

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SIMULATION

Nr. 3, July 1980 \$3.00

# Ares

# Barbarian Fantasy Empires in Conflict Kings

In this issue:

FICTION

**The Whispering Mirror**

RICHARD LYON AND  
ANDREW OFUTT

Final Notes

EDWARD MICHAELS

FACT

**War in Space**

JOHN PRADOS

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and magical conflict as  
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**Magazine Printing:** Wellesley Press, Framingham, Massachusetts  
**Game Component Printing:** Reflex Offset, Garden City, Long Island Die-Cutting: Friedman Die-Cutters, New York  
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THE MAGAZINE OF  
SCIENCE FICTION  
AND FANTASY  
SIMULATION

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## Muse

It isn't often you can actually learn a lesson from a science fantasy film, but such is the case with *The Empire Strikes Back*. After *Star Wars* boggled all the greedy schlockmeisters of the universe with the supernova of green it produced, they responded in typical schlock mode: let's copy it and cash in. S.O.P. for your cliché Hollywood "creative" minds. This impulse to make money by imitation and/or giving the public what it seems to want wouldn't be so objectionable, if the folks doing it also had some realization of *what* it is they are imitating and what are the qualities and quantities that are causing people to line up in mega-groups to sit in the dark for two hours.

After all, loving imitation is responsible for a lot of high art — and giving people that which entertains them is what show business is all about! Ain't it? So here's the kicker: a successful imitation is one which reproduces the *spirit* of the original, not the *surface*. Marvin Mogul can only see cute robots and zooming rocket boats as a ticket to box office boffo. So he orders up *Battle-*

*Tub Galaxative* and *Slattern 3*, and waits for the cash to pour in the windows of his office. So they cancel his series and hoist him out of the moviehouse. Marvin Mogul says: "Sci-fi is just a flash in the pan."

A good imitation requires at least as much creativity as the original. This fact is lost in the wind that blows inside the heads of most Hollywood poobahs. If, for some reason, you think imitation is easy, go out and imitate a successful film, book, or whatever. Imitate a successful game — I dare ya (I'm beginning to sound like an alkaline battery commercial). Of course, you *must* do it skillfully, entertainingly, and intelligently for it to be a "genuine" imitation. To do a *successful* imitation, the *heart* of the original must be reproduced and the "clone" brought to term from the center out.

After all the inept "cash in" productions have failed, we now have a sequel to *Star Wars* that is at least as well done as the first film. It is also a very different film (see the review in this issue). Many new creative people worked on *Empire*, a story universe brought to fruition, and Mr. Lucas tuned his participation to a lesser intensity. A textbook approach to intelligent, creative, successful imitation.

To entertain people, you must excite them, appeal to their sentiments, cause them to laugh and become enthralled by your production whatever it might be. Imagine a vaudeville stage. The brilliantly original card magician finishes his act and the crowd goes wild with applause. The board goes on the easel for the next act: "The Great Cardozo" — a guy that was doing a dog act last week, but saw the crowd go wild over card tricks. Cardozo comes out and runs through several technically adequate card tricks, and the crowd goes to sleep. So how come? Doesn't the crowd *always* go wild over card tricks? Aren't they *hot*? Aren't they *box office*? Maybe Cardozo should buy more expensive cards or hire an assistant from the same theatrical agency as the guy he's trying to imitate. Or maybe Cardozo should face up to the fact that it's the *magic* that gets the crowd, not the tricks.

Redmond



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ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN GARCIA

# The Whispering Mirror

by Richard Lyon & Andrew Offutt

"Twas a strange, strange thing. The Queen's bedchamber was obviously empty and yet there was the sound from in there...of whispering.

— STATEMENT OF MILORD DUKE ASHOK ON HIS DEATHBED

Wearing depression like a second cloak, Breen trudged up to the little house that was home to him and his grandfather so long as they must remain in this besieged city. Twilight was creeping over the city, stealthily as an assassin. As he reached the door, Breen saw someone rushing at him from out of the darkness. He heard the shout as he reached for his dagger.

"My lord Breen!" the unknown called. "It's Sir Vorund!"

Oh. Breen remembered the skinny knight who had been his friend that day at Castle Paragas. The youth relaxed, but only a little. The knight's face hardly resembled that of a bearer of good tidings.

"Is it true?" Vorund asked breathlessly. "Did you publicly accuse Lord Druiin? — try to force him into a duel?"

Breen sighed. "It's true. But as you must know he's too busy dueling others to bother with me."

The worry clouding Vorund's sky-colored eyes deepened. "Ah lad! I fear me you may be quarreling with your only friend. Small reason you and I have to trust King Thilloiden — and if such people as we have any friends at all, 'tis surely Milord Druiin."

"The street's a bad place to speak against the king," Breen said quietly, and opened the door. "Come in, Sir Vorund. Mind the lintel."

A second surprise awaited Breen within; someone was waiting in the sitting room. He stared at the wizard Ebbren, who was about as attractive as spiders and rats. Words exploded from Breen in the accusative.

"What're you doing here? Where's your grandfather?"

The maroon-robed man bowed politely and stringy gray-and-white hair swung past his pinched face. (A rat's face, Breen thought.) "I came to talk with you and your grandfather. But after he admitted me, the old man had a small stroke. My presence was good fortune, as I've some skill in such matters. He is in his bed, resting comfortably, and should enjoy a full recovery."

"I don't want to seem ungrateful, but I mean to check what you just said, wizard."

As Ebbren gestured agreement and Breen started past him, Vorund touched the youth's arm. "Lad," he murmured, "we must talk. Dark things are happening and..."

Abruptly Vorund's face went gray and he clutched at his chest. Even as Breen tried to grab him, his legs went limp. The stringy knight crumpled to the floor like a sliced wash-line.

"I do believe," Ebbren observed impersonally, "the poor fellow is having a heart seizure."

**HIS FACE** CONTORTED IN PAIN, Vorund still struggled to speak. Hurriedly Breen squatted and bent an ear to the man's lips. "I came here to warn you," Breen heard. "Things happening in the king's court... men disappearing wi-withouttt... k-queen's bedroom, mirror there..." Approaching death wracked him in a final spasm and with his last bit of breath Vorund said, "At night the mirror...whispers..."

His own condition close to debilitating shock, Breen rose from a corpse. He looked at Ebbren, and his expression became one of intense suspicion. "I notice, wizard, that you made no attempt to help my friend."

"There was nothing I could do," Ebbren said with a rather elaborate gesture. "Besides, the poor fellow feared me. Had I approached him, 'twould merely have worsened his state."

"Worse than death? Rather a coincidence, isn't it? First my grandfather's stroke. Then Vorund's seizure, all in one night and with you present." Breen's indifferent upbringing had hardly taught him not to stand up to the aged; even wizardly ones.

"Tragically, no," the ugly little man replied in a sigh. "This city is under siege and near starvation. We are all weakened, my boy. Death is all too common. It is our constant companion."

Slowly Breen let out his breath. Much as he mistrusted the wizard, there was no reasonable ground on which he could accuse him of anything. "Suppose," he said, still watching his unwelcome guest most closely, "suppose that you just state your business, sir, and depart. I must to my grandfather."

"He lives, Breen; he sleeps now; he needs that rest. Today you publicly accused the most noble Lord Druiin of plotting the massacre at Castle Paragas. That is something King Thilloiden has long suspected, without being able to prove it. Do you have proof? — evidence, that would stand up to a court of his peers?"

"No. That's why I tried to force the knife into a duel."

"Ahh, young man, young man," the mage said, with a placating gesture of a two-ripled hand that was like an albino spider. "I fear that would be of no more avail. Sir Druiin always chooses the crossbow, a weapon that requires not so much skill as calm and steady nerves. As he is much the coldest blooded man in the realm, he always wins. The king has lost several friends that way. Still..." The mage paused, paced about the sparsely furnished room. His robe whispered about doubtless spindly legs Breen had no desire to behold. "Still, my young friend, there *is* somewhat you can do, something which would greatly advance you in the king's favor." Again Ebbren paused to stare sidewise, eyebrow cocked. Fixing, those eyes were. Breen didn't like that gaze.

"There are many things I could do, did I choose! Trusting you is not one of them, sir!"

Even as he snapped the "sir" as an insult, the youth was staring into the wizard's red eyes. They were larger, much larger, than they had any right to be. Ebbren spoke softly, purring.

"Would you be willing to spy on Druiin? Suppose I were to provide you with a magical disguise, so that you could follow Druiin unknown, learn what he plots against the kingdom..."

"I must go to my grandfa — "Well... uh... I mean, that would depend on..." His voice trailed off with his capacity for thought. He had to gaze in helpless fascination into the wizard's enormous red eyes; eyes like unto glowing pools of blood. He had the strangest feeling, uncanny and far from pleasant, as if he were shrinking. *No, of course not. But that chair is growing!*

"I'm so pleased that you agree," Ebbren whispered, and reached down toward Breen.

To the boy's horror the old man was now gigantic, his hand so large that he could — and did — pick Breen up by the scruff of the neck as if he were a kitten. Squealing in angry protest, Breen squeezed shut his eyes

against the horror of vertigo. He was being carried through the air. It was not just Ebbren; the entire room had grown to prodigious dimensions, furnished for giants. From somewhere the mage produced a leather poke that was covered, strangely, with a mesh of chain armor. Without ceremony Breen was dropped into that reinforced sack. As its top was drawn shut to imprison him in utter darkness, he heard the wizard's voice:

"Don't get excited, lad. After you've done your spying on Druiin and learned what he's up to, just come back here and I'll gladly turn you back."

**T**RAPPED IN BLACKNESS, Breen fought down panic and struggled to understand what had happened to him. He realized that the whole room, Ebbren included, had not grown. He had indeed shrunk! That frightsome concept made his whiskers bristle and his tail twitch, even as he forced himself to accept it.

*Wait! I don't have any whiskers, much less a tail!*

Shuddering in the grip of an uncanny feeling, Breen began to feel himself with his...paws. He did indeed have whiskers, as well as a long furless tail. His body was covered in sleek but greasy fur and...

*Dark Lady Theba preserve me! That rat-faced swine has changed me into a rat!*

In sudden panic he struggled furiously to claw and bite his way out of the sack. Logic was long fled and even his grasp on sanity was tenuous. Panting, he gained enough control to realize that no matter what claws and teeth did to the leather, he was not going through chainmail. The mind he set to thinking was still his own, not a rat's. Unnerving as it was, he could not complain that Ebbren's "magical disguise" was not effective. Indeed it could well be the solution to his problem. This way he might well be able to effect a settling of accounts with Druiin. One cheering aspect was that rats could not talk. Therefore Breen need not worry about being returned to his normal form. Ebbren had to do that, if he wanted to hear what his unwilling spy had learned.

*Gods and stars, the youth thought as a measure of calmness returned, this is monstrous ironic. I've come full circle!*

A whoreson born, Breen had spent his childhood in the city streets, surviving as best he could. He was hardly soft or naive when, two years ago, the balding Sir Clarin had appeared with his black brows and salty beard. He had proclaimed it that street-boy was his long-lost grandson, the child acknowledged by Clarin's son Ethod on his deathbed. Breen's soaring notions of a fabulous improvement in his status were soon dashed, however; Clarin's legitimate heirs had long ago stripped the old man of everything. They permitted him to live as a poor dependent on the great estates that were once his alone. Breen they made... a servant. In truth he was better off. At least he ate regularly, and slept under a roof. But the resentment that was a canker in Clarin also gnawed the growing, street-wise boy.

The massacre at Castle Paragas changed everything.

With so many noble families destroyed by Northron raiders, Breen became sudden heir to vast domains, as poor Clarin was disbarred by a provision of the law that forbade property's reverting backward. Still, all was not yet sunshine and velvet. Breen's sudden wealth meant the opposite of security. To begin with, neither the king nor the remaining nobility were happy to welcome a whoreson into their high-nosed ranks. Then, in the ruins of Castle Paragas Breen and Clarin found evidence that Druiin had not only survived the massacre but must have been its author. Now he had mysteriously disappeared. The devil Druiin must treacherously have brought the awful Northmen!

**O**BVIOUSLY DRUIIN WOULD one day return; in law his claim to the inheritance was much better than Breen's. Merely by petitioning the High Court, Druiin could take from Breen and Clarin all they possessed. For the noble Clarin, such a situation was a matter of family honor. To clean and preserve that honor, Breen would have to challenge and slay Druiin, since they could not prove his complicity in the mass murders. To that end Breen must train night and day. Since it was also a matter of survival, Breen agreed. Every evening he went into the forest with crossbow and one bolt. He must make that shaft count, or go without dinner. Soon the forest's squirrel population was reduced, and Breen ate regularly. When he and Clarin came here to Ermont and were trapped by the siege, the routine had changed but little. Breen still went forth every evening, to shoot the only game that abounded in this starving city: rats. Eaten whole and raw, they sustained life.

*And now I am become a rat,* Breen thought, from the bottom of a sack that swung gently as he was carried to an unknown destination.

For all his fears, he remained the street-dreaded optimist and opportunist. Since the day last week when Druiin had mysteriously reappeared, his bastard cousin Breen had known that he must somehow destroy him.

Now perhaps he had a chance to accomplish that, retain his new wealth, and gain the king's favor into the bargain. For a long moment (Lord?) Breen focused on that happy prospect. He had been worried about Clarin's health. Lack of food was more cruel to the elderly than to any. If Breen could win King Thilloden's favor, he and Clarin could join those of the royal favorites who feasted at the palace. For all the deprivation of the general populace, the palace larder was ever well stocked, and the Royal Granary rich full. Indeed, though it was well guarded against humans, that granary was where the rats Breen slew fattened themselves. He had rather eat at the king's table first hand!

*Now if I c —* the sack he occupied ceased its swaying.

*Have we reached our destination? What? Where?*

New panic surged in, dark as the domain of Drood of the Thousand Arms. The bag opened and Breen blinked at the influx of moonlight. Then a huge hand grabbed him and he was hurried by through the air.

Sailing over a high stone fence, he saw a

grassy lawn rushing rapidly up at him. An instinctive twitch of his tail brought Breen the rat down on all four widespread feet. Breen felt really good about that accomplishment — and about the fact that this small body withstood the shock of that impact with ease. He reared up to survey his new surroundings.

*Now what am I supposed to do? I don't want to go in there!* Directly before him bulked a stately manor house. At a guess: Druiin's headquarters. The home base of his sworn enemy! *Well, perhaps I shan't bite Ebberrn's fingers all the way off, then.*

Breen hesitated, whiskers twitching as he reflected. He had small reason to trust Ebberrn. Still, it was hardly likely that the callous wizard would go to so much trouble in bringing him here if that house did not hold something well worth learning about. For a youth with curiosity and an adventurous spirit, the choice was easily made. Breen padded silently forward on four wee paws, approaching the medium-sized house. He soon saw that gaining entry would be no problem. A small hole had been cut in the bottom of the door, obviously intended for a cat. Cats in Ermont had long since gone to the stew pot.

**B**REEN APPROACHED the door without a second thought, the coolest rat in Ermont. Just as he was about to enter, his rat's sense warned him: his nose. The musky odor was undeniably male and Breen could not help imagining a powerful, huge-pawed animal skilled at rat murder. *Cat!*

*It might be just a pampered housepet, though — and whatever it is, I'm not making myself any safer by standing here shivering.*

Without recognizing this next of the night's many choices, Breen moved not as *rattus rattus* but as *homo* usually *sapiens*. The rat passed in by the cat's entry.

Within the house he stared about, startled and puzzled. The place was seemingly deserted. Dark as it was, dark as Drood's gaze, save for the moonlight streaming through broken windows. A ghostly lacy of spiders' webs sagged under the dust that was thick on the floor. From all appearances no one had been here for years, decades...

Except that someone had. Human footprints marked the dust of the floor, fresh tracks. Each was longer than Breen's new body. Now he saw that strands of cobwebbery hung loose here and there, torn. Last night, perhaps the night before, someone had been here. Judging from the footprints and the fact that so few cobwebs had been disturbed, that someone had been moving with surreptitious care.

Breen gulped back curiosity and refused to rush off on the trail of this previous invader. Instead he examined the cobwebs. His bright red rodent's eyes saw clearly, despite the darkness, and what he saw was disturbing. These strands were...not quite right! What their origin might be he could not guess, but of one thing he was sure: no honest cob had spun these ghostly threads that laced the room.

Moving with utmost caution, he followed the footprints.

Through a sitting room full of long disused chairs they led him, into a dining chamber. He ran up a chair to inspect a table elegantly set with silver cutlery, crystal goblets, ornate porcelain plates. All were covered in cobweb and dust. *Someone planned a big party, set the table, and rushed off to leave it here for twenty years worth of spiders.*

The trail of footprints ended in a corner, with a fresh corpse.

Feeling about as comfortable as a wine taster in Naroka, Breen recognized Lord Hrucial of Wellstream, a favorite of King Thilloden. His Majesty's boon companion in drink and womanizing — and, some dared whisper, the man Thilloden relied upon when an assassination was needed. The handsome wretch's dagger still shone silver in his cold hand, but what had laid him low was a mystery. There wasn't a mark on the body.

*A stroke or a heart attack, perhaps, Breen mused without cheer. 'Twould seem that I am not the first Ebberrn has sent to this spiders' house!*

Fear's chill fingers clutched at his little stomach and his rodent's body quivered with nervous excitement. Now Breen knew he was in the very thick of a dark unholy war between wizards. Thilloden and his mage Ebberrn against Druiin...and whatever irrefragable powers he was allied with. Hrucial must have come here in the dead of night to murder Druiin. Instead he...

*The spiderwebs! They're alarms! Touch one of them and Druiin knows he has an uninvited guest.*

Breen had a moment to feel profoundly grateful for the instinctive caution that had kept him from disturbing the webs. Then he moved on.

Probably, he mused as he scurried along, *this whole downstairs area is a trap. So — what's abovestairs, so well protected?* The main staircase he assumed had to be a trap. In the kitchen, however, he found what he sought. A back stairway wound upward, a narrow strait into the unknown.



He crept upward. Soon he was rewarded by the sight of dim lamplight and the sound of human voices. At the top of the stairs he saw a topaz bar of light across the bottom of a closed door that, to a rat, looked a hundred feet tall. Freezing in place, he listened to the muffled voices from the far side of the door.

"Yes, grandfather, I appreciate the risks. Still, given our other options, I think it's the best gamble."

*Druin*! the youth thought, and excitement swelled huge in his tiny body. The reference to "grandfather" puzzled him — until he remembered. Was there not a rumor that *Druin's* maternal grandfather was a black wizard? Something vastly important was afoot. *Go close enough to peek under the door, and I'll close what.*

He was just starting to leave the stairhead when it struck. Abruptly and only for an instant the very air seemed alive, glowing with power. Wild ultra-vivid colors flashed before Breen's eyes and his fur bristled in fear. It was as though the very nature of reality had been warped for a tiny moment, and instinctively he knew what it was. Magic. Black magic. Some sort of dire spell had just been cast.

As Breen covered back, the door slowly creaked open. From the protective darkness Breen watched fearfully, little red eyes bulging while he wondered what unearthly horror that opening portal might reveal....

They came forth. Without cheer Breen beheld a shriveled old man and a large black cat. A tom, lean and long, with big dangerous paws. Breen could see only menace in those slanted slits of green that were the cat's eyes.

Quoth the oldest to the animal, "Remember, *Druin*, you must be back here before dawn."

*Druod's eyeballs — my cousin's transformed himself into a cat — natural enemy of rats. Us rats!*

Galvanized by terror at this utterly unnatural event with its dread implications for himself personally, Breen bolted down the stairs. He was near the bottom before he realized how incongruous his fear was. He had matter of factly accepted his own transformation, precisely because it was a matter of fact: a situation he could not change but could use to advantage. Equally a matter of fact was that his enemies also used magic. Best to direct his worry and fears to his real problems — of which he had plenty. To begin with, in seconds the cat would descend that narrow stairwell, and nothing he could do would prevent it from scenting him.

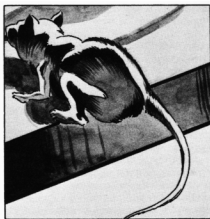
Faced with still more choices, Breen thought, *If it corners me I'll just have to fight.*

**E**VEN AS HE RACED OFF THE STAIRS, through the kitchen and under the grate of the long abandoned fireplace, he considered the idea. Here was a good place for a stand. In these tight quarters his opponent's size would not be so great an advantage.

Still....He thought about those huge paws and shuddered. The claws of that unnatural feline must be like daggers, to a rat. *Brrr! All a poor rat has going for him is his vaunted courage, which is a bad bargain.*

*Who'd want to be the one to "fight like a cornered rat!"*

Terrified but ready to fight, he cowered in the absolute darkness under the big iron grate. Listening. Softly, on almost silent feet, his foe was coming toward him. He saw it emerge from the stairwell, sleekly gliding with that sinuousness some called beautiful. Not rats! It did not seem to be sniffing the floor. His hopes rose — and the cat bent its nose downward. One sniff and it turned to pad directly toward Breen. Its eyes, almost shaded but looking big as unripe pears, flashed like emeralds in the moonlight that sneaked into the room. Could it see him, here in these darkest of shadows? It was four times the size of a mouse; twice his size, and instinct kept telling *rattus rattus* to flee, flee, while intellect told Breen to wait, wait. Now the cat was much closer. Still it was not looking directly at him. Abruptly the flattened feline head turned ever so slightly.



Their eyes met. It was rat, not human, instinct that made Breen snarl.

The cat only stood, its gaze baleful and sinister. After what seemed an eternity it turned, tail twitching, and slowly walked away.

*Dazed*, Breen spent a moment just breathing. The beast, he knew, had not been the slightest whit afraid of him. It was just that the cat was not a cat, but his cousin *Druin*, and it/he had more important things to do than obey feline instincts to kill a mere rat. In fact, from what the ensorcelled youth had heard upstairs, it was a safe bet that *Druin* was doing something vital tonight, some critical move in this dark battle of wizards. *And he hasn't any notion I'm not a real rat!*

*I think.*

Breen knew he ought to follow, to learn what the enemy was up to. Forcing himself, he set off after that bigger, tail-high prowler of the dark. The trail led through a maze of empty, night-shrouded streets. A cat paced haughtily. A rat followed, scuttling, scurrying, moving from this bit of cover to that. Although now and again he caught a glimpse of the cat's tail, for the most part Breen trusted his sense of smell. Before he could be sure of their destination, the cat slipped through a gap between a high stone wall and a massive iron gate. A rat followed with more ease. On the other side he gazed about, pulse quickening and eyes widening; they were on the grounds of the Royal Palace!

Breen's nose screamed at him: *DOG!* The palace grounds he knew were guarded by ferocious Nevinian dogs big as small ponies. Still, the cat was racing on through the tall wet grass, heedless of this danger. Because he knew something, perhaps? Breen followed.

Up broad pink-marble steps the cat sped, past the feet of a dozing guard and through an ornate grillwork door into the palace. Abruptly the guard awoke. Hazel eyes focused on the rat that came leaping up the stairs. The man started to lift his heavy pike and this time Breen had no choice. He raced for dear life. The weapon sped down at him, aimed well, but he was faster than a just-woken man. Iron crash-grated on the marble a hand's breadth behind Breen. Inwardly he exulted, for his human brain had known that once he was inside the weapon's reach he was safe. The guard threw a futile kick, then cursed as his foot slammed into the door. The rat had sped under it.

His hand-like paws waded in a plush carpet of gold and plum and nacarat, in a brightly lit hallway tapestried in deep plum velvet. He saw no sign of the cat. The carpet was a staggering confusion of odors.

Still, the choices were only two. In one direction the corridor led toward the great Dining Hall, where the sound of the last few drunken revelers could be heard. In the other direction...Breen's whiskers twitched while he sought to remember. Yes! It led up the broad stair to the sleeping area. The hall was clogged with drunks; if something important were happening here tonight, it would probably be in a bedroom.

Keeping to the side where he tended to be hidden by the drapes, Breen scuttled down the corridor. On the stairs he caught a whiff of cat scent and was sure he had guessed aright. He scampered up — to pause in bafflement at the top of the steps. This corridor, tapestried in luxurious gold and green, was long, marked by more than a dozen doors. Where had *Druin* gone?

The floor gave off feline scent. Breen blinked. This was a female's spoor!

*Druod's Arms! Queen Isleina has several cats! Any of them's liable to attack me! Why did that lackwit Ebbren make me a rat instead of something practical?*

Breen was frightened and angry. He was also determined. From door to door he went, peeking under each as he zig-zagged up the corridor. Again and again he found only an empty dark room...until at last he blinked at light and heard the sound of voices. By wriggling deep into the carpet's fine pile he was just able to force his head all the way under the door for a good view. The chamber was illumined by the yellow-gold light of an extravagance: a dozen candles in a chandelier of crystal prisms. Oh, the eerie shadows it threw! The tall canopied bed extended from one corner, covered in lavender silk sheets over goose-down pillows.

