

# ABYSS



32

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# CONJURINGS

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This is probably the single latest issue of ABYSS ever, and if anyone is to blame it is your loyal, diligent and overworked editor-in-chief. Unfortunately the demands of publishing and completing my master's thesis bore down rather heavily this winter and after #31 ABYSS publication work slowed to a halt while I completed my analysis of the English wine trade during the 14th century. This semester things are ever so much better, what with my oral exams and dissertation research and I can certainly take out lots of time to make up for my past failings. Thanks for sticking with us and with any luck we will be resuming or even catching up on our schedule. We have already completed almost all of the work on #33 so it should follow within a couple of weeks. After that we'll be taking a break to work on some other backed up projects and #34 will be coming as soon as possible. Your suggestions and comments are as welcome as always.

I think you'll find this an interesting issue. For the first time we offer a complete game aid in the form of 'By the Gods', a supplement for *Lo Challenge Tomorrow* and *Challengers*, and certainly one of very few games which allow players to role-play gods. A scenario aid for 'By the Gods' will be out next issue. Continuing this issue is Vincent Burchett's 'Gods and Myths of Japan' which will be concluded next issue with the 'Japanese Bestiary'. Also offered for your consideration are a selection of other articles worth looking over, particularly Eric Olson's 'Beggary' and Tad Rocek's 'Draw'. Finally, take note of the demographic survey results at the end of the 'plug page', as they may help you find out more about your fellow denizens of the Abyss. This is a nicely varied issue, with something for even the most discriminating palate.

Coming up next issue are a number of interesting new items, including the first in a series on African mythology, new fiction from 'Ollazren the Storyteller', Jon Schuller on 'Learning from Violence', an article on vehicles in TCI called 'Behind the Wheel', and a variety of regular features, as well as the possible return of the mysterious Lew Bryson/Librarian to the Stars.

As usual, we welcome mail of whatever sort, comments, suggestions, even submissions. We may not be able to give everyone a personal response but we do read all the mail we get and give any suggestions full consideration. Keep in touch (DFN)

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# The Forest AND The Deep DAVE NALLE

There are two parts of the world which inspire fear and wonder in the mind of the middle ages and in more primitive societies as well. These are the forests which surround and separate human communities and the depths of the great oceans which form the boundaries between continents and kingdoms. Perhaps the vast expanse of the sky presents a third great locus of mystery, but up until recent times it has not been possible to reach and interact with the sky in the way that man had to face these two traditional frontiers. It may be significant that heroic fiction and horror fiction which have an ancient legendary tradition are often closely linked to the settings of the forest and the deep, while science fiction is the fantasy of the skies and is an invention of the last hundred or so years.

The communal mind is always the most fascinated with the elements which it must battle for survival but which are not yet quite conquered. By the end of the middle ages both the forest and the ocean are well controlled, with the expansion of agriculture and forestry and the exploration of the farthest reaches of the Atlantic. However, in the darker period from classical times well into the 12th century these two locales and wonder about them form the core of a large body of myth and legend.

In designing a fantasy campaign where myths and fears are as real as we think they are, an awareness of the power of the forest and the deep is an important asset. This awareness is central to the best fantasy and horror, particularly the work of masters like Joseph Payne Brennan, Avram Davidson, Gene Wolfe, H. P. Lovecraft, Thomas Burnett Swann, William Morris and Manly Wade Wellman, Arthur Machen, among a vast selection of others. As the fantasy campaign mirrors nothing so much as myth and fiction a similar concern for these areas of mystery is essential.



The forest is probably the first and oldest threat to the human community, as it has to get at least somewhat through the forest before it can face up to the ocean. The dark pathways and hidden ways of the woodland are home to all manner of gods and bogeys. Gwyn, Freyr, Njord, Diana, Dionysius, Pan, Cybele, Nerthus and Tezcatlipoca are all to be found in forests. They are all deities whose realm is nature but they also share a common theme of madness or sheer terror. They are the gods of the wild who protect wild things and care but little for mankind. Even in Christian symbolism the forest image has been adopted as a place where dark deeds are done and the devil (a horned man like most of the pagan forest lords) waits to tempt the weak willed. Perhaps the best examples of the nature of forest deities are Gwyn and Cybele, though others could serve just as well. Gwyn is a deity who crosses pantheons freely and is present from Ireland to Francis Fion, Gwyn, Guyon or Huon, a mysterious horned figure ruling the woodlands and its fe children, riding the night as master of the wild hunt. He is a strange and powerful deity. Those who see him can assume that they are doomed to die, and he rides out at night to hunt men down and devour their souls. He is an inspiration for the madness of poets and berserkers, a mystic vision of the unknown which lies within the woodland and beyond the veil of death. Cybele is also often shown as horned, and symbolizes many of the same concepts as do the other woodland goddesses who share more than one major attribute with her. The creatures of the woodland are Cybele's children, and harming them can mean death if she catches you. She is a bringer of plenty and of blight. Particularly interesting is the character of her worship which includes self mutilation, human sacrifice and frenzied orgies, traits shared by many of these deities and their followers. In addition, these deities are often paired as dual aspects of each other, like the great pair of Njord and Nerthus, who combine the horned god and goddess into a brother/sister-husband/wife team for twice the terror. In addition to their sylvan associations it is important to note that these deities are also almost all associated in one way or another with the moon (with the madness tie-in), and usually presented as bearing horns on their head, symbolizing both the stag (the animal lord of the forest) and the crescent moon.

Accompanying these deities of the forest are the numerous lesser inhabitants of this shadowed world, the fairies and monsters who wait for those who stray from the proper path. Tales of these creatures abound from different times and societies. There is always something lurking beneath the branches to do ill to the unwise, and there is often a direct relationship between these creatures and the greater gods or spirits of the forest. Every myth cycle has its woodland fairies, satyrs, fawns, dryads, centaurs, pixies, brownies, elves, spirits or what have you. The Celtic and Hellenic traditions are particularly

strong, accentuated by direct ties between woodland deities and spirits. Gwyn is the lord of the Celtic fairies, grim spirits of the woodland who are rather inimical towards men, seeking to tempt and ensnare them. Pan rules the Greek woodland and is accompanied by the fawns and satyrs which are among the primitive woodland spirits of his world. A similar relationship exists in most other cases, particularly with Freyr and the Germanic elves. Tales of elves and fairies have survived into relatively recent folklore better than older tales of the gods, who tend to become assimilated into myth as the kings of the fairies. The British isles are especially abundant in tales of men or women who get lost in the woods and sleep on or near a fairy mound, becoming ensnared by the fairies and kept with them in a sort of underworld to either never be released or be released much, much later. Even America has a few great tales of this sort, the most famous being that of Rip van Winkle, which is directly descended from the Dutch/Germanic tradition of New York state.

Just as there are great woodland myths a similar tradition exists in literature, with Robin Hood's Sherwood, Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, such tales as 'The Music on the Hill' by Saki. The Devil in a Forest by Gene Wolfe, Lycanthia by Tanith Lee, Moonheart by Charles de Lint, any of Manly Wade Wellman's John the Balladeer series, and many of Thomas Burnett Swann's works. The forest is often the neutral place in literature where mysterious forces work on the characters to bring about a profound change.

In a fantasy campaign woodland gods and spirits can be a major asset in setting up adventures and situations. The concepts of inimical woodland dwelling races like mandrakes, elves and fairies are one route, while another is that of Genius Loci or spirits of places, essentially supernatural guardians of things or specific locations, such as dryads, nymphs or less fully defined spirits who watch over the woodlands. Deities can also be used as the power behind all of these spirits or as the overseers of their activities. In many ways, as in Druidic tradition, the woods are sacred places, and the very trees are holy in a sense, part of the tendency to sanctify that which we fear. The forest should not be some silly wilderness of random encounters and stray happenings. It is a place which is very much alive and even almost a self-aware entity where each element contributes its small piece to a greater awareness. Along with this, characters and background characters should have a healthy awareness of the dangers and terrors of the wood. Forests should also be differentiated as to their particular personalities, as some are deeper and darker and perhaps more inherently magical than others, like Tolkien's Mirkwood. In some cases a particular deity may watch over a wood or a part of it, having it under his protection, or some woods may be more attractive than others to spirits and supernatural entities. In short, don't let the forest of the fantasy campaign be little more than a bunch of trees which provide good cover for bandits. They can be one of the great mysteries in a world, and far too often they are underemployed.

The second great mystery faced man as he began to travel over the waters to fish and trade. The mystery of the ocean is inescapable, and survives to this day when the deep reaches are still a mystery beyond our knowledge and reach where Kraken may well dwell. In many ways the mythology, literature and fear of the ocean depths follows a pattern similar to that of the forest. The ocean has its cruel and capricious spirits and deities, particularly to those societies which depended on the seas for sustenance, such as the Celts, Scandinavians and classical Greeks. The best examples of deities embodying the mystery of the ocean depths are probably the Fomor, Rana, Aegir, Poseidon, Dylan, Proteus and Dagon. There are many other gods of the sea, but the more than any others represent the unknown depths, rather than commerce and the storms which are the realms of so many others. If the themes of the forest are madness and terror, the themes of the ocean depths are probably mutability, the unknown and inescapable doom, again none too cheery. The best parallel examples of the characteristics of the watery realm can probably be found by looking at the Fomor, Rana and Proteus. Proteus is a minor classical deity, often overlooked. He is the son of Okeanos, and seen as the old man of the sea. The important key to his nature is change. He is blessed with the ability to completely change his form in the wink of an eye, and rules over the life which lives within the sea, while Poseidon dominates the destructive aspects of the sea. Nothing about Proteus is constant, in a way mirroring the very nature of the sea itself, changing in an instant, and taking anything given to it and transforming it into something 'new and strange' through a mysterious process. Proteus is a minor and not unfriendly deity, a kin to the indifferently destructive mermaids and tritons. The aspect of the sea as a place of doom is represented perfectly by the Viking goddess Rana. She is the queen of a strange realm in the ocean depths which is populated by those who drown at sea. Death at sea was a major concern to the seafaring peoples of the north and they created an underworld for those who died there. What makes Rana more interesting is the aspects which she acquired as a witch of sorts, a sort of Circe or siren who deliberately



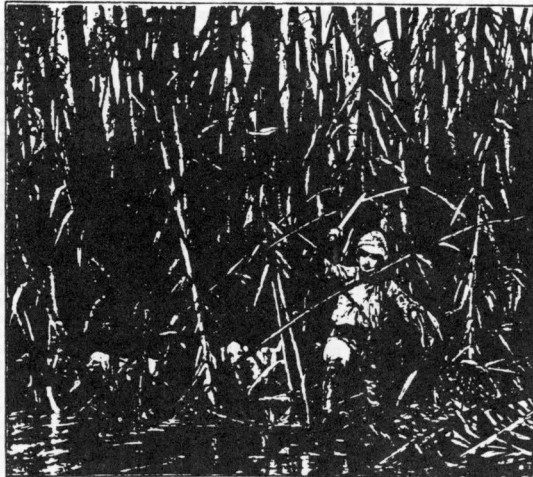
lured ships to their doom in order to people her realm. Rana was seen as a great hidden force beneath the waters, commanding the strange creatures of the sea and the source of the ultimate doom for all seafarers. The Fomorí form the perfect synthesis of these themes and a good example of the mysterious nature of the sea. They are a full pantheon of demon-gods feared by the seagoing Celts, inimical to their own friendlier seagods like Dylan, Llyr and Manannan. The Fomorí are a race of shapechangers who live in the depths of the ocean north of Ireland. They can take whatever form they like, are strongly inimical to humanity, and seek to work destruction wherever they can. Their leader is Elathan the Golden, but perhaps the most interesting is his son Bress, who is the clearest representation of the changeability of the sea, who actually comes in and impersonates the ruler of the gods in one myth, ruling undiscovered in his place. More than anything else, most of the Fomorí are monsters, creatures which are half human and half beast and lurk beneath the waves to destroy men. The core of their nature is mystery, because they embody all the imagined fears of men who live by and on the sea. The sea is an unequalled source of fear and mystery because those who sailed it in small boats were completely at the mercy of its capricious and impressive might, and it is natural to wonder about the depths which seem to stretch unfathomably below in darkness and where one might easily find oneself at the whim of an angry deity.

Just as there are mystic creatures of the woodland, there are dangerous denizens of the seas, operating on all levels of our awareness, with some interesting parallels to opposite numbers in the woods. Some of the most interesting of these come from the realms of Celtic myth, such as the Kelpie, Silkie and Roane, all of whom offer dangers to the unwary fisherman or sailor. Classical myth is equally rich, providing us with sirens, mermaids, tritons, nymphs, nereids and many more. Even Scandinavian legend offers a few choice horrors, particularly the nicor and kraken. Interestingly, many of these beings are not unattractive or bestial, but rather creatures of mystery and allure who, like the mermaid, siren or silkie seek to lure the unguarded to a watery doom. One interesting parallel is between those woodland spirits who seek to change the paths of the woods to deceive travellers much in the way that sirens seek to draw men from their paths. Such creatures are often in league with appropriate gods, for example Dylan is often seen as the leader of the Roanes and Poseidon as the leader of the Tritons. On the whole oceanic spirits and creatures seem to be a bit cruder and more ruthless in their dealings with men, perhaps because their realm is a bit less accessible and familiar than the woodland.

