Union established a secret military outpost at Tycho Crater in A.D. 2005; a NorthAm expedition landed shortly afterwards at Clavius Crater, hundreds of kilometers distant, to assault the Soviet bomb launcher on the eve of the Wet Firecracker War. Only 17 warheads were fired before the linear magnetic accelerator was captured. The Battle of Tycho Crater, April 2, 2008, marks the entry of Terra into space war. It is also significant as the moment when Terrans accepted that their affairs were inextricably bound to the exploration and development of space.

Tycho soon expanded into a major military and scientific establishment, with 5,000 personnel by A.D. 2015. Mining operations commenced, while a new, more powerful magnetic launcher was completed to send raw materials to the L-5 colony construction sites.

The discovery of vast deposits of ice beneath the lunar surface made possible the colonization of the Terran moon as a “habitable” world. With an abundance of solar power, ice was made to yield oxygen in great quantities, with hydrogen produced as rocket fuel for deep space exploration. Most importantly, ice provided the water vital to hydroponic farms for...
both Luna and the L-5 colonies. When L-5 O'Neill was completed in A.D. 2028, almost 60,000 people were living in Luna, 35,000 of them in Tycho City, a vast tunnel complex beneath the site of the original Soviet base.

Luna’s attraction was considerable. The low gravity had a salutary effect on human physiology; the life expectancy of lunar colonists rose beyond 125 years. Degenerative diseases associated with aging in a high gravity field were almost unknown, and when encountered were of a minor nature. Heart ailments were a rarity. Aging seemed to slow drastically, and Luna exerted an appeal as a world granting eternal youth and vitality. Of course, prolonged periods in low gravity caused dramatic physical adaptations which made a high-gravity field like Terra’s most uncomfortable for Lunarites, but the price was considered a small one to pay for the benefits gained from life on Luna.

The rise of the infamous Pure Earth Movement on Terra was a catastrophe for Luna. The space colonies were regarded as a luxury which could be ill afforded by the “poor and starving billions” of Terra. Transportation to Luna became a standard sentence for political dissidents, malcontents, and criminals. A flood of transportees swelled the lunar population to more than fourteen million by A.D. 2138.

Transportees and Free Citizens alike were brought under the increasingly harsh government of the Lunar Administration. Ever higher production quotas were imposed on lunar farmers, with savage penalties for failure to deliver the required grain at the launch head. The price paid for produce was held to cripplingly low levels, forcing farmers into ever-deepening debt to the Administration. By A.D. 2100, there was little difference between the lot of Free Citizens and that of convicted criminals.

The matter came to a violent conclusion on June 24, 2136, with the announcement of the frightful Air Tax by the Lunar Administration. Lunarites reacted with violent demonstrations; Admin “PeaceKeepers” intervened, and the population of Tycho City arose in general rebellion. News of the uprising spread to the other major colonies of Clavius, New Tokyo in Mare Imbrium, Copernicus, and Plato. By July 12, the Lunarites had eliminated the last vestiges of Terran control and had declared the Lunar High Republic.

Pure Earthian preparations to bring the rebels to heel were dramatically frustrated by the rebellion of the L-5 SkyCities the following week. Also suffering under Terran repression and disinterest, the L-5 colonies “spaced” their Pure Earthian administrators and refused to provide the spacecraft required to transport a Terran expeditionary force. With no spacecraft built or based directly on Terra, and an administration which had dismantled its planetary spacecraft production facilities and technology, Terra was helpless to suppress the rebellion of the OutWorlds.

Free Luna prospered, becoming a haven for refugees from Pure Earthian repression. After the socio-dynamic collapse of Terra in A.D. 2165, the Lunar High Republic played a signal role in the reconstruction of the shattered planet, and has since provided vast quantities of food to Terra at premium prices. Most importantly, it became the center of OutWorld exploration and colonization.

Luna today

Luna’s vast shipyards and industrial complexes at Tycho City, New Tokyo, and Copernicus have outfitted numerous colonization expeditions, the bulk of the huge Solarian merchant marine, and the primary strength of the BattleFleets of the Terran Union and the Federation. A major naval base is located at Marius in Oceanus Procellarum (a AAAAAx5 starbase) and nine lesser bases exist as well (each AAAAA class), each guarded by some 2,000 heavy planetary defense guns and over 1,700 startorpedo launchers.

Luna is also a major mercantile center, with eight major civilian starports (each AAAAAA class) and over fifty lesser starports (A to AAA class) at the main population and production centers. Some 5,800 interstellar corporations now maintain head offices and production facilities on Luna. A very respectable 158 starlInes, from huge TransGalactic to the tiny independents, operate from New Tokyo, Copernicus, and Clavius, to span the vast reaches of the growing Federation.

The Lunar economy is one of the strongest in the Federation, with an average per capita income of CR 42,500 for a gross planetary product of MCR 10,625,000 per year. About MCR 2,000,000 is contributed annually toward Lunar and Federation defense. Free trade without tariffs is standard policy. Luna’s chief exports include spacecraft, high-tech equipment, and foodstuffs. Imports include industrial and power metals and a variety of manufactured goods.

According to the census of A.D. 2583, the population has risen to 50,000,000 human citizens, and perhaps another 200,000,000 semi-permanent residents who are citizens of Terra and the other Solarian Outworlds. Some 7,000,000 non-humans also reside in Luna.

It should be noted that one lives “in” Luna, not “on” it. Though domed installations exist on the surface, all settlements are located largely underground in multi-level . . . tunnel complexes.

... ONE LIVES “IN” LUNA, NOT “ON” IT. THOUGH DOMED INSTALLATIONS EXIST ON THE SURFACE, ALL SETTLEMENTS ARE LOCATED LARGELY UNDERGROUND IN MULTI-LEVEL . . . TUNNEL COMPLEXES.

lunar government and laws

The Constitution of the Lunar High Republic is based upon that of the old U.S.A. However, it provides inalienable protections for the rights and freedoms of the individual on an order unheard of in earlier states. Oppressed for decades by one of the most viciously authoritarian regimes in Terran history, the
Lunarites laid down a code of conduct for government that amounts to a "hands off" policy with respect to most areas of human activity.

Each citizen is held to be "sovereign in his own right," fully answerable for his actions only when such actions endanger the rights and prerogatives of other citizens. Such laws as do exist confer authority to the government to intervene whenever the safety of the citizenry as a whole is threatened.