The center of this house-sized bed-chamber was dominated by a great mirror large enough to show several people in full-length reflection.

All this Breen took in at a glance. Now his attention fixed on the woman who sat before that tall mirror. Clad only in a negligee of diaphanous black silk and cobwebby lace,

Queen Islaia was unquestionably the most beautiful woman in the realm. She sat on a high stool in fine display of her superb figure. Finely formed arms and long legs were bare as the day she was born, and much improved since then. Her back was to Breen. As her fingers ran a gold-chased ivory comb through the spun gold hair that streamed down past her shoulders, the youth could see the beauty of her smile in the mirror. The negligee, only casually draped about her, perted with her motions. Breen swallowed.

Behind the queen, a male throat was cleared.

Startled, Breen looked in the direction of that sound and his eyes went wide in amazement. At attention just behind Her Majesty stood three palace guardsmen, all in full dress uniform of red and gold and jet!

*Damnation! I'd heard things were a bit odd here in the palace, but...the Queen? Carelessly showing herself naked to her guards?*

"Have you," she whispered in delicately soft tones, "completed the task I assigned you?"

"Aye, Your Majesty," the tallest guard answered mechanically. "All is in readiness. The packing crate is strong, well cushioned, and large enough to hold Your Majesty's mirror. It awaits downstairs, and a squadron of the Royal Lancers is ready to mount, beside a wagon with four of our best horses hitched to it. As soon as Your Majesty gives the word, her mirror can be in the crate, the crate on the wagon, and all on their way to safety."

**T**HE WATCHING BREEN was puzzled. Only vaguely annoyed that he was in the wrong form to appreciate properly the queen's nudity, he felt the beginning clutch of fear. Something was surely very wrong.

"Very good," the queen whispered. "The time, however, is not yet. Bide here a while."

As she spoke, Breen shuddered. His rodent ears were not playing tricks on him. The queen's soft voice came not from her lips, but from her reflection in that mighty mirror.

Knowing that something of surpassing evil was hidden in the scene he watched, Breen stared in horror and fascination. The queen was still combing her hair. Her mirror image, however, dropped its comb. It rose, unconcernedly letting the negligee fall from her/its body. Stark naked and truly golden-haired indeed, the image stood and stretched her limbs. *And then she walked off, leaving the queen still combing before an empty mirror.*

Breen felt the hair standing erect, all over his diminutive body. Terrified by this most unnatural of events, he bit his tongue to keep from squealing and rapidly pulled his head from under the door. He was in perfect position to learn what was afoot here — and chose not to but to continue with his original mission. For a moment, when his head caught, he knew only terror. Then he had twisted free.

In the cavernous corridor, he was strongly tempted to run away and run some more. Best to forget the whole incident. He

wanted no such knowledge and the worry it brought. He realized now that he had been tricked into the role of pawn in a nightmarish war between powers beyond human and natural. Those powers were castled at opposite ends of the board; Breen was very much in the open between them, and all but helpless.

Still, tricked or no, the fact remained that he had set out this night to learn what his cousin Druin was about, and Breen had a strong predilection toward finishing what he started. Not without some tremors, he scurried down the carpeted corridor. A boy in a rat's body with a man's resolve. Since Druin wasn't in the queen's chamber, the next logical place to seek him was the king's apartment. That, Breen reasoned, should be next door.

Upon pushing his head under the door, he saw only darkness and heard only snores. Further, the room seemed empty save for moon-softened shadows. He was about to withdraw to look elsewhere when something furry brushed past his face. He froze while it prowled suspiciously past: a large cat, blacker than darkness.

How Druin had gained entry to a closed room was a further mystery. However accomplished, Breen was sure Druin was here to do the king no good service. A dozen half-forming plans flitted through his mind like swirling water (with a bit of mud) while the cat paced across the room. With the easy grace of its kind it hopped onto a table in the darkest corner. Breen saw only the eyes, early seeming to float high above the floor. From there the cat spoke, in the strong, clear voice of Sir Druin.

"King Thilloden! Awakel King Thilloden!"

"Uh? Hrum? Gumph huh — what? Who — who's there?"

The cat's tone was cold as death. "Druin, son of Aradam, the man you had murdered for a jar of polish. My crossbow is leveled at your heart."

The king stayed where he was. "You can't get away with it!" he warned, but the terror in his voice betrayed him.

"That is my concern, ignoble king. Before I shoot you, however, there is one thing I'd like to know. Unworthy monarch — what was so important about that polish?"

*Lady of death, Breen swore mentally, beginning to comprehend. Could Druin be innocent of the massacre at Paragas?*

After a period of silence, Druin spoke again, softly and seemingly without passion.

"Thilloden, I know. If you tell me what I don't know, I shan't release this bolt. Otherwise — I'll shoot you now and depart."

"No no! It — it wasn't my fault!" The king was babbling. "All her doing — the queen's! All. Ever since she acquired that strange mirror, she has been different... strange!"

"The polish," Druin insisted.

"It was her idea! Your father had a jar of that rare and extremely fine polish — you know there's no other like it! She wanted it to make her mirror absolutely perfect."

*All those lives, Breen thought sickly. Her doing...for that awful mirror!*

"Ahhh," Druin murmured in a vastly appreciative tone, "I believe I understand. One

question more: for all that Zardok and Thesia are nominally at war, I know of your treaty with the king of Thesia. You are secretly at peace! In exchange for a bit of gold and...certain other considerations, His Majesty of Thesia sends his soldiers here to slaughter those of your subjects you find inconvenient. The city is invested, but I know your agents have left these walls — and returned. Why? Why see that your own capital city is besieged by foreigners who might...slip?"

"Her idea and demand, again!" the terror-stricken monarch bleated.

With each hideous new revelation Breen's head spun the more in a horror of unbelief. He scarcely noticed the first tap on his tail...

Abruptly that tapping became sharp pain and he was being dragged backward. His head thumped the door's bottom and a whisker hurt him sore. In the corridor he twisted his head to see a horrific monster towering above him, its fearful teeth closed on Breen's tail. One of the palace cats! How pleased the violet-collared monster looked! Breen fought whelming terror...

With a sudden jerk he managed to pull free. Instantly a deadly paw full of razor-sharp claws came speeding at his head. He had little choice; he sprang over that rushing death. Propelled by the fury of desperation, he flew straight at his enemy's face. The cat knew only an instant of shock before its intended prey struck, jaws open and biting for all he was worth.

A piece of its nose gone, the cat howled in agony with a sound that must have wakened the entire palace. With violent jerks of its head it threw Breen off and went yowling down the corridor.

*By Thesa it's true! When cornered, the rats really do fight!*

His self-congratulations were short-lived. Behind him someone shouted and he whirled to see several guardsmen rushing down the hall at him. Pointing at the clearly visible rat on the carpet, the foremost shouted to his companions.

"See, I told you there was a rat in the palace!"

Tail arrow-straight behind him, Breen spread down the hallway. As the guards in their flashing cuirasses started after him, the screams of the king blasted from his bed-chamber:

**"GUARDS! HELP! ASSASSIN! MURDER!"**

**F**ORGETTING BREEN, those decorative men turned to bang on His Majesty's door.

In the excitement several were trying to force the tall thick portal while only one fumbled for the latch. He found and lifted it. The door exploded inward, men in armor tumbling over one another. While a black cat bounded over their bodies, the king yelled, pointing.

"Seize that cat! It's a demon come to slay me!"

Someone muttered in a disbelieving voice, "Seize? A cat?" And the chase was on.

Breen, running in the lead, was baffled as to which way to turn. Though he and the cat — which was racing after him — were far



swifter than the pursuit, the alarm was spreading like measles. Everywhere he looked there seemed to be more and more guardsmen joining the chase. Down the steps he scuttled, and turned — oops, guards! He successfully dashed right through the trio and sped to round a corner. Here came more, even while his nose apprised him that the kitchen was not far away. Shouts and clangor behind him gave him hope: maybe they'd stuck Druin good, and would cease bothering with a poor little rat. He made for the kitchen. Instinct sent him there, not plan or intelligence. He dashed into the big room only seconds ahead of the mad parade. *Damn! They must have missed Druin.*



The cook's domain was black as Ebbren's heart but for the small save-fire in the sprawling hearth. For a moment or two Breen squandered his precious lead in a frantic scurrying about. At last he found what he sought — the door leading outside. It was a solid piece of oak, grease-swollen and tightly fitting into the frame. All that was quite aside from the iron padlock.

*What do I do? No turning back now, and the only way out of here is that one opening into the cellar steps...*

The cellar would certainly have no outside exit. Down there, his only hope would be to find some dark little place and hide. Like a rat. A rotten plan, surely leading to death. This time, however, Breen was fresh out of alternatives. Here came that plagueous Druin-cat, with men right behind. A pike clattered and went skittering over the floor.

Breen skittered even faster, and down the cellar steps. With the cat just behind him he fled down into darkness, only a few paces ahead of the pounding big feet of their noisy pursuers. Now luck or Milady Chance joined them: a rearward guardsman tripped. He fell. An avalanche of metal-cuirassed men bounce-slid-banged noisily down the steps as each man tumbled the one before him. While they tried to sort themselves out of the cursing, clanky pile at the base of the stair, cat and rat loped desperately about, searching for a hidey-hole.

More guards were coming. Their torches transformed the cellar into an eerie maze of shifting shadows that seemed alive with goblins and claws. Just as the task of finding a good hiding place was beginning to seem hopeless, Breen's nose advised him of a most welcome scent: rat! The cellar was divided into a number of separate rooms by wooden partitions, and at the base of one of

these was a large rat-hole. With grateful thoughts to his putative kinsmen, Breen ducked inside.

Unfortunately the hole was big enough for the cat to follow. It did.

*Now what do I do? They don't care a spit about me — but to get Druin they'll tear the place apart!*

"Little whoreson went into that hole! I see him!"

"Reach in and see if you can find 'im, Cherkyl!"

"Huh! You do that, wren-brain."  
"Get out of the way, you cess-heads. I'll fetch 'im out!"

The wooden walls surrounding the fugitives thundered and quivered as that man commenced enlarging the hole with an ax. Over the din of chopping, the two changelings could hear others shouting in confusion. Obviously the royal guard was going about this with far more enthusiasm than organization. What fun to race about the premises at night and start tearing up the palace, with the king's sanction! The crashing multiplied as others attacked the partition at various places with ax and sword. A sword-thrust passed through the dampness-weakened old wood scarcely a hand's breadth above Breen. A man cursed as his swordpoint snapped off in chopping, a foot away.

*This, Breen thought, is what is meant by being trapped like a rat.*

His sanctuary was being reduced to firewood and there was no way out — yes, there was! Up! Breen threw himself upon one trembling wall and began climbing. The old wood was rough enough so that his rodent's claws easily gained good holds. For all that it was like climbing a tree during a hurricane, he made good progress.

*Please, cousin Druin! I can't speak, but surely you can see we'd both be better off if you stopped following me!*

While section after section of wall disintegrated, Breen clawed his way to the cellar's ceiling. Below he heard the furious activity continuing. *They won't stop until they either get us or smash the palace entire!* A trail of rat scent led him onward, along a joist and through a pitch-black maze that wound to and fro and round about through the ceiling crawlspace. Was he running in circles? Did he follow a trail that crossed itself? Perhaps; he had no way of knowing. At first he could gain some notion of where he was from the sound of the guardsmen's chopping axes. But now it seemed that they were everywhere, frantically chopping open every possible place of concealment. Breen was utterly lost, scurrying about in total darkness, whiskers warning him to twist and turn, and...

His sensitive rat's nose caught a new scent. Very faint, but there was no mistaking it: grass. Fresh wet grass. Yes, and un-stale air. Filled with new hope, he followed that scent of living green.

Often his way was blocked and he had to nose around an obstacle. Each time he was afraid of losing the precious scent. He did not. The sweet aroma of grass grew stronger. At last he saw a glimmer of light ahead and joyfully raced for it. Soon he discovered all he had hoped for: a beautiful

rat-hole, just his size. Beyond the hole he could see the palace gardens, bright in the moonlight; the high wall, and...escape! Dimly aware that the cat was right behind him, Breen bolted for that hole. He plunged through in a burst of speed and, in the garden, paused to glance rapidly about.

Behind him the cat meowed furiously. Breen heard the true meaning of the word *caterwaul*. Breen looked back.

Druin-cat was too big to fit through the hole. He could only thrust part of that sharp-nosed feline head through the rat-gnawed gap. Twisting about, it impressed its mouth to bite at the wood that it opened it.

*Has Druin lost his wits? Cats don't have the right kind of teeth to chew wood. Only rats...we rats...oh.*

*It's a sign! My dear cousin wants me to save him — at considerable peril to my own life. Gnawing a cat-sized hole will take no little time, and one of the palace dogs could come by at any moment.*

True, he still heard the distant sound of chopping. Damn that damned King Thilloden anyhow! *Why couldn't he have married a nice homely codd whose main talent was breeding and presiding over state dinners?*

**F**OR A MOMENT Breen stood lost in thought. *Choices...* Then, decision made, he hurried back to the hole. Looking the cat straight in its green eyes, he shook his head.

The cat stared at him, obviously puzzled. After a long awkward moment, the animal spoke. "I see," it said, murmuring in Druin's voice. "You believe you should be recompensed for your service. Very well, Breen, I promise to renounce all inheritances in your favor."

Then Druin swore, and in a rush Breen moved to the hole and began a furious gnawing.

"I'll also," murmured the nobleman-turned-cat, "give you what you really need; an explanation of what is happening. Quite simple. 'Tis a war of magic between my grandfather — the wizard Mardarin — and some unknown malign power; the power served by Thilloden, Ebbren, and many others. In such combat there is no defense except secrecy and sorcery. You and I know enough to make us passing dangerous to this other power. Should we escape, our knowledge will allow my grandfather to spring one of the many traps he has prepared for our foe. Breen: should aught hap to me you will have two choices: get to Mardarin within a short time and tell him all you've discovered — or die."

Listening attentively, Breen busily chewed. No wonder rats loved garbage! The wood tasted awful. Portions of it were good strong oak and required considerable time; other sections were rotten and disintegrated under his toothy attack.

Time passed at a stumbling pace and he had no way of knowing how much time. He worried, for he'd a presentiment of some nasty problem to come. *There must be,* he mused with human insouciance in his rat's body.

The last portion of the hole had looked as if it would be the hardest. When he bit into it, it instead crumbled rapidly into fragments,

almost gone with dry rot. What delight for a celebrating rat! In a final burst of effort, Breen gnawed away the last of it and stepped back to admire the newly enlarged hole.

*Good job if I do say so myself! But where's Druin?*

**T**HE CAT HAD BEEN HERE just a moment ago. It had watched him intently all the while he worked. Indeed he was sure it had refrained from giving him advice only because speech was not easy for the nobleman, in his feline form. Baffled by the disappearance, Breen stared about. With the fool gone for no reason, what was he supposed to do? If he....

A pair of eyes glowed from the darkness. Given power of speech, Breen would have said, "Well, there you are!" But there was something wrong with those eyes. There was also something dangerously wrong about the way they moved; slowly, calmly approaching him. Then the thing in the darkness rustled into the light and Breen's nervousness became absolute, paralyzing horror. His heart was a pounding drum. He screamed inwardly, desperately wishing to run and unable to do so. He was staring, red eyes bulging, at a cobra; elegantly dressed death big enough to gulp him in a single swallow.

At the back of his mind he knew King Thillo den was to thank for this. Finding his guards tearing the palace to pieces, the monarch must have ordered this thing brought and put on their trail. Such knowledge was of no use to Breen now. He could not move. Slowly, inexorably, the monster slithered toward him, its eyes bright. Bared fangs looked long as swords. As it coiled to strike, sinuously, beautifully, Breen thought, *I've got to run. I'm right in the hole. Just a quick hop and I'm back out of range.*

With the thing's eyes on him, however, he could not move. And the cobra struck.

At the same instant, a bolt of blackness pounced on it. The snake's fangs bit empty air, brushing Breen's greasy fur while a black cat's paw sank long claws into the back of the serpent's neck. The cat dragged it back. There was an awful moment of unimaginable animal fury — and the cat's sharp teeth sank into the cobra's head to pierce the brain. Black blood trickled out of the reptile's mouth and down its lolling forked tongue while its body twitched and quivered. The tail thrashed furiously at first, then only faintly. When it was still, the cat dropped it.

"Good cousin Breen," the cat said, "heed me. You wall that seems so tempting an escape route is in truth a trap. We'd be far worse off on its other side. Our only way out is the south wall and the route there goes through the dog kennels."

Much as Breen wanted to protest such seeming suicide, he could only squeak. The cat apparently took that for agreement. It set off at a steady run, sinuous form seeming to flow over the shadowy grass. Breen chose to follow.

They moved swiftly through the moonlit gardens, without incident. As the south wall came into view and drew closer, Breen began to think that all was going to work out

after all. That was when the night was rent apart by a thunderous bark. It was echoed from a dozen directions.

Cat and rat broke into a dead gallop, legs moving for all their lives were worth to them. The rodent's widely spaced eyes allowed him to see behind with only a slight twist of his head. He saw dogs. Huge dogs. They were coming from everywhere, ferocity-bred giants with great slaving jaws. Their long legs were eating up the distance between them and Breen, and the south wall seemed a hundred miles away. Then there was the more immediate problem: the dog between the fugitives and the wall. The cat, still in the lead, was bouncing straight for that vast opponent.

*O gods, I was better off when Druin was my enemy. He's rushing straight into the jaws of death and I have to guess what he's planning. (He is planning, isn't he? Druin?)*

The dog, a giant mastiff whose mouth was a fang-lined red cavern, was also running full speed, on collision course with the cat. At the last instant, the feline snapped "Left!" and bounded to the right. While Breen dutifully leap-scrambled leftward, the canine's claws dug up turf and he swung his head stupidly from side to side. Cat and rat rushed past him on either flank.

The fence was near, oh so sublimely near. A glance behind showed Breen the huge-pawed cap closing in. Tongues lolled over fangs like stalagmites and stalactites. The fury of their barking was all around him and their jaws were gnashing less than an arm's length from his tail, and he was at the ivy-covered wall, struggling for claw-holds, willing himself upward. The pack struck the wall beneath him in a snarling mass. They became a howling cauldron of savagery, leaping upward, powerful jaws snapping furiously — as he hastened up and away.

When he reached the top of the wall the cat was already there, staring down at the dogs with its fangs bared. It hissed malevolently at them. From his new vantage point Breen could see the length of the palace grounds — and the violent commotion at the far end. It wasn't dogs.

**D**ROOD'S ARMS! A mob is storming the palace! No wonder Druin didn't want to leave that way — he knew! For an instant cat and rat looked at each other. Then they turned and went over the wall.

They were en route down before Breen saw how far it was to the ground. The wall ended not on a level but in a very steep hillside, and its bottom was a frightening distance away. The cat seemed able to run down nearly as fast as it could go, a feat that Breen could not approach.

The sun was just peeking over the horizon. Though this new light of luminescent pearl should have made things easier for Breen, he found himself rapidly growing clumsy. He weighed too much. His claws didn't want to work properly. He could not control his downward cling-and-run. Despite his best efforts, he slipped.

Breen fell headlong, to bounce and roll down the hill, his hands snatching futilely for holds.



At the bottom of the slope he lay moaning, struggling to get his breath back. The sight of his own hand filled him with a sudden surge of excitement. Hastily Breen felt his face. It was a face. He was human once more.

Beside him, a black cat meowed.

"Druin! What's the matter? Druin turned me back — why didn't it you?"

The cat's only reply was another meow. *Is that how these things work? Breen wondered in horror. Are there some spells the sun dissolves and others it — makes permanent? Is my cousin forever a cat?*

The youth bit his lip and stared about in perplexity — to see a gate come open not fifty yards away. Four superb horses emerged, drawing a wagon that bore a single large crate. Coffin? No — the queen's mirror!

One of the half-dozen dull-eyed soldiers riding in the wagon pointed at Breen and the cat. "Master! It's them two!"

Though no audible command came from crate or man, the driver whipped the horses and the wagon came rumbling toward Breen with ominous intent.

"Come on!" the boy yelled at the cat, which ignored him, a seemingly dumb animal. Snatching it up, Breen fled. *Holy Theba, Mother of Drood, he thought profanely as he ran, what an unholy mess this is! Some kind of demonic enemy behind me in that mirror and my ally is in a state where he's doing well to catch birds!*

The chase went on and on. The wagon gained on the straightaways, while Breen increased his lead in the narrow, winding alleys. Once or twice he'd have lost them altogether had not one of the soldiers hopped down to pursue him afoot. Eyes like marbles, those soldiers. Now Breen was tiring fast and had no notion where to go. With high hopes of gaining the aid of the legendary Mardarin, he had no idea where the mage's house was. He had journeyed there once — in a sack.

Abruptly the cat stirred in his arms. It struggled to be free. Even an animal knows its way home, Breen mused, and dropped it.

With purposeful speed the beast sped away. Breen was close behind. The wagon

trundled headlong after them, its sides often scraping the narrow walls of alleys. A merchant's canopy, just going up in garish stripes, went down. The horses were in a lather, their eyes wide. This in vast contrast to the soldiers riding the wagon; their faces showed as much expression as would a like number of corpses. Those several people unable to get out of the rushing wagon's way were violently knocked aside.

Cat and Breen rushed out onto a wide street. Behind them the wagon again began gaining rapidly. Down that thoroughfare they fled, and into wide-open Steff Square. The cat sped to the center of the deserted market. By a small stone there rested a bowl of meat scraps, which the cat commenced to eat contentedly. Glancing from purring feline to the wagon thundering down upon them, Breen screamed:

*"But where is Mardarinnnnn!?"*

The moment he stood there in hesitation was too long. The wagon was upon them. Soldiers sprang down to seize the youth and cat. From the crate came a silent command, an urging that was felt rather than heard:

*Open this box. I/we wish to see the death of my/our enemies.*

Swiftly a pair of soldiers drew bolts. A side of the crate came away. In its dark interior gleamed the mirror. It was filled with two deadful eyes, the most horrible vision Breen had ever beheld.

*Ah yesss. Good. Now kill them.*

The new voice bawled from the far side of the square: "Why bother? Isn't it we you want?"

Struggling in the grasp of a huge armored soldier with a face like yesterday's oatake, Breen twisted his head to see the speaker: Druin! And beside him a wizened old man like a vulture; the great Mardarin Magus!

Even as Druin shouted the old man in the monkish brown robe had bent to put a torch to a trench cut in the hard-packed pave. Red, smoky yellow flames leaped up. They rushed in a roar along the trench's length, moving not toward the group in the center of the square but to their left and right. While the wall of fire sprang higher and rapidly lengthened, Breen's quick eyes saw what was happening: Steff Square had been incised with a shallow trench in the shape of a pentagram. Into that oil had been poured. Now that oil roared ablaze in an uprush of greasy black smoke. Wagon and soldiery and Breen were surrounded on five sides by walls of raging flame. A pentagram of fire.

Like puppets with their strings cut, the soldiers began dropping.

While Breen struggled free of his inert captor's lax arms, the draught-horses, their reins hanging slack, bolted — or tried to. At the edge of the pentagram the lead horse rebounded as if the leaping flames were a wall of glass. Unable to go forward, the beasts fought their traces and each other in a mad confusion of flying hooves and tossing heads. Harness jingled and Breen saw rolling eyes wide with terror. The wagon was rocked noisily back and forth, in constant danger of overturning. Again Breen heard that silent, dreadful voice:

*Since you cannot serve me/us, die.*

Every horse collapsed into an unmoving tangle. *Damn cousin Druin!* Breen thought, swearing under his breath. *He deliberately used me as bait in this trap for the mirror!*

With the perfect vision of hindsight, he saw how it had been accomplished. First Druin had taught the cat that it would always find meat in the bowl in this square. Next he put the animal into his pocket before his metamorphosis into a cat. When the sun returned him to human form, he merely released the confused beast and concealed himself. At the same time, Mardarin was investigating the mob's attack at the palace fore. The mirror demon, hastening to depart by the rearward gate, had been shown what appeared to be its enemies. Delighted, it naturally gave chase. That accomplished only the leading of itself and its mindless allies into this fiery trap. And now Druin's voice belowered triumphantly from beyond the walls of fire.

"Now, mine ancient enemy, we come to reckoning! First I will show you what happened to your servants — Thilloden and Islain!"

