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In a year of dramatic changes for TSR, Wizards of the Coast, and the game industry as a whole, it's easy to become blasé about the relatively minor changes that come along with the big ones. Put a hundred small changes together, however, and you have something pretty spectacular. You've already started seeing the results of those little changes in these pages, and next month we add the finishing touches to give you a fine-tuned DRAGON® Magazine.

Don't worry: We aren't relaunching the magazine all over again. From what you've told us through letters, email, and conversations at conventions, about 90% of the 1996 relaunch has been just right. Now we're concentrating on that final 10%, and here's what you can expect to see.

Many of you have asked for interviews with your favorite authors, game designers, and artists. Starting next month, we'll end each issue with "ProFiles," a short interview with one of the most popular creators of fantasy fiction, games, and artwork. Our first chat is with Margaret Weis, who really needs no introduction here.

Another common request has been to expand our role-playing games reviews, so we're adding a new section to Rick Swan's "Roleplaying Reviews." In it, Lester Smith returns to DRAGON Magazine with his own "Re:Views" section, focusing on small-press or lesser-known games that might not have made it to your local game store.

While we'll remain devoted first to players of the AD&D game, Dungeon Masters will get some extra attention each month in a new DM's advice column written by Peter Adkison, the man who liked AD&D so much he bought the company. "Out of Character" features tips and suggestions drawn from Peters many years of gaming experience.

DRAGON Magazine isn't the only thing to benefit from the results of this year's changes. As the newly appointed TSR Product Group Manager, Bill Slavicsek tells us, "For the first time, at least in my experience at TSR, the responsibility and creative control are in the hands of the brand managers. That's going to make for better product."

While there's no official decision to start work on the third edition of the AD&D game, Bill also points out, "In 1998, we're concentrating on setting material for the AD&D game—products that remain useful even in the event of a third edition."

AD&D is certainly the biggest TSR product, but it isn't alone in receiving a great deal of attention. As many devoted fans of the GREYHAWK® setting might already have read, that classic campaign returns next summer, right after the new ALTERNITY™ science fiction game hits the stores. Fans of the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, PLANESCAPE®, and RAVENLOFT® settings won't be overlooked, and the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign will enjoy a relaunch in late summer. DRAGONLANCE® fans—both players of the SAGA™ system and the AD&D game—will be pleased to know that the setting will support both games next year.

Other TSR projects for the year include a new incarnation of the MARVEL SUPERHEROES® roleplaying game, this time driven by the story-oriented SAGA system, as well as a few surprises that we'll announce in coming months. Keep an eye on the TSR Previews section in these pages for more information as it comes out.

One thing doesn't change for TSR or for DRAGON Magazine, and that's that we won't stop changing. As ever, let us know what you think, and chances are good that we'll do much more than simply read your letter.

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Two-Bit Floozie?

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I have never written to you before, never having seen the need. However, something monstrous has happened. Some two-bit floozie has invaded the Wizards Three, daring, striving to replace Dalamar. This is too insulting to contemplate. First you kill off the DRAGONLANCE® setting, then the next thing I know, Dalamar’s gone kaput! Gone like yesterday’s news. For who, I ask you? For some nobody, that’s who! Dalamar has long been a favorite character, next to Raistlin of course. It’s rare to have a rogue elf, let alone a cool one.

So, do gamers everywhere a favor—ditch the wannabe, and bring back the real thing. If he has access to planes, he can go to other worlds. Heck, you would you not take it?

Were you given a chance to win favor in the eyes of your lord and master, would you not take it?

Were you given a chance to sup on that exquisite gods-food “ice cream,” would you not take it?

Ponder upon these, and see my will and situation. My master Mordenkainen is greatly pleased by my swift-growing mastery of magic, and my conduct in the presence of the Lord Elminster—but both archmages have kindly and gently made clear to me that I am in no way a permanent replacement for the Lord Dalamar. Calm thyself, and prepare for his return, as I do.

How so? Know that I have offered to place myself in peril, to journey to Krynn and learn what hath befallen the Master of the Conclave. I welcome this chance to prove myself, to see yet another new world, and to taste adventure alone for the first time.

My gracious master promises me that his Art shall create a clone of me, if I return not within a season. Some great calamity, or perhaps only great change, hath befallen Krynn, and both my lord and the Lord Elminster are more troubled than they will say plainly. It seemeth that they do miss the Lord Dalamar.

I am a “wannabe” great mage, I freely admit, though thy phrase “two-bit floozie” cries out for an apology on thy part—or a spell-challenge upon mine. I renounce my right to cause further unpleasantness between us; will you do the same?

Rauthenee of Greyhawk
Mage-Apprentice to Lord Mordenkainen the Mighty

P.S. I accept apologies in ice cream.

Article Ideas

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I’m glad to see you back in print after your short “vacation.” I have been a reader of DRAGON Magazine since around issue #87. I have always enjoyed the great campaign and character ideas I have gained from your articles.

I like the new layout you’ve produced over the last year, especially the full reproduction of the cover art inside without the titles. I always thought it a shame that these works of art were not viewable without the titles covering them.

I was glad to read in the last issue (#238) that Ed Greenwood will be writing more of the “Wizards Three” articles. I always enjoyed the creative use of cantrips and spells that come out of these articles. The same goes for “Rogues Gallery.”

The biggest thing I have a problem with though is the increase in flip-the-page advertising. I know you need the adds to help with the cost of publication, but these “to be continued” ads are getting annoying. I would also like to see an increase in the length of the “D-mail” section and of “Sage Advice” as well.

In closing, I’d like to give you an article idea. I would write it myself; however, must accompany all subscription orders. Methods of payment include checks or money orders made payable to DRAGON Magazine or charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit card. Send subscription orders to DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046-9107. In the United Kingdom, methods of payment include cheques or money orders made payable to DRAGON Magazine or charges to a valid ACCESS or VISA credit card; send subscription orders with payments to DRAGON Magazine Subscriptions Dept., P.O. Box 504, Leicester, LE16 0AD. Prices subject to change without prior notice. The issue explanation of each subscription must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.
life doesn't give me the time. None of the books to date give much idea on types of clothing worn during the time period most of the AD&D® campaigns—let alone weights, which are important if someone is carrying an extra set or two of clothes. What paladin would put his or her mystic armor back on after a nice relaxing bath following a month of strenuous kobold-smashing and orc-killing? Why not put on a nice clean tunic and trousers. I think you get the idea. Thanks for the time to read my two cents’ worth.

James Wade Watkins Glen, NY

That sounds like a splendid idea for an article. Now, who will be the first one to send us a formal proposal for it?

James’s letter is the sort we’d like to see much more often, telling us what he thinks we’re doing right and what we should change. If you have an opinion on this issue, or dozens of opinions, please share them with us by writing to “D-Mail.” If enough come in each month, we’ll consider expanding the size of this column.

And More Article Ideas

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I’m writing just to say that DRAGON Magazine is still a great as it ever was since I began reading more than two years ago.

Also, since you may be bringing back some of the old campaigns like the GREYHAWK® and SPELLJAMMER® settings, will DRAGON Magazine contain articles to correspond with these systems? I still run SPELLJAMMER adventures every now and then, so if you add anything onto it, I would be greatly in debt. These old campaigns have been my favorite ones since I began playing the AD&D game.

Jason A. Kahler
4949 Walkingfern Drive
Rockville, MD 20853

Whether an AD&D campaign is active or inactive, we’ll continue to support it with good articles (see issue #241 for the proof of that promise). While we’ve seen occasional GREYHAWK submissions, we’d love to see more proposals for good SPELLJAMMER articles (like Roger Moore’s article on the Scro in DRAGON Magazine Annual #1). The best proposals should show how the article would still be useful to people who don’t play the SPELLJAMMER campaign.

Plural Pila

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I really have enjoyed Issue #239, although I’m only partway through it.

I have some small quibbles with Dirty Orc Trick #84. First, the plural form of pilum is not pilums, but pila. Pilum is a Latin neutral noun with an “-a” ending for the plural form of the noun (dropping the “um”). Second, the original pilum was not really light but quite heavy, and it was wielded by Roman legionnaires. It was used for throwing, and the shaft did not bend, but the head, made of soft metal, did. Often it would get through the shields of opponents, the metal bending, and it would be quite difficult to get the blasted thing out. Usually the opponents had to throw down their shields and face the legionnaires, who pulled out their short swords (gladius, or plural gladii) and charged in, stabbing fiercely for the innards of their opponents. The Gauls and Germans fared badly against this tactic, even though, man for man, they were taller and heavier than the legionnaires. Caesar mentions this fact in his Gallic Wars.

All of the above courtesy of the guy who won the Latin medal in military prep school after laboring through Caesar so many years ago.

But, since we are talking about orcs, and not Romans, what John wrote was fine, and if the above quibble is the worst criticism I can find in the magazine, then it truly is a very superior issue.

Paul Culotta
Tacoma, WA

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You will feel such a relief when you describe the “hairy seven-foot dog-faced men” and don’t hear all the players respond, “Gnolls, ha! That’s easy.”

A tribe of “short rat-faced humanoids who steal away human babies at night” is much more intimidating when it’s not immediately received as a group of half—HD Kobolds. I’m not saying that you should put away your three-year-old campaigns and search out all new and uninitiated players. What, however, can we do to eliminate this problem?

I have taken a few minor steps to keep things fresh in my campaign. One thing that I do is eliminate “table talk.” That is, I attempt to limit any discussion that is related solely to the “rules of the game.” This practice stops players from planning outside of character. Another thing that can be done is to change the stats for monsters. The orcs of the south for instance, are the smaller cousins of northern orcs. The smaller cousins have one Hit Die, while the larger cousins have at least 2+1 Hit Dice and some special attributes that are not apparent to the PCs. If the party has any other experienced DMs, that can be a problem as well. Chances are they have all the old modules and most of the DUNGEON® Adventures. This greatly limits the resources that you can use.

One possibility is to use an old classic module like U1 The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh and change the ending to something completely different. Another thing that you can do to keep things fresh is to make the players change roles. For instance, if Bruno always likes to play warriors, ask him to play a mage or—even better—a pacifist priest.

Of course, old players have their place. They make excellent leaders in a game where most of the other players are new. And, of course, most new players won’t get your jokes about the first-edition monk trapped in the RAVENLOFT® setting, or the time when Kyle said this to Rich, etc.

These are just my thoughts. I would be happy to hear what others think.

Chad Dukes
Leonardtown, MD

First there is Bruce F. Beyer’s piece about the cavalier kit. He seems confused about the difference between a class and a kit. In the first edition, the cavalier was a class in its own right; kits are a second-edition confection. In the second edition AD&D rules, the cavalier is a kit, which means a character who is a cavalier will also be a fighter, a paladin, or (unlikely) a ranger. This is why the cavalier has fewer abilities in the second edition. Another consequence of this change is that a cavalier can have specialization with the attendant multiple attacks and other bonuses.

Mr. Beyer also writes that he does not believe paladins and rangers should be allowed to specialize. In several campaigns in which I have both played and DMed, rangers and paladins have been allowed to specialize in up to three weapons (while fighters could specialize in any number). There were still many fighters, the odd paladin, and absolutely no rangers in our adventuring parties.

Then there is Alexander Fontenot’s comments concerning multi-classed humans. For me, this ties in with the old bugbear of level limits mentioned in John Cudmore's letter. It’s funny how game balance is here being used as the reason for giving human characters a rough deal, when people question whether anyone would ever play a human if level limits were removed. In our campaign, we removed level limits from demihumans and compensated for this by allowing humans to be multi-classed. We also gave human characters +1 to any one ability score of the players choice, thereby taking care of demihuman characters’ other big advantage: starting with a score of 19. The difference between an ability score of 18 and one of 19 is enormous, especially in Strength. The rationale behind our choice was that with a much greater population, the probability of a character of exceptional ability increases.

This change retained humans’ unique flavor of generality and did not upset game balance. In fact, it improved balance. With level limits, players who wish to play demihumans must gamble whether the campaign will last long enough to hit the level limit. If it will, then the character is completely unplayable (steady improvement is the essence of any level-based game). If the level limits are not likely to be reached, then they clearly have no effect at all, balancing or otherwise.

As to Mr. Fontenot’s objections, I too would be slightly horrified at the thought
When dealing with demons... ...talk softly and carry a BIG spear.

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of a high-level paladin/bard. Although I doubt any such character would live very long, given a paladin’s propensity to charge up to the front and challenge the toughest foes combined with the multi-class character’s inherent lack of hit points, I have a way to make sure of it: I would never allow a multi-classed paladin/bard in any campaign I was met, putting experienced players in the group (including myself) to shame. So to all those male-only-by-dogma groups out there: Let the women play, and the whole group will benefit. Or are you scared that they will show you up?

James Thompson
Warwickshire, Great Britain
eeykjet@een1.eee.nottingham.ac.uk

**While we might view slavery as an abomination, slave societies see themselves otherwise . . .**

running. In fact, I would not allow paladins to multi-class at all (except maybe with the priest class). I do not see how this can be a reason for disallowing multi-classed humans in general. Does Mr. Fontenot say to his players, “Sorry, you cannot play a fighter/mage because paladin/bard is such a scary combination?”

Then there are the historical points. I just want to say the following: PCs are adventurers and heroes, a cut above the rest. What they are categorically not is your ordinary man or woman of the street. It is amazing how many people do not seem to see this. Mr. Fontenot’s arguments show an excellent reason why an NPC should not be, for example, both a blacksmith and a tailor, but that is all. Fighters do not serve apprenticeships; they learn to fight as part of the militia, the army or from a hired tutor (if they are rich) or as a matter of survival on the streets. Thieves are likely to learn their skills a similar way, perhaps at a very early age. For example, suppose two characters (0-level humans) were both serving in an army. On discharge, they decide to take up magic and become apprenticed to a master mage. One decides to concentrate on the magic only and so is stuck with the combat abilities he had on leaving the army. The other keeps practicing his combat abilities as well as his magic. This allows his combat abilities to develop in parallel but slows down the development of his magic. Clearly, he is a multi-classed fighter/mage.

As a final point, I want to step back in time a bit to issue #226, which features much debate about female gamers. Over the years, there have been a number of women in the groups I have played in, although they were outnumbered by the men, and two of them were the best roleplayers I have ever seen themselves otherwise . . .

**A Frightening Prospect**

Though I have never in the past felt compelled to write in, upon reading Mr. Alexander Fontenot’s letter on multi-classed humans (in issue #238), I decided to voice my opinion.

The primary factor for preventing humans from multi-classing is indeed, as Mr. Fontenot stated, game balance. As many people have argued, allowing humans to multi-class opens the door to chaos and ultra-powerful characters. Regarding the admittedly frightening prospect of a paladin/bard, I can say only that any DM as concerned with game balance as he seems should find a way to disallow this combination. For example, the character’s deity would have to be a very unusual one to allow into the clergy a person who claims to follow a strict code of ethics and honor, while at the same time he rogously and blatantly uses thieving skills behind the scenes. For that matter, the character would have to be unusual as well, and remember how few people can become paladins. The deity, unless its portfolio was primarily music, song, history, or (for lack of a better term) “roguishness,” might not allow the character to be a paladin at all!

Mr. Fontenot’s identification of the paladin and bard classes as actually being multi-classed humans deserves mention. The paladin class is less potent than the fighter/cleric combination. With the experience needed to reach 9th level (when the paladin gains his first first-level spell), a fighter/cleric has reached level 6/6 and is already casting third-level spells. To balance this, the paladin has granted abilities (which the cleric also has) and advances faster, because he is single-classed. The same goes for the bard, who lacks both the magical might and thieving prowess of a mage/thief with the same total experience but is instead rewarded with other abilities.

Responding to Mr. Fontenot’s citing of the historical reasons why multi-classing is not feasible, I must point out that these reasons are also applicable to the demihuman races, effectively making multi-classing off-limits to everyone. Or are we to believe that they have all developed such enlightened societies that such situations are no longer a problem? This game is played for fun, and so some such concerns must be laid to rest for all concerned.

Lastly, Mr. Fontenot’s statement that suitable masters for beginning characters must be 9th level or above (the level that most characters attract followers) is, I believe, amiss. If that were so, then every 1st-level character would at the least know of such a person, a highly unlikely occurrence. Also, if one takes the time to think about it, this would make all but the very oldest wizards nonexistent, since they do not attract followers at all! Since no new wizard apprentices exist, they would not be an available character class for new PCs. Because this cannot be the case, there is no reason to expect that a prospective apprentice need find someone of 9th level or higher. With all apologies to Mr. Fontenot, this makes his last argument about the human physiology nonviable, as not every candidate is dead of old age.

Brian Frink
15207 Dakota Street
Victorville, CA 92394-2039

**Slavers and Other Ancient Villains**

Lloyd Brown’s article on ancient villains (issue #238) offered good advice and certainly helped me develop a suitable adversary for my next campaign. While the idea was brilliant, however, I found some of the detail both contradictory and unlikely.

For example, I think his view of the slaver as a villainous archetype is misleading. Most importantly, for a slaver to exist, at least one society has to regard slavery as acceptable. While we might view slavery as an abomination, slave societies see themselves otherwise, and slavery performs a useful economic function. Slavers are businessmen, and slaves are precious commodities. There is no profit in deliberate degradation of slaves, nor can there be any reason to act as a slaver without a society that recognizes property rights over intelligent beings. Therefore, I do not agree that a slaver
Power Lies Within

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forms a villain archetype. Certainly, a villain might also be a slaver, and to non-slave cultures the slaver is evil, but I do not think that slavery would form more than a minor one of the many business interests developed by the ancient villain over the years.

I was also confused by the contradictions in the article concerning the loyalty of followers. On one hand, if offered employment in his service, “those naive enough to fall for this old trick are assasinated,” and on the other hand, “loyal followers are the most valuable ‘possessions’ these villains can have . . . they represent a great investment.” If employees are summarily executed, I do not see how loyalty can be expected. My own feeling is that ancient villains can afford to be the most generous of employers, having amassed the power, security, and outlook to feel little danger from their underlings. Ancient villains will always be looking toward the long term, and it would be simplest to bribe PCs not to interfere. Breaking such an agreement would do the villain’s reputation great harm, and he or she is likely to be around long enough to worry about such things.

Don’t get me wrong; the article was another good idea from the Dragon Magazine stable. It usefully highlights another area for improving roleplaying and baddies without necessarily giving them another vorpal blade +20.

Timothy Eccles
London, England

Disruptive Players

This letter is a response to Mark Fitzpatrick’s letter in Dragon Magazine #239. You have a thorny problem that all players and DMs have from time to time: how to deal with the disruptive behavior of unruly players. As DMs, we have enough challenges to put together an enjoyable game without someone ruining the fun. As players, we have a hard enough time keeping up with the storyline, figuring out the puzzles, and defeating the monsters, without someone making it that much harder. When this happens, then it is our sad task to put things right, for the benefit of everyone concerned.

The simplest method is, as you mentioned, not to invite the disruptive player(s) back to the group. This is a last resort, in my mind, not to be used until all other options are exhausted. In the meantime, there are things that you can do to fix the problem.

First, simply talk to the disruptive player and inform him of the problem.

In some cases, the player doesn’t realize that his behavior is disruptive until someone brings it to his attention. If you have had this talk before, then also warn him that continuing this stuff will get him ousted from the table.

At the table, the DM has control of the game, and all the elements that go along with an enjoyable evening. Short of reprimanding the player in front of the others, the DM can discipline unruly players by using their disruptive behavior against them (as long as the action happened while in character), resulting in a loss of experience points, loss of surprise, unexpected encounters, negative NPC reactions, lack of adventure knowledge, loss of status, or anything else the DM can imagine. If this happens a few times, and the player realizes that it’s his behavior (while in character) that causes it, he might just change his tune a little.

All in all, the idea is to be fair and honest with these people, whether in the game or out. Give them every chance to fix the problem on their own, for disruptive behavior of an unruly player ruins the fun for all. If they won’t change, then you will have no choice but to ask them to leave the game.

Anton J. Uselmann
P.O. Box 492
Gold Beach, OR 97444

In Defense of the Cavalier

In response to Mr. Kohler’s attack on my letter “Ode to the Cavalier” (in issue #241), let me just begin by saying I have played and DMed for the last 15 years, and in all that time I have seen three players actually play a cavalier correctly. Mr. Kohler describes a game world ruled by power-gamers wielding skill-laden killing machines, namely the cavaliers and barbarians. If this is the case, Mr. Kohler, I propose that it is an atypical situation that you have created and failed to put into check.

As I stated earlier, very few players can properly play a cavalier. I have personally witnessed several players renounce their decision to be a cavalier and return their character to a run-of-the-mill fighter. The cavalier is just too restrictive to appeal to most players.

Let’s face it, after a week of reality, most players just want to kick butt come the weekend game session.

I still uphold my defense of the cavalier, as I outlined in Dragon Magazine issue #238. He is not the mindless pawn of power gamers that Mr. Kohler suggests. He is what he has always been—the champion of the downtrodden, well within his right to retain all special abilities granted him by the powers that be.

If you ask me, the power gamers are those who play the death-dealing specialist mages. Why play a cavalier, who goes one on one vs. a single opponent, when you can launch a fireball and take out several hundred single-HD creatures? Much easier, less work, and a lot safer. Honestly, I made that statement about the cavalier kit collecting dust because I can’t get anyone to play one. Everyone wants to play the single-classed fighter, no strings attached, or the almighty wizard.

Now let’s set the record straight. It appears Mr. Kohler has misinterpreted some of the rules outlined in the Complete Fighter’s Handbook. In his rebuttal, he states, “There is nothing anywhere prohibiting a fighter or paladin who takes the cavalier kit from specializing.” Although obviously true in the first instance, he is completely wrong about the paladin.

The paladin, as is the case with the ranger, cannot take weapon specialization. On page 58 of the CFH [corrected 2nd printing, May 1992], under the paragraph heading, “Single Weapon Proficiency/Weapon Specialization,” it states, “only single-class fighters, not
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paladins or rangers can take weapon specialization.” It is true, however, that a paladin can take the cavalier kit, but he cannot take the weapon specialization offered to a single-classed fighter. The paladin and ranger are both sub-classes of the warrior and are, therefore, under the rules outlined by the Unearthed Arcana, Player's Handbook (2nd Edition), and the Complete Fighter's Handbook, unable to specialize.

The next point of order: Wow! Where did this mage-knight conglomeration come from? This is kind of like an oxymoron and goes against every fiber of my being. Talk about power gaming! Let's take a mage character who undoubtedly will be a fireball - wielding pain in the gluteus-maximus in a short time to come, and give him a cavalier kit. It is completely against the rules outlined in the CFH. On page 36, it states that warrior kits are designed to add depth to warrior class characters, and only single-classed warriors can take the warrior kits outlined within the CFH.

I personally enjoy the game in its own right with the same old character classes that the game has evolved with all these years. I don't believe we have to experiment with far-flung aggregate type mutations as the mage-knight (not possible, by the way), acrobat-fighter, and the psionicist-necromancer-berserker.

Bruce F. Beyers
CPTBrewski@aol.com

Super Heroes?

I am writing in response to Bruce Beyers' letter in issue #238. Why should we create an "ultimate warrior"? The entire point of the second edition Player's Handbook was to balance each character's strengths and weaknesses, not to have a warrior that could dominate play and take care of every monster.

The cavalier could use a revamping, but allowing him to function at negative hit points and giving him the ability to increase stats is going too far! What happens when the mighty cavalier reaches all 18s in his physical attributes? Suddenly he is jumping up by 10s in hp per level, his AC makes him immune to the average monster's attack, and he can wack a dragon bone from bone in the blink of an eye.

It is better to use the Player's Option™: Skills and Powers book, allowing players to pick and choose their abilities and weaknesses. This way they are gaining nothing for free.

One final note about this letter. The paladin and ranger are not subclasses. Instead, Warriors are a group of classes including paladins, rangers, and fighters. Their special abilities set them apart from the rest of the soldier-of-fortune crowd. The point of the AD&D game is not to give one class super-abilities but to allow all classes help in their special way. Wizards hurl magic, Rogues backstab and pick locks, Priests heal, and Warriors protect all of the above.

Daniel Ingraham
Raleigh, NC

The point of the AD&D game is not to give one class super abilities but to allow all classes to help in their special way.

Thieves' Cant

I would like to discuss the Thieves' Cant used in the AD&D game. The Player's Handbook describes Thieves' Cant as a dialect of the common tongue unknown to all but thieves. This works fine for most campaigns, but I feel that in many campaigns, the Cant should be treated slightly differently. I would suggest that, depending on the race of the PC and the particular guild that character went to, Thieves' Cant should be available to different languages. I have two reasons for this feeling. One, the AD&D multiverse is populated by slews of humanoid races, some of which (like halflings) are capable of shady activities far beyond humans. With such a diverse selection of races, it seems stupid to declare that each race's society is so different that only human thieves are smart enough to produce their own guilds and slangs. Secondly, many of the AD&D races rarely associate with other races (such as most elves), and therefore it makes sense that thieves of different races would assemble different types of Thieves' Cant. Which languages have Thieves' Cant would be based on the DM's world and choices.

Charlie Martin-Brooks
RFD #2, Box 20
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Doctoring Specialization

I must admit that after reading Chuck Moffat's letter (in issue #238), I felt compelled to dust off my calculator and do some basic math. In Mr. Moffat's letter, he defines “doctor level specialization” as available only to warriors of 15th level or higher.

If we construct a model warrior around Mr. Moffat's rules, then the warrior would be initially possessed of a +8 bonus to hit and to damage his opponents. Furthermore, if we imbue that warrior with the rather unremarkable Strength score of 17, then he now possesses bonuses of +9 to hit and damage. If we add to this model the assumption that at some point during his lengthy adventuring career, our warrior had acquired a long sword +2, then his bonuses now stand at +11 to hit and damage. If our model is the minimum level for the "doctor level specialization," then at 15th level, he is enjoying an impressive -5 THAC0.

In combat with the most difficult-to-hit opponent he could possibly face (AC -10), our hero need roll only a 5 or higher on 1d20 to hit his opponent. Worse yet is the horrific damage that our dervish inflict. With his staggering four attacks per round, this Quisinart will (statistically speaking) strike his opponent an average of three times per round. With a long sword, three hits from the specialist yields 36-57 hp damage per round (3d8 + 33).

My suggestion for our model is that he retire to a quiet life in the lower hells, where he can while away the hours slaying bothersome pit fiends.

Arthur D. Reynolds
626 Brockton, EKU
Richmond, KY 40475

Do you have a favorite house rule for the AD&D game? If so, share it with the rest of us! Send your favorite house rule to: "Forum House Rules," DRAGON Magazine, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, or send it via email to dmail@wizards.com. Be sure to include your full name and address along with a note telling us how much of that you'd like printed with your letter.
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by Skip Williams

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This month, the Sage ponders the capabilities of polymorphed creatures, elven resistance to spells, and other troublesome questions from the AD&D® game.

. . . the question of an elf’s resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells has raised its ugly head in our local campaign.

The description for the *polymorph* other spell says that a polymorphed creature does not gain any magical or special abilities that go along with its new form unless a mental change occurs. When the spell recipient gains the new form’s mentality, it gains the form’s magical and special abilities and resembles a genuine version of the creature. Does that include hit points and Hit Dice? How are hit points assigned? How long does the process take? What happens to a creature that has undergone the mental change and then becomes subjected to a successful *dispel magic* effect? Does the restored creature retain any abilities from the assumed form?

Once the mental change takes place, a polymorphed creature gains all the assumed form’s abilities: Hit Dice, Armor Class, combat abilities, magical abilities, and so on. The DM can re-roll all the creature’s hit points or can simply roll all the Hit Dice the creature has gained (or lost) and add (or subtract) the result from the creature’s old hit-point total.

Technically, the polymorphed creature gains all its new abilities the instant its mentality changes, though some DMs might require some time before the creature can use them. I’d suggest one day to one week per ability, depending on how difficult it is to use. The DM rates each ability’s difficulty and decides the order in which they become available.

In any case, the mental change is permanent. The creature’s newfound abilities, however, remain dependent on the *polymorph* other spell. If the effect is dispelled, the creature reverts to its natural form and loses all abilities that went with it—even purely mental abilities and other powers that the creature’s natural form could sustain. Nevertheless, the creature firmly believes the assumed form to be its natural one. A *wish* can remove the delusion. Some DMs also allow *heal* or *restoration* spells to do the trick.

Suppose my character casts a *prayer* spell on himself. If some enemies come into the spell’s area of effect after my character finishes the spell, does my character gain the spell’s bonuses against them so long as the spell is still in effect? Do the newly arrived enemies suffer the spell’s penalties against my character? What about my character’s allies?

Everyone in the area of effect at the instant a *prayer* spell is cast is affected for the duration of the spell. Those not in the area of effect when the spell is completed are unaffected. All the casters allies gain the listed bonuses (see spell description in the PHB). If these characters subsequently encounter foes who have not been affected by the *prayer* spell, they gain all the spell’s bonuses, but the foes suffer no penalties from the spell.

It seems to be an old question, but the question of an elf’s resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells has raised its ugly head our local campaign. Does elf resistance count against any spell of the school of Enchantment/Charm or only against the spells *charm person*, *charm monster*, and *sleep*? If it works against the whole school of Enchantment/Charm, I do indeed think that the race of elves is far too strong to be a player character race and thus should be banned from play.

Yeah, its an old question, one the Sage has answered before, but here’s a better answer: An elf’s resistance applies to spells and spell-like effects that allow continuing control over the recipient. These include *charm person*, *charm monster*, domination, *fire charm*, a vampire’s charm gaze, a harpy’s song, and many others. An elf’s resistance does not apply to effects that allow limited control or impose a disability, such as command, *hold person*, suggestion, quest, or geas. Nor does an elf’s resistance prevent outside influences from usurping control of the body, such as magic jar.

Any effect that causes the recipient to fall into an enchanted slumber, such as the *sleep* spell or the sleep effect of the *eyebite* spell, is subject to elven resistance. If an opponent uses a *command* or *suggestion* spell to induce an elf to fall asleep, the elf does not gain the benefit of his resistance, but the resulting sleep is not “magical” sleep, and the elf can awaken in response to loud noise, general discomfort, or the like.
From the steppes of the Barbarian Highland to the noxious depths of the Karlok Fens, armies continue to mass. Ragnarok. Armageddon. The Breaking. Toth-Amon. The End of All. All races and languages have a name for it. A grand conflagration on a scale as yet unseen. It comes. All beings prepare their best and most vicious to be tested in the final forge of might.
With the special link between familiar and wizard, could a familiar who has the intelligence to scribe, memorize and learn spells, attempt to learn a spell its master knows? If the wizard failed to learn a particular spell, could his familiar try to learn it?

No and no.

What is the deal with the listing for monster summoning VIII in the back of the Monstrous Manual™ tome? As far as you’ve let us know, monster summoning VIII is the highest possible (because it’s a ninth-level wizard spell).

There actually are some spells higher than 9th level out there (true drowers, psionic enchantments, and even high magic to name a few). However, there is no monster summoning VIII spell. The listing in the Monstrous Manual tome is an error, but I’ve always found it useful as an alternate list for the monster summoning VII spell.

In the Player’s Handbook, it is said that paladin can turn baatezu, tanar’ri, and other lower-planar scum. How does the ability work? Are the creatures affected like undead of similar Hit Dice, or is turning them more difficult?

Invisibility, for example, has a maximum duration of 24 hours (see spell description), and contingency lasts a maximum of one day per level of the caster. I strongly recommend that you limit armor to a maximum duration of one day, too.

If a character dies from a poison with an immediate onset time, can a neutralize poison or slow poison spell save him if cast on the following round? Or does it take effect only after the poison takes effect? Although the Dungeon Master® Guide clearly indicates that the effect of a poison with an immediate onset time is felt the instant it is applied, it’s best to allow a slow poison or neutralize poison spell to save a poisoned creature from death if cast during the same round the recipient was poisoned. The poison might take effect immediately, but the recipient doesn’t necessarily die instantly.

Yes, creatures that have venom with an immediate onset time are quite deadly—something people who design monsters overlook all too often.

Exactly how does a character with the healing and herbalism proficiencies tend to a poisoned character?

Use the “Special” line on Table 61: Undead Turning for lower planar creatures unless the creature’s description says to use another line. Note that paladins themselves can be turned by evil priests. The priest functions as though he were three levels lower than his actual level and uses the line appropriate for the paladin’s hit dice.

If a spell has an open-ended duration, one not dependent on time, such as armor, invisibility, or contingency, can a character cast these spells and then re-up with new spells on the following day? Do these spells take up a spell slot while they last?

A spell vanishes from the caster’s memory the moment it’s cast, not when it ends. So, yes, a character can remember a spell he currently has running.

Note, however, that some of the spells on your list have finite durations. Depending on the duration of the spell, the rules at the end of Table 61 apply. For example, if the poison takes 24 hours to work, the poison causes 1 point of damage per hour after the saving throw. If the poison takes 10 minutes, the poison causes 1 point of damage per minute after the saving throw. If the poison takes 5 seconds, the poison causes 1 point of damage per second after the saving throw. If the poison takes 1 second, the poison causes 1 point of damage per second after the saving throw.

Exactly how does a character with the healing and herbalism proficiencies tend to a poisoned character?

The DM has to decide how long a poison will be. If the group has a healer, it’s incumbent upon the DM to make sure the poisoned character doesn’t roll a saving throw too soon.

If the poisoned character has received a slow poison spell, you might allow a character who has already failed a saving throw vs. poison a second saving throw if a healer or healer/herbalist tends him before the spell ends.

If a poison is classified Injected, can it be used to coat a weapon? Since “Injected” means it must be put directly in the bloodstream, I think any successful hit (at least 1 hp damage) will count as the poison being injected, since that hit has drawn blood. (Don’t coat your hammer with poison.) I know the creature struck has to attempt a saving throw vs. poison, but what damage will the poison cause if the saving throw fails? What happens if the saving throw succeeds? Does the amount of damage the blow inflicted have any effect on what the poison does? Also, how long does the poison last once it’s applied to a weapon, and how long does it take to poison a weapon?

Yes, injected poisons can be “injected” with a successful attack by a piercing or slashing (type P or S) weapon coated with the venom. For game purposes, blunt (type B) weapons can’t inject poison. While not every “hit” in AD&D game combat necessarily draws blood, it’s best to require a creature struck by a poisoned weapon to attempt a saving throw vs. poison anytime a poisoned weapon hits and inflicts damage; though the DM could introduce some additional mechanic, such as a minimal amount of damage (say at least 3 hp damage) or a high attack roll (perhaps a attack roll of 16 or higher or an attack score at least three points higher than the minimum needed to score a hit).

Once the attack delivers the poison, the rules on poison from the DMG (Chapter 9) take over, and any damage the weapon inflicted becomes moot. Just roll the saving throw and apply the result. Note that most poisons can inflict some small amount of damage even if the recipient makes a successful saving throw.

The DM has to decide how long a poison remains dangerous once applied to a weapon. I suggest no less than one turn and no more than one day. Use the shorter time for simple liquids that the user just slaps on and the longer time for specially prepared venoms that
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won't rub off or evaporate readily. One successful hit with a poisoned weapon should effectively wipe off all venom, as should exposure to large volumes of water, intense heat, or similar conditions that could remove the venom.

It takes a full round to apply venom to a weapon (no movement or other significant actions allowed), and a character can apply poison that quickly only if the poison is readily at hand. Small weapons, such as arrows or quarrels can be envenomed 10 at a time.

Many referees I know require characters carrying poisoned weapons to attempt saving throws vs. poison every turn or hour to see if the character has scratched himself or had some similar mishap. Success means nothing happens to the character. Failure means the character has poisoned himself.

The characters in my game recently came upon a room where they found a few furnishings and a “cloak” hanging on a peg. At a suggestion from another player, the party thief tried on the “cloak” only to find that it was a cloaker! The monster proceeded to make mincemeat out of the thief, and then the rest of the party. Now I’m wondering, should I have rolled to see if the cloaker was surprised?