Good use of sea gods and creatures can be found in the work of a number of authors. Joseph Payne Brennan has a particularly good sense of the terror of the sea, and Thomas Burnett Swann presents a somewhat more charitable view in a number of his books. H. P. Lovecraft's deep ones could be seen as a modernized embodiment of this tradition. Sea horror/fantasy as practiced by such authors as Avraam Davidson, Anthony Boucher and L. Sprague de Camp

In a fantasy campaign much can be done with the sea and its dangers. Travel by sea is not infrequent in most campaigns and relevant, well thought out encounters with aspects of the general threat of the unknown depths will help bring about an awareness of just how vulnerable a small ship is in a vast and largely unknown ocean. As with forests particular creatures have particular domains, and at sea many types of creatures seem to band together into organized cultures or communities, perhaps following the model of seals, fish and other natural creatures, so that you find schools or even kingdoms of mermaids or tritons. Much more than the society of the supernatural forest, the society of the sea seems to mirror and mock that of humanity. Territorial rights and hierarchy play an important role here, and a sense of activity and awareness is to be encouraged. The sea is not just a surface to be travelled over. In a world where few people know how to swim and navigation is a matter of guesswork the sea offers dangers and mysteries as great as the riches to be gained by venturing abroad by boat.

Man fears that which he must deal with but has not yet conquered, and to even the advanced primitives of the fantasy world the depths of the ocean and the forest should be sources of curiosity, mystery and sheer terror. These fears have dominated myth and legend throughout history and still crop up as part of the underpinnings of modern horror fiction. Use these elements to your advantage and you can add depth and feeling to a campaign. Make the unknown places of your world really be unknown to encourage players to throw off the preconceptions of a modern world where we have tamed so much of our environment and there is so little left to wonder at that we must turn to the great voids between the stars for the mystery and horror which hide behind the modern myths of science fiction.



#### A GAME OF SHADOW AND LIGHT

*A Game of Shadow and Light* challenges 4-8 characters of 6-9th level with a mirage haunted desert and supernatural slavers. It is suitable for use with AD&D and similarly constructed systems. Available from DARK ELF PUBLISHING, Box 135, Wellington, OH 44090. Beware the swirling sands! \$5.00 postpaid.

# DRAW! TAD ROCEK

With the approaching publication of *Guns at Noon* (the fourth background expansion to *To Challenge Tomorrow*), a problem with applying the mechanics to the needs of this peculiar place and time arises. The mechanics for handling firearms in the system are good, but they are rather generalized and feature some potential glitches, particularly when applied to a society where the use of the handgun was raised almost to the level of religion (shades of Glenn Ford).

The requirements of a wild west setting for more definition and flexibility in the firearm rules urges some modifications and additions to the system which can be made fairly easily, even in a short space like this.

To *Challenge Tomorrow* combat is centered around Activity Points, a fund of points which each character has to spend every round to do whatever actions he undertakes. Different actions all have their own set costs. In combat the main expenses are Attack and Defense. In this case these are represented by the numerical values Missile Attack Rating and Missile Defense Rating. To use one's

MAR or MDR one must spend AP. The AP cost to fire a pistol of this period is 24. The AP cost to fire a rifle is 30. The cost to defend is 20. Note that these may vary for weapons of later or earlier periods. Each character will have between 10 and 100 AP to spend each round, based on characteristics, with the typical character having around 50. AP are normally spent during the round with any leftovers vanishing at the end of the round and the full value being restored at the start of the next round. How they are spent can vary a little bit. A character may borrow AP from the next immediate round to make an 'all or nothing' action. This means he can take up to half the AP from round 2 and use them in round 1, added directly to his total. The cost for this is that he loses twice the AP he borrows, so if he takes 20 he loses another 20 as well, and if he takes the full half he loses all the AP for the next round, though in emergencies he may borrow from the round after that, but this starts a vicious circle which rarely pays off. Another option is spending less or more than the standard AP for an action. If a character spends half the required AP he gets half the results. If he doubles the amount required he increases results by half. Thus, in combat he might spend only 12 to fire a pistol, halving his MAR as the result (reducing his chance of hitting). This would let him shoot faster. The AP cost may be halved or doubled more than once in a round. Another important factor in gun combat is an additional AP cost which is tacked on when drawing the weapon. The standard APC is for firing and aiming the gun. In the round when it is first drawn an additional cost called the Base APC is also paid. The BAPC is based on the gun type in question. BAPC is only paid when drawing the gun, when raising it from a round or more in an 'at ease' or 'lowered' position, or after loading (which has its own APC, equal to the BAPC for each bullet loaded). BAPC cannot be increased or decreased just by choice. These are the basics of combat and its variations, clarified a bit for this context. A final note on weapons and AP is needed. No gun made prior to 1855 had the 'double action', which combined cocking and firing the gun, so guns before that period had to be cocked separately. The result of this is a bit of slowness. In effect, on every shot after the first shot the gun must be cocked, adding an additional 10AP to the cost of firing. If the second hand is free to cock or 'fan-fire' then this addition is reduced to 20-DEX per shot. Almost all guns made after the 1850s will have double action. Some classic gunfighters used single action guns and acquitted themselves quite well.

In the American west gunfighters exceeded the normal limits of skill and involvement with their weapons, and some specialized adjustments are demanded. Normally AP are just spent loosely en masse in the round. This just won't do for a gunfight/quick draw situation. In these situations take the AP of the two characters. Subtract the lower AP from the higher. Halve the difference and note that value. This is the amount of AP which the faster gunfighter (the one with more AP) can expend before the other gunfighter can use any of his. For example, Texas Pete might have 45AP while Marshal Bill Tilghman has 63. This would mean Bill could spend 9 before Pete spent any, getting a bit of a head start on the draw, though theoretically their start is simultaneous. Bill just moves faster. After that spending is simultaneous until the end of the round when Bill would have 9 left over to spend. In this type of situation AP would be spent slowly, perhaps in simultaneous groups of 3 or 5 to see the sequence of events. Note that AP spent for defense always come out of the general total of the characters for that round, subtracted before anything else, reducing the total, and that defense applies for the entire round, no matter what.

Now, this increases the realism of the duel, bringing it into a nice time-frame, but it does nothing to cover the unique skills of the gunfighter, as AP are based all on characteristics. To solve this problem we can add the skill 'Fast Draw', which is the skill of pulling a weapon with unusual speed as opposed to the standard aiming skill for that weapon. Fast Draw should have a Training Point Cost of 5 per Skill Level learned. Each SL has the potential to add 1 to the AP of the character for the round when the draw is made, applying after defense but before AP are compared and the difference determined to see who gets the head start. There is a cost for these bonus AP. The require advance concentration. Each AP gained costs 5AP from the previous round counting backwards. Thus, to add 12AP a character would have to have 60 available in previous rounds. If he doesn't have that many AP per round he can borrow from the next earlier round, but he cannot borrow if there is any other action intervening. For example, if Texas Pete had 12 SL of Fast



Draw and 45AP, he could draw in round 3, borrowing 45AP from round 2 and 15 from round 1 if he did nothing to interfere. However, if he walked in round 2 (costing 20AP), he would have to stop when he got to the point where the other AP use occurred, so he would only be able to borrow 15AP and couldn't go into round 1. If he has only 15AP available he may only use 3 added AP of his potential 12. Having this skill can help even out the odds a bit.

PISTOL/MAKE	CAL	MAG	BAP	RAN	DAM	DATE	NATION
Adams	.45	6	14	6	13	1872	UK
American Arms	.41	2	7	2	11	1865	US
Bodeo	10.4mm	6	12	5	11	1889	Italy
Chicago Protector	8mm	7	9	5	8	1872	US
Colt	.22	5	11	4	8	1848	US
Colt Baby Dragon	.31	5	11	4	9	1836	US
Colt	.34	5	16	6	10	1851	US
Colt Navy	.36	6	15	7	10	1889	US
Colt New Navy	.38	6	9	4	10	1889	US
Colt Lightning	.38	6	10	4	11	1877	US
Colt Derringer	.41	2	6	2	11	1875	US
Colt Lightning	.41	6	12	5	12	1877	US
Colt Peacekeeper	.44	6	24	10	15	1872	US
Colt Frontier	.44	6	18	7	14	1872	US
Colt Army 1848	.44	6	25	8	14	1848	US
Colt Army 1860	.44	6	14	6	13	1860	US
Colt Army Frontier	.45	6	16	7	14	1873	US
Deringer	.28	1	5	3	7	1850	US
Deringer	.41	1	7	2	10	1850	US
Deringer	.48	1	9	2	14	1850	US
Diancea	.45	5	14	5	13	1886	UK
Enfield	.476	6	16	6	16	1880	UK
Evans	.56	1	8	3	10	1850	US
Evans	.50	1	11	5	15	1850	US
Fagnus	.45	6	15	5	13	1875	Belgium
Galand	9mm	6	14	5	10	1874	Belgium
Gasser	9mm	6	11	5	9	1876	Austria
Gasser	11.30mm	6	20	6	13	1870	Austria
H&A XL2	.22	5	8	4	6	1872	US
Herlich	.42	1	8	3	11	1850	US
Herlich	.45	1	10	4	12	1850	US
Kynoch	.45	6	19	8	13	1886	UK
Marlin XXX	.30	5	8	4	8	1875	US
Mausier Zig-zag	9mm	6	11	4	9	1878	Germany
Merwin	.44	6	15	6	12	1877	US
Reichsrevolver	10mm	6	14	5	11	1879	Germany
Remington Zigzag	.22	6	6	2	5	1860	US
Remington	.38	5	9	4	11	1873	US
Remington	.41	2	8	3	11	1867	US
Remington Army 61	.44	6	16	7	13	1861	US
Remington Army 74	.44	6	14	6	13	1874	US
Ripppers Peepercow	.22	8	12	5	5	1864	US
Rogers & Spencer	.44	6	21	9	13	1858	US
Savage Navy	.36	6	22	10	9	1856	US
Sharps #1	.22	4	9	5	5	1859	US
Sharps #2	.30	4	12	4	7	1863	US
Simson	.55	1	13	3	18	1850	US
Smith & Wesson	.38	5	10	4	11	1887	US
Smith & Wesson	.44	6	16	7	13	1870	US
Tranter	.45	6	16	6	14	1878	UK
Velo Dog	5.5mm	5	6	3	5	1895	UK
Warrant	.38	6	10	4	10	1880	Belgium
Webley	.38	6	10	3	11	1876	UK
Webley	.442	6	14	5	14	1887	UK
Wesson	.22	2	5	3	5	1860	US



RIFLE/MAKE	CAL	MAG	BAP	RAN	DAM	DATE	NATION
Berthier	8mm	3	18	11	10	1890	France
Colt Revolver	.36	6	28	11	10	1855	US
Colt Revolver	.56	6	44	11	24	1855	US
Colt Shotgun	.75	6	55	7	40	1855	US
Krag-Jorgensen	.30	5	33	13	9	1892	US
Lebel	8mm	8	33	17	10	1886	France
Lee-Navid	6mm	5	24	15	6	1879	US
Lee-Metford	.303	10	27	11	9	1883	UK
Mannlicher	6.5mm	5	32	18	7	1873	Austria
Mannlicher	8mm	5	30	16	9	1875	Austria
Mannlicher	11mm	5	40	12	15	1886	Austria
Marlin	.40	7	33	10	13	1870	US
Mausier	7.92mm	5	32	13	10	1886	Germany
Mausier	11mm	8	42	13	15	1884	Germany
Mosin-Nagant	7.62mm	5	34	13	9	1891	Russia
Remington	.35	5	28	12	11	1875	US
Remington	.44	5	36	11	16	1870	US
Sharps	.40	1	32	12	16	1874	US
Sharps	.45	1	36	13	20	1850	US
Sharps	.50	1	40	12	24	1854	US
Springfield	.30	5	30	12	9	1883	US
Winchester 94	.30	15	34	13	9	1894	US
Winchester Henry	.44	5	40	12	16	1860	US
Winchester 73	.44	8	40	12	16	1873	US
Winchester 72	.44	8	36	11	17	1872	US
Winchester 86	.45	8	38	12	18	1886	US
Winchester High Wall 51	.8	42	10	22	1885	US	
Winchester Spencer	.56	44	11	24	1885	US	
Winchester Shotgun	12g	8	45	6	35	1887	US
Winchester Shotgun	10g	8	50	5	40	1887	US

A note should be inserted here on multiple weapons. When using a pistol in both hands, all of the AP costs for the second weapon, including aiming and drawing AP are halved, while the primary gun remains full cost.