The fires flickered, paled, changed. Within their white-glowing cores pictures formed. The palace! A mob running rampant through its ruined finery...while the bodies of the king and queen, he in a nightshirt and she naked, hung slowly twisting from chandeliers.

"As for Ebbren, whom you sent forth last night with gold to reward the Thesian mercenaries for killing the people of this nation..."

**T**HE PICTURE SHIFTED. Its scene became a narrow ravine. A man lay at its bottom, amid gray stones. His head was split open, and Breen recognized the straggly old locks. "He fell among thieves," Druin called. "On the other hand, General Mormyke, who commanded the Thesians..."

The scene was the inside of a war-tent. All was in disarray, as if hasty robbers had been at work. In one corner lay a corpse, its face a nasty shade of green.

"The general found poison in his wine cup," Druin shouted. "Now his army is leaderless and without hope of being paid — they fade away like mist before the morning sun. The sun, old enemy. Don't you love it!"

Trivial, replied the mirror, its awful eyes focused on Druin. *Though you have caught me, you lack the skill and strength to hold me.*

There was no answer from beyond the fire, but to his vast horror Breen realized that the flame-walls were suddenly closing in.

*A futile gesture!* the mirror snapped, in soundless thunder, but Breen thought: *All this fire may not harm you, but it will cook me!*

It was doubly maddening to be trapped this way because there was no reason for his death. His cousin had no need to let him be taken thus. Indeed, in pure self interest he should not have done, since Breen's presence here did nothing to improve the trap, and might even have made it go awry. None of it made any sense...

*Unless there's something I'm supposed to do! Something he can't...*

The air had the feel of a gathering storm, tense with latent power. Breen knew that both Mardarin and the mirror were preparing horrific enchantments to hurl at each other. And the mirror was confident!

Druin had had plenty of time to reach this square and plant something for Breen's use — but what? It had to be within the pentagram — ah. Beside the little dish of meat scraps lay a small stone...which on closer look was not a stone at all. It was an ingot of native silver.

*Virgin silver! And I spent my childhood throwing stones...*

While the roaring flames grew ever nearer and the very air sparkled with vast powers about to be unleashed, Breen snatched up the ingot. Already he was hot, hot. He hurled the chunk of silver with all his might, straight into the awful eyes that were somehow *within* the mirror.

**H**E DID NOT MISS, and yet he thought that he must have failed. The crash was but a tiny one that made only a little hole in the mirror. And then it began to spread, and spread, like a fiendish hungry cancer. It consumed the mirror — all of it. The mirror was gone! Breen and everything around him seemed to be falling into a hole, a hole in the universe. He cried out and did not hear his voice. Lost in a spinning colorless vortex he felt himself slipping, slipping...and a strong hand grasped his wrist. Slowly he was pulled back up. For one heart-stopping moment Breen caught and held that other wrist, while all around him was chaos and darkness. He knew that if he dared open his clenched eyes he would see that he was hanging above the yawning mouth of Hell.

When at last he did venture to look, Steff Square was again a normal public area. He was sitting on its hard pave, while over him stood Druin, who held his upraised arm. Of mirror, wagon, horses, soldiers, even the black cat — there was not a trace.

From well across the square ugly, square old Mardarin grumbled, "Grandson, if you must rescue something, you'd have done better to save our cat."

Releasing Breen without a word, Druin gestured a casual farewell. He walked away, dark robes flapping lightly in the breeze of his own passage. Before Breen could gather himself and indignation at the shameless way they had used him, the wizardly pair was gone.

Breen rose and stood staring. He yawned. He stood alone, nonplussed. In a sense, what had just happened was a great victory. The siege was over, Ebbren dead, the mirror gone (dead?), the King and Queen of Evil were dead. Breen had his inheritance free and clear. Too, with the Thesian invaders dispersing, he would return his grandfather to their proper home. There he would keep the old man in the dignity he deserved. Up all night and most active as well, Breen yawned again.

The only major problem remaining was that he was acutely short of food and ready cash and...and at this very moment the mob was looting Thilloden's palace! Weariness left Breen. Best he go get his while the getting was good. ■■

# SPACE WARS

## Seizing the High Ground in Earth Orbit

by John Prados

It has been over a decade now since Neil Armstrong, standing on the Moon, declared it was a small step for a man but a large one for Mankind. Space spectaculars have been scarcer since 1969, but there has been a slow and steady progress. In 1980 we are on the verge of a quantum jump in the intensity of space travel and its utility to Man. Space already serves for scientific experiments and earth resources identification. It provides us with vital communications linkages and a medium for the tools used to monitor arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Space-based global positioning systems are about to make possible constant precision navigation. In the immediate future space may serve directly for resource acquisition through power satellites and the like.

Today there are many people who seriously believe that the colonization of space is imminent. Indeed, Dr. Gerard K. O'Neill of Princeton University has spent much time demonstrating feasible technology and a plausible scenario for space colonization. Dr. O'Neill believes that the need for electric power will spur the move to space and that such a move will result in a number of artificial colonies in orbit around the earth as well as mining facilities on the moon. The colonies will be the manufacturing centers that provide materials for satellites and other structures built in space. There is now an entire "L5" Society, named after the "libration" point in the moon's orbit at which an object would remain at a constant distance from both the moon and earth. This organization is publicizing the benefits that would come from erecting a large space station at this point.

Just as a variety of public needs are served by space, so too are many military functions. While it would be preferable for man to leave his enemies behind on the ground, it is becoming increasingly evident that the explosion of space technology will include a new level of military competition between the superpowers.

### Always Sieze the High Ground

The envelope of space that surrounds the earth can be seen as a series of layers which extend outwards from the earth's surface. Selection of these layers is related to their physical conditions and to the energy requirements for achieving that altitude. Just above the atmosphere is what might be called "near-orbit" space, say 50 to 600 miles high. This region is already used by most existing satellites and has been accessible since the Soviet Union launched the first earth satellite vehicle in 1957. Beyond this region, out to about 23,000 miles, is a median zone. A body in orbit around the

earth at 22,300 miles is said to be in "geosynchronous" orbit because its "orbital period," or the time needed for a complete revolution of the orbit, is exactly equal to the time required for the earth to spin once upon its axis. In effect, such a spacecraft is able to remain stationary over one point on the earth's surface. Geosynchronous orbits are used by some communications satellites and by those which provide early warning of hostile missile attack. After geosynchronous space, out to a distance of perhaps 60,000 miles, is a region that might be called the "magnetosphere." Here the Van Allen radiation belt fluxes and wanes depending upon solar flare conditions. Finally, there is what might be called "far-orbital" space, a region from 60,000 miles to about 600,000 miles from the earth's surface which includes the Moon, 240,000 miles distant. Beyond that distance an object in orbit around the earth would suffer major orbital distortions caused by the sun's gravitational field.

Military officers the world over are typically schooled to take the high ground, which offers tactical advantages to its occupants during combat. From the beginning of the space age there has been growing awareness that space is the high ground of today. Indeed, space has given much already to those who have been able to operate in it. From the high ground of near-orbit space the superpowers have been able to enhance their intelligence capabilities. Communications are also considerably improved; the United States, for example, transmits about 66% of military messages routed overseas by satellite. Near-orbit space also provides the medium through which inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM's) fly to their target. The uses of space are such that large numbers of satellites have been launched to date. Over 11,000 objects have been tracked in space, including 4,500 currently in orbit and 108 satellites in geosynchronous space.

Until today the utility of space has been an instrumental and not an absolute value. That is, space was used to achieve something else — the impact of an ICBM on its target or photographic coverage of the opponent's missile bases, for example. Now, however, the combination of emerging technologies promises to make space an area for the basing and operation of actual military hardware. The technologies in question are those of the directed-energy weapon, miniaturized and increased computer capability, phased-array radars (PAR's), and "realtime" intelligence and communication capability.

Under current military doctrines the likely rationale for space-based beam energy weapon systems is as an antimissile (ABM)

system. There are still several technical obstacles to be overcome before such a capability can be achieved. The most important include the problems of power generation for the beam, magnetic and other field effects on tracking and aiming the energy beam, and the computer programming software for the antimissile system's engagement routines. Nevertheless, the technical problems are capable of technical solutions. Some experts anticipate practical beam weapons by the late 1980's. Almost certainly some kind of actual beam deployment will occur by the 1990's.

While directed-energy weapons have not yet proved their ability, their application may be much wider than ABM use alone. In certain respects the offensive use of beam weapons is a less technically demanding application of the technology than defensive antimissile use (although power generation would be increased, aiming and engagement would be considerably simplified). This application presents difficulties both for military strategy and for arms control. Fortunately, however, directed-energy weapons are not yet in place so there is still time to address their implications.

One final crucial stumbling block remains to be negotiated before satellites with such weapons could take to space. Beam weapon satellites might weigh hundreds or thousands of tons; therefore, space powers must achieve the capacity to propel weights of such dimensions into orbit. Needless to say, there is also a direct relationship between the altitude of orbit desired and the amount of propulsion (thrust) required to put a given payload weight into space. As long as rocket boosters used to loft satellites are single-use affairs, which fall into the sea and are lost, the expense of putting a large weight into space, even near-orbit space, becomes astronomical. Typically, some 80% or more of the gross weight of the rocket represents the propulsion, with a much smaller figure for the useful payload.

### The Propulsion Revolution

The difficulty of reaching orbit is a constraint that is already being overcome. The cost of using rocket propulsion can be reduced considerably if the rocket itself is not expended in the act of lifting its payload into orbit. A reusable booster rocket that could lift a significant amount of payload would begin to solve the first major hurdle preventing the large scale utilization of space. Programs designed to furnish such a vehicle have long been of interest to scientists and are currently being pursued by both the United States and the Soviet Union.

The first studies of a vehicle of this type

were actually conducted by a German scientist during World War II. Then, Eugen von Sanger produced a full engineering study of what he termed a "rocket bomber," completed in December 1944. The craft was supposed to be launched into sub-orbital flight and "skip" off the upper reaches of the earth's atmosphere, thus giving Germany the capability to bomb targets up to 10,000 miles away. Hitler's Germany collapsed soon afterwards, but copies of the Sanger study were captured by both the Russians and the Americans.

A number of scientists from the erstwhile German missile program were eventually concentrated in the United States. Some among them, including Walter Dornberger, head of the old program, were aware of the Sanger project and encouraged interest in a similar vehicle, which would have amounted to a reusable space vehicle, or "space plane," as it is sometimes called. Dornberger later recalled that he personally delivered some 678 presentations advocating a "space plane" concept between 1961 and 1968. During the Eisenhower administration, a first contract was let in 1969. It was always assumed that such a craft would be manned by military crews, and from 1969 to 1963, some \$10 million was spent for research studies examining the functions the military might be able to perform in outer space.

In the meantime an actual technology program went forward. Called DYNASOAR, the program was intended to demonstrate the feasibility of combining the characteristics of rockets and aircraft. DYNASOAR was a glidercraft which hung suspended from a space attachment for maneuver within the atmosphere.

Plans for military involvement in space were greatly modified by a decision made under President Kennedy in May 1962, embodied in a document called NSAM 156 that set areas of responsibility for the space program as a whole. The decision was to give responsibility for all manned space efforts to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and for unmanned, non-scientific missions to the Department of Defense (DOD). Under this policy DOD concentrated on military communications, intelligence, geodetic and similar types of satellites. For some years this remained the state of affairs until NASA's own budgetary troubles brought the DOD back into the picture.

The technology developed for DYNASOAR was used in Project START, which was to develop a space "ferry." Studies showed that unmanned and manned vehicles could successfully maneuver during atmospheric re-entry. In January 1969, NASA announced the first contract awarded in a new Space Shuttle program, to function first as a transportation unit and later to help develop an orbital space station and an eventual manned expedition to Mars. The year of the first lunar landing was the highpoint of NASA expectations, but in March 1970, President Nixon cut back seriously on NASA resources, ruled out the Mars mission, and relegated the Shuttle to a shoe-string budget. The situation was further complicated by Congressional opposition to further large spending by NASA. Defense, particularly the Air Force, had large and well-

protected budgets for the conduct of their own satellite programs. Although it had theretofore been amply served with conventional rockets for boosters, the Air Force was amenable to buying into the NASA shuttle. The military now intended to launch all satellites by means of the Shuttle after a certain transition year has passed. There have already been several slippages in the scheduling of the transition year, initially programmed as 1981, due to technical problems that have developed with the thinly supported Space Shuttle design.

The Space Shuttle itself is to have a gross lift off weight of 4,500,000 lbs., of which about 76,000 lbs. represents payload. It will have the ability to glide after re-entering the atmosphere about 1,000 nautical miles (less than the 3,000-mile "crossrange flying" capability originally desired by the Air Force) after initial launching from Cape Kennedy's Launching Pad 39, made famous by the *Apollo* flights. With a crew of four and a maximum orbital duration of about 30 days, the Space Shuttle will offer many advantages once perfected. At present, however, there are major problems with the primary engine systems and the atmosphere re-entry insulation. The difficulties have pushed back the first space flight by the shuttle from October 1979 until at least 1981, and they have apparently forced the retirement of the first Space Shuttle built. The *Enterprise*, previously termed an operational craft, is now being called a "training" vehicle and the first "spaceworthy" Shuttle is now expected to be the *Columbia*.

For its part, the Soviet Union has also demonstrated interest in a similar system, although no hardware has yet materialized. It is known that the von Sanger study was discussed in Kremlin meetings as early as 1947. In late 1978 the Soviet Union acknowledged that it is developing a vehicle

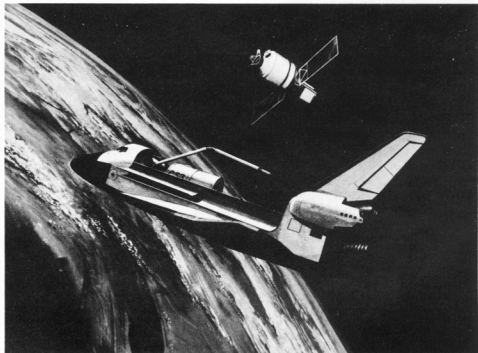
of this type, termed a "*raketoplan*," but smaller than the U.S. Space Shuttle. It is not believed that the Russian *raketoplan* can be operational much before 1985-1990.

In any case, it is clear that both superpowers will develop a greatly increased space operations potential within the next decade. Over the same period it is likely (but not certain) that the problems associated with the modification of directed-energy beams as weapons will be solved as well.

### Problems with Weaponry

Directed energy beams can be any type of energy that is focused into a beam and can be efficiently aimed. Two types of such beams are of the most interest at present. The first is the laser, an acronym for "light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation." The laser operates with a power source whose energy is converted into a single, intensely concentrated and "coherent" beam of light emitted on a single wavelength. Impacting a target, the beam produces intense heat. A second mechanism that is possible is an accelerated particle beam, a coherent beam of electrons or protons. For use outside the atmosphere a particle beam should have a neutral electrical charge so that it will not be bent by the earth's magnetic field. Either weapon would have tremendous velocity — in the case of the laser the speed of light, with the particle beam a little less. Assuming adequate power generation sources, either could fire repeatedly, and both would have a substantial effective range (some experts are already speaking of hits at a 1,000 kilometer range) — certainly formidable weapons.

Increasing indications point to the fact that the high energy beams the United States is interested in developing are potential military hardware. In late 1973 there were reports that the Air Force had finalized plans

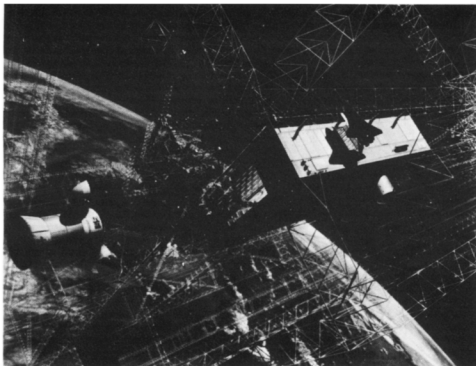


Artist's conception of the Space Shuttle orbiter in Earth orbit as it launches a satellite.

for a laser assembly and maintenance facility for aircraft at Kirtland. By 1975 the Director of Defense Research and Engineering had formed a "High Energy Laser Group" of program managers at DOD, which three years later had been superseded by offices at DOD dedicated to both laser and particle beam technologies. In the meantime, the Air Force has equipped a KC-135 aircraft as a test bed for a high-energy laser. Most significantly, there are reports that in early 1978 at a facility of the TRW Corporation at San Juan Capistrano, California, a scaled-down model laser defense system successfully destroyed missiles in feasibility tests. All the armed services are currently pursuing laser and particle beam developments, and some feel that deployment of energy weapons will occur during the 1980's. Total U.S. spending for military space projects over the past two decades is now put at over \$50 billion dollars.

Press reports indicate that the Soviet Union is equally interested in beam energy weapons and may in fact be more advanced than the U.S. in the particle beam area. During the period of 1967 to 1977, the Russians are reported to have spent over \$3 billion on a single facility near Semipalatinsk in Soviet Central Asia. A second test site has been built at Azgir, and the Russians are said to have conducted tests on at least seven occasions since November 1975 and to be incorporating the particle beam technology into a satellite design. These sources believed there might be such a deployed Soviet technology by 1982.

Although beam weapons are most often mentioned in the context of ABM use, there are a number of difficulties that must be overcome in weaponry application. Power generation is a major problem. In addition, a beam satellite must be able to detect hostile missiles, track them among both decoys and other objects in space, and distinguish between friend and foe. The satellite would also have to track and monitor its "shots" and correct its aim, and would have to prepare in advance for the next engagement sequence by tracking a different set of objects. The detection problem itself is significant. There are a variety of radar countermeasures, including deliberate nuclear explosions, that can blind a tactical radar, which would presumably be the main spacecraft sensor. Inefficient computer technology is also a major stumbling block. It has been calculated, for example, that in a terminal defense of a missile silo against a falling nuclear warhead (which is a simpler function and allows more time for computation), the number of programming calculations that would have to be resolved by a single tactical computer would be about 500 million. The inadequacy of existing computer programming techniques was an important weakness in the SAFEGUARD ABM system that the United States came close to deploying after 1969. Software development must still achieve some sophistication before large numbers of individual installations of this quality could be deployed. Moreover, in the context of a beam ABM system involving such large numbers of individual satellites, satellites would have to monitor each other's activities and provide the national command authority with some means of control in



Artist's conception of how a large satellite system could be built in orbit.

order to impose strategic direction on the mechanical activities of the individual beam satellites.

The list of difficulties for defensive use is considerable. By contrast, the use of beam weapons in an *offensive* mode might in fact be easier. Against objects on the earth's surface this application would involve simply the spotting of a known point on the surface, which is less demanding than ABM use. Satellites in the opponent's directed-energy beam network would also be vital targets and, unlike ICBM's coming up through the atmosphere, computer calculation could benefit from pre-computed trajectories and from a minimal capacity of the target to maneuver. Clearly the major constraint for such a use in the foreseeable future would be power generation. Space colonization enthusiasts like the "L5" Society, however, are already talking about the feasibility of power-generation satellites using solar energy, with expected 10 gigawatt capacities (enough electricity to light Manhattan) as early as 1989. A beam energy weapon could be coupled to such a power satellite as easily as the microwave antennas that are to be used to beam electric power earthwards. Alternatively, scientists now expect to be close to achieving fusion energy reactors in the early 1990's, which would also be tremendous power sources. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect offensive weapons applications for directed-energy weapons.

### A Scenario and The Problem

Military applications may not necessarily spring out full grown from the scientific community. They may arise from a creeping realization that some measures are strategically necessary. As an example, let us suppose that in the pursuit of solar power the

United States begins to construct a power grid of 500-ton satellites. The need for materials may well spur the development of lunar stations and a space colony to function as manufacturing units for space construction, as the "L5" people expect. The Space Shuttle may be adequate for getting initial increments of materials into orbit, but a different vehicle would have to be built to move materials from near-orbit altitudes to intermediate and higher levels. At the point where this power grid begins to take over a significant portion of the total grid electricity of the United States, it also acquires military value. If such a system were damaged or destroyed, the resulting power surges might have a considerable effect on real military capabilities, particularly those of command, control, and communications. Now, let's add beam weapons to the scenario.

In the beginning, perhaps in the latter part of the 1980's, the Shuttle is used to lift Laser ABM satellites and initial materials for the power satellites. Both the United States and Russia have developed antisatellite weapons designed to inhibit the other's "real time" intelligence, early warning, communications, global positioning systems, and ABM satellites. The most likely effect of the antisatellite weapons is to force both spacepowers to seek higher orbits for their military satellites in order to avoid direct-ant interception by missile-mounted antisatellite weapons. These requirements, among others, will probably stimulate interest in a space "tug" or ferry vehicle designed to shift satellites and other materials from one location and orbit to another. As higher orbits are found, eventually there will be a concentration of targets in the same geosynchronous orbits that will be occupied by the power satellites. At that point it will be inevitable that such power

resources would be primary targets or even unintended collateral victims of hostilities. The next step would be that the power satellites must be defended as well, and if the satellites are to be targets in any case, it might seem reasonable to arm them as offensive beam weapons. As the efficiencies with which power can be generated improve further, it would be reasonable to expect wider deployment of the beam weapons on such vehicles as the Shuttles and space ferries, which are capable of maneuver, and on the large and stationary space colonies.

If the unfolding pattern of events comes close to such a hypothetical scenario, a transformation would occur in the strategic balance heretofore prevalent on earth. Most important would be the shift from the combination of nuclear weapons and conventional explosives as the basis of offensive military power to a combination of nuclear explosives and beam weapons. Conventional high explosives would probably not be eliminated from military arsenals, but their uses might become more specialized in nature, such as in engineering or in precision-guided munitions.

The balance would also be changed by the appearance of armed military spacecraft for the first time. Present armed, mechanical space systems, such as antisatellite (ASAT) interceptors and the fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) at one time deployed by the Soviet Union, would be supplemented by beam satellites. Armed spacecraft would provide area command and control for such space systems and would also furnish a means for in-space maintenance and repair, in addition to a maneuverable armed system to reinforce existing means in any given orbital sector. If a propulsion revolution occurred which would make spacecraft movement by other than chemical rocket engines practical, then the trend toward armed manned spacecraft would be further accentuated.

Beam weapons would also have independent effects on military strategy. Beamed "shots" at near-light speeds would increase the velocity of engagements towards "push button" warfare. It would not be necessary, for example, to expend hours of flight time and several orbits of the earth to intercept some satellite with ASAT means. Instead, interception could be practically instantaneous. A space battle involving some hundreds of satellites, perhaps a colony and some power satellites, and a few armed spacecraft, could conceivably be resolved in a matter of minutes.

For the immediate future this sort of a space battle would occur in near-earth orbits as an adjunct to a surface war in which the powers involved exchanged strikes with nuclear-tipped missiles. The trend with these ICBM weapons is toward nuclear warheads able to destroy hardened military targets by their great accuracy in striking the targets. The greatest degrees of accuracy will be possible only through the use of terminal guidance and remote guidance of the warheads. These forms of guidance will in turn require both on-board computers and navigational "fixes" from global position indicator satellites such as the United States' NAVSTAR system. Because of the accuracy

requirements for destroying hardened military targets, the absence of such satellite navigational aids will significantly degrade the effectiveness of any attack. Given these factors, the navigational satellites, like the others, would become prime targets, and there is reason to believe that the most likely scenario for the opening phase of such a future war would consist of attempts by both sides to incapacitate the opponent's space-based instruments.

Another possible strategic effect of the new technology may be felt on the general propensity for war. If either side were the first to deploy a comprehensive suite of space-based systems, or to appear to be on the verge of such an achievement, there would be an incentive for the opponent to preempt this development by launching an immediate war, rather than waiting to be relegated to a strategically inferior position. Neither side would want the other to have sole use of the "high ground" above the atmosphere. Whether or not preemption were considered, it would be likely as another effect that a tremendous stimulus to the opponent's military space program would be provided, with important consequences for the arms race.

Finally, the technical achievement of a beam weapon, and of a generation of even more sophisticated computer programs and hardware could lead to the notion of a "real-time" war. The novel analytical methods and computer programs required to assess the effectiveness of a massive military space deployment might lead either space power to think that the result of a war could be calculated in advance more precisely than is now held to be the case. If so, either power may calculate that it could "win" in a war with an effective beam energy ABM system, or that it might survive such a major war in a favorable situation relative to the opponent. This calculation might have a disturbing effect on the attitude toward risk-taking in international relations, exhibited particularly by the power possessing space weapon systems.

### Limiting the Unthinkable

It may be possible to avoid the dangers of the space strategic balance in an age of energy weapons by judicious statecraft. Since 1977 the United States and the Soviet Union have been conducting talks on controls for ASAT weapons. Three rounds of negotiations have already been held on the matter, the most recent in Bern during February 1979. Present efforts appear to be directed at securing a temporary halt in the testing of ASAT interceptor satellites armed with conventional explosives. The longer term implications of military developments for the space arena have not been addressed in the ASAT talks thus far.