Assuming that the cloaker wasn’t aware of the party before the characters entered the room, and wasn’t asleep or otherwise distracted, this is what I would have done:

When the party first entered the room, I would have checked to see if the cloaker was surprised (not when the thief grabbed the cloaker). Since cloakers spend most of their lives waiting for prey to stumble by, I would have given it a +2 bonus to the roll, as it was prepared to make an attack. If the cloaker had been surprised, I would have decided that the party caught it off guard and that it snapped to its senses when the thief grabbed it. Note that the party would not be aware of the cloaker until the thief woke it up even though they had surprised it.

If the party had not surprised the cloaker, I would have assumed that the cloaker ambushed the party (see PHB, Chapter 11), giving it a free attack on the thief, with no defensive bonuses for the thief’s Dexterity and a +2 bonus for a rear attack (because the thief was literally trying to wear the cloaker).

In any case, I would have had the party roll for surprise only when they actually discovered the cloaker. The cloaker could have made two free attacks before there was an initiative roll—one when the thief tried to put it on (provided the cloaker was not surprised itself) and one more if the party was surprised.

Skip Williams reports that he wrote the bulk of this month’s column on the third floor of a drafty old house where he was a guest. Skip says the garret was well supplied with closets full of old clothes where it was just faintly possible to imagine cloakers lurking in the darkest periods of windy nights.
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The Adventure Begins March, 1998
One of the DM's perennial problems is judging a new spell proposed by a creative player. Here is a set of rules, the Laws of Spell Design, intended to help the DM make a rational, objective decision about such potentially unbalancing new spells. The Laws of Spell Design also allow help the DM make faster decisions and point out a number of considerations that the DM otherwise might have overlooked.

Many of the spell design rules have been “reverse-engineered” from existing spell-level assignments. Close examination of the Wizard spells listed in the AD&D® game Player's Handbook (PHB) reveals several basic patterns in the level assignments. The Laws of Spell Design address approximately 20 of these basic patterns.

Types of New Spells

Before delving into the detailed Laws of Spell Design, consider the different types of new or proposed spells. When attempting to assign a level to a new spell, the DM should first categorize the spell to help decide which Laws apply. New spells usually fit into one of the following four categories:

A. Very similar to an existing spell, except for minor modifications to one or more explicit spell parameters, such as casting time, required components, duration, range, area of effect, or saving throw. Sometimes players want to just tweak a spell.

B. Somewhat similar to existing spell(s) but may combine one or more effects.

C. Derived from an existing spell, with modifications to major spell parameters such as damage caused, targeting, applicability, prerequisite spells, or effect on the caster.

D. Entirely new spell, totally unrelated to any existing spells.

The Laws of Spell Design are a great help with the first three types of new spells, and they can provide guidance on the fourth type.

Modifying Base Spells

The first step in designing a new spell is to determine which existing spell (or spells) is most similar to the proposed new one. This task is fairly easy if the new spell fits into category A, B, or C. Use the level of the established spell as the base level for the proposed new spell. Then apply the spell modifiers from Tables 1 and 2 as required. Note that a proposed spell can have both positive and negative modifiers.

Table 1 summarizes the spell level modifiers that are dependent upon spell parameters (range, components, duration, etc.).

Table 2 summarizes the spell-level modifiers derived from parameters that appear in the spell descriptions, such as number of targets, chance of success, debilitating effects on the caster, etc. Only a few of these laws apply to any given spell. The Law of Damage does not apply to a fly (W3) spell, for example.

Example: A player proposes a spell called shield other, which acts as shield spell except that the caster places the spell on another person. This change shifts the range from personal (able to affect only the caster) to touch. This is a +1 level shift, so the shield other spell ranks as a second-level spell. The new spell could be brought back down to first-level by increasing the casting time from under one round to one turn, which would apply a -1 level shift.

Laws that cover the same effect are not additive. For example, the Law of Range (personal to touch) and the Law of Self (caster to target) both apply to the shield other spell. However, the spell is not adjusted twice for what is essentially the same effect, so the level assignment goes up by only one level, not two. If, however, the modification involved a change to both range and duration, a +2 level shift would apply.

Generalized Law of Parameters

According to this law, modifying a spell to improve its effects or parameters requires more power. All spell parameters (area of effect, duration, range, number of missiles, number of targets affected, dice of damage, etc.) increase via one of the following three methods, in order of increasing power requirements:

❖ Remain constant
❖ Increase every X caster levels, where X > 1
❖ Increase with every caster level

Example: This type of progression is illustrated by the spells invisibility (W2), invisibility 10’ radius (W3), improved invisibility (W4), and mass invisibility (W7).

If a wizard modifies a spell so that its parameters increase every level instead of
### Table 1: Parameter Modifiers to Spell Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPELL PARAMETER</th>
<th>+1 LEVEL</th>
<th>NO CHANGE</th>
<th>-1 LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General parameter</td>
<td>... increases with every caster level.</td>
<td>... increases every X caster levels (X &gt; 1).</td>
<td>... remains constant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Range</td>
<td>... ranged.</td>
<td>... touch.</td>
<td>... personal (0).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of spell is</td>
<td>... increases with caster level.</td>
<td>... is constant.</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If spell is ranged, range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Components</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell requires</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material components are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are expensive material components</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Duration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration (non-damaging spells) is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration (damaging spells) is</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Law of Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Casting time is</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Law of Areas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law of Resistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving, throw?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to save</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Law of Range**

The following range categories appear in order of increasing power requirement:
- Personal (or zero).
- Touch.
- Range remains constant with caster level.
- Range increases every X caster levels, where X > 1.
- Range increases every caster level.

Example: Modifying the magic missile (W1) spell so that the caster could fire one missile per caster level would make the modified spell second-level.

In addition, use the following six laws to modify spell level when modifying explicit spell parameters.

- Range increases every X caster levels, where X > 1.
- Range increases every caster level.

### Law of Components

There are three aspects to the Law of Components:

1. Spell components, in particular material components, provide part of the power or open the pathways to allow spells to work. Given equal spell contact with more easily than something that is at a distance, although this factor is not usually worth a level of difference.

Example: Shield is a first-level spell with a range of 0 (caster only). A shield other spell that allowed the caster to place a shield on another person within touch range would be a second-level spell.

- Range remains constant with caster level.
- Range increases in multiples of 10' per caster level.
- Range remains constant with caster level.
- Range increases in multiples of 10' per caster level.
- Range remains constant with caster level.
- Range increases in multiples of 10' per caster level.

**Example:**

For each +2 in bonuses.
levels, a spell that requires material (M) components accomplishes more than one that does not.

2. Expensive components (those with a value of 100 gp or more per spell level) provide more power than cheap components. A spell with expensive, consumed material components accomplishes as much as a spell one level higher. Conversely, a spell with cheap consumed components accomplishes less.

3. The use of material components assumes that those components are consumed by the spell. Expensive, reusable components have the same effect as moderately costly consumed components—i.e., no effect on spell level. However, very expensive (valued at 500 gp or more per spell level), reusable components might have an effect on assigned spell level.

Example: Find familiar (W1) accomplishes a very powerful effect through the use of a long casting time and expensive, consumed material components.

Law of Duration
The time increments of spell duration are (in order of increasing power requirements):

- Instant
- Round
- Round(s)
- Turns
- Hours
- Days
- Until triggered
- Permanent

Duration is inversely proportional to raw spell power. A spell can accomplish a weak effect for a long time, or a powerful effect for a very short time. Damaging spells (such as fireball, W3) typically cause all their damage in one round. Damaging spells that persist for more than one round are either higher level or obey the Law of Damage. Modifying a damaging spell with an instant duration so it persists for more than one round involves a level shift of +2. Modifying a non-offensive spell so that it persists for more than one round involves a +1 level shift.

A spell that passively waits for an event to happen is less effective than one aimed at a specific event. Consider the difference between fire trap and fireball. Contingency type spells that last until triggered require significant amounts of power. A damaging spell that waits until someone triggers it (fire trap, W4) is higher level than one that goes off instantly, damage being equal (burning hands, W1).

Example: A player proposes extended shield, which is the same as shield except that the duration is five turns per level instead of five rounds per level. The increase in duration from "rounds" to "turns" causes a +1 level increase, making extended shield a second-level spell.

Law of Time
Simply put, the law of time states that given two spells of equal level, the spell with the longer casting time is more powerful. Casting time must increase by two categories to gain a level of effectiveness. For example, the casting time must increase from less than one round (with initiative modifier) to turns, or from rounds to hours.

Specifying a casting time is a very important consideration when designing a spell. Will the spell be a quick-fire incantation useful in a combat situation? Or will it be a slow, deliberate ritual requiring long preparation? Wizard spells can be divided roughly into two categories as a function of casting time: incantations and rituals. The following table summarizes the classification scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casting Time</th>
<th>Type of Spell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ One Round</td>
<td>Incantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounds</td>
<td>Incantation or Ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incantations have a casting time of one round or less. Examples of incantations include magic missile (W1), shield (W1), and levitate (W2). Incantations are battle-oriented spells that must be cast quickly. These extremely quick spells sacrifice power for speed. Incantations usually have a duration of less than one turn per level, although there are exceptions such as Tenser’s floating disc (W1), rope trick (W2), and web (W2).

Rituals have a casting time of one turn or more, most likely one turn per level or even one hour per level. Examples include armor (W1), find familiar (W1), identify (W1), and strength (W2). Rituals generate powerful effects compared to incantations of the same level. Rituals often require esoteric material components and extensive preparation. Rituals are utility-type spells that perform a specific task or place a temporary enchantment upon an item. Spells that

Example Spell
Shield Vessel
Third-Level Wizard Spell
Evocation
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 1 vessel
Saving Throw: None

The shield vessel spell allows the wizard to place a shield spell around a vehicle (usually a seagoing ship), protecting everyone within the area of effect. The spell protects the crew of the vessel just as the shield spell protects its caster. It negates magic missile attacks and provides AC 2 protection against hand-hurled missiles, etc. Since the shield effect totally surrounds the vessel, anyone aboard receives a +1 bonus to saving throws against attacks that originate from off the ship. The spell provides no protection from attackers that successfully board the ship.

The material component of the spell is a series of finely wrought pieces of silver jewelry made to resemble small shields. The silver shields must be placed around the perimeter of the vessel to be protected. The total value of the shields must be at least 1,500 gp, although the wizard is free to put more money into the shields. The silver shields are not consumed by the spell. If the total value of the shields falls below 1,500 gp (through wear, battle-damage, vandalism, theft, etc.), the shield vessel spell immediately fails.

Notes: Since this spell is obviously derived from shield (W1), it is a base first-level spell. The Law of Ranges applies, since the range has moved from personal (0) to touch, for a +1 modifier to spell level. The Law of Targeting applies, since the spell now affects multiple targets within an area instead of a single target, for a +1 modifier to base spell level. Finally, the Law of Areas applies, since the spell now protects an area, not just the caster. This makes shield vessel a fourth-level spell, which is higher than the player wanted. However, the player proposes the use of expensive, reusable components (500 gp per spell level) to make up the difference. By the Law of Components, this allows a +1 modifier to the spell level. The net effect is that shield vessel should be a W3 spell with a +3 modifier to initiative for casting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPELL PARAMETER</th>
<th>+1 LEVEL</th>
<th>NO CHANGE</th>
<th>-1 LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law of Changes</td>
<td>Actually creates.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Modifies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of creation:</td>
<td>Actually destroys.</td>
<td>Modifies or moves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of destruction:</td>
<td>Permanent.</td>
<td>Long (&gt;1 turn/level) but finite.</td>
<td>Temporary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of changes:</td>
<td></td>
<td>... some other actions.</td>
<td>... no other actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Control</td>
<td></td>
<td>... any other actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caster controls spell and may perform . . .</td>
<td>... &gt;1d6/caster level.</td>
<td>... target allowed no save.</td>
<td>... target allowed save.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Damage</td>
<td></td>
<td>... wizard of caster level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage potential is . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td>... single form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Expertise</td>
<td></td>
<td>... probability of success ≤ 10%/caster level.</td>
<td>... fixed probability of success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caster rolls to hit and . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caster attacks as . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Forms</td>
<td>Spell has . . .</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Automatic but temporary (-1); chance of permanent debilitation or death (-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell provides information and has a . . .</td>
<td>... greater than 10%/caster level chance of success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell provides information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and has a . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of the Mage's Price</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debilitating effects?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Metaspells</td>
<td>Spell has prerequisites?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell has prerequisites?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spell . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject present by . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target of spell is . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Self-Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viable targets are . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Specifics</td>
<td>Very specific one purpose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generality:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Specifics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generality:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Targeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of targets . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell is detrimental to target and . . .</td>
<td>... increases every caster level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell is detrimental to target and . . .</td>
<td>... allows selection of multiple specific targets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: See the text for discussion of the Law of Power and The Final Law.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
create a permanent, long lasting (more than one turn per level), or “until triggered” effects are rituals. A low-level ritual spell with the same effect as casting a fireball could be designed, but in the two or more turns required to cast the spell, the orcs would be roasting the wizard over a slow fire instead of cracking in the fading embers of a fast fireball.

Conjuration and summoning spells are often (but not always) rituals, especially if they summon a powerful creature. Examples include mount (W1), phantom steed (W3), and conjure elemental (W5). Many other conjuration/summoning spells walk the fine line between ritual and incantation, with casting times of a round or more.

**Example:** Consider the proposal instant strength, a spell that acts just as strength (W2) except that the casting time shifts from one turn to less than one round, with one point of initiative modifier per spell level (+2 casting time shifts). As a result, instant strength would be a third-level spell with an initiative modifier of +3.

**Law of Areas**

Areas of effect normally increase with caster level in increments of 10 feet; either a 10’ x 10’ square or a cube 10 feet on a side. Spells with constant areas of effect require less power than spells with increasing areas of effect. However, if area is given as constant, the area should be fairly small, such as one object or an area under 10 feet per side. The DM should disallow attempts to lower the level of a spell by specifying a large, constant area, since this violates the intent of the rule. A shift from a small area of effect to a large area would require a +1 shift in level, and vice versa.

**Example:** A wizard creates a mass fumble spell that acts as a fumble (W4), except that the area of effect is one 10’-cube per level. Since the spell is shifting from a small, constant area of effect (30’-cube) to an area of effect that increases with level, the mass fumble spell is fifth-level.

**Law of Resistance**

As a baseline, if a spell is detrimental to the target, the target receives a saving throw that negates the spell. Saving throws modify spell level according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saving Throw</th>
<th>Modification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halves</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negates</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, a spell that allows the target no chance to resist is two levels higher than a spell that allows the target a normal chance to resist the effects and three levels higher than a spell that allows the target a saving throw to negate the effects entirely. Significant penalties or bonuses to the target’s saving throw (+2 or more) also shift the assigned spell level by +/-1 level.

**Example:** A firebomb spell that acts as a fireball but allows no saving throw would be a fumble-level spell (+2 level shift).

The target does not receive a saving throw against spells that are beneficial to the target or that do not directly affect the target. There is no saving throw vs. strength, for example, or against monster summoning. Spells of this sort are not subject to the Law of Resistance.

**Implicit Spell Parameters**

The laws below discuss some (but not necessarily all) of the implicit parameters.

**Law of Changes**

Change has three aspects: creation, destruction, and modification.

Creating something from nothing is harder than changing something that is already there (related to the Law of Presence). Truly creating something from nothing is difficult or impossible. Instead of making a spell to create gold, design a spell that extracts trace gold from the surrounding environment. If a spell truly creates something, it is two levels higher than a spell that simply modifies something that already exists.

Actually destroying something is very difficult. Spells are easier if they simply put the object somewhere else, or change its nature (rapid oxidation, polymorph, etc.). Spells that actually destroy the target are two levels higher than spells that alter the target.

Permanently and truly modifying the essential makeup of the world is difficult or impossible. For instance, changing lead into gold (permanently) is very difficult. Inducing a permanent change is still easier than creating something, but inducing a temporary or illusionary change (fool’s gold, W2) is the simplest, easiest approach.

**Law of Control**

Most spells do not require any sort of control once they are cast. Mirror image (W2), for example, simply performs its function without any interference from the caster. However, some spells require active control. For these spells, there are...
three distinct levels of spell control. Moving a spell between the different levels of control requires a one-level shift.

Spells of the first type require continuous caster concentration, immediately cease if the caster’s concentration lapses, and preclude any other action by the caster. These types of spells require the lowest power of the “control required” spells. Examples of these spells include phantasmal force (W1) and emotion (W4).

Spells of the second type require continuous caster concentration, persist for a continuous caster concentration, immediately cease if the caster’s concentration lapses, and preclude any other action by the caster. These types of spells require the lowest power of the “control required” spells. Examples of these spells include phantasmal force (W1) and emotion (W4).

Spells of the third type maintain themselves once cast and allow other actions. An example of this type of spell is phantasmal killer (W4).

Law of Damage
As a baseline, damaging spells cause 1d6 hp damage per level of the caster, or an average of 3.5 hp per level. Spells that inflict more damage (such as 1d8 per level) are higher level, and vice versa.

Law of Expertise
If the wizard must roll to hit in order for the spell to be effective, this action takes the place of a target saving throw. Spells that allow the caster to use a better-than-normal THAC0 are one level higher than those that restrict the caster to the caster’s THAC0.

Example: Melf’s minute meteors (W3) requires the caster to roll to hit the target, but the target is not allowed a saving throw. A modified version of the spell that allows the mage to attack as a fighter of equivalent level would be a fourth-level spell.

Law of Forms
Spells with two or more forms (e.g., irradiation [W2], fire shield [W4], emotion [W4]) are higher level than spells with a single form. This law assumes that the caster specifies which form will be used at the time of memorization. If the caster can specify the form at the time of casting, the spell is even more powerful.

Example: Ice storm (W4) has two forms, and the caster can specify which form is used at the time of casting. Ice storm could be a third-level spell if split into two different spells (e.g., hail storm [W3] and sleet storm [W3]).

Law of Information
Spells that provide information are usually difficult, with long casting times. The higher the probability of clear and accurate information, the higher level the spell. The usual chance of success is 10% per level of the caster. Informational spells often carry the possibility of caster debilitation.

Law of the Mage’s Price
Spells normally have no debilitating effects on the caster, but some spells include a chance of a detrimental effect on the caster as a way to lower the level at which they can be cast. See the Detrimental Effects for Spellcasting sidebar for a listing of some of the spells with detrimental effects.

Spells that have temporary but significant debilitating effects (such as identify [W1]) provide one level in effectiveness. If identify had no detrimental effects, it would not be a first-level spell. Temporary debilitating effects are usually automatic and last anywhere from hours to days. Examples of temporary effects include: a decrease in an ability score, a loss of hit points, a need for the caster to rest afterward, or some combination thereof.

There are two types of permanent debilitating effects. If the debilitating effect is non-lethal but serious, the debilitating effect is automatic. Examples of this type off effect include the aging caused by wish (W9) and haste (W3), and the ability score losses caused by permanency (W8). If the debilitating effect is insanity or death (something that removes the caster from play), the caster should have a chance (usually a saving throw) to avoid the effect. Spells that have a chance (saving throw) of inflicting permanent significant debilitation (e.g., insanity, permanent aging, permanent loss of hp) or as little as a 1% chance of causing death (such as contact other plane [W5] and teleport [W5]) gain two levels in effectiveness.

Example: Burnout (W1) acts as a fireball cast by a 5th-level wizard and has a casting time of less than one round, with an initiative modifier of +3. The caster must save vs. spells or die of massive system shock from the magical backlash. If the saving throw succeeds, the caster still suffers 5 hp damage. This spell accomplishes a higher-level effect because it has possible deadly consequences (-2 level shift) to the caster.
Some non-damaging spells have detrimental effects on the target. These include haste (W3) and polymorph other (W4).

**Law of Metaspells**

There are two types of metaspells: prerequisite spells and those that accomplish spell alteration.

Prerequisite spells are those that the caster must cast just prior to casting the spell of interest. The shift for prerequisites counts only once. If a spell has two prerequisites, the shift remains one level.

**Example:** Conjure elemental (W5) provides an excellent example of a spell with prerequisites. While protection from evil (W1) is not strictly required, any wise wizard will cast it prior to attempting to summon an elemental. Permanency (W8) and contingency (W6) are also good examples of spells with prerequisites.

The second category of metaspells includes those that directly affect other spells, those that affect the parameters of other spells (altering casting time, duration, area of effect, etc.), and those that affect the caster's ability to use spells. Metaspells of this type must be third-level or higher. Spells in this category include dispel magic (W3), Rary's mnemonic enhancer (W4), extension (W4), and permanency (W8).

**Example:** To get around designing a ranged version of every spell with a range of personal, a mage could research and create a metaspell specifically for this purpose. The far reaching spells in the Tome of Magic are good examples.

**Law of Power**

This law is invoked when the new spell attempts to meld two (or more) existing spells into a new spell. The Law of Power states that each new spell level has approximately twice the power of the previous level. A first-level spell has a power ranking of 1, a second-level spell is worth 2, a third-level spell is worth 4, and so on. Theoretically, two second-level spells could be combined to form a third-level spell. Applications of the Law of Power are often quite complex.

**Example:** A player proposes a new spell called gird, which combines the effects of strength and shield. Strength is a ritual-type spell with a casting time of one turn. The player wants to increase the duration of the shield effect to match the duration of the strength effect (one hour per level). The Law of Duration says that the proposed shield effect makes it a second-level spell. Applying the Law of Power, the two spells combine to form a third-level spell. However, in this case the gain is minimal. It basically allows the caster to deploy two spells in one turn instead of two spells in one turn and a round. To make the gird spell useful, the casting time needs to drop to be less than one round. Making this change (applying the Low of Time) would increase the spell level by one, making gird a fourth-level spell with a casting time less than one round and an initiative modifier of +4.

**Law of Presence**

Illusions provide an appearance of an object or creature that is really not there. Therefore, illusions are easier than summoning, which actually calls the object or creature from the surrounding area. Summoning is in turn easier than conjuring, which calls the creature or object regardless of where it is at the moment, even if it does not really exist.

The spell phantasmal force (W1) provides an excellent example of a very general spell which uses illusion to accomplish a great deal. To make some of the stuff dreamed up via phantasmal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Casting Time</th>
<th>Area of Effect</th>
<th>Saving Throw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abjuration</td>
<td>Personal or Short</td>
<td>V, S, M</td>
<td>5 rounds +5 rounds¹</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>Usually caster; short range.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alteration³</td>
<td>Typically 10 yards¹</td>
<td>V, S, M</td>
<td>Highly variable, some rounds, some permanent.</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>Typically one creature or 10¹ cube.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjuration-Summoning</td>
<td>Small area.</td>
<td>V, S, M</td>
<td>Turns¹.</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>Target.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divination</td>
<td>Caster.</td>
<td>V, S, M (E)</td>
<td>Several rounds¹</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>One creature, target, or small area.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enchantment/Charm</td>
<td>Fixed or Short¹</td>
<td>V, S</td>
<td>Highly variable²</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Negates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evocation/Invocation</td>
<td>Fixed or Short¹</td>
<td>V, S, M</td>
<td>Rounds¹ or instantaneous</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>None or ¹/₂¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illusion/Phantasm</td>
<td>10 yards¹ or 0².</td>
<td>V, S⁶</td>
<td>Conditional⁷.</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>10; cube¹ Target must disbelieve, then negates.</td>
<td>None or ¹/₂¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necromantic</td>
<td>Touch or constant</td>
<td>V, S⁶</td>
<td>Rounds to permanent, typically turns.</td>
<td>&lt;1 round</td>
<td>One target</td>
<td>None; negates if target is animate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
1. Per caster level.
2. Charms typically last days; enchantments have durations of rounds if animate, long or permanent if inanimate.
3. Inanimate target.
4. Evocation/Invocation spells that cause damage allow a saving throw for half damage. Other types allow no save.
5. If the illusion/Phantasm is cast on a target (e.g., Nystul’s magic aura, spook), the range is 0. Otherwise, range is 30 yards +10 yards per level.
6. Most Illusion/Phantasm spells with material components have cheap components, on the order of cheap cardboard props. Expensive components go a long way toward improving the power of an illusion/Phantasm spell.
7. Lasts until caster ceases to concentrate or some special condition is satisfied. Very powerful, battle-oriented illusions typically have a duration of rounds.
8. Necromantic spells with material components tend to be quite powerful.

Example: Polymorph other (W4) spell and provides an excellent illustration of this law.

Law of Self Knowledge
Excluding damaging spells, the nature of the target has a great deal to do with how powerful the spell has to be in order to succeed. Spells designed to affect only inanimate objects or manipulate forces are fairly easy. Spells that affect non-sentient beings are of "nominal difficulty." Spells designed to affect sentient beings are one level higher.

Law of Specifics
A spell with a specific purpose has an advantage over a general spell of the same level when it comes to the specific purpose for which it was designed. For example, item (W3) miniaturizes virtually any item designated by the caster. If a wizard designed a spell that miniaturized only fires, the proposed spell can either a) have a much longer duration than item, or b) be one level lower than item. The DM should use care when applying this law; it is easily abused.

The Law of Specifics especially applies to protective spells. To fully protect against a specific type of magical attack, use a defensive spell of the same level that is specifically designed to ward against that spell.

Example: A protection from fireballs spell would be third-level and would provide full protection from fireball spells. It might even provide some protection from lower-level fire magic. This is more specific than a general protection from fire spell, which
would be fourth-level and would provide general protection from all sources of fire.

Example: Charm monster (W4) is more general than charm person (W1), which is more general than charm Spaethe (a specific person). If Spaethe were to fall victim to a charm Spaethe spell, saving throw penalties would apply, or the duration of the spell would vastly increase.

Law of Targeting

There are two concerns relative to spell targeting: the number of targets and the selection of targets. Spells that affect more targets as the caster increases in experience are more powerful than spells that affect a constant number of targets. This Law is similar to the Generalized Law of Parameters. The ability of the caster to select targets also affects the spell level. Spells that blanket an area with no control over whom (or what) they affect are one level lower. Spells that allow the caster to select one target in an area are of “nominal” difficulty. Spells that allow the caster to pick multiple specific targets in an area (such as slow, W3) are hard (one level higher).

The Final Law

The last Law of Spell Design is that “there will be exceptions.” There are a number of spells in the Player’s Handbook that simply do not fit these patterns. See the sidebar “Aberrant Spells” for notes on some of the more distinguished pattern-breakers. When adjudicating a spell that does not fit a pattern, the DM should exercise caution and common sense.

Base Spells

Here are some of the basic concepts that guided the “reverse engineering” of spells for the creation of The Laws of Spell Design. The most useful tool in this endeavor was the idea of base spells, the templates for other spells. Base spells establish the parameters for “average” spells of a given school. A typical base spell has the following characteristics:

❖ It has a relatively short range that increases with caster level.
❖ It requires material components that are consumed during the casting.
❖ If offensive, it has a duration of one round. Other types of spells establish an effect that lasts for less than one turn per caster level.
❖ It has a casting time of less than one round, with an initiative modifier of +1 per spell level.
❖ It affects a limited area or number of targets, increasing with caster level.

❖ If the spell is offensive, the target receives a saving throw to negate all or part of the effect. Otherwise, there is no saving throw.

Each spell school has a different set of base spell parameters, as presented in Table 3, which summarizes the attributes of a typical spell of each school. Note that each school has wide variations in base spell parameters. There are abjurations with long ranges, illusions with expensive material components, and enchantments with casting times of hours or days, just to list a few of the variations.

New spells are judged on how they deviate from the base spell. If the spell is modified to make it harder to cast or less effective, the spell level drops. If the spell becomes easier to cast or more effective, the spell level increases. Use the Laws of Spell Design to determine how much to increase or decrease the spell level.

Example: A player proposes a spell called divination ward, which acts just as a non-detection (W3) spell except that the spell does not require any material components. Since abjuration spells normally require a material component, the law of components is invoked and divination ward becomes a fourth-level spell.

Judging Originality: Researching Derivative Spells

When adjudicating a new spell, the DM must also address the issue of when a new spell is truly original. Under the optional rules, researched spells do not count toward the wizard’s maximum number of spells known. Allowing a wizard to circumvent the limits on the maximum number of spells known by researching directly derivative spells could affect game balance. Therefore, use the following modifications to spell research of derivative spells.

A spell is a derivative if it is a direct, easily recognized modification of an existing spell. The connection should be fairly obvious. Examples from this article include gird and shield other. If the new spell is a direct derivative of an established spell, it fills half a “slot” toward the wizard’s maximum number of spells known. Two directly derivative spells would count as one learned spell for the purposes of calculating the maximum number of spells known by the wizard.

Wizards who know an established spell can research direct derivatives of that spell in half the usual time and at half the usual expense—and earning half the normal XP researching such spells.

Aberrant Spells

Not all existing spells obey the Laws of Spell Design.

❖ Magic Missile (W1) has a quick casting time, no material components, and a decent range. Furthermore, the caster need not roll to hit, can affect multiple targets, and allows the target no saving throw.

❖ The continual light spell (W2) represents an aberration in the pattern of the Law of Duration. The spell is quite powerful, very quick to cast, and creates a permanent effect. Increasing the casting time to two turns could rectify this imbalance.

❖ Since dispel magic (W3) can directly affect other spells, it violates the law of Metaspeells.

❖ Stoneskin (W4) provides absolute immunity from multiple forms of physical attack. It has a short casting time, relatively cheap components, and is “general” protective magic. As such, it is probably too powerful for its assigned level. It could be brought back into line by requiring expensive material components (100 gp or more of diamond dust) and a longer casting time (turns).

Be generous when deciding the issue of originality. Even one small sparkle of originality should take a spell out of the directly derivative classification.

The DM must also consider how much effort a wizard must expend to add a new spell to the campaign. In some settings, a wizard can easily obtain practically any new spell desired. At the other extreme, some worlds require wizards to research each and every new spell they learn, whether it’s a “standard” spell or a totally new one. The level of difficulty in obtaining spells should affect the XP awarded for researching new spells. The harder it is to obtain new spells, the more XP the wizard should receive when the wizard actually researches a new spell.

Ted Zovich reports that he’s having quite a bit of trouble finding time to write these days, but he hopes he’ll find more time soon, especially since the TSR crew has moved to the Seattle area. Ted also plays a mean game of Iron Dragon.
In the aftermath of the Chaos War and the departure of the gods from the world of Krynn, the powers of magic known to the people of Krynn were lost. The mages' memorized formulae and the clerics' prayers yielded them no magical power. The magic-workers of Krynn were forced to seek other sources of magic in the Fifth Age of Krynn, better known as the Age of Mortals.

In time, the people of Krynn discovered those other sources of magic that Paladine spoke of, drawn from ancient powers from the dawn of the world's history. The story of the discovery of these new forms of magic—sorcery and mysticism—is detailed in the DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ game.

Sorcery and mysticism are different in many ways from the magic that mages and clerics once wielded on Krynn. Both forms have their own unique advantages and limitations that have changed the way people work magic. Sorcerers cannot affect the bodies, minds, and spirits of living creatures as mages once could; even simple charm spells are beyond them. At the same time, mystics cannot affect unliving matter or energy as many of the clerics of the old gods could. The power to call down flame strikes and shape the elements is lost to them.

These changes have forced students of the new magics to be innovative in the use of their abilities. Many of the old spells and enchantments of the Fourth Age have been reworked by sorcerers and mystics for their use, while others have been abandoned by all but a few academics and scholars. Meanwhile, new spells and enchantments have been created by students of the Academy of Sorcery and the Citadel of Light.

Here are some of the vast range of possibilities for sorcery and mysticism in the Fifth Age, using the SAGA™ System rules. They include some of the old Fourth Age spells that have been adapted by modern spellcasters on Krynn as well as some new spells unique to the Fifth Age. Each spell lists all of its properties, its casting difficulty, and spell point cost and gives a short description of the spell and its effects.

**Sorcery Spells**

**Audible Glamer**
School: Aeromancy
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Near missile
Duration: 1 minute
Area: Small room
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 12

The creation of audible illusions was a problem that troubled many sorcerers. Students of the school of spectramancy had long since developed the creation of visual illusions of light, but it was some time before students of aeromancy hit upon the idea of using the controlled movement of air to create sounds.

This spell creates any fairly simple, meaningless sound that the caster desires: the babble of conversations (but not actual words or messages), scuffling, wheezing, and so on. The sound is loud enough to be heard clearly in a small room, but it becomes much less audible at greater distances unless the listener has acute hearing.
**Bind**  
School: Enchantment  
Invocation: Instant  
Range: Melee  
Duration: 1 minute  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Impeding  
Difficulty/Cost: 14

With this spell, the sorcerer enchants a length of rope, chain or other such flexible material with animation that allows it to follow his commands. By making an average Perception action against a target’s Agility, the sorcerer can cause the rope to bind the target, impeding its own physical actions by a -4 action penalty. When the spell’s duration expires, the rope falls lifeless again, and anyone bound by it is freed.

**Darkness**  
School: Spectramancy  
Invocation: Instant  
Range: Near missile  
Duration: 1 minute  
Area: Large room  
Effect: Impeding  
Difficulty/Cost: 17

By controlling the available light, a sorcerer can blanket an area up to a small room in pitch blackness. The darkness imposes a -4 action penalty on all actions that require sight such as combat or spellcasting.

**Detect Magic**  
School: Divination  
Invocation: 10 minutes  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 1 minute  
Area: Large room  
Effect: Irritating  
Difficulty/Cost: 10 (higher if resisted)

With this spell, a sorcerer can sense the presence of magical forces (sorcery or mysticism) used nearby. Magical items and enchanted individuals show a telltale glow of magical power to the user of this spell.

**Feather Fall**  
School: Aeromancy  
Invocation: Instant  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 1 minute  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Irritating  
Difficulty/Cost: 10

Made famous by the power of the Staff of the Magius carried by Raistlin and Palin Majere, this spell allows the caster to slow a fall and float gently to the ground like a feather on a cushion of air.

**Fireball**  
School: Pyromancy  
Invocation: Instant  
Range: Far missile  
Duration: Instant  
Area: Large group  
Effect: +8 damage points  
Difficulty/Cost: 17 (resisted)

This powerful spell summons a ball of fire that the sorcerer hurls at a target out to far missile range. The sphere explodes into a ball of fire that inflicts 8 damage points to a large group of targets. Because it is resisted by the highest Perception of the targets, the spell is both difficult and exhausting to cast.

**Fly**  
School: Aeromancy  
Invocation: 1 minute  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 30 minutes  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Troublesome  
Difficulty/Cost: 12

A sorcerer using this spell can fly through the air like a bird on a current of magical wind. The sorcerer flies at roughly the speed of a giant eagle, allowing him to fly up to four miles before the spell expires. If the spell expires while the sorcerer is still in the air, he falls.

**Invisibility**  
School: Spectramancy  
Invocation: 1 minute  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 30 minutes  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Painful  
Difficulty/Cost: 15

Using the illusions created by spectramancy, the sorcerer can make a target he touches invisible for the duration of the spell. The invisible subject gains a +4 action bonus to resist attacks requiring sight and can move through areas without being seen, although he can still be detected by sound or smell.

**Levitate**  
School: Aeromancy  
Invocation: 10 minutes  
Range: Near missile  
Duration: 15 minutes  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Variable (see below)  
Difficulty/Cost: 10+

With this spell, the sorcerer magically lifts an object, moving it through the air without touching it. The final difficulty of the spell is based on the effective Strength that the sorcerer wishes the spell to have, using the effect table for damage and defense spells. For example, a Strength 6 spell would have a total difficulty of 13, while a Strength 15 spell would have a difficulty of 15.