The universal belief is that the less government there is, the better. The principle followed is that of "user pay"; put in Lunarite terms, "If you want it, fellah, pick your own pocket!" At the same time, the ever-pragmatic Lunarite has no delusions about the cost of things, and he is prepared to pay the going rate for what he needs. His only objection is paying for anything he doesn't need or want. Suspicious of anything smelling of government bureaucracy or monopoly, he will prefer to do business with private interests, who invariably provide superior service for the credits spent because competition soon weeds out the inefficient and the unresponsive.

The regulation of business is left largely to "established custom," and a highly ethical code of business conduct has evolved. Sharp business practice is acceptable, but outright fraud and failure to perform on the terms of an agreement is guaranteed to bring disaster to the dishonest firm or individual. Good repute is essential to doing business. Once it is known that a person or company cannot be trusted, business will fall off to nothing in short order. Further, Lunar custom permits anyone convinced that he has been wronged to hold the individuals responsible to personal account. No one can hide behind the legal fiction of corporate action. If XYZ Corporation failed in its honorable duty, the officers of XYZ can expect to be "called out" if they do not set things straight.

The Lunarite always has the right to challenge anyone who has broken any of the numerous codes of behavior which arose during the penal period. It might seem that Lunar society is chaotic, with everyone free to do much as he likes in the absence of firm laws. Such is not the case at all. While a Lunarite is free, he is also obligated by honor and custom to respect the freedom and rights of others. Personal responsibility is absolute, even as personal freedom is exceedingly broad and unrestricted.

"Good manners" are essential in a world with its roots and its pride vested in its penal history. "Good manners" demand respectable and honorable conduct. The loudmouth, the dishonest man, the bully, the murderer, all may expect to be "spaced" through the nearest airlock to the surface or cut up with surgical precision in a duel with his victim or one of his victim's relatives or friends. Lesser offenses can result in a ruined reputation, hardly less disastrous in a society in which personal reputation really matters.

Lunarite "manners" extend to such fundamentals as honesty. The simple fact is that thieves do not exist on Luna. One can leave a valuable object in a public place and expect to see an advertisement in the "Found" column of the Daily Lunatic, the Selene Gazette, or any other newservice on the next day. Few thieves in Luna last long. The citizens are very skillful at operating air locks.

Wrongdoers may elect to go to "court" to settle matters — which involves both parties agreeing on binding arbitration by some individual they trust to make a fair decision. "Judging" is carried on by private citizens, and any Lunarite can set himself up as a "judge." For a pre-arranged fee, men of wise and honest reputation routinely hear cases brought before them, deciding matters quickly on the basis of the plain facts as any "reasonable" person sees them.
LUNA IS THE PRODUCT OF THE “BOTANY BAY” POLICIES OF THE PURE EARTHIAN REGIME WHICH DOMINATED TERRAN POLITICS FROM A.D. 2065 TO 2167.

Justice is dispensed with equal dispatch. Legalisms and lawyers are regarded with general hostility, and proceedings are conducted with an informality that is sometimes frightening to those used to formal rules of due process. The “court” tolerates no attempt to impede its determination of the true facts. The reputation of the “judge” depends upon his fairness and ability to cut through the fog of claims and counterclaims. In Luna, reputation is everything if one wants to do business. Judging is a most respectable and profitable business, and Lunar justice is counted among the most honest and certain of any in the Federation.

Lunar society

Visitors to Luna are advised to retain a “guide” — usually one of the many waifs who hang around the spaceports — to take them through the intricacies of the complex Lunar society. Until one learns the accepted modes of behavior, a “new chum” can easily get into trouble. At the same time, Lunarites are patient with tourists and newcomers, and may excuse conduct that would easily result in a duel if done by another Lunarite.

Luna is characterized by a degree of tolerance and diversity unequalled anywhere else. The population itself is a mixture of every racial, national, and religious group of humanity; their transporee ancestors came from every part of Terra. Intermarriage has produced a people exhibiting the bloodlines of every racial group of humanity. Many non-humans now live on Luna as well, and they enjoy the benefits of a tolerant society in which they meet with no prejudice or difficulty.

Lunar culture is a melting pot, with words, manners, and values drawn from scores of Terran cultures and combined into a uniquely Lunar pattern of life. Marriage practices appear in every known Terran form. A number of new marriage systems evolved on Luna which answered the unique problems of a penal colony at one time woefully short of women and having no security for the family besides what it could provide for itself. Even some alien marriage customs exist among Lunarites. All are held to be most respectable, and a quick offense is taken at any criticism.

Women are held in very high regard, and one is advised to avoid any disrespectful conduct towards them. Children occupy, a special place and are watched over and protected by the adult population. Indeed, one soon gains the impression that Lunar society resembles a single extended family, with everyone involved with the welfare of all his fellows.

The family is the basic social unit. The usual family involves multiple marriage, with women holding a dominant, matrachal position. This harkens back to the early penal period, when women were at a premium and several men had to share a single wife. Equally common are group marriages, with a number of male and female spouses. Such marriages seem to offer the greatest degree of security, for the death of any one spouse does not shatter the family or disastrously reduce its ability to earn income or retain its resources.

The marriage relationships are genuine partnerships in most instances, with each adult member of the family having input into family decisions. In many multiple marriages, for instance, a new spouse is carefully selected for both personal and business qualities that will enhance the family, and the spouse will not be taken without universal approval.

The powerful family ties perhaps explain the Lunarites’ refusal to accept much government intrusion into their private lives. With an average of seven adults in family groupings, citizens possess most of the human and financial resources to pay their own way. If they do encounter difficulty, their friends will step forward to help out until the family reestablishes itself.

This is not charity, but rather a loan between friends, and such assistance is invariably repaid with fair interest. Neighbors looking out for neighbors and pluralistic marriages are the ways that the Lunarites survived the Pure Earthian terror. They have not abandoned such admirable customs because they are the most effective survival techniques available in any society.

The preference to do most things oneself or to hire some private firm to provide needed services is the reason that few government agencies exist in Luna. The armed forces are composed entirely of Federation troops and are concerned with the defence of Luna from outside attack. There is a police force, maintained by voluntary public contribution, but it is small and performs only investigatory functions (though with great efficiency).

If manpower is needed, the police can count on finding large numbers of volunteer deputies. Since most Lunarites sign up for a tour of duty with the Federation Armed Forces (and often retain their equipment and light weapons upon discharge), tough and disciplined posses are the rule. In the event of a direct attack on Luna, they would also serve as volunteer militia — a tradition that originated during the penal period.