The ASAT approach is a partial and short-term effort. Both sides would presumably be free both to produce and deploy ASAT's, and the moratorium might allow only more innovation of sophisticated interceptors. Existing space law and international law is also sketchy on what are now emerging as technical possibilities. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 prohibits the stationing or detonation of weapons of mass

destruction (such as nuclear weapons) above the atmosphere. Beam energy weapons, even used offensively, do not produce mass destruction in the sense of the treaty; part of their attraction for governments would lie precisely in the notion that controlled "surgical" strikes could be made with beams. Moreover, the use of a beam weapon would circumvent the implicit barrier of the nuclear threshold on the escalatory path to full scale war.

There is some language in the 1972 ABM Treaty that might limit the deployment of beam weapons; if they could be construed to be ABM systems and then be employed under its terms, but a clever defense ministry might avoid the ABM Treaty in any of several ways. A wide variety of beam weapons could be deployed in low-energy and high-energy roles, and it could then be claimed that the new beam was just another beam weapon and not an ABM weapon. Alternatively, one could simply claim the beam weapon to be an offensive weapon and not bound by the treaty. A third possibility would be to build the beam into a satellite and say that the satellite was not an ABM interceptor missile in the sense of the treaty. Since beams could also be used in an ASAT role, it is clear that a separate ASAT treaty would be of marginal use so long as it covers only explosive interceptor satellites.

One possible arms control measure that could begin to address some of the problems of war and space would be a total ban upon space-based energy weapons. Space powers might be able to agree to such a ban today, since both the United States and Russia are a decade away from a practical weapon system; it might be difficult or impossible to agree to such a ban later on. A total ban would be easier to verify and could be enforced by ground-based directed energy weapons.

As stated earlier, military officers have always been trained to look to the high ground. Today the figurative high ground in space, which overlooks the earth, is coming into the range of real military programs of the foreseeable future. The Space Shuttle will dramatically increase the United States' ability to place numbers of satellites in space, which in turn will have important military functions for command control and guidance during a "real-time" war using missiles and eventually beam weapons. Beam weapons may reach power levels that could be used for both ABM and for offensive purposes, and they may be deployed on a wide variety of satellites, spacecraft, and large orbiting objects such as space colonies. Beam weapons and space technology could result in important changes in the strategic balance and in military doctrines.

The transition from an earth-borne culture to an increasingly mobile civilization, colonizing our solar system and reaching for the stars, will be extremely difficult under any conditions. It is worth some effort to leave national animosities behind on the surface on the earth. In the short term, exploration and colonization will be facilitated if space is peaceful. In the intermediate term, space colonists and earth citizens will be safer thereby. In the long term, it appears that civilization must learn or perish. ■■

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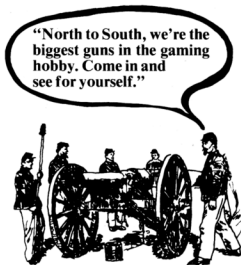
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# Barbarian Kings

## Fantasy Empires in Conflict

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### Read This First:

The rules to *Barbarian Kings* are organized by major topics arranged in the order in which they occur in the play of the game. Each such major topic is given a number and a name below which is given (usually) a General Rule or Description which summarizes the rules in that section. This is usually followed by numbered paragraphs called Cases, which give the specifics of the rules. Note that the numbering of the Cases is a decimal form of the Major Section number. Players should examine the map and counters and then quickly read the rules (without trying to memorize them). Then the game should be set up to play and a "trial run" made.

1. Basic Description
2. Equipment
3. Definition of Terms
4. Setting Up the Game and the Starting Sequence
5. Sequence of Play
6. Alliances
7. Finance
8. Movement Plot, Execution and Block
9. Combat
10. Magic
11. Victory Conditions

### Inventory of Game Parts

Each game of *Barbarian Kings* should contain the following parts:

- One 11" x 16" mapsheet
- One sheet of die-cut counters (100 pieces)
- One rules folder (bound into *Ares* version)
- One die (not in *Ares* version)
- One game box (not in *Ares* version)

If any of these parts are missing or damaged, notify SPI's Customer Service Department.

### Rules Questions

Should you have any difficulty interpreting the rules, please write to SPI, phrasing your questions so that they can be answered by a simple sentence, word, or number. You must enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. We cannot guarantee a proper answer should you choose to phone in your question (the right person is not always available — and since SPI has published hundreds of games, no one individual is capable of answering all questions). Write to:

SPI  
Rules Questions Editor for  
Barbarian Kings  
257 Park Avenue South  
New York, N.Y. 10010

### [1.0] Basic Description

*Barbarian Kings* is a simulation of the Red Age of political and military turmoil on the island continent of Castafon situated in the northern quadrant of the Fira Ocean on the planet Hypastia. This is a world where magic works (sometimes), and men and near-men are as treacherous and as territorial as anywhere in the Universes.

The Players (from two to five) assume the roles of provincial kings, bent on conquest and consolidation. By force and deceit, maneuver, and manipulation, each has the goal of bringing under his control sufficient numbers of provinces to win the game (in other words achieving the game equivalent of the Peace of King Coth, which marked the end of the Red Age in 87,805 HE).

Each Player begins the game with one or more provinces under his control and is given a limited amount of money with which to raise an army (represented by the various die-cut cardboard pieces). Each turn in the game, Players write movement orders for their leaders and armies, make alliances, and have battle. In all these activities, the influence of magic is felt through the casting of spells by the various kings and wizards.

REMOVING THE RULES FROM THIS ISSUE:

Open the magazine to the center, bend the staples with a penknife or screwdriver; lift out the rules and close staples.

### [2.0] Equipment

Examine all equipment and read up through Section 5.0 before punching out any playing pieces.

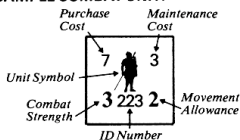
#### [2.1] Game-Map

The game is played upon an 11" x 16" map divided into land and sea provinces. Each province contains the province's name, a unique province code to identify it in written orders, and a taxation value. Each land province and one of the sea provinces also contains the name of the indigenous population, indicating the type of people native to the province and the kind of units which can be built there.

#### [2.2] Playing Pieces

One-hundred die-cut cardboard playing pieces (or "counters") are provided with the game; they represent the various military units, Heroes, Wizards, and Kings used in the game. Each military unit has a unit symbol, Purchase Cost, Maintenance Cost, Combat Strength, Movement Allowance, and ID number printed on its face. A counter's color indicates its race/national grouping (this same information can be derived from a unit's ID number).

#### SAMPLE COMBAT UNIT:



#### SUMMARY OF UNITS:



King (nr. 010)

King Coth, House of Evrin

Nr. 020: King Aradren II, House of Nol; Nr. 030: King Fina, House of Melmi; Nr. 040: King Wil, House of LiMoren; Nr. 050: King Baxx, House of Greensword



Hero

Nrs. 011, 012, 021, 022, 031, 032, 041, 042, 051, 052  
Numbers and colors indicate historical allegiance; in game, any Player may hire any Hero or Wizard.



Wizard

Nrs. 013, 014, 023, 024, 033, 034, 043, 044, 053, 054  
See note under Hero unit.



Barbarian Fleet  
(111-115)



Barbarian Infantry  
(121-126)



**Barbarian Cavalry**  
(131-136)



**Civilized Galley Fleet**  
(211-215)



**Civilized Legion Infantry**  
(221-226)



**Civilized Cataphractoi**  
(Armored Cavalry)  
(231-233)



**Elven Fleet**  
(311-315)



**Elven Cavalry**  
(331-335)



**Orc Infantry**  
(411-416)



**Warg Rider Cavalry**  
(Orcs on Giant Wolves)  
(421-424)



**Dwarven Infantry**  
(511-516)



**Feudal Infantry**  
(611-614)



**WarFrog**  
(Swamper)  
(711, 712)



**Whale Folk**  
(811, 812)



**Airship**  
(911, 912)



**Pirate Fleet**  
(951)



**Phase Marker**  
Used on Phase Record Track if Players need a reminder of the current Phase.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Units are grouped by origin, *not* by allegiance to Players. It is perfectly possible for opposing Players to have units of identical types in their armies. Even the Heroes

and Wizards of a given house may be bought by different Players (although it is good game practice to do this only when there is no other choice). Because of this, Players should keep very careful records of who belongs to whom at what point in the game.

#### [2.3] Charts and Tables

The charts and tables necessary to play the game are organized on page 8 in the rules. Charts include the Terrain Effects Chart (8.7) and the Combat Results Table (9.8).

#### [2.4] Game Scale

One centimeter on the game-map equals 150 Imperial *zots*; each Game-Turn represents one complete revolution of the planet Hypastaria around its sun (i.e., one Hypastian year).

#### [2.5] The Die

Players will need a single die from a set of 6-sided dice. This is not supplied with the *Ares* version of the game. This die is used in conjunction with the Combat Results Table, in Spellcasting, and to decide which Player is to go first in a given activity within the Sequence of Play.

### [3.0] Definition of Terms

**Combat Strength:** A unit's relative fighting ability.

**Movement Allowance:** The relative speed with which a unit can move from province to province. Basically it costs a unit one Movement Point from its Movement Allowance to enter a province.

**Taxation Value:** The number of sequins (units of money) a province produces in tax revenues for its owner each Game-Turn. The Taxation Value is the large bold number printed within the province on the game-map.

**Origin:** The racial and/or ethnic grouping of a unit, signified by the color and the first digit of the military unit's ID number. Units may only be built in provinces to which their type is indigenous. The color of units does not indicate which Player owns them. See ID number.

**Purchase Cost:** The number of sequins required to build the unit.

**Maintenance Cost:** The per-Game-Turn cost (in sequins) to keep a unit in play.

**ID Number:** A unique three digit number that identifies each unit and unit type. Note that in the case of military units the first digit (the leftmost) indicates the origin of the unit (all units in the 200 series are civilized, for example) and the middle digit indicates what type of unit it is (for example, all 220's are legion infantry units).

**Magic Value:** A variable number associated with a specific Spellcaster's specific branch of magic. When casting a spell, a die-roll compared to the number determines success or failure.

## [4.0] Setting up the Game and the Starting Sequence

#### GENERAL RULE:

Each Player should be provided with a notepad, a pen, and a pencil. The playing pieces should be carefully punched out and sorted according to type, placing them in piles at the head of the map. Players then use the Starting Sequence to determine how many units, provinces, and which Leaders they start with. It is recommended that all record-keeping be in pencil, except where noted otherwise.

### THE STARTING SEQUENCE

#### A. Choosing Provinces

1. The Player to choose first is determined by rolling the die; high roller wins (if two players tie for highest, those two re-roll).
2. First Player chooses one province.
3. Second Player (clockwise from first) chooses one province. If only two Players are in game, repeat steps 2 and 3 until each Player has chosen three provinces.
4. Third Player chooses one province.
5. Fourth Player chooses one province. In games with only three or four Players repeat steps 2, 3, 4, and 5 until each Player has chosen two provinces.
6. Fifth Player chooses one province. In games with five Players, each chooses only one province.

#### B. Choosing Kings

1. In the same order as provinces were chosen, each Player takes a King court and places it in one of his provinces. Each Player records his King's position.
2. Each Player assigns as many as three of the following military and magical abilities to his King (this should be done secretly, in ink).
  - a. Tactical Skill
  - b. March Ability
  - c. Retreat Ability
  - d. Mind Magic
  - e. Elemental Magic
  - f. Illusory Magic
  - g. Necromancy

Abilities may be assigned in duplicate or triplicate (i.e., the same King may have a double March Ability, for example).

#### C. Endow Treasury

Each Player starts the game with a Treasury of 50 sequins. Throughout the game all expenditures and additions should be strictly accounted for in itemized fashion suitable for audit by other Players at the end of the game. Standardized bookkeeping practices are recommended.

#### D. Place Neutral Units

In every *unchosen* province having a Taxation Value of 6 or more, place one infantry unit of the proper origin for that province.

#### E. Start Game

Go to the Sequence of Play (5.0)

## [5.0] Sequence of Play

### GENERAL RULE:

Play proceeds according to a strict sequence (detailed in the body of this Section of the rules). No action may be taken out of order. Any rule which can be logically derived from this sequence is to be considered as if explicitly given in the rules. For example, because C2, Maintenance, occurs before C4, Purchase, units need not be maintained on the Game-Turn in which they are purchased. Each run-through of the Sequence of Play is termed a **Game-Turn**. Play proceeds for an indefinite number of Game-Turns, until one Player satisfies the Victory Conditions (11.0) or until the Players unanimously agree to terminate play.

### PROCEDURE:

## THE SEQUENCE OF PLAY OF A GAME-TURN:

### A Alliance Phase

- Plot Bickering:** Players with capable Spellcasters secretly record their intention to cast these spells and at whom.
- Sign Alliances:** Allying Players exchange slips of paper bearing their signatures (one set of slips can be used throughout the game by writing the Game-Turn number by the name whenever the slip is used). These alliances are irrevocable for the entire Game-Turn, except as affected by magic.
- Executes Bickering and Harmony Spells:** Spells plotted in Step 1 are announced and resolved. If an alliance is made or broken by magic, signatures are exchanged or returned immediately.

### B. Tornado Phase

Players with capable Spellcasters may cause magical tornados to appear in specified provinces, preventing the collection of taxes from it for this Game-Turn.

### C. Finance Phase

- Tax Collection:** Each Player receives a number of sequins equal to the total Taxation Value of all the provinces he controls. This sum is recorded in the ledger of the Player's Treasury.
- Unit Maintenance:** Each Player must spend the number of sequins equal to the total maintenance cost of each of his current units he wishes to remain in play.
- Disbanding:** Any unit for which the maintenance cost was not spent is considered immediately disbanded (removed from play and returned to the units available for purchase).
- Unit Purchase:** Roll for precedence; high roller builds all the units he wishes to first; this privilege moves clockwise around table until each Player has had a chance to purchase new units. Units may only be placed in a province to which they are native and which the purchasing Player controls. Players with capable Spellcasters may purchase Illusory units.

### D. First Magic Phase

- Kill Wizards and Heroes:** Players with capable Spellcasters plot the death of

Wizards or Heroes, resolving all such spells *simultaneously* and immediately.

- Kill Units:** Surviving capable Spellcasters may plot and resolve the destruction of Enemy units. Results are applied immediately.
- Allegiance:** Capable Spellcasters may attempt to take permanent control of neutral units.

### E. Movement Plot Phase

- Clevoynance:** Capable Spellcasters may plot to examine one other Player's Movement Plot before plotting that of the Spellcaster Player.
- Plot Leader, Unit, and Wizard Movement:** Using the ID numbers of the pieces and Provinces, each Player secretly records his intended movements, Movement Point-by-Movement Point.



### F. Second Magic Phase

Players with capable Spellcasters may cast any or all of these spells: Mind Control, Stormy Seas, Storms in Mountains, Freeze Sea, Flood, Invisibility.

### G. Movement Execution Phase

- First Movement Point Expenditure:** All units and Leaders of all Players entering any Province by the expenditure of a *single* Movement Point do so. When all such units have moved, Players may announce their intention to *block* the further movement of any Enemy units now in the same province as they are. The presence of a neutral unit automatically blocks the movement of Players' units out of the province.
- Second Movement Point Expenditure:** All units expending two Movement Points to enter a province and all units spending a *second* Movement Point to enter a second province (this Game-Turn) now do so. Players announce their intention to block further movement.
- Third Movement Point Expenditure:** All units expending two Movement Points to enter their second province or one Movement Point to enter their third now do so.
- Subsequent Movement Point Expenditures:** Use the same techniques to make any remaining moves.
- Detect Illusions:** Spellcasters capable of doing so may attempt to detect illusory units and invisible units.

### H. Combat

- Precedence of Resolution:** Each Player rolls the die and the high roller resolves all his combat situations first in the province of his choice. In clockwise order other Players resolve their combats in the same province. Re-start entire procedure for each province in which combat can occur.
- Announcement of Intentions:** The high roller announces his intention to at-

tack Enemy units in a given province (or his intention to ignore their presence). Other Players announce clockwise from the high roller as each gets his opportunity to attack in that province.

- Result Application:** Combat results are applied immediately as they occur, before any further combat takes place.

### I. Third Magic Phase:

Players with capable Spellcasters occupying provinces in which units were destroyed in this Game-Turn's Combat Phase, may attempt to raise those units from the dead. If more than one such Spellcaster occupies a province, the die is rolled for precedence.

### J. Game-Turn

Restart the Sequence of Play and record the passage of one Game-Turn on each Player's plot pad.

## [6.0] Alliances

### When Three or More Players Are in the Game

#### GENERAL RULE:

An Alliance is a contracted activity lasting only for the Game-Turn in which it is agreed to in writing. Allies may neither block each other's movement nor engage each other in combat.

#### PROCEDURE:

Before exchanging signature slips, Players may openly discuss their intention to ally with one another. They are, however, bound only by exchanging signature slips (in other words they may double cross each other).

#### CASES:

[6.1] If two or more Players exchange signature slips, then they are allied for that Game-Turn.

[6.2] A Player may be a member of only one alliance per Game-Turn.

This alliance may consist of as few as two and as many as five Players. Alliances require no expenditures but may be the result of bribes. If Players wish to allow Allied Kings and Heroes to lead their units, they must mutually plot which units will be led by which allied leader. If the Plots don't agree, the temporary control is not exercised. If, through magic or mistake, a Player becomes a member of more than one alliance, then all those alliances are voided for all members.

[6.3] When combat occurs in a province, the forces of allies are always considered as one Player.

The Players must agree (and write it into their Movement Plot) which of their Leaders present in the province will lead any fight (and consequently which Player has the final say as to whether or not an attack is made). If no commander is named, the allies in that province may not attack (but of course still defend as one force).

## [7.0] Finance

### Taxation, Maintenance and Purchase

#### GENERAL RULE:

At the beginning of the Finance Phase, each Player collects from each province he controls, a number of sequins equal to the taxation value of those provinces. These sequins are used to maintain and purchase units and to bribe other Players.

#### CASES:

**[7.1] A Player controls a province only if at least one of his units occupies it or was the last to occupy it, or if he controlled it since the start of the game and never lost control.**

Note that other Players' units that are *allies* do not upset or contest the controlled condition of a province. Indigenous neutral units do prevent any Player from controlling any provinces they presently occupy. The presence of a Leader or Wizard does not constitute control.

**[7.2] Units are purchased and maintained for the costs shown on their faces.**

Note that the limit of the countermix is a design limit (Players are discouraged from introducing more counters into the game). Except for Kings, Players may purchase units of any type of any house regardless of the types and house they control.

**[7.3] Wizards and Heros are each assigned one ability when purchased.**

The Player should note which magical ability he wishes a purchased Wizard to have and which non-magical ability a purchased Hero to have.

#### Magical Abilities:

Mind Magic  
Elemental Magic  
Necromancy  
Illusory Magic

#### Heroic Abilities:

March Ability  
Retreat Ability  
Tactical Ability

## [8.0] Movement Plot, Execution and Block

#### GENERAL RULE:

Units and their Leaders must have their movement plotted for them each Game-Turn. This requires Players to specify from where, through where, and to where units are moving and by whom they are being led.

All units require Leaders (Kings or Heroes) to accompany them throughout their actual movement (whether or not the Leader starts with them or remains with them). Wizards may move independent of Leaders.

The Movement Allowance of a unit indicates, basically, how many provinces a Player can move that unit.

#### How to Plot:

On the plot sheet, write the ID number and Type of Leader unit (King or Hero) making the move and which combat units are going with him. The move is plotted using either the names or ID numbers of all the provinces moved from, through, and into. Movement of Wizards may be plotted separately so as not to confuse them with Leaders.

#### How to Execute the Plot:

Follow the procedure detailed in the Sequence of Play, and perform it within the restrictions of the Movement Rules.

#### CASES:

**[8.1] When travelling without units, Leaders and Wizards may enter any type of province at a cost of 1 Movement Point per province.**

If, however, Leaders are travelling with units, they must expend as many Movement Points as their units. Leaders may move any number of units. Since Wizards never lead units, they are not subject to this limit. Wizards and Leaders may not end their movement at sea unless they are with a Fleet. There is no limit to the number of Kings, Leaders, and Wizards that may be in a province.

**[8.2] Should a Wizard or Leader enter or remain in a province without Friendly military units, and that province is occupied by Enemy military units, a King is captured and a Wizard or Hero is eliminated automatically.**

A captured King may not be actually used by the captor, but he may be ransomed, sold, or traded to another captor or held indefinitely. He must be in the custody of a military unit (and may not be killed). If the King is restored to his original Player, he once again functions normally.

**[8.3] A Leader with March Ability has an increased Movement Allowance of "5."**

If a King has a duplicate or triplicate March Ability, his Movement Allowance is raised to "6" or "7." Units travelling with such a King (start to finish) have their Movement Allowance increased by one, two, or three Movement Points for that move.

**[8.4] No unit, Leader, or Wizard may move directly from an Enemy occupied province to another Enemy occupied province nor to an Enemy controlled province.**

Units may move from a vacant Enemy controlled province to an Enemy occupied or controlled province. Note also that units cannot be *blocked* by neutral units or Enemy units from leaving the province in which they began the Game-Turn if the province they move to is not Enemy occupied.

**[8.5] Each province is characterized, for movement, by the basic kind of terrain it contains.**

See the Terrain Effects Chart. Note that any number of units may enter a province, provided they meet the restrictions of 8.6.

**[8.6] Some units have special movement abilities and restrictions.**

**Fleet units** may only enter Sea provinces and Coastal provinces.

Note that three Coastal provinces have two separated coasts. The Player must note which side of the province the Fleet entered by (and it must leave the same way).

Fleet units may each transport one military unit and any number of Leaders and Wizards, if they begin their movement in the same province as the units to be transported. Land units may not move by land in the same Game-Turn as transported over sea. There is no cost to the Fleet unit to embark or disembark a land unit.



**Airships** may enter any province at a cost of one Movement Point per province. They may not end their movement in either a Sea or Mountain province (if plotted or forced to do so, they are eliminated instead). Airships may transport land units in the same manner as Fleets.



**WarFrog** units may move *through* one Sea province per Movement Phase. They may not remain at sea, and are eliminated if forced to do so. When coming ashore (entering a Coastal province from the sea) WarFrogs pay only 1 Movement Point regardless of the actual cost to enter the province. WarFrogs always pay only 1 Movement Point to enter a Swamp province.



**Whale units** may never enter coastal provinces — only Sea provinces.



**Dwarven units** pay only one Movement Point to enter Mountain provinces.

**Elven units** pay only one Movement Point to enter Forest provinces.

**[8.7] If Players wish to avoid plotting moves, they may experiment with the following procedure:**

Roll for precedence; the first Player makes those moves constituting the expenditure of the first Movement Point for his Leaders, Wizards, and units. Then the second Player makes his first Movement Point moves and so on until each Player has moved all the units and Leaders for their first Movement Point. Roll for precedence again and make the second Movement Point move (and any two Point moves). The Movement Phase proceeds on the basis of rolling for precedence before the expenditure of each Movement Point. All other rules apply.

The drawback to this system is that some of the surprise and mystery will be eliminated from the game in order to avoid the tedium of plotting.

## [9.0] Combat

### GENERAL RULE:

During the Combat Phase, a Player may exercise his option to have combat with Enemy units which are in the same province as the Player's. See the Sequence of Play for determining who shall conduct combat first.

### PROCEDURE:

Combat is not plotted. Rather the Player announces his desire to have combat and it automatically ensues. Regardless of who initiated combat, the simplified ratio is stated from the point of view of the Player with the *larger* force. For example, a Player with a force of three Combat Strength Points elects to have combat with a Player with eight Combat Strength Points. The ratio is rounded off in favor of the *smaller* force (always) and stated as 2-to-1. The die is rolled and the result found by cross-indexing the die number with the ratio column.

### CASES:

#### [9.1] No force can participate in combat with the *same* Enemy force more than once in the same Combat Phase.

A force may have combat with each Enemy force in the province, one at a time, if the Player so wishes. The restriction against having combat with the same force more than once per Game-Turn applies regardless of who initiated the first combat.

#### [9.2] Each force in a Province is considered an integral value and must be used in total in any combat.

Note that allied forces in the same Province are considered to be *one* force (and the Players should have plotted beforehand which Player controls those units for combat purposes).

#### [9.3] If any Leader of a force has Tactical Ability, the column on the Combat Result Table is shifted one column in his favor.

If the Leader has duplicate or triplicate Tactical Ability, the column is shifted twice or thrice (within the limits of the table). Net out the shift if both opposing Leaders have Tactical Ability.