**Light**  
School: Spectramancy, pyromancy, enchantment  
Invocation: 1 minute  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 1 hour  
Area: Small room  
Effect: Irritating  
Difficulty/Cost: 13

With this spell, the sorcerer calls into existence a small point of light (known as “werelight” or “magelight”) bright enough to illuminate a small room. Pyromancers achieve the same effect with a small floating flame, and enchanters may cause small objects to glow enough to provide the same light.

**Phantom Steed**  
School: Summoning  
Invocation: 20 minutes  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 1 hour  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Hindering  
Difficulty/Cost: 12 (resisted)

Using the art of summoning, the sorcerer conjures a spectral mount with all of the abilities of a normal riding horse (Co 9, Ph 10, In 2, Es 2, Dmg +2, Def -2) that will carry the caster or another individual chosen by the caster for the duration of the spell, allowing the target to travel up to eight miles on a good road before the spell expires.

**Shield**  
School: Aeromancy  
Invocation: Instant  
Range: Personal  
Duration: 1 minute  
Area: Individual  
Effect: Def +9  
Difficulty/Cost: 12

This spell creates an invisible barrier of air around the caster or another subject that protects him from attacks. The magical shield provides 9 defense points against physical attacks of all kinds but does not affect attacks using magic.
Teleport
School: Summoning
Invocation: 10 minutes
Range: Artillery
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 10

By folding space, the sorcerer can “jump” across a distance in an instant, moving from his starting point to another visible point within artillery range. Great distances can be covered in successive “jumps.” Sorcerers have been working on ways to extend the range of this effect, given that some recall when they could cross hundreds of miles with a single spell. So far, the range of this spell remains limited.

Wall of Fire
School: Pyromancy
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: 1 minute
Area: Large room
Effect: +6 damage
Difficulty/Cost: 16

This powerful spell creates a wall of blazing flames ten feet high able to span the width of a large room. The flames cause 6 damage points to any character or hero that comes in contact with them.

Wizard Eye
School: Divination
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Artillery
Duration: 30 minutes
Area: Small room
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 16

This spell is based on one used by Fourth Age wizards; it allows the sorcerer to view distant areas as if he were physically present, seeing the area of up to one small room at a time. Unlike the spell it is named for, this version does not create an actual invisible eye and can see anywhere the sorcerer wishes within range of the spell.

New Sorcery Spells

Campfire
School: Pyromancy
Invocation: 30 minutes
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 minute
Area: Individual
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 6

This very basic spell allows the caster to start a small fire without the use of flint and tinder—useful for getting a campfire going in damp or difficult conditions. The fire burns normally once it has been set.

Charm of Protection from Sorcery
School: Enchantment
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Def +10
Difficulty/Cost: 15

This enchantment is placed upon any item that can be worn or carried by the subject, typically a ring, amulet or shield. It creates a barrier of protection around the wearer that shields him from sorcerous attack, giving him 10 defense points against damage from sorcery spells or sorcerous effects from magical items.

Countermagic
School: Varies (see below)
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Impeding
Difficulty/Cost: 15 (resisted)

Sorcerers are somewhat frustrated by their inability to interfere with the magic of their enemies. Once it was possible to dispel another’s magic in a given area, but now a sorcerer must know something of the school of magic being used in order to counter its effects.

A sorcerer of a particular school can use his magic to counter the work of another sorcerer of the same school. Thus a pyromancer could attempt to snuff out an enemy sorcerers fireball or wall of fire, and a spectramancer could banish an enemy’s illusion. The counter-spell is resisted by the target sorcerer’s Perception. (It is also possible for a sorcerer to indirectly counter the effects of a spell with another spell, such as a hydromancer creating a gush of water to put out a wall of fire, but this is considered a separate spell.)

Countermagic has no other effect other than it interferes with the target spell.

**Flaming Weapon**
School: Pyromancy
Invocation: Instant
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 minute
Area: Individual
Effect: Dmg +8
Difficulty/Cost: 12

The sorcerer casts this spell on a melee weapon, causing the business end of it to burst into flames that inflict an additional 8 damage points to any target the weapon is used against. Wooden weapons are destroyed by the use of this spell when the duration expires, and metal weapons become hot enough to inflict 1 point of damage each minute to a wielder if not handled with heavy gauntlets or gloves. The weapon will cool completely in 30 minutes once the spell has expired.

**Gateway**
School: Summoning
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Artillery
Duration: Instant
Area: Large group
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 15

With this spell, the sorcerer folds space enough for a group of up to ten people to be instantly transported a distance equal to artillery range. Multiple “jumps” allow considerable distance to be covered in a very short time, but this greatly taxes the caster. Unwilling subjects of the spell may resist, increasing the difficulty and cost.

**Magical Missile**
School: Varies (see below)
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Dmg +6
Difficulty/Cost: 13 (resisted)

Once, the mages of Krynn were able to attack enemies with darts of pure magical force, but this “simple” ability is now beyond sorcery. Sorcerers must now use the powers of their different schools for combat magic. This spell is available to any school except for divination, enchantment, summoning, or transmutation. It creates and launches darts of the appropriate medium at the target. Pyromancers would create darts of flame, geomancers might use stone or crystal, and spectramancers would cast burning lances of light. The caster directs the missiles with an average Dexterity action, resisted by the target’s Perception.

**Water Bubble**
School: Aeromancy
Invocation: 10 minutes
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 11

Aeromancers have developed a spell that creates and maintains a bubble of air around a person’s head, allowing him to breathe under water.
Mysticism Spells

Animate Dead
School: Necromancy
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Melee
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Small group
Effect: Painful
Difficulty/Cost: 18

This dark spell allows the mystic to animate up to five corpses within range, turning them into zombies or animated skeletons that fight at his command for the duration of the spell. The animated dead are mindless and can carry out only the most rudimentary commands issued by their summoner.

Blessing
School: Channeling
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 30 minutes
Area: Individual
Effect: +4 to ability
Difficulty/Cost: 14

With this spell, the mystic can add 4 points to one of the subjects Physical Abilities (Agility, Dexterity, Endurance, or Strength) for the duration of the spell. The ability may even exceed 10 through the effects of the spell, allowing the character or hero to perform amazing feats.

Charm
School: Mentalism
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Melee
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Impeding
Difficulty/Cost: 17

This challenging spell allows the mystic to convince a target that he is the mystics best friend and confidante—that everything he says is trustworthy and important. While few mystics trained by the Citadel of Light like the idea of tampering with the thoughts and feelings of others, they still prefer such methods to using their gifts to inflict permanent harm.

Cure Blindness or Deafness
School: Healing
Invocation: 20 minutes
Range: Personal
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Cures affliction (equivalent of 5 cards)
Difficulty/Cost: 10

This spell allows a mystic to restore lost sight or hearing to the subject with a simple laying on of hands and a short ritual. The subjects eyes and/or ears must still be intact for the spell to work, but it will cure afflictions such as cataracts and magical curses that cause blindness or deafness.

Cure Disease
School: Healing
Invocation: 20 minutes
Range: Personal
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Varies (see below)
Difficulty/Cost: 6

A mystic can use this spell to help the body throw off the effects of disease. The final difficulty of the spell is based on the strength of the disease being affected, ranging from 6 for a simple cold to 11 or more for magical diseases and ailments. The healer will not necessarily know the strength of the disease unless he has encountered its symptoms before, so it is often necessary to over-spend on spell points to ensure that the ailment is overcome.

Detect Evil
School: Sensitivity
Invocation: Instant
Range: Melee
Duration: Instant
Area: Small group
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 12 (resisted)

This spell allows the mystic to sense evil thoughts or intentions in any small group of people. The mystic must be able to see the faces of the people in question; thus, the spell would not sense the presence of an invisible adversary with evil intentions.

The spell does not provide exact information on the nature of the evil, only that it is present and which people are radiating it.
Feign Death
School: Necromancy
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 12
Feign death allows the mystic to place himself or a willing subject into a state of deep trance in which all of the subject's body's functions are slowed to a standstill. The subject appears dead, and a daunting Perception action is required to determine otherwise.
While the feign death spell is in effect, the subjects need for food, water, and air is suspended.

Hold Person
School: Mentalism
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: 15 minutes
Area: Individual
Effect: Impeding
Difficulty/Cost: 16 (resisted)
With a simple wave of a hand or a hard stare, the mentalist overpowers the target's mind and renders the victim totally unable to move for the duration of the spell. A challenging Presence action allows the paralyzed character to overcome the spell and move again.

Insect Plague
School: Animism
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Near missile
Duration: 15 minutes
Area: Small group
Effect: Hindering
Difficulty/Cost: 16 (resisted)
The clerics of Majere were once well known for calling upon swarms of insects to fight their enemies, and some mystics have followed their example with this spell which summons forth a cloud of biting and stinging flying insects to harass and harry opponents. Anyone within the cloud of insects suffers a -3 action penalty to all actions for the duration of the spell.

Invisibility to Animals
School: Animism
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 15 minutes
Area: Individual
Effect: Invisibility
Difficulty/Cost: 10
This spell renders the subject invisible to any creature affected by the animism sphere.
Animals and other creatures will not see the subject of the spell, nor will they scent him or hear his movements. The subject of the spell gains a +4 action bonus against any creature affected by the spell. This is a very useful spell for hunters.

Polymorph
School: Alteration
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Troublesome
Difficulty/Cost: 13
This is a basic spell that allows the mystic to alter his shape or that of another willing subject he touches. The subjects' Physical abilities can be shuffled as described on page 85 of The Book of the Fifth Age. For each point that the new form's total Physical abilities exceeds the subjects original form, the spell's difficulty increases by 1.

Remove Paralysis
School: Healing
Invocation: Instant
Range: Personal
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: Removes paralysis (equal to two cards)
Difficulty/Cost: 10
With a simple touch, the mystic can remove the effects of any paralysis on the subject, allowing him to move freely again. This affects paralysis caused by mysticism spells as well as by creature special abilities such as the touch of ghouls.

Sleep
School: Mentalism
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: 30 minutes
Area: Large room
Effect: Hindering
Difficulty/Cost: 17
This spell causes a wall of thorny vines and bushes to grow out of the ground to block passage of an area equal to a large room. Hacking through the vines is a challenging Strength action and causes 4 damage points to any character or hero per attempt.

Speak with the Dead
School: Spiritualism
Invocation: 20 minutes
Range: Personal
Duration: 15 minutes
Area: Individual
Effect: Troublesome
Difficulty/Cost: 9 (resisted)
The mystic performs a ritual that calls up the spirit of someone who has died to ask it questions that the spirit is compelled to answer. The spirit resists the spell with its Presence ability. If the spell is successful, the spirit must appear and answer the mystic's questions for the duration, but there is no requirement that the spirit answer truthfully. Those who do tell the truth are prone to speaking in riddles.

Tongues
School: Mentalism
Invocation: 10 minutes
Range: Melee
Duration: 30 minutes
Area: Small group
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 13
The mystic allows the subjects of the spell to comprehend each other regardless of the languages that they speak. Especially obscure or difficult languages may increase the difficulty of the spell if the Narrator sees fit.

Wall of Thorns
School: Animism
Invocation: Instant
Range: Near missile
Duration: 15 minutes
Area: Large room
Effect: Hindering
Difficulty/Cost: 17
This spell causes a wall of thorny vines and bushes to grow out of the ground to block passage of an area equal to a large room. Hacking through the vines is a challenging Strength action and causes 4 damage points to any character or hero per attempt.
New Mysticism Spells

Healing
School: Healing
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: Instant
Area: Individual
Effect: varies
Difficulty/Cost: 8+ (see below)

This basic healing spell allows the mystic to restore health by touch. The basic difficulty is for restoring one card to an injured hero or 1 point of Endurance damage to an injured character. For each additional card or point of damage, increase the difficulty by 1.

Ignore Pain
School: Mentalism
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Individual
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 12

This spell does not actually heal damage but allows a hero to ignore the pain of his wounds and continue to function. The spell restores all of the hero's cards lost due to damage for the duration, but when the spell ends, the hero immediately loses all of the cards gained back from the spell, starting with their highest card. If this will result in the hero having a negative number of cards, the hero lapses into a coma and will die in one minute if not immediately healed back to a hand of zero cards or more.

Resist Mysticism
School: Meditation
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 30 minutes
Area: Individual
Effect: +4 action bonus to resist mysticism
Difficulty/Cost: 13

With a light touch, the mystic bestows on the subject an aura of protection against mysticism spells. The subject gains a +4 action bonus on all Avoid Mysticism actions for the duration of the spell, including mysticism effects from magical items. A similar spell exists that provides +4 action bonus on all Avoid Sorcery actions.

Stephen Kenson is a freelance writer who has worked for several game companies, most notably in FASA's Earthdawn line.

Ward Off Beasts
School: Animism
Invocation: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 hour
Area: Small room
Effect: Irritating
Difficulty/Cost: 13

The mystic traces out a circle or the borders of a small room and casts this spell, preventing any beasts affected by the animism sphere from entering the area for the duration of the spell. If the animals are especially desperate (hungry, fearful, or driven by another spell or special ability), the caster must make an average Spirit or Presence action to keep them out.

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Better Building Through Magic
by Michael Lambert
illustrated by Brad McDevitt

The construction of a medieval castle begins by choosing a location. A defensible position is essential, and rocky outcroppings or river forks are prized by architects. Laborers are hired, often as many as two or three thousand, first to dig a foundation, and, if the location permits, then to dig a moat or ditch around what will become the castle's central grounds. Stone is brought to the site, often laboriously transported from quarries miles away, to begin work on the outer walls and towers. Wooden scaffolding is used to build the towering outer walls, often ten to fifteen feet thick, requiring the skills of numerous free masons and rough masons.

A great gate in the outer wall leads to an inner courtyard, where many of the castle buildings are located. These include stables, a blacksmith shop, barracks, storehouses, a carpenter's shop and the manor home, usually containing a great hall. Most of these buildings are constructed of wood, and require skilled craftsmen to design and build. Finally, inside the courtyard is the central keep, the focus of the castle's defenses. The keep has its own walls and towers, constructed in the same time-consuming fashion as the outer walls. A second moat might enclose the keep, which has private apartments, store rooms and service rooms. All of these buildings and rooms take time to build. In rare cases, and under extreme duress, castles could be built rapidly, but most take years, even decades to complete. Building a stronghold, castle, or cathedral using medieval tools and techniques is typically a long and expensive process.

In fantasy worlds, there is a better way. Magic exists in these worlds, and where there is magic there is room for innovation. Why spend months digging a foundation when spells can transmute rock into mud, or a wand can displace tons of dirt with a simple command? Flying and telekinesis make the use of scaffolding and winches obsolete, and spells that shape wood, rock or iron make the use of skilled craftsmen unnecessary. In sufficiently advanced cultures, spells can be developed specifically for construction purposes. These could include spells that create illusory castles to give builders a pattern to follow, spells that enhance the strength of workers, or spells that detect the presence of salvageable construction materials on other worlds or planes.

The use of magical abilities for the mundane goal of constructing buildings in an AD&D® campaign world would be based on a simple premise: time is money, and building homes, strongholds, or even towns the conventional way takes time. Therefore, an organization that can reduce the time necessary to build large structures stands to make an extraordinarily large amount of money. Rulers might need castles built quickly to withstand an interdimensional assault, a local guild might need their buildings protected from scrying attempts, or a local church might want their cathedral expanded to attract more worshippers. The number of situations where magical construction can be used effectively in a fantasy world is endless.

In fact, it's not too hard to imagine a group of mages forming a cartel to perform exactly these kinds of construction services. The pay would be good, business steady, and—best of all—there would be very little chance of ending up inside the stomach of a dragon or some other creature from the wild lands. Also, the types of individuals who would be able to afford
the services would most likely have power and influence in the world, two attributes that help any business venture. In fact, the nature of some worlds might even require the use of magic to design and build certain structures if geographical conditions do not allow for the use of traditional construction methods.

The presence of a mage construction company in a campaign world is dependent on two factors: the abundance of magical abilities and the presence of large population centers that would generate a steady source of business. On worlds where magic is scarce, the use of magic would be restricted to a few scattered practitioners who would not be very interested in using their arcane knowledge for material gain. In addition, a world with a low or scattered population wouldn’t have the need to expend the energy required for using magic in building construction.

If the two factors are present, though, and the DM decides to add a magical construction company to the campaign, a little background on the methods and techniques that can be used is necessary.

With the variety of spells available to mages, time savings can be realized at all stages of construction—planning, building and post-construction. See the sidebar on the following page for a list of spells that have construction applications is given above, but for illustrative purposes, we turn to the opening description of the medieval castle.

When planning a castle or stronghold, medieval architects were constrained by the natural geography of the location they chose to work on. Not so the mage. While location is still important, mage builders have unprecedented abilities to alter the terrain they’re working on. With move earth, dig, disintegrate and vanish spells, mages can create or level small hills, forming a foundation in a matter of hours rather than days. Rock can be turned to mud for easy removal, and water can be turned to dust or lowered. Mages can even control weather to improve working conditions or meet an important deadline. These benefits, and others, allow mage builders to save time by changing the location site to suit the needs of the construction.

But why start using magic after the location of the stronghold has been chosen? Mages can use magic before construction even begins to determine the best location to build. Using powerful spells such as vision, foresight or limited
Wizard Spell Appendix

First-Level Spells
- Alarm (protection)
- Enlarge (worker enhancement)
- Feather fall (damage reduction)
- Light (fire avoidance, night work)
- Mending (repair)
- Spider climb (worker enhancement)
- Tenser’s floating disc (logistics)

Second-Level Spells
- Bind (repair)
- Continual light (fire avoidance, night work, interior lighting)
- Deep pockets (worker enhancement)
- Levitate (logistics)
- Magic mouth (protection)
- Strength (worker enhancement)
- Wizard lock (protection)

Third-Level Spells
- Clairaudience/clairvoyance (oversee construction, search for raw materials)
- Explosive runes (protection)
- Fly (worker enhancement)
- Haste (worker enhancement)
- Item (logistics)
- Monster summoning (all types) (specialized worker recruiting)
- Tongues (oversee construction)
- Water breathing (worker enhancement)

Fourth-Level Spells
- Charm monster (specialized worker recruitment)
- Dig (excavation)
- Plant growth (landscaping)
- Polymorph other (worker enhancement)
- Polymorph self (worker enhancement)

Fifth-Level Spells
- Avoidance (protection)
- Conjure elemental (specialized worker recruitment)
- Fabricate (item creation)
- Stone shape (statuary/specialized construction)
- Telekinesis (logistics)
- Teleport (logistics)
- Walls (all) (specialized construction)
- Transmute rock to mud (excavation)

Sixth-Level Spells
- Control weather (location enhancement)
- Disintegrate (excavation/location enhancement/renovation)
- Geas (specialized worker recruitment)
- Lower water (location enhancement)
- Move earth (excavation)
- Stone to flesh (excavation)
- Transmute water to dust (location enhancement)

Seventh-Level Spells
- Limited wish (location enhancement)
- Vanish (excavation/renovation)
- Vision (divination)

Eighth- Spells
- Glassteel (support/aesthetics)
- Otiluke’s telekinetic sphere (logistics)
- Permanency (spell enhancement)
- Polymorph any object (various tasks)
- Symbol (all types) (protection)

Ninth-Level Spells
- Foresight (divination)
- Shape change (worker enhancement)
- Wish (various tasks)

Walls, towers and support columns can be moved into place with levitate, telekinesis, Tenser’s floating disc, or Otiluke’s telekinetic sphere. Monsters, elementals and humanoids can be summoned or charmed to perform specialized tasks, and certain spells can be cast to enhance the ability of different workers. Enlarge enables workers to lift more, while fly allows them to work on walls or roofs that are hundreds of feet above the ground. Imagine workers wearing deep pocket robes filled with tools and materials miniaturized by the item spell, spider-climbing a cathedral or castle to finish work on the roof or ceiling. There would be no need for scaffolding, raised platforms, or heavy winches; work on hard-to-reach places would be sped considerably.

Secondly, accidents would also be less of a worry to the mage builder. Fires could be avoided by using light and continual light spells. Feather fall spells could save workers from injury, and mend and fabricate spells could repair or replace tools. Major injuries that could cause a medieval craftsman to miss months of work can be cured with a simple potion of healing or a cure light wounds spell.

Magical wards to protect doors and windows, special detection areas to identify and neutralize pesky invisible, ethereal or astral creatures, and magic mouth to alert defenders are just a few enhancements that mage construction could add to any stronghold. Mages could cast gate spells to summon reinforcements from the Outer Planes, or teleportation portals for a secure escape route. The price might be steep, but a security system needs to fail only one time to have a once-proud fortress reduced to ashes and rubble.

Of course, these magical construction techniques need not be limited to the building of castle or towns; they can be used to construct buildings that have no medieval counterparts. There’s no rule that states a stronghold has to be a stone castle with a central keep, basic towers, a moat and drawbridge. The castle is a common sight in fantasy worlds, though, as it is one of the most enduring features of the medieval political landscape. However, the design and construction of fortifications in the Middle Ages was a unique approach to a set of political and military realities that may be completely different than those of a fantasy world. Medieval architects did not have to contend with rampaging dragons that could make a mockery of even the highest walls, invisible mages who could pass through walls unseen to lower the drawbridge for allies, or monsters that could burrow into the castle from deep underground. Taking these and numerous other fantasy specific factors into account, it’s easy to see that magical construction techniques could lead to the building of structures never conceived before.

Naturally, a mage construction company is not something that PC mages are going to run to join. That’s not its purpose in a campaign world. It’s a support organization meant to add depth to a fantasy setting and offers characters options they might not normally have. It does this in a number of ways: by introducing the player’s stronghold in a short amount of game time, by giving the players additional avenues of adventure, and by giving the DM creative freedom to design unique buildings, cities, and towns.

Strongholds, fortresses or other structures that players control are narrative forces in an AD&D campaign. Many adventures can be designed simply around their construction and upkeep. The players might need to complete several successful quests to finance the
construction of a stronghold, or they might have a mandate from a local lord to defend a certain piece of territory. Once established in a certain region, players might become involved in local politics or promote the growth of a new town. Of course, having a set place of operations will enable enemies to locate and attack them, perhaps forcing the PCs to travel abroad to remove threats to their castle or tower.

The use of a mage construction company can cut the time necessary to build a stronghold or other building by as much as 75 percent over conventional methods. This gives DMs the ability to introduce these structures as adventure catalysts before the campaign ends. At the same time, using magical methods to enhance construction efforts is extremely expensive and goes a long way in separating players from any excess treasure they’ve accumulated during their adventures. If they don’t have excess treasure, they can either pay for mundane construction or plan adventures to acquire the appropriate funds.

Of course, PCs are not the only ones who can benefit from magically enhanced construction techniques. Both allies and enemies of the PCs might have access to mage construction companies. PCs might return to a small outpost they raided only months earlier to find a well-defended castle in its place. A local giant tribe might spend some ill-gotten wealth to add magical defenses to their hill-top fortress, or an evil temple can be built nearly overnight in a region thought to be controlled by lawful forces.

The ability to use a mage construction company for adventure scenarios doesn’t end with the actual construction of new buildings. There are many ways that its entire business operation can be used to send the PCs in different directions. The company might want to scout ruined cities or towns on other Prime Material worlds to salvage construction materials, or to research building styles. PCs might be asked to go along as protection or to partake in the research. A scenario could also be developed where the players are asked to infiltrate a new stronghold to find flaws in its magical defenses. The company might need exotic spell components and contract the players to retrieve them, or it may ask them to fix a problem that one of their structures has inadvertently created. However it’s used, a magic construction company can add many new twists to any campaign.

Even if the PCs never interact directly with the organization, the mage construction company can play a part in the overall campaign. By simply acknowledging the existence of a group of mages capable of using magic to build different types of structures, DMs remove many constraints of world development. Cities can be built underwater, in the air, or underground. Buildings can rise thousands of feet in the air or exist on different planes of existence at the same time. A base town can be created around a portal that opens to other worlds, or an elvish fortress can be fashioned from living trees. Without ever employing or working for a mage construction company, player characters can feel its influence in many aspects of a campaign world. Once you, the DM, decide that these types of construction techniques exist in the world, the campaign possibilities are endless.

When not creating new ways to add some spice to campaign worlds, Mike keeps busy teaching his martial arts students how to defend themselves. His wife keeps him in line by reminding him he is the third smartest person in the family, after her and their cat.
The baron’s mage knelt to examine the withered plants. Behind her, her employer glared at the devastation surrounding them. These fields were green not two days ago, wizard. I know the cause is not natural—"
— and, therefore, magical," muttered the mage under her breath. —and, therefore, magical. But who has done this?"
"A moment’s study, my lord . . ."

There was a long silence as the mage carefully sifted through the dusty earth. Two bodyguards began a rhyming game, while others dismounted to spare their horses. Finally, the mage stood and held a leaf up for the baron to see. "Here, sire, observe the striations—" she took a quick look at the baron’s darkening face, and cut to the chase. "—uh, as you suspected, a realm spell, and it bears the traces of our ‘good friend’ to the north. . . ."

Even the beginning mage has spent many years of intense single-minded study of magic and its lore; its one of the reasons they have such limited combat skills. From the history of magic to the common types of material components, to the subtle difference between invocation and evocation—the mage has acquired a vast storehouse of arcane knowledge. Following behind are bards, sages who specialize in magical lore, and even children of the nobility who study magic as part of a well-rounded education.

But is it reasonable to assume that every wizard and sage has acquired exactly the same knowledge? Specialists are an obvious example of mages who neglect parts of their education to focus on other arts, but even generalist mages have specific areas of expertise—certain types of magic they find useful or interesting. But how to express these varying bits of knowledge in game terms?

This article replaces the spellcraft non-weapon proficiency (NWP) with several new NWPS for the Wizard non-weapon proficiency group, to allow characters to customize their magical knowledge. Like other NWPs, each costs one extra proficiency slot (or two extra character points) to characters who do not have full access to Wizard NWPs. In addition, some of these proficiencies have prerequisites—other skills or NWPs that must be possessed beforehand. Players may use these NWPs to customize their mages, to play “failed mage” warriors, or to recall information when investigating magic (which, in the typical campaign world, happens often).

Proficiency Descriptions

**High Magic.** This proficiency gives the character a formal knowledge of the most powerful magics in the campaign world (a knowledge of realm magic, for example), including true dweomers and other tenth-level magic. Lesser-known and obscure bits of information will be “remembered” with a successful proficiency check. DMs may disallow this proficiency on a case-by-case basis (i.e., an Anuirean regent might know much about realm magic, but his commoner bodyguard will not).

**Magecraft:** This proficiency indicates a formal knowledge of basic magical theory, how spellcasting works, descriptions of common spells and magical items, and biographies of well-known wizards. On a successful proficiency check, the character also “remembers” obscure or lesser-known bits of information about magic and can identify a spell by observing its casting. The proficient character may also roll against half his proficiency (rounded down) to spot a magical construct or item. This last use of the Magecraft proficiency requires 2-12 rounds of careful examination.

**Metaphysical Theory.** Beyond a knowledge of the campaign world’s magic, the character has studied the theory of how physical laws and magical laws interact and can predict how varying these laws will affect magic.

On a successful proficiency check, the character can predict how magic will work on another world or plane, given some basic facts about the plane. (Spellcasters traveling to another world or plane often use this proficiency to decide what spells or items to bring with them.)

While on another world or plane, the character may make a proficiency check against half his skill (rounded down) to compensate...
for the effects of varying physical laws for one round. This use of the proficiency requires 1-10 rounds of intense thought and concentration. During this time, the character cannot cast spells or perform strenuous actions. For the one round following the period of concentration, the character may cast spells and use items as if he were still on his home world or plane. This “bending of the rules” is quite tiring, and the mage must save vs. death magic or lose one point of Constitution (or Constitution/Health) for one full day.

**School Theories.** Over and above the basic familiarity that any mage or any character with the Magecraft NWP possesses, each of the following NWPs represents an intensive study of a particular type of magic. The character has formal knowledge of all common, uncommon, and rare spells or items from a particular school of magic and can make educated guesses about new spells (including “name” and unique spells) and items from that school.

*Prerequisite:* Magecraft.

Specialists may identify and study spells and magical items from their oppositional school(s) but suffer a -6 penalty to their proficiency checks; on the other hand, specialists enjoy a +3 bonus when studying or identifying spells and items from their own schools.

Benefits common to all school NWPs:
- Mages with a particular school proficiency gain a +5% bonus to learn or research a new spell from that school (in addition to the specialists existing bonus) and a +5% bonus to create a scroll, potion, or other magical item that harnesses magic from that school.
- Mages may make one proficiency check at the beginning of any research or construction attempt. Success means that the required time has been reduced by one week or that the mage has deduced the exact nature of any one exotic or unusual material, required.
- Non-spellcasters who have come this far in their studies gain an understanding of magic approaching that of a beginning mage. They have the ability to read (but not use) spellbooks and scrolls, provided the spells are of the appropriate school; a successful proficiency check is required. In addition, the non-spellcaster gains a +1 bonus to any saving throws against that particular school of magic.

**Unique Benefits of Each School Theory:**

**Abjuration Theory.** Understanding of magical avoidance, repelling, and warding. On a successful proficiency check, the character can spot an existing protection or glyph spell and attempt a second check to determine the exact type.
Table 1: Proficiency Slots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Slots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Magic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magecraft</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysical Theory</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(School) Theory</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Ability/Modifier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alteration Theory. Knowledge of how magic can change an existing object, creature, or condition. On a successful proficiency check, the character can spot a shape changed, polymorphed, or magically-altered creature, although he cannot determine the creature’s true form. This proficiency check is rolled by the DM (secretly) when the character first encounters the creature or when the player declares that his character is concentrating on a specific creature or individual. Lycanthropes and “natural” shapeshifters (like dopplegangers) are not revealed.

Conjuration Theory. Knowledge of the calling of matter or creatures from another plane. The character has a familiarity with the structure of the Outer and Inner Planes and can recognize a particular planar creature or artifact on a successful proficiency check. In addition, the character may make a proficiency check after 1-10 rounds of careful observation to tell if an animal is currently under the control of a summoner.

Divination Theory. Advanced study of magical detection techniques and knowledge-gathering. The character is always allowed a proficiency check against half his skill (rounded down) when targeted with any form of divination magic. Success means the character feels that “someone is watching him.” The character is also familiar with common forms of divination in the game world (astrology, cards, and so on). If these work in the campaign world, the character may perform one divination each week (treat as an augury spell).

Enchantment/Charm Theory. Knowledge of enchantments placed upon objects and creatures. On a successful proficiency check, the character gains information equal to the result of a bard’s Legend Lore skill about a given magical item. In addition, the character may spot a magical charm, geas, or similar spell after carefully observing the affected creature for 1-10 rounds and making a successful proficiency check.

Illusion Theory. Study of illusions, phantasms, and shadow magic. The keen insights and knowledge of psychology required to understand illusion magic makes the character very sensitive to subtle nuances of behavior. On a successful check, the character can tell if he is being deliberately lied to (although the truth is not revealed).

Invocation/Evocation Theory. Study of the flashy and dramatic invocation/ evocation spells. On a successful proficiency check, the character may perform a single evocation cantrip, such as a single puff of smoke, a spark hot enough to light dry paper, a light equal to that of a small candle, or other minor magical effect. Like any other cantrip, this spell cannot harm any but the smallest of creatures and cannot disrupt anyone’s concentration. On a natural “20,” the cantrip is miscast (e.g., gives a hotfoot to the king, sets fire to the drapes, etc.—DM’s choice).

Necromantic Theory. The darkest of the studies, the study of life and death and how very thin the barrier between them can be. The student of necromantic lore may conduct research (as per magical item construction) into golem construction, is an expert embalmer, and gains a +1 bonus to all Healing checks. However, the character’s knowledge of life and death bring an increasing detachment from society that can be sensed by others. The character suffers a -1 Reaction penalty for every four experience levels (rounded down).

New Traits & Disadvantages

Campaigns that use the optional character point system presented in Player’s Option: Skills & Powers rulebook can include the following:

Untutored (Flaw, 4 bonus points/10 bonus points): The character learned magic through intuition and native talent, not by the usual apprenticeship. As a Moderate disadvantage, the character may not begin play with any NWPs from the Wizard group. Furthermore, the character must pay the “non-mage” cost (one additional proficiency slot, or two additional CPs) to acquire any such proficiency during play. As a Severe disadvantage, the character may never have or acquire spellcraft or any Wizard non-weapon proficiency and suffers a -10% penalty to learn new spells. His chance to research spells from scratch, however, is unaffected.

Natural affinity (school) (Advantage, costing 4 points): The character has a “knack” for a particular school of magic (chosen at the time of generation). The character enjoys a +1 bonus to all NWP checks involving that type of magic, and a further +5% bonus to learn new spells of that school. In addition, the character may learn one more spell per level than his Intelligence score indicates (Table 4, PHB, or Table 8, S&P). Purchasing this advantage twice for one school has no cumulative effect.

Campaign Notes

Advanced study of magic is not just a matter of “+5% to learn a spell.” The character has an encyclopedic knowledge of various types of magic that he encounters during play. Although these NWPs provide immediate benefits, their main purpose is to encourage a more thoughtful, investigative style of play. As a new source of clues, of tactical information, or simply as a way to impress NPCs, this knowledge has many role-playing applications—provided the character has an opportunity to use them. The DM must plan ahead and be ready when the PC asks what his “abjuration theory roll tells him about the mysterious writing on the locked door,” or says “I’m going to impress the sage with my knowledge of magical metaphysics.”

Lachlan MacQuarrie has recently completed his Master’s degree in Abjuration with a minor in Metaphysical Theory.

Table 2: Proficiency Character Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>CPs</th>
<th>Initial Rating</th>
<th>Relevant Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Magic</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Intelligence/Knowledge, Wisdom/Willpower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magecraft</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intelligence/Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysical Theory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Intelligence/Reason, Wisdom/Intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(School) Theory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intelligence/Knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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It was early in the evening; it'd be hours yet before my study was invaded by three mighty mages.

Or so I'd thought. I was strolling unconcernedly down the hall, laden with a case of cola and some bottles of ice wine, when a sudden, well, hoofing sound from above made me look up, dump the drinkables onto the broadloom with a hasty crash, and dive into the nearest closet.

I was just in time. The closet has louvered doors, and I got myself turned around in time to see (through the slits) Elminster slide serenely down my banister rail, robes tucked up to reveal legs that were as hairy as they were shapely.

As he deftly swung his leg over to drop from one flight of stairs to the other, Elminster said loudly in my direction, "See? The place is empty, as I told thee. There's no one here to see us make fools of ourselves. Trust me."

By now, I can recognize a warning when the Old Mage gives it. For one thing, the words "Trust me" are a dead giveaway. For another, I'd never heard him hoot like that before. He prefers subtle, stealthy arrivals. I stayed where I was and kept very quiet.

A moment later, the lady mage Rautheene scudded down the well-polished banister in an elegant, precisely-balanced sidesaddle pose, gown demurely tucked around daintily-booted ankles. Behind her came her mentor, Mordenkainen, but I confess my eyes were so caught by the smooth descent of the lady in black that I scarcely noticed his voyage—or whatever befell Elminster at the bottom that caused a thump and a muffled curse.

The lady Rautheene has the merriest tinkling laughter I've ever heard. It rolled out across the hallway as Elminster rose, rubbed his behind, and gave her a sour look.

"Humph," he growled. "Some apprentices have more wits than to dare ridicule archmages who can shake realms with a single spell!"

"Or make an adroit landing," she agreed serenely, patting his cheek fondly as she danced down from the banister in an elegant swirl of black gown, unbound sable hair, and jet jewelry.

"Ho-bloody-ho," he replied darkly as she swept past, but there was a twinkle in his sharp old eyes as their gazes met. She grinned at him—and vanished in a puff of smoke.

At that moment, another solid thump announced the arrival of a certain mighty mage of Greyhawk at the polished post that stands where the banister turns at the landing, to plunge down the lower flight of stairs.

It was followed, after an ominous moment of silence, by a high, involuntary blurt of pain. Even from the closet I could see it was going to be a little while before Mordenkainen of Oerth found enough breath to emit anything more.