One limiting factor which remains is the Base APC or drawing or readying cost. To start with you will notice that in the tables provided with this article a realistic revision of these values has been provided along with other pertinent information. Now, just as gunfighters improved their skill, they also improved their equipment. Now, of course we are dealing with a matter of money. This is a society where a person would be fairly well off if he took home a couple of hundred dollars after a long cattle drive and room and board runs less than a dollar a day. Naturally, prices for weapons vary, and the economy went up and down rapidly on a regional basis, but a pistol should be in the \$10-20 range. In general, a good formula for price is \$50-(Current Year-Year of Make), with nothing for less than \$10. The newest flashiest guns will cost the most and the older models (except classics) will cost less. For rifles

start at a top price of \$80 with a minimum of \$15. For foreign--pistols use the rifle formula, and for foreign rifles increase cost by 30%. Guns can be improved for faster drawing. BAPC can be lowered through the services of a good gunsmith. When the BAPC is lowered the cost of the gun goes up. BAPC decrease should be in increments of 5% and each decrease should increase cost by 50%. BAPC should never go below 75% of the original, so there can only be 5 steps of improvement. For example, in 175 a Colt .44 might only cost about \$12, but if bought at \$42 it could have its BAPC lowered from 25 to 18, making it competitive with the more current Colt .44. The GM should also remember that availability of the most recent guns may be far less than the availability of good gunsmiths. These modifications can be made on the same basis for rifles. Costs can go even further for non-functional and decorative modification. Lots of gunfighters liked to 'improve' their weapons beyond any necessity just to feed their egos.

Rifles are also given on the accompanying chart. All of the items mentioned above apply to them as well as to pistols. They should be applied logically, but the mechanical differences are minor. Even Fast Draw is possible with rifles. The skill must be learned separately for pistols and rifles, at the same cost, and they contribute to each other, so for each 5 levels of 1 you get 1 free level of the other.

Now that the fast draw is squared away, another area of promising modification to the basic TCT pistol mechanics is firearm damage. Instead of the traditional die range, the accompanying charts give a single damage(DAM) number for each gun. This is because firearms tend to do more consistent damage and a slightly different system might work better. When a bullet hits, roll two 10-sided die. Ignore the lower of the two numbers and multiply the higher of the two by the DAM value. Divide the result by 10 and that is the damage done. If doubles are rolled, consider the blow a critical, add the two numbers together and use the total times the DAM value divided by 10 as the damage. This system is potentially quite lethal and averages high, but keeps things more realistic. You may find that the critical rule is a bit too gory and can be omitted. Note that this variant is not used with hand weapons.

Another interesting addition to the damage system, borrowed from Challengers(TCT expansion four) is the idea of stun or AP damage, which makes combat a bit less gory and even more convincing. What this means is that when a bullet hits, it does both normal damage and AP damage at the moment of impact. AP damage is a loss of AP caused by the 'punch' of the bullet. To find AP damage take the lower of the two D10 rolled when doing

doing damage and multiply this by the DAM value of the firearm. This is the number of the AP which the wound character loses immediately. At the point when he has hit he has the option to fire if he is already in the process of firing, using the MAR appropriate to the number of AP he has already spent. He may still borrow AP or use whatever AP he has left, but the AP from being shot are subtracted immediately and carry over to the next round if any are left-over. In the case of a critical damage as the total of the two numbers times the DAM value. Note that this relationship of AP and real damage is the inverse of that found in Challengers. To make combat go a little longer and a bit more enjoyably the AP damage works fine if halved, but it should be reduced no further than that.

As they stand, these modifications considerably improve the TCT firearm system, but some special circumstances and facts should be considered. First, the concepts which apply with these weapons and skills should apply throughout combat, and second tactics and strategy can make a huge difference, as can the very situation of the fight. The spacing of AP given in the section on fast draws applies with hand to hand weapons or in combination as well. This allows the traditional favorite technique of the historical Bill Tilghman, who liked to stand near gunfighters when they drew down on him and instead of drawing he would fell them with a solid punch to the jaw (the aiming APC of Punch is only 16 and there is no BAPC...the ultimate first-strike). Punch and hand-held clubs do more APC damage than firearms so by the time the gunman had recovered Tilghman could draw his own Winchester rifle and stick it right up their nose, much to their embarrassment. As far as situations and strategy, not all gunfights are on main street at high noon, and terrain, conditions and the choices of the characters should make a large difference. Quite often the quick draw is irrelevant, as the situation or dumb luck may give one character the chance to sneak up on or fool the other.

Another incidental area of improvement which is possible is that of weapon range. Not all weapons are as accurate at great range and this is handled by the added characteristic RAN found on the charts which are provided. The RAN means two things. First, it is the number of yards of range at which the gun is accurate with no special modification. Second, it indicates the range intervals at which modifications are made. In short, for every increment of RAN in yards the target is away from the character firing the gun 5 is added to the target's MDR(defense). Thus, for a gun with a RAN of 10, within 10yds there would be no bonus to the defenders MDR. From 10-20 there would be a bonus of +5. From 20-30 the bonus would be +10. From 30-40 it would be +15. And so on, so that the farther away a target is, the harder it is to hit. Note that this bonus MDR modification is automatic and has no AP cost for the person being shot at. Adding this modification will make a large difference in sniper and ambush situations.

One final example should pull this all together. One day Texas Pete (AP45, Fast Draw 12, Colt .45--BAP12) steps out on the main street of Booker Texas to face down Bill Tilghman (AP63, Fast Draw 8, Colt .44--BAP18). All things considered Bill has a 14AP edge, getting a 7AP jump on Pete. Pete has 37AP to attack with after defending and Bill has 51AP, assuming both defend fully. It looks extremely even, because Bill's natural ability is balanced out by his old but customized gun. They draw. After 10AP Bill has 32 left 'til he fires, while Pete has spent 3AP and has 33 left to go. Pete is a sharp guy, and he realizes the old lawman has a slight edge, so after 3AP, when he has spent 27, he fires at half aiming effectiveness. A good idea, but unfortunately he misses. He now has 10AP left, his gun is out, and a chest wound. Bill rolls a 5 and a 6, so he does 7(6x12/10) points of real damage and 60(5x12) points of AP damage, knocking Pete down. At this point Pete has spent 8 of his remaining 10AP for the round, originally planning to carry on to the next round for 16 more AP to complete his shot with full MAR. As it is, he realizes he was hit, though the wound is probably not fatal unless unattended. So, he squeezes off a snap shot at a third effectiveness, aiming for the chest, getting lucky and hitting Bill in the left arm. He rolls a 3 and a 6 for damage, doing 7(6x12/10) points of real damage and 36(3x12) points of AP damage. Bill doesn't take a snap shot and at the end of the round Pete now has -58AP and a serious chest wound, while Bill has -27AP and a mangled left arm which may be broken. However, Bill is right handed and perfectly willing to wait into the next round to recover and finish the job. In the second round Bill has 63-27-20(defense)=16AP while Pete has 45-58=-13AP, essentially a helpless babe. Note that the quick draw bonus does not count on rounds when drawing is not an issue. As Pete is essentially down and out for the round, Bill feels no hesitation in drawing a full 31AP from the next round, dropping his defense to a quarter normal(+15AP), and raising his MAR by 50% three times(62AP). With hits him in the right arm, rolling 1 and 7 for damage, doing 8(7x12/10) points of real damage and 12(1x12) points of AP damage. Fortunately that's enough to break Pete's arm, and Marshal Bill Tilghman, victorious again can claim that he actually aimed for the arm out of mercy, blowing his legendary status to even greater proportions. With his right arm broken and a major wound in his chest the fearful Texas Pete is happy to be on his way to see a prison doctor. In retrospective, note that if Bill had rolled a little worse he would have been left in round 3 with OAP, while the unhappy Pete would have had 45-13(carried over)-12(from the new wound)=20, enough to either defend himself in his paranoid state or get off a partial shot without defense at the flabbergasted marshal who sent a bullet into the dust at point-blank range, though Bill would probably borrow enough from round 4 to at least defend. But the guys in the white hats tend to win, and there was only a 1 in 50 chance that Marshal Tilghman's tactic would be a total failure.

There isn't room to go into every detail of wild west combat here. We could fill twice this space on brawling alone. I hope that this does provide useful guidance for improving firearm use in TCT, and since so many other role-playing scenarios have such a strong echo of the west you may find it useful as a general application to your campaign. Even if you don't play TCT, most modern systems use some form of AP and you can probably adapt it with some ease, if you don't use an AP system there's enough explained here to tack one onto your current system. Follow your own trail and let's hope it doesn't lead to a dusty main street and the smell of blood and bullets.





3

# GODS & MYTHS OF JAPAN PART TWO VINCENT BURCHETT

Buddhism was introduced into Japan by Korean missionaries in 538ad. Buddhism combined readily with shintoism and create a harmonic synthesis of explanations of the material and spiritual world. Buddhism met with some opposition at first but gained popularity with the support of the regent Prince Shotoku and from the early 600s to the 800s buddhism continued to develop in Japan. Meanwhile, the buddhist monks tried to familiarize the Japanese with the ideas of karma, retribution and faith in salvation as associated with the buddhas, bodhisattvas and devas. In looking at TSR's Deities and Demigods it is hard to see how they could have overlooked this important pantheon of Japanese myth. They say not one word about buddhism, though they do mention some deities primarily associated with it. It is also important to note that the word 'shinto' itself originated with the advent of buddhism to differentiate the two religions.

The important deities of this pantheon fall into four main classes as detailed here.

## THE NYORAI CLASS

The nyorai class of Japanese buddhist deities is the first and most important of the four. They are the tathagatas or buddhas in the Japanese pantheon. Some of the members are:

### Shaka-nyorai

Shaka-nyorai is worshipped in most monasteries in Japan with the exception of those of Amidist persuasion. For the majority of believers today he arouses respect rather than true piety. He is not really a source of immediate aid, rather an embodiment of buddhist virtues. His statues show him with his right hand pointing to the sky and his left to the earth showing that he has spiritual possession of both. His priests are often in conflict with those of Amida-nyorai. He is identified with the buddha Sakyamuni. His festival is on April 8th which is also his birthday.

### Amida-nyorai

Of all the deities of the Japanese buddhist pantheon Amida-nyorai is the closest to the western idea of God. The help asked of him is almost always of a spiritual nature and involves peace of mind or some ultimate purpose. He is the great refuge that one thinks of in the hour of death. Of all the buddha statues in Japan, such as the Great Buddha of Kamakura, those of him are the most common. He is identified with the buddha Amitabha.



Also known as the buddha Mahavairocana. Dainichi is the personification of the absolute form of a supreme, omnipresent buddha. His statues show him as a man with red skin, wearing a red halo, and sitting on a red lotus with his fingers and palms brought together in a triangle shaped gesture of concentration. Other versions change his color to white, blue or sometimes even green.

#### Yakushi-nyorai

Yakushi is sometimes identified with the buddha Bhaisajy, a guru who reportedly made a vow to cure all sickness. A little medicine jar is usually seen in the left hand of his statues. He is also said to have been known in early Japan as the 'King of Medicines'. His sanctuaries still attract pilgrims seeking cures of their ills and reportedly some do leave his sanctuaries genuinely cured.

#### THE BOSATSU CLASS

The bosatsu are the bodhisattvas or 'buddhas-to-be' of Japanese buddhism. They are the ones who chose to remain on earth to help mankind instead of reaching Nirvana and nyorai (buddha) status. Some of the members of the group include:

#### Miroku-bosatsu

Miroku is identified with the bodhisattva Maitreya and has been a well known character since the early days of buddhism. Like the buddha Sakyamuni, he will be reborn someday to save all living beings. Statues of him exist from the seventh and eighth centuries although he fell from popularity around the thirteenth century.

#### Kannon-bosatsu

Kannon is sometimes identified with the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and is the perfect embodiment of the ideal bodhisattva. He is always concerned for the sufferings of man and is said to be an ocean of compassion. He listens to every prayer, ensures peace and safety, performs countless miracles and can assume any shape to do so.

#### Monju-bosatsu

Monju is identified with the bodhisattva Manjusri and personifies supreme wisdom. He appears seated on a lion with either a book or a scroll in one hand and a sword in the other.

#### Fugen-bosatsu

Fugen, identified with the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, represents innate reason and concentration. He is often seen with Monju and together they are often with the buddha Sakyamuni.

#### Jizo-bosatsu

Jizo, identified with the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, is more involved with everyday Japanese life than most other deities of the pantheon. He is loosely connected with the lower world and sometimes appears as the protector of the dead.

#### Kokuzo-bosatsu

Kokuzo, identified with the bodhisattva Akasagarbha, is the opposite of Jizo-bosatsu in many ways. He is connected with the upper world and is the protector of the especially good spirits of people who have just died.

#### THE MYOO CLASS

The members of the myoo class are the vidya-raja or the 'Kings of Science' in Japanese buddhist myth. They exercised their wrath against the forces of evil and the wicked. They are also the personification of the mystic formulas of sovereign power. Some of the members of this class are:

#### Fudo-myoo

Fudo the 'Immovable' is also known as the vida-raja Acala. He is regarded as a pillar of support in all things needing strength of purpose. He witnesses anyone taking a vow. His most famous shrine is in Narita, an impressive sight located near the international airport.

#### Aizen-myoo

Also known as the vida-raja Raga, Aizen's name literally means love. He represents the loving passion in people and love transformed into the desire for enlightenment. His body is red and has eight arms; two of which are holding a bow and some arrows, the classic symbol of love. He has three eyes and bristling hair with a lion's face. As a deity of love he is worshipped by prostitutes, tavern keepers and musicians.