#### [9.4] Combat may take place in Sea Provinces exactly as in Land Provinces.

Land units and Fleets in Sea provinces add their Combat Strengths into one integral value (see 9.2) just as Fleets in Coastal provinces must add their strength to land combat. When losing units at sea, first lose a land unit, then a Fleet, then a land unit, and so on until the loss called for is satisfied. The same basic rule applies to airships.

#### [9.5] When all Player-initiated combat in a Province is finished, a neutral unit in that Province then has combat with any forces, starting with the high-roller that did not already have combat with it.

#### [9.6] When called upon to retreat by the Combat Results Table, a force must conduct the retreat

### under the same strictures as a move.

If the force (or parts of it) cannot legally retreat into the available provinces then it (or the parts of it) is eliminated instead. The owning Player decides which province or provinces his losing units retreat to *unless* the opposing Leader has Retreat Abilities greater than that of the loser, in which case the victor decides. Forces may never retreat into Enemy occupied provinces. Land forces may embark onto ships in order to retreat.

#### [9.7] Leaders with *net* Retreat Abilities greater than one *never* have to retreat their own force (they ignore "R" results).

If opposing Leaders net out against each other, it is as if they had no Retreat Ability at all. A superiority of one Retreat Ability allows that Leader to retreat the loser. A superiority of two or more allows a King to ignore retreat results.

## [10.0] Magic

### GENERAL RULE:

Only Wizards and Kings who have taken magical powers (collectively called "Spellcasters") may cast spells. Each Wizard has knowledge of *one* of the four *branches* of magic, assigned when he is first hired; a King may have knowledge of up to *three* branches of magic. Each Spellcaster is assigned a Magic Value of 2 with each of the branches of magic he knows. Kings *may* take the same branch of magic twice or three times, in which case they have two or three separate Magic Values for the same branch.

### PROCEDURE:

A Spellcaster may only cast spells from his branch(es) of magic. Each time a Spellcaster attempts to cast a spell, roll a die; if the roll is equal to or less than his Magic Value, the spell succeeds. If the roll is 1, his Magic Value increases by one; if 6, his Magic Value decreases by one. Magic Values may never increase above 5 nor drop below 1. Players should keep accurate records of changing Magic Values.

### CASES:

#### [10.1] Some spells have a cost in sequins which must be paid only if the spell succeeds.

#### [10.2] Each spell has a specific time during the Game-Turn when it may be cast as explained in the Sequence of Play.

A Phase Record Track, used primarily to keep track of when various spells may be cast, is printed on the game-map. The Phase Record marker is placed on this Track, and moved along it as each Game-Turn progresses to indicate the precise actions which each Player should be taking at any given time. These times are also listed on the Spell Summary (10.8).

#### [10.3] A Spellcaster may attempt to cast only one spell per Game-Turn from each branch of magic with which he is familiar.

A King with a double or triple Magical Ability — i.e., who took a single branch of magic two or three times — may cast spells from that branch two or three times, using a different Magic Value each time (see General Rule).

### [10.4] Mind Magic

[10.41] **Clairvoyance** [Time of Casting: Movement Plot Phase. Cost: None.] Allows the caster to see the plotted moves of one other Player before he plots his own movement. Works only for the current plot phase. If two Players cast this spell on each other, neither may see the other's plot.

[10.42] **Mind Control** [Time of Casting: 2nd Magic Phase. Cost: None.] Allows the caster to take control of one Hero owned by an Enemy Player. During the Movement Plot Phase, the casting Player must plot movement for the Hero. After the Plot Phase, he determines whether the spell succeeds. If so, the casting Player's plot is executed during the following Movement Phase. The Hero reverts to the control of his owning Player at the end of the Movement Phase, and may not turn units over to the controlling Player's Leaders, nor may he attack units belonging to his owning Player.

[10.43] **Cause Bickering** [Time of Casting: Alliance Phase (must be plotted in diplomatic orders). Cost: None.] Spell prevents any one specified Enemy Player from allying with one other specified Enemy Player. Affects only the current Phase.

[10.44] **Harmony** [Time of Casting: Alliance Phase (must be plotted). Cost: None.] The spell forces one specified Player to ally with another specified (possibly the Spellcaster's) Player. Cancels out bickering. Affects only the current Phase.

[10.45] **Allegiance** [Time of Casting: 1st Magic Phase. Cost: 5 Sequins/unit.] Allows the caster to take control of any number of neutral units, *permanently*. In case of conflict, roll for precedence.

### [10.5] Elemental Magic

[10.51] **Stormy Seas** [Time of Casting: 2nd Magic Phase. Cost: None.] The caster specifies two contiguous sea provinces. All naval units in the provinces are immobilized (i.e., may not move during the subsequent Movement Phase); no Fleets, WarFrog, Whale, or Airship units may move to the provinces (plotted movement is aborted). Units controlled by the casting and allied players are not affected. Lasts for one Movement Phase only. Leaders and Wizards are not affected.

[10.52] **Storms in Mountains** [Time of Casting: 2nd Magic Phase. Cost: None.] As above, but applying to Mountain provinces and land and air units. Dwarven units are not affected.

[10.53] **Flood** [Time of Casting: 2nd Magic Phase. Cost: None.] Immobilizes all land units (except Warfrogs), Leaders, and Wizards in a single and province for one Movement Phase. Any force moving into the province is also immobilized; no combat may take place in the province. Units controlled by the casting and allied players, as well as Leaders and Wizards, are not affected.

[10.54] **Freeze Sea** [Time of Casting: 2nd

**Magic Phase.** Cost: **None.** Makes a single Sea province impassable to all naval units (and Whales) — any such units in the province are immobilized, and any movement into the province is aborted. The province becomes passable to land units. Effects end after the Movement Phase; any land units in the province at that time are eliminated. Swamp provinces may also be frozen without affecting any units therein. A frozen province is the equivalent of a plains province for one Movement Phase.

[10.55] **Tornados** [Time of Casting: **Tornado Phase.** Cost: **None.**] Prevents collection of taxes from one (specified) province for the current Finance Phase.

#### [10.6] **Illusory Magic**

[10.61] **Illusory Units** [Time of Casting: **Finance Phase.** Cost: **1 sequin/unit.**] The Player must announce that he is casting the spell, but not which of the units he purchases are illusory. He may create any number of illusory units at a cost of 1 sequin per unit. The ID numbers of all illusory units must be noted on scrap paper for later verification. The illusory units remain on the game-map, but if forced to engage in combat they are removed before combat is resolved. Illusory units do *not* prevent an Enemy Player from building units because of countermix limitations; if a Player wishes to build a unit and none are available but illusory units of that type are on the game-map, he may require the owning Player of an illusory unit to remove it from the game-map so he may construct it. An illusory unit behaves as a regular unit until removed from play.

[10.62] **Invisibility** [Time of Casting: **2nd Magic Phase.** Cost: **None.**] The spell is cast on one Friendly Leader; the Leader and any units, Wizards, and other Leaders he moves with are removed from the game-map. They are now considered invisible, and the casting Player must keep track of their position on a piece of scrap paper. If the Leader drops off any units, they become visible and are placed on the game-map; if he picks up any units, they become invisible and are removed. The invisible force may not be blocked by an Enemy force — but they may block Enemy movement. The invisible force may not be attacked. If the invisible force blocks Enemy movement or attacks an Enemy force, it loses its invisibility and is returned to the game-map. Otherwise, invisibility is permanent. Units hired in a province containing an invisible force may be added to that force without first being put on the game-map.

[10.63] **Detect Illusion** [Time of Casting: **Movement Execution Phase.** Cost: **None.**] The spell is cast at any province; if there are any illusory or invisible units in the province, the owner of those units must tell the caster of their presence, type, and number.

#### [10.7] **Necromancy**

[10.71] **Kill Wizard or Hero** [Time of Casting: **1st Magic Phase.** Cost: **8 sequins.**] Causes one specified Enemy Wizard or Hero to be eliminated.

[10.72] **Kill Units** [Time of Casting: **Magic Phase.** Cost: **5 sequins per unit.**] Immediately eliminates Enemy unit.

[10.73] **Raise Units** [Time of Casting: **3rd Magic Phase.** Cost: **None.**] If the Spellcaster is in a province where combat took place in the preceding Combat Phase and in which units were eliminated and the Spellcaster's force did not retreat, all eliminated units (of all sides) may be raised. These are now zombie units, and controlled by the caster. They must be maintained at normal costs. **Special Rule:** If a 6 is rolled, not only does the spell fail and the Spellcaster's Magic Value decrease, but he loses as many units of his non-zombie force as he tried to raise. (If he attempted to raise more zombie units than are present in his original force, he loses all units).

[10.8] **Spell Summary**  
(see map)

## [11.0] **VICTORY CONDITIONS**

### GENERAL RULE:

In two-player games, a Player must control Provinces with a total taxation value of **120** or more at the beginning of a Game-Turn to win. In three-player games, a Player must control a total taxation value of **100**; in games with more players, of **90**.

A game may be ended before one Player fulfills the victory conditions with the mutual agreement of all Players. In this case, the Players may unanimously concede the game to one Player or group of Players.

## Province Listings and Key to the Map Notation

<i>Nr. Name</i>	<i>Tax</i>	<i>Nature of Natives</i>
01. <i>Sea of Whales</i>	1	<b>Whales</b>
02. <i>Sea of Ice</i>	0	<b>none</b>
03. <i>Northern Arm</i>	2	<b>none</b>
04. <i>Dragon's Claw</i>	1	<b>none</b>
05. <i>Sea of Winds</i>	1	<b>none</b>
06. <i>Thorian Abyss</i>	1	<b>none</b>
07. <i>Sta Fira Ocean</i>	1	<b>none</b>
08. <i>South Starsea</i>	2	<b>none</b>
09. <i>East Starsea</i>	1	<b>none</b>
10. <i>North Starsea</i>	2	<b>none</b>
11. <i>Mel Fira Ocean</i>	1	<b>none</b>
12. <i>Mel Fira Ocean</i>	1	<b>none</b>
13. <i>Nila's Sea</i>	1	<b>none</b>
14. <i>Strait of Tuli</i>	4	<b>none</b>
15. <i>Bay of Jedren</i>	2	<b>none</b>
16. <i>Sea of Kizann</i>	2	<b>none</b>
17. <i>Gulf of Bornn</i>	2	<b>none</b>
18. Korsland	6	<b>Barbarian</b>
19. Kann	6	<b>Barbarian</b>
20. Arkand	4	<b>Barbarian</b>
21. Andesite	8	<b>Dwarven</b>
22. Sira	6	<b>Elvish</b>
23. B'n'or	2	<b>Feudal</b>
24. Sukann	6	<b>Barbarian</b>
25. Stel	4	<b>Dwarven</b>
26. Yakash	10	<b>Orcish</b>
27. Mela	3	<b>Elvish</b>
28. Yaro	8	<b>Elvish</b>
29. E'kor	6	<b>Barbarian</b>
30. Shevane	6	<b>Civilized</b>
31. Zann	3	<b>Barbarian</b>
32. Grandarite	6	<b>Dwarven</b>
33. M'yakash	4	<b>Orcish</b>
34. Tharady	8	<b>Civilized</b>
35. Sashok	3	<b>Orcish</b>
36. Chevois	4	<b>Feudal</b>
37. Wys	3	<b>Airmen</b>
38. Drormt	4	<b>Swamper</b>
39. Munampt	3	<b>Swamper</b>
40. Hadren	4	<b>Civilized</b>
41. Penna	6	<b>Civilized</b>
42. Romark	2	<b>Feudal</b>
43. Lilla	2	<b>Elvish</b>
44. Starhome	8	<b>Pirate</b>
45. Thoria	4	<b>Civilized</b>
46. Ela	4	<b>Elvish</b>
47. Chesá	10	<b>Civilized</b>

### Design Credits:

#### Game Design and Development:

Greg Costikyan

#### Physical Systems and Graphics,

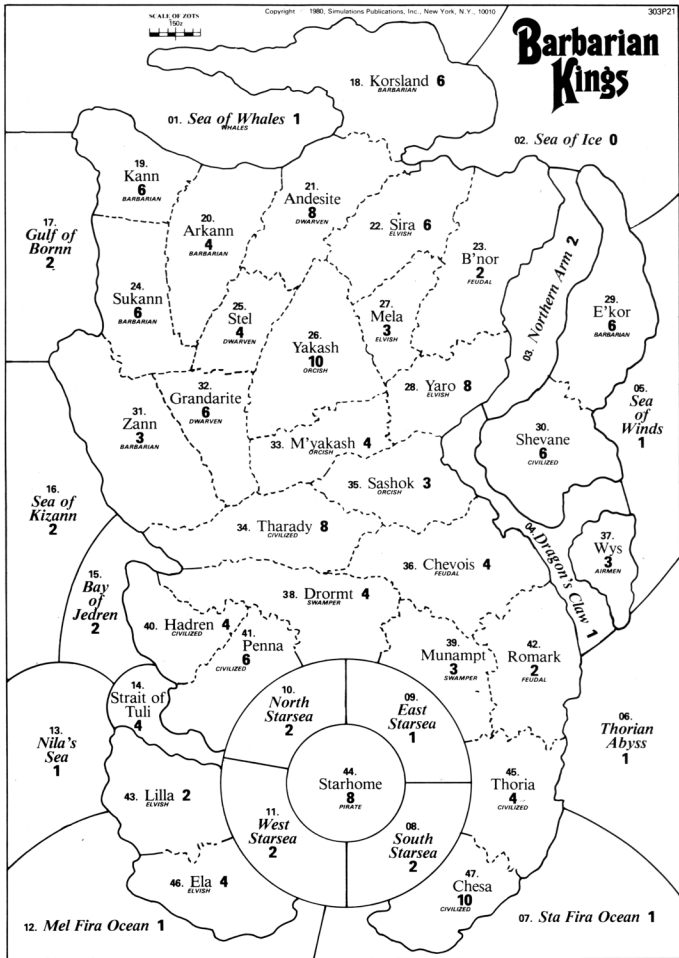
and Rules Editing:  
Redmond A. Simonsen

#### Playtesting:

Tom Gould, Ben Grossman, Stephen Tihor

#### Production:

Carolyn Arnold, Rosalind Fruchtmán,  
Ted Koller, Manfred F. Milkuhn,  
Michael Moore, Bob Ryer,  
Patricia J. Snyder



MOVEMENT PLOT MAP Players have permission to photocopy this page for repeated play.

## [9.6] Combat Results Table

DIE	Combat Ratio					
	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1
7	Le	Lr	Lr	Sr	Sr	S½e
2	L½e	Lr	Sr	Sr	Sr	S½e
3	Lr	Sr	Sr	S½e	S½e	Se
4	Sr	Sr	S½e	S½e	Se	Se
5	S½e	S½e	S½e	Se	Se	Se
6	Se	Se	Se	Se	Se	Se

### Explanation of Results:

**e:** Force is eliminated.

**½e:** Units with Combat Strengths equal to or greater than half of the force's total Combat Strength are eliminated from the force; owning Player chooses which are eliminated.

**r:** Force must retreat (but see Retreat Ability, 9.7)

**L:** Result applies to larger force.

**S:** Result applies to smaller force.

**Note:** If the two forces are of equal size, arbitrarily assign one to be the "larger" and the other the "smaller." If two forces are of equal size, that of the higher-rolling player is deemed to be the "larger" and the other the "smaller". A leader's Tactics Ability can cause a numerically inferior force to be treated as the larger force. **Example:** A King with a triple Tactics Ability leads a force on the smaller side of a 2-1 ratio. The ratio is first shifted one to the left (to 1-1) and then "bounced" two to the right (to 3-1) for a total of three column shifts.

## [8.7] Terrain Effects Chart

Terrain Type (and Map Reference Sample)	Military Unit Movement Point Cost to Enter	Combat Effects
<b>Plains Province</b> (nr. 30, Shevane)	1 MP	Normal
<b>Mountain Province</b> (nr. 32, Grandarite)	2 MP Dwarven: 1 MP	Double Dwarven and halve Cavalry Strength
<b>Forest Province</b> (nr. 28, Yaro)	2 MP Elven: 1 MP	Double Elven and halve non-Elven, Cavalry & Legion
<b>Swamp Province</b> (nr. 38, Drormt)	2 MP WarFrog: 1 MP	Double WarFrog; halve all others
<b>Sea Province</b> (nr. 06, Thorian Abyss)	1 MP*	Normal

\*Unembarked Land units are prohibited.

When halving Strengths, total first, then halve rounding down. When doubling or halving, count the *effective* final Strength as the size of the force.

## Leader and Wizard Summary

A **King** is a **Leader** who may be a **Spellcaster** (choice of 3 Branches and/or Abilities).

A **Hero** is a **Leader** who may *not* be a Spellcaster (choice of 1 Ability).

A **Wizard** is a **Spellcaster** who is not a leader (choice of 1 Branch).

**Abilities** are...

March (8.3)

Retreat (9.7)

Tactics (9.3)

**Branches of Magic** are...

Elemental Magic (10.5)

Illusory Magic (10.6)





















































































Mind Magic (10.4)

Necromancy (10.7)

A King may duplicate (or triplicate) an Ability or Branch of Magic, and has a separate Magic Value for each time he takes a Branch of Magic.

## Barbarian Kings Counter Section Nr. 1 (100 pieces): Front

Quantity of Sections of this identical type: 1. Quantity of Sections (all types) in game: 1.



# Final Notes

by Edward Michaels

"Hss," Cap warned his eldest son.

Fifteen pairs of eyes followed his pointing finger. There, twenty meters away came the bisonoid male, trudging through the melting snows of Crier's Pass. It used its wooden spear as a staff while crossing the muddy valley, heading for the gap that led down to the plains. Cap's band, hidden in the shadows behind the moraine, would not be noticed until it was too late.

The leader gestured to his nephews, Edgar and Mickie, to circle around the long pile of rocky debris. Silently the two men obeyed, weaving like wraiths in and out of the shadows cast by the dim sunlight and quickly closing the distance to the gully through which the beast would have to pass.

On the far side of the broad pass, Cap saw his brother's family trailing the buffalo along the top of an escarpment. Good, there would be no escape for it. The families would eat well that night...

A clatter of falling pebbles shattered the stillness.

The captain wheeled, furious, seeking the cause of the disturbance. Bart, his eldest son, had leaned over too far and sent the rock outcropping tumbling under the weight of his hand. The boy's eyes were filled with fright.

"Now!" Cap ordered. Though it seemed hopeless — the buffalo could run fast when warned — he had to try to stop the beast from leaving the mountain pass. Perhaps the sudden appearance of the family would buy them a moment's surprise and let the nephews block the gully,



John H. Butterfield

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN H. BUTTERFIELD

The leader leapt over the gravel ridge and raced down at the bisonoid, followed closely behind by the rest of the family. He saw his brother Peter stand up, surprised no doubt that the ambush had been sprung too soon. There would be much blame tossing at supper if he did not slay the buffalo.

Surprisingly, the beast did not flee. It stood its ground, crude spear brought up for a throw. It should have flown as all buffalo flew at the sight of men. Yet this male paused to lift its spear and gauge the distance. Even in the rare event that it could kill one man, it must have known it was trapped. By every law of the lost sages, Cap swore, the beast should flee!

It waited patiently, its target chosen. As Cap and his family slogged the last fifteen meters through the mud, it cocked its arm and let the spear fly. Cap was the target.

Gods our fathers, he thought, they have learned to throw like men!

A body slammed into Cap behind, knocking him to the ground. His head rapped a stone as he landed. There was a moment of shock, followed by darkness.

From his vantage point overlooking Crier's Pass, Cap could see the pearly sun rise, its pale disk growing visibly larger with each new dawn. Beyond the pass lay the endless plain, its thick cover of snow waning under the double glare of bright Prime and pale Companion. In a week the plains would be green and the families would be able to move in for the double harvest.

Of course, there were the buffalo to slaughter first. It was a mixed blessing that as the winters grew more moderate, the troublesome creatures seemed to multiply with astonishing rapidity. Still, they would provide abundant food for the long summer.

The gods my fathers indeed smile on me, Cap decided.

"Mighty satisfied with ourselves, aren't we, Captain?" a ragged voice hissed in his ear.

Cap's reverie was snapped. He turned to see Saul, the last of the readers, standing at his elbow. The old man was plucking at his beard and smiling slyly.

"Why are you here?" the Captain snapped. "I gave orders I was not to be disturbed."

"What guard would dare touch a reader?" the old man retorted angrily. "I have the gift, Captain Smith. I read!"

"They all think you're mad, old man. That's why they don't touch you."

"The gods our fathers could all read," Saul fumed. "No one thinks they were mad." He reached under his ragged cloak and brought out a tattered book. "Wouldn't you like to read, Captain?" he asked. "It's not too terribly difficult. Even a leader of the families can learn."

"My father did not read," Cap snapped, "and he was a great leader!"

"Yes, you have the vanity of your father too," Saul stated simply. He sat on a stone and thumbed carefully through the pages. "One of the gods writes about vanity...if I can find it. Ah yes, 'Pride comes before the fall.'"

Cap plucked the book from Saul's hands, shouting, "I should destroy the

useless sayings of the gods. Not a word of theirs has helped us, nor did their wisdom help them return to the star they came from. Tell me one use for this book, and I'll let you keep it."

"Why, Captain," the old man said humbly, "there's only a few drops of wisdom in it. The gods admitted they were merely travellers in machines they did not understand. They collected their little wisdom in books, most of which are now lost. But that book you hold is our last link to the gods our fathers." Noticing his leader softening, he pressed on. "Will you let me show you but one word of possible wisdom?"

Cap sighed, shaking his head in disgust. "What is it?"

**T**HE OLD MAN TOOK BACK THE BOOK and quickly found the passage he sought. "The buffalo-like make good eating," he read, "their meat is much like beef. They are clever beasts and learn to mimic us in using tools. One of these days they could learn to use fire, and then they might actually be able to challenge us." These words were written shortly after the gods landed.

"So?"

"You don't see?" Saul sighed loudly, maddened by ignorance. "In those days the buffalo did not know how to use fire! Today they not only use fire, they have also learned how to make weapons!"

"All the more reason for us to exterminate as many as we can."

"You were always slow, Captain Smith," the old man scolded. "The first gods ate the buffalo because they looked like food from the heaven they called Earth. We've eaten the buffalo all these years because we thought they were supposed to be our food."

"The buffalo are dumb beasts!"

"They may be more than they seem."

"The buffalo are big, shaggy, dumb creatures that taste good," Cap lectured. "Their hides provide our tents, our bow strings, our clothes. The gods knew they have no intelligence; they are clever mimics, that's all."

"Let us hope they don't develop a taste for human flesh," the old man muttered as he turned away. "They're too damned human for me."

"...not human at all."

Cap awoke with the taste of mud in his mouth and the memory of his conversation with Saul in mind. Then he remembered — the buffalo male, the spear. His forehead ached terribly.

But I'm alive, he realized.

His second son Phil was sitting next to him. "What happened?" he asked the boy.

"I saw the spear aimed at you, and knocked you aside, father."

Cap smiled and tussled the hair of his boy. "Well done, my lad. You'll be a first class hunter in no time." He looked around and saw the families standing over the buffalo male, slashing at the body to give their axes the first taste of blood for the hunting season.

"Mickie brought the buffalo down," the boy said. "Strange, it didn't try to run. It just stood there, grunting at us."

"Perhaps the buffalo have learned independence...just like my son." Cap started to stand. A shock of pain swept over him; he sat. "Serves me right for playing the hero. Phil, go wet your axe. I will join you in a minute."

The boy didn't move. "Father," he blurted, "Bart's dead."

"What?"

Phil pointed to the body lying behind them.

"The spear missed us, but it hit Bart in the leg," he explained. "I don't understand. It wasn't a serious wound, I've had worse and lived. We pulled out the spear, but in just a few minutes he began to scream..."

A son of the Captain screaming? God, the families would laugh at him for siring weaklings.

"...He called for you, said his leg was on fire. Then...he died."

Despite the pain in his head, Cap stood. As he neared his son, he saw the grimace of anguish on the boy's face; he must have died in mid-scream. The families must have suffered humiliation at such unmanly behavior, especially from the leader's own flesh. Not one lost soul of the lost star travellers would be atoned by such a death....

And the buffalo had met its death like a man. That thought was the most bitter of all.

The gash in the boy's leg was bad but not fatal. Certainly not large enough to cause the boy's spirit to flee to the stars. Unless... perhaps it was not the wound that had killed the boy.

Once old Saul had prepared a potion, a poison he called it, for Cap, when a rival family had tried to encroach on the planting fields. In the duel for ownership, Cap had used the poison spear, and it had produced the same grimace on the dead man's face.