Elminster winced and hastily lifted a hand. His fingers made crawling motions like a bucket of aroused worms trying to elude a fishhook, and Mordenkainen rose gently into the air and floated down to the hallway.

A moment later, something seemed to grow and whirl between my eyes. I sat down hastily on a row of boots as blue mists raced and coiled across my sight. They grew bright, flashed together, then rolled back like stage curtains to reveal a scene that was bouncing slightly as we proceeded down the hall, with Mordenkainen's softly-hissed curses coming from nearby. My, but archmages know some interesting phrases.

I was back looking out of Elminster's belt buckle again, facing Rautheene as she leaned forward across the study table, a little frown of concentration on her face. Bowls of chips and glistening
turned toward Mordenkainen. "Master?"

"I don't feel overmuch in the mood to talk," the Old Mage growled, "but perhaps its source was a twinge of renewed pain rather than a culinary opinion. He lowered himself gingerly into my recliner, snapped weary fingers, and watched the fire roar obediently into life.

"I'm dying," he told the rising blue-white flames promptly, his voice so plaintive that Rautheene dipped her face to her master's shoulder as she passed, to hiss quietly, "Let us leave the table, this once," he proclaimed. "My lady?"

Mordenkainen groaned, but perhaps its source was a twinge of renewed pain rather than a culinary opinion. He lowered himself gingerly into my recliner, snapped weary fingers, and watched the fire roar obediently into life.

"I'm dying," he told the rising blue-white flames promptly, his voice so plaintive that Rautheene dipped her face to her master's shoulder as she passed, to hiss quietly, "Let us leave the table, this once," he proclaimed. "My lady?"

Rautheene hastily wiped ice cream from her chin and turned toward the sofa, licking long and elegant fingers as if she were just a child playing in the kitchen. Maybe she once had been.

"No word of Dalamar?" Elminster asked, settling himself. His pipe drifted to a spot just beside his chin, and emitted a contented puff of blue-green smoke.

"None," Rautheene replied, squeezing her master's shoulder as she passed, to bid him keep silent until he was more comfortable.

A row of bottles followed her, drifting along in midair. The lady apprentice frowned. What comments from either of you about things striking me?"

"Such impudence would be misplaced," Elminster agreed solemnly. His pipe, however, gave a derisive snort, and I saw Rautheene put fingers to her lips hastily to stifle another giggle. Bottles and slabs of cheese were circling her master now, and in their midst he noticed neither—or chose not to notice either—reaction.

Pipesmoke undulated toward the fireplace as Elminster murmured, "Try dipping that extra old cheddar into mustard . . . a most intriguing taste, I find."

Rautheene shuddered. "And yet you disapprove of pralines'n'cream with smoked salmon?"

"Well," the Old Mage growled, "it sounds and looks revolting, but ye seem to be thriving. Send some my way, if ye will. I've survived this long, after all . . ."

As he spoke, a platter of buttered asparagus drifted to the fireside, flanked by bagels piled high with bacon, and mugs of steaming cream soup. My kitchen, it seemed, was suffering another full frontal assault.

"Well?" the Lady Rautheene asked, chin in hand, watching the archmage of Toril lick his lips.

Elminster turned incredulous eyes on her. "As vile as I thought it'd be," he growled. "I suppose ye like bubble gum, too?"

The lady apprentice frowned. What is 'bubble gum'?"

"Rautheene," the Lord Mage of Greyhawk said formally, sitting bolt upright in the recliner, "I forbid you to investigate bubble gum. Absolutely and utterly. Think of it, if you must think of it at all, as chewing on a pink, oversweetened, sticky species of slimy raw eels."

His apprentice gagged delicately. "My curiosity endeth," she announced.

"Good," Mordenkainen said with finality. "To head off further mischief, I'd best begin our talk of magic—little spells of coinsharp, nex tremity and Sortil's aeques transfer."

"Before entering studies under Lord Mordenkainen," Rautheene said, "my career tended toward . . . deception. I can contribute the spells false ioun stone, hither, and wizard gong."

Whilst I," Mordenkainen announced, "had occasion to employ spells concerned with both prying and stealth in my younger days. As we seem to be dealing in threes, let me reveal echo, fingerblade, and spy."

The three mages reached into their bodices in unison, drawing forth parchments with identical flourishes. It was a good thing that my snort of mirth was safely back in the closet, out of range of their hearing. "Spur-of-the-moment" and "unplanned," indeed.

Then, of course, they started trading tales of sorcerous goofs and hilarities—and the remoteness of the closet, echoing with my chuckles and helpless guffaws, became a very good thing.

If I ever dare to cross two old and wise archwizards, or a stunningly beautiful lady apprentice fast rising in power, perhaps I'll share some of those stories with you. Perhaps when I'm very old and my health is failing. By then, spending several centuries as a toad or a flowerpot or Rautheene's backscratcher might seem a little more appealing than it does now.

Things could get worse, after all. I could wind up as Elminster's backscratcher!  

For Your Campaign

Remembering some of the tales next morning, Elminster chuckled all over again and gave me details of the spells exchanged by the Three in return for my promise to have at least four large tubs of ice cream waiting in my freezer for their next visit. Pralines'n'cream, of course.

"Oh," Elminster added gruffly, just before he faded into the fireplace, "and another thing: ye may as well fill a shelf of thy fridge with smoked salmon, too. Rauth isn't going to rest until she's got both of us hooked on her salmon and ice cream mess, too."

"She won't be able to get into that skintight gown much longer if she goes on wolfing down ice cream like that," I warned.

"She already can't, lad," Elminster replied in satisfaction. "Did ye not notice the gown she wore yestereve was a size larger than the one she wore at her last visit? I did."

The flames roared up past his smile, and he was gone.

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The flames roared up past his smile, and he was gone.
**Coinshar**

(Alteration)

Level: 1

Components: V, S, M

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 3

Duration: Special

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell turns a bladed weapon into a gleaming gold coin—or a gold coin into a sharp, pristine dagger (suited in size to the caster of the spell, with its appearance, hilt hue, and so on as envisioned by the caster). The transformation is complete and undetectable by normal means (though the changed item radiates an alteration dweomer), but the effect lasts for only one day per level of the caster, whereupon the item returns to its former shape. Only a mage of very clear wits and concentration (Intelligence 15 or higher) can use this spell to create a coin or dagger that is an exact duplicate of a pre-existing item, and then only if that item can be examined by the caster immediately prior to casting.

A blade or coin produced by a coinshar spell that breaks or is melted isn’t destroyed in the usual manner but instead returns to its true shape in pristine condition. (Continued exposure to whatever endangered its transformed shape can, of course, damage this true form.)

The material component of a coinshar spell is a pinch of iron filings and at least one tiny fleck of gold dust—or a shaving from a gold coin.

**False Ioun Stone**

(Alteration, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 1

Components: V, S, M

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 4

Duration: 1 round/level

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell animates and alters a stone or stones to make them outwardly perfect copies of the magical items known as ioun stones.

One to three false stones can be created by this spell; the only difference in casting is that more false stones require more material components. A raw stone takes on whatever forms of ioun stone the caster desires (so long as the caster has in the past actually seen a real stone of the sort desired). If not, the spell produces either a vibrant purple prism (even die roll) or a dusty rose prism (odd die roll) as its first stone, and a pearly white spindle (even) or a lavender-and-green ellipsoid (odd) as its second stone, the third stone being any sort of ioun stone.

Like real ioun stones, the transformed stones spin continuously and take up an orbit around the caster’s head. They can be grasped and repositioned (e.g., to orbit at a different radius) by the caster without ending the spell. Any stones touched by other beings vanish instantly but don’t affect remaining stones. False ioun stones radiate a dweomer but have no actual magical powers. Their major use is to impress gullible onlookers.

The material components of this spell are the raw stones (which are consumed by the magic, vanishing when the spell expires), a small handful of small glass beads, and one clear gem of any type and value, per stone to be changed (such a gem may be flawed, but it must be real gemstone and larger than the raw stone it will affect).

**Hither**

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 1

Components: V

Range: 0

Casting Time: 2

Duration: Instantaneous

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell causes a single item to leap into the caster’s grasp from elsewhere on his or her person. The item must be non-magical and of a weight and size that the caster could normally hold comfortably. It arrives gently but securely in the caster’s grasp, ready for use, and may by means of this spell come from a scabbard, backpack, pouch, or hiding place under clothing without disturbing intervening garments or its former storage place (i.e., a backpack tied shut remains tied shut, and other items in it retain their places).

The transfer may be silent and unheralded, or accompanied by a faint flourish of chiming notes and a flash of light briefly trailing from the item, whichever the caster desires.

**Wizard Gong**

(Alteration, Evocation)

Level: 1

Components: V, S, M

Range: Unlimited (same plane)

Casting Time: 4

Duration: Special

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

This spell causes the caster to feel a silent, distinctive vibratory alarm when a specific door, window, portal, or lid is opened or destroyed. The “alarmed” opening must be touched during casting, and the spell requires as its material component a clear, colorless gemstone of any sort, but not less than 1,000 gold pieces in value.

After a wizard gong is cast, the “alarmed” area radiates no dweomer, and casting a dispel magic upon it (or the caster) can’t ruin the gong spell. Neither distance nor elapsed time has any effect on the operation of a wizard gong, but after it is cast, the caster loses the use of the first-level spell slot it occupies until it is discharged. An individual may have only one wizard gong active at a time. Once cast, the spell can’t be ended by the will of the caster (unless he or she opens the “alarmed” door).

**Echo**

(Alteration, Evocation)

Level: 2

Components: V, S

Range: 0

Casting Time: 2

Duration: Special

Save: None

Area of Effect: Special

An echo spell “records” all sounds heard by its caster in the round immediately preceding its casting. These sounds can be “replayed” aloud twice, at any time after the echo spell is cast, by the speaking of a single secret activation word chosen by the caster.

A caster can have multiple echo spells in use at the same time, but once one is cast, the caster loses the use of the second-level spell slot it occupies until both replays have occurred. The spell can’t be ended without replays by act of will; the replays must occur to end the magic. Replays occur at the same volume level that they were heard by the caster, and they survive unconsciousness or intervening charms or feebleminded states of the caster (but not the caster’s death and subsequent resurrection).

This spell is normally used to incriminate loose-tongued conspirators, or to preserve important or complex instructions, proclamations, or agreements.

**Fingerblade**

(Evocation)

Level: 2

Components: V, S, M

Range: 0

Casting Time: 2
Fingerblade can be willed out of existence by its caster at any time. It strikes as a +1 weapon that the fingerblade touches (specific and successful attack roll required). There is no saving throw against this power of the spell; the touched weapon and the fingerblade both vanish, instantly and silently. This power can't affect magical weapons, or non-magical weapons bearing any sort of temporary dweomer (e.g., a normal sword upon which a light spell has been cast).

The material components of a fingerblade spell are a fingernail clipping (from the caster) and a needle or long, narrow, and sharp fragment of tempered metal.

**Nextremity**
(Alteration, Necromancy)
Level: 2
Components: V, S, M
Range: 0
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 2 rounds
Save: None
Area of Effect: Special

This spell “drinks” some of the caster’s vitality, causing a loss of 1d4 hp (which can be regained by normal rest or magical healing). It causes one of the caster’s hands and one of the caster’s feet temporarily to switch places with each other.

The “switched” extremities retain full strength and skill; a caster can use a hand that is now down at his left ankle, for example, to reach for something or to perform a dextrous task just as if he were employing his hand (though visibility and guidance can be a problem; the spell doesn’t move eyeballs about or provide “pipeline vision”).

A nextremity spell has one valuable side-effect that makes this spell more than a juggler’s (or sneak thief’s) curiosity: as the two extremities switch places, any non-magical bindings or manacles upon them, or around the wrist and ankle to which they are attached, fall away. Mages use this spell to manage “miraculous” escapes more often than for any other reason.

The material components of a nextremity spell are a piece of bone, a fragment of tendon, and a piece of sinew from any mammal (or mammals; they need not all be from the same creature or creature species).

**Sortil’s Aqueous Transfer**
(Alteration)
Level: 2
Components: V, S, M
Range: 300 yards
Casting Time: 2
Duration: Instantaneous
Save: None
Area of Effect: Special

This spell transfers liquid from one vessel to another (either from a full containing to an empty one, or trading the contents of two containers). For the spell to function, the two vessels (which can be open, like cups or mugs, or closed, like wineskins, casks, or stoppered jugs) must be identical (or nearly so) in size, shape, and material. The caster must have touched or handled both containers at some time previous to the casting of the transfer. The spell fails if this is not so, or if the caster attempts to move an ignited liquid, or a liquid containing solid or semi-solid objects larger than the caster’s thumb (such as meatballs or dumplings).

If these conditions are fulfilled, the spell succeeds. No part of the liquid is consumed or lost by the magic; if liquid passes from a filled container to an empty one, the formerly laden container will be left bone dry. Movement of the liquid is silent and instantaneous; a sudden change in the weight of the container may result, causing an unsuspecting being holding or carrying it to drop the container or overbalance.

Alcoholic liquids and acids may be moved unaltered by means of this spell, but enchanted liquids of any sort (such as potions) lose their magic when affected by a transfer. Poisoned liquids are moved by a transfer, but on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6, they’re rendered permanently inert during their journey; on a roll of 6, they’re weakened so as to be delayed in taking effect for 1d4+1 rounds (in addition to any normal onset time delay).

The material components of a spell are a raindrop and a tear (from the caster), which are typically carried in stoppered vials fashioned to fit together when opened (the opening of one large enough to engulf the open end of the other), so that the two drops can easily be shaken together; they must touch during casting.

Sortil was a mage of Halruaa, who flourished some 600 years ago.

**Spy**
(Alteration, Evocation)
Level: 3
Components: V, S, M
Range: 0
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 7 rounds
Save: None
Area of Effect: Special

This spell brings into being a visible, tangible eye or ear identical to the spellcaster’s real eyes or ears. The caster can see or hear through the organ as if it were his own, while within 90 feet of it (regardless of intervening walls or barriers). The eye or ear is stationary once placed in a spot by the caster and adheres to surfaces unbreakably (i.e., it can be “stuck” to the underside of a table to conceal it). If an eyelid is created, it swivels and focuses as if it were real, and the caster can direct it to “aim” in particular directions from afar.

If the eye or ear created by a spy spell is destroyed (it is considered AC 10 with 1 hp), its caster suffers an instant loss of 4 hp and the loss of use of one eye or ear (whichever is appropriate to the spell form employed) for 1 full day (24 hours, or 144 turns). Note that this blindness or deafness is a spell-curable magical affliction, not visible physical damage.

The material components of a spy spell are a glass rod or tube of any size (miniatures are usually employed), and a glass lens or cone, or an eyeball or ear from any creature.

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Ed Greenwood wants it to be known that there is no truth to the malicious rumor that he is the son of King Azoun IV of Cormyr. Nor does his lineage have anything to do with irritable dragons, archliches, Harpers named Storm, lusty dwarves, Malaugrym, or wizards named Elminster. “All resemblances are purely coincidental. Ed insists. “I was in another world at the time.”
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The investigations of Volo include some confused notes about a "desert-dwelling giant blue dragon who seems to have some magical link with a statue... way of surviving sandstorms? Special magic?"

Elminster has consented to lay bare rather more than such cryptic queries about the Doom of the Desert, lymrith, the blue dragon of the Chill Sands. Few folk of the North ever see this legendary "Dragon of the Statues" unless they brave the frigid wastes of Anauroch east of ruined Ascore, or dare to explore the Netherese ruins scattered up and down the Fallen Lands along the western edge of the Great Desert. lymrith roams these regions tirelessly.

She's engaged in an extended exploration of the surviving ruins of Netheril and has already gained much old magic from them. She has also developed quite a few unusual spells.

Perhaps the most important of these is the magic that has kept her alive thus far: force burn, a spell derived from magics left behind by Netherese mages that is deadly to the fey subterranean race known as the Phaerimm. Fear of it has driven them to ignore lymrith rather than turning their power to the task of destroying her.

Adventurers are warned that lymrith has developed spells that employ sand as a weapon—and that apparently confer the ability to use such magics on some of the many gargoyle servants she's created.

lymrith is first heard of in adventurers' journals written circa 570 D.R., as a young and aggressive dragon who smashed a Bedine trading encampment on the edge of the desert, who tore apart a caravan bound for the distant Sword Coast, and who left the camp laden with desert-gems.

lymrith apparently challenged an older dragon somewhere in the vicinity of the High Moor shortly after her emergence from Anauroch—and had to flee for her life.

Sorely wounded, she crashed into some ruins (possibly remnants of fallen Netheril) in the Forgotten Forest and hid for some years, healing slowly and stealing forth only by night to find food. At some point during this time of night-hunting, she somehow gained magic beyond the normal capabilities of even the oldest blue dragons; Elminster believes she was captured by a powerful archmage and modified by him to serve as an intelligent servant.

This belief is supported by sightings of a blue dragon flying over the Delimbiyr Vale with a disintegrating, robed human skeleton perched between her shoulders in a high-backed saddle. This was almost certainly lymrith, who soon began to...
raid camped caravans and Sword Coast settlements by night, unleashing wizard spells from a roster strong and varied enough that many mages used magic— in vain—to hunt down a rogue wizard they believed to be dwelling in hiding somewhere in the Greypeak Mountains.

lymrith apparently turned to digging apart the ruins along the western Desertedge when a chance landing to rest yielded her a stone chest packed full of spellbooks.

Her enthusiastic digging brought her jaw-to-jaw with her first phaerimm, and her life very nearly ended there, but the narrow escape alerted her to this mighty menace from below, and she redoubled her efforts to find magic, which she carried off to a windswept mountaintop.

Inevitably, lymrith was seen flying back and forth and was confronted by an adventuring band hoping to be rich dragonslayers by the end of the day. They ended up as corpses instead, and lymrith was goaded into experimenting with certain of the spells she’d already found to make her first gargoyles.

lymrith needed loyal, sturdy servants to guard her lair and dig for her while she kept watch for phaerimm and humans from a safe vantage point. Her gargoyles began as crude, ungainly gliding stone monsters but soon grew more elegant and deadly. Today she is served by such specialized creations as grandfather plaques (q.v., under “Gargoyle,” in the Monstrous Compendium® Annual Volume Three).

When her gargoyles became a threat enough, lymrith set them to digging up Netherese ruins, while she spent hours flying high above the western desert and adjoining lands, seeking herds of rothé and the like for food and ruins that might not be visible from the air.

The shifting sands of Anauroch soon rewarded her, unveiling the leaning top of a lone sorcerer’s tower. lymrith tore it open and found her richest magic yet. She made it her lair for some centuries, until one day phaerimm came boiling up out of its depths to slay her.

By then, lymrith was ready for them. Her force burn spells and other magics destroyed many phaerimm and sent the rest fleeing—and in the time she’d won by her victory, the Doom of the Desert set about shifting all of her accumulated treasure north to another ruin she’d found as the restless sands laid it bare: a stone city roamed only by the skeletons of undead Bedine.

The dragon has still not learned the city’s name but has dwelt in it ever since, driving away all other dragons and phaerimm who approach, and making ever-stronger gargoyles to dig into the city’s tombs and cellars for her, and guard what she has already gained.

The key to lymrith’s character is her driving, all-consuming ambition. In the words of Elminster, she is “the least lazy and sleepy wyrm I have ever known.”

lymrith’s Lair

Though she has several caverns in the Greypeak and Sunset Mountains (caves that have their own pools of water but which she keeps otherwise bare), the Doom of the Deserts lair is the nameless ruined city that lies north-east of Ascore, half-buried in sand.

There she lies atop her hoard of gems in a huge temple or meeting-hall, with her tail filling the entrance to her smaller chamber of magic. All around her are gargoyles guardians, and her lesser gargoyles servants fly patrols to watch for intruders, tunnel the sand-choked chambers and passages beneath her, and tirelessly transport rocks from the nearby mountains to create a permanent ”windbreak dune” or wall on the windward side of the city.

At least one adventuring band has reported being fired upon by “stone-hurling engines” (trebuchets) that were aimed and re-aimed with great accuracy by gargoyles seeking to dissuade any invasion of the city. These weapons could hurl showers of boulders almost a mile from the crumbling outer walls of the ancient city—reinforced by gargoyles swooping on the intruders from aloft, dropping boulders on them.

Teeter-totter pitfall traps and spell-hurling gargoyles were reported by the only mage to reach the city streets and survive. (He gained entry—and soon left hastily—by means of teleport spells.)

lymrith’s Domain

From her nameless city, lymrith roams the western edge of Anauroch as far south as the Greycloak Hills and as far west as the eastern edge of the High Forest (now that Hellgate Keep is no longer the peril it once was). She seems to like colder climes, unlike most blue dragons, and flies occasional forays as far north as where the Ice Mountains meet the glaciers.

The Doom of the Desert regards her city—and the ways beneath it, as far down as they may exist—as her exclusive territory. Any phaerimm, drow, human adventurers, or anyone else entering it becomes her food as swiftly as she can bring about such a fate. The rest of the area she flies over, however, she rules but lightly, watching events more than enforcing her will. She is known occasionally to make hunting flights (in search of herds of livestock, usually) that carry her far afield.

The Deeds of lymrith

The blue dragon of the Chill Sands has spells that readily thaw ice into drinkable water. There is ice in plenty beneath her city, and much more only a short flight away in all directions except south or due west. She seemingly eats anything, so long as there’s lots of it, but she doesn’t seem to grow hungry too often. She spends most days examining magical items brought to her by her gargoyles, and experimenting with the spells and items she already has to derive new and more powerful magics.

lymrith creates new servitor gargoyles every dozen days or so, but she is becoming increasingly obsessed with her own survival and has interrupted her usual augmentation of her gargoyles army to experiment with the creation of multiple bodies for herself. At present she can “jump” her essence from her real body to a mechanical body and to at least two statues, but she hasn’t managed to yet craft a second living body.

The statues lymrith has created are as large as she is, and all six of them look like stiffly-posed blue dragons made of single smooth-finished blocks of stone. (She’s actually fused rock together with flowstone spells to make them.) When she teleports them about, or links with them to cast spells through them (just as a human mage can make certain spells emanate from a projected image) or to move her sentient self-essence into them, the statues’ pupilless eyes come alive with tiny flames.

lymrith’s driving aim is to gain all the magic she can and thereby rise to supremacy over all other dragons, phaerimm, or anyone else who might challenge her. Then she can live forever, crafting ever-stronger magics. No one knows whether she’ll ever feel secure enough to think of mating, dwelling elsewhere, or sharing her magic with beings not of her own creation.

Certain Bedine tribes worship lymrith—from a safe distance. They leave behind offerings of polished sapphires. Thus far, lymrith has suffered
them to live and even safely approach the city walls until they can see her central hall clearly. She’s never rendered them the slightest aid, however, and might just be humoring them idly.

Lymrith has mastered various magical means of teleporting groups of creatures and is known to use this method to capture herds of snow rothé and other edible beasts when her supply of food runs low. (The harsh climate and scant grazing provender causes this shortage to happen fairly often.)

The Doom of the Desert seems to find the crafting and enchanting of items tiresome, but tinkering with the casting of spells holds endless fascination for her and consumes most of her days. Perhaps once every eight days or so she momentarily tires of magical experimentation and indulges herself in farscrying Faerûn around her, to keep track of what’s happening elsewhere. She does this in a whimsical manner rather than taking thorough or defensive care over it.

Less than a decade ago, lymrith’s spells ensnared the Company of the Flame Spider. Named for the exotic dancer who sponsored them, this band of fumbling magelings and disaffected mercenaries was formed in Athkatla. After several unrewarding forays into the High Moor and the ruins of Illefarn, they undertook a commission from the Merchant League to explore the chill northern reaches of Anauroch, seeking a trade route east or at least a series of landmarks that travelers across the shifting sands could rely on.

A dozen Flame Spiders avoided Ascore (whose fell reputation has spread across the North) but set off to travel in a wide ring around it, taking note of any desert landmarks along the way. They soon caught sight of the city that held the Doom of the Desert—too late to avoid being in turn seen and trapped by her. lymrith placed no compulsions on the adventurers; she merely makes use of mass teleport and gargoyles prevent any invasion of the city on such occasions, but if no such activity is mounted, the Doom of the Desert uses her gargoyles to send out a feast, then employs spells to eavesdrop on any over-the-wine conversations, seeking to learn what the wider world knows of her as well as interesting news. lymrith seems to have adopted the Flame Spiders as pets, in somewhat the same manner as soldiers’ develop a casual affection for stray dogs, to whom they toss camp leavings. She uses her spells to snatch the Amnians apart from each other whenever their arguments break into open violence.

Most of the magical experimentations mounted by the blue dragon of the Chill Sands involve altering incantations to change spell effects; after centuries of doing this, she can tinker with spells instinctively and has been known to cast a spell in battle, observe its effect, and alter an immediate second casting to achieve a different result. Magic excites her, but challenges and danger (apparently) leave her icy calm; she has self-control far beyond what most dragons can conceive, let alone achieve.

When not altering or combining spells, lymrith is usually attempting to infuse some part of an artificial draconic body with a magical property or power. The upper reaches of her central city chambers are crowded with floating sculpted stone body parts and more-or-less complete bodies. On several occasions spell experimentations that went awry have awakened these floating dragon fragments into wild eruptions of movement and magical power, slaughering gargoyles and causing even lymrith to retreat and blast anything that comes too close. A lymrithian spell-duels, or at least a sequence at her, whereupon she tends to hurl mobs of gargoyles at them and—if she deems it necessary—a few devastating spells or combinations of spells, to defeat or disable the menace so that she can return her attentions to whatever she was doing when the danger arose. Foes (such as, on one recent and fatal occasion, an overconfident group of Sembian wizards-for-hire) who believe that such hasty reactions give them a weakness to readily exploit are correct, to a point—but such bold foes had best be able to do their exploiting very fast and very hard, or an aroused lymrith will begin to unleash the full defenses of her city at them. In earlier days, she evidently placed belligerent creatures, from remorhaz to adventurers, in some sort of magical stasis, then stored them in sealed chambers, safe from hungry creatures, scorching sand, and the ravages of time. She can awaken groups of them en masse as she teleports them into the presence of a foe—or to a position just above opponents, so as to bring them crashing down on the heads of such enemies.

The mage Tathtlan of Neverwinter, now deceased, discovered lymrith early in his explorations with an ancient Netherese scrying stone and observed her often. His notes (from which much of what Elminster knows of the Doom of the Desert is derived; the Old Mage stresses that although it appears lymrith became aware of her observer, she took no action against him and did not cause his demise) indicate that, from time to time, doorways and spires in the nameless city changed by themselves. Although their alterations may have
been caused or triggered by the magical experiments of Iymrith, she was surprised by the changes on at least two occasions, and Tathtlan believes that some other force was, and is, awake and active in the city. Perhaps phaerimm are managing to slip some magic past the Doom of the Desert, or older resident enchantments or hidden beings are at work. These changes never seem to amount to a direct challenge to lymrith, and their cause and true nature remain mysterious.

Tathtlan was of the opinion that lymrith is growing more whimsical and carefree as she ages, more caught up in the exultation of wielding magic and increasingly less caring of the world around her and of her own safety. He compared her behavior to that of some ancient elves, yearning for a oneness with magic that, legends whisper, led the Doom of the Desert with interest.

Iymrith’s Fate

The Doom of the Desert is unlikely to gain enough magic to feel secure, but if she can survive phaerimm attacks for another decade or so, she might master the ability to move at will from body to body; there are a few dracolich and mechanical monster bodies in Faerûn that she might be able to seize.

This power would probably ensure her survival from a concerted phaerimm or dragon attack—a good thing for her, because she would also almost certainly come to the attention of the Cult of the Dragon (as more than a dim legend of the North) and face well-organized attacks from multiple dracoliches acting in concert with other Cult forces. Elminster’s money will, however, be on lymrith in any such confrontation—though he knows more than a few mages who’d like to watch.

A force burn spell has no effect on non-living things, but does harm undead just as it does living targets.
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The World of Robert Jordan’s Wheel of Time
by Robert Jordan and Teresa Patterson
Tor $39.95/HC

Any fan of fantasy literature who is not at least familiar with Robert Jordan’s The Wheel of Time series should be. Jordan’s sales alone guarantee that he’ll have a major impact on the genre. Fans will enjoy his latest release, The World of Robert Jordan’s Wheel of Time, which describes the history and geography of his fantasy setting.

The oversized hardcover book is divided into six sections that vary greatly in their effectiveness. They are in order: “The Wheel and the Power,” “The Age of Legends,” “The World Since the Breaking,” “Some Narrative Paintings,” “The World of the Wheel,” and “Within the Land.” Only the “Age of Legends” and the “World Since the Breaking” sections contain new information for those most likely to buy this book—the devoted Jordan fan. Happily, these two sections comprise more than half of the book and make it well worth the price.

The clarified history of the world found in sections two and three are excellent. The descriptions of The Forsaken, the premier villains of the series, are also interesting. Finally, the book offers fans of this involved series a list of the thirteen major villains, a chronicle of the War of the Shadow, and detailed information on Artur Hawkwing.

The last two sections are, regrettably, nothing more than a brief rehash of what anyone who has read the books knows about the world. There are a few rare gems, like a continent that has yet to be mentioned in the series, and a closer look at the Seanchan. Neither of these two sections has enough detail to be useful to a fan, however; most of the material covered is clear from the books themselves. Additionally there should have been a brief list of all the minor characters and a description of where they are found in the books.

Anyone interested in gaming in the world of The Wheel of Time should have this book. Although it isn’t a role-playing game book, it’s an invaluable reference to the setting and characters.

It would have been too easy for Jordan to turn this out as a quick way to hold his fans’ interest between novels and make some extra cash. Instead, the book adds enough detail to the history of the world to be well worth any Jordan fan’s time. The novels are a better starting point for the series, but those already familiar with The Wheel of Time will enjoy this exploration of the world.

—Jesse Decker

Destiny’s Road
by Larry Niven
Tor $24.95/HC

Larry Niven heads a short list of science-fiction writers who excel at creating new worlds. Of these, Ringworld is probably the best known. Now Niven gives us the planet called Destiny.

The Earth settlers of Spiral Town live at one end of Destiny’s Road, a path of melted rock created by the Cavorite, one of two landers in which the colonists descended to the planet. The colonists struggle to maintain earthlife on their new planet. Cavorite helped, using its fusion drive to sterilize the “Crab,” a peninsula jutting out from the mainland. With reduced competition from native life, earthlife has spread, providing sustenance. Even so, the colony is threatened by the lack of a necessary element that is available only in the form of “speckles,” a food supplement sold only by the caravans, humans from another settlement.

Destiny’s Road is part travelogue and part mystery, with adventure all along the way. Jemmy Boocher, a Spiral Town youth, gets into trouble and must leave the safe confines of home. He follows the “Road,” determined to see its end. Along the way he encounters chugs, sharks, and the Otterfolk. The mysterious origin of speckles threatens his life.

As is often the case in Niven’s novels, the world of Destiny’s Road is so well-developed that the story seems too short. The pacing is good, however, and the journey of Jemmy Boocher becomes an end in itself.

—Pierce Watters
The Singing Sword
by Jack Whyte
Forge $23.95/HC

Jack Whyte’s version of Arthurian legend rises from a foundation in Roman history, with an emphasis on plausible science and military matters. You’ll find no spellcasting wizards nor fire-breathing dragons in this distinctly masculine version of the rise of Camelot.

Publius Varro is the protagonist, and deciding whether he is Whyte’s version of Merlin is one of the series’ early pleasures. It’s clear that Varro’s friend Caius is the Arthurian Kay, and only in the second generation of the primary characters do we discover Uther, Arthur’s sire. The story thus far concerns the evolution of Arthur’s Britain rather than the famous characters of legend, and so the books are aptly called The Camulod Chronicles. If there is a protagonist other than Varro, it is the ideal of Camulod, a republican state rebelling against Imperial Rome.

Where The Skystone introduced a somewhat awkward sequence of sex scenes and polarized portrayals of women, The Singing Sword uses both of these elements to marry Roman history with British legend. Whyte’s most successful achievements are his treatment of magic as science and his emphasis on action combined with military and political intrigue. The first two volumes promise a continually engaging and original addition to the canon of Arthurian variations.

—Dave Gross

The Subtle Knife
by Philip Pullman
Knopf $20.00/HC

The first volume of His Dark Materials, The Golden Compass introduced us to Lyra Silvertongue, the clever heroine of a subtly magical Victorian earth. In Lyra’s world, all humans have magical animal companions, familiars. The familiars of children Lyra’s age can change shape at will, but at puberty each familiar takes its permanent form. Lyra’s adventures in the first novel reveal much about the nature of familiars and the world-shaking ambitions of her scientist father, Lord Asriel.

In The Subtle Knife, we meet Will Party, a boy from our own, modern Earth. As cunning and brave as Lyra, Will also must survive the dangers of his father’s mysterious past. Together, Will and Lyra begin to discover how their separate quests are related—and how each leads ultimately to the most terrible of conflicts.

The most brilliant element of The Subtle Knife and its predecessor is the characterization of the children. These are not the innocent darlings of most fiction, but real characters, capable of both good and wicked acts. The moral choices of the protagonists are meaningful and compelling, and their quest becomes truly epic as the story unfolds.

While its virtues invite comparisons to Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, Philip Pullman has created a truly original work. No lover of fantasy fiction should miss these inevitable classics.

—Dave Gross
A note from Holwof, archivist of Candlekeep, to his superior:

We’ve finished cataloging the third shelf! Mehgrim found this bound in a volume of Urmlaspyr poetry. She believes it to be an unrecorded tale of the Simbul. After reading it, I’m inclined to agree. Deneir alone knows who first wrote it, but no one other than Alasra Shentrantra swears by breakfast foods!

The air soured at midday. By early dusk, the blizzard had begun in earnest, hurling frigid claws against the walls of Caddo’s charterhouse. The stout timbers held the worst at bay, but wisps of ice sparkled above all the candles.

Save for the blizzard’s howl, Caddo’s was a quiet place. None of the locals who came each evening to gossip was foolish enough to leave home on such a night, and the woodsmen who’d dribbled in during the bleak afternoon were a taciturn lot, given to staring at the hearth and nursing a single flagon until midnight. Burr, the dwarf who worked for Caddo, had little to do.

He’d spent the afternoon in the tiny room he called home, checking out the gear he’d been wearing that night, some two decades past, when he’d stumbled through another blizzard and across the charterhouse’s threshold for the first time. Blizzards were rare enough here on the borderland between the Lonely Moor and the Forgotten Forest. Two winters, even three, might pass without a truly ferocious storm. But the blizzards would come, and when their winds were strongest, Burr would gird himself with the fine weapons and armor he kept in his room and hurl himself straight at the storm’s fist.

It wasn’t something Burr wanted to do. It was something he’d had to do since that first storm, when he hadn’t known what waited in the snow. Years ago, he’d tried getting stone-drunk, but he’d gone out anyway, surviving only because Caddo had followed him. Since then Burr took better care of himself when the air soured, lest Caddo follow him again.

Caddo was a good man with a wife, three children, and a crippled mother-in-law all depending on him. Caddo had no need of the snow cave. Burr’s need grew stronger with every howling wind. It burned behind his eyes.

“You stay here,” he told Caddo, slamming a polished flagon on a shelf. His hands had begun to shake. He made a fist and shook it in the human’s face. “I’ve got to; you don’t. You understand that? You stay here, no matter what. You don’t come looking for me, not tonight, not next week—not next month or next spring. If I don’t come back, you let me rot out there. You understand?”

Caddo pulled away with the wooden expression of an honest man trapped into lying. “I understand.”

They stared at each other, years of friendship and a score of blizzard nights between them.