Above all, the Lunarite devotion to “orderly” (read “lawful”) behavior is itself the best defense against crime, foreign espionage, and sabotage. Lunarites witnessing any dishonest act will raise an outcry, and everyone nearby will join in the apprehension of the wrongdoers. Lunarites take care of their own.

Miscellaneous notes

The Lunarite proclivity for gambling is notorious throughout the galaxy. This, again, appears to be rooted in the penal days of the early colonies when everything was a gambling proposition. Accustomed to uncertainty and danger, Lunarites always figure the odds. They often show prescient powers by accepting risks that others would reject outright, and then succeeding in their ventures.

Gambling is in the blood of the true Lunarite, and one must take this into account whenever dealing with one. For instance, dicing for discounts on purchases (or added value, if one loses) is regarded as mandatory if one is expected to
patronize a business establishment again. And any form of "sporting proposition," be it racing, organized sports, or a street-corner pickup game of dice, will attract plenty of active participation from passers-by.

Visitors to Luna have the prospect of many unusual experiences. The world is disease-free — the result of thorough medical examination upon entry, a totally controlled environment, and the finest medical facilities in the Federation. Five interstellar universities have been established on Luna, each with superb medical facilities.

Lunar hotels are fully automated, with luxurious accommodations in even the modest, economy-class hostels. The cuisine is cosmopolitan in the fullest sense, with foods from a hundred worlds readily available. The population is friendly and helpful. The nightlife is varied, with entertainment drawn from the length and breadth of the Federation, guaranteed to satisfy any taste. Of course, Lunar gambling casinos are famous, and one can find his favorite game of chance at one or another establishment, however exotic and foreign the game might be.

In summary, Luna is the product of the "Botany Bay" policies of the Pure Earthian regime which dominated Terran politics from A.D. 2065 to 2167. The Lunar population is a mixture of all racial and cultural elements of humanity, and evidences a degree of toleration for difference perhaps unique in modern experience. Victims of brutal oppression and exploitation, the Lunarites are dedicated individualists who hold personal freedom paramount and resist any attempt to limit their personal choice and activities.

Yet Luna is a harsh and unforgiving world, and the Lunarites have learned to work together in a common cause. Whenever threatened, Lunarites submerge their individualism into an unshakeable group solidarity and will labor and fight for the survival of their neighbors and their way of life with great courage and self-sacrifice.

With such a committed social consciousness and sense of responsibility, one might expect Lunarites to be politically active, but the opposite is true. Politics is rarely on a Lunarite’s mind. "Politics" is a matter of deciding what a problem is and who the best men are to solve the problem. The whole process is carried on at such an ad-hoc level that one wonders how anything ever gets done.

But, as noted, Lunarites are hard pragmatists and usually know the facts. That includes an awareness of the best men among them — ones who are both competent and trustworthy — and these are usually dragooned, kicking and screaming all the way, into doing what the community needs. In characteristic fashion, such leaders dispose of the matter as quickly as possible so that they can resign their posts and get back to their private lives and endeavors. Exercising power over others is distasteful to Lunarites, and will be avoided if possible.

Luna is one of the most highly developed planets in the Federation. The average level of education approaches the equivalent of a Master’s degree at an elite university. Learning for the sake of learning is a basic Lunar virtue. Those less founded in the theoretical areas are invariably competent technicians or talented jacks-of-all-trades. Lunar economic success is directly related to Lunarite educational excellence.
The Zethra
An NPC race for the STARFRONTIERS® game
by Ed Greenwood

From Pan-Galactic File 009887615AR211 Open:
This report is filed upon completion of a preliminary study ordered when Agent 00969H "Quillanson" asserted that the beings Hhon of Prenglar, Stulta of Dramune, and Mlaqaq of Ruane's Star were common members of a single race. Questioning of these individuals, and the beings Urluth and Vrendu of Cassidine, has yielded little information, save that all, though they have no detected regular intercommunication, think of themselves as Zethra, and originated on a single, unknown planet beyond the borders of the Frontier sector in the direction of the Xagyg dust clouds.

As far as can be determined, the Zethra (the name is used in singular and plural forms) derived the theoretical knowledge of interstellar spacetravel mechanics, but lacked heavy metals with which to construct spacecraft (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Zethra Briefings"). At length, they acquired a derelict space vessel, thought to be an abandoned Vrusk "Sarsk" explorer starship (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Vrusk Explorations, Xagyg Sector"), mastered its controls, science, and maintenance, and several hundred Zethra set out to explore surrounding space with it.

Information as to their precise route and adventures remains undisclosed, but the ship has apparently moved out of the sector, after leaving an unknown number of Zethra on various Frontier worlds. Such planetfalls seem to have been by choice, rather than by any military or colonization plan, but the intractable and enigmatic nature of the Zethra has thus far limited the information gathered on this possibly dangerous race. Agents are warned that the Zethra themselves constantly gather information, possibly for future military use, and news of a sensitive nature should on no account be allowed to reach them.

Agents are also warned to beware the personal powers of such individuals when encountered — an excerpt from a report filed by Agent 00616Y "Umbryl," ordered to question Urluth of Cassidine, is appended:

"The alien was initially approached by Agent 00982H 'Samber' and a recording robot 00151R 'Tencode' Level 5 modified Security Type, and it seemed intrigued. It accompanied them to Brazil's Hubstar Saloon, but upon seeing the follow-up guard take position behind it — two Vrusk, four Humans and a Dralasite, all field agents of some experience and good reports — the alien grasped both Agent 00982H and the robot and appeared to shock them with such force that the Human agent collapsed and the robot went haywire, dancing about jerkily on the spot.

"It then forestalled the guards attack by transmitting a jolt through the metal floorplates of the Hubstar's lobby that stunned all seven into unconsciousness. An electrostunner fired by myself from within the Hubstar appeared to do it no damage, and it touched the robot again. The robot spoke, obviously to me and at the command or instigation of the alien: 'Don't try this again. I go now. Do not follow.' Contact with my superior, Agent 00812D 'Asimit,' resulted in orders to do just that. Report concludes with film and robodata. . . ."

Zethra
Physical appearance and structure
Zethra are rubbery, ball-like creatures with high elasticity and durability, possessing a number of tentacle-like appendages. Six of these are retractile, strong, dextrous arms, capable of manipulating both large, heavy objects and tiny, intricate controls or items; their length varies from 1-4 meters. These project from the body in a ring about its widest circumference. A ring or "crown" of four small (.5m long) sensory tentacles projects from one end of the ball, parallel to (but separated from) the ring of arms.