By the lost sages, Cap thought, could it be the buffalo have learned to brew poison? No, it was clearly impossible. Yet...

Shuddering at the thought of touching the dead, Cap nevertheless reached down to soften the grimace of death etched on his son's face. The flesh was still warm to the touch.

"We will bury him with honor," he announced.

"But, father, he died screaming! It's not fitting!"

"His death may have saved the family. The buffalo's spear was poisoned. Our enemy has a new strength. Go!"

Phil scampered to collect other boys and select the stones for Bart's grave. The rest of the family had already begun dressing the buffalo's carcass.

"Still, it could have been poison," Peter insisted, tearing off a shred of pakka bread from the common loaf. He dipped it in the bowl of honeyed buffalo blood and engulfed the sopping morsel in one gulp.

"Buffalo do not know poisons," Edgar objected, one of the few hunters who dared contradict the captain's hulking brother. "Only the reader knows how to make poison. Next you'll tell me the buffalo bury their dead."

The rest of the council chuckled at the absurdity.



There was open tension in the council. Seldom had an argument continued for so long and never on so touchy a subject as a death in the captain's family. Those closest to him felt Cap's sorrow and tried to protect him from the boorish frankness of his brother.

Cap had steadfastly refused to eat, not even touching the dish of spiced buffalo blood that was his right alone. Nor had he objected when Peter had taken the liberty of usurping the delicacy. Instead, he sat in silence as the argument passed back and forth among the family members.

Suddenly, he rose. The council was instantly alert. Peter let drop his next chunk of bread, awaiting the captain's command.

"It was poison," Cap announced.

Peter grunted in satisfaction at his brother's support. The others nodded in agreement, one after another.

"From what I have seen this day, I know we have underestimated the strength of the buffalo...and their intelligence." This last phrase brought murmurs from the council. "The beast did not run, as we expected. It dared throw its spear at me, leaving itself defenseless. It waited patiently until Mickie struck the death blow. Have any of you ever seen such a thing before?"

"The buffalo flee at the smell of a man," Mickie chanted the old truth.

"Perhaps no longer." Cap waited until the whispers around the council stopped and until all eyes were once more upon him. "For the four generations we have been here, we have treated the buffalo like simple animals. The gods our fathers wrote how the beasts reminded them of simple herd animals from ancient Earth. But even the gods noticed that the buffalo were clever at imitating man; perhaps the gods underestimated just how human the buffalo were. Each of you this evening has feasted upon its flesh. Think now, what if the god whom our fathers worshipped has decided that the buffalo should become a true man? Is it not forbidden for man to eat man? If our fathers were blind, must we also be blind?"

A few hunters traded guilty looks; the rest had growing anger in their eyes at the accusation.

"The buffalo are animals," Peter stated flatly.

"When does a man-imitator become not a simple mimic but a man? Brother, if you

were chased by a group of buffalo, would you flee? No, you'd stand your ground and fight! Is that not what the beast...man did today? Is not my son dead from its poison? We face men!"

Angry protests erupted on all sides. Only when Peter rose trembling with anger, did the noise die. "Brother," he half-whispered, "you are captain. If you believe what you say, we have all sinned!"

He grabbed a bowl of blood and hurled it out of the tent, and then sent the plate of buffalo meat flying after it.

"Peter!"

The shivering man stopped at his brother's command.

"If we have sinned, we have sinned...through our narrow-mindedness," Cap told the council. "From this day forth we treat buffalo as a rival family. We will not feast on their flesh or drink their blood. But we will destroy every beast we find. We must smash them before they can gather together against us, before they learn more of our secrets. Tomorrow we descend into the valleys. We will track down and kill them all! No mercy for the women or children, no herd gathering. If it takes a whole harvest to root them out and destroy them, we will do it!"

"Aye!" Edgar shouted.

"Aye!" cried Peter and the others.

**T**HE BUFFALO ENCAMPMENT stood in the valley by a narrow stream. The families circled it in the hills. The Cap's family guarded the north slope, Peter's the south, and Mickie and Edgar led the bands in the mouths of the valley. The plan was to have Cap and his brother swoop down into the encampment and send the buffalo heading in panic towards the valley mouths, where they would be cut down by the rest of the families.

Prime was already beginning its descent towards the horizon, and pin-point bright Companion was high overhead. Cap raised his spear; Peter saw the signal and lifted his. The two families broke over the top of the hill and headed into the valley, their ululating war cry echoing through the hills.

The bisonoids seemed shocked. For a moment the camp was in confusion, moving, it seemed to Cap, very slowly. Some grabbed spears. Some gathered children or a few pouches. The ones with the spears gathered in a circle. The rest broke for freedom.

But it was wrong. Rather than head for the valley mouths, the majority of the beasts ran up the hills, straight at the warriors. There were far too many for the few hunters to kill. Only a handful headed for the valley mouths.

Cap hoped his nephews would notice the buffalo's strange behavior and break their cover. The ambush had gone wrong, again.

The circle of buffalo with spears held off the first wave of the hunters. A few threw their spears at the approaching men and then turned to grab another weapon. The families took advantage of the holes in the solid line and attacked, spears first at those beasts who still held spears and then axes drawn to attack the rest.

Peter's family hit first, throwing the buf-

falo into the axes of Cap's family. In a moment the circle was broken, and the males fell quickly under the onslaught of axe blows. Only a few males survived as Edgar and Mickie's families arrived. In moments the ground was littered with the dead and, Cap noticed, three hunters.

The leader stared at the slaughter. Twenty males dead in the circle and a few dozen dead on the slopes. But many women and children had escaped.

"Captain," his brother called. The leader turned to look at the pile of males Peter was picking through. "They're all! Not a single male has a full set of teeth!"

Curse the gods, it was true! The males were old, most of them going grey in their shaggy manes. And these old men had killed three men!

"After the women," Cap shouted. "They must not warn the next village."

"We must bury our dead, Captain," Edgar reminded him sternly.

"No!" the leader shouted. "There is no time now! Most women seemed to go in that direction. We must follow them and attack the next village!" He scanned the empty faces around him. "On the way back we will bury our dead with the respect that is their due. Follow them!"

His head pounding painfully, Cap pushed through the men and headed up the slope. He would not be fooled again.

It was difficult following the women. One by one the group the hunters had followed split off, but the leader refused to split his party. They followed one group of tracks, those of an adult with two young, which was bound to lead them to another camp.

As morn began to fill the eastern sky, the exhausted families saw their goal. The lone buffalo woman, two children being dragged behind her, was just topping a hill. She too was tired. The sight of her filled the men with renewed strength, and they raced up the hill in hot pursuit.

The woman saw her trackers. She fled, pulling the children under her arms. By the next valley they would catch her.

The cold of the night had made footing on the snow better. Over the hill and down the slope they ran. The next hill was higher, and the buffalo woman had trouble climbing it. Once she lost precious moments to gather one of her children who had fallen. At the top she dropped in exhaustion, the man barely a dozen paces behind her.

Cap could not make the climb. His head swam with pain. Deciding to let the younger warriors have the glory, he collapsed on the cold ground to watch the woman's final moments.

On the crest she had gained her feet again. Rather than run, she began jumping in the air, grunting wildly into the next valley. Then, suddenly, she reached down and grabbed her youngest, lifted it high over her head, and threw it. She grabbed the second child and threw it too. Then she turned to face her enemy. Snarling madly, she ran back down the slope to kill someone.

Unfortunately, she picked Peter. The big man dropped his spear and dived head first into her belly. They rolled down the

slope in a tangle. The man flipped her away easily and caught her head under his arm. He twisted once.

Cap swore he heard the neck snap. He shuddered at the madness in his brother. In horror he saw the woman reaching out to scratch Peter, who calmly kicked her hand aside and plunged his axe into her skull. Another chop and her head was off. He held up the dripping trophy and chanted his victory to the gods.

Animals! Cap thought. By the gods, we are the animals.

**P**ETER SWUNG THE BLOODY HEAD ONCE OVER his head and threw it as a present to his brother-leader. The sight was too much. Cap muffled a scream as the head fell a few paces away. The pulsing spasms in his head swept him into blackness.

When he awoke, he heard voices in the background.

"Not a male in the village."

"The ones who fled will warn the whole valley. We'll never catch them now."

Cap forced the darkness out of his mind. He opened his eyes and saw the council gathered in the tent. Edgar sat near him, bathing his head with water.

"What happened?" the leader demanded.

"You fainted," Peter snapped.

"A fever, Captain," Mickie added.

"And the woman?"

"There was another camp in the next valley," Edgar said softly. "The woman destroyed both her children to warn them. Dashed them both down the mountain. We found only a few old ones too weak to move."

"And killed them!"

"We must pursue..." Cap tried to rise but the dizziness forced him back. "They must not warn the others."

"There's no one to warn but other women and the old men," Peter sulked. "The buffalo men seem to have flown."

"Something...wrong..." the leader muttered. "Ambush should work."

"Perhaps we should return to Crier's Pass," Mickie offered. "The women and children will be coming down to the plains soon..."

"Peter!"

The Captain's anguished cry surprised the men.

"An ambush!" Cap pushed away Edgar's hand. "While we've been chasing after their women and old men, the buffalo males have gathered to attack our families as they come through the pass! We must return. They are defenseless..."

Peter turned to Mickie. "Tell them we move camp tonight. We return to the pass."

"But the captain..."

"If he is a captain, he will lead us back," the big man stated. "If he is too weak...we will find a new leader."

The council hurried out to gather their equipment. Peter stopped at the entrance. "Brother," he said, "you'd better pray that we return in time."

He slapped the tent flap shut as he left.

The families pushed themselves to their limit to hurry back. The rays of the twin suns

had melted most of the snow and the footing was treacherous. Several times they had to backtrack to bypass deep bogs.

Cap, weak as he was, barely managed to keep up with the others. His sons and nephews took turns helping the sick leader make the trek. Peter led the families, refusing to stop for a moment no matter how tired the Captain or other men might be.

On the morning of the third day they saw the high peaks of the mountains. By noon they could see the Pass. The women and children had not reached the plains.

Pausing for breath, Peter took his brother aside. "By the gods our fathers," he swore, "if they are dead, you will answer with your own life, Captain!"

By late afternoon they reached Crier's Pass and began the climb. Overhead a few birds cried, but the mountains were otherwise silent. As Prime slid toward the horizon, they reached the pass where they had ambushed the bisonoid male a few days earlier.

Cap pulled free of the helping hands. He pushed past the men and finally past his brother. As the leader entered the pass, he unsheathed the tip of his spear; the other men followed his example.

He marched around a large rock outcropping and came to a sudden halt. The rest of the men surged around him, half afraid to see the expected carnage.

In the valley were the tents of the families. Women were tending to supper for the children who ran amidst the tents. Tufts of buffalo manes flew in the wind, banners for the joy of winter's ending.

The warriors stood and stared. Then they broke into laughter, relief making them feel like madmen.

"By the gods," Cap finally got out, "we have frightened ourselves with ghost tales. The buffalo would never think to ambush us!"

"Our captain is getting nervous in his old age," Peter roared, slapping his brother on the back. "I apologize, dear brother, for my nasty temper. Come!" he called the others, "I'm hungry enough to eat two buffalo myself."

**T**HE MEN RAN TOWARD their families, laughing and waving and crying out the names of loved ones. At first the women jumped for their short spears, but when they recognized their men, they dropped them to run and join them. The men threw down their spears as they clasped their wives and children.

Cap, his strength fading fast, followed at a slower pace. The dolmen of his dead son caught his attention. He waved to Almira, his wife, who was trudging up to join him, and he stopped between the pillars of the grave to rest.

A flash of white gleamed in the dim light of Companion. It was the skull of the buffalo male that had been buried at his son's feet. Either the melting snow had washed it clear or some animal had dug it up — to be picked clean. It seemed to smile at Cap.

Almira, puffing after her climb, embraced her husband. They shared a long kiss.

Snuggling in his arms, she said, "It is good to have you back again, my husband. I

thought you would be gone longer." She pulled free and looked around. "Where's Bart? He's not with the others."

He held her at arm's length. "What kept you so long in the crossing?"

"Oh, there was a rockslide we had to clear away. Where's Bart?"

Cap nodded at the grave. "He fell in battle."

A low moan broke from Almira and she dropped to touch the grave.

"But I have come home," he stated, more as proof to himself than as comfort to her. "I am home!"

A shrill cry echoed through the valley, answered by calls from all directions.

Cap turned. A buffalo male leaped from behind a boulder, spear in hand. The thrust caught Cap straight in the stomach and the creature's momentum carried him backwards against a grave pylon. The wooden tip snapped against the cold stone. Then the spear was wrenched free. Cap slid slowly to the ground.

Although his vision was clouding, he was still able to see hundreds of buffalo males burst into the valley, down the escarpment, through both valley gaps, and over the moraine.

As his life ebbed, Cap reached out his hand to stop the bisonoid. It had drawn its knife and gripped Almira by her hair. The captain was dead before he could witness the slitting of her throat.

**T**HE AMBUSH HAD BEEN A COMPLETE SUCCESS. At first, seeing the hairless males return, the chief had almost given up the ambush. But when the warriors had dropped their weapons to embrace their families, he had given the order to attack. The enemy did not have a chance. The larger, more dangerous males were stabbed with poison spears, as his smaller bulls dodged their clumsy axe blows. The biggest male, the most hated, had been the last to die; it took handfuls of spears to topple him. But in the end, not one of the enemy lived.

The chief of the buffalo, once the battle was won, called for the men to pick the fattest for the feast, but only those who had not been pricked with poison spears. He was well satisfied with the songs of praise his bullocks sang for him.

It had taken many years to carry out his revenge. The once vast man-herds had covered the world until the enemy had fallen from the sky. Perhaps it was for the best, since the pressure of the enemy had finally forced the bull-chiefs to join together. They had all seen friends, wives and children eaten by the enemy, and each had contributed a bit of wisdom — the secret of the poison, the enemy's consistent method of attack, bullock sentries — all of which was used to destroy this band of enemy. But there were more to kill, more to eat. Then the whole world would once more be theirs.

Mnlak ran to his chief, showing a packet of bound black and white leaves he had taken from an old male. The chief ripped out a sheet and tasted it. Not as good as the grass or the grains the enemy had sown... or the flesh of the enemy. He dropped the sheet to the ground, where the pines scattered in the wind, and went to join the feast. ■■

# TAKE

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# Games

*The ancient pagans, not having the information on the subject which we derive from the pages of Scripture, had their own way of telling the story [of the Creation myth].*

Bulfinch's Mythology

Like it or not, fantasy role-playing has become the first mass-market game form to emerge from the wargaming field. *Dungeons and Dragons*, the acknowledged leader in the field, may, in the not-so-distant future, achieve household name status. Fantasy role-playing (FRP) games, which could be numbered on the fingers of one hand two scant years ago, are going forth and multiplying upon the shelves of hobby stores all over the land. Before the current spate of product overwhelms the reader, he might wish to take a leisurely pause and review what came before the flood, as it were.

The most important part of a FRP game is the concept. The players become characters in a fantasy world, invented and moderated by one of their number known variously as gamesmaster, dungeonmaster and referee. They set themselves an ambitious task, for such a game requires an attempt to re-create life in a land of magic, albeit from a distinctly limited perspective. That world view, from the vantage of an adventurer seeking great treasure, has created a melange of classical mythology and FRP game designers' inventions which is taking firm root in the minds of FRP players as true fantasy.

The opening quote, penned by the presumably religious Thomas Bulfinch during the last century, is deliciously ironic to veteran observers of FRP designs. Mr. Bulfinch sought to recall to his readers' memories the wonders of pre-Renaissance myths, so that they could better understand their forebears' fears and beliefs. Alas, the lofty positions of Mount Olympus, Asgard and the fair isle of Avalon have been usurped by the dank and noisome dungeons, which have conquered space in fantasy worlds as insidiously as the blight of slums have spread across the cities of America. Far worse are the creatures who prowling the corridors of these catacombs, impersonating the fantastic creatures of myth, when, in actuality, only the names of mythic beast and imitator are the same.

The current state of affairs will not be changed by a continuation of the above pontifications, so perhaps it is best to turn our attentions to the matter at hand, taking the most recent releases first.

## IN THE LABYRINTH

**Designer:** Steve Jackson  
Mail order and retail sales  
Metagaming, \$4.95

The folks at Metagaming, who marketed the microgame line partly as an introduction to the somewhat complex wargaming genre, have attempted to do the same for FRP with "The Fantasy Trip" series. Previously, *Melee*, a medieval/fantastic combat system, and *Wizard*, which adds magic to *Melee*, had been released, but

even the combination of the two does not qualify as a FRP game. In *The Labyrinth*, labelled a "games master's module," is the first part of "The Fantasy Trip" which includes true role-playing rules.

*ITL* serves well the purpose for which it is intended. Just in case the purchaser does not immediately realize this from a first perusal of the rules book, the publisher hastens to elucidate the obvious superiority of these rules in comparison to any others already on the market. The designer's prose is, thankfully, mostly devoid of this vein of bragadocio.

The rules to *ITL* are amongst the best yet encountered in FRP rules. The designer has a slight tendency to wax lyrical when instructions might be more appropriate, but he has a breezy, informal style which should sit well with those who do not relish digesting seventy-odd pages of hard data. Discovery of all but the most prominent rules is, as with all rules in this genre, a frustrating enterprise, but at least the table of contents gives one an idea of where to start.

The best feature of the game is the streamlined nature of the design. Wherever possible, a simple system is instituted. This fluid simplicity makes *ITL* easy to learn, but may limit the game's ultimate appeal to the hard-core FRP gamer. This "flaw" will become apparent only after an individual campaign has been played for some time, but the players will have received their money's worth when such a point is reached.

All *ITL* campaigns take place on the planet of Cidri, which is conveniently so large that the description in the rules cannot even guess at its size. Cidri was discovered by the Mnoeren, a family descended from the human who discovered the trick of instant transport between an (presumably) infinite number of planes. After dumping all sorts of modern and futuristic technology into Cidri, the Mnoeren staged a grand exit a few centuries ago, leaving the common folk to fend for themselves. The rationale is well-developed (the designer is to be commended for resisting the temptation to overtax his talents in this department), but it has a few elements whose inclusion is of dubious merit in a fantasy game — such as post-gunpowder weaponry and an attempt to tie the gamesmaster to one world. He should have his own choices in these departments.

A player need keep track of only a few status indices for his character. Each player begins with the same number of points to distribute amongst his character's requisites (Strength, Dexterity and IQ). Though there are only three requisites, somehow or other the character sheet manages to fill up a full page. Differentiation between characters is achieved mainly by which skills they acquire; the basic career choice, however, is between magic-user and fighter. Speaking of career choices, each character holds down a job between expeditions, a reminder that one cannot escape day-to-day drudgery even in a fantasy world.

The rules address the problem of converting real world (i.e., player) actions into those of the characters in a nice fashion: if, for instance, the players argue with each other, so do their characters, despite the less than salubrious consequences if, say, pur-

suers are lurking nearby. The standard paraphernalia of FRP games is at least lightly covered, with especial care taken on the workings of the dungeon (er — better make that labyrinth). A convention of Wargaming has sneaked in here — if the dungeon will not go to the hexgrid, then the hexgrid will come to the dungeon. While the look of a typical labyrinth appears to be the work of a mad pretzel-maker, the system works in play.

The monster listings occupy a good portion of the book, and are written in a rather boozy style. The gamesmaster may be thrilled to know what an orc's breath smells like (no, it doesn't go quite that far), but he will not be too happy at the singular lack of direction he is given for bringing these monsters into play during expeditions. Some rather peculiar creatures were admitted to this menagerie, including Uncle Teeth (possibly an escapee from denture commercials). On the plus side, the support material is both plentiful and good.

*ITL* is as good as any FRP system currently available commercially. It has the Metagaming hallmark of easy accessibility, but also has the limitations usually found in that company's games (which, to be fair, are caused in part by the system's size constraints). Do not be fooled, however, by claims that the \$5 price tag on the rulesbook makes it a great bargain. A player needs basic or advanced *Melee* and advanced *Wizard*, which have not been released as of this writing, to play the games at all. Reference is made on the back cover to the need for these two games to play magic and combat, which is a somewhat roundabout way of saying the game is incomplete as is. If you intend to buy *ITL*, be aware that the complete set will cost close to \$15.

## RUNEQUEST

**Designers:** Steven Perrin, Raymond Turney, Steve Henderson, Warren James  
**Developers:** John Sapienza and Greg Stafford  
**Graphics:** Luise Perrin and William Church  
Mail order and retail sales  
The CHAOSium, \$11.95

In the beginning, there was *Dungeons and Dragons*. At first, the faithful were few and scoffers many, but the powerful concept behind the game could not be denied. Some envied the success of *DD&D*, and sought to entice devotees from the path with their own fantastic alternatives. Most were but pallid imitations of the original, though wretched excess belouced at least one brilliant vision (Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Chivalry and Sorcery*). The first serious challenge to the thrall in which *DD&D* held the FRP audience came from California, that peculiar land which seems doomed to join fair Atlantis underneath the waves.

*Runequest* was the challenger's name, and the company that produced it rejoiced in the unlikely name of The CHAOSium. Greg Stafford heads this cooperative which specializes in fantasy and mythology, and it was he who designed *White Bear and Red Moon*, recognized as an epochal landmark in the history of fantasy games. The designers of *Runequest* were great admirers of Stafford's game and saw fit to incorporate his world of Glorantha into their FRP game. Previous efforts to provide a coherent background for fantasy games had failed,

(continued on page 33)

# Film & Television

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

**Producer:** Gary Kurtz  
**Director:** Irvin Kershner  
**Story:** George Lucas  
**Screenplay:** Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan  
**Special Effects:** Brian Johnson, Richard Edlund and Nick Alder

### Cast

Mark Hamill	.....	Luke Skywalker
Carrie Fisher	.....	Princess Leia
Harrison Ford	.....	Han Solo
Billy Dee Williams	.....	Lando Clarissian
David Prowse	.....	Darth Vader
Alec Guinness	.....	Obi Wan Kenobi

When discussing any sequel, there is one question which must always be answered at the start: Is it as good as the first? In the case of *The Empire Strikes Back*, the offspring has surpassed the parent.

In *Star Wars*, the characters never seemed in any true danger. The mood of the movie was light; the tension was that of an Errol Flynn film — sure, they're in trouble, but you know they'll get out of it; just keep watching.

Not so this second time around. This time the wisecracks are at a minimum, the jokes are sparse and tainted with grimness. C-3PO isn't as humorous as he is annoying. Chewbacca isn't as much of a clown as he is a concerned and worried friend. Han, Leia and Luke are no longer a cute, romantic trio. Han and Leia are in a tragic sort of desperate love, and Luke must confront Darth Vader and the dark side of the force. It is not that happy a film.

Empire opens with Vader desperate to find Luke. He cares little for the others; Luke is his only concern. The rebellion has found a new planet, an ice world, to act as their base of operations. Before the rebels have finished setting it up, however, they are discovered by Imperial forces and the fighting begins anew. Because of the attack, the rebel forces are scattered, everyone agreeing to meet at a mysterious "rendezvous" point somewhere in the galaxy.

Luke and Artoo do not head for the meeting place, though. During a scouting mission before the battle, the young hero sees a vision. Obi-wan Kenobi appears to him, telling him to go to another planet. Here he is to seek out a being by the name of Yoda (an incredibly life-like alien, animated by veteran puppeteer Frank Oz), who was Obi-wan's Jedi master.

In the meantime, Han, Chewbacca and Leia are forced to escape together with C-3PO in a malfunctioning Millennium Falcon. Running all the way followed close behind by Imperial forces led by Darth Vader, the quartet slips out of trap after trap, with Han and the princess slowly falling more and more in love. For Han it is fear that he is not worthy of a princess, that he might hurt her, that he is caught up in something far beyond him which makes him reluctant. For Leia, it is a fear of first love. There is a sense that she

feels she would be betraying Luke, and that Han would not love her in return.

While all this is happening, however, Luke arrives at his destination. Finding Yoda, he begins a new type of training in the use of the force. This is where Lucas really begins to flesh out the story. Although the action slows down to a standstill in these scenes, the drama begins to interpose far beyond that achieved in *Star Wars*. Lucas finally delves beyond the superficial treatment he gave the Jedi and the force in the first movie; in the sequel we learn how the force works, what it takes to control it, and what to avoid to keep it from controlling you.

From the beginning of the film to the end, Luke's power grows. At the opening, he can levitate small objects. By the end, his strength has grown enough to let him battle Darth Vader to a standoff. But the power does not come easily. Yoda and Obi-wan constantly warn Luke of the dark side of the force, and how it can twist whoever seeks to use it.