#### THE TEN CLASS

The members of the ten class are the devas or 'God-Kings' of Japanese buddhist myth. Some of the members of this class are:

# BY THE GODS



## INTRODUCTION

By the Gods is a curious aid designed to serve several functions. In essence it is a game aid and system for playing deities of a variety of levels of power and influence in situations appropriate to myth and legend. As presented here the orientation is towards the exploits of minor deities, demigods and heroes, but play on higher levels is certainly possible. BTG is a supplement to To Challenge Tomorrow, intended to be used as an independent campaign background and game system in combination with the basic system of TCT and the additional powers featured in Challengers (the TCT based superhero role-playing system). In addition, as far as background is concerned, By the Gods ties in with Pantheon, the comprehensive mythological resource to be published by Ragnarok in early 1986. It is a simple aid and expansion, and should be easy to adapt to other game systems as well. Featured here are all the additional rules and information you need as well as several adventures in different backgrounds, and it is certainly possible to use BTG independently from Challengers.

## SET-UP

The core of the system is a set of skills and powers. These are bought by characters using Bonus Points, as assigned in Challengers, and exist in addition to the characteristics and skills found in basic TCT. For the most part you use the character creation rules from Challengers, with the powers given here added to the general list of powers, with both being available to the characters. This follows the general pattern of the TCT rules, but with characteristic maximums lifted and a general fund of 130+1020 points to spend on characteristics as a whole, rather than in the four group divisions. Another change is that characters under this system get Skill Benefits on powers as well as skills, with the SBs for powers being one at -3, one at -2, and one at -1. Finally, in addition to Training Points each character gets a general fund of 100 Bonus Points which can be spent directly on characteristics or as TP, or on the powers added in Challengers, but at least 40% of these BP must spent in a primary area and at least 20% in a secondary area, i.e. Powers, Characteristics or TP. In all areas BP work just like the other points in that area.

Cosmology is one of the keys to setting up a good BTG campaign. In creating characters it is important to consider the setting in which play will take place, particularly the nature of the culture and pantheon involved and the position of the characters in that setting. It is also possible to use mixed pantheons or interaction of cooperating or opposing pantheons. Characters should know where they stand in the realm of gods and men. They should know who their parents are and where they fit in the hierarchy. Cooperation between the GM and player to select and develop an appropriate background for the character. Many of the central characters in myth form a good model, such as Heracles, Gilgamesh, Perseus, Sigurd, Pwyll, Huon and countless others of greater or lesser power, though we recommend the realm of half-deities, those mortals of ancestry or inner greatness sufficient for them to aspire to god hood and to associate with gods.

## POWERS

Supernatural powers are what separate gods from mortal and a good basic selection of powers which make characters more than human are provided in Challengers. In addition to these powers, which are available for By the Gods characters there is a set of special god-powers specifically for BTG characters. These powers are learned like skills, with the purchase of additional levels at the same cost as the original level increasing effectiveness. There are three basic classifications of powers for By the Gods. They are 'Awareness Powers', 'Manifestation Powers', 'Affinity Powers'. They have different effects and costs, and are described below. These supplement the basic powers list in Challengers.

### Awareness Powers

The first thing that sets deity characters apart from normal humans is the potential for heightened levels of awareness. While this is an uncommon capability in heroes it is common to minor deities and even some demi-gods. There are three basic awareness powers, Vision, Hearing and Knowledge. These are possessed by the character and have limited range. Normally such a power would cover a radius centered on the character, but it is

also possible to center it on a particular point, area or locus of interest to the character. In addition to these two options a combination is also possible, with multiple loci, both around the character and in more than one specific focal point. What's more, the locus can be a specific being or object which may be mobile, allowing observation of key persons at ISL each. Loci should be established when the character is created and very hard to change. The character should learn levels of the appropriate power for each locus separately. Range radius is determined by the number of levels the character has for the given locus. The powers may also be combined for a fuller awareness. Awareness powers and their functions are detailed below. Note that each skill has a cost per level given which is the cost for each skill level acquired.

The radius of range of an awareness power around its focal point is skill level squared in miles.  $Range = SL \times 5000 / 2mi$

There are limits on the use of the power, as explained below. In addition, there is a chance of success when a power is used, or more properly brought into focus for search or close examination which is equal to 100 percent minus the range(m) of events from point of focus in m times 30, divided by skill level percent.  $Chance \text{ of Success} = 100 - ((Range \times 30) / SL) \%$

**Vision:** This power allows the character to see events and activities in areas which are not specially protected and which are within its range. The character only observes events when he chooses to look around, but there is a  $(SL \times RAT) / 100\%$  chance that he will notice any unusual or noteworthy action in that area. This power provides only sight, not sound. Actual examination, observation and searching of the area of awareness costs an amount equal to range(m) of events observed from focal center divided by skill level times 10.  $APC = (Range/SL) \times 8$ .  $Cost/SL = 7$

**Hearing:** This works essentially in the same way as the skill above, but involves only hearing. The chance of noting something incidentally is somewhat higher at  $(SL \times RAT) / 8\%$ . The cost in AP cost is somewhat higher as well, at  $(Range \text{ from Locus} / SL) \times 10$ .  $Cost/SL = 6$

**Knowledge:** This is a somewhat more general power which allows the character merely to sense the tone and tenor of events in the area of awareness. It provides no sight or sound and no specific details, but gives a feeling for events which bode good or ill promoting potential personal interest. Chance of being attracted is fairly high at  $(SL \times RAT) / 4\%$ . There is no AP cost, because this power is constantly in effect and cannot be focused beyond the basic awareness of good, bad or curious events.  $Cost/SL = 5$

#### Manifestation Powers

There are five basic manifestation powers, all related to the appearance or presence of the deity. These cover a number of variations and consist of the powers Presence, Image Projection, Vocal Projection, Incarnation and Form Alteration. Powers can be used in combination and increased skill levels increase effectiveness. Certain variables apply with all manifestation powers. These are AP cost, range, cost to learn each level and specific effects. These are explained with the descriptions provided below.

**Presence:** This power instantaneously transports the character to a specific point or locus, but it must be a target which is in the range of an awareness skill which he uses to determine his point of arrival. Levels of presence determine the range to which the character may transport himself from the spot where he is, though he must be able to sense his target in some way.  $Max: \text{range is } (SL) \times 2 \times 3mi$ .  $AP \text{ Cost per use is } 50 + ((\text{distance traveled} / SL) \times 100)$ .  $Cost/SL = 9$

**Image Projection:** This allows the character to project and direct an image exactly like himself within the same limitations as the previous power, with the same range and awareness requirements. The AP cost is lower at  $30 + (\text{distance covered} / SL) \times 50$ . The character image may only act and gesture, not speaking or manipulating physical objects.  $Cost/SL = 4$

**Vocal Projection:** This is exactly as the previous skill but projects only vocal sounds created by the character. The two will work in combination and all the costs are the same. They must be learned separately.  $Cost/SL = 6$

**Incarnation:** This is a considerably more advanced sort of skill and one employed only rarely. It allows the character to direct his own spirit and essential nature into the body of a newly born infant so that as the infant matures it will become a fresh, earthly incarnation of the deity, while his core identity remains in the godly realm. In this situation awareness is shared by the two personas, and in most cases the incarnate form develops attributes far beyond the human norm, including a growth and maturation rate accelerated by  $SL \times 50\%$ . This power is not for everyone, and involves some significant GM arbitration. There is a percentage chance of successful incarnation, which also serves as a percentage of similarity between the mature mortal form and the original. This is  $SL \times 2$ . Range limitations and awareness requirements are as with the powers given above. AP cost is  $500 + (50000 / SL)$ . Note that if more than one incarnation is attempted the chance of success is halved with each successive incarnation created.  $Cost/SL = 8$

**Form Alteration:** This is rather different from the other powers in this group, and is essentially little more than the ability to change how the character looks, not in the sense of shapechanging (as with the **Challengers** power), but in the sense of changing appearance so that the character, who may be well

known, will not be recognized. In general a character has a chance of being recognized based on his Reputation Points, usually 1% per RP. Each SL of this skill will negate one RP for this purpose. In addition, SLs give a percentage chance of assuming a specific appearance which the character has seen, without major shape or size alteration. The chance of doing this successfully is  $SL \times 2$ , modified for circumstances. Finally, it is possible to assume to form of another type of being or substance, based on the affinities described in the next sections. A character may learn one particular form within an affinity per SL of that affinity, and using this power he may change to that form. The form must be something he has seen before. All changes last until the character chooses to change back, and he will not change back until he actively effects the same change process to his natural form, which he is assumed to have an affinity for. The AP cost for any of these actions is  $100 + (20000 / SL)$ .  $Cost/SL = 6$

#### Affinity Powers

These powers are based on a series of affinities to different beings, elements and substances. Increased SL with the affinities allow more control and flexibility with that affinity and increased SL with the powers provides more force in manipulating the affinity material. Affinities will be explained first followed by the specific powers and how they effect the affinities.

Affinities have costs and are learned in SL. Each SL gives an affinity to a specific sub-class of the affinity group (chosen by the player), as well as providing more strength with the group as a whole, with the application depending on the specific power. For example, a SL of Wild Beast Affinity might be specified as a Badger Affinity as well as a general level in the group. The affinities and their costs are listed below. Presumably the list could be expanded or reclassified.

Affinity	Cost
Wild Beasts	5
Wild Plants	4
Wilderness Entities (dryads, etc)	7
Domesticated Beasts	4
Cultivated Plants	3
Domestic Entities (numina, etc)	6
Earth Matter (stone, sand, etc)	4
Earth Beasts (worms, slugs, etc)	4
Earth Entities (gnomes, etc)	7
Ocean Matter (water, etc)	5
Ocean Beasts (fish, crustaceans, etc)	4
Ocean Entities (roanes, nymphs, etc)	7
Air Matter (wind, gasses, etc)	6
Air Beasts (birds, etc)	5
Air Entities (sprites, etc)	8
Energy Matter (fire, electricity, etc)	6
Energy Entities (salamanders, etc)	8
Undead Beings (zombies, vampires, etc)	8
Spirit Beings (ghosts, wraiths, etc)	7
Otherworld Entities (elves, etc)	6
Deemonic Beings (demons, devils, djinn, etc)	9
Art (music, painting, etc)	7
Science (philosophy, magic, history, etc)	7
Industry (trades, business, etc)	6
Pursuits (warfare, hunting, etc)	6
Emotions (madness, love, hate, etc)	6

To some degree a character is defined by the affinities which he has and the loci of his power (see above), particularly if he is a true deity, and there should be a logical relationship maintained between affinities. To encourage this contribution should be allowed between directly related affinities. Note that the last few are rather abstract and their application with powers may require considerable GM discretion. For an example of how affinities work, consider the god Pan, who would have Wild Beasts as his main affinity, as well as Music and Madness, though with considerable levels in the first. Given below are powers for applying affinities. There are several basic powers, a number of which have multiple functions. Note that ASL means Affinity SL and PSL means power SL. In cases where combined affinities apply both ASL should be added together when used.

**Communicate:** This will allow the character to communicate with both specific and general affinity subjects as if he were part of the same class and within the limits of the affinity's communicative ability. There is a  $ASL \times PSL \%$  chance of communicating in general and twice that with specific affinity subjects. Communication is two way and can be carried on through awareness powers. This power will not work with those affinities where it is clearly inappropriate, and has natural range.  $APC \text{ is } 30 \text{ AP per CR}$ .  $Cost/SL = 3$

**Control/Command:** This allows the character to direct the natural activities of the affinity subject, working both with abstracts and concretes. The degree of alteration of action or the degree of enhancement, restriction, or even the chance of specific success is found by the formula  $(100 + (ASL \times PSL)) \times \text{Beings}$ , with specific affinities getting double effect. One being equals 2 cubic yards of matter.  $APC \text{ is } 40 \text{ AP per CR}$ .  $Cost/SL = 4$

**Summon:** This calls affinity subjects to the character from within a range of **PSL SORO/SL**. It works basically as the previous powers, with a chance of success in summoning for each target and double range and chance of success for specific affinities. The special chance of success is **(ASLxPSLx2) - Beings**. The beings or material summoned will arrive directly by effective teleportation. For material things, two cubic yards of matter are equivalent to one being. It will work on beings or items related to an abstract affinity at half effectiveness. **APC is 50+(800/PSL)**. **Cost/SL=5**

**Alteration:** This changes the nature of something within the limits of its affinity group, essentially changing it from one specific sub-class to another, for example, it would change a poplar tree to a birch, or lead to gold. Mass is preserved. Chance of success is **(ASLxPSLx3) - Units**, there is no modification for specific affinities, as it can only be done if both states are specific affinities in the same general group. In this case one unit equals 10 pounds of matter or 1 cubic foot of matter. **APC is 200+(1000/PSL)**. **Cost/SL=7**

**Creation:** This is the final affinity based power, and perhaps the most remarkable and significant. It allows the character to create matter, abstract material or effects, or even life. It falls in three tracks for chance of success, all on the same formula. In the formula X is a variable. For Life/Being/Beast affinities it is 3. For Matter it is 6. For Entities/Undead/Spirits it is 9. If the item or being created is within a specific affinity the chance of success is doubled. The formula is **(ASLxPSLxX) - Units**. In this case a unit is 10 pounds or 1 cubic foot of matter or other substance. Whatever is created has all of its natural characteristics, but lasts for only **(ASLxPSLxSRO) hours**. The **AP Cost is 500+(1500/PSL)**. **Cost/SL=10**

### SPECIAL LIABILITIES

One aspect of the **Challengers** system is the concept of liabilities, or special limitations or requirements which curtail the powers of the character and gain him some extra **BP** as a recompense. As a general guideline, no character should gain more than 50 or so **BP** from liabilities, but some liabilities can be particularly appropriate and relevant. In general it is good for **GM** discretion to be the determining factor in assigning these **BP**, but some guidelines and suggestions may be of help.