“Swear it by your—” Burr began as the door sighed on its hinges.
A blast of frigid wind shook every flame in the room, extinguishing half the candles and two of the lamps. In the light that remained, Burr and Caddo took the newcomers measure. He was above middling height and wrapped in shaggy fur. The leather-wrapped hilt of a great sword stuck up above his right shoulder, and the shifting sound of chain-mail accented his slightest move. His hands were sheathed in bear-paw gauntlets; his leggings might have come from the same source.

A shroud of ice-rimed wool shielded his face. There was a slit for his eyes, but the shadows and cold were such that not even Burr's dwarven vision could guess their temper. They watched as the newcomer strode to the dry rack where the woodsfolk had left their cloaks. Precious metal glinted as he opened the cloak-clasp. His hood fell back, dumping ice on the taproom's floor and releasing an unexpected wealth of silver hair.

Caddo shot another silent question Burr’s way, and the dwarf answered with a puzzled shrug. Anything was possible here, where the ruins of Dekanter were only two days’ journey to the northeast. The newcomer might be an elf or a half-elf or a man years past his prime. Burr was prepared for anything he thought, as the man unwound his woolen shroud, anything but a woman.

“Dear lady,” Caddo began, ever the courteous innkeeper. “May I help?”

She nailed Caddo with a scowl, and suddenly the tap-room was colder than the might outside. “Brandy. Warmed. Now.”

Without the scowl, she might have been beautiful. Burr reckoned he’d visited a hundred cities before he wound up in the borderland and he’d never seen a demeanor quite as harsh. He nodded as Caddo closed his hand around a thumbnail-sized divination crystal. Holding the crystal between his eye and a glass-bottom flagon, Caddo scryed the woman’s aura. Burr asked a silent question, and Caddo shrugged.

“Plain as you or me,” Caddo whispered, retrieving a wax-covered bottle. He filled the flagon with amber brandy.

The dwarf wasn’t reassured though he did his best to reassure the inn’s other patrons as he carried the flagon across the room. As the woodsfolk went back to nursing their drinks, Burr boosted himself onto the stool opposite the silver-haired scowl.

“Burr,” he introduced himself, offering his hand after he’d set the flagon down. His fingers might have been serpents in her glare. He shoved his hand beneath the table and tried again. Will you be needing a bed-down, sir? There’re rooms upstairs but its all or nothing, dear lady, and precious little time before the cave sinks back into the storm. Take my advice, make me your guide, or you’ll be sitting here when the next storm blows.”

Rekka held the fresh flagon above the lamp, felt flame lick her fingers. There was no pain; she was a century past physical pain. She’d seen the human innkeeper peering through the glass-bottomed flagon and countered his crystal charm with a thought. She’d need her magic to defeat the snow cave’s guardians, Ffellsil’s ghost, the fury and the rest. The dwarf had his facts straight, but Rekka hadn’t meant for anyone to see through her warrior’s trappings just yet. The dwarf might have been lucky. Strangers couldn’t be common here, especially not during a blizzard. With or without her magic blazing, she wasn’t inconspicuous.

Sometimes Rekka did share the loot she harvested from out-of-time; out-of-place boitholes like Ffellsil’s snow cave, but not with anyone who reeked of wrong the way Burr did. He’d been ghost-bit, perhaps, in one of Ffellsil’s traps, or maybe he was just crazed. Any man might lose his mind up here where the air still stank of Netheril’s sorcery, two millennia after that dark empire’s collapse.

“I don’t share. Do yourself a favor, leave me alone and—above all else—don’t follow me.” It was the longest
speech she’d made in a month and she took a sip of brandy to soothe her throat afterward.

He stayed in the chair, leaning the way plain folk did when they wanted something so much that it fairly burst their skulls. Rekka lowered the flagon, spun a brass ring on the second finger of her left hand. She could break him with the spells hammered into that ring, but he scraped the chair back from the table before she needed to use it.

The innkeeper, the dwarf, and the other strangers around her watched with sidelong glances and ill-disguised luck-signs, but they kept their distance as Rekka nursed her second flagon through the long evening. Around midnight, the innkeeper banked the fire. The lodgers bedded down in snoring heaps near the hearth. Burr extinguished all the lamps and candles save one, which was enough for Rekka to watch him leave the taproom.

Yet he said nothing and stayed put when she clasped her own cloak. He was still sitting at a table, a shadow among shadows, when she put her hand on the door and left the charterhouse without a sound or draft to mark her passage.

If Burr had begun his search for Ffellsil’s cave twenty-one winters ago, then he was a beginner in the questers’ game. Rekka had first heard the Netherese wizard’s name whispered in Yeenoghu’s Realm more than a century ago. She hadn’t been looking for Ffellsil then. She scarcely remembered what she had been looking for, except it must have been magic and she must have found it. Not that she needed more magic, then or now.

All the magic Rekka needed was locked in her mind, hammered into the rings she wore, or etched onto the flexible steel plates lining her belt and baldric.

She was prepared for ghosts, even Ffellsil’s ghost, and she hadn’t tripped a trap by accident since the day she’d blundered through a time-weave and found herself, unharmed and un-aged, on the other side. It was a mixed blessing to know she couldn’t age and might not ever die. Rekka hadn’t known her family. She’d sworn off friendships because, even without questions or jealousy, there was still the pain of watching death steal them away.

The search for magic was her life. The artifacts and grimoires she kept in a cave beneath the Sea of Swords were simply the means to tally score in a solitary game. Perhaps she should have hired Burr, not because she needed a guide, but dwarfes were a long-lived race and the onus of safety, to sole his boots with iron rasps. Wise precautions, perhaps. Heavy precautions, certainly, and time consuming in a place where time was of the essence. Unless it was written on a scroll she hadn’t found, Rekka knew of no spell that would let her remain in the snowcave once the blizzard’s fury began to abate. It would simply melt away and return intact, as Burr had noted, with the next fierce storm. Rekka preferred simpler tactics: with a rings twist she rose a handspan above the thick ice or not-thick ice, whichever the case might be.

Ffellsil had conjured guardians as well as traps for his bolthole: sentient winds, hoarfrost beasts, a serpent formed from ice so hard it held a honed-steel edge. Rekka faced them all without surprise or ill-effect, dispatching the serpent with her great sword because, in her private reckoning, triumph by might was worth more than triumph by magic. But might took longer than magic and she was relieved when Ffellsil’s final obstacle shimmered in front of her. It was, as predicted, a freezing ghost, possibly the wizard himself or his doppleganger.

Bright, diaphanous frost-veils unfurled around the ghost, seeking to draw Rekka into a fatal embrace. She floated, backward, staying just out-of-reach as she shaped her thoughts into the mnemonic trigger of a common frost spell—another bit of Yeengo hugs gossip: Ffellsil’s cave, like so many well-defended and wizardly places, was vulnerable to a simple, yet precise attack. A toothy grin spread across Rekka’s face as the veils ceased their hungry shimmering. But the danger wasn’t gone: The ghost was merely stunned. It would recover, if she let it—which she wouldn’t. Rekka dug deep into the hem of her sleeve, withdrawing a handful of red, white, and black powder which she blew at the immobilized ghost.

More incendiary than sorcerous, the flakes had been dried from the hottest peppers known to mortals and immortals alike. Rekka shook with silent laughter as the stricken ghost sneezed itself into oblivion.

A chamber filled with treasure worthy of a dragon opened in front of Rekka. She paused before entering it. Burr had mentioned a final threshold that he alone knew how to cross. No one else spoke of a trap after the ghost, but a warning was a warning and she was glad to have had one a moment later when the faintest breeze rifled
her hair. She spun rightward, whipping the great sword through a swallow-cut. The blade bit into something she never saw, and a scream echoed in her mind without having touched her ears.

“I owe you one,” she said to the absent dwarf. Hearing her own voice, Rekka judged she’d passed all the trials and dangers.

The wooden box without a lock, she decided, would be the proper debt-gift, if there were time to look for it. Searching the bolt-hole would be no small challenge: Ffellsil wasn’t much of a housekeeper. Well, neither was Rekka. She attacked the clutter with the same reckless vigor she used in her own bolt-hole, hurling objects left and right, but not without examining them.

Rekka knew the blizzard had begun to wane when the bolt-hole sighed and the hand-fire above her head took on a greenish hue. The chamber appeared little different than it had when she’d entered, save for a heap of tomes and scrolls near the center. She still had a quarter of the floor and a whole wall left to glean. Curiosity or, to give it its true name, greed had gotten the better of Rekka early on in her magic-questing days, but she was wiser now and willing to settle for a smaller haul safely stashed in her own bolt-hole.

There’d be other winters, other storms.

Rekka took a thin leather sheet from her belt and shook it into a sack large enough to hold her swag. She was half-packed when she heard a noise at her back, where no noise could be ignored.

Clenching her fist and shaking her forearm in a single gesture, Rekka dropped a feathered dart into her palm. It was out of her hand and flying toward its target before her mind understood what her eyes saw. By itself, the dart was a puny weapon, but the drops of venom-wax from its spout and the scent of Sambar herbs filled the charterhouse dwarf was dead before he knew he was hurt.

“You fault,” Rekka said harshly, fighting the rage that guilt invariably roused within her. “Not mine.”

He’d come for the wooden box without a lock. It fell from his spasmed fingers as he collapsed on the increasingly transparent floor of Ffellsil’s bolt-hole. Rekka stared at it a moment, then scooped it into the sack along with the scrolls and other artifacts. She had the sack drawn shut and half-knotted when she noticed mist rising from the corpse.

The wrongness she observed in the charterhouse had a name now, and the name was geas. Another time, another place, and the spell might have captured her curiosity. In this time, this place, Rekka deflected it with a quick wave of her hand. It dissipated without a fight.

That told her something about the spell the dwarf had cast: The mage who’d cast it wasn’t her peer.

As a result, she doubted the geas had come from Ffellsil. That mage’s reputation, though dark, had been honestly earned. More likely someone else in the millennia since Netheril’s demise had heard the tales of Ffellsil’s snow cave and ensorcelled some misfortunate into braving the its dangers. Rekka’s curiosity ebbed as the geas had ebbed, and vanished with the snow cave.

Rekka was returned to the blizzard which had not, to her human senses, abated much. She reached into the storm, spoke a spell-laced word, and withdrew her traveling companion: a gnarled staff, faintly glowing in the wind-driven snow.

The staff held the location of every forlorn, forsaken place Rekka had ever visited and, most importantly, offered swift passage to her bolt-hole beneath the Sea of Swords. A few thoughts were all she needed: memories of rock and salt, thick fur carpets and a pot of tea steeping beside her favorite chair.

A lightning bolt struck the staff as it awakened: unusual, but not unprecedented, and no great cause for concern, considering the sack she carried and the cave she’d left.

Still, Rekka took precautions as her bolt-hole formed around her. Hand-fire revealed nothing untoward . . . except, at the corner of awareness, a flickering mist.

Geasi weren’t sentient in any ordinary sense, but some could flit from life to life until their purpose was accomplished. Rekka could have cast such a persistent spell, but it seemed odd that a mage whose geas could be deflected, once again with a simple gesture, could also have cast one strong enough to follow Rekka’s staff between the snow cave and her own well-warded bolt-hole.

Still, the geas had vanished again and compared to what Rekka expected to glean from Ffellsil’s hoard it was of minor interest. She plucked out the topmost tome and settled in her chair. A deep purple flame bloomed at the tip of one finger; she touched the cracked enamel of an otherwise unremarkable teapot. Steam rose instantly from its spout and the scent of Sambar herbs filled the cave.

Rekka lost herself in thaumaturgical theories which had been old when Netheril vanished beneath the Anauroch sands. An hour passed, an afternoon, an evening, a day.

“Fascinating,” she murmured, closing the book. “All that from a tincture of arnica and willow-bark.” Her mind raced toward applications, variations, and the cat-sized mist above the teapot. Flicking her wrist, she snarled, “Be gone!”

And, like a cat, the geas leapt for her shoulder, curling around her neck, caressing her ear. Rekka could almost hear its frustrated sigh: no geas, no matter how persistent, could wriggle uninvited into her warded thoughts. The geas sank to the floor and seemed the essence of misery and despair. Rekka could have, and probably should have, sundered it utterly, but that seemed unnecessary.

Besides, Rekka was hungry. A cookfire was unthinkable in the cave. Rekka plucked a handful of bright-colored pebbles from a bowl beside her chair and conjured morsels of cold, spiced meat. Chewing one and trying to decide if she’d conjured red meat or white or some improbably in-between mixture, Rekka plucked Ffellsil’s wooden box from her sack.
A box with no lock, the dwarf had said truthfully. But Ffellsil’s box didn’t fall open in her lap. By its weight, she guessed it was hollow. By the many woods worked into it, she guessed it was a puzzle. Some twenty pieces sat on the carpet beside her before Rekka conceded that the box was empty.

She’d played a few unfair tricks with spells and artifacts over the years, but she judged Ffellsil an unnecessarily cruel mage. At least, she would never have crafted a geas that compelled unwitting men to their deaths in pursuit of empty boxes. Rekka dumped the wood chips in the bowl with the bright pebbles.

Movement against the carpet caught Rekka’s eye. She thought immediately of the persistent geas and readied a spell to destroy it for good. The invoking words were on the tip of her tongue, the gestures at her fingertips, but the movement hadn’t come from the geas.

Ffellsil’s box hadn’t been empty.

In slack-jawed astonishment, Rekka watched a man in the prime of life materialize on her carpet. If he’d meant her harm, he’d have been the first human in a hundred years with a fighting chance against her, but he lay as one asleep. Rekka took a moment to rally her defenses and another to marvel at his clothes, which were like none she’d ever seen. Considering the breadth of her travels, that was an accomplishment.

“Netheril?” Rekka muttered.

She’d seen images of Ffellsil and his peers, all of them created since Netheril’s collapse, none of them accurate, none of them depicting a diamond-quilted tunic, wrapped breeches, or the square-toed boots so evident on her floor.

The strangers eyelids fluttered; Rekka paid closer attention to his face. It was a pleasant face, the sort of face Rekka had seen on countless ordinary folk whose thoughts and dreams lay beyond her comprehension. A tanar’ri lord rising from the Abyss could not have disturbed her more.

A tanar’ri lord would, at least, make no demands on her cave’s precious air. Already the mote of her consciousness that kept the air breathable felt the strain of an extra pair of lungs. She had to get the stranger to one of her surface retreats, none of which she’d visited within the past year. Her best choice was deep in the Winterwood, where an outcast druid could not have disturbed her more.

She took the lodge from her memory. It awakened the Winterwood remembered Rekka. It gave her a debt care-taking a hunters’ lodge on her behalf.

It was a steel-gray noontime with fresh snow on the ground when the staff brought them to the Winterwood lodge. The druid was nowhere to be found and, judging by the debris on the floor and holes in the roof, he hadn’t left recently. Rekka spared the time to send a suppurating curse after the druid before attacking the chaos.

If housework had been a magic art, Rekka would have become its master; but it wasn’t, and neither was she. Her hearth-fire vented more smoke through the holes in the roof than through the chimney and the stranger, on whose behalf she wrestled blankets and straw into a bed, resisted when she settled him in it.

“I suppose you could do better?” she demanded, shaking the last dusty blanket over him.

He didn’t need to answer. She’d studied his hands as she’d moved him. They were the scarred and callused hands of a man who’d worked hard, though he was too well fed and well dressed to be a peasant. He wasn’t a wizard, either, and he was too old to be anyone’s apprentice.

He roused Rekka’s curiosity as no magic had in decades. She wanted to talk to him about Netheril and the days of sorcery run wild. She certainly didn’t want anyone to harm him while she was hunting meat for the pot balanced oh-so-delicately on the hearth-irons, so she circled his bed with salt and camphor, raising wards that flickered as he breathed.

The Winterwood remembered Rekka. It gave her nothing she didn’t earn, for that was the way of wild places. Yet she found tracks she wouldn’t have seen if...
the forest were against her. Two fat rabbits hung over
her shoulder when the dreary afternoon gave way to
wind-whipped twilight as she returned to the lodge.

Fire still glowed in the hearth—that was the lesser of
the two astonishments greeting her. The greater
astonishment, harder to see than the fire, was a
translucent spirit hovering near the stranger's wards. The
spirit had the shape of a young, human woman, dressed
in garments not entirely unlike those the strange man
wore, albeit of better quality. Rekka took note of ghostly
gold hair pins in thick, dark hair.

A sorceress of Netheril? Ffellsil's rival? Rekka raised her
right hand. Her forefinger curled, brushing the ring at the
base of her thumb, invoking a spell that could sunder any
spirit from its essence. But she left the spell uncast. The
spirit seemed aware of nothing except the unconscious
man, not even of the powerful wards that cast up a
myriad of blue-green sparks when the spirit unwisely
challenged them. It shrank back and to the extent that a
spirit could reek emotion, Rekka felt its pain and
desperate disappointment.

Those sensations, so similar to the reflected misery
and despair Rekka had felt when the persistent geas had
failed to penetrate her mind's warded thoughts, solved its
mystery as well. The mage who'd crafted the geas had
fueled it with her own spirit. The geas persisted because
she persisted ... Because the man imprisoned in an
empty box had meant more to her than life?

By the laws of magic Rekka knew, and she knew a
great many, such a transformation wasn't possible.
Rekka couldn't do it, at any rate, and could scarcely
bear the thought that a less experienced mage had
accomplished the feat. Yet that conclusion, as the spirit
was again confounded by Rekka's wards, was
inescapable. The banishing spell on Rekka's fingertips
failed to penetrate her mind's warded thoughts, solved its
mystery as well. The mage who'd crafted the geas had
fueled it with her own spirit. The geas persisted because
she persisted ... Because the man imprisoned in an
empty box had meant more to her than life?

Dissipating magic penetrated the spirits awareness. It
turned toward the door where Rekka stood, dead rabbits
in one hand. Its face became an eloquent mask of fear,
its eyes at Rekka's back. She came around to
the proper order of time, she diverted it with a broom.

The rabbits struck the pot, knocking it off the hearth-
rins, spilling hot water that raced toward the man
sleeping within her wards.

“Stay!” Rekka commanded, but the word was without
power and the spirit vanished like snow-ice in the wind.

“Damn!” Rekka swore as she threw the rabbits across
the room.

The rabbits struck the pot, knocking it off the hearth-
rins, spilling hot water that raced toward the man
sleeping within her wards.

“Twice damn and thrice damn,” Rekka continued,
adding an incautious wish to have the last moment back.
Heavy air filled the room. The water slowed, then
reversed itself. Belatedly Rekka realized what she was
doing. “Cold tea and crumpets!” she shouted the curse to
end other curses. The water flowed freely again and in
the proper order of time, she diverted it with a broom.

There were eyes at Rekka's back. She came around to
see her sleeping stranger sitting up within the wards,
alert and healthy. Rekka sheathed a knife and grounded
a spell. At the rate, she was wasting magic, she was going
to be up all night restoring her arsenal from her spell-
books.

“Your name?” she demanded. She’d never been one
for pleasantries. If he was awake, then it was time to
start sharing whatever knowledge was left inside his
skull. “Your particulars: who and what were before I
found you?”

“Irmenthelor. Second—” His voice stopped. He grew
pale and swayed. “Irmenthelor—” he began again.

“Second—” and stopped in the same place and clapped
his hands over his ears.

Rapport, Rekka reminded herself. Names were names
and stayed the same despite rapport, but all the other
words changed. Irmenthelor was speaking a language
he’d never learned and didn’t believe he understood.

“So, your name’s Irmenthelor?”

He lowered his hands and stared at them, every emo-
tion known to man at play on his face. “Irmen. I am—I
was called Irmen long ago, I think.”

“If you were born in Netheril, Irmen—if you fell afoul
of a wizard called Ffellsil, then it has been two at least
millennia since last you saw the sun.”

The swaying worsened. Irmen clutched his knees to
control it. His eyes darted, the signs of a man racing
through his memories and finding them turned to dust.

“Were you born in Netheril?” Rekka asked, as much to
stop his frantic remembering as to have an answer. “Did
you fall afoul of Ffellsil?”

“Ffellsil?” Irmen asked, giving the name a subtly
changed inflection. “Why tell you what you already
know?”

Rekka stifled her excitement. Irmen had mettle, the
only quality she truly cherished in a man; more
importantly, he remembered something of his former
language. The spoken triggers of Netherese magic were
hers for the gleaning! Full of nervous energy, she seized
one of the rabbits and began skinning it with more vigor
than skill.

“Why, Irmen? Because I’m all you’ve got, and you’ve
got an idea what I can do if you refuse.”

Irmen understood the message. “Yes, you could say I
fell afoul of Ffellsil.”

Rekka threw offal in the fire and wiped her bloody
hand on her leg. “Stole from him?”

He took a moment to compose an answer. “He saw it
that way.”

“With reason?”

Another pause, longer than the first. Rekka looked up.
Irmen's hands were clenched and he was staring at the
fire. His voice, when he spoke, was a whisper:

“Is freedom still counted a crime?”

“By some,” Rekka conceded, expecting a challenge:

“But—” Irmen's hands were clenched and he was staring at the
fire. His voice, when he spoke, was a whisper:

“Is freedom still counted a crime?”

“By some,” Rekka conceded, expecting a challenge:
"Rekka."

The half-skinned rabbit was slipperier than ten eels bound together. The knife slipped and sliced off its front leg. Grateful that it hadn't been a finger, Rekka tossed meat and bone into the fire.

"Well, hasruth Rekka, if you'll trust me with that knife, I'll see that there's enough meat left for us both to eat."

It was the sort of audacious remark she'd have made herself, were their positions reversed. Rekka set the mess between her knees. She admired audacity; she was beginning to admire this man. "And should I trust you with a knife?" she asked in a deceptively bantering tone.

"No, but trust hardly matters, does it, hasruth?"

He'd surprised her again with a sly and bitter grin framing his words. Rekka swallowed a smile of her own and quenched her wards. She stood up, leaving her knife and their meal behind on the floor. "Have at, Irmen. I'm not a fussy eater."

"Neither am I, hasruth Rekka—"

Irmen's legs buckled as he stood, spoiling his carefree display. Rekka could have offered him a hand but didn't. It wasn't her way; she didn't imagine that it was his. He caught his balance and took a tentative step.

"Not anymore. Not anymore, hasruth." There was defeat and despair in his voice.

Rekka realized, with some surprise, that she wanted more than words in a dead language from this man. She wanted another, less bitter, grin for a start, but had no notion how to procure it, one ordinary human to another.

"Hasruth?" she asked as he made two quick confident cuts with the knife. "Why call me that? What is hasruth?"

He finished skinning the rabbit, skewered it on the arrow she'd killed it with, and propped the laden arrow over the coals with his foot before answering: "Ffellsil was hasruth."

"Then I am simply Rekka who stole a wooden box from Ffellsil's cave."

Irmen tried to smile, Rekka saw the corners of his mouth twitch, but something she'd said rankled his memory. Maybe the box; she should have brought the box; she found a reason to kill them before she spread the tale. Irmen, who fell asleep quickly and into the grip of muscle-wrenching nightmares, had no defense against her and, in the end, needed none. Rekka sat on the far side of the drafty, frigid room, wrapped in the cloak he wouldn't share. For the first time in a long time, her thoughts were focused not on sorcery, but on the even more arcane notion of affection.

She'd reached no conclusions before the hearth coals winked out. Her cheeks were so cold she thought her eyes would freeze shut each time she blinked. She was warming her face against her knees when she sensed a change in the room. By the time she'd got her head up, the geas-ghost was kneeling beside Irmen again.

There were no wards this time to repel its hands, but it was without the power to affect or experience the tangible world. At first Rekka was fascinated, but fascination faded, and the ghost's efforts became painful to watch.

"Desist," she suggested, not loudly enough to awaken Irmen but laced with enough magic that the spirit would hear and, hearing, would fade as it had faded before.

When it had gone, Irmen cried out a single word: "Sareh."

A name. Rekka could command the geas-ghost with its name, but she didn't, not that night. By the next day she feared it was too late. Though Irmen ate and drank when she did, he drew no strength from his food. By noon his skin matched the gray sky over Winterwood. He was withering . . . dying.

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Rekka probed him with spellcraft, seeking a magical cause for his decline. She found only despair and denial. She probed him with questions, determined to learn all that she could of Netheril and its language before she lost him. She thought, too, as she interrogated him, that if he spoke of Sareh it might relieve his pain.

"Did you have a family? Someone you left behind when you challenged Ffellsil?" she asked.

"Challenged?" Irmen retorted, and a trace of the mettle Rekka admired returned to his eyes. But it faded.

"No. No one," he whispered, turning away, staring into the fire. "I'd already lost everything."

Rekka was certain that he saw something in the flames. Someone. His grief was so quiet, so private that she, who feared nothing, dared not intrude, not even with a wish. His integrity had become more precious to her than his happiness. She was at a loss, a place she'd never been.
At sunset, she made tea with jasmine she’d brought from the sea-cave.  
“Drink this,” she urged, molding his limp fingers around the cup. “You need to rebuild your strength.”  
Irmen held the steaming cup but didn’t drink. “For what? For more questions? Haven’t I told you everything I know about the hasruth?”  
“There is a world beyond Winterwood. A new world, without the hasruth. I can show you—”  
His face became a mask that locked Rekka out of his thoughts more effectively than all the wards of wizardry. “What?” she demanded, beginning to pace around the blankets where he sat. “What do you want from me? What must I do to make you smile and laugh? I’ve given you back your life, what more do you want?”  
“I want what I had, hasruth Rekka. You have the power. Give me death—the true death—and then I will smile.”  
“But you’re alive. You’re free. Be grateful for that!”  
“Grateful that everything is gone? Grateful that I’m the last and alone?”  
“You have me!”  
Irmen turned then and saw Rekka with her arm upraised in anger. She lowered it, but too late.  
“Hasruth.”  
“I am not hasruth. Don’t blame me for your failure. It’s not my fault that she died!”  
“She?” Irmen asked softly.  
In the grip of rage, Rekka ignored the change in his tone. “Yes, she — Sareh, a dark-haired woman with gold hair pins. Ffellsil’s daughter? His lover? Did you seduce her? Did you think you could steal her away?”  
Irmen rose, unsteady, but without help. It was the bravery Rekka admired in him, but it wasn’t enough to make her cautious.  
“You’re a common, ordinary man, Irmen. You had no chance against magic, Sareh’s or Ffellsil’s.”  
He stood quiet. Rekka thought she’d gotten some sense into his head. Then he began to speak.  
“Common and ordinary, that’s true enough—but I weave? That’s what she’d thought. Or was Irmen right?  
Rekka learned as Irmen spat out the word hasruth how Ynsarehal might have managed to fuel her geas spell with her own life essence. Rekka’s rage was extravagant, backed by centuries of sorcery and experience; it was powerful, but scarcely focused. Irmen’s passion, common and ordinary, was so tightly constrained that, had he been any sort of mage, he’d have become a living fireball or lightning bolt. He—thank Mystra—had no talent, but Ynsarehal had.  
It was a useful lesson, and one she’d put to good use in the future, but for now—  
“I am not hasruth.”  
“You know her name! We died together. Hasruth Ffellsil had come, unannounced, as was his way. He called the household together. In Netheril, to have magic was to belong to the hasruth, and they were always looking. Everyone was examined, always, from my lord to the least. It was unpleasant, because they enjoyed it, but I had no fear; I’d been through it many times before. And Sareh, too. We were Netherin; it was our lives.  
“Then the miserable bastard called her: ‘Ynsarehal, you will come.’ She had no talent, but that didn’t matter, if the hasruth wanted her. She screamed and ran toward me. My lord could do nothing, not against the hasruth. We knew, all of us, what would happen if he tried. But for Sareh and I, the worst had happened—” Irmen paused, ironic, even in anger. “—Or so we thought. I caught her before he did. I remember fire as I held her in my arms.  
“We died together. You brought me back. You know her name. Where is she, hasruth Rekka? What have you done with her, hasruth?”  
Rekka opened her mouth. “I’ve—I’ve done nothing—but the denial could not squeeze past the memory of the geas-ghost fading.  
“I’m not hasruth,” a statement of faith, not fact, spoken as Rekka ran from the lodge.  
Irmen’s words followed her: “Hasruth! Hasruth! You have magic for your heart.”  
Three trees and one bear-sized rock suffered Rekka’s wrath before she curbed it. The Winterwood swirled sharp ice in her face: Too much magic, too little cause: hasruth!  
“I’m not!”  
Her voice was lost in the wind. Rekka could challenge the storm, win a battle, and lose the war within. If she had not already lost it. She was human, born mortal, but she’d never grown old. Because she’d tripped through a time-weave? That’s what she thought. Or was Irmen right?  
Rekka began to shiver, cold and shame combined. She’d left her cloak behind, and though she could warm herself with a spell, magic wasn’t an answer. She hunkered behind a fir tree and told herself she wasn’t hasruth, that she had a heart until she knew, by the emptiness within, that she lied.  
“I’m leaving. I’m going home!” she announced to anyone in earshot, but the sea-cave with its trove of heartless magic was not the place she wanted.  
If not there, then where? The lodge? For Irmen? With Irmen?  
Rekka summoned his memory. She was lonely, but lonely was different than alone. She wouldn’t give up magic for anyone’s company. For Ynsarehal? She did feel guilty and guilt was a terrible thing in the emptiness of her heart, but guilt always festered, with or without magic to fuel it. She wouldn’t go anywhere for guilt.  
For herself? Because she’d become accustomed to being alone and had never guessed anything was wrong or missing? Because the only magic left was the magic of the mortal heart she’d abandoned, and the only way to find it was through Irmen and his beloved?
She called the geas-ghost. Not surprisingly, she didn’t come.

The pale sun had fallen below the treetops and the moon was already bright in a cloudless sky. Rekka’s sleeves and breeches cracked when she stood. Clear nights were the coldest nights, not nights for being alone. She retracted her steps.

There were other tracks crossing hers at the threshold, leading away from the lodge.

“Damned fool!” she muttered and opened the door with a mighty crash. “I won’t let either of you get away!”

Irmen taken her staff, which was useless to him, except as a crutch, and left her cloak, which might have kept him alive. Rekka furled the heavy pelt around her shoulders and set off at a run.

He hadn’t gone far, just to a wind-scoured rock where he sat, staring at the moon. His eyes were closed and ice glazed, but there was a pulse in his wrists, a moan through his lips when he looked at her.

“Let me go . . . We died together. We’ll be together.”

“Fool! No matter who or what you worship, death’s not like that. And, anyway, she’s not exactly dead.”

“She?” Irmen was stupid with cold.

“Sareh! Ynsarehal! Who else? Neither of you died. You were put in a box, and she,” Rekka despaired of an explanation he would accept without despising her more than he already did. “It’s all magic, Irmen, and you don’t care about magic, do you? You talk in your sleep, Irmen, that’s how I knew her name. But your Sareh had the knack for magic. She survived. She found out about Ffellsil’s box, and she made sure she’d be waiting when her geas freed you.”

Irmen began to shiver. He was fighting the cold, fighting death. Rekka wrapped him in her cloak and left her arms resting on his shoulders.

“W-w-where?”

“That’s a problem. You can’t see her; she can’t touch you. And me, well, Irmen, you’re going to have to trust that I do have a heart. I’ve made mistakes, but I’m not Ffellsil—Damn, it’s cold! Let me get you back to the lodge—”

“N-no. If S-S-Sareh’s here,” Irmen glanced left and right. “Let me see her!”

“Tell her you trust me.”

“It’s a lie.”

“Then make it the truth, or give it up. This cold will kill.”

He closed his eyes and succumbed to shivering.

“Trust me, Irmen. I am not hasruth.”

Sareh came closer, hesitated, extended a translucent hand. Rekka felt nothing until hard-won reflexes cut in, fighting the spell, protecting the magic-obsessed person Rekka wished to leave behind. For a moment, it seemed that reflex would triumph, then someone, possibly Rekka herself, said Trust me,” and Sareh flowed into her, cold as the winter twilight.

Rekka retreated into herself, behind wardings meant to protect her memory from a tanar’ri assault. Her appearance had begun to shift—her will, her magic, her gift that Irmen actually see the love he’d lost.

“Sareh . . .” his voice was awed.

An arm that was still Rekka’s own moved toward Irmen’s face. It would have been easy to burst out of her self-appointed prison, to destroy Ynsarehal while keeping her shape and a few of her memories. But Rekka didn’t know what to do with those soft, delicate fingers, where to touch Irmen’s cheek to make him smile.

Her voice said, “Irmen,” and a torrent of other words she didn’t understand.

The transformation was nearly complete. Another heartbeat, no more than two or three, and—will she or nil she—Rekka would be possessed for... for how long?

The question came too late. Rekka had surrendered everything except a shred of awareness that lips were pressed together, touching and being touched.

Would it be enough? Would it last?

Then the warmth of summer was within her, swaying in a gentle breeze, bursting with laughter. Rekka had her answer. Forever wouldn’t be too long.

Lynn used to write for TSR’s D ARK  S UN ® milieu, then Elminster introduced her to Allassra Shentrantra. She promptly wrote The Simbul’s Gift and this story, both about Allassra. She promises that it will be a lasting friendship.
The onyx panther is a unique being, however, belonging to itself and Drizzt Do'Urden. Neither is about to desert the other without stiff opposition. Where can a character find a companion to rival the incomparable Guenhwyvar?

Here then are four new magical allies from the farthest corners of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. Perhaps a player character might be fortunate enough to find one. Players beware: each companion is a legend in its own right and might have its own agenda and motives.

Harashuin’s Spirit Ally

Harashuin’s Spirit Ally is a minor protective magical item named after Harashuin of Alaghon in Turmish. The story of the Ally’s creation is a tale of necessity. Harashuin was preparing to make a secret and dangerous journey to Arrabar on the southern coast of the Vilhon Reach. Unfortunately, he lacked both the money to hire guards and the personal spell ability to protect himself. Because the journey was too important to forsake, Harashuin desperately sought an alternative. After many experiments, the wizard crafted an amber pendant and infused it with every protective spell in his meager arsenal.

What spells Harashuin used are unknown, for the wizard did his work in secret. However, the pendant did possess one visible characteristic—the roaring visage of a lion was meticulously etched into the amber. Harashuin then went on his journey and arrived safely in Arrabar. The wizard boasted that the magical token had saved his life many times. Flush with his success, Harashuin created more tokens. To this day, many spirit allies have accompanied wizards, merchants, and adventurers of all types on their journeys throughout the Realms.

Description: Fashioned from a flawless gemstone of at least semi-precious value, and often displayed hanging from a chain, the spirit ally is engraved with an image of the spirit that dwells within. For example, a turquoise stone that contains the spirit of a horse would have a horse’s head carved into it. Harashuin’s Spirit Allies are infused with the spirit of any natural bird, mammal, reptile, fish, amphibian, or sometimes monsters such as pegasi, wyverns, displacer beasts, or hippocampi.

When worn or grasped, these magical companions can bestow the following benefits upon their owners.

1. The stone confers a heightened sense of smell, sight, hearing, or touch upon the owner. With these enhanced senses, the owner is surprised only on a 1 or better on 1d10.

2. As the stone is partially sentient, the wearer feels that he is never alone, even against terrible odds. The wearer’s Morale never drops below Steady (11).

3. Encounters with a spirit ally’s species (e.g., wolf stone = wolves) are generally friendly. Treat this effect as the ranger’s ability to befriend wild animals (see the Player’s Handbook, Chapter 3).
4. A wizard can use a spirit ally to find a specific familiar or minion. For example, if a mage uses a cat stone and the *find familiar* spell to locate a cat familiar, the attempt is 100% successful. With the spell’s completion, the ally crumbles to dust, beyond repair.

**XP Value:** 2,000  **GP Value:** 6,000

**Quixoro’s Knightly Steed**

Sages report that this slightly tarnished medallion had been in the possession of the Chainse merchant family of Waterdeep since the time of Sir Quixoro Chainbreaker, a Tethyrian paladin who lived some 200 years ago. According to family legend, as long as the medallion remains in the hands of the Chainses, the family fortunes will continue to grow.