Photo by Knut Vadrieth

His training under Yoda's supervision is interrupted by a call for help from Leia. His friends are finally captured by the Dark Lord in the floating city of an old running mate of Han's, Lando Clarissian (the only new member of the cast, played by Billy Dee Williams). Lando betrays the others, trying to save his city from the Empire. Eventually, he helps Leia, Chewbacca, C-3PO and Artoo escape. They attempt to rescue Han, but arrive only in time to fire a few ineffectual blasts at the ship taking their friend to Jabba the Hut (the "businessman" who put a price on Han's head in *Star Wars*).

While Lando frees the others, Luke blunders into the trap Vader set for him, and the Dark Lord attempts to seduce Luke to the dark side of the force. Their battle is a mixture of technology and magic — light sabers and the force are both used freely. While Luke struggles to save himself, both morally and physically, Vader hammers at him, trying to corrupt his opponent, swaying him toward the dark side of the force.

Throughout the film, Luke has been shown in upside down positions, sometimes hanging helplessly, sometimes in control of his situation. Yoda tells him that he must reverse his perspectives, that he must be turned inside out, upside down. To achieve

harmony and defeat the dark needs which dwell within himself, he must view everything through new eyes.

By the time the film is over, Luke has no choice but to see the world differently. The woman he loves loves someone else. He has lost his youth, his innocence, his hand and his memory of his father.

*The Empire Strikes Back* is a well-paced, well-directed adventure/drama. Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan's screenplay, based on George Lucas's story, is much more taut, more fully-realized than the cardboard prop-up heroics of *Star Wars*. Irvin Kershner's direction is moodier, heavier — more given to confusion and shock than Lucas's. Even John Williams's soundtrack picks up the feelings of the new film. Many of the passages are more sober; although relying often on a blend of the original theme, the music is starker, grimmer than before.

Lucas has continued his saga of other-galaxy rebellion well. Instead of becoming parodies of themselves, the characters have grown fuller. Suddenly war is no longer adventure; it is a hellish reality which changes people — sometimes for the worse.

20th Century-Fox has another record breaker on its hands. George Lucas has produced a better film than the original, though many feared he would not even be able to equal it. The crowds have reason to once again stand in those four and five hour lines, two and three times a piece.

In two or three years, we will see if it can be done again. Until then, we have another excellent film to watch, and the second-rate producers have another to imitate.

Christopher John

## THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS

**Producer:** Ron Miller  
**Director:** John Hough  
**Screenplay:** Brian Clemens, Harry Spaulding and Anne Sisson  
**Production Designer:** Elliot Scott

### Cast

Bette Davis	.....	Mrs. Alywood
Carroll Baker	.....	Helen Curtis
David McCallum	.....	Paul Curtis
Lynn-Holly Johnson	.....	Jan Curtis
Kyle Richards	.....	Ellie Curtis
Benedict Taylor	.....	Mike Fleming

Last year, the Disney studios tried to make an adult science fiction film, *The Black Hole*, by re-writing their one science fiction hit, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, as an outer space adventure. They did not meet with great success. This year, with no real past success in the field of adult horror, they blindly took a stab with Florence Randall's novel, *A Watcher In The Woods*. The blindness of that stab shows.

The film opens with an American family renting an English mansion for their summer vacation. Their "landlady" (played by Bette Davis with enough class to make her laughable closing scene almost bearable) is an eccentric recluse, still mourning the mysterious disappearance of her daughter some thirty years previous.

The American family consists of the father (David McCallum), who is well-known in Broadway circles (whatever that means),

and the mother (Carroll Baker), who writes children's novels. They tote along their daughters, 17 year old Jan (Lynn-Holly Johnson) who is virginally sexy, and her little sister Ellie (Kyle Richards), who, being younger, is relegated to being precocious Disney-style.

After the introductions the film begins to bog down. David McCallum has just enough time to make a box for Ellie through which she may view an upcoming eclipse safely, before he disappears from the film. He mutters something about a rehearsal, and is never seen again.

His vanishing act would not be so bad, except that there is no explanation as to why, when the later terror begins, no one tries to call Dad and let him know about it.

It is this kind of failure in paying attention to details which ruins the film. Many people have complained that there are no clues to what is happening in the film. This is not true. Everything needed to figure out what will happen next is included, but the film has so little action and the clues flash by so fast, the audience misses many of them... primarily due to boredom.

It is very easy to be bored. Even before the family signs the papers to rent the estate, Jan starts experiencing the influence of the Watcher. Glass breaks into triangles; she sees a mysterious circle in the water; threes and circles keep reappearing, as well as visions of a blindfolded young blond girl. Jan herself is young and blond and female. With mirrors breaking, premonitions happening every other scene change, and Bette Davis insisting that her lost Karen is calling to her through little Ellie, the audience soon realizes that someone is trying to tell them something. Interspersed with these clues is a never-ending series of audience-grabbers — startling throw-something-at-the-camera, make-'em-jump shots. After the first half hour, however, the audience has been so inundated that no one jumps.

Another problem with the storyline is the sudden introduction of four new characters halfway through the film — three of the lost daughter's childhood friends, and Benedict Taylor as the world's cleanest-cut, young, blond dirt-biker. He immediately develops puppy love for Jan, of course. The film finally progresses to the expected ending. Young Karen is trapped somewhere and needs to be rescued. Somehow, her disappearance involved the people she was with and their activities during her last night on Earth. Jan figures out this much, but no more. Neither does anyone else. Herewith lies the crux of the film's trouble — no one has the slightest idea what they are doing or why.

All the characters know is that Karen disappeared before she was struck by a massive bell, which fell from the ceiling of the building they were in, and no body was ever found. They do know that she disappeared during an eclipse. Grasping at straws, Jan decides that if she takes Karen's place, while she and the others recreate the events during the last eclipse, why then, Karen will be "free." What she will be free from, or free to do, is not explained. For some reason, presumably guilt, three British adults allow a teenage American to take them in to an

abandoned church during an eclipse to repeat a childhood ceremony. Jan in blindfold takes Karen's place, and the eclipse and the ceremony begin. Once as before, the circle is broken, and once more, the Watcher joins the party. Not for long, however. The monstrous Watcher, who makes almost as good a screen creature as the Alien, is only on screen for some thirty seconds, and then disappears with our star. Seconds later she reappears with the missing Karen, still a teenager.

While Karen runs off to find her mother, Jan calmly relates the story of Karen's last thirty years, explains who the Watcher is, and tops it all off with a short rap on inter-dimensional travel.

The reason for the extended explanation is the simple fact that the movie was rushed out before the special effects people could finish the closing sequence. Supposedly, at a later date this footage will be added to the film, but it is now missing.

The film sorely needs that footage. For some reason, rather than use effects which would create a mood of horror for the film, sf-type lasers were substituted, making the whole movie seem more like a bad episode of *Dr. Who* than a horror movie. The missing fifteen minutes might have tied the whole film together.

It is a shame that fifteen minutes entitled the "Other World Sequence" which credits Art Cruickshank, A.S.C., Jack and Jane Boyd, and Dave Mattingly, among many others, was sacrificed to meet a deadline. It is more than a shame because no audience is going back to see what they missed when the film is re-released with the extra footage, nor if they have to sit through the rest of the movie again first.

It must be put on the record that for a studio unused to being totally serious, this is a big step forward. *The Watcher In The Woods* takes its creators quite a distance from the syrup of Disney's past. It is just unfortunate that a baby's first steps are usually awkward, stumbling ones.

Christopher John

## BEING THERE

Producer: Jack Schwartzman  
Director: Hal Ashby  
Screenplay: Jerzy Kosinski, based on his novel

Cast	
Peter Sellers.....	.....Chance
Melvyn Douglas.....	.....Benjamin Turnbull Rand
Shirley MacLaine.....	.....Eve Rand
Jack Warden.....	.....The President
Richard Dysart.....	.....The Doctor

For almost eight years, Jerzy Kosinski refused to sell the film rights to his masterfully satirical novella *Being There*, waiting until a package was offered which insured the integrity of his work. Ultimately, he wrote the screenplay for this remarkably successful adaptation, and the result is not only a faithful transfer to film, but an enhancement of the original material.

*Being There* is an allegorical fantasy, the story of an orphaned mental defective named Chance, adopted in secrecy and raised in seclusion by a wealthy, verifiably eccentric old man. Chance's responsibilities in the old

man's home are few, his diversions fewer. He tends the garden and watches the televisions which inhabit every room in the house. Bland though these two activities may be, they are more than enough to entertain, even challenge, the simpleminded Chance. He grows to a contented middle age, placid and serene, untouched by curiosity or doubt.

When the old man dies, leaving no record of Chance and no provision for his welfare, he is summarily evicted. He wanders into the cruel world beyond the garden walls, a stranger in a strange land. This journey is accompanied by the dramatic strains of Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, a choice purposefully reminiscent of man's awakening in Kubrick's *2001*.

Chance wears the old man's timeless, hand tailored suits and silk shirts, and carries an expensive piece of alligator luggage. These symbols of wealth, his reserved demeanor and amiable witlessness cause him to be mistaken for a Fortune 500 captain of industry by a wealthy matron after her limousine backs over him. Fear not, his wounds are superficial and the ensuing misinterpretations of each and every thing he says are hysterical. Chance quickly becomes a close friend to Benjamin Turnbull Rand, a corporate titan. He becomes a national celebrity, a statesman, and an advisor to the President of the United States.

Kosinski adroitly explores the way people create their impressions of one another, the way they establish their illusions, the biases and preconceptions they carry into every encounter. Chance's diffidence is mistaken for humility and his inane, non-sequitur declarations for profoundly philosophical metaphors. By saying nothing at all or by simply repeating what has been said to him, Chance becomes a major force on the international scene. His idiotic yet uniquely calm and benign presence win the respect and unqualified admiration of all he touches.

The film is impeccable. The script is lean and delightful, intelligent and entertaining. Peter Sellers is brilliant as Chance, lending believability and charm to his innocently muddled character. Melvyn Douglas' performance has already won him a well-deserved Oscar. Shirley MacLaine and Jack Warden are perfect foils for Sellers. Hal Ashby's direction is straightforward, joyful and perfectly matched to the quality of the script and the company.

Director of Photography Caleb Deschanel made a remarkable debut as a major cinematographer with his first feature film credit, *The Black Stallion* (a stunningly beautiful film). *Being There* is only his second film, but it too shows the extraordinary quality of his craft.

Chance is an empty vessel into which others pour their own needs and desires, the ultimate passive man, the product of genetic misfortune and television's somnolent therapy. The film's humor never flags and yet it delicately bitter irony is never far away. It satirizes politics and politicians, business and businessmen, and, finally, all the rest of us and what we imagine we see when we look at one another.

Of course, it is a fantasy. It's clearly impossible for severely limited persons to achieve high office.

Vincent Misiano



# Media

Many merchandisers are currently displeased with the science fiction craze started by *Star Wars*; they are upset with the poor public response to the recent wave of so-called block busters — *The Black Hole*, *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*, and *Saturn 3* on the big screen, and the much ignored *Brave New World* and *Martian Chronicles* on television. The major studios, on the other hand, have not had their spirits dampened, since most have recovered their costs in production and distribution; there will be more such movies on the way. For the moment, merchants of licensed products have turned a cold shoulder to science fiction. It remains to be seen whether *The Empire Strikes Back*, the sequel to *Star Wars*, will rekindle the excitement, and sales potential, of the original.

Among the more modestly budgeted films to be released in the near future is *Battle Beyond the Stars* from Orion and New World Pictures, scheduled to open July 11, 1980. Richard Thomas (John Boy of *The Waltons*) goes out to hire the futuristic version of the *Seven Samurai/Magnificent Seven*. Emphasis will be placed on action, and there will be a lot of miniature work. Robert Vaughan, Sam Jaffe, and George Peppard, appearing as head villain, will star.

*Virus* will have an international flavor, since it is being filmed in Peru, Chile, Alaska, Tokyo, Toronto, and Washington D.C. It also features a long cast of names — Glenn Ford, Robert Vaughan, Chuck Connors, George Kennedy, Sonny Chiba, Bo Svenson, Olivia Hussey and Henry Silva. It seems a mutant virus goes on a rampage in 1982 and decimates the world's population; this leads to a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. The action of the film will take place mostly in Antarctica. *Virus* will sport a \$15 million budget.

Lawrence Sanders' best seller, *The Tomorrow File*, should reach the screen by late 1981. It is billed as a film showing a society in the year 2020 that is based on "genetic ratings," and will offer such elements as the Ultimate Pleasure Pill, televised sex instruction, a "political drug," and a doll that dies.

Although very few classic movies have been remade successfully, John Carpenter (*Halloween* and *The Fog*) will attempt to rework the 1951 classic, *The Thing*. He plans to stick more closely to the original story, John W. Campbell's "Who Goes There?"; the major line of departure from the original film will be the alien's ability to assume the physical identity of his intended victims.

Other films to note will include: *Alien Encounter*, a low-budget exploitation film probably due to land on television this summer, starring Jack Palance and Martin Landau; Sean Connery will make a come-back in futuristic films (*Zardoz* was his last outing) via *Outland*, which Peter Hyams is both writing and directing for the new Ladd Company; in the making is *Superman II: The Adventure Continues* in which Christopher Reeves and Margot Kidder team up with, or possibly against, E. G. Marshall.

Howard Barasch

## GAMES [continued from page 30]

abysmally for the most part, but here was a rationale well-suited for translation from story into game form. The players of *RQ* campaigns will have to decide for themselves whether they wish to have their characters roam through Glorantha; it is likely that the creative energies lavished on the formation of that world will make this an attractive possibility to those who enjoy myth.

The reader should not imply that the designers of *RQ* were slavish imitators of a master storyteller and game creator. First, the legends and peoples of Glorantha comprise the brightest star in a dim firmament of fantasy board and role-playing game rationsales. Second, the designers were, and still are, men who vociferously opposed the philosophy espoused by TSR, the company which markets *D&D*. The designers provided much innovation to the young FRP field, and the only contributions Greg Stafford made to this part of the effort was to aid in development and provide a vehicle for the publication of the game.

The most noticeable system in the *RQ* design is combat. At least one of the designers is a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism (composed of erudite men and women who mourn the passing of the High Middle Ages), who was affronted by the simplistic and, to his (their?) point of view, inaccurate treatment of medieval/fantastic brawling. I cannot vouch whether the system realistically recreates combat with mythological monsters, having never dued with a chimaera myself, but all indications show that medieval combat is represented fairly here. Regrettably, the attention to detail will not seem worthwhile to the average FRP gamer. The bookkeeping is just a bit too much (every creature must be portrayed in terms of a schematic diagram showing the main sections of its body), and a single melee can occupy too much (real) time in a playing session.

The rest of the game is very good. With the introduction of cult mechanics, gigantic strides have been made towards a believable religious system. Basically, each cult is dedicated to the worship of a particular deity, and draws their powers and code of ethics from this single source. The interrelationship between spirit powers and rune lords (which characters aspire to be) must be read to be believed and certainly ranks as one of the most interesting ideas advanced in this segment of the hobby. Glorantha becomes a real place because of inventions such as this; there is not even a breath of Christianity tinged with pagan religion which permeates all other FRP rules.

The characteristics (i.e., requisites) are fairly conventional. Size was included because it is integral to the combat system, and Power determines a character's ability to wield magic and to gain acceptance in the other world of spirits and deities. Battle magic is used when there is no time for preparation, and has fairly predictable uses (frying trolls, etc.), while enchantments include stored spells which dwarf battle magic in potency. The magic rules are certainly unique to this game, and are almost worth the price of the rules book alone.

The important features of the game in-

clude a high number of percentages, covering a wide range of abilities useful on adventure which must be generated for each character. Every skill in which a character can become proficient is reduced to a percentage chance; unlike *D&D* one does not require dice in the shape of an inverted rhomboid which cost a duke's ransom to play *RQ*. The most promising feature is a social system now in its gestation period; since two more large rules supplements are promised (*HeroQuest* and *GodQuest*), some highly original and useful designs will probably emerge in the coming years.

When *RQ* came out, it was well-organized by the FRP standards of that time. The rules are not painful to read, and a second edition, in which the charts are easier to find, has helped matters considerably. The drawbacks of the game are that the foundation of the game (combat) has play problems and that the individual systems do not mesh together as nicely as one would hope. Among the strengths are its freshness of design concepts, the elimination of the odious "level" progressions for characters, and the detailed background.

*RQ* costs about as much as the three parts of "The Fantasy Trip" combined, with slightly less component value. A little over 100 pages are contained inside a soft cover. The second edition is distinguished by a color cover and is worth the higher cost than that of the original edition. The first cover is absolutely priceless; it depicts a somnolent young girl dressed for a Marquis de Sade Costume Ball proffering an oversized tortilla to a ravenous, deformed gila monster — all done in brown crayon.

## TUNNELS & TROLLS

**Designer:** Ken St. Andre  
**Developer:** Liz Danforth  
**Graphics:** Liz Danforth and Rob Carver  
 Mail order and retail sales  
 Flying Buffalo, Inc., \$8

One of the hobby's trendsetters is nestled somewhere in the vast reaches of the Arizona desert. The crew at Flying Buffalo has had a decade-long affair with computers, which they have used to popularize computer-moderated play-by-mail games. The minds behind this and other less known schemes recognized the promise of FRP games soon after *D&D* went commercial (the game had been played by local wargaming clubs in and around Wisconsin for a while before it saw the light of day), and published their own entry, *Tunnels & Trolls*.

*T&T*, at heart, a variant of *D&D*, right down to its alliterative title. There are several important differences, including the progression of characters through increases to characteristics. The monster generation system, which has the gamesmaster determine the strength of an individual monster from a given number of points, has inexplicably not been expanded upon in later designs.

The basic scenario has characters descending into dungeons to murder innocent creatures. The cruel adventurer-characters leave destitute the newly-orphaned offspring of their victims, since they are of a mercenary bent. Sound familiar? The presentation is not. The spell names range

from the absurd to the ridiculous, including gems on the order of "Zap 'Em" and "Quick Fry." Some of the others are too revolting to contemplate. The monsters suffer a slightly better fate; one of the most fearsome creatures cringes in terror from his own name: "Balrog Maximus Meanie." Predictably, the first supplementary adventure is called *Buffalo Castle*.

Stripped of annoying distractions, *T&T* is a pleasant puff-piece. The production values have increased from amateur status to a nearly professional standard. The rules have been ordered, and can be understood in no more than two readings. The package includes pregenerated characters and an adventure for beginners. The game will be passed over by all but the completist; there are better buys on the market now. Still, *T&T* was a nice try by those fun people at the airborne herbivore.

## DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

**Designers:** Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson  
**Graphics:** David C. Sutherland III  
 Mail order and retail sales  
 TSR Hobbies, Inc., \$10

## ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

**Designer:** Gary Gygax  
 Mail order and retail sales

## AD&D MONSTER MANUAL

**Graphics:** David C. Sutherland III  
 TSR Hobbies, Inc., \$12

## AD&D PLAYERS HANDBOOK

**Graphics:** Dave Tampler  
 TSR Hobbies, Inc., \$12

## AD&D DUNGEON MASTERS GUIDE

**Graphics:** David Sutherland III  
 TSR Hobbies, Inc., \$15

It is difficult to find things to say about a game which has been accused of playing a part in the disappearance of precocious Michigan State student (which it did not), of being the guise in which Satan attempted corruption of innocent Utah school children, and is threatening to become the game phenomenon of this young decade. In a world where publicity and hype determine the success of a product, *Dungeons and Dragons* is doing famously. The working press has only a vague understanding of how the game works, and, in their ignorance, have lauded it to the skies, while inflicting upon the *cognoscenti* such gaffes as references to "dragon-masters" and "incredibly hulks." Hats off to TSR, which steadfastly promoted an idea which no wargamer could take very seriously six years ago into the first mass-market product to come from this hobby.

The fanfare has obscured the fact that there is a game, not a media event, known as *D&D*. The design has many flaws which have become apparent as it has aged and are magnified by TSR's intransigence when it comes to changing a system or rule in response to valid criticism from players. The presentation of the package is amazingly poor. The original rules rate as one of the worst of all time, including fractured English,

garbled text, contradictory rules, a reinvention of mythology, and passing references to crucial rules. *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* was meant to remedy this situation. Actually, in place of the previous rules' maladies, the gaming public received an overwritten, jumbled mass of discourse upon *D&D* which can only be assimilated by making a life-long study of the text. Given a choice between stringing together rules in *AD&D* and discovering the proverbial needle in the haystack, the adroit gamer would make for the farmhouse.

As for the game itself, six characteristics are generated by rolling three six-sided dice. These have great effect upon play, so one minute of good rolling can give a player an edge over his fellows which will take months to reduce. Characters are locked in to a particular class, with no chance for intermingling the various skills attendant to each. Characters progress by levels, which means that they spend a great deal of time before achieving a significant jump in power. For instance, a character can kill several fearsome monsters over a period of months, calculate the remaining Experience Points to reach his next level, and reach it by playing Jack the Ripper to the inebriated ladies of the night in the local skid row. The parameters for each monster are extremely narrow, so players engage in quick mathematical exercises to gauge their chance of surviving the encounters... and the list goes on and on.

It's so much fun raking *D&D* over the coals for its problems that one tends to forget its strong points. The dungeon format allows the inexperienced game master and players to learn and enjoy the game very quickly. The original design includes a simple combat system which, regardless of what has been said about it, is the best from a game point of view (despite Gary Gygax's fascination with the ten most obscure medieval pole arms). The magic spells and items give *D&D* and its FRP imitators almost limitless variety, as any desired effect can be introduced into play by the game master and any situation from fantasy literature can be reproduced.

Most important for the FRP fan, *D&D* is the FRP game played most often in most places. Manufacturers of wargames are scrambling madly to produce a viable competitor, but as of now, *D&D* remains unchallenged and is likely to continue its rapid growth. There are at least three more FRP games due out before the end of the year, and it will be interesting to see if any of these can take on *D&D*. For the nonce, if the reader is interested in investing in *D&D* as the most prevalent FRP game, buy the collector's edition and *Greyhawk*, and ignore the rest.

Eric Goldberg

## GAME PUBLISHERS

Please send black and white 8" x 10" photos of new products to:

Ares Magazine  
 Simulations Publications, Inc.  
 257 Park Avenue South  
 New York, New York 10010

The following games have been received from companies for review:

### TASK FORCE GAMES

**Asteroid Zero-Four**, Stephen V. Cole/Leslie H. Dixon, \$3.95

**Cerberus: The Proxima Centauri Campaign**, Stephen V. Cole/David W. Crump, \$3.95

**Intruder**, B. Dennis Sustare/Stephen V. Cole, \$3.95

**Starfire**, Stephen V. Cole/Allen D. Eldridge, \$3.95

**Star Fleet Battles**, Stephen V. Cole/Barry Jacobs, \$12.95.

**Sword Quest**, R. Vance Buck/Barry Jacobs, \$4.95

**Valkenburg Castle**, Stephen V. Cole/R. Vance Buck, \$3.95

### JUDGES GUILD

**Escape from Astigar's Lair**, Ree and Allen Preuhs, \$2.00

**The Legendary Duck Tower**, Paul Jaquays and Rudy Kraft, \$5.95

**Modron**, Bob Bledsaw and Gary Adams, \$3.50

**The Sword of Hope**, Dave Emigh, \$3.00

**The Treasure Vault of Lindoran**, Jeffery O. Dale, \$4.00

**Vidriстан: The City State of the Modern Emperor**, Creighton Hippenhammer and Bob Bledsaw/Rudy Craft and Clayton Miner, \$12.00

### YAQUINTO PUBLICATIONS

**Mythology**, J. Steve Peek, \$14.00

### GRIMOIRE GAMES

**The Arduin Grimoire, Vols. I-III**, David Hargrave, \$9.95 per game

### SCHUBEL & SONS

**The Tribes of Crane**, George V. Schubel, \$10.00

### EXCALIBRE GAMES

**Adventures in Fantasy**, Dave Arneson and Richard Snider, \$20.00

**Get MOVES issue nr. 52 and read about Barbarian Kings.**

*MOVES*, The Magazine of Simulation Conflict Theory and Technique, is available for \$2 from SPI or through many retail outlets nationwide.