One major class of liability is special vulnerabilities, which are essentially the equivalent of affinities, but more on the lines of anti-affinities, where those subjects get benefits against the character and there tends to be a mutual antagonism. The intensity of these anti-affinities should determine the benefits, but the equivalent of **SLs** can be assigned at a value of **2BP** each, and these levels can be added to those of anyone using those affinities against the character, and specification should be used. Such levels can also be used to find a chance of negative reactions (fear on the part of the character, antagonism on the part of the affinity), with a **SL SORO x ZL** chance.

Another good possibility are specific foes or opponents appropriate to the background, with **BP** bonuses dependent on the power of these foes, perhaps ranging from 1 to 30 points. For example, Heracles being persecuted by Hera might get 25 **BP** as a result.

Also possible and really special for gods alone is a link to worshippers so that the welfare of the god would depend on the size of his following. To do this the character should assign a percentage of his total **BP** which are dependent on his worshippers. As his worship expanded that percentage of his **BP** total would grow at half rate, but if worship fell off, his **BP** would decline. For example, a character might make 80% of his **BP** dependent on the 2000 members of a village under his special protection. If the faith spread to another village of the same size he would gain a number of **BP** equal to half that 80% (say 60BP if he had 150BP to start), but if that village were wiped out, say by a rival god, he would lose 80% of his original **BP** and almost become a mortal. Naturally, **GM** flexibility is the key here, but this can encourage interaction on several levels.

Other possibilities are obligations to particular worshippers or places, personal failings or psychological disorders, special circumstances and required actions and the like. More ideas can be gained from the liabilities section of **Challengers**, or just use your imagination. Do be sure not to give out too many extra **BP** unless you want to run a high power campaign.

### AN EXAMPLE: HRIGDI HOORSON

Hrigdi is the son of Hodr, conceived when a lust-filled giantess of Utgard took the blind god by surprise and ravished him. He is a specially created minor-godling for a Scandinavian myth background. We'll gloss over his actual physical stats, which should be impressive, and look primarily at his powers. His area of particular interest is the remote wooded hill lands,

with a particular interest in wild beasts. He has a sacred grove, where his mother Ugrida caught his father Hodr. He has 122 **BP** to spend because he has a 11 level vulnerability to all forms of energy affinities. He has 8 **SL** of Knowledge based around his sacred grove (40BP), giving him a 20% chance of being aware of events within 32mi of the grove, with a general chance of success of over 80% at up to 5 miles. In addition he has 10 levels of affinity with Wild Beasts (50BP) and 8 levels of Control/Command, the result of this is a chance of success in commanding any one wild beast of 94% with a 15 **CHA**. He could control a whole pack of wolves with over 80% chance of success, or even better if he took wolves as one of his specific affinities. Having used all of his **BP** in this way he would not really be able to get any of the more common powers from the **Challengers** rules, but he would still be free to spend his **TP** on his skills, probably in combat and woodcraft.

Many other variations are possible. True deities would probably need to have more **BP** to work with so that they could afford a variety of powers, perhaps starting at a level of 200 or so **BP** for equivalents of minor Olympians. Hrigdi is, more than anything else, a well-developed local nature spirit. For heroes who are more mortal than anything else, **BP** would probably want to go mostly to skills, characteristics and the most limited powers, probably affinities and some of the passive **Challengers** powers. A variety of ranges and levels of play are possible and the **GM** should feel free to exercise his imagination.

### SCENARIOS

Space does not allow fully developed scenarios to be provided here, but many sources and examples can be found in classic literature. We particularly recommend the **Lokasena**, the **Prose Edda** and **Elder Edda**, the **Nibelungenlied** and **Beowulf** for Scandinavian material, the **Odyssey**, the **Aeneid** and the **Argonautica** for classical material, and the **Maori** or **Huan of Bordeaux** for Celtic material.

Next issue of **ABYSS** a special adventure aid for use with **By the Gods** will be presented. Watch this space.



# PLUGARAMA

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LEGENDARY SUPERHERO ADVENTURING



## NEW YSGARTH SYSTEM

We're still at work on the new edition of Ysgarth, which is scheduled for release in the late spring or early summer. Progress is going well and there will be a full report in an upcoming issue. Development and playtesting are going well, with the revisions of the skill and combat systems complete. The new magic system is currently undergoing playtesting of what we hope will be a final version and work on the background and world design section is almost finished. There are, of course, various stages of production still to be completed. All of the major and minor systems are being completely revised and updated, although the new system will remain compatible with aids already published. The rules will come in two 8.5x11 booklets with everything needed for play. You can reserve a copy now for only \$15 (postage included) and it will come at least a month before the system is in the stores. In addition you will receive regular updates and progress reports. The New Ysgarth System will mark the start of a new generation of role-playing games, with the ideal merger of realism and playability to unchain the imagination.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESULTS

Results this time were quite gratifying and showed some change from the last survey. Significant items abstracted from the survey are provided here for your reference.

53% of our responding readers own a computer. Of these most (19%) own a Commodore or an Apple (11%), with Adam, Kaypro Atari and IBM also making a respectable showing. An impressive 61% do not own a VCR and 72% don't use home video games, while 53% make up for this by having a cable service.

The leading hobbies among our readers are reading science fiction and fantasy (28%), writing (17%) and comic collecting (14%). 53% belong to a local gaming club but only 36% belong to a national gaming organization. 53% buy their games in a local store, with the rest buying at conventions (25%) or through the mail (22%).

The average copy of ABYSS gets read by 3.28 enlightened gamers who are 20.53 years old (a year older than last time). They are 75% male and are in the second semester of their Sophomore year of college (25% have at least an MA). They are primarily students (44%), game designers (11%) and sometimes computer programmers, teachers, librarians or in the military. They earn \$17,180 per year, though there is a spread from 0 to over 30K. Of this money they spend \$132 on games and \$246 on books per year.

Only 27% use published modules and the most popular magazines aside from ABYSS are DRAGON (18%), ALARMS & EXCURSIONS (12%), WHITE DWARF (11%) and DRAGONLORDS (10%). Magazines which did well last time have fallen considerably, like DIFFERENT WORLDS (7%) and SPACEGAMER (6%). No one can agree on their favorite comic books, but the lead is held by Judge Dredd (8%), American Flag (7%), Twisted Tales (6%), Moon Knight (5%) and X-Men (5%), with many others making a showing. The top boardgames among our readers are Kingmaker (15%), Middle Passage/Passage to Cathay (12%), Rail Baron (10%) and Civilization (10%), with many others in contention. Roleplaying is dominated by Ysgarth (22%), To Challenge Tomorrow (14%), Champions (8%) and AD&D (8%).

We hope to let these results and any suggestions you send in guide our editorial policy in the coming year.



### Bishamon-ten

Bishamon is also known as the deva Vaisramana. He is one of the Shi-tenno(q.v.) and is also one of the Seven Gods of Luck(q.v.). He is portrayed as wearing armor and carrying a great spear and trampling demons underfoot. He is so important in so many areas that it is hard to see how he could have been missed when TSR compiled Deities and Demigods.

### Benten(Benzai-ten)

Benten is the 'Goddess of the Gift of Eloquence', and is regarded as an important figure in Brahmanism for she is the patron of language, wisdom, knowledge, music and the arts in general. She is also one of the Seven Gods of Luck(q.v.).

### Kichijo-ten

TSR does mention this goddess of luck, but she is not one of the seven. She was much like Benten, but she failed to establish a shrine and gather much of a following. She was so unimportant to the scheme of things that I can't see why TSR bothered with her, although their basic description was good. Her priests are often in conflict with those of Benten.

### Daikoku-ten

Daikoku, also known as the deva Mahakali, is a very popular god of happiness and wealth and is one of the Seven Gods of Luck. He is the protector of monasteries and the provider of food.

### Shoten

Shoten is the Japanese buddhist version of the deva Vinayaka. He is partly helpful and partly evil; he will sometimes help people overcome obstacles and sometimes he will place obstacles in their path. His priests are required to have some personal initiative and the holy symbol of the faith is never publicly displayed.

### Marishi-ten

Marishi is the embodiment of the ray of light that appears in the sky before sunrise. Her image was placed on helmets as a protection against an enemy's attacks. She is sometimes portrayed as male rather than female.

### Ida-ten

This is the deity of speed. He appears as a young man with a spear, a Chinese helmet and breastplate, holding a sword. The Japanese cliché 'an Ida-ten race' means a very fast race indeed. Naturally he can outrun any living creature.

## THE SEVEN GODS OF LUCK

This is a group of seven very popular deities associated with good luck and happiness. Some of them are mentioned in Deities and Demigods, but they are not identified there as a group. They were grouped together from various cycles during the 16th century and they are mentioned in other myths as well. They are a favorite theme in music and theatre and often appear together on their treasure ship Takara-bune(q.v.). Three have already been described, Benten, Bishamon and Daikoku, and can be referred to above. The other four are:

### Ebisu

He is the patron deity of fishermen and tradesmen. He is one which TSR got all muddled. He appears as a fat, bearded fisherman with a rod in one hand and a red snapper(a symbol of good luck in fishing) in the other. He is the son of Daikoku, but in some versions he is identified with Hiruko or Koto-iro-nushi, a son of Okuninushi. He is also associated with happiness due to his role as a peacemaker between celestial and earthly deities.

### Fukurokujo

This is a deity of longevity. He was once said to have been a Chinese Taoist sage and is depicted with a large, domed head and accompanied by a crane or tortoise which symbolizes happy old age.

**Hotei**

This deity appears as a cheerful buddhist monk with a large belly and often accompanied by children. He is sometimes associated with Miroku-bosatsu and is nicknamed 'the laughing buddha'.

**Jorojin**

This deity is much like Fukurokujo and was also once a sage. He appears as an old man with a white beard wearing a scholar's headdress and accompanied by a stag. He carries a staff that has attached to it a scroll containing all the wisdom of the world.

**THE SHI-TENNO**

These are the four guardians of the cardinal points in Japanese buddhist myth. They are also mentioned in Tibetan, Chinese and Vedic mythology. They usually appear wearing armor and heavily armed, trampling demons underfoot. They are known by various different names, but in Japanese myth they are:

**Bishomon**

This deity has already been mentioned. He is also the leader of this group and the guardian of the north. He is generally associated with the fall season.

**Jikoku**

This is the guardian of the east and the leader of the celestial musicians. He is white in color and his symbol is a stringed instrument, so he is worshipped by musicians and his priests should have some knowledge of music. He is associated with the summer.

**Komoku**

This is the guardian of the south. He is either colored blue or green and is depicted carrying a sword. He is associated with the spring.

**Zocho**

This is the guardian of the west and the god of serpents. He is red in color and his symbol is a small shrine or jewel and a serpent. He is associated with the winter.

**OTHER IMPORTANT DEITIES**

There are a large variety of lesser deities who are also important in their own areas and possibly of some use. These are described briefly here.

**Ama-tsu-nara:** This deity can be found in Deities and Demigods and is presented as a deity of blacksmiths, but I can find no mention of him in any other source.

**Amatsu-mikoboshi:** This is the shinto deity of evil whose name means 'against the star of heaven'.

**Ame-no-uzume:** This is the patron goddess of dance. It was her dancing that caused the other gods to laugh and draw a curious Amaterasu from the cave in which she hid herself. In some versions of myth she is the wife of Saruda-hiko.

**Bimbo-gami:** This is the shinto god of poverty.

**Binzoku:** This is a Japanese disciple of Buddha who was raised to the rank of god because of his powers to heal the sick.

**Binzuru-sonja:** One of the sixteen great disciples of Buddha who lost all hope of reaching Nirvana due to his use of his supernatural powers in front of heretics. He has great power over illness, particularly those affecting the eyes.

**Emma-o:** This is the overlord of hell (Jigoku) in Japanese buddhist myth. He judges the souls of men and sinners and determines where they go among the sixteen regions of fire or ice. The damned stay there until they are reborn either on earth or in heaven. He wears a Chinese judges cap and has a fierce expression on his face and wields a rather deadly mace. In modern Japan hell is thought of as a fable and Emma-o is used as a bogeyman to frighten young children into being good.

**Fuchi:** A fire goddess who was born from a piece of Kagutsuchi. She gave her name to Mt. Fuji.

**Fujin:** This is the god of the winds. He appears as an Oni carrying a bag in which the winds are contained.

**Futsunushi:** This is a shinto god of fire and lightning who helped clear the way for Ninigi to assume the throne of the earth.