Zethra are a mottled greenish-gray with a few orange patches, but they can alter the pigmentation of their skin cells by rearranging internal supplies of chemical substances, to blend with their surroundings. Although they are able to match all color hues exactly, they cannot alter their low reflectivity or the soft texture of their skin, and so cannot gleam or become rigid.

Of the five major spacefaring races, Zethra most closely resemble Dralasites internally, due to the amorphous nature of their body parts. A Zethra's brain is located beneath its
Zethra sense heat, light, and electrical energy, and can distinguish variations in the same with great sensitivity through their four "see-feelers," or "seefers" (as Humans call these organs). They can also sense vibrations and energy fluctuations through parts of their bodies, but entirely lack a sense of smell. Like Dralasites, they also lack the ability to see or appreciate colors, detecting them only as differences in shade.

Senses

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Particular information on Zethra:

- Average size: 1.5m diameter
- Average mass: 60 kg
- Average lifespan: unknown; thought to be 400+ years
- Reproduction: hermaphroditic, budding
- Body temperature: 34°C; wide tolerance of changes in environmental temperature

Speech

Zethra have no audible speech, instead using a rapid, complex language of electrical energy pulses with which they communicate with other Zethra through any good conductor (e.g., ferrous metals), or through direct seefer contact. Zethra can communicate with Humans, Dralasites, Vrusk, and Yazirians through a code-like series of "clicks"; they "hear" sounds in return by sensing and interpreting air vibrations.

Zethra create "clicks" by silently tapping someone with a tentacle, or by banging on a surface with a held object. They may also pass electrical pulses or mild shocks through conductive materials (a painful form of communication!), or cause a machine to emit sounds by the use of electrical pulses. Any Zethra who has practiced with a polyvox can cause it to emit a message through the use of energy pulses. They appear to comprehend unfamiliar languages rapidly and with ease.

Society and customs

Zethra appear to be very self-interested and amoral. Rare in the extreme, they seem to lack any organized society or racial goals, although they will readily cooperate with their own or with other races for rewards. Zethra desire supplies of energy, or organic matter with which to produce it.

Zethra also like information, and appear fascinated by trivia from all races and planets: odd bits of poetry, music and lyrics, catch-phrases, rumors, and apparently inconsequential facts. Such information is used for personal enjoyment and to achieve some unknown goal or future scientific development, but they will divulge nothing of their personal plans or preferences. All information can be retained perfectly for later recall and use.
The few Zethra encountered have readily joined Frontier life. As noted above, they appear to have come from a planet in an unidentified sector, spreading through space by using a derelict spacecraft built by Vrusk, which they found, studied, and then piloted by use of their special abilities. They do not appear to have had the materials necessary to construct their own spacecraft.

**Attitudes**

Zethra are not allies of any particular race, and refuse to cooperate with either the Sathar or any UPF organization, such as the Star Law rangers, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, or the smaller interstellar companies. Their true feelings are difficult to identify, but they seem to get along with all creatures who do not hinder their activities. Zethra do not appear to understand humor on the part of any creature. Rarely offended by the words or deeds of others, they are commonly thought of as emotionless. They can, however, become the friends or enemies of individuals of other races.

**Special abilities**

Zethra can, at will, consume organic matter and convert it to energy, using it for continued activity, healing, and rejuvenation. This is done by some inexplicable natural process which remains a mystery to Frontier scientists of all races, even after exhaustive physical and field examinations. Zethra can store such energy in internal battery-like organs, using or releasing it when necessary to move, think, act, manipulate items, or as a weapon against other creatures.

An adult Zethra can store 220-440 SEU in its body, and requires approximately 20 SEU daily for movement, thought, and functional stability. Prolonged combat, complex mental effort, and the healing of injuries can double a Zethra’s daily energy consumption. Zethra can heal minor wounds by resting in the normal fashion, or by expending energy (50 SEU will restore one lost hit point). This represents a return to body stability.

Lost limbs or body organs will regenerate very slowly; a tentacle, for instance, takes 3-6 months to be replaced, and a seefer 1-4 months. Given enough time and food, a Zethra can always rebuild itself so long as most of its brain and at least one “storage-star” cell cluster survives. It will patiently absorb all organic matter around it until able to regrow the damaged parts of its body.

It must be emphasized that Zethra can only absorb organic matter, and will convert it entirely to energy with few by-products. Different materials will, of course, yield different amounts of energy (live intelligent creatures seem to yield the most energy, per given amount of mass, though Zethra will refrain from “eating” companions or obviously intelligent beings unless such beings are enemies).

Zethra can also transmit energy by contact, with great precision, releasing up to their current total SEU, minus 25, in any turn. These pulses can activate or deactivate computers, security systems, and robots. The pulses will duplicate the effects of throwing the “on” switch, or of giving certain command words; they may also simply blast or jolt the machinery past the point of its safeguards. Unfamiliar equipment and large computers often cannot be knocked out in such a manner, but a Zethra can always cause a robot to malfunction by a discharge of 100+ SEU. A Zethra who is familiar with a scanner, security lock, or related device will not hesitate to disable it if it is so inclined, regardless of the wishes of other creatures.

A Zethra discharge is less potent than a beam weapon, doing 1d10 damage per 2 SEU expended. They can elect to put more energy into a given attack, so that a cornered Zethra could well slay half a dozen or more opponents. Zethra discharges must be by direct contact or through a metal conductor (which reduces damage by -2 points per meter of conductor separating Zethra and victim). A Zethra can expend 2 SEU to stun as an electrostunner does, but if a target appears to be protected by an anti-shock implant the Zethra may increase its next attack jolt to 14 SEU, sufficient to both overcome and destroy the implant. A gauss screen can stop a Zethra jolt, but will usually fail under repeated attacks; Zethra cannot burn out such a defense, but know their limited power supply.

Zethra are immune to all electrical and radiant energy (i.e., laser) attacks, and can drain a powerclip, beltpack, or backpack at the rate of 10 SEU per turn. Laser, electrostunner, stunstick, and shock glove attacks all provide Zethra with energy, rather than damaging them. They absorb 10 SEU per turn given to them by the weapon attacks, conducting away what cannot be absorbed. Fire and sonic attacks do half-

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Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures... and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins.

damage to them. Electrical creature attacks (such as those of the Rogue Crystals found on Volturnus) do no damage, and are absorbed in the same way weapon attacks are. Physical attacks do full damage.