Unfortunately, Lord Neville Chainse, a vain and foolish scion of the family, lost the medallion last winter in a card game. The new owner, a sellsword named Wilfrid Hawkblade, left soon after and headed for Neverwinter. Neither Hawkblade nor the medallion arrived, however. Lord Neville is becoming desperate and has offered a substantial reward for the return of “his” medallion.

**Description:** Quixoro’s knightly steed is a medallion the size of a large man’s palm. It consists of an electrum disc, an iron ring and a gold chain. The disc bears the arms of Sir Quixoro Chainbreaker (a pair of falcons in flight separated by a diagonal chain broken in the center). The tarnished iron ring features a chain motif broken at the four points of the compass. The crudely wrought length of gold chain allows the wearer to wear the medallion around his or her neck.

Upon examining this piece of jewelry closely, one notices three words (faith, loyalty, and courage) written in Old Tethyrian on the back of the iron ring. If these words are spoken while the person wears the medallion, Quixoro’s knightly steed, a paladin’s destrier of heroic proportions, appears.

**The Knightly Steed** (heavy war horse): INT Avg; AL LG; AC 6; MV 15, HD 3-3 (27 hp); THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-3; MR 5%; ML 16.

Named Medallion, this stallion is rusty black with one white sock and blue eyes. His big (17½ hands) frame is clad in full leather barding with green and gold trappings and a chamfron with a foot-long iron spike.

Medallion can communicate with its master (and only its master) via a limited form of telepathy. He also has extensive knowledge (as a 4th-level sage) of the following subjects: Major—Chivalry, Strategy, and Tethyrian history (up to the point of Sir Quixoro’s death); Minor—Heraldry and Etiquette.

When he communicates, Medallion’s “speech” is highly formal and archaic (e.g., “Milord, I do perceive that thine enemies have secreted themselves behind yon shrubbery.”). This battle charger has no sense of humor and possesses a blind spot when facing the enemy. (The word “outnumbered” is not in his vocabulary.) However, Medallion is loyal to a fault and utterly implacable.
whenever his master is in danger. If the wearer is not already a knight, Medallion feels it is his duty to "instruct his new master in the intricacies, duties, privileges, chivalric code, and honor of the wearer's new calling—whether the wearer wishes it or not.

XP Value: 3,600  GP Value: 8,000

The Urn of the Blue Vishap

Crafted long ago in the lands of Zakhara by the ancient sha'ir Shalik ibn Shakuffar, the genie trap known as the Urn of the Blue Vishap was used to imprison the wicked marid named Merifa of the Pearl Lagoons. It was then hurled into lands far beyond Zakhara, never to be seen again . . . until the busy Hands of Fate turned a page in the Great Book of the Loregiver. Four hundred years later, the Urn of the Blue Vishap returned to Zakhara in a corsair's sea chest. The Urn has since appeared in countless rawuns' (bard's) tales of evil sorcerers, sa'luks (thieves), heroes, and nomads throughout the Land of Fate. The Urn is now said to reside in the shadowed vaults of Assassin Mountain, though who but the Grandfather of Assassins can know whether that rumor is true?

Description: The Urn of the Blue Vishap is a heavy enameled urn that stands between one and four feet high, depending on the whim of the Urn's dread servant. Decorated with gold and lapis lazuli waves, sea serpents, and other aquatic motifs, the urn takes its name from the carved vishap's head that crowns the golden lid. At the time of the urn's creation, the image of the vishap was used to warn people of evil magic or dangerous paths. This warning should be heeded.

The marid Merifa escaped Shalik's prison centuries ago after tricking her liberator into taking her place. Now the urn is truly named, for it now holds a titanic, blue-winged vishap of awesome power.

The "vishap" is not really a vishap at all, but an old blue dragon named Saluuknir from the Raurin Desert in Southern Faerûn.

Saluuknir (Blue Dragon): INT Very; AL LE; AC -4; MV 9, fly 24; HD 14 (108 hp); THAC0 8; #AT 3 (1-6/1-6/3-24); BW Lightning bolt-5' × 100' (Dmg 16d8+8); MR 35%; ML 20. Innate powers: create/destroy water (thrice/day), imitate sounds (at will), dust devil (once/day), ventriloquism (once/day).

Saluuknir can cast the following Wizard spells (at 7th level): dancing lights, feather fall, sleep, knock, and mirror image.

While bound to the Urn, Saluuknir can exercise the following powers:
1. Grant a limited wish (twice/week).
2. Assume gaseous form (at will).
3. Alter his size (to one-fourth of his original length—twice/day).
4. Resists all spells or items that alter, control, or confuse the mind (+4 on saves vs. possession, charm, and similar effects).

Rubbing the Urn summons Saluuknir. He is an irascible and claustrophobic wyrm given to petty acts of arrogance, bullying, and avarice. His greatest desire (besides his freedom) is to have five minutes alone with Merifa of the Pearl Lagoons. Despite all his grumbling and evil ways, the power of the Urn compels him to bend all his power into the fulfillment of three wishes or tasks demanded by whoever frees him. While Saluuknir will not twist the wording of his summoners wishes in the manner of an ifrit or other evil creature, he does whatever he can to persuade his summoner to find and punish Merifa.

Saluuknir cannot directly harm the summoner or any living creature, unless he or the Urn are threatened, and he must also fulfill the summoner's tasks or wishes to the letter.

XP Value: 20,000  GP Value: 40,000

Lycaeonorukke

Lycaeonorukke (pronounced Lie-KAY-on-oh-ROOK-ah), A.K.A. the Silver Wolf, was fashioned by Warthyr the Worrier of Silverymoon as a gift for Lyosse, an adventuring priestess of Tymora. Instead of keeping the wizard's gift, however, Lyosse gave the figure to a companion before venturing into the High Forest. She was never seen again.

Since then, stories (all true) of a savage beast have circulated up and down the
flanks and tail and silver-gray belly, chest and legs. His amber eyes reflect intelligence.

When alone with his summoner, Lycaeonorukke acts like a large, affectionate, and stupid puppy. But when battle is joined, the Silver Wolf becomes the experienced alpha wolf, taking charge and tolerating no disobedience from its summoner or any of its summoner’s friends and allies. Lycaeonorukke has dragged more than one of his foolish charges away from the battlefield.

Lycaeonorukke has one serious weakness. He is confused by paradoxes (e.g., a zombie looks and smells dead, but moves anyway). The Silver Wolf will either investigate the situation further or refuse to obey.

The Silver Wolf has several powers which he can use in the hunt or to protect his master. Lycaeonorukke can:

1. Wind walk once every night when the moon is full.
2. Track prey with the same proficiency as an onyx dog.
3. Harm those creatures that can be harmed only by silver or +1 weapons (e.g., werewolves).
4. Makes all saving throws as if he were a 4th-level ranger.

Lycaeonorukke may be called once a day and requires a full month to recover if “slain.”

XP Value: 5,000 GP Value: 10,000

Bruce Schmidt hails from Brooks, Alberta, where he enjoys reading books and watching fantasy films.
Morion the Bard, master entertainer and storyteller of Faerûn, has collected a great number of spells throughout his travels, some of them traveling from different Prime Material Planes. Often called simply "the Bard" because of his fame, he commonly uses his spells to give life to his shows, enhancing his own theatrical performances or writing magical effects into his plays and then selling his own spellcasting services to those troupes willing and able to pay his price. Although Morion’s great love is for the play, to adventurers he is better known for his brilliant and flashy spells.

Morion refers to his spell repertoire as “magic of sight and sound.” The phrase “magic of sight and sound” could theoretically include the whole range of illusionist spells, but this unique selection of spells draws from several different schools to achieve its effects. Anything that creates sound or light—or that depends on sound or light to deliver its effects—is considered a part of this informal category of magic. Sight and sound magic also includes illusions that mimic the caster’s own form without change. Existing spells from this class include shout, audible glamer, light, color spray, the prismatic spells, mirror image, mislead, and rainbow pattern.

While Morion’s spellbooks contain many spells common to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting and the spells from the Complete Bard’s Handbook, the tome he protects most closely is the one identified here. Morion shows a great understanding of magic (for a bard), and though he cannot research spells on his own, he describes them in such detail that a researching wizard has little trouble understanding exactly what Morion seeks when the Bard comes to purchase the wizard’s services. Morion asks any one wizard to research only one or two spells, so his inventions are not concentrated in a single person’s hands.

The Bard’s brilliance is seen in the fact that some of his spells include those of a higher level than bards can normally use. (The PLAYER’S OPTION™: Spells & Magic reference allows bards to learn spells higher than sixth level.)

Whether out of pride or caution, Morion is secretive about his specially commissioned spells—so much so that he has frequently
found occasion to cast such spells as hostile images to defend himself against fellow bards and jealous wizards who coveted his secrets. Morion freely trades other, more common spells, so this secrecy is often the subject of rumor. Considering his might and popularity, however, it is almost certain that he has had some contact with the Harpers, although he does not seem to be active in that organization himself. It would not be a surprise to his fans if members of that organization were seen using some of these spells.

Morion’s Spellbook

The tome of the Bard’s spells is jet-black with a hard cover, possibly made of some sort of shell. Most who have seen the book speculate that it is covered with the shell of a strange turtle. It is bound in gold, and the lock is made of the same material. The lock itself is a complicated device that must be undone with skill or magic—Morion destroyed the only key to prevent intru-
sion. The book opens for Morion himself upon verbal command.

Once within the covers, the reader is disappointed to see that each page appears blank until it is touched—and a secret command word is spoken. If the word is known, the initial disappoint-
ment turns to awe as the words and glyphs are reproduced in three dimen-
sions in the space above the page, in brilliant color, leaving little doubt as to the nature of the book. The smooth, stark white pages contract strongly with the dark cover and the bright colors dancing above the page, creating an impressive image.

First-Level Spells

Apparition

(Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: Caster Only

Saving Throw: None

This spell causes the caster to seem to turn wispy and insubstantial, as if under the effects of a wraithform spell. The cast-
er’s outline becomes fuzzy and indistinct, his body becomes translucent, and his features become difficult to distinguish.

This spell is distinct from blur in that it does not afford any AC bonus or make the caster harder to attack in any way. The caster does appear very much like a ghost, however, and enemies might flee, attack with holy water, or raise holy symbols to protect themselves. The caster is fully corporeal and can use spells, talk, and move normally. The spell can be very effective if the caster briefly mouths words to strangers, moves away silently, and passes through an illusory wall.

The material component is smoke or steam, which the caster must create or carry somehow.

Chromatic Crown

(Alteration, Abjuration)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: One creature

Saving Throw: None

The popular first-level spell chromatic orb has given rise to many variations, some more common than others. Chromatic crown creates a sparkling headpiece adorned with gems of every color, which appears on the head of the targeted creature. Depending on the caster’s level and desire, one gem pre-
dominates over the others. The crown offers a bonus of +4 against one class of attacks, depending on the primary color of the crown selected at the moment of casting. See Table 1 for a summary of the chromatic crown effects by caster level and predominant gem color. As with the chromatic orb spell, a caster can choose a lesser-level effect if he so desires. The chromatic crown does not function if any headgear other than non-magical wool or cloth is worn.

The required material component is a small golden crown. The crown need not have great detail and costs only 25 gp to make.

Chromatic Rod

(Conjuration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 6 rounds

Casting Time: 1


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Table 1: Chromatic Crown Effects

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a 2'-long scintillating rod that appears in the caster’s hand. The rod can be used to touch an opponent, who must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or stand motion-
less for 1d6 rounds while myriad colors dance before his eyes, completely block-
ing all other sight. The target is effect-
ively blind, with a -4 AC penalty and -4 THAC0 penalty.

During the four rounds the rod is in existence, it can affect as many targets as the caster can successfully attack. Note that the wizard might gain extra attacks for employing a haste spell. Likewise, if the DM uses the PLAYER’S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics rules, the mage might gain attacks of opportunity.

Like the chromatic orb spell, the chromatic rod bypasses metal armor; only magical bonuses and Dexterity adjustments apply to the AC of a target in metal armor. Also, the caster is not con-
sidered to be attacking without a weapon, making this spell much more effective than shocking grasp or other touch spells.

The material component is a small glass rod or prism. A light source must be present for this spell to function; it does not work in total darkness.

Size Disguise

(Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 5 rounds/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: Caster only

Saving Throw: None

This spell makes the caster appear as much as twice or as little as one-quarter his original height. The spell’s primary use is for intimidation, but a larger-
seeming caster might be missed by attacks that enemies aim at his head or chest. If the illusion is cast for maximum enlarging effect, the caster gains a -4

Table 1: Chromatic Crown Effects

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None
AC bonus on first melee or missile attacks, as unwitting attackers might aim at a point higher than the casters real form extends. Subsequent attacks suffer only a -2 penalty, as attacks that would otherwise have hit pass through the illusion, letting enemies know that something is amiss.

The material component for size disguise is a small telescoping steel rod. Morion and other bards often use this spell to create convincing portrayals of ogres and giants, or pixies and other “wee folk” during magically enhanced performances.

Second-level Spells

Captain's Voice
(Alteration)
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Neg.

Ship captains are often recipients of this spell, cast by an associate wizard or bard. Captain's voice allows the target to speak in a normal voice (or louder, if desired) and be heard clearly in a 90'-radius area, as if the listeners were standing beside the speaker. Ship captains and military commanders often use the captain's voice spell for giving commands to large groups of people simultaneously. The caster's voice carries through wooden walls without restriction, but stone walls greater than 6" thick stop the captain's voice from carrying. Obviously, this spell can be used effectively within wooden homes, towers, or fortifications as well.

Willing subjects of this spell need make no saving throw. An unwilling target can be affected by the spell, making his words easily heard throughout the area. A person so affected notices that his voice is magnified on a successful saving throw. An unwilling tar-geting. Obviously, this spell can be used simultaneously. The caster's voice carries through wooden walls without restriction, but stone walls greater than 6" thick stop the captain's voice from carrying. Obviously, this spell can be used effectively within wooden homes, towers, or fortifications as well.

Hostile Images
(Illusion/Phantasm)
Range: 60 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One target
Saving Throw: Neg.

The target of a hostile images spell might think at first that the casters spell has gone awry, for 2-8 images of the target appear around him, as if the caster had cast a mirror image spell on the target. Once these images come into being, however, they turn and attack the target. If the target changes weapons or casts spells, the images do the same. If he runs, the images follow at the same speed, although they cannot move beyond 60 yards from the caster.

The illusions cause no damage, real or illusory, although they appear to try to kill the target with great vigor. When struck for even 1 hp damage, an image disappears. Their main effect on the target, besides confusion, is to use up his shield defenses (if any) and to occupy front and flanks spaces, enabling real attackers to take positions to the rear and unshielded flanks.

Hostile images produces the same number of images as a mirror image spell: 1d4+1 for every three levels, up to a maximum of eight images.

The material components are a small mirror and a mobius strip; the latter item is consumed in the casting.

Hypnotic Harmonies
(Enchantment/Charm)
Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 20 yard radius
Saving Throw: Neg.

This enchantment is similar to the hypnotic pattern spell except that its effects rely on sound rather than sight, and its magic is drawn from a different school. The caster sings or plays a musical instrument to cast the spell, which causes any affected creature to become fascinated and stand listening for as long as the caster maintains the music, plus two additional rounds. The spell can captivate a maximum of 24 levels or Hit Dice of creatures. All creatures affected must be within the area of effect, and each gains a save vs. spell. A damage-inflicting attack on an affected creature immediately frees it from the spell.

Hypnotic Harmonies can be heard normally, according to the terrain, intervening walls or objects, and acoustical design, but the magic affects creatures who hear the harmonies only if they are within 60 feet of the caster. The caster must remain still to maintain the harmonies and may perform no other actions while maintaining the spell.

Hypnotic Harmonies is popular among bards, who often attempt to disguise its casting among their nonmagical music. It guarantees a large crowd at the inn, if nothing else.

Mute
(Alteration)
Range: 10 yards/level
Components: S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Neg.

A wizard uses the mute spell to keep a target from casting spells that require verbal components, keep a traitor or witness silent, or teach a bard companions a lesson. If the spell recipient fails its save, it cannot speak, scream, sing, roar, or make any noise from the throat or mouth. No cure spells alleviate this effect, but the caster can end the spell at any time by silent act of will, and...
a *dispel magic* spell is also effective. Undead are not affected by a *mute* spell.

The material component is a pair of small balls of cotton, which are consumed by the casting.

**Third-Level Spells**

**Dirge of Despondency**  
*(Enchantment/Charm)*  
Range: 90 yards  
Components: V, S  
Duration: 1 round/level  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: One 10'-cube per level  
Saving Throw: Neg.

The *dirge of despondency* creates mournful tunes that seem to come from deep string instruments. The sound affects all intelligent creatures within the area of effect, overwhelming them with deep hopelessness, as the fourth-level Wizard spell *emotion*. Targets who fail their save submit to the demands of any opponent—surrendering, fleeing, etc. If not commanded to surrender or leave, the creatures are 75% likely to do nothing each round and 25% likely to retreat. As with the hopelessness effect of the *emotion* spell, this effect countered by the *emotion* spell’s hope effect.

Although they have not yet been documented, other third-level musical versions of the various *emotion effects* are widely suspected. Only time will tell whether Morion has successfully commissioned such spells.

**Rumble**  
*(Alteration)*  
Range: 10 yards/level  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1 round  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: 30'-radius sphere  
Saving Throw: None

This spell causes a loud vibration that could be thunder, an avalanche, an earthquake, a stampede, or an impending volcanic eruption. The sound begins softly and seemingly distant, then rises to a thundering crescendo near the end of the round. Creatures of Non-, Animal, or Semi-Intelligence must make a Morale check or flee for 3d4 rounds. Creatures with greater Intelligence gain a saving throw vs. paralysis. Those who fail must stop moving and brace themselves, but the spell effect does not force them to stop attacking, defending, or casting spells. *Rumble* can be used to stop a cavalry charge; if the horses don’t flee, worried riders might rein them in anyway.

The material component is a cylindrical drum, about 12" tall and 6" across.

**Shrieker Wall**  
*(Alteration)*  
Range: 60 yards  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: One object  
Saving Throw: None

This spell is often used as a distraction or to completely clear out an area that the caster must defend against intruders. *Shrieker wall* causes an inanimate object to emit a loud wall exactly like that of a shrieker, possibly drawing in nearby monsters. It might be used to bait a trap, draw guards to the wrong part of a castle, or possibly attract a hungry (and uncontrolled!) purple worm.

The material component is a tiny silver horn, twisted into a precise shape. It commonly costs about 25 gp.

**Silent Passage**  
*(Alteration)*  
Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: One creature per three caster levels  
Saving Throw: None

This spell enhances or bestows the ability to Move Silently. Wizards often use it to mask the sounds of a heavily encumbered fighter or a pack animal. *Silent passage* masks the sounds of armor yet allows normal vocal communication and spellcasting. The spell enables the spell recipient(s) to Move Silently with a 90% chance of success, or with a +50% bonus to those who already possess the Move Silently ability (maximum of 95%).

This spell is normally used to sneak past or surprise sentries or dangerous monsters the caster wishes to avoid.

The material component is a piece of velvet, wrapped around and between two pieces of any kind of metal.

**Silent Passage**  
*(Alteration)*  
Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Casting Time: 3  
Area of Effect: One creature  
Saving Throw: None

This spell produces the sounds of loud trumpets blaring a charge. Any of the caster’s allies hearing this theme receive a +4 bonus to Morale, attack at +1 to hit, and receive +2 bonuses to damage rolls and saves vs. subsequent enchantment/charm spells for the duration of the spell.

The caster can designate up to one person per level to benefit from the triumphant charge. Those who are not chosen as spell recipients hear the horns as a distant but menacing sound.

**Protection from light**  
*(Abjuration)*  
Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 5 rounds/level  
Casting Time: 5  
Area of Effect: One target  
Saving Throw: Neg.

The blind wizard Marrol created this spell. The target and all of his or her equipment become totally black, as the spell repels all light. The lack of color allows the target to Hide in Shadows at a base 20% chance (or with a +20% to any existing Hide in Shadows ability, maximum of 95%). *Protection from light* provides protective benefits by giving the target the ability to make all saving throws against light-based spells cast at the eyes (e.g., color spray, hypnotic pattern, and light spells). Willing recipients of this spell need make no saving throw.

The material component is a black hood, similar to the type falconers use to cover the eyes of their birds.

**Echolocation**  
*(Alteration)*  
Range: Touch  
Components: V, S, M  
Duration: 1 turn/2 levels  
Casting Time: 5  
Area of Effect: One creature  
Saving Throw: None

Another of Marrol’s creations, this spell proved useful in the Underdark, where he vented his rage against the hated illithids for years of slavery. *Echolocation* allows the caster or other spell recipient to emit a constant high-pitched sound that reflects back to him like a bat’s sonar. The magic of the spell allows the caster to hear and interpret these reflected sounds, allowing him or her to “see” up to 60 yards.

This mode of finding one’s way is superior to normal vision in several ways. Gaze attacks do not affect the...
Infrared Light
(Alteration)
Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 10’ radius sphere
Saving Throw: See below

Human spellcasters make frequent use of this spell, since it can confer upon several recipients the ability to see in the dark, as per the infravision spell. The spell is similar to the light spell in that it can also be cast on an item and carried. If cast at a creature with infravision, it blinds the creature for the duration of the spell (saving throw negates).

All creatures (hostile or benign) within the area of effect during the casting of the spell are afforded 120’ infravision; creatures that enter the area before or after the spell is cast are not affected.

The material component is a small coin, stone, or gem that has once had a light or continual light spell cast upon it, and a hair, nail, or other body part of a creature with infravision.

Sixth-Level Spells
Otto’s Triple Chime
(Alteration, Abjuration)
Range: 60 yards + 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: One round
Casting Time: 6
Area of Effect: 10’ cube
Saving Throw: None

Named for the famous mage of Oerth but reportedly not created by him, Otto’s triple chime creates a resonant tone that repeats twice. At the end of the first chime, every closure (door, chest lid, clasps, etc.) in the area of effect is affected by a dispel magic, removing all protective abjurations and trap magics. (See dispel magic spell for details.) The dispel does not affect other magical enchantments or dweomers placed upon the closures. After the second chime and again after the third, each closure is affected by a knock spell, unlocking up to four closures.

Although this spell might affect unwanted targets as well, it is a good way to make a large amount of treasure accessible quickly. Cast at a group of enemies, it can pop off their armor by unhooking clasps, unbucketing saddles, or even spilling gold out of previously secured pouches and backpacks.

The triple chime is highly favored because its great range allows the spell to be used against doors or chests from a distance too great for the caster to be affected by traps that might be triggered by the spell.

The material component is a set of copper, silver, and gold keys worth 10 gp, 50 gp, and 250 gp respectively.

Seventh-Level Spells
Aria of Peace
(Enchantment/Charm)
Range: 0
Components: V
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 60’ radius
Saving Throw: Neg.

When the caster begins an aria of peace, sweet calming tunes of many instruments fill the air. The sound instantly calms any hostile creature, compelling it to stop fighting. Elves and half-elves receive their usual resistance to this powerful charm.

Affected creatures cannot attack anyone while under the spell’s effect. No hostile moves can be made. Weapons cannot be drawn, those affected cannot use violent defense modes (like a wall of fire), nor can they move to position themselves for an attack. Those who were previously engaged in combat or closing for a fight must stand still.

If a creature resists this spell by making a successful saving throw, he can attack others who can defend themselves against that creature only. These defenses cannot include area-of-effect spells that also attack creatures who are not assaulting the defender. Hostile creatures must resist the spell every round they remain within the area of effect, making saving throws and/or magic resistance checks until subdued by the spell, until they leave the area, the caster ends the spell, or the creature is killed or rendered unconscious.

The spell lasts as long as the caster maintains it, plus one round per four levels of experience thereafter. Once the caster ceases concentration, he usually uses personal persuasive abilities or enchantments to avoid further violence.

Evil creatures rarely use this spell. It is common under a different name among sorcerers of Zakhara and might have originated in the Land of Fate.

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In 1846 D.R., Netheril was just entering the height of its glory, and magic was the lifeblood of the empire. Wizards spent years perfecting the magical items and spells that would inspire future legends and fill apprentices' spellbooks for generations to come. In that year, a new breed of magical automaton was born in the workshops of the brotherhood of arcane craftsmen known simply as Mystra’s Anvil. These constructs were made from at least two different materials, such as stone and iron, and they served their masters in a variety of ways, from carrying heavy loads to murdering a rival. The master controlled his arcane servant with the aid of a talisman. Thus, the creatures became known as talisman servants.

The talisman servants had one distinct advantage over true golems: they could be made from anything, from old wagons to minor magical items, saving both time and money in construction. At one point, talisman servants outnumbered golems in several regions of the Arcane Empire.

Talisman servants had three disadvantages, however—flaws that eventually doomed them. Their masters soon discovered, often at the risk of their lives, that the talisman and the servant could not be separated by more than a mile. If that happened, or if the talisman was lost or destroyed, the servant would not respond to commands. Also, the talisman servant possessed a degree of sentience not normally seen in automatons. Some servants were so aware of their environments that they self-activated and ran amok until their masters could regain control. But the most unnerving danger was that certain aspects of a master’s personality would be imprinted on the servant. For example, if a mage had a strong dislike of water, his servant would balk at every river crossing. Such personal quirks quickly earned the talisman servants notoriety.

When Netheril collapsed in -290 D.R., many wizards reluctantly destroyed or hid their creations to prevent their enemies from turning their magic against them. To this day, bards tell of rogue automatons, while mages search for elusive texts on the construction of the talisman servants.

Here are three of the talisman servants of lost Netheril.

DM’s Notes
❖ If a talisman is destroyed, use the following table to determine its fate:
Roll 1d100

01-50 Servant collapses into useless junk, never to rise again.

51-00 Servant freezes in position. It cannot be revived until a new talisman is made. When a servant is destroyed, a talisman disintegrates into useless powder.

❖ Like other constructed beings, talisman servants are subject to wild magic effects (as detailed in Code of the Harpers, pp. 96-99). If this accessory is not handy, a DM can substitute magical items to a servants design instead of assigning wild powers. The table below then applies.

Roll 1d100

01-50 The servant can use the magical item as any character would (e.g., a cloak of flying allows a servant to fly).

51-00 Every magical item added to the servant’s body confers an extra 5% magic resistance on the servant to a total of 90%. If the servant is “killed,” the magical items are also destroyed.
Talisman Servant, Caravan

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any Land
FREQUENCY: Very Rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Non-
INTELLIGENCE: Semi- (2-4)
TREASURE TYPE: Special
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

| NO. APPEARING: | 1 |
| ARMOR CLASS: | 1 |
| MOVEMENT: | 9 |
| HIT DICE: | 12 (72 hp) |
| THAC0: | 9 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 1 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | 1-10 |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | Crush, bite of sharpness, bellow |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | Wizard Locks, +1 weapon to hit, Immune to mind influencing spells |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | 15% |
| SIZE: | M (7' at shoulder, 11' long) |
| MORALE: | Steady (11-12) |
| XP VALUE: | 7,000 |

Caravan servants are created by a wizard of at least 15th level, who forms the automaton from a variety of sculpted stone, furniture, barding, leather tacking, saddles, pouches, knobs, spikes, hooks, straps, sacks, and saddlebags for the purpose of carrying and/or pulling large quantities of cargo (up to 1,200 lbs.). All caravan servants have between four and eight sturdy clawed legs and a head. Beyond these requirements, the wizard's artistic whims are as important as functional considerations, making the caravan servant the most varied in appearance of all the talisman servants. For example, a caravan servant that belonged to a wizard who favored dragons might have a dragon's skull for a head, a large trunk as its body, and a length of chain for a tail. The talisman associated with this type of servant usually takes the form of a whistle, a walking stick, riding crop, or a mahout's goad.

Combat: Designed as a beast of burden, the caravan servant is not a dependable fighting machine. However, in an age of numerous thieves and brigands, the caravan servant is capable of protecting its master and its cargo. On the command of its master, the caravan servant can wizard lock every drawer, saddlebag, or trunk that makes up its body (and only these containers). Any tampering on the servants compartments without the master's approval triggers the servants defenses.

A caravan servant uses its tremendous Strength (24) and weight to pin, smash, or crush its opponent for 1d10 hp damage per strike. Alternatively, it bites with its powerful jaws with the same effectiveness as a sword of sharpness, also for 1d10 hp damage. A natural attack roll of 19 or 20 results in the loss of an opponent's limb.

A caravan servant also provides a fearless and solid barrier against hailstorms of arrows and can open doors, gates and fences which might otherwise be closed (a 7 in 8 chance of success). When a wizard merchant came to a city, he needed a way to alert the guard without straining his voice, thus he gave his servant a voice—a loud one. A caravan servant can deliver a thunderous bellow three times a day. This roar can panic any beast or person not trained for battle with the effect of a fear spell; a successful save vs. spell negates the effect.

The caravan servant may be harmed only by weapons of +1 or greater enchantment. It is unaffected by magic that affects the mind (e.g., feeblemind, charm, and illusion spells). Many wizards named their caravan servants (e.g., Chamfron, Lilac, or Bender). This was not an indication of soft emotions but rather a means of bonding and recognition between master and servant. If a stranger stole a talisman and took command without a proper introduction, the results often proved fatal. A caravan servant might ignore the interloper, balk at his commands, or even attack. There is one story of a caravan servant who chased a foolish scoundrel through a town before crushing the man against the prison gates.

There is a 50% chance that a caravan servant will self-activate if someone says its name or it is in mortal peril. Once activated, it yawns, stamps its feet, and begins to look for its master, smashing through doors and walls in its search.

Habitat/Society: Unlike other automatons, caravan servants have a reputation for being amiable, loyal, tireless, affectionate, and steady. As such, caravan servants were well known and welcomed in many towns. When Netheril was in its glory, caravan servants could be found in any market square or livery stable, or encountered in an overland merchant caravan in the company of their masters. In modern times, functioning servants are rare, found hidden away in desolate ruins or following an ancient path, bringing the bones of its master home.

Ecology: As created beings, caravan servants need not eat, drink, or rest; nor do they impact greatly on their environs. An intact caravan servant usually (85% of the time) has cargo when encountered. A cargo may consist of anything from a portion of a dragon's hoard to a load of manure.
Talisman Servant, Gladiator

These terrifying servants are created by a sadistic mage of at least 18th level. Crafted from stone, leather, and either iron or bronze, this murderous construct appears as a burly humanoid dressed as a barbarian or a pit fighter. Its head resembles a grotesque helmet with eyes that glow with malevolent fury when activated. The oversized jaws and fangs are capable of engulfing a victim's head. A gladiator servants forearms and paws are sheathed in spike-studded bracers and tipped with razor-sharp claws. The talisman most often associated with this type of servant is a dagger, bracer, medallion, or spiked glove bearing the symbol of a violent power such as Bane, Tempus, Loviatar, or Malar.

Combat: With an effective Strength of 20 and the reflexes of a seasoned brawler, gladiator servants exist to slaughter for their masters' amusement. When attacking a man-sized or smaller opponent, a gladiator can trap its victim in a bear hug on a natural roll of 19 or 20. From that point, the servant cannot attack with its arms but gains a +3 attack roll bonus when biting its victim. If an opponent is too strong for a gladadiator to take head-on, the servant resorts to the unsavory tactic of wearing its victim down by throwing whatever or whomever it can grab. On occasion (10% per round), the gladiator servant actually slips into a berserker rage. While berserk, the servant can attack at twice the normal rate and keeps attacking until all living things within 20' are dead or its master can regain control. For the master to regain control, he must roll 6d10 and score lower than the total of his Intelligence and Wisdom scores.

As with its mortal counterpart, a gladiator servant pauses just before it delivers the coup de grace to observe a well-known point of arena etiquette: it looks to its master for the classic hand signal of life and death. If the master decides to spare the victim, the servant will withdraw but if the master decides to have the victim killed, the gladiator complies with a triumphant roar and gruesome results. A berserking gladiator does not pause for this ritual.

A gladiator servant is immune to all mind-affecting magic and can be harmed only by a +2 or greater weapon. In addition, its bracers act as shields +3. As long as the master holds the talisman, the servant will not attack him, even in its berserker state. However, to prevent his servant from going berserk, a wizard must focus all his attention on the gladiator. Thus, spellcasting is impossible, and a wizard's Dexterity falls by two points for the duration of the melee. If someone should manage to steal a gladiators talisman when it goes berserk, one of the following events occurs:

Roll 1d6

1-3 The gladiator freezes for 1-3 rounds while it establishes a link with its new master.
4-6 The gladiator falls apart due to the shock of the transfer. All beings within five feet of the servant suffer 2-8 hp damage from falling debris and shrapnel.

A neglected gladiator servant is likely to self activate (75%/day left unattended) especially if placed in an area where violence has recently been committed, such as on a battlefield. A self-activated gladiator embarks on a killing spree until it is destroyed or its master can regain control. Stories of rampaging gladiators decimating entire villages or savaging entire battalions are common in bardic lore.

Habitat/Society: In ancient Netheril, a gladiator servant could be found anywhere but was most often encountered on the blood-soaked sands of sporting arenas or serving as the backbone of a unit of a wizard's shocktroopers. In modern times, a functioning gladiator servant might be found in the dungeons of a long-buried fortress or city (e.g., Spellgard). Due to its berserker tendencies, this type of talisman servant must be closely monitored by its master.

Ecology: As created beings, gladiator servants have no need for food, drink, rest, or air. However, an active gladiator seems to revel in the devastation it wreaks upon its environs. The bracers of a destroyed gladiator are non-magical, but they can removed and refitted for a human-sized warrior.
Talisman Servant, Mystran

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any Land
FREQUENCY: Very Rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Non-
INTELLIGENCE: Average (8-10)
TREASURE TYPE: Special
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1 or 2
ARMOR CLASS: 0
MOVEMENT: 12
HIT DICE: 14 (84 hp)
THAC0: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Polearm, gaze weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Surprised only on a 1 or 2, +2 or better weapon to hit, spell immu-
nity, tracking ability
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%
SIZE: L (7-9' tall)
MORALE: Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE: 13,000

Created by a powerful mage and a priest of at least 17th level, this talisman servant is named after Mystra, the Lady of Mysteries. The mystran is the most refined-looking of all the talisman servants. Fashioned from stone and metal (steel, mithril, or silver), a typical mystran appears as an athletic humanoid with an animal head. They almost always wear the robes of the higher clergy of Mystra or the armor and livery of ancient militia. Two features distinguish mystrans from gladiator servants. The eyes of a mystran glow with intelligence and determination, and their ears are long pointed, and alert. The talisman most often associated with a mystran servant is a silver medallion or necklace shaped like an eight-pointed star or shield. In the case of a pair of servants, earrings or bracers serve as talismans. In either case, the talisman is embossed with the interlocking symbols of Mystra and a protective power (e.g., Helm, Bereronar, or Yondalla).

Combat: The mystran servant is created to protect a treasure, structure, or person. A mystran never abandons its post. Mystran servants are the most sentient of all automatons. They can understand complex instructions, operate manual traps, and are capable strategists. Mystrans are rarely fooled and possess an excellent memory, being able to remember thieves no matter how much time has passed since the servant last saw them. In addition to their Intelligence, mystran servants are always armed with a magical polearm of some type (+1/+2 vs. thieves). Even unarmed, these servants can still bite an opponent with their stony jaws.