**Hiruko:** This is the deformed child from Izanagi and Izanami's first union who was cast adrift in a reed boat. Some versions identify him with either Ebisu or with Sukuna-bikona, who came to Okuninushi in such a reed boat.

**Inari:** This is the god of rice cultivation, prosperity, merchants and tradesmen. He is also the patron deity of swordsmiths and is connected to brothels and entertainers. He is depicted as an old man with a flowing white beard and riding a fox carrying bags of rice. He sometimes uses foxes as messengers and foxes are treated with great respect by his priests.

**Kagu-tsuchi:** The ill-fated god of fire whose birth killed Izanami and was himself slain by Izanagi.

**Kami-nari:** This is the goddess of thunder. Trees split by lightning were considered sacred to her and could not be cut down.



**Kishimo-jin:** The mother of demons in Japanese buddhist myth who ate children but was later converted by Buddha and became a protector and healer of them.

**Onamujji:** A deity that tried to keep the earth's throne away from Ninigi.

**Otoshi-no-kami:** The god of the harvest.

**Raiden:** A major god and patron of the fletchers according to Deities and Demigods, but I could find no mention of him anywhere.

**Ryujin:** This is the god of dragons. Any prayers for rain were answered by him.

**Saruda-hiko:** The guide to Ninigi when he left the heavens to take command of the earth. He is the god of the crossroads and his symbol is the phallus, usually placed at a roadside.

**Saruto-hiko:** The god who was the commander of Ninigi's armies and also the grandson of Amaterasu.

**Shina-tsu-hiko:** A goddess of the winds born from Izanagi's breath.

**Sukuna-bikona:** A dwarfish deity who helped Okununushi in building the world. He is also the god of healing and of saki (rice wine) and is associated with hot springs.

**Takemikadzuchi:** An assistant to Futsunushi.

**Ta-no-kami:** A god of rice fields and the divisions between them.

**Uga-no-mitama-no-kami:** The god of rice who was given the first seeds by Amaterasu from Ukemochi's body.

**Ugaya-fuki-aezu:** The father of Jimmu-tenno, the first emperor of Japan and a grandson of Ninigi.

**Ukemochi:** The Shinto food goddess who was slain by Tsukiyomi. After her death Amaterasu sent a messenger to her body and he discovers that her body gave birth to many things; a horse and ox from her head, millet grass from her forehead, silkworms from her eyebrows, panic grass from her eyes, rice from her stomach and corn from her lower body. The messenger gives these to Amaterasu who extracts the seeds for other deities to sow. Then she puts the silkworms in her mouth and starts to unwind the thread thus beginning a silkworm culture.

**Umi-no-kami:** A god of the ocean and an assistant to Susannowo.

**Wata-tsumi-no-kami:** A god of the tides and an assistant to the god of the oceans.

Umi-no-kami.

**Yabune:** A god who protects households and their inhabitants from harm. He is briefly mentioned in old poems and rituals. His symbol is a gregeo.

#### CLOSING NOTES

This concludes our look at the major deities of the various Japanese pantheons in brief but sufficient detail. A further section 'The Japanese Bestiary' is yet to come and will examine the mythical creatures and artifacts of Japan.



# BEGGARY

## ERIC OLSON

With a topic like this you would expect me to talk about the Assassins' Guild or some sort of Mages' Guild. Instead, I'm going to talk about what may seem like the least of the guilds (in the eyes of society) but with a great potential for subtle power and influence. The guild in question is the Beggars' Guild, which may not even be a guild in the traditional sense, much in the way that Thieves' Guilds are more likely to be underworld confederacies or syndicates. Beggars are closely linked to Thieves in many ways, and in a well-developed city one of their functions would be as the eyes and ears of the professional Thief population as nobody notices beggars, they can go anywhere and find out almost anything. Knowledge is

are organized beggars adept at gathering information, they are likely to have garnered a few powerful friends/allies and surprising amounts of hidden capital. Another major area of power is the use of rumors on the street. Rumors and unhappy murmuring can bring down governments and destroy business faster than force of arms. A well organized band or syndicate of Beggars can bring society to the brink of collapse through rumors and well coordinated public displays. In many ancient cities much of the population consisted of displaced farm labor which had taken to begging so that cities were filled mainly with the very rich and the very poor. This was the great traditional problems of Rome, where the riots of the populace led Popes and Caesars to spend the hot summers elsewhere (Avignon, Ravenna, etc.).

The term Beggars' Guild is not necessarily accurate for the type of organization we are discussing, but for the sake of compliance with the erroneous notion of the Thieves' Guild which is so closely related we will stick with it. Beggars' Guilds are formed as a means of self-preservation against the other unsavory elements of the city. Beggars in particular neighborhoods would band together; pooling resources to find safe havens to sleep and hide from danger, finding protection in obscurity as well as numbers. In many cases it became expedient or desirable to expand the guild to include all of the beggars in the city, as a means of unity against opposing groups in society or as a means of consolidating power. Most often such unification would be the result of an ambitious person who wanted to enhance his personal power by dominating all the beggars in the city. Those beggars who supported him would prosper and those who opposed him would perish (nobody worries much about dead beggars in a gutter). Such ambitious beggars are a focal point in coordinating such a begging syndicate and are traditionally called Beggarmasters, the equivalent of the Guildmaster in the Beggars' Guild, which is in many ways a parody of the guilds of the wealthier segments of society. This pooling of manpower and resources could make beggars a formidable and unsuspected force and give a great deal of hidden influence to their leaders. City wide organization of beggars would not be the rule in every case. In larger cities competing syndicates might even be involved in active conflict, or have divided up the city into territories of control. Beggar wars would tend to go unnoticed by the general populace, as few would notice the disappearance of a faceless beggar and his replacement by an equally faceless beggar from a rival guild. Such occurrences should be rare as these organizations exist to be anonymous and violence courts attention.

Most people have the mistaken impression that beggars are all helpless cripples, an image which it is profitable for beggars to encourage. While some may be maimed or diseased, in most cases they are far from helpless, more likely to be sporting repulsive but artificial or cultivated and harmless disorders. Most beggars really fall into the group which were called 'Sturdy Beggars' in the middle ages. Healthy people who either could not or would not find work or were between occasional employment and preferred to earn easy money by begging or minor crimes. Some of these beggars might be foreigners unfamiliar with local language, unemployed sailors or mercenaries whose work is seasonal or occasional, criminals, renegades, displaced farm workers or unemployed entertainers. Most people do not realize the close ties between beggars of one sort or another and the wide range of street entertainers, such as jugglers, fortune-tellers, storytellers or mummers. Minstrels might even fit into this general class, though trained bards are a cut above it. As you can see from this listing, most beggars are far from helpless. Many are quick, strong and in the prime of life, as ready to take your money by threat as by sympathy. You'll never find a beggar unarmed. Living on the streets they cannot afford to be undefended and they can be close to the urban equivalent of brigands in strength and combat skill. Beggar groups will have some heavies to see that their members are kept in line and protected and maybe even some high-class muscle or even an assassin. Their preferred tactic is always to dupe targets, draw them away from guards or compatriots and then take him in a large group in a secluded spot where he will learn how hearty beggars can be. They probably will not kill, only maim or cripple, because whether they are healthy or not, they all resent society which has made them all outcasts of one sort or another. Some beggars will be crippled or diseased, but in a primitive society this will rarely take a totally incapacitating form. Those who are seriously physically injured or terminally ill will die. They won't hang around on the streets begging. Those with diseases like leprosy or plague won't even be allowed into the city, so the many affecting these afflictions will almost certainly be either fakers or recovered sufferers. To survive on the streets you must be sturdy but look wretched and beggars have many techniques for this. If you don't have the good fortune to have survived a bout of plague with nice scars there is always paint and powder, and anyone can play dumb or blind pretty well. The most likely actual cripples will be those who have lost limbs in industrial accidents and had to abandon their craft, usually careless manual laborers who got sloppy while lifting and hauling in a workshop or mill. Real craftsmen who get injured can still teach and supervise and are provided for by their guilds. Nonetheless armless beggar will claim to be a swordsmith reduced to poverty by his injury.

One of the important roles of organized beggars is in gathering information, as mentioned before. Cities are literally full of beggars and after a while citizens take almost no notice of them. No one has better opportunities to observe the passage of people, their activities and their involvements. Beggars are ideal for casing places before they are robbed, for finding out when people will be away from home, for finding out who meets who and where, and for following marks or enemies. They also provide a wonderful network connecting information sources together, and the more artful beggars can even listen in on conversations or catch a few snippets of plots and plans. They are accepted in all levels of the underworld, so they can gather information from those best suited to getting it, for example they could pass on confidences which a whore learned from a customer to a racketeer who would then use the information for blackmail. Naturally the beggar and his guild would get their percentage in all this.

One myth which must be dispelled is that of the poor beggar. The only really poor beggar is the incompetent or freelance beggar. One major function of the Beggars' Guild is to share the wealth so that no one goes hungry and to increase the opportunities for profit. Some of the portion which beggars pay will go to regular communal meals and relief, though some will line the pockets of the leaders. In many ways the Beggars' Guild is like an expanded, rather

mercenary family, particularly in the strong bond of loyalty and brotherhood. Guilds also provide training and aid in presenting a wretched appearance, and will help members keep out of sight when necessary. They also provide protection and assure fair pickings. Of course, in return for this they expect an honest fee, usually half of the beggars earnings or more, depending on the strength of the guild, possibly as much as three quarters. There is great danger for beggars who fall out with their guild or for freelancers moving into guild territory. Freelancers will either be eliminated or forced to join in a provisional status (if there is room for them) and those who fall out with their brethren will tend to find themselves at the bottom of the river or at least begging with full fees and none of the benefits or choice locations.

A Beggars' Guild can be a useful ally or a dangerous enemy. As an ally it can be a source of valuable information, can spread or squelch rumors, and can hide anyone and keep them safe. As an enemy it can do all this for your foes, cause your agents to disappear, spread damaging rumors, or even take you unawares and dispose of you. Beggars are kept strong and protected by a kind of code that they will never harm or inform on their guild or guild brothers. The punishment for breaking this code is swift and unpleasant. For many this type of brotherhood offers far more than common poverty, a way out and a means to survive and collect a little capital. A strong guild will support its members and advance them beyond its own ranks for later favors. Beggars are essentially criminals in sheep's clothing, but more than that they are the dispossessed poor of the society who must band together for survival and profit, becoming strong when unified in a way they could never hope to be alone. The Beggars' Guild is a force to be reckoned with in an urban society, a useful tool or means of advancement. I hope these few ideas on beggars may be of help to GMs in expanding the under-classes in an urban fantasy campaign. If applied wisely and tied in to other aspects of the city they can add depth and variety to background and events.



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## ECHOES

Dear Dave-baby,

Loved that cover on ABYSS #31! Guess that shows that all gamers aren't hoos! Won't be ashamed to leave that mag laying around the old pad! Oughta put more tit-shouts in! How 'bout one per issue? Don't worry about the munchkins! Do them good to see some flesh at a young age! Won't grow up queer! Hey! Should put some he-man stuff in the fiction, too, stuff like 'jammed his battle-hungry lance into the stear-wreathed target of her love-field! would be great! Gotta do this, will boost sales, raise the readership, heighten enjoyment! Keep on printin' Davey-babes!

Gregory 'Party-El!' Drone  
Northwest Orange, NJ

Dear ABYSS Staff,

I just received ABYSS #31. This is my 4th issue. I'm 100% stunned. The cover was the best I've ever encountered on an FRP magazine!!! 'God's and Myths of Japan' wasn't so good. 'Tact and Tactics' was awesome. The art was great! 'Ward Tales' was also a high scorer. 'In the Speculum' was so-so. 'The Lake of Korshar' was the best ever. Finally an AD&D module. Way to go Eric Olson! Plug page was a helpful little peice. The one major downfall was 'Bulletin from Britain' which was absolutely, 100% useless. Who cares about Britain! We don't need to know about Britain. But enough of the bad and on with the good. 'Falling Thunder' was a neat little story. 'New Tsgarth Magic' was super! All in all, gentlemen, it was well worth the wait. You did a damn good job!!! I still can't get over the cover, it's great!!!

John Green  
Chicago, IL

Dear Echoes and ABYSS Readers,

I disappear for a couple of months and what happens: 1/ve get the worst and most effeminate cover that I've ever seen, 2/ve get fiction from a non-pro that's not written by my favorite untalented assistant editor (watch out Lew), and 3/someone other than me has written an article on Middle Passage. What is the world coming to. I see the staff needs some shaking up to put things back on track. In all seriousness, everything but the cover is a welcome change. I'm happy that we are getting new writers, especially one who shows some interest in Middle Passage/Passage to Cathat. ABYSS needs fresh blood to flourish. It can't be carried by the editorial staff (some of whom we haven't heard from in a long time), though we keep trying. As for HP/PC, a few designer notes. Passage to Cathat is meant to add spice to Middle Passage and give players some room to expand and maneuver. For simultaneous movement (brought up in last issue), I recommend numbering the squares and prewrite orders. As for spies, make them available in ports for \$5000 or \$1000 with an upkeep cost of \$1-2000 per turn thereafter. They can obtain copies of ship manifests, give you assessments of port and ship defenses and determine the destination of ships as declared to the harbor master at the port of departure. They can't get the exact route the ship will take, but once you know the destination, figuring that out should be an exercise in logic. That's it for now. I hope you enjoy Passage to Cathat and London by Night. Feedback on them would be appreciated as we plan further work in these two areas, based on what we can gather about your interests.