For example, if three Star Law marksmen with laser rifles shoot a Zethra with their dials set on 20 SEU, they would do no damage to it, but would instead give it 10 SEU of additional energy (the rest being channeled away). The Zethra could conduct the excess energy to the marksmen or another target through a metal floor, while engaging in some other activity.

Zethra can also serve as a power supply for beam weapons, defensive screens, and machinery wielded by themselves or others. Contacting the necessary powercords with the tips of their tentacle-like arms, they will often recharge the equipment of encountered strangers in return for food and gossip.

Experience

A Zethra’s perfect memory, inquiring mind, and reasoning intellect aid it in its understanding of the manufacture, handling, and repair of machinery and mechanical tools or aids. This ability is similar to a Vrusk’s Comprehension, but is effective only in dealing with objects and mechanical thinking, not in social dealings. This allows a Zethra to add 1d10% chance of success to its success rate (in addition to its skill level) when using Technical Skills.

Zethra ability modifiers

Zethra NPCs are created in the same manner as characters normally are, according to the STAR FRONTIERS® game rules. The base ability scores are altered by applying the following modifiers:

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<tr>
<th>Modifier</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>STR/STA:</td>
<td>-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEX/Rs:</td>
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<tr>
<td>INT/LOG:</td>
<td>+5</td>
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<tr>
<td>PER/LDR:</td>
<td>-5</td>
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Zethra movement rates

Normal rolling (=walking): 15 m/turn
“Scrambling” (=running): 35 m/turn
Average movement per hour: 6 km

Consider Zethra movement as “Slithering” for application of Terrain Effects.

Additional Data

Zethra may use all tentacles with equal facility; they have no “handedness.” They also lack a back side, and can move in any direction with equal ease, rarely losing control in weightless conditions.

Zethra cannot be stunned, but are otherwise affected by non-electrical beam weapons as noted above. They can bounce as effectively as other creatures leap, but are affected by wounding, falling, and explosives. Zethra swim at the same rate as the other races, but lose no stamina points until their current SEU is 40 or less (then they lose 5 STA per 30 minutes). Absorption of aquatic lifeforms will prevent SEU loss. Water transmits Zethra jolts poorly: -3 points of damage per 10 meters distance, but any creature within the jolt’s effective radius in contact with the water cannot avoid damage.

Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures (though not the vacuum of space) and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins. They have no lungs, and don’t require oxygen or other specific gases. They cannot drown unless drained of energy and imprisoned underwater with no food available.

Inert (“noble”) gases do not yield the materials Zethra need, but they can tolerate them for short times. Poison, smoke, or doze grenades will not affect Zethra. Stimdose, Staydose, and power screens have normal effects on them, however.

Zethra cannot wear defensive suits, but can wear belts, with pouches, linked from the base of an arm around the curve of their bodies to the base of another arm. In this manner they can carry screens and other items. Some Zethra have ID cards issued by local authorities to keep track of their movements and activities, but Zethra have no distinctive Personalized Recognition Attribute (such as a fingerprint or voice pattern).

Referee notes

The PSA of Zethra are always Technological. Zethra are always after more information, but their goals, plans, and feelings should remain a mystery to other races. If a Zethra befriends a player character, that PC can trust the Zethra not to make any hostile acts, but not to act in a consistent or “sane” manner; the PC may be attacked by space pirates and see his friend wander out into a laser crossfire to inquire of the new arrivals if they know any old songs, or have heard anything about so-and-so’s daughter on the planet Kdikit.

Zethra seem very long-lived and know much of past Frontier events and machinery. A typical Zethra will have skill levels as follows: Melee Weapons 1, Thrown Weapons 2, Computer Skill 4, Robotics Skill 3, Technician Skill 6, Environmental 2.

Zethra tend to prefer thrown weapons in combat if they cannot use their electrical discharges effectively. They always try to learn what they can of computers and robots (something local authorities are understandably reluctant to aid or allow, given the unknown aims and flexible loyalty of Zethra).

Naturally adept at Technician subskills, they are of necessity practiced in Environmental Skill. Two subskills here are automatically possessed by all Zethra, regardless of study or training: Analyzing Samples, and Making Tools/Weapons. Zethra often work as fences, barkeepers in spaceports, or as bodyguards to rich and adventuresome spacefaring individuals. Any position where new information is likely to be constantly forthcoming is preferred.

It must be emphasized that Zethra are rare, enigmatic, mysterious creatures. They must always be NPCs, but represent an independent force, rather than an enemy to other races like the Sathar. Zethra seem to like travel and adventure.
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As the STARFIRE game system stands currently, players take turns moving their ships one hex at a time. Not only is this a long process (especially when a player is controlling several ships), but players can also forget which ships have already moved their one hex. Two solutions to this dilemma are presented here, as well as some suggestions for adding the third dimension to STARFIRE game combat.

Simultaneous movement
Simultaneous movement and combat in STARFIRE gaming can be as natural as death and taxes. The only additional equipment players will need to utilize this variant is some extra paper for movement plotting. It should be noted that simultaneous plotting of fleet orders is used in the STARFIRE III: EMPIRES game supplement, but is not dealt with in this variant. Those who do not own the STARFIRE II game supplement should ignore references to Assault Movement and Fighters.

Prior to play, each player should list each ship in his fleet for the scenario across the top of his plotting sheet. This allows movement to be written, on a turn-by-turn basis, directly underneath the appropriate ship. Once this is completed, players are ready to begin.

The sequence of play needs a little revision in order to work properly. The new sequence is:

1. **Plot phase:** The players record their ships’ intended movement for this turn. Plotting is done with a series of numbers or letters. The movement order is executed in the order that the letters and numbers are listed. Forward movement, without facing changes, is represented by a number equal to the number of hexes moved through consecutively. A “0” represents wasting one movement point in the hex currently occupied. The letter “R” represents a facing change, one hexside to the right. An “L” represents a facing change of one hexside to the left. An “X” means that the ship expends all remaining movement points in the hex currently occupied, without a change of facing. When every ship has its movement plotted, the phase is over.

2. **Movement phase:** All ship movement is considered to be simultaneous, but all movement must adhere to the standard STARFIRE game rules (e.g. turn modes must be obeyed, etc.) After all ship movement is completed, the phase is over.

3. **Combat phase:** Combat is resolved as per the normal STARFIRE game rules, with the exception that all battle results are applied after all ships have had the opportunity to fire. Some players may object, but this is in keeping with the spirit of simultaneous resolution; before play, decide which method you will use. Once all combat and damage has been applied to ships, the phase is over.