The mystran’s eyes are its most potent defense. Each servant possesses one of two different gaze weapons. The first is a paralyzing glare. The victim must save vs. petrification or suffer the effects of a hold person or hold monster spell, but the effects last only as long as the servant maintains eye contact. The second gaze weapon is a powerful version of the wizard eye spell. While this ability has no combat value, the servants master sees everything his servant sees. The wizard must make a system shock roll when the mystran contacts him or else suffer acute vertigo for one round while his eyes adjust to the new perspective. If a mystran duo is encountered, one has the paralytic gaze and the other has the wizard eye. Each ability is performed at the 14th level of ability. In addition, mystran servants are immune to all illusion, invisibility, fear, and mind-altering spells. A mystran’s hearing is very acute, thus it can be surprised only on a 1 or 2. Only weapons of +2 or greater can harm a mystran servant. No mystran pursues a retreating enemy beyond 240’ of its post or charge, nor can a mystran break into homes or holy ground. However, if someone steals the mystran’s ward or the master’s talisman without first destroying the creature, the servant tracks the thief (with the skill of a 7th-level ranger) until he gives up the stolen property. Even seeking sanctuary does not stop a mystran with a mission. A mystran can wait decades for a thief, its righteous gaze looking in through the window every time the rogue looks out. A mystran is the least likely of the talisman servants to self-activate (5% chance). However, on occasion, a mystran activates and acts on a “hunch,” prowling restlessly in an 240’ arc for 1-8 rounds before it shuts down on its own.

Habitat/Society: Mystran servants served a key role in the security system of a wizard’s fortress or priests temple in the Arcane Empire. In the present age of Faerûn, mystrans can be found in the North guarding the inner sanctums and treasuries of the few temples of Azuth, Helm, and Mystra fortunate enough to acquire them or in Nimbral, Halruua, and Thay where powerful and incorruptible guards are essential. If created to watch over a person, a bodyguard mystran might develop a “mother hen” complex which can be most embarrassing for its ward and entertaining for onlookers. Aside from its ward, a mystran rarely associates with anyone other than its partner or master.

Ecology: Mystran servants have no need for rest, food, drink, or air. They do not leave much of an impact on their environment. Not counting whatever treasure it was created to protect, the mystran’s polearm and its eyes (gems worth at least 1,000 gp each) are the servants only treasures.
Knuckledragger limped toward the fortress gate, an empty wooden bucket in his left hand. He hurried to catch up to the small party gathering there, not wishing to be left behind. This was a momentous occasion for him: for the first time in his four years, he was to be allowed outside the four walls of the wooden structure that had been his whole universe. His father, Scale-face, had convinced the others that he was old enough to take part in the duties and responsibilities of an adult.

Karg, the scarred old orc that kept watch at the gate, motioned for the two other guards to open up. As they pulled open the heavy doors, Karg gave the mongrelmen their orders. “Be back in two hours. Don’t be late. Remember your families.” This last, Knuckledragger had heard the stories, of course, and could already reproduce the sounds of many forest creatures, animals he had never seen, but whose calls he had heard imitated by others.

Once beyond sight of the fort, Knuckledragger sensed a change in the atmosphere. The orcs were no longer visible, but whose calls he had heard imitated by others. He knew that he must concentrate on the task at hand and that he must not be so with the knowledge that their family members back at the fort would be put to death slowly. The orcs were not known for their mercy, and to date no mongrelman had ever failed to return from these excursions outside the fort.

Knuckledragger fell into line behind his father as the mongrelmen shuffled through the gate of the orc fort. Ahead lay the wide world. Who knew what wonders it held? Knuckledragger had heard the stories, of course, and could already reproduce the sounds of many forest creatures, animals he had never seen, but whose calls he had heard imitated by others.

Once beyond sight of the fort, Knuckledragger sensed a change in the adults around him. They walked with a proud bearing not stooped and hunched as if they wished to shrink into as small and unnoticeable a ball as possible.

Knuckledragger was well accustomed to the posture, having witnessed it day in and day out during his lifetime as a thrall among the orcs. It was always best to escape notice, especially when living with cruel masters. A slave unseen was a slave not being beaten or tormented.

Ah, but now sweet freedom! Knuckledragger drank in a deep breath, tasting the exotic fragrances as they passed through his muzzle. A dozen different wildflowers tickled at his shiny black nose, vying for his attention. How different things smelled out here, when compared to the stenches inside the orc fortress!

Knuckledragger picked up his ear—his left one, the one covered with a soft, downy fur—as he became aware of the sounds of the forest ahead of him. Birds chittered in the trees, insects droned, and somewhere, a woodpecker drilled a tree in search of dinner.

“What are you thinking, son?” asked Scale-face, looking down at his son and calling him by his true name.

“This, it’s all so beautiful!” gasped Knuckledragger. “If only we could stay here forever!”

“If only,” agreed Scale-face. “But you know that we cannot. The orcs are our masters; still, perhaps someday this will not be so.”

The small band trudged into the forest. There were six of them in all: besides Knuckledragger and his father, there was Half-Human, so named because, by the whims of fate, he had been born with human or human-like features along the entire left side of his body; Crab Leg who also had a crabman’s eyestalk growing out his face, and who could therefore look in two places at once; One-Horn, who always held his head sideways because of the weight of the minotaur horn growing from the right side of his head; and Little Shorty, whose predominantly goblin-like features looked very out of place on a body supported by stubby little goblin legs.

Once several hundred feet into the shade of the forest, the band stopped.

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1. Mongrelmen, like many other short-lived races, grow quickly. They reach adulthood around age four or five, and they live to a maximum age of 40. Of course, those held as slaves by other races rarely live that long, counting themselves lucky if they live to see 15 or 20 years.

2. Regardless of their facial appearance, mongrelmen enjoy a wide variety of vocal abilities and can precisely imitate just about any noise they hear. This includes noise heard secondhand, so once a single mongrelman hears a particular animal call, he can pass that call on to all other mongrelmen in his tribe. Animal calls make up a large part of mongrelman “music.”

3. Mongrelmen prefer not to be seen. They are well aware that their appearance causes disgust and fear (and often ridicule). For this reason, mongrelmen are abnormally fascinated with the concept of invisibility, for it not only hides their twisted bodies from sight but also aids in their pickpocketing abilities. To many, becoming invisible is the ultimate goal, for it not only hides their twisted bodies from sight but also aids in their pickpocketing abilities.

4. All mongrelmen have two names: their “true name” and their “slave name.” Their true name is most often an animal noise. A mongrelman is given his true name at birth, and it is this name by which other mongrelmen call him.
They were smooth of skin and uniform—an artifact of the mongrelmen? Was there a god of the mongrelmen? Was there a lesser god his masters respected. But there was a god of the orcs, as well as a few others, that cannot be said in front of the orcs."

"Yes. this is the temple of the Hidden God."

Knuckledragger looked around but saw nothing unusual. They had been walking through the forest and were now in another part of it. What made this part of the forest so special?

Then he saw it, as if a veil had been lifted from his eyes. That clump of trees over there, with the fallen branch—it was actually a small dwelling! Knuckledragger had looked right at it for several seconds without realizing what it was.

"What is it?" he asked his father, his voice dropping to a whisper.

"This," replied Scale-face, "is the temple of the Hidden God."

A flap opened in the side of the structure, and an ancient mongrelman appeared from inside the temple. Greeting Knuckledragger with a bow and a respectful nod of his head.

"Pleased to meet you, Chief Half-Human."

Pleased to meet you," said Knuckledragger, noting that the priest's right hand was covered in scales the same color as those on the left side of Scale-face's head. Perhaps it was because of this similarity between the elder priest and his father, but Knuckledragger took an instant liking to him.

"Come inside, Chief Half-Human. We have much to discuss." Knuckledragger followed the priest through the camouflaged flap and inside the temple. It was dark and gloomy, but exciting to the young mongrelman, for it was a secret place of which his masters, the orcs, did not know.

"How long have you lived here?" Knuckledragger asked.

"Twelve years," replied the priest.

"Twelve years! How old are you?"

"Thirty-seven. There are a few good years left in me yet!" Knuckledragger's mouth dropped. He'd never heard of anyone living to be so old. Maybe the Hidden God gave his priests the gift of long life. Knuckledragger asked if this was so.

"No, no," chuckled the priest. "So far, the Hidden God has remained as hidden to me, his priest, as to anyone. He has given me no powers, granted me no visions, provided me with no spells. Given me absolutely no indication, in fact, that he's even there at all." Is he? asked Knuckledragger. "I mean, what if he's dead or something?"

"No, my son, gods cannot die. He is the Hidden God, and he cursed them. Their flesh they consumed. Undergoing a ritual known as the Feast, they would eat humanoid flesh, digest it in specialized organs within their body, and thereafter be able to transform their bodies into copies of the humanoid forms on which they had feasted. Utilizing this ability, they were able to infiltrate many humanoid societies and serve as spies for the wizard. However, the wizard unknowingly created the Infiltrators without the ability to breed true to their forms. The offspring of two infiltrators was always a misshapen humanoid form showing various, random features of the humanoid forms "feasted" upon by its parents. Thus was born the mongrelman race.

"As long as it takes."
Knuckledragger hid his disappointment. “So what do you do? As a priest, I mean.

“I pray, mostly. I pray for the Hidden God’s forgiveness for whatever sins our forefathers committed. I pray for a return of the powers it is said our ancestors possessed. Mostly, I pray for the patience to continue on as I have for these thirty-seven long years.”

“Why do you live out here, by yourself?”

The elder priest smiled down at Knuckledragger. “I could not live with you, among the orcs. The Priest of the Hidden God must devote his time to prayers and supplication, time I would not have as a slave. Here, I have all that I need: a small stream nearby for my water, forest plants in abundance for my food, and plenty of solitude in which to pray for our people.”

“Right. And, could I ask you to say a prayer for my mother?”

“Of course, my child. What is your concern?”

“She’s going to have a baby soon. Could you ask the Hidden God to see that the baby survives?”

A look of pain flickered across the old priest’s face for a fleeting moment. Then, in a voice full of weariness and hope, he said, “We will pray together.”

Fidgeting in a torn leather bag that had been tossed into a corner, the priest pulled out an old piece of flint and steel, and worked his mismatched hands at starting a spark. After a few moments, he managed to light a yellowing taper candle and pulled back the curtain from a small alcove cut into the wall. “Behold, the shrine of the Hidden God,” he intoned. The alcove, of course, was empty.

Nonetheless, he placed the candle in a notch before the alcove: Together, he and Knuckledragger prayed to their god for an intercession in the fate of Knuckledragger’s unborn sibling. They were still kneeling in position before the empty altar when Scale-face and Half-Human returned.

“It’s time to go,” Knuckledragger said quietly.

Knuckledragger got up, thanked the priest, and walked back toward the forest’s edge in silence with his father and his friend.

“You are quiet, Half-Human,” Scale-face observed.

“Yes, I’ve been thinking. If the Hidden God returns our powers, what form will you take?”

“I don’t think it will happen like that, my son.”

“You don’t?”

“No. The Hidden God took away the power not from the generation that angered him, but from their children. I’m sure that when he sees fit to return our power, it will be the same way. One day, our children will be born as they once were, and the race will be as it once was.” He looked down at his son. “So do not waste time hoping to change your body someday.” Accept it as the one you will have for the rest of your life, and move on to other things. Besides,” he said, smiling “you’re not particularly ugly.”

They walked along in silence for awhile longer, then Knuckledragger blurted out, “I think I would like to serve the Hidden God.”

“You would? But, you’re much too young to be a priest. Perhaps in fifteen or twenty years, when you’re much older. Right now, you are a strong young man in the prime of your life. You are needed by the rest of the community. Ah, here come the others.”

Crab Leg, One-Horn, and Little Shorty came hobbling up from out of the forest. “Great news,” Four-Finger found a dead body in the forest, “of a species unknown to us! A small humanoid, with blue skin.”

“How small?”

“Only about three feet, but we don’t know if he was fully grown. We took his arm, just in case.”

“Where is it?”

“Strapped to Leg’s leg.” Crab Leg passed Knuckledragger’s bucket back to him, now filled with hunks of mushrooms and tubers, and lifted up his rotting, filthy robe to show a small blue arm strapped to his inner leg by strips of cloth. He smiled, showing reptilian teeth. “We’ll Feast tonight.”

“Come,” said Scale-face. “We must not be late.” Together, the six shuffled off toward the orc fortress.

“Humph!” snorted Karg at their arrival, sounding as always, a bit disappointed that there’d be no torturing the hostages in retaliation for an escape attempt. As the mongrelmen shuffled single file back into the fort, he grabbed Scale-face by the shoulder. “You! Scale-face! Your woman is giving birth. You may go to her.”

8. Mongrelmen are omnivorous. Free mongrelman grow fruits and vegetables and often supplement their diet with domestic game, partially because they tend to be below-average hunters. While many mongrelmen sport teeth designed for eating meat, they are perfectly happy living a vegetarian existence if necessary.

9. Another sad fact of mongrelman existence is their high infant mortality rate. Even in free mongrelmen societies, only about 50% of infants born live more than a week. In slave societies, where the mongrelmen live under much harsher conditions, the infant mortality rate can be as high as 80%. For realism, but mongrelmen, while insisting on having their ugliness shamed them and caused them to seek to hide from others, they nonetheless believe it is their duty as mongrelmen to remain in the forms in which they were born until the Hidden God deems otherwise. To take matters in their own hands, they fear, would anger their god and prevent him from returning. As a result, they often consider them “the lucky ones.”

10. Although appreciation of beauty is an important part of mongrelman society, and they have a fascination with polygenic beauty, too mongrelman would willingly alter their appearance to hide their ugliness. Mongrelmen take their hideous appearance as a fact of life, something over which they have no control, and while their ugliness shame them and causes them to seek to hide from others, they nonetheless believe it is their duty as mongrelmen to remain in the forms in which they were born until the Hidden God deems otherwise. To take matters in their own hands, they fear, would anger their god and prevent him from returning to their aid. As a result, they often consider them “the lucky ones.”

11. “You’re not particularly ugly,” is a high compliment among mongrelmen. They are truthfully enough not to insult each others’ intelligence by commenting on their appearance. Some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat, others appreciate the flavor of humanoid meat, and some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat, and some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat, and some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat, and some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat.

12. “Feast” today is not the same “Feast” as in the most delicate elven princess. Half-Human and crab leg, one-horn and little shorty were truly lucky enough to be able to fit into a set of armor; usually they must make do with bits and pieces of different types. Players with mongrelmen PCs who wish to wear armor should consult The Complete Fighter’s Handbook, page 111, for rules on rule in the Teenager’s Handbook, page 111, for rules on armor.”

13. Mongrelmen today retain the ability to “Feast.” However, all “feasting does is store the humanoid form in the mongrelman’s genetic code and passes that form on to its offspring. Thus, a mongrelman with no ogrish features “feasts” upon a slain ogre’s flesh. Later, when he mates, his children could end up with body parts resembling those of a humanoid form. Only humanoid forms from four to nine feet or so can be successfully “feasted” upon, so the mongrelman makeup will never include halflings or kobolds (too small) or giants (too big).

Mongrelmen continue to “Feast” for many reasons. Some believe that the Hidden God requires it of mongrelmen so that when he restores their ability to shapeshift, they will have that many more forms they can adopt. Others believe that only when a set number of humanoid forms have been “feasted” upon will the Hidden God restore their power. Some simply like the flavor of humanoid meat.

In any case, “Feasting” is a private act that mongrelmen will not share with others not of their race. “Feasting is always done in private, and not every one in the mongrelman community will partake. Usually, only those who do not sport features of the humanoid to be “feasted” upon will take part, so that the flesh can be used only by those able to benefit from it. Children are not allowed to “Feast” until they have been initiated into adult society and have learned the secret history of the mongrelmen and their Hidden God.”
Appendix: Designing a Mongrelman PC

With most PCs, the character’s physical appearance is up to the player, who can decide such things as whether or not his PC is a blonde or a brunette and what color his eyes are. After all, such details don’t usually make a difference in how the PC will be played, or alter any of his capabilities.

Unfortunately, the same does not hold true for the mongrelman PC, made available in The Complete Book of Humanoids (see pages 43–46). As its very name suggests, a mongrelman is made of differing body parts from a wide variety of creatures, and no two mongrelmen are apt to look anything like one another. The player wishing to run a mongrelman PC is going to have to know just what his character looks like before he can even decide on his character class. After all, some physical traits are going to hamper, if not preclude altogether, various career possibilities. A mongrelman with two crab claws in place of hands is not likely to have much of a future as a mage, if he can’t even perform the simplest of somatic gestures. Similarly, pickpocketing isn’t likely to be possible to such a mongrelman; he’ll probably end up as a warrior, and a pitiable one at that, as he’ll be unable to wield the coveted magical swords and similar enchanted weapons a party is sure to encounter eventually.

A system is needed to generate the physical appearance of a given mongrelman. This appendix provides one way to do so, by means of Table 1: The Random Mongrelman Appearance Generator. It also gives some notes on what additional capabilities and detrimental attributes accompany the mongrelman’s specific physical makeup. These notes should be useful even to those who opt not to randomly roll their PCs’ appearances, but prefer to design them piece by piece themselves.

The “Mongrelman” entry in the MONSTROUS MANUAL® rules states “mongrelmen are a mixture of the blood of many species: humans, orcs, gnolls, ogres, dwarves, hagboblins, elves, bugbears, bullywugs, and many others.” Since the creatures specified range in size from 4’ to over 9’ in height, only humanoid creatures within that size range were added to the table, specifically, the crabman, goblin, goblin, minotaur, and satyr. If DMs wish to add other creatures to this list, it is easy enough to modify the table to suit their individual campaign worlds.

Randomly Determining Your Mongrelman’s Appearance

A mongrelman’s body makeup is generally split into nine different areas, each of which might be patterned after a different creature. Each of a mongrelman’s arms and legs tend to be predominantly patterned after a single creature, while the head and torso are usually an amalgamation of several different creatures blending into each other. A diagram of these areas appears as Illustration 1. Mongrelman bodies are seldom symmetrically divided; often the torso body type might run partway

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15. There is almost no end to the amount of abuse a mongrelman slave is willing to take. Among mongrelmen, mere survival is the greatest accomplishment one could hope for. They remain courteous and obedient to their masters no matter what the provocation, wishing only to avoid trouble. Sadly, this makes them excellent slave material, a fact not many humanoid tribes are liable to overlook.

16. Mongrelman passivity is so great that humanoid tribes need not fear allowing mongrelmen access to weapons. There is no chance that the mongrelman will use the weapon to try to free themselves from slavery in a bloody revolt, as such a concept is foreign to them. Many humanoid tribes even go so far as giving their mongrelman slaves piecemeal armor and weapons and training them for battle, using them as “cannon fodder.” Mongrelmen can be trained to use just about any weapon, but prefer simple ones such as swords and clubs. Free mongrelmen often use blowguns; besides being a simple weapon to make and use, it is silent and can be used by a camouflage mongrelman without giving away his location. In addition, it is easier for a mongrelman to remain still and hidden and use a blowgun on prey that comes within range of the blowgun dart, then fire down into the blowgun dart, given the standard mongrelman’s limping gait. The blowgun dart is usually coated in a mild poison that causes paralysis for 1d4 rounds unless a save vs. poison is made at +2.
Table 1: Random Mongrelman Appearance Generator

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<td>Orc</td>
<td>86-95</td>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>86-95</td>
<td>86-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyr*</td>
<td>96-00</td>
<td>91-00</td>
<td>96-00</td>
<td>91-00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Since only male satyrs exist, only male mongrelmen can have satyr body parts. If rolling up a female mongrelman, reroll any results that indicate a satyr’s body part.

down an arm or leg, or a patch of flesh on the head might continue partway down the mongrelman’s back, but the diagram is close enough to permit close approximations of individual mongrelmen’s physical makeup.

Roll percentile dice on the table above for each of the nine areas of the mongrelman’s body, recording the results on the diagram in Illustration 1.

Once the rolls from Table 1 have been made and recorded, it only remains to determine the specific oddities of your mongrelman’s physiognomy. Roll 1d10 and compare that number to Table 2. This shows how many quirks your mongrelman character has. Finally, roll d% on Table 3 to determine the specific quirks, rerolling any duplications.

If, when rolling up a specific quirk, you get a result which isn’t a change to the mongrelman (for instance, rolling lizard man teeth when your PC already rolled up a lizard man snout for area C), reroll the specific result but not the quirk itself. In the example above, the player would reroll on the head column until he got teeth that didn’t match those already in his PC’s mouth.

Once the mongrelman’s features have been decided upon, the player must determine if his character has any special physical abilities or disadvantages due to his body’s unique physiognomy. The following characteristics are possible:

**Bite damage.** Mongrelmen with the claws of a lizard man can attack for 1-2 hp damage. Those born with a crabman’s claw can cause 1-6 hp damage, but this ability comes at a cost—the claw’s rigidity prevents the mongrelman from casting spells requiring intricate somatic gestures and hampers thieving skills such as picking pockets and opening locks. A mongrelman with one crabman claw has only a base 40% chance of successfully picking a pocket (instead of the standard 70% mongrelman ability); those with two drop down to a mere 10% change. For these reasons, mongrelmen with crabman claws often become warriors.

**Claw damage.** Mongrelmen with the claws of a lizard man may choose to bite in melee for 1-2 hp damage. Those born with a crabman’s claw can cause 1-6 hp damage, but this ability comes at a cost—the claw’s rigidity prevents the mongrelman from casting spells requiring intricate somatic gestures and hampers thieving skills such as picking pockets and opening locks. A mongrelman with one crabman claw has only a base 40% chance of successfully picking a pocket (instead of the standard 70% mongrelman ability); those with two drop down to a mere 10% change. For these reasons, mongrelmen with crabman claws often become warriors.

**Dry skin.** Those mongrelmen with body parts of either a lizard man or a bullywug must moisten those areas at least once every 24 hours or suffer the effects of a half-power irritation spell (-2 AC and -1 to hit) until they can do so.

**Extra limb.** Those mongrelmen with a partial crabman torso might have one of the crabman’s smaller arms (player’s option). Only one extra arm is possible, unless both of the die rolls for the mongrelman’s torso resulted in “crabman,” in which case two extra arms are possible. These extra arms are capable of fine manipulation, adding +5% per additional arm to the mongrelman’s ability to pick pockets in certain circumstances. (The arms must be free to move, not hidden under layers of clothing.)

**Flexible eyestalk.** Mongrelmen with a crabman’s eyestalk can move it in all directions, making it easier to peek over a wall, around a corner, and so on. If severed, an eyestalk grows back in about a week.
Horn Butt. A mongrelman with the horn of either a minotaur or satyr can butt for 1–4 hp damage. This is less damage than a satyr or minotaur causes, but mongrelmen are generally not in as good physical condition, nor can they generate the speed necessary for a really good head-butt ing. In no case can a horned mongrelman cause charging damage.

Infravision. A mongrelman will have 60' infravision, if he has at least one eye from one or more of the following creatures: bugbear, dwarf, elf, goblin, hobgoblin, minotaur, orc, or satyr. Many mongrelmen with infravision possess it in only one eye, although this doesn’t seem to hamper them much.

Light Sensitivity. Mongrelmen with at least one goblin or orc eye have a sensitivity to bright lights, including normal daylight. They strike at -1 to hit when in bright sunlight or its equivalent.

Lizard Man Lungs. Mongrelmen with the upper torso (area D) of a lizard man are able to hold their breath for 2/3 of their Constitution scores (rounded up), as opposed to the standard 1/3.

Ogre Strength. A mongrelman with the arm of an ogre has a +1 to hit and +2 to damage with weapons wielded in that hand. The bonuses are not as high as those enjoyed by full-blooded ogres, but this reflects the fact that only the mongrelman’s arm is that strong, not the rest of his body.

Reduced Movement. Compare the height of the two creatures indicated when the rolls were made for the mongrelman’s legs (as indicated by the height column on Table 1). If there is a 2' or more difference, the mongrelman’s movement rate drops down to 6 as a result of the difference in leg length. Furthermore, he will move with an awkward, limping gait.

Tail. Those mongrelmen with a torso (area E) of lizard man or satyr heritage often have tails. Satyr tails are of normal size; lizard man tails tend to be shorter than those of true lizard man tails, and cannot be used in melee in any fashion. However, they can make disguising the mongrelman as a normal humanoid more difficult.

Tracking ability. Only those mongrelmen with the nose of a minotaur have this ability; those who do can track creatures by their scent with a 50% probability of success.

Any special abilities or disadvantages should be noted on the mongrelman’s character sheet.

Other physical traits can be obtained from examining the MONSTROUS MANUAL descriptions of the various creatures whose body parts make up the mongrelman. These won’t add any extra abilities (one shouldn’t, for instance, try arguing that because his mongrelman PC has minotaur features on his head, he is immune to maze spells), but they can provide some interesting details about the character. As an example, ogres have purple eyes with white pupils, while hobgoblin eyes are yellowish or dark brown. A mongrelman with one eye of each type will definitely look distinctive.

Little features like these can also be helpful when naming the mongrelman, or at least when deriving his “slave name.” Generically insulting names (“Ugly,” “Lumpy,” “Freakface”) are most often used in cases where the mongrelman is the only one of its kind in the group; even a crude tribe of orcs has to use a bit more imagination when dealing with mongrelmen in any numbers. In such cases, the “slave names” tend to be a bit more descriptive (“Clawhand,” “Eyestalk,” “Furface”), if only to keep the individual mongrelmen straight.

Choosing Your Mongrelman’s Appearance

The other way of determining your mongrelman PC’s appearance is simply to pick and choose body parts. The DM must approve of any “hand-picked” mongrelman body design in the interests of game balance, ensuring that the mongrelman doesn’t have too many advantages without “paying for them” with disadvantages. For instance, a mongrelman with two ogre arms, a minotaur’s bite attack and tracking ability, 60’ infravision (due to one dwarven and one human eye, bypassing light sensitivity) and two extra-manipulative crab arms is pushing the limits of fair play. A good rule of thumb might be a disadvantage for every two advantages, just to keep up game balance. Remember, you’re role-playing a misshapen creature ashamed of its deformed body, not a superhuman powerhouse!
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Mongrelman, Infiltrator

| CLIMATE/TERRAIN: | Any |
| FREQUENCY: | Very rare (possibly extinct) |
| ORGANIZATION: | Small groups |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE: | Any |
| DIET: | Omnivore |
| INTELLIGENCE: | Very (11-12) |
| TREASURE: | See below |
| ALIGNMENT: | Lawful Neutral |
| NO. APPEARING: | 1-4 |
| ARMOR CLASS: | 7 |
| MOVEMENT: | 12 |
| HIT DICE: | 4 |
| THAC0: | 17 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 1 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | By weapon type |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | Shapechange |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | Nil |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | Nil |
| SIZE: | M |
| MORALE: | Elite (14) |
| XP VALUE: | 270 |

Much as dopplegangers, infiltrators were (and possibly still are) created by wizards as servitors. They have the ability to shapechange into various humanoid forms, but their original form is that of an emaciated, hairless being with a somewhat oversized head. Large black eyes cover nearly half of the face, which has no discernible nose and only a thin slit of a mouth. Skin color tends to be a dusty white.

Combat: Infiltrators can adopt a variety of humanoid forms (see “Ecology” for details). While in their natural forms they can attack only with a weapon, but infiltrators spend time practicing armed combat and are usually proficient in a wide variety of combat arms. In addition, some of the shapes they can adopt provide them with natural combat abilities, such as a lizard man’s claw/claw/bite routine. Infiltrators have all of the natural combat abilities of whatever form they adopt, with the exception of skills which must be learned (such as proficiency with a flind’s flindbar or a lizard king’s great trident). When wearing a different humanoid’s form, they gain that creature’s armor class and hit dice (add 4 hp per additional hit die of the assumed form—these “extra” hit points are the first lost in combat, and disappear when the infiltrator reverts to its normal form). An infiltrator assuming the form of a humanoid with fewer hit dice retains its own hit points.

Habitat/Society: Created by wizards, infiltrators live to serve them in the role of spy, messenger, and occasionally interpreter. All infiltrators have an innate ability to comprehend languages that they hear, and can speak those languages as well. Infiltrators are fiercely loyal to the wizards that create them, treating them with a devotion often reserved only for the divine. An infiltrator whose wizard is slain often seeks out a new wizard to serve, for it is service to a master of the magical arts that an infiltrator feels secure.

Infiltrators generally have no treasure of their own, as any that they acquire is turned over immediately to their masters. However, because of the infiltrators’ devotion, wizards often entrust them with the use of magical weapons or helpful items. Infiltrators can use any magical items usable by warriors.

Ecology: Infiltrators have an adaptable set of vocal cords, allowing them to speak just about any language they hear. They also have the ability to absorb genetic material through the flesh they consume. This process, called “feasting,” allows the infiltrator to break down the organic material in a separate stomach-like organ and use the genetic material gained therein to restructure their own bodies into a perfect physical simulacrum of the type of humanoid whose flesh they consumed. Gender has no bearing in the flesh being “feasted” upon; a male infiltrator “feasting upon the flesh of a female hobgoblin could thereafter shapechange into a male hobgoblin. He could not, however, become a female hobgoblin, as gender remains a constant no matter what form is assumed. Additionally, the assumed form will not be an exact replica of the being “feasted” upon—an infiltrator cannot pose as the specific individual whose flesh he ate, merely as a member of the same race. Only the genetic material of humanoid races from 4’ to 9’ can be successfully “feasted” upon, as these are the size limits of the infiltrators’ shapechanging abilities. Animal forms or humanoids outside the size limits listed above cannot be adopted.

Once “feasting” is complete (the process takes about an hour), the infiltrator can thereafter assume the form of that type of humanoid. Shapechanging into a new form takes a single round and heals the infiltrator of 1d4 hp damage. Naturally, it is in the infiltrators best interests to “feast” upon as great a variety of humanoids as he can, in order to widen the selection of forms he can adopt.

Shapechanging affects only the infiltrators body, not his clothing or armor. For this reason, infiltrators prefer to wear no clothing while in their natural forms. (They have no taboo against nudity, probably because male and female infiltrators are virtually indistinguishable while in their natural forms.) Once taking on an assumed form, they will usually don clothing, armor, and weapons appropriate to that form.

The biggest drawback to an infiltrator’s life is its inability to pass on its characteristics to its next generation. Infiltrators cannot bear young with other species, even when assuming their forms, and the offspring of two infiltrators is always a mongrelman, bearing the physical characteristics of the various types of humanoids upon which the infiltrators had previously “feasted.”

The original infiltrators have long since died out, leaving behind the mongrelmen as their only legacy. However, it is possible that the secrets to the creation of the infiltrator race might someday be rediscovered (if it hasn’t been already) or independently researched by some wizard exploring the possibilities of magical shapeshifting.
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In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct. The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held
2. Site and location
3. Guests of honor (if applicable)
4. Special events offered
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements, and
6. Address(es) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values will be in U.S. currency. Statements are in U.S. currency. The information given in the listing is accurate and confirmation can be obtained. Convention deadlines are the first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, D RAGON® Magazine, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA, 98055, U.S.A.

IMPORTANT

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

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If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at (425) 204-7226 (U.S.A.).

Conventions

JANUARY

Georgecon
January 2-4 1998 MO
Stafford Inn, St. Louis, MO. Guests: Jerry Rector (Star of the new Star Trek series The Privateers), Ray Greer (Champions®, Fuzion®, and other RPGs), Rick Loomis (President & Founder of Flying Buffalo), and Matt Faileigh (former President of Society of Ancients and Game retailer). Events: four major Magic® tournaments, countless RPG events; two Warhammer® Tournaments; Warhammer 40K® tournament; Necromunda® Demos and tournament, Vampire® LARP, Super hero LARP, tons of anime, masquerade ball, filking, etc. Contact Georgecon c/o NHGG P.O. Box 398 Gerald, MO 65066. Email ike96@fidnet.com

Crusades '98
January 16-18, 1998 CT
Quality Inn Conference Center, New Haven, CT. Events: Board Games, Miniature Wargaming, Board Games, CCGs, Painting Contest, Seminars. For more information contact the Connecticut Game Club, P.O. Box 403, Fairfield, CT 06430-0403. Email quillup@concentric.net.

FEBRUARY

Winter War XXV
February 6-8 IL
The Chancellor Hotel, Champaign, IL. Events: Magic, Vampire, AD&D, Call of Cthulhu®, Hero System, Warhammer®, GURPS®, Larps, historical games, miniatures, board games, Star Fleet Battles®, and more. Contact: Donald E. McKinney, 304 W. Sherman Box 1012, St. Joseph, IL 61873. Email winterwar@prairienet.org.

DunDraCon
February 13-16 CA
Marriott Hotel, San Ramon, CA. Events: 150+ convention-sponsored RPGs, seminars on gaming, CCGs and board game tournaments, miniatures games, SCA rooms with seminars, displays and demos, large dealer room, flea market, figure painting contest, video arcade room and lots of open gaming. Registration: $30. Contact DunDraCon, 1145 Talbot Ave, CA 94706. Email ashland@ccnet.com.

Total Confusion
February 19-22 MA
Ramada Rolling Green Hotel, Andover, MA. Events include roleplaying, board, and card games. Contact Total Confusion, P.O. Box 403, N. Clemsons, MA 01863. Email mikechambers@juno.com.

SheVaCon
February 27-March 1 VA
Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Guests: C.S. Friedman and Larry Elmore. Events: art show and sale, 24-hour gaming, live-action roleplaying, Vampire. Contact SheVaCon, P.O. Box 2672, Staunton VA 24402. Email drgnshrd@rica.net

Jaxcon '98
February 20-22 FL
Ramada Inn on Arlington Blvd., Jackson, FL. Events: roleplaying, card, and miniatures games. Other activities: an AD&D tournament, sanctioned Magic tournament, Vampire LARP, dealer’s room, and flea market. Registration $20/weekend until Jan. 1; afterward $25 for weekend, $15 for Fri/Sat. Contact: Jaxcon, P.O. Box 14218, Jacksonville, FL 32224-4218. Email Jaxcon@usa.nrr.
Winter Fantasy '98
February 26-March 1   IL

The 1998 Winter Fantasy convention offers an unequalled opportunity to hone your gaming skills. With multiple seminars on a broad range of topics, there has never been a better place to study and practice gaming. There will be featured events to discuss becoming a better gamer, seminars from companies that drive the industry, and other game-related topics. Also being added this year is a full slate of board, card, miniature, and non-Network roleplaying. As always the RPGA® Network will be a main focus of Winter Fantasy, with daily gaming events, seminars, and LIVING CITY events. Contact Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 13500, Columbus, OH 43213. Email andon@aol.com.

MARCH CONVENTIONS

Megacon '98
March 13-15 FL
Expo Center, Orlando FL.
Guests: Julie Bell, John Byrne, Tony Daniel, Joseph M. Linsner, George Perez, Don Rosa, William Tucci, Boris Vallejo, Mark Waid, and Steve Bryant. Events: role-playing, RPGA Network, miniatures gaming, comic book artists, CCGs, anime, LARP, comics, and gaming dealers Room. Other activities: board gaming, fantasy art show and auction. Contact: P.O. Box 3120, Winter Park, FL 32790. Email megacon98@aol.com. Website: http://www.blueearthpress.com/megacon/.

AggieCon XXIX
March 26-29 TX
Texas A&M University.
Guests: Robert Asprin, Kerry O’Quinn, Joe R. Lansdale, Thomas Knowles, Darlene Bolesney. Events: dealer’s room, art show, panels, gaming, charity auction, Rocky Horror Picture Show, masquerade ball; costume contest, 24-hour anime room. Contact: Texas A&M University, MSC Student Programs Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844. Email aggiecon@msc.tamu.edu. Website http://cephid.tamu.edu/aggiecon.

Egyptian Campaign '98
March 27-29 IL
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. Events: RPGA Network events, AD&D game, Shadowrun, Battletech, Warhammer 40K, Empire Builder*, Diplomacy*, Axis & Allies*, Magic, Star Fleet Battles, Car Wars*, and many other board, miniature, card, and roleplaying games. Contact: Egyptian Campaign 1990, c/o S.I.U.C. Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Third Floor Student Center, Carbondale, IL 62901-4425. Email ECGamCon@aol.com. Website: http://www.siu.edu/~gamesoc.

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**FLOYD**

Written and Illustrated by Minh Williams

MY LIFE IS A FAILURE...