Eric W. Olson  
Aurora, CO

# IN THE SPECULUM

## MAGAZINES



### SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE

APP:6, CON:1, VAL:5, PER:4, OVE:4

Now, this magazine has the single lowest content rating ever in *ABYSS*. Don't let that deceive you. Depending on what you're looking for there can be lots or very little here for you. The issue on hand is #64 and it is in 8.5x11 format with 42 pages and a glossy, full-color cover, though previous issues have been in more of a news format. The cover price is \$1.95 and publication is monthly.

Some readers may be familiar with *LOCUS*, the largest SF news magazine. If not, it will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of *ABYSS*. *SFC* is *LOCUS*'s main competition, and tries to present news of the SF field and hobby from a somewhat different perspective. Both magazines present news on authors, artists, events and publishing. Both present information on upcoming book releases. Both present book reviews and special articles. What *SFC* has to distinguish it is a rather nice line on the intrigues of publishing and short but consistently on target book reviews. What hurts it is an amateurish editorial attitude, a nauseating orientation towards the lowest common denominators of SF fandom, annoying convention reports, and trouble keeping up its schedule (we should talk). On the whole the news is more interesting than in *LOCUS* but less up to date. It shares a rather limited awareness of magazines and small presses with its competition. One particularly endearing new policy was established in reaction to TSR's legalistic attitudes about its trademarks, which prompted *SFC* to eliminate TSR reviews altogether.

On the whole there are actually less than a dozen pages of densely printed text in an issue of *SFC* and some of that space is wasted, but like *LOCUS*, part of the value of the magazine to readers interested in new releases in SF or fantasy is the advertisements (of which there are a great many). The ads in *SFC* are comprehensive, and they are a good way to find out what's new and upcoming in your favorite fields and from your favorite authors. The price is reasonable, and *SFC* is different enough from *LOCUS* that you might find it worth looking into. (DFN)

### STRATEGY & TACTICS

Dragon Publishing, POB 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

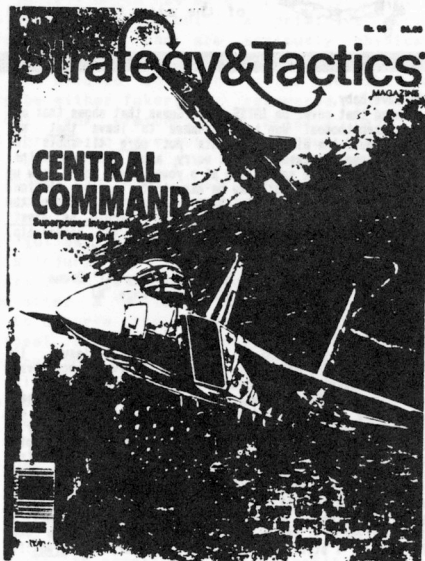
APP:6, CON:6, VAL:2, PER:5, OVE:4

As a former *S&T* subscriber I've been reluctant to look at its new incarnation in the less than inspiring hands of TSR. Superficially it still looks the same. There's still a game in each issue, many of the same features and the same outrageous

cover price. It may be a distortion through hindsight, but beneath the surface much seems to have changed. I have *S&T* #98 on hand. This issue is 64 8.5x11 pages of fairly dense text, with a good bit of advertising, mostly concentrate products, with half of the magazine and much of it for TSR products, including an incongruous full page ad for Marvel Super Heroes. A good bit of space seems to be wasted with large, crudely reproduced photographic illustrations and mediocre graphics. It doesn't seem to have the flash of the old *S&T*.

Content is what really counts. Most of the general fare and much of the dullness of the old *S&T* survives, though without the personal touch which marked its earlier incarnation. The game this issue is "Central Command", another predictable "what if" superpower confrontation scenario. It is playable, but far from exciting. One thing about it which I didn't really understand was why a full page illustration of all the counters, front and back was provided when the counters are provided with the game and easier to look over. They've also given Richard Berg a "Moves" section, which really has very little resemblance to the old *MOVES* magazine (to be truthful, I liked *MOVES* much more than *S&T* and would rather have seen it preserved). This section was interesting and somewhat useful, perhaps the best part of the magazine. The rest of the articles were fairly lifeless, but could be useful to some. The reviews featured in the section which preserves *RICHARD BERG'S REVIEW OF GAMES* were astonishingly laudatory and made me yearn for a negative review so I could have some faith in the rest of the section. On the whole, as might be expected Berg's material is the best in the issue. The "Feedback" section is also still around, though it seems a little hollow with no real *SPI* to back it up. I almost had a feeling that they were asking the questions as a matter of form rather than as a useful source of information.

On the whole *S&T* doesn't seem to be all that exciting, but then in its later issues with the real *SPI* it was no real thrill either. It is a useful, colorless hard wargamer's magazine best suited to those interested in technical games for more modern periods. There seems to be a conscious effort to stay away from the types of games which the old *S&T* sometimes featured for variety but which TSR seems to believe are adequately covered by their equally limited fantasy organ. I think some of the attitude behind the revival of *S&T* is illustrated by the table of contents where the listing of games in the review section shows all the games in normal print, but TSR's *A Gleam of Bayonets* in all capitals for added emphasis. I'd recommend *S&T* to avid hardcore wargamers, but they are probably already familiar with it. For those with a softer interest it is of limited value. If you are interested, subscribe. Don't buy it in the local store. You'll save \$12 a year that way. (DFN)





## WEIRD TALES

APP:6, CON:6, VAL:7, PER:5, OVE:6

Somehow another group of people got hold of the WEIRD TALES title and tradition, presumably wresting it from Lin Carter's rabidly clutching hands. This is, if anything, a genuine curiosity in many ways. The magazine is in an 8.5x11 format, published bi-monthly, almost all fiction with a few features, and done on slick paper with a color cover. A single copy is \$2.50 and a subscription is \$10 per year, a rather reasonable price.

The high point of the magazine should be looked at first. It seems to be genuinely devoted to the WEIRD TALES tradition, a work of fans of the original magazine hoping to recreate it, though they may have created more of a zombie than a true rebirth. It is also nice to see a mix of traditional WEIRD TALES writers (Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury), outstanding newer writers (Harlan Ellison, Stephen King) and less familiar writers. In some ways the content is weak. The orientation seems to be very much towards horror and light fantasy, certainly a part of the WEIRD TALES tradition, but other aspects seem to have been omitted, particularly dark fantasy, adventure and swords and sorcery. On the whole, the authors in this premiere issue are good writers, but not the ones I would expect to see kicking off a serious revival. There are better writers who are strong on the market right now, who should be in WEIRD TALES, including new writers who I fear may be overlooked by the editors. I would hope to see such writers as David Drake, Glen Cook, Charles de Lint, Adrian Cole, Richard Tierney and Charles Saunders in future issues. There are many good new writers out there who need a magazine to fill the void left by the passing of FANTASTIC. On the whole the fiction in this issue as well as the featured book reviews and 'weirdisms' are solid if not terribly exciting. Certainly up to standard in a shrinking magazine market.

The real weirdness of this new WEIRD TALES comes in the area of production. And stylistically this magazine is really strange. There is a conscious, plodding effort to stick to the style of the original magazine, to the extent of reprinting old art, logos and graphics, and even odd old advertisements. A little of this is fine, but it really gets bizarre when you notice that there are new advertisements featured which are as unusual as the most unusual to be found in the yellowing pages of a classic issue. How hard did the publisher have to search to find ads from the Rosticrucians, a medium by mail, and a manufacturer of ventriculouist's dummies? Where did these people advertise when there was no WEIRD TALES? Next, the art and graphics. Some of the art is reprinted, but most of the new art is awful, with the exception of a fairly nice cover. As to the graphics, the layout is amateurish and unimaginative. White space is used badly, the typestyle is unattractive, and it looks a lot like my high school literary magazine. The titles are particularly bad, all typeset the same way, with no style at all. Ron Cobb (art director), Frank Cohen (Layout) and Alex Yuchongtin (Layout) are presumably responsible for this, and they should either be replaced or take a course in layout and design. Hell, the title page is laid out with the logo, date and cover credit off center, and whoever did the cover has no ideas of how to handle bleeds or color overlays. It may be a personal perspective, but I could do a much better job, and there must be someone on the west coast with an interest in fantasy and the necessary skills. A good look is what will make WT succeed or fail, and as it stands now the look of the magazine invites failure.

This incarnation of WT shows potential, devotion and heart, but it is a disappointingly amateurish production, a labor more of love than of consideration or pragmatism. I hold some hope for WT, but they will have to pull production up to a marketable standard if they want to compete in a commercial climate which has already killed better produced magazines with less famous names. Nonetheless, give WT your support it's the least it deserves. (DFN)

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We've reviewed over 30 magazine reviews in the past issues of ABYSS. I think that's more than any other gaming magazine, so for reference this is a compilation of magazines and ratings. There is a purpose to all this. We don't know the current status of most of these magazines, and hope that someone out there will write in and give us an update, as we plan to go back and assign reviews to the surviving magazines which we did several years ago, some of which have changed considerably. In addition to the standard ratings (Appearance, Content, Value, Personal, Overall), Issue Number (ISS), Reviewer (REV) and Status (STA) are given. Those marked with a '?' are a mystery to us and news would be welcomed. Those marked 'RIP' are gone and those marked 'OK' seem to still be around. We'll keep running magazine reviews (someone has to do it), and if you know of new publications let us know or tell them to let us know, and if we can get hold of a copy we promise to do a review.

Magazine	APP	CON	VAL	PER	OVE	ISS	REV	STA
Adventure Gaming	2	4	4	4	3	15	DN	RIP
Adventurer's Club	7	5	5	6	5	29	DN	OK
Deck of Many Things	6	3	6	4	5	20	DN	OK
Different Worlds	3	5	7	5	5	15	DN	OK
Dragon	6	6	5	3	4	15	DN	OK
Dragonlands(C)	8	6	4	9	7	27	DN	?
Dragonlords(B)	8	9	6	8	8	18	DN	RIP
Explorer	3	4	1	4	3	23	DN	?
Fantasy Herald(S)	3	7	8	8	7	20	DN	?
Fantasy Book	7	5	6	5	5	26	DN	OK
Fantasy Review	6	8	5	7	7	26	DN	OK
Fantasy Tales(B)	9	7	6	7	7	27	DN	OK
Flagship(B)	8	7	4	7	7	29	JB	?
Miser's Horde(B)	4	5	7	6	6	29	DN	OK
Moonscape	9	4	6	5	5	25	DN	?
Necromancer	2	5	4	4	4	20	DN	?
Necronomicon	4	7	5	8	7	20	DN	RIP
Netherland Contin.	6	6	3	6	5	24	DN	?
Night Voyages	8	9	6	8	8	25	DN	RIP
Nuts & Bolts	6	5	5	7	4	29	DN	?
Olympus	5	3	5	5	4	21	DN	?
Oracle	9	5	5	7	7	21	DN	?
Phantasy	5	6	2	6	5	18	DN	?
Phantasy Network	8	4	5	5	5	24	JD	RIP
Quasits & Quasors(B)	6	8	8	5	7	18	DN	?
Ringwraith Shadow(B)	6	3	6	5	4	22	DN	?
Red Giant(B)	2	4	7	6	5	22	DN	?
Sorcerers Apprentice	8	8	7	8	8	15	DN	?
Spacegamer	4	7	2	5	3	15	DN	OK
Stornalord(B)	7	6	8	4	7	18	DN	?
Weirdbook	9	9	3	8	7	23	DN	OK
Myrafire	2	4	5	6	4	24	CJ	RIP

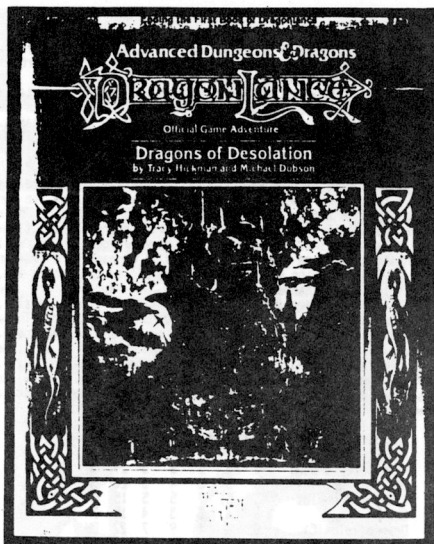
## GAMES &amp; AIDS

## TSR

TSR continues a copious publishing schedule despite rumours of Chapter 11 and massive staff reductions. This time I'm going to try to catch up on some of the wide selection of newish items on hand, including modules, aids and a few items which are hard to identify.