4. **Factor beam phase:** This phase is resolved simultaneously (or sequentially, as determined by the players before the game), but uses the same method as in the STARFIRE rules. The only item of note here is that the smaller of the two ships which are tractor-beamed together may not plot movement, but mirrors the movement of the larger ship during the movement phase.

5. **Assault movement phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE II game rules (it’s easier to do this sequentially than simultaneously, since fewer ships will usually be moved).

6. **Fighter attack phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE II rules, but all effects occur simultaneously.

7. **Record-keeping phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE game rules.

A few thoughts on the above system should be kept in mind. During the combat phase, since it is considered to be simultaneous, players are not required to tell their opponent when a ship’s shields are “down,” nor give any indication on damage or system losses on the ship until the round’s end. In the same vein, a ship is not considered “destroyed” until the end of all combat. Fighter launches occur at the end of the Movement phase, and the fighters are placed on the board after all movement has been resolved. This means that the fighters may move in the Assault movement phase of the turn they were launched, but not the Movement phase. Fighter recovery is done at the end of the Movement phase (though both fighter and mothership must start the Movement phase in the same hex and follow the same movement route).

For example: “3R2L1” means that the ship will move straight for three hexes, turn right (remaining in the same hex), move two hexes straight in the new direction, turn left, and move one hex straight. “20L1X” signifies that the ship will move straight two hexes, expend a movement point in the final hex, turn left, move forward one hex and waste the remaining movement points in the
end hex. “RRX” would indicate that the ship was not going to move from the hex it began the turn in, but would make a facing change two hexsides to the right. The “X” is just a reminder that all movement is used up.

As an example of simultaneous combat, suppose the Terran destroyer Patton is locked in combat with the Khanate escorts Falkn and Balkn over Geralon.

**Patton** — DD1 (2) SSSAAAIHFIWDIII (6)  
**Falkn** — ES1 (2) SAIWIWII (4)  
**Balkn** — ES2 (2) SAIWIWII (4)

All ships are at a range of two. Since combat is simultaneous, it makes no difference who fires first; the Khanate player chooses to administer his attacks. The range is much better for guns than missiles, so guns are fired at the destroyer. All four of the guns hit (each for 1 point of damage). The Terran player now fires at the Falkn, lacking multiplex tracking. The player elects to resolve his force beam attack first, scoring 3 hits. The gun attack does another point.

At the end of the combat round:

**Patton** — xxxAAIHFIWDIII  
**Falkn** — xxxIWII  
**Balkn** — SAIWIWII

At this time, the Terran player tells the Khanate player that the Patton has “shields down” and, of course, the Khanate player tells the Terran player that the Falkn also has “shields down.” Due to the simultaneous combat effects, it is well within the realm of reason to have ships waste fire by blasting helpless floating hulls. Players should keep this in mind when firing.

**Advantage movement**

If simultaneous movement isn’t your cup of tea, or you just hate the extra paperwork, the following variant might still speed up the movement phase without sacrificing the STARFIRE game system’s simplicity. Rather than using the initiative phase to determine who moves or fires at what time, replace the phase with the Advantage determination phase.

During the Advantage determination phase, players assign the following classifications to each ship:

- A ship is considered “advantaged” if it has an enemy ship in its 60-degree front facing arc, and the ship isn’t in the enemy’s 60-degree front facing arc.
- A ship is considered “disadvantaged” if it is positioned in the 60-degree front facing arc of an enemy without having the same enemy in its 60-degree front facing arc.
- A ship is considered “unadvantaged” if it meets neither of the two above classifications for being “advantaged” or “disadvantaged.” A ship is also considered to be “unadvantaged” if it qualifies for both classifications.

The illustration below depicts ships from the various classifications.

During the movement phase, ships which are “disadvantaged” are moved first (expending all of their movement points). “Unadvantaged” ships are moved next (expending all of their movement points), finally the “advantaged” ships are moved (expending all of their movement points). If problems arise when deciding who moves before the other when several ships fall in the same class, a die can resolve the problem (high rolls go first, with ties rerolled).

During the Combat phase, all “advantaged” ships may fire first, followed immediately by “unadvantaged” and then “disadvantaged” ships. Use a die to resolve conflicts.

During the movement phase, ships which are “disadvantaged” are moved first (expending all of their movement points). “Unadvantaged” ships are moved next (expending all of their movement points), finally the “advantaged” ships are moved (expending all of their movement points). If problems arise when deciding who moves before the other when several ships fall in the same class, a die can resolve the problem (high rolls go first, with ties rerolled).

During the Combat phase, all “advantaged” ships may fire first, followed immediately by “unadvantaged” and then “disadvantaged” ships. Use a die to resolve conflicts.

This movement variant reflects the importance of having the proper positioning on an opponent. Players will find that “dogfighting” will occur more when this variant is used than when using the normal STARFIRE game rules. A recommended option is “restricted Field of Fire” (12.6), though some players will find that these rules will make bad positioning hazardous enough to be.

**3-D movement**

For those gamers with a warped sense of adventure, playing STARFIRE games with the added third dimension can be a
Adding a “height” dimension is relatively simple, given the size of the hexes as opposed to the size of the ship. For all practical purposes, we can ignore such things as ‘blind spots” above and below a ship, and “angles of deflection.” Thus, the only effects which will result from the “height” dimension are adjustments for movement and range.

Since range and movement are both units of measurement, both can be calculated the same. Obviously, one doesn’t simply add the amount of distance traveled horizontally (represented by movement on the mapsheet) to the distance traveled vertically (kept track of on a slip of paper in either positive or negative movement points above or below the mapsheet). What is needed is the length of the hypotenuse formed from the right-triangle distances. The hypotenuse is equal to the square root of the sum of the two distances squared.

Rather than bore you with geometric equations, the table below shows the distances (in movement points) traveled. Simply find the horizontal distance traveled and cross-index it with the vertical distances traveled. The number shown at this cross-index is equal to the number of movement points actually expended.

To determine the distance between two objects is a matter of subtraction. Determine the horizontal distance as per normal STARFIRE game rules, and find this number on the horizontal line of the chart. Next, subtract the lower elevation from the higher elevation. This number, can then be found on the vertical line of the chart. The cross-indexed numbers will yield the actual range between the two objects.