AND NOW I FACE ETERNITY AS HALF A BEING.

THE BOY, ALVIN KETTORN, WHOSE BODY I...ABSORBED 100 YEARS AGO HOLDS SO MANY OF MY MEMORIES.

I ALMOST FEEL WHOLE AGAIN BEFORE THEY SLIP FROM ME...

THE FEW SNICKERS OF MY MIND THAT I RETAIN ARE AS FLEETING AS A RAVEN AT TWILIGHT...

ON SILENT WINGS.

HUM.

IT'S BITTERLY IRONIC THAT I SHOULD COME TO THIS.

AFTER FOUR CENTURIES OF USING THE LIVES OF OTHERS TO PROLONG MY OWN, I'VE BECOME TRAPPED IN THIS WEAKENING, ROTTING MUSK...AND I FEAR THAT NO MATTER HOW WEAK IT BECOMES, I WON'T BE ALLOWED TO EXPIRE.

SEANCES, CRUELTY DOES TAKE THE EDGE OFF A BIT...

ALVIN WAS THE LAST ONE I'D TAKEN...

SPIRITED HIM AWAY FROM CLEFT WHEN HE WAS BUT A TODDLER.
I used sorcery to erase Alvin's memories of Cleft, and I convinced him that he was an orphan, as well as my apprentice.

I trained him in the basics of magic...

...so he could help in extending my life.

For I was a Summit Cedrin; my bracers had made it difficult to magically drain the life from others. Their spell restraints were a thorn in my side!

Alvin would solve both problems. His limited training in Magecraft made his brain a bit more receptive.

...to my essence!!

I used every meager draught of power that the bracers would permit to transfer my mind into Alvin's body...permanently.

The ritual succeeded. I had a young body, my centuries of magical knowledge, and most importantly:

I mastered ancient Mage unseen for millennia! Confident in my supremacy, I hatched a plan to control the great seal of Rancor, and thereby rule all magic, even for one as powerful as I had become. This was no small feat. The preparations took decades.

As I aged, I even acquired another potential body, just in case.

Freedom from those accursed armbands!

Also, I hated doing the dishes.

Time grew short as I readied my assault.

But the Summit Cedrin had discovered my plans.
Their disruption of my spells destroyed my tower.

How much time passed before I regained consciousness remains unknown. I found myself with incomplete memories and a body thrust into unlife.

But Floyd had made off with him, unable to resist the siren song of promised unity...

The chaotic energy burst also fragmented me. Alvin was unreachable from my being.

I could feel Alvin nearby. The pieces of my mind he carried called out to me, allowing me to know his location.

I followed...

I found Alvin about to become prey to some brainless orcs.

I then used the bones of my victims to seize Alvin from the village of Cleft.

I scratched them was child’s play but Alvin escaped during our battle.

Once again, Alvin had help and he slipped away.

The energy I used to re-animate those corpses cost me dearly. I felt the energy that drives this body began to fade. I still feel its decline.

I can still sense Alvin’s thoughts. He calls himself “Melvin” now, no doubt. Because of my memories mixing with his... If only...

If only I had my whole self for a moment, I could teleport right to him, but Alvin has that spell locked away in his brain along with so much of me.

Sigh... this forest is likely to be my grave. How demeaning. I hear that old fart Acererak built one mother of a tomb to spend his unlife in. I always meant to look him up.
“What in—?”

GREETINGS, MELZAK THE SCREECHER! WE HAVE COME SEEKING YOUR AID, FOR WHICH YOU WILL BE REWARDED.

I DOUNT THAT I CAN ASSIST YOU. BESIDES, THERE IS LITTLE I WANT.

AND I HAVE LITTLE TO OFFER, BUT OUT OF CURiosity, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WILL HELP YOU FIND HIM. IN RETURN, I WANT POSSESSION OF THE SMALL BOX HE TRAVELS WITH.

NOW, LET US BE OFF.

SOME ADVICE, ACHERON: HE HAS A MAGICAL ARTIFACT WITH HIM THAT MAY PROVE IRRITATING.

Here’s how to neutralize it.

THAT WAY, YES, SOUTH.
Keeping my AD&D® campaign fresh isn’t easy, and it seems I’m always scrambling for ideas. Official AD&D sourcebooks remain my resource of choice, but they don’t always fill the bill. Why? Well, sometimes, new ones aren’t published as often as I’d like. (My campaign devours material like a shark devours raw meat; we’ve been known to go through two or three sourcebooks’ worth of stuff in the space of a month.) And sometimes, my players read new sourcebooks before I get the chance to use them in my campaign, thus spoiling any potential surprises. I suspect that a lot of gamemasters—regardless of whether they’re AD&D players or aficionados of other game systems—share the same frustrations.

So where else to go for campaign material? Well, how about sourcebooks written for RPGs other than Your Favorite Game (be it AD&D or whatever)? All you have to do is steal—er, borrow—the concepts you like, adapt them to Your Favorite Game, and no one will be the wiser. To get you started, here’s a stack of contenders, ripe for the plundering.

### Old Ones
Palladium Fantasy RPG game supplement
One 224-page softcover book
Palladium Books $20
*Design*: Kevin Siembieda
*Editing*: James A. Osten and Julius Rosenstein
*Illustrations*: Scott Johnson, Dave Carson, Martin McKenna, Ramon Perez, Michael Kucharski, and Kevin Siembieda
*Cover*: Martin McKenna

### Dragons & Gods
Palladium Fantasy RPG game supplement
One 232-page softcover book
Palladium Books $20
*Design*: Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik
*Editing*: James A. Osten and Julius Rosenstein
*Illustrations*: Michael Dubisch, Kent Burles, Martin McKenna, Dave Carson, Wayne Breaux Jr., Ramon Perez Jr., and Kevin Long
*Cover*: John Zeleznik

### Adventures on the High Seas
Palladium Fantasy RPG game supplement
One 224-page softcover book
Palladium Books $20
*Design*: Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik
*Editing*: Alex Marciniszyn, James A. Osten, Julius Rosenstein, and Erick Wujcik
*Illustrations*: Scott Johnson, Martin McKenna
McKenna, Wayne Breaux Jr., and Peter Simon
Cover: Martin McKenna

Monsters & Animals
Palladium Fantasy RPG game supplement
One 224-page softcover

Kevin Siembieda, founder and mastermind of Palladium Books, exhales ideas like we ordinary mortals exhale carbon dioxide. With Palladium well into its second decade, Siembieda shows not a smidgen of slippage in energy or enthusiasm, doubly impressive considering that Palladium is essentially a one-man operation. Oh sure, Siembieda gets an occasional helping hand from talented guys like Erick Wujcik (inventor of the Amber* diceless roleplaying system) and C.J. Carella (who dreamed up the creepy Nightbane* game). But Palladium is Siembieda's baby; he conceives, writes, art directs, even lays out the bulk of the company's products. With his eye for detail, his dogged determination to get everything right, he's the kind of guy I'd want for a brain surgeon.

The Palladium Fantasy RPG, Siembieda's oldest and most durable game, illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of Siembieda's approach to roleplaying. Let's begin by acknowledging that the Second Edition (published in 1996) significantly improves on the First (from 1983), transforming a rather amateurish hodgepodge of warmed-over Tolkien into a slick, smart production, on par with the best of TSR, White Wolf, or any other high-profile publisher. That said, Palladium Fantasy is far from my first choice for a fantasy RPG, owing to convoluted mechanics like Inner Strength Points and a combat system I'm still not sure I understand, even after fiddling with it for 10 years. Graphically, the game's about as appealing as a filing cabinet, though the bulk of the company's products. With Palladium well into its second decade, Siembieda shows not a smidgen of slippage in energy or enthusiasm, doubly impressive considering that Palladium is essentially a one-man operation. Oh sure, Siembieda gets an occasional helping hand from talented guys like Erick Wujcik (inventor of the Amber* diceless roleplaying system) and C.J. Carella (who dreamed up the creepy Nightbane* game). But Palladium is Siembieda's baby; he conceives, writes, art directs, even lays out the bulk of the company's products. With his eye for detail, his dogged determination to get everything right, he's the kind of guy I'd want for a brain surgeon.

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Though the Palladium Fantasy supplements share many of the drawbacks of the parent game—stretches of flat writing, so-so graphics—they're in a league of their own, thick volumes packed with mind-bending concepts, brilliantly conceived and developed. Forget the Palladium Fantasy game: if you're a fan of any fantasy RPG, these supplements contain enough high-octane ideas to launch your campaign into the stratosphere.

Case in point: Old Ones, a terrific sourcebook originally published in 1984, but updated in '96 to conform to Second Edition standards. Part history book, part slasher film, Old Ones catalogs 34 major cities of the Timiro Kingdom, a sprawling expanse populated by ogres, knights, and demons. The level of detail is staggering; a typical city entry pinpoints more than 100 different locations (temples, granaries, tax offices) and provides dozens of adventure hooks. It's a grim, vividly evoked world that feels alive; you can smell the sweat at the Gladiator School, taste the elderberry wine at Splash Tavern, feel a pickpocket's blade in your back at the Charm Emporium. Meanwhile, on an extraplanar realm, lurk the Old Ones, a mysterious race of near-omnipotent aliens who view humanity in much the same way as we view a bowl of Captain Crunch. Xy, "the greatest of the Evil One," heads up a decadent hierarchy that also includes the sadistic Netosa (symbol of eternal suffering) and Ya-blik (lord of pestilence and treachery). True, Old Ones owes a heavy debt to H. P. Lovecraft—Xy seems like a refugee from the Call of Cthulhu* game—but it's still a dazzler.

Equally dazzling is Dragons & Gods, a visionary treatise on fantasy's most powerful entities. These dragons aren't your run-of-the-mill fire-breathers but mind-bending monstrosities that look like they were conceived on an LSD trip. The Lo-Dox sports golden feathers, shape-changes into a mermaid, and speaks Spanish! The Great Horned Dragon consorts with demons, practices black magic, and is a master of mathematics! The gods also receive a tradition-shattering treatment, with Siembieda combining elements of Tolkien-esque myths, Egyptian religion, and his own fertile imagination to invent a cosmology that's as compelling as it is original. We have Bes the Depraved, a hideous bearded dwarf wielding intelligent daggers (one of the daggers suffers from paranoid schizophrenia). We have
And lest you think Siembieda hits a home run every time at bat, here’s *Monsters & Animals*, a disappointingly routine creature encyclopedia, sort of like TSR’s *Monstrous Manual™* book, only without the flair. Each entry includes physical characteristics, behavior notes, and a full set of stats (which Palladium fans will be happy to hear includes Structural Damage Capacities, Occupational Characters Classes, and Horror Factors, making them compatible with the *Rifts*® game and other Palladium RPGs). Too often, however, the descriptions are lifeless, even trivial. For instance, here’s the opening to the Turtles entry: “Turtles are considered to be the most conservative of all the reptiles, both in design and character. All turtles have a characteristic bony outer shell . . . Many turtles can withdraw their head and legs into their shells when threatened.” I got a kick out of the fantasy monsters, especially weirdo-likes like the loogaroo (an intelligent vulture) and the eye killer (a dog/serpent/owl combo), but way too much space is wasted on everyday animals like chipmunks, frogs, and mules. In all my years of roleplaying, the number of times I needed stats for a chipmunk is approximately equal to the number of people who think *Batman & Robin* is the greatest film ever made.

Evaluation: Whether you’re a player or a gamemaster, you’ll find a wealth of ideas in these books, all of which can be adapted (with a little effort) to the system of your choice. *Dragons & Gods* should top your shopping list, followed by *Old Ones* (if you’re in the market for new settings), and *High Seas*, (better for veterans, owing to some complicated concepts). *Monsters & Animals* you can probably live without. Unless, of course, you absolutely, positively have to know the Structural Damage Capacity of a chipmunk.

**Earthdawn Survival Guide**

*Earthdawn* game supplement
One 120-page softcover book
FASA Corporation $18

*Design*: Stephen Kenson with Diane Piron-Gelman and Louis J. Prosper

*Illustrations*: Tom Baxa, Kent Burles, Jeff Laubenstein, and Jim Nelson

*Cover*: John Matson

**Throat: The Dwarf Kingdom**

*Earthdawn* game supplement
One 184-page softcover book
FASA Corporation $20

*Design*: Robin D. Laws

*Illustrations*: Janet Aulisio, Tom Baxa, Joel Biske, Kent Burles, Liz Danforth, Jeff Laubenstein, and Larry MacDougal

*Cover*: John Howe

I can’t say I’m all that crazy about *Earthdawn*. The system uses too many numbers for my taste, the magic rules in particular demanding too much of my teenie brain. But I adore the supplements and heartily recommend them to fantasy roleplayers of all persuasions, *AD&D* aficionados in particular. Don’t spread this around, but the conceptual differences between the *AD&D* game and *Earthdawn* aren’t all that dramatic. Both share many of the same archetypes (like dwarves and dragons). Both feature magic-soaked, vaguely medieval settings. And both foster epic adventures pitting noble heroes against das- tardly villains and fantastic monsters. For these reasons, an *Earthdawn* sourcebook can be an idea-deficient Dungeon Master’s best friend.

If I didn’t know better, I’d swear that *Earthdawn Survival Guide* was designed to be a generic fantasy supplement, intended for everyone. First, the whimsical writing style makes it as inviting as a book of fairy tales. From the introduction: “The song of the road has called to me since my boyhood in the hinterlands of Barsaive. The confines of Caralle, the humble village where I grew up, suited most of my neighbors just fine, but I always longed to know what lay over the next hill . . .” Kinda makes you want to curl up in a chair with a cup of hot chocolate, doesn’t it? Second, all of the game material—every statistic, mechanic, and formula—is confined to the last few pages, meaning you can peruse most of the book without stumbling over a single number.

Essentially a collection of essays, the *Survival Guide* strolls from one interesting topic to another, all of them loaded with useful information for fantasy campaigns. The “Underground Exploration” section describes a nailing array of subterranean hazards, ranging from pockets of poisonous mist to veins of liquid fire. “The Tale of the Bone Bell,” one of many parables from legendary explorer Brun Rockstriker, tells of a majestic artifact constructed by an elven elementalist to keep away monsters. “On The Healing Arts,” the books most provocative chapter, delineates dozens of arcane maladies and treatments; Death’s Caress causes victims to become sensitive to touch, Yellow Jig induces random fits of jerky, uncontrollable muscle spasms. Burn your finger? Soothe it with a mist bloom poultice.

But although the *Survival Guide* is a great read, it’s only a so-so reference. Without an index or a comprehensive table of contents, it’s difficult to locate specifics; the only way to find, say, data about explosive gas is to page through the book. Despite a chapter titled “Places of Legend and Peril,” there’s not a single map. And at $18, it ain’t cheap; any of the Palladium books gives you 100 additional pages for approximately the same price.

A bit more of a bargain—an extra two bucks buys you 60-plus pages — *Throat: The Dwarf Kingdom* takes a comprehensive look at a dwarven enclave that wouldn’t be out of place in the *Forgotten Realms®* setting. Throat, nestled in the midst of a mountain range, teems with political tension and social anarchy; in short, it’s ideal for adventure. Robin Laws, a mainstay of the *Earthdawn* design team, describes the kingdom in vivid detail, from the type of clock favored by commoners (the hour candle) to the number of baths taken by the average citizen (four per month). How do dwarves breathe underground? Air sponges magically transmute carbon dioxide into oxygen. Why are Throat coins hexagonal? To make them harder to counterfeit. An excellent section on economics explains how crude underground
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farming operations evolved into sophisticated trade networks. The culture chapter takes a look at unusual sports (like hach'var, where teams compete to poke animal hide-covered spheres through holes in a stone wall) and profiles some of the kingdom's prominent artists (like Javen, who specializes in ornate pots bearing caricatures of the royal family).

Thanks to a thorough index, *Throal* makes a better reference than the Survival Guide. But like the *Survival Guide*, *Throal* falls short in the map department. And the campaign outline seems like an afterthought, something tacked on the end to fill up a few spare pages. Overall, though, *Throal* is a first-class setting, a history-rich empire that any dwarf would be proud to call home.

**Evaluation:** Page by page, these *Earthdawn* supplements aren't as idea-saturated as the Palladium books. But because of their strong narratives, the *Earthdawn* books go down easier, making them more suitable for RPG newcomers. *Earthdawn* books can be as addictive as potato chips; if this pair whets your appetite for more, I recommend *Parlainth: The Forgotten City, Skypoint & Vivane, Legends of Earthdawn, and The Serpent Vivar*.

**GURPS Dinosaurs**

**GURPS** game* supplement
One 128-page softcover book
Steve Jackson Games $18
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*Editing:* Steve Jackson, Lillian Butler, and Susan Pinsonneault
*Illustrations:* Scott Cooper, Russel Hawley, and Pat Ortega
*Cover:* Paul Koroschetz

**GURPS Planet Krishna**

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*Design:* James Cambias
*Editing:* Sean Barrett
*Illustrations:* Dan Smith, Terry Tidwell, Arthur Roberg and Carol Scavella
*Cover:* Kelly Freas

As long as I've been running my AD&D campaign—going on ten years—I've toyed with the idea of sending my player characters to the prehistoric era and having 'em go head to head with dinosaurs. Imagine a sword-wielding warrior going up against a stegosaurus or an elven ranger staring down a Tyrannosaurus rex. Whoopee!

Unfortunately, dinosaur sourcebooks are about as scarce as Spice Girls at a Mensa convention. I figured that, in the wake of *Jurassic Park,* we'd be flooded with dino books, but there's been nary a trickle. In fact, *GURPS Dinosaurs* is the only sourcebook of its type I've seen in the past couple of years, making it the stand-out, I guess, by default.

Not that it's bad. As a reality-based reference, *GURPS Dinosaurs* scores high, cataloging literally hundreds of prehistoric creatures in remarkable detail. I thought I was reasonably well-versed in dino-lore, but I'd never heard of three-fourths of these: the dragon-like scutosaurus, the frog-munching limnoscelis, the big-as-an-airplane, mean-as-a-cobra quetzalcoatlus. Each entry includes complete statistics (in *GURPS*-ese, translatable to other game systems by resourceful gamemasters), habitat notes, and special rules (like those for gryposaurus head-butting contests). There's also a fascinating section on prehistoric humans, replete with anthropological minutia. We learn, for instance, that the Cro-Magnon women were far better at finding food than their male counterparts, and that the language limitations of early man were due to an underdeveloped larynx.

But when it comes to putting all this together in a campaign, *GURPS Dinosaurs* pretty much leaves you on your own. There's a ton of hard data, but not much about roleplaying; that is, we're told a lot about what dinosaurs look like, but darn little about how they behave. I wanted to breathe the air of the Triassic Era, feel the Cretaceous swamp beneath my feet, know what it's like to hunt—or be hunted by—dinosaurs. But no such luck; *GURPS Dinosaurs* has about as much personality as a biology text. The scenarios are too skimpy. There aren't nearly enough illustrations. And the book dismisses its most tantalizing premise—dinosaurs as player characters—in a handful of paragraphs. *GURPS Dinosaurs* is good as far as it goes; it just doesn't go far enough.

Ever heard of L. Sprague de Camp's "Krishna" novels, like *The Queen of Zambra* and *The Hand of Zel*? Me neither. But after being charmed to the core by *GURPS Krishna*, based on the aforementioned books, I'm inclined to check 'em out. A guided tour of the second planet of the star Tau Ceti (11.6 light years from Earth, if you're keeping track), *GURPS Krishna* is fantasy at its goofiest. This is a world where women lay eggs, the royalty sports green hair, and diners have to eat fast before their meals wriggle off the table.

The book includes pretty much everything you need to cobble together a Krishna campaign, with an emphasis on culture and daily life. Designer James Cambias, a relative newcomer who writes with assurance and clarity, explains how Krishna maintains a stable culture by outlawing all technology more sophisticated than battle axes. Violators are subjected to the Saint-Remy Treatment, where portions of the brain are zapped with electrical charges. (How would a fireball-flinging mage fare on Krishna? Good question—and a great premise for an adventure.) Other transgressions are resolved by duels; a
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person who declines a duel is marked by the Five Mutilations (it's as nasty as it sounds). After a hard day of dueling and mutilating, citizens relax by racing gliders and watching reverse strip teases, where dancing girls wind themselves up in long sheets.

There's a roster of memorable characters (Gichak, an alien entrepreneur who wears nothing but sunglasses), a list of intriguing places to explore (Nich-Nyamadze, a polar region where everyone dresses like Santa Claus), and a menagerie of bizarre creatures (the nudamef, a grumpy carnivore with the neck of a giraffe and the head of a crocodile). GURPS Krishna isn't for everyone—if you're a stickler for logic, you're gonna hate this—but its paradise for role-players with a sense of humor.

Evaluation: Nothing enlivens a dreary campaign like an oddball setting, and these books showcase oddballs of the first rank. Strip away the sci-fi elements, ditch the GURPS statistics, and you're left with plenty of raw material for an eye-opening campaign. (Be prepared to do some homework; neither book has anything approaching a developed adventure.) Incidentally, if you're in the market for oddballs, you might investigate the other entries in the GURPS series. Nearly every one of them contains oodles of ideas that can be readily adapted to other RPG systems. Some of my favorites, all of which I've pillaged for my AD&D campaign: GURPS Places of Mystery, GURPS Aztecs, GURPS Alternate Earths, and GURPS Voodoo.

Short and Sweet


The Vampire: The Masquerade* game is always interesting, but it isn't always scary, which is why aficionados of the macabre oughta welcome Fatal Addiction with open claws. Spotlighting ghouls, arguably Vampire's most repulsive characters, Fatal Addiction casts players as blood-lusting servants of the undead, willing and eager to sell their grandmas to the dog food factory for an extra pint of Type A. The book covers such ghoulish idiosyncrasies as limb regeneration, blood bonding, and the consequences of overdosing on gore (the ghoul gets sick to his stomach—really sick). Obviously, this isn't for the fainthearted, and it certainly isn't for kiddies. But if you're a lover of the grotesque, you'll find this as titillating as cuddling up to a fresh corpse.


Like most RPGs, Call of Cthulhu* may seem daunting to first-timers, what with all the unfamiliar rules and background to digest. Three cheers, then, for Secrets, a compendium of novice-level adventures that'll have newcomers feeling like veterans in the time is takes to say "Nyarlathotep." "A Love in Need" features a creepy boarding house occupied by extraterrestrial serial killers. "A Cult of One" stars a repellent villain in desperate need of a new body. Technically, the adventures take place in the 20s with a minimum of tweaking. If Secrets still seems like more than you can handle, check out Minions, 15 ultra-brief scenarios—most no more than a page or two—each keyed to a specific Mythos creature or phenomenon, slickly staged and a breeze to run.

Quest for Power, by Stephen Ricciardi, Thomas Gobuzas, Doug Schonenberg and Steven Samuels. Infinite Imagination, $40.

The gorgeous, meticulously crafted Quest for Power takes its cue from those old choose-your-own-adventure paperbacks, which present the player character with a series of simple encounters ("You find a large mirror in an old storage room") and a fixed number of options from which to choose ("Do you gaze into the mirror or leave?"). Here, the encounters and options are listed on colorful playing cards, arranged in a grid to form a stylized representation of the city of Baintor. PCs wander around the city, battling monsters and interrogating strangers until they trigger a climactic battle at a sinister castle. It's smooth-playing and surprisingly challenging, plus it boasts a credible solitaire system. On the other hand, a game this structured lacks the improvisational elements of a traditional RPG; if I want to shatter the mirror and fashion the fragments into magical arrowheads, I can't, 'cause that ain't one of the choices on the card. As a board game, Quest for Power gets a thumbs up. But as a roleplaying game . . . well, put it this way: how do those paperbacks fare against an actual AD&D campaign? (Information: Infinite Imagination, 19 Skyline Terrace, Nanuet, NY 10954.)


As long as I've been writing this column (something like six—gulp—years), I've been complaining about referee screens, pointing out that anybody with a pair of scissors, a bottle of glue, and access to a photocopier can make his own for, oh, about 50 cents. Well, publishers haven't been taking the hint, because they're still grinding them out. So I give up. If you want to spend your hard-earned dough on a couple of slabs of cardboard, be my guest. As for you publishers, if you insist on making this stuff, the least you could do is follow the lead of White Wolf, who've made an admirable effort to add value to their screens by packaging them with 64-page sourcebooks. Frontier Secrets, included with the Wild West screen, is a terrific compendium of new gifts, breed variants, and adversaries. Book of Lost Dreams, the Changeling screen bonus, presents nifty new rules for cantrips and combat, along with an intense adventure titled "Capture the Flag." As for the screens, they may be loaded with tables and easy on the eye, but they're still slabs of cardboard to me.


It takes time to save the universe. But what if you only have a couple of hours? West End comes to the rescue with this collection of bite-sized adventures for the Star Wars* game, each playable in an afternoon. Best of the bunch: "Agent Nallok is Missing," an offbeat mystery that takes place in a booby-trapped salt mine. Add a set of 32 reference cards (bound in the back of the book), and you've got a keeper.

Princess Ryan's Star Marines, by Mark McLaughlin. Avalon Hill Game Company, $55.

You're "Grandma" Morohn, stuck on the Planet of the Grapes, about to be incinerated by a squadron of Suicide Fappers. In the nick of time, good old "Poodle Cut" Kerske appears in her laser car and tosses you an electric chainsaw. Obviously, this isn't your ordinary sci-fi board game. One part "Star Wars," one part "Monty Python," the lunatic Princess Ryan's Star Marines pits the good guy...
Marines against the bad guy Black Guards in a race to recover the kidnapped leader of Earth. It all plays out on an elaborate game board (including locales like Dismal Swamplands and A Hill Called Avalon) with colorful, Vegas-quality playing cards representing characters and equipment. The clever Time Clock—sort of like a bank, from which lime Pennies are withdrawn more or less at random to “pay” for actions—keeps pressure on the players; when the Clock runs out of Pennies, the game ends. Combat is exciting frequent, and unforgiving. Despite the goofy premise and simple rules, Star Marines requires both tactical skill and long-range planning; miscalculate how long it takes to breech the Royal Suite, and you’ll be pushing up daisies at the Interstellar Mall. Eat chain, Fappers!

Des Moines, Iowa native Rick Swan has played approximately ten billion different RPGs. Or at least it seems that way.

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growth of the late ’80s and early ’90s. Without the groundwork we laid then, we might not have had the later success of Wizards and Magic.”

**New Marvel SAGA™ RPG**

TSR plans a summer publication date for a new superhero RPG based on Marvel Comics characters such as Spider-Man, the X-Men, and Captain America. Unrelated to the company’s earlier MARVEL SUPER HEROES® RPG, first published in 1984, the new game will use the SAGA System rules seen in last year’s DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ game.

“Existing characters will be a major focus,” says line developer Mike Selinker, but “hero creation is a major component of the SAGA engine, and will be so here as well. We definitely are interested in winning the comic-book audience, so the game will be formatted in that style: smaller books, lots of art, big focus on hot artists and writers, that sort of thing. We believe that experienced RPGers will also like the game, because of the innovations inherent in the card-based SAGA System and the emphasis on dramatic action.”

The design team plans to have over 300 characters in print within six months. Scenarios will also be frequent, as well as occasional gazetteers and new decks of cards.

**Steve Jackson Announces GURPS® Traveller**

Steve Jackson Games (Austin, TX) is adapting the classic science-fiction RPG Traveller (GDW, 1977) to its Generic Universal Roleplaying System (GURPS, 1986). Longtime Traveller designer Loren Wiseman will edit the GURPS Traveller line and will write the first release, due in early 1998.

The GURPS Traveller line takes place in an alternate-history Third Imperium that differs from the Traveller 4 background published by Imperium Games (Lake Geneva, WI). SJG Managing Editor Scott Haring says, “In our timeline, Emperor Strophon doesn’t get assassinated” (this was the breakpoint between the original Traveller setting and GDW’s later MegaTraveller) “and the ‘virus’ that was the entire basis for Traveller: The New Era did not devastate the Imperium. Our timeline is a continuation of the original Traveller, though we’ll be taking it in some interesting directions.”

The GURPS Imperium timeline moves only a few years forward from classic Traveller. Wiseman’s first GURPS Traveller volume will include a description of the gameworld; GURPS rules for characters, equipment and spacecraft; and conversion rules between the two systems. Haring said, “We want players to be able to convert any Traveller material to GURPS right off the bat, and we want Traveller players to be able to play in our alternate timeline.” Wiseman is also devising a story arc that develops through many supplements. “We’re gonna have a lot of fun with this before it’s over,” Haring says. The SJG license extends through 1999 with several renewal options.

GURPS Traveller is licensed from Sweetpea Entertainment, a Hollywood production company that acquired the rights to the game several years ago for a possible TV deal that fell through. After the game’s original publisher, GDW, went out of business in 1995, Sweetpea decided to resurrect the game. Sweetpea also holds the movie rights to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

SJG has produced many science-fictional GURPS settings. Most of them rely on the GURPS Space genre book, which in many details closely resembles classic Traveller. In 1994 the company published GURPS versions of White Wolves Storyteller RPGs Vampire®, Werewolf*, and Mage*, and its GURPS CthulhuPunk combines Chaosium’s Call of Cthulhu background with that of R.L. Talsorian’s Cyberpunk 2020. (sjgames@io.com; www.sjgames.com)

**Not Making This Up: Insecta* Rainforest**

A press release titled “Bugging Out in the Rainforest” begins, “Welcome to the jungle, a place where giant hissing cockroaches fly and the heaviest bug in the world roams, the Hercules Beetle. These are just two of the insects found in Rainforest, the first expansion set for the Insecta game.”

Insecta (1995) is a game of bug-to-bug combat where players build mutant insects out of assorted head, abdomen, and appendage cards “taken from actual insects.” Each player can accumulate more parts by eating his enemies. Up to six players try to escape from a Hive ruled by enemy wasps, dragonflies, centipedes, termites, and spiders, all controlled by a Hivemaster player. “Rules cover jumping, crawling flying hovering, instinct, stingers, web spinners, colony insects, glue squirts, neurotoxins, egg sacs, expendable spines, pheromones, trophallaxis [the transfer of nutritive secretions, i.e., vomit, between insects], and much more.”

Designed by amateur entomologist Philip Eklund of Sierra Madre Games (Tucson, AZ) and developed by Neal Sofge and Michael Wasson of Fat Messiah Games (Los Angeles), Rainforest adds butch jungle things such as earwigs, trapjaw ants, giant Malaysian hornet bees, and insuperable adversaries like carnivorous plants, bufonoid toads, geckos, hummingbirds, and spiny anteaters. New rules include stink glands, sticky tongues, bloodsucking fangs, and exploding bugs.

The expansion, with 119 cards and two pixie displays (Clack just writes what they tell us, folks), costs $14.95. Insecta (1-7 players, playing time 30 minutes to five hours) is $19.95. Shipping and handling $3.50 for orders up to $20; add $1 shipping charge for each additional $20; overseas orders add $1. (Fat Messiah Games, Box 341136, Los Angeles, CA 90034; NealS@aol.com)

**Wildstorm RPG Update**

In issue #238 Clack announced that Pinnacle Entertainment Group, publisher of the Deadlands: The Weird West RPG, was designing a superhero RPG based on WildStorm Studios comic characters. According to Pinnacle’s Shane Hensley, the deal fell through early this year, so the game won’t happen.

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Freelance writer and cub reporter Allen Varney will write DRAGON® Magazine’s newly resurrected “TSR ProFiles” column, which takes over from “Current Clack” starting next issue.

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Garfield Patents
Trading Card Games

In September the U.S. Patent Office granted Magic: The Gathering* designer Richard Garfield a patent for the "trading card game method of play.

U.S. Letters Patent 5,662,332 describes a game of strategy and chance in which "players construct their own library of cards, preferably from trading cards, and play their library or deck of cards against the deck of cards of an opposing player. However, the game components may take other forms, such as a board game, or the game may be played in different media, such as electronic games, video games, computer games, and interactive network."

The patent claims "an exclusive property or privilege" relating to games with "a reservoir of multiple copies of a plurality of game components." This means that players can access and use the same cards multiple times. The patent also covers Magic's "tap" mechanism of bringing new cards into play by turning existing cards "from an original orientation to a second orientation." The complete text is on the World Wide Web at <patent.womplex.ibm.com/details?patent_number=5662332>.

The patent is in Garfield's name because only individuals, not companies, can obtain patents. However, inventors can then assign the rights to companies, and Garfield (who himself was never closely involved in securing this patent) has assigned all rights to Wizards. He says, "Game mechanics are important and hard to protect. Establishing a precedent with this patent is good for the industry and good for designers."

Patents protect "any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, composition of matter, or improvement thereof," in recent years this has been informally expanded to encompass such abstractions as software and mathematical formulae. A patent grants the inventor the right to exclude others from making, using, or selling the invention without paying a fair licensing fee. This differs from a copyright, which protects a work of art (but, significantly, not rules mechanics) from being copied without permission; and from a trademark, which protects a name or symbol that identifies a product. So Magic: The Gathering and its distinctive logo are registered trademarks, whereas the Magic rulebook, card art, and card text are copyrighted. This new patent covers Magic's unique mechanics.

The Patent Office awards many game-related patents annually, mostly for token designs, spinner mechanisms, and the like. For instance, game designer and manufacturer Lou Zocchi holds a patent for his "Zocchihedron" 100-sided die. This hobby's first patent for game rules went to Al Leonardi of Nova Games, for his Ace of Aces air-combat games in book format (the same system used in the later Lost Worlds booklets). Most patents last 17 years.

Garfield, who holds a doctorate in combinatorial mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania, is the great-great-grandson of U.S. President James A. Garfield (1831-81). Richard isn't the first Garfield to gain a patent; his great-uncle invented the paper clip. His great-great-great-great-grandfather, James A. Garfield (1831-81), was a U.S. President. Richard's great-grandfather, Riddle Garfield, was an inventor who patented numerous game pieces, tokens, and spinner mechanisms. Many of these patents were for token designs, spinner mechanisms, and the like. For instance, game designer and manufacturer Lou Zocchi holds a patent for his "Zocchihedron" 100-sided die. This hobby's first patent for game rules went to Al Leonardi of Nova Games, for his Ace of Aces air-combat games in book format (the same system used in the later Lost Worlds booklets).

Pat Pulling Dies at 49

Patricia Ann Pulling, 49, founder of the organization Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons (BADD), died of cancer October 15 in Richmond, VA. When her son, Irving Lee "Bink" Pulling II, committed suicide in 1982, Pat Pulling became convinced his RPG hobby was responsible. In her book The Devil's Web: Who is Stalking Your Children for Satan?, in testimony at murder trials, and on more than 200 radio talk shows, she linked RPGs with Satanic worship and the '80s epidemic of teen suicide. Along with Dr. Thomas Radecki of the National Coalition Against Television Violence, and Larry Jones, who produced a newsletter called File 19 for Christian police officers, Pulling belonged to the key triumvirate fomenting the "Satanic panic" of the '80s.

For most of a decade, BADD controlled public perceptions of roleplaying, until designers Michael Stackpole, Loren Wiseman, and others began systematically refuting all accusations. The panic lost vigor in the late '80s when insurance companies started refusing injury claims of "ritual Satanic abuse." In 1992, Radecki surrendered his license to practice medicine, in response to charges of unprofessional conduct. Jones's current whereabouts are unknown. Pulling became a real-estate agent in Glen Allen, VA, where she was active in Republican politics. She is survived by her husband and four daughters.

"She was obviously very driven, very concerned about the welfare of children," says Stackpole. "Her methods were not quite the sort of thing I was taught in college—she did a lot of damnation-by-headline—but she was clearly very dedicated to her cause. I firmly believe she went to her grave knowing that games killed her son."

Though Pat Pulling caused lasting damage to this hobby's image, Stackpole credits her with "forcing the industry to grow up. She shined one hell of a light on us, so we had to learn how to deal with the outside world. Without that, we might not have had the strong..."
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