First, Indiana Jones marches on with a new module release called *Crystal Death*, a collection of mini-scenarios produced with some flash and some tacky gimmicks like a 'combat clock' and the 'magic viewer' system (presumably a red filter to read secret information screened out by an overlay, though my copy was missing its screen). The half-dozen scenarios presented are childish and unimaginative, and between the style and the gimmicks I'd say this was aimed at an audience of 10 year olds with little imagination or interest in role-playing. If I were publishing products aimed at this sort of audience I'd seriously reassess my personal value system.

In *Drums on Fire Mountain*, the 6th in TSR's series of modules brought in from the UK, the designers prove three things. First, even role-playing worlds are afflicted with wogs who need to be put down. Second, it doesn't matter where you are or what kind of culture you're in, a dungeon is still a dungeon. And third, TSR managed to find people in England who are just as unimaginative as their domestic designers. This module is set on the AD&D equivalent of a south-seas island called Teki-nura-ria. The scenario is basic. Noble aryan adventurers head to an island of primitives (grass-skirted orcs), eager to oppress them and steal all their wealth and the secrets of the inevitable underground complex built by their ancestors. Although the setting is superficially new and there are a few original or at least variant monsters, this is just the same old hack and slash stuff, ideal for munchkins, but not really role-playing.

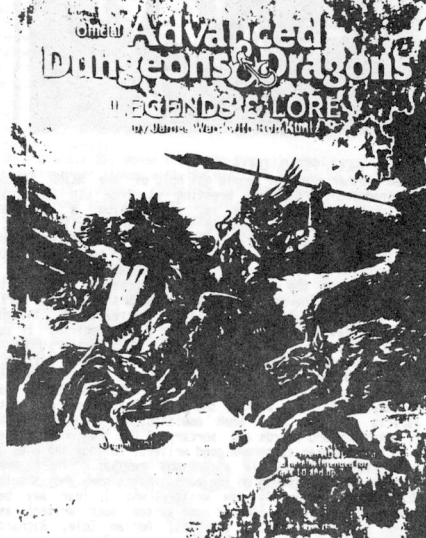


Now, last issue I got sort of excited about a module in the 'Dragonlance' series. Since then I've seen more of the series and had a chance to look at the novels based on the series to be reviewed next issue. *Dungeons of Desolation* is the fourth module in the series. On the whole, design and production are well above TSR's standard and the orientation is towards a somewhat more mature(sic) audience. The more I see of this series the less the surface trappings fool me. Sure the maps and graphics are excellent, but this is just munchkin bait of another sort. There are a few nice ideas. The flying fortress bit is well done, but a flying dungeon is just a flying dungeon. The really offensive aspects of this adventure are the awkward elements of the story, the slavish wedding to conventions of the AD&D/Pseudo-Tolkien world, and the really offensive characters who are offered for play. Yes, you no longer have to think, TSR provides the character for you. These characters are essentially eight stereotypes. The very names are dead giveaways to the attitudes of the designers. I don't know about you, but if I were forced to play a dwarf named Flint Fireforge I'd fall on the axe which I am naturally carrying as fast as possible. Some exciting innovations... a female(!) cleric (named Goldmoon of all things) and a race called kender who are, guess what, halflings, with the main representative bearing the proud name Tasslehoff Burrfoot. There's also a wonderful random encounter section with a selection of monsters who seem totally illogical and out of place. This module has given me a clear vision of who this series is designed for. I see a vast audience of pudgy myopic high-school girls clutching harlequin romances, early middle-aged bureaucrats, attendees of Darkover fan conventions and other quietly desperate people with enough imagination to hate their lives and themselves and too little to move beyond the mind-numbing conventions presented in this series of modules clearly intended to entertain grown-up munchkins.

Now, I don't actually know anyone who still plays *Star Frontiers*, though I know plenty of people who played once or twice. However, there must be a following as TSR is releasing modules like the new 2001 and 2010 modules, the latter of which was actually released before the movie. There isn't much to say about these two modules. The two added skills in 2001, 'Astronomy' and 'Navigation' make you wonder how people traveled through space prior to this point. In fact, as astronomy is described as allowing one to tell the difference between stars and planets, I feel sort of sorry for all the previous space travellers roasted as they attempted to land on stars. They are well produced and well thought out, but essentially unplayable, as might be expected from the topics. Also out for *Star Frontiers* is module number four, *Mission to Alcazzar*. This module is actually somewhat better than one would expect. They set up a fairly interesting if standard planet, with some possible native life and situations. It is a basic reconnaissance, rescue and raid mission, so common to SF role-playing, but it is fairly well set up and has the detail and information necessary. *Mission to Alcazzar* is not innovative, but it is good solid adventuring with the emphasis on quick thinking rather than personality or interaction, which is not altogether bad for purposes of relaxation.

Also new from TSR is *Legends and Lore*, an exciting and original role-playing aid. As it says in small print on the cover, this is merely a reprint of the old *Deities and Demigods* with a new title, presumably because *Deities and Demigods* was out of print and with a new title and cover art the unwary might buy a

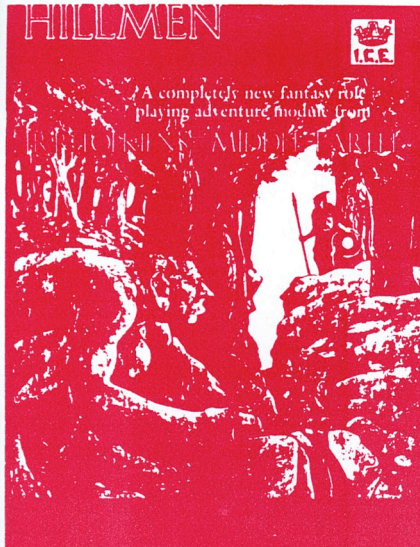
second copy. Aside from these two changes and a new introduction, the text and art are exactly the same as the second edition of *Deities and Demigods*, down to being taken from the same layouts and typeset. Now you would think that any self-respecting game company would take this opportunity to correct some of the inaccuracies in what was probably the single most inaccurate and offensive role-playing aid ever published. I would think that outraged reviews of *Deities and Demigods* in every major magazine would have at least made them blush and perhaps do something to bring it up to par. Damn it, mythology is important in role-playing, and even AD&D players deserve better than this garbage. But no, it *Legends and Lore* is just the same old stuff, with more omissions than can be counted, glaring errors, incalculable inaccuracies, and a dominating attitude which lowers deities to the levels of big monsters and makes religion nothing more than another magic item. Some day I may have the time to do a rundown of all that's wrong with *Legends and Lore*, but here I have neither the time nor the space. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that in the write up of Odin alone there are at least 7 major errors which would come clear from reading a single book on Norse myth, not to mention at least a half-dozen notable omissions, and a variety of degrading unnecessary additions which are essentially gilding the lily. On the whole, as with many of the deities in this book there is no more than a superficial resemblance between the being described and anything found in actual myth or legend. If the goal of TSR is to encourage ignorance and disseminate misinformation *Legends and Lore* is a landmark. As mythology or a role-playing aid it is a crime. (JLS)



#### IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES

ICE seems to have put their more original systems and work on the back burner and decided to concentrate on their more profitable but somewhat less interesting Middle Earth series. There are several fairly interesting new items out in this series, and for those who retain an interest in Tolkien and his world they might be worth checking into.

The *Tower of Girdle Unlool* and *Shelob's Lair* and *Hillmen of the Trollshaws* are two new modules. What makes these modules interesting and sets them apart from more common fare is that they are not merely dungeons or other hack and slash situations. Each module contains not only encounters, descriptions and situations, but extensive and useful regional and situational background as well, which makes the adventures more generally useful. Both booklets are well put together, with color covers, slick paper and clear type. The art and graphics are both attractive and functional, and Peter Fenlon's maps recreate Tolkien's own style well, while adding clarity and detail. Both adventures feature useful charts and aids, including general rules for conversion to other systems (these are notably unsuited to most up to date skill-based systems, though they work fine for D&D type games). *Shelob's Lair* recreates the memorable region around Girdle Unlool and the situation of the entry into Gondor. Characters, races and some background have been fleshed out nicely, but the situation while fairly straightforward is a bit too challenging for the average munchkin, as it requires enough thought to use tact and evasion rather than sword and spear. There are four scenarios of varying length and complexity provided. On the whole, this is a good adventure, with useful background information, though it could be somewhat more novel, but novelty is hard to achieve with



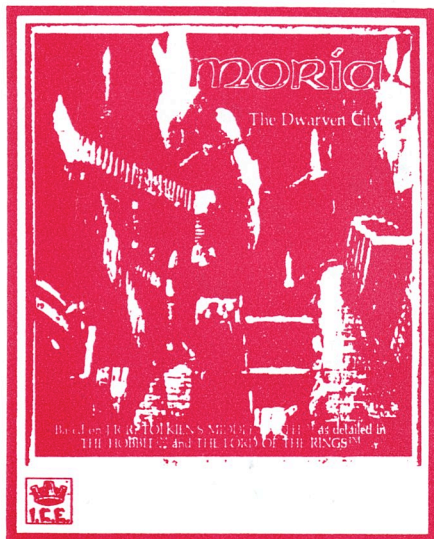
such a familiar topic. *Hillmen* treats a less familiar setting, and does it rather well. It is somewhat longer than *Shelob's Lair*, but the format and style are similar. It sets up a good background which was only touched on by Tolkien, concentrating on the fortress of Cameth Brin and the underground complexes of the hillmen. There are essentially five scenarios provided, and they are all fairly good, with nice variety. On the whole, this package seems more interesting and playable than the first because it offered more room for originality and inventiveness.

*Moria: The Dwarven City* is the latest in ICE's series of campaign modules detailing the major areas of Middle Earth. It includes extensive maps of the area and the mines and city themselves. Background, history and detail are provided for different times and situations. A good bit of material is added to flesh out Tolkien's framework. Some of that is very good, particularly the political and historical material. The added monsters and creatures are a bit dubious, but I suppose they are necessary for variety. To provide immediate use there are six fairly sketchy scenarios provided, but there is enough background that a good GM can develop plenty of situations for further play. *Moria* is better suited than some of ICE's other aids for play with beginners who are moving away from primitive playing styles, but unfortunately some conversion work will be needed for advanced systems, as the ideas are somewhat ahead of the mechanics provided.

Also on hand is a bit of a change from ICE, *The Lonely Mountain*, a boardgame set in the background of *The Hobbit*. The game is fairly simple, featuring a functional map and set of tables and easy to follow rules. There are cards provided for

characters, opponents and treasure, as well as counters for keeping track of movement. In both production and design style it is somewhat reminiscent of SPI's games on similar lighter topics. The main problem with the game is that it isn't really very interesting. Essentially, players go into the mountain and try to best obstacles and grab what they can of Smaug's treasure, much like a number of other board and computer games. The topic and concepts seem somewhat flat and childish, and on the whole it doesn't provide enough development or detail to hold up for more than a few plays. This isn't a poor game by any means. It is well produced and designed, but like other games of the same genre (*Dungeon*, *Talisman*, etc) it is not a lasting font of excitement.

ICE's romance with Tolkien enterprises has slowed their production of aids on other topics, but they do have on notable recent release, an expanded edition of *The Iron Wind*, their original campaign aid. The background is nicely developed, more original than their Tolkien material, and probably of greater interest to experienced gamers. The maps and presentation are excellent, the background well thought out, and lots of interesting detail is provided. The booklet concludes with a set of three scenarios of widely separated levels of power as examples for play. Stats are in terms of their *Rolemaster* system, but they suggest that you write for rules on conversion to your preferred system (I'll let you know what comes of my request for V&G and TCT conversions). It seems like *ADND* conversion would be fairly easy. On the whole I'd recommend *The Iron Wind*, and I wish they'd publish more aids for this pleasant setting. (DFN)



#### FEEDBACK RESULTS FOR #31

Article	Rating	Change
Conjurings	82	+7
Gods of Japan	95	--
Tact & Tactics	62	--
Wyrd Tales	90	--
In the Speculum	97	+6
Lake of Korshar	74	--
Bulletin...	85	--
Echoes...	81	--
Falling Thunder	76	--
New Ysgarth Magic	88	--
Peter Chen	84	+2
Rick Pressley	84	=
Others	95	+5
Overall	84	+1

#### RAGNAROK ENTERPRISES ORDER FORM

# Item	Price Total
— ABYSS(6)	10.00
— ABYSS(13)	18.00
— TCT	8.95
— London by Night	5.95
— Challengers	5.95
— Guns at Noon	4.00
— Boxed TCT	9.95
— Ysgarth(New Edit)	15.00
— Suburban Slasher	6.66
— Citadel of Zushran	2.00
— Dark Waters	5.95
TOTAL\$	

#### YOUR FEEDBACK ON #32

Rate these items on a scale from 1(lawful) to 100(great)

Conjurings	_____
Forest & Deep	_____
Draw	_____
Gods of Japan	_____
By the Gods	_____
Plug Page	_____
Begary	_____
Echoes from the Abyss	_____
In the Speculum	_____

Peter Chen \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rick Pressley \_\_\_\_\_  
 Them Dead Dudes \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



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