Players should consider the mapsheet as “0” elevation with an infinite number of elevations extending above and below the playing surface. For any scenarios which do not have height elevations listed, the following generation procedure may be used to locate objects on the vertical axis:

1. Ships which have not used a Warp Point to enter the map sheet just prior to the start of the scenario (not having “warped” into the mapped area), may start at any elevation between -20 and +20.
2. Ships entering the map through a Warp Point start at the same height elevation as the Warp Point.
3. Warp Points and Planets are randomly assigned a location on the vertical axis by rolling a six-sided die. If the result is odd, then the distance is less than zero. If it is even, then the distance is greater than zero. To find out how many elevations in the positive or negative direction the point is, roll three six-sided dice and note the result. If any of the dice have the same number of pips, they are rerolled and added to the original result until such time as no “doubles” or “triples” are rolled.
4. Stars are always located at the “0” elevation.
5. Bases are deployed wherever the owning player wishes.

The use of three-dimensional tactics, such as attacks from above or below, demonstrates how fluid space combat should (or could) be. Improper usage of the “height” element can lead to destruction of a fleet. Players should be on the lookout for deceptive height differences. Objects which appear quite close on the mapsheet might actually be farther away than others on the same elevation a mapsheet apart! This variant also works very well with the simultaneous movement variant described previously. To denote a gain in elevation, use a “+”; if losing elevation, use a “−”. Each sign represents one level change.

HYPOTENUSE DETERMINATION TABLE

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Parting shots

The above variants can be considered highly experimental. Although I have playtested each one of them, it is far easier to tell players face-to-face how things work than to actually apply pen to paper (or, in this case, fingers to type-writer), and write the rules to govern all actions within the parameters of the variant. If you have any questions concerning these variants, send them to me in care of this magazine. If you have discovered a better way of accomplishing the goal, write it up. Good articles are hard to come by.
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86 APRIL 1984
SNARFQUEST

#9

COME ON, WE BETTER SPLIT NOW.

YEAH, IT SOUNDS LIKE OL' WILLIE IS BLASTING EVERYTHING.

LATER

SNARF... ARGH! PAY ATTENTION, WE'RE GONNA MAKE A RUN FOR IT—YOU READY?

GO FOR IT!

Looks like nobody is guarding da front door.

Born ready!

Hey, we made it... oh, wow!

Hold up, you guys!

Oh Snarf... gasp... I must rest... puff... I'm not used to so much running.

Here! Let's hide behind dis rock.

We shouldn't even stop.

So far—so good!

Dr. I tell you dat I'm gonna be king too, an' I'm gonna be big, right?

Yes... oh Snarf, we could use some help.

So there's a secret passage behind this book case?
YOU GUYS ARE SO BRAVE AND SO HEROIC.

OH YES, I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE SO VERY VERY INTELLIGENT...

LET ME GIVE YOU A GREAT BIG HUG.

DAT'S OUR JOB.

YES ME IS AND SO CUTE...

OOHHH WOW!

AN'ME IS SMART TOO.

NOW YOU SLIME-HEADED MORON, I'M GONNA SLOWLY SQUEEZE YOUR TINY FEATHER BRAIN OUT UNLESS YOU GIVE ME MY SECRET WEAPON, NOW.

SUTHAZE!

UGK... SHE WAS SUTHAZE DA WHOLE TIME.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WOULDN'T FALL FOR YOU.

I LOST DA WEAPON... ME PROMISE... PROMISE... PROMISE...

I COULD BELIEVE THAT.

I'LL TAKE THOSE SWORDS!

WHAH!

GAH...

GAH...

GAH...

GAH...

RUN!
RUN ONE STEP AND I'LL ZAP YOU TO DUST! HEY RAT, YOU LOOK FAMILIAR.

ME?...UHHH...HEY, I DON'T THINK WE...AH, HAVE MET...

HEY, IF YOU KNOW OL' RAFFENDORF, DEN I'LL LEAVE AM, LET YOU GUYS SUS TALK...OK?

SHUT UP.

RAFFENDORF...OH YESSS...HA! PRINCE RAFFENDORF, I REMEMBER, I TURNED YOU INTO A RAT... YEAH, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. CHUCKLE-CHUCKLE.

CHOKED

GULP.

EH...ER...I GUESS MAYBE YOU WERE THE ONE NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT.

WELL, I SEE THAT BEING A RAT IS JUST TOO GOOD FOR YOU...AND I THINK...

YOU WOULD LOOK BETTER AS A BUG!

SO DAT'S HOW OL' RAFF KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT SUTHAZE...

YEAH, AND I TOLD YOU THAT I NEVER WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN, DIDN'T I?

YEEEEE! DIS DUDE IS OUT TA KILL US FER SURE...NOW WHERE DID I PUT DAT SECRET WEAPON!

NOW FOR YOU- YOU SNOUT HEAD, YOU WOULD LOOK GOOD AS A...

LOOK OUT! SNARF!

SNARF...JUS' LOOK AT ME...HELP!

AHHH...DIS IS HORRIBLE!

WHERE'S DAT SECRET WEAPON??

YAAA...I FOUND IT...SUTHAZE, I'M GONNA...?? DO...SOMETHIN' TO YA.

SNARF...HOLD DA OTHER END.

NEXT ISSUE: DOES SNARF SHOOT HIS FOOT OR DOES SUTHAZE TURN SNARF IN TO A SLUG?
HATWAY'S EWNAY?

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION- WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS MONTH?

HOW ABOUT SEX AND D&D?


WHY NOT?!

Um... well... I don't know.

THEN WE'LL ASK THEM.

THAT'S IT?

YEP. THEY DESIGNED IT THEMSELVES.

NO KIDDING.

OKAY- SO WHERE'S THE EDITORIAL OFFICE?

I DON'T KNOW- EVERYTIME I TOLD THEM I WAS COMING, THE PLACE WAS SHUT DOWN.

I'D LIKE TO SEE KIM MOHAN, PLEASE.

THRU HERE.

BUT THIS PLACE IS A MAZE- THERE'S NO SIGNS. WE'LL BE LOST IN MINUTES.

GREAT EH? WE'RE RELEASING A GAME BASED ON OUR FLOORPLAN NEXT WEEK.

OH-SO THAT'S THE MAZE OF MADNESS EH?

COME ON- WE'LL JUST OPEN DOORS UNTIL WE FIND HIM.
EDITORIAL?
NO - THIS IS TSR'S TESTING DEPT. A LOT OF GAMES THAT SOUND GOOD ON PAPER ACTUALLY PLAY TERRIBLY.
GET A LOT LIKE THAT?
I'LL SAY, HERE'S SOME WE'VE REJECTED JUST THIS MONTH...