# Books

**Sundiver**, David Brin

Bantam Books, \$1.95

**Engine Summer**, John Crowley

Bantam Books, \$1.95

**Thrice Upon a Time**, James P. Hogan

Del Rey Books, \$2.25

**The Monitor, The Miners and the Shree**, Lee Killough

Del Rey Books, \$1.95

**Watchtower**, Elizabeth A. Lynn

Berkley Books, \$1.95

**Unisave**, Axel Madsen

Ace Books, \$1.95

**Mayflies**, Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.

Berkley Books, \$1.95

**Michael and the Magic Man**, Kathleen

M. Sidney, Berkley Books, \$1.95

**Still Forms on Foxfield**, Joan Slonczewski

Del Rey Books, \$1.95

**Ariosto**, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro,

Pocket Books, \$2.25

## Science Fiction

John Crowley's *Engine Summer* received a remarkable amount of mainstream critical attention when it was published last year in hardcover. Reading it, one can see its appeal to the mainstream reader: it moves with a Faulkneresque grace and dream quality; its political overtones are fashionably leftist; and it comes to a satisfying whole, though its plot is not unified in the manner of traditional science fiction.

Well, mainstream critics are not always purlind; Crowley is a remarkable writer. The story is set in a post-Collapse America; the protagonist is born into a community of "Truthful Speakers," an anarcho-syndicalist commune (though neither they nor the author thinks in those terms). His love leaves the Truthful Speakers to join Dr. Boots' List, another society; and eventually, he ventures forth to find her, meeting three other societies in his travels. Eventually, he learns something about the origins of his world, and becomes a "saint" — one who tells his story with such clarity that others may see themselves in the telling. *Engine Summer* is pleasant and idyllic.

Science fiction as a literature is particularly suited to political exploration. A writer of science fiction can construct a society on any political principles, and then explore that society's political ramifications — something difficult or impossible in other genres. I'm somewhat surprised that, given the political turmoil of this century, science fiction has not entirely exploited this potential for political discourse; Heinlein, Le Guin, Spinrad, and others have done so to some extent, but even in their writings the intent is oblique. I suspect that the scientific attitudes of the Campbell stable are primarily responsible for the lack of political exploration in early sf; it is notable that the few attempts of that period can be laid to the Futurian group. With the revolution in sf that has occurred in the last two decades, more overtly political writing has come to the fore.

Axel Madsen's *Unisave* is an overtly political novel; it, perhaps, attempts to be

something else, but its writing style and characterization are sufficiently mundane so that its political aspects are the only aspects which are at all memorable. It deals with a future in which overpopulation has become the overriding problem. Standards of living are uniformly high, due to the industrialization of space, but population threatens to outpace the growth of food supplies. The major characters are all members of the Unisave Council, the United Nations organization responsible for overseeing and limiting population growth. Unisave's first effort was to limit each person to one child. This has proven insufficient, and they must now find another way to reduce population growth. The member for space proposes "geriatric bingo," in which each person, upon reaching the age of 60, would be subject to a death lottery. Eventually, the council finds a less dramatic way of limiting growth. The point of the novel seems to be that "society" can "collectively" reach humane decisions through a "consensus" achieved by the mass of people as a whole — the deliberations of the Unisave Council are, Madsen claims, "metadetermined" by the universal consensus. Madsen seems to be portraying a collectivist society that "works" — by no means a utopia, but a human and rational one in a world in which the "luxury" of "inefficient" competition can no longer be afforded.

Madsen is apparently unable to perceive that his society is actually a horrible tyranny of monstrous proportions. Individuals are almost universally spied upon by an omnipotent state; all economic activities are directed by an omniscient state. The "universal consensus," by its nature, cannot be truly universal. In a world population of twenty billions, any decision must be opposed by a large minority, and thus the humanely metadetermined decisions of the United Nations are actually using the mystique of consensus to override the liberties of individuals. Thus, Madsen's political hypotheses are unconvincing.

Madsen's writing is no more remarkable. Despite the potentially intense emotional nature of his subject material, the novel progresses slowly and unemotionally. His one attempt at a dramatic scene fails to communicate any real feeling of drama, and his characters are uniformly bland, almost clones of one another. An unremarkable novel to which I have devoted too much space.

I enjoyed Joan Slonczewski's *Still Forms on Foxfield*. If asked, I would be unable to pinpoint exactly why. Though competently written, no aspect is really remarkable.

*Still Forms on Foxfield* deals with a small colony of Quakers who fled when nuclear war seemed inevitable and established a small colony on Foxfield. Left to develop independently for a century, they are suddenly contacted by Earth — in the form of a ship from United Nations Interstellar, the homogenous human society to which all colonies and Earth belong. UNI insists that it is the obligation of every human to participate in and accept the restraints and guidelines of UNI; the Quaker colonists insist on the right to order their lives as they wish, in accord-

dance with their religious beliefs. The stage is set for conflict, but the issue is left unresolved. An outside event intervenes to change UNI's attitude; thus, the Quakers survive as a result of fortuitous circumstance, rather than their own efforts. Despite this unsatisfactory denouement, *Still Forms* is a story of courageous men and women attempting to deal with a crisis not of their own making, and it makes for enjoyable reading.

About a year ago, I read Lee Killough's *The Doppelganger Gambit*, a satisfying interstellar mystery, and made a mental note to read anything else she wrote in the future. Her latest offering, *The Monitor, The Miners and the Shree*, deals with a sociological expedition to study the culture of the Shree on the planet of Nira. Unfortunately, the expedition quickly runs afoul of an illegal mining venture operating on the planet in direct violation of the Department of Surveys and Charters' order that the native intelligents be left alone to develop their own society. After a long struggle in which the team is dispersed around the planet and forced to hide from searchers from the mining company and in which the team comes into intimate contact with the Shree, they manage to reunite and make contact with the Department. Eventually, they get off-planet, and manage to negotiate a compromise satisfactory to the Department, the company, and the Shree.

*The Monitor, The Miners and the Shree* is a well-crafted adventure story, of the sort Paul Anderson used to write, and is well worth reading.

No one can claim that James Hogan doesn't try. His first four novels are similar in many respects: they are all "superscience," dealing with near-future technological discoveries that are capable of transforming the world and actually do so in the course of the novel; and all are weak in terms of characterization and story. Hogan's great fault is that of most superscience writing: his ideas are remarkable and of great breadth and his novels are worth reading for them alone — but he is no writer. In many respects, *Thrice Upon a Time* is more of the same; however, it is evident that Hogan is aware of his problems and is trying to correct them. The difficulty is that his painstaking efforts to inject "human interest" into his story are rather painful to read; he's trying, but, I'm afraid, failing. One can only hope he will learn as he goes along.

In the meantime, we have *Thrice Upon a Time*. Those who like the "hard" in hard science fiction or who are fascinated by the technological developments of our time will place Hogan in the "must read" category. *Thrice Upon a Time* deals with time travel — not physical time travel, but exchange of information across the temporal barrier. Hogan has thought out the ramifications of such an idea in detail, and his hypotheses are convincing. Each time one sends a message into the past, one changes one's present, but the message still exists. Consequently, one might simultaneously receive a dozen different messages from a dozen different potential futures — none, or only one, of which will actually come to exist since one may act on the content of those messages. The result is that "planning" can actually

become a reality, since one *can* act with omniscience: if one makes a mistake, one need only warn oneself to avoid that mistake.

*Thrice Upon a Time* for its faults is still a book rich in ideas.

David Brin is a writer new to me, and *Sundiver* is apparently his first novel. Nonetheless, I was very much impressed by it, and shall look for further material from him.

*Sundiver* is primarily concerned with an expedition that descends into the sun's corona in a specially designed ship, discovers living beings within the sun, and makes contact with them. Brin is an astrophysicist, and he knows his material. As intriguing as the main subject matter of the volume is its wider setting. It seems that humanity has recently contacted a galactic civilization. Apparently, intelligent life always comes about through "uplift"; i.e., genetic modification of a non-sapient species by an intelligent one. How this chain got started is unknown. Humanity is unique in not having a known "Patron" species. Status in the galactic society is determined partially by the status of one's Patrons, and also by the number of races one's own race has uplifted into sapientcy. Humanity would normally have a low status and be assigned an adoptive Patron species as a guardian, but for the fact that, at the time of contact, humanity has already uplifted two species — chimpanzees and dolphins.

*Sundiver* is thought-provoking, tightly-plotted, and readable. Though Brin's human characters are rather two-dimensional and the story depends less on their interaction and development than on the setting and science, he is somewhat more competent in this area than Hogan. All told, it is a remarkable first effort.

After reading Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.'s *Mayflies*, I have one urgent question: why haven't I heard of O'Donnell before? He's the equal or superior of most of the best-known science fiction writers today and deserves a great deal more exposure.

*Mayflies* is the story of a scientist who dies accidentally, but whose brain is preserved and reprogrammed to act as the central computer of a starship. His programmers believe that his personality has been entirely wiped out by the shock of dying; but, years into the slower-than-light interstellar journey, his personality starts to reassert itself, and eventually regains full control of his brain. *Mayflies* is the story of that starship's journey, the lives of its passengers, and of the scientist, who completely controls the starship and thus the lives of its passengers. It is also a fascinating portrayal of the development of a society. O'Donnell has a master's touch; I recommend *Mayflies* highly.

## Fantasy

I'm surprised that Kathleen Sidney's *Michael and the Magic Man* was published as a fantasy novel. It is, of course; but it is also the kind of novel that will appeal to mainstream readers. There is no doubt that a "fantasy" label on the spine ghettoizes a novel to some extent, so I doubt the novel will receive the mainstream critical attention it deserves.

*Michael and the Magic Man* is a story of a group of psychics wandering across America in a van, the world's only defense against nefarious, psychic, alien invaders. They are and can be the only defenders, for their story would be dismissed as insanity were they to reveal it to the authorities, who have already been infiltrated by the invaders and therefore cannot be trusted. But things are not as they seem...

Sidney is a writer of considerable power; *Michael and the Magic Man* is as innovative as it is unusual. One hopes that she will be accorded the recognition she deserves.

I've always been puzzled at the obsession which so many fantasists seem to have with the Middle Ages. By far the majority of fantasy is in a static feudal setting, and the usual characters are barbarians, feudal princes, court wizards, and the like. Personally, the Medieval period has always struck me as a peculiarly dreary and unexciting one, and the hold it has over the minds of fantasy writers is odd, given the presence of many more exciting backdrops — such as the Renaissance.

It may be that my appreciation for Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Ariosto* is partially the result of my interest in and passion for the Renaissance. Be that as it may, I found *Ariosto* fascinating reading.

*Ariosto* takes place in two fantasy worlds; one is an alternate universe in which the Italian city states have unified into Italia Federata under the beneficent hand of the Medicis. The other exists in the mind of a character in that world, *Orlando Furioso* — in our world the writer of *Orlando Furioso*. In this first world *Ariosto* is a great hero of Italia Federata and travels to the New World in order to help Italia's colony of Nuovo Genova defend itself against an attack by the evil wizard Anateccacciatore, in alliance with the valiant Indian tribe of the Cerocchi. In the "real world," *Ariosto* is unwillingly caught up in an international intrigue by Italia's enemies to unravel the federation and leave Italia prey to the larger surrounding nations. The second world is the site of *Ariosto*'s second great epic, which he writes during the course of the book.

*Ariosto* is well-written in a style that preserves the elan of the Renaissance without intruding greatly on the story. If you are as tired as I am of innumerable repetitive stories of valiant princes and heroic barbarians, you'll want to pick up a copy.

On the back of Elizabeth Lynn's *Watchtower* is a quote from Joanna Russ: "An adventure story for humanists and feminists!" To tell the truth, if I'd noticed the blurb before I purchased the book, I wouldn't have bothered. Humanism and feminism leave me cold, I'm afraid.

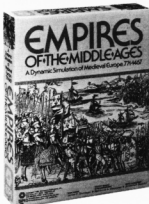
However, my money was not misspent. *Watchtower* is excellent, despite its politics.

The novel is the first in a trilogy about *Turner Keep*, but stands on its own; it comes to a satisfying climax, avoiding the all-too-frequent problem of those many trilogies which depend on their sequel to tie the loose ends together. The plot is a common one; the birthright of a young lord is stolen by invaders, and he must escape and gather forces to reconquer his rightful domain. The

book is saved by fine and unpretentious writing, full-fleshed characters, and fast-paced plotting. Lynn, I suspect, is another new writer to watch. *Greg Costikyan*

The following books have been received from publishers for review purposes:

- A for Anything**, Damon Knight, Avon, \$1.95
- A Feast Unknown**, Philip Jose Farmer, Playboy, \$2.25
- Allan**, Gardner R. Dozois (Editor), Pocket, \$2.25
- All the Shattered Worlds**, Steve Vance, Manor, \$1.95
- Ariosto**, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Pocket, \$2.25
- At the Narrow Passage**, Richard C. Meredith, Playboy, \$1.95
- The Best of Keith Laumer**, Keith Laumer, Pocket, \$2.25
- The Best of New Dimensions**, Robert Silverberg (Editor), Pocket, \$2.25
- The Best of Walter M. Miller, Jr.**, Walter M. Miller, Jr., Pocket, \$2.95
- The Blessing Papers**, William Barnwell, Pocket, \$2.50
- Breakfast in the Rules**, Michael Moorcock, Avon, \$1.95
- Checkov's Enterprise**, Walter Koenig, Pocket, \$2.25
- Crystal Phoenix**, Michael Berlin, Bantam, \$1.95
- Death is Only the Beginning**, Robert Curry Ford, Playboy, \$2.25
- The Demu Trilogy (Cage a Man, The Proud Enemy, End of the Line)**, F. M. Busby, Pocket, \$2.50
- The Ennead**, Ian Mark, Pocket, \$2.25
- The Eyes of the Overworld**, Jack Vance, Pocket, \$1.95
- The Faded Sun: Kutath**, C. J. Cherryh, DAW, \$2.25
- The Glory Game**, Keith Laumer, Pocket, \$1.95
- The Great Fethish**, L. Sprague de Camp, Pocket, \$1.95
- The Hummingbird**, Quig Williams, Avon, \$2.25
- In Memory Yet Green: The Autobiography of Isaac Ailmov, 1820-1964**, Avon, \$7.95
- Islands**, Maria Randall, Pocket, \$1.95
- The Lost Stars**, H. M. Hoover, Avon, \$1.75
- The Orphan**, Robert Stallman, Pocket, \$2.25
- Perilous Planets**, Brian Aldiss (Editor), Avon, \$2.50
- Project Wand**, Barbara Rogers, Dodd, Mead, \$8.95
- Sammurkand**, Gahan Diamond, Playboy, \$2.25
- Scavengers**, David J. Skal, Pocket, \$2.25
- Shiva Descending**, Gregory Benford & William Rotler, Avon, \$2.50
- Spare 7**, Clancy Carille, Avon, \$2.25
- Source of Evil**, Mary Vigilante, Manor Books, \$1.95
- The Great Crocodile**, D. G. Compton, Pocket, \$2.25
- Them**, Robert French, Manor, \$1.95
- Three From the Legion**, Jack Williamson, Pocket, \$2.95
- Webhaster**, Pamela Sargent, Pocket, \$2.25
- What Rough Beast**, William Jon Watkins, Playboy, \$1.95
- Where No Man Has Trod**, Nancy & Frances Dorer, Manor, \$1.95
- Veistige of Time**, Richard C. Meredith, Playboy, \$1.95



SPI's new release, *Empires*, is truly becoming a multi-player hit. The game has great potential as a base for magic/role-play "overlay." *Empires* is available from SPI and its dealers nationwide. \$18 boxed.

## SF/F GAMER INFORMATION

# Directory of Science Fiction and Fantasy Game Publishers & Manufacturers

This list of game and figurine manufacturers and sf/f game magazine publishers will be featured several times a year in *Ares*. In the listing, a "?" indicates that the information was not available at the time of contact. We urge manufacturers and publishers to send us information about companies we have inadvertently left out or corrections on any mistakes we have made in the listing.

## Archives Miniatures

1111 S. Railroad Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
(415) 349-7900

Established: 1973 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: No  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## Avalon Hill Game Co.

4517 Harford Road  
Baltimore, MD 21214  
(301) 254-5300

Established: 1958 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **The General** (bimo)  
**All-Star Replay** (bimo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## The CHAOSium

PO Box 6302  
Albany, CA 94706  
(415) 524-2156

Established: 1975 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **Different Worlds** (bimo)  
**Wyrms' Footnotes** (bimo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc.

240 Mineola Blvd.  
Mineola, NY 11501  
(516) 747-8180

Established: 1975 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **Wargaming** (bimo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## Flying Buffalo

PO Box 1467  
Scottsdale, AZ 85262  
(602) 966-4727

Established: 1970 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **Sorcerer's Apprentice** (quat)  
**Wargamer's Info** (mo)  
**Flying Buffalo Quarterly** (quat)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## Game Designers' Workshop

203 North St.  
Normal, IL 61761  
(309) 452-3632

Established: 1973 Sales: In-store/by mail

Magazines: **Journal of Traveller's Aid Society** (quat)

SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## Grimoire Games

PO Box 4363  
Berkley, CA 94704  
(415) 841-2867

Established: 1978 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: No Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## Heritage Models, Inc.

9840 Monroe Dr., Bldg. 106  
Dallas, TX 75220  
(214) 351-3708

Established: 1973 Sales: In-store  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: Yes

## Hinchcliffe Models, Inc.

4824 Memphis St.  
Dallas, TX 75207  
(214) 634-1647

Established: 1979 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: No Fantasy games: No  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## The Judges Guild

RR 8, Box 9  
1221 N. Sunnyside Rd.  
Decatur, IL 62522  
(217) 422-1930

Established: 1976 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **The Dungeoneer** (bimo)  
**The Journal** (bimo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## Martian Metals, Inc.

PO Box 388  
Cedar Park, TX 78613  
(512) 258-9470

Established: ? Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## Metagaming

PO Box 15346  
Austin, TX 78761  
(512) 836-4116

Established: ? Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## Operational Studies Group

1261 Broadway  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 684-0888

Established: 1978 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **Wargame Design** (quat)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.

3726 Lonsdale  
Cincinnati, OH 45227  
(513) 631-7335

Established: 1975 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## Simulations Publications, Inc.

257 Park Ave. So.  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 673-4103

Established: 1970 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **Strategy & Tactics** (bimo)  
**MOVES** (bimo)  
**Ares** (bimo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## The Space Gamer

PO Box 18805  
Austin, TX 78760  
(512) 447-7866

Established: 1975 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **The Space Gamer** (mo)  
SF games: No Fantasy games: No  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## Task Force Games

405 So. Crockett  
Amarillo, TX 79104  
(806) 379-6219

Established: ? Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: No

## TSR Hobbies, Inc.

PO Box 756  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147  
(414) 248-3625

Established: 1974 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **The Dragon** (mo)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## Valiant Enterprises, Ltd.

97 Hickory Commons  
Antioch, IL 60002  
(312) 395-3636

Established: 1967 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: No Fantasy games: No  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: No

## Yaquinto Publications, Inc.

PO Box 24767  
Dallas, TX 75224  
(214) 330-7761

Established: 1979 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: No  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: No Other accessories: Yes

## Zocchi Distributors

01956 Pass Road  
Gulfport, MS 39501  
(601) 896-8600

Established: 1970 Sales: In-store/by mail  
Magazines: **The Hex-o-gram** (4 to 6 wks)  
SF games: Yes Fantasy games: Yes  
Figurines: Yes Other accessories: Yes

# Feedback

## Reader Survey, Ares nr. 3

Your opinions directly affect the editorial content of *Ares* Magazine. We invite you to participate in this, our regular survey of readers.

**How to use the Feedback Response Card:** After you've finished reading this issue of *Ares*, please read the Feedback questions below, and give us your answers by writing the answer numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each question number. See centerfold for card. Please be sure to answer all questions (but do not write anything in the box for question numbers labelled "no question"). Incompletely filled-out cards cannot be processed.

**What the numbers mean:** When answering questions, "0" always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When the question is a "yes or no" question, "1" means YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating, "5" is an AVERAGE rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

## SECTION A

### 1-3. No question

The following questions ask you to rate the articles in this issue on a scale of 1 (poor) through 9 (excellent); 0 = no opinion.

- Barbarian Kings (game)
- War in Space (non-fiction)
- The Whispering Mirror (fiction)
- Final Notes (fiction)
- Directory (service)
- Games (review)
- Books (review)
- Film and Television (review)
- Media (review)
- 13-14. No questions
- This issue overall
- Was this issue better than the last one? 1 = Yes; 2 = No
- Assume that you don't subscribe to *Ares*. Would the quality of this issue alone motivate you to subscribe? 1 = No
- Your age: 1 = 1-13 years old or younger; 2 = 14-17; 3 = 18-21; 4 = 22-27; 5 = 28-35; 6 = 36 or older
- Your sex: 1 = Male; 2 = Female
- Education: 1 = 11 years or less; 2 = 12 years; 3 = 13-15 years; 4 = 13-15 years and still in school; 5 = 16 years; 6 = 17 years or more
- How long have you been playing conflict simulation games? 0 = less than a year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2 years; 3 = 3 years; 9 = 9 or more years
- What is the average number of hours you spend playing simulation games each month? 0 = none; 1 = 1 hour or less; 2 = 2-5 hours; 3 = 6-9 hours; 4 = 10-15 hours; 5 = 16-20 hours; 6 = 21-25; 7 = 26-30; 8 = 31-40; 9 = 40 or more hours
- How many simulation games (of all publishers) do you possess? 1 = 1-10; 2 = 11-20; 3 = 21-30; 4 = 31-40; 5 = 41-50; 6 = 51-60; 7 = 61-70; 8 = 71-80; 9 = 81 or more
- What level of complexity do you prefer in games? Rate your preference on a 1-9 scale, with higher numbers indicating increased complexity. Use the following games as guidelines: 4 = *World Killer*; 7 = *Battle Fleet: Mars*; 9 = *Air War*
- How many conflict simulation games have you purchased in the last twelve months? Do not include games received by subscription. 1 = one to three; 2 = four to six; 3 = seven to nine; 4 = ten to fifteen; 5 = sixteen to 20; 6 = 26 to 30; 7 = 31 to 40; 8 = 41 to 50; 9 = 51 or more
- What percentage of the games you buy do you expect will be SPI games? 1 = 10%; 2 = 20%; 3 = 30%; 4 = 40%; 5 = 50%; 6 = 60%; 7 = 70%; 8 = 80%; 9 = 90%

28. How much money do you plan to spend on conflict simulation games in the next twelve months? 1 = less than \$10; 2 = \$10-25; 3 = \$25-50; 4 = \$50-75; 5 = \$75-100; 6 = \$100-200; 7 = \$200-300; 8 = \$300-400; 9 = \$400 or more

29. How much have you spent on conflict simulation games in the last twelve months? 1 = less than \$10; 2 = \$10-25; 3 = \$25-50; 4 = \$50-75; 5 = \$75-100; 6 = \$100-200; 7 = \$200-300; 8 = \$300-400; 9 = \$400 or more

30. Pick the one area of science fiction that you most enjoy reading: 1 = Space opera/science fiction; 2 = "Hard" science fiction adventure; 3 = Problem-solving hard science fiction; 4 = Extraterrestrial societies; 5 = Future societies (utopia/dystopia); 6 = Alternate history; 7 = Time-travel; 8 = Soft science fiction (i.e. a.k.a. "new wave"); 9 = Other (please write in the category description)

31. Pick the one area about which you would most like to see science fiction games done: 1 = Strategic space conflict; 2 = Tactical space conflict (ship against ship); 3 = Strategic planet-bound conflict (army against army); 4 = Tactical planetbound conflict (man against man); 5 = Alternate history conflict; 6 = Conflict in a contemporary setting; 7 = Role-playing adventure; 8 = Economic/social/political conflict; 9 = Other (please write in the category description)

32. How many science fiction games do you own (including the game in this issue)? 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; 5 = 5; 6 = 11 to 15; 7 = 16 to 20; 8 = 21 to 25; 9 = 26 or more

33. How much did you spend on science fiction books in the last twelve months? 1 = under \$10; 2 = under \$20; 3 = under \$30; 4 = under \$40; 5 = under \$50; 6 = under \$60; 7 = under \$70; 8 = under \$80; 9 = \$81 or more

34. What percentage of the money spent on science fiction books was spent on hard-cover books? 1 = 10%; 2 = 20%; 3 = 30%; 4 = 40%; ...9 = 90%

35. Pick the one area of fantasy that you most enjoy reading: 1 = Sword and Sorcery; 2 = Mythological fantasy; 3 = Quest adventure; 4 = Classically-based fantasy (e.g., Arthurian legend); 5 = Fantasy in a contemporary setting; 6 = Science fiction/heroic adventure; 7 = Anthropomorphic fantasy (e.g., *Watership Down*); 8 = Horror/occult; 9 = Other (please write in the category description)

36. Pick the one area about which you would most like to see fantasy games done: 1 = Strategic sword and sorcery boardgames (army against army); 2 = Tactical sword and sorcery boardgames (hero against evil/droid); 3 = Quest/adventure boardgames; 4 = Sword and sorcery role-playing; 5 = Quest/adventure role