"EXPLODING PETS", "DUELING GLACIERS", "NUCLEAR WAR IN RHODE ISLAND", "ATTACK OF THE PRIME NUMBERS", "DUNG BEETLE", AND "SLOWMERILLION".
EXCUSE ME - I SEE THAT OUR AFRICAN GAME, "I WIN - ZULUS", NEEDS SOME MORE WORK.

EDITORIAL? NO - THIS IS THE LEGAL DEPT.
SORRY.

HAVE YOU SEEN MY NEW ENGAGEMENT CIRCULAR-METAL-BAND?

HEY! THE PHONE'S CIRCULAR-METAL-BANDING!!

... AS I CAME IN TODAY, I SAW SOME KIDS PLAYING CIRCULAR-METAL-BAND-AROUND-THE-ROSEY.

ARE YOU PEOPLE STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE TOLKIEN ESTATE?

EDITOIRAL?

NO - THIS IS TSR'S COMPUTER SECTION. WE DEVELOP NEW COMPUTER GAMES AND DO THE ACCOUNTING!

BOTH? DOESN'T THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS?

SIR? JOHNSON JUST GOT A NEW HIGH SCORE ON DRAGONPLAYER!

SIR, THE BOARD WANTS OUR BUDGET REQUEST FOR NEXT YEAR.

NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
Hey you—go tell the janitor to get the blowtorch—one of the models can't get out of her chainmail bikini.

Editorial?

No—this is TSR labs. This is our latest idea. We worked 2 years to perfect it—

one sided dice!

What good is it?

That's the marketing dept.'s problem.

Hey—i wish we could but there are whack-o's out there who think that gaming is evil like rock 'n' roll or t.v. and are just looking for a reason to pull us off the shelves—so maybe we keep ourselves a little too clean—but we're still here.

That's crazy!

Yes?

I demand artistic freedom!!

This free enuf for you?

Say, i just thot of something...

Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time.

Give me strength, lord?

...we're not working for dragon anymore...

Oh, you noticed.

So now there's nothing stopping us from doing sex and d&d!

Why...I think you're...

All right get moving—this page is private property!

Thanks, folks—it's been fun!
Dear Phil,

I think it’s going to be a problem for me to remember to not leave two or three pages in the back end of the magazine for “What’s New?” I imagine you’ll have a much easier time remembering not to draw it — but don’t be surprised if I call you up a month from now and say, “I don’t care if you quit or not. I need three pages!!”

Actually, if I ever do try to get you to reconsider, it won’t be for what I want — it’ll be on behalf of thousands of our readers who have palpitated over every one of your panels since Phil and Dixie rummaged through that hobby shop in “What’s New?” #1 three years ago. You may think it’s time “to take a break,” as your letter says; you may feel that you’re out of good ideas, like you told me on the phone when you broke the news to me. But don’t try to tell that to all the people who turn to the back of the magazine first — they even read Phil & Dixie before they read my stuff, if you can believe that. I don’t think I’m speaking out of turn when I say that they will miss you just as much as we will — and we will miss you a lot.

Sure, we’ve had our differences. (Do you want to write the best-selling expose, or should I?) But they’ve all been small, especially compared to the miles and miles of smiles that you and “What’s New?” have brought into the world. I’ve always admired people who could step back from the peak of an accomplishment, have the good sense to know when they’re at the top, and then step on to something else without falling down. I guess you’ve made that trip, to the peak of this accomplishment, and everything I have to say really boils down to this: Thanks for taking us along for the ride.
Okay, I give the horde of trolls my Plus IV Glance of Ill-Will... and I roll a 17.

Well, the heads of the 13,000 nearest-trolls pop off, and all the rest faint at the sight of blood. You're out three silver pieces because your boots are ruined.

But suddenly a trap door opens, and you are dumped in front of Odin, the All-Father, who is a bit... perturbed... at your interrupting his dinner.

Mortal, stop washing your hair in my soup!

Oh, come off it, Tail! Don't you have anything challenging in your dungeon?

Yeah! I'll just flick my Elixir of Entropy at him!

Uh... you're right. The Almighty Father of the Universe just evaporated into a cloud of steam!

Well... suddenly the sun goes supernova, the planet splits apart, and a 50-foot tsunami of magma rushes at you!

My character cleans his fingernails.

My character considers raising his staff to cast a spell.

We've been in too many dungeons to trifle with these petty little confrontations you're throwing at us.
EY WOIMY!

WHATCHA GONNA DO WIT' ALL DEM FISH?

FISH? WHAT FISH?

DA ONES YA GOT IN DAT BIG CRATE... BACK IN DA DEN.

THERE'S NO FISH IN THAT CRATE.

DER AIN'T? NOPE.

WULL HOW COME IT SEZ "COD" ON IT?

IT SAYS, "C.O.D."

'EY! I CAN READ!

COUGH-UP OR DIE... IT'S A SPECIAL BILLING PROCEDURE.

OHH...

IRVING... DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT C.O.D. MEANS?

YOU RUN INTO IT A LOT WHEN YOU DEAL WITH THE UNDERWORLD.

SO WHAT'S IN DA CRATE?

THAT'S "SIEGE OF THE IRON KEEP"...

MAN! I HOID OF OVER-SIZED PACKAGIN' BUT DAT'S REDICULOUS!

DAT BOX IS FOITY FEET LONG AN' TWENNY FEET TALL!

... THAT WARGAME I ORDERED 4 MONTHS AGO.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YEP... THE KEEP TAKES UP MOST OF THE SPACE.

DA KEEP?

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME... DEY STICK A WHOLE STINKIN' CASTLE INTO DA GAME?!

MM-HMM...
...COST ME A FORTUNE JUST IN POSTAGE & HANDLING.

DIS I GOTTA SEE!

THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE ON THE SAND-TABLE.

FAH! HOO NEEDS DA ROOLS?

THE BUILDING INSTRUCTIONS.

OH.
RATS!

WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY MEAN BY "SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED"?

YOU SURE DO GET INTO GAMES DAT FOCUS ON REALISM, DON'CHA?

OH WELL... BETTER LATE DEN NEVEH.

...THEY ONLY HAD SIX WEEKS WORTH OF RATIONS!

HA!

YEAH... I JUST WISH THAT BLASTED FREIGHT-CARRIER'D TRY FOCUSING ON REALISM! FOUR MONTHS—SHEESH!!

TRY TELLING THAT TO THE PLAYING PIECES.
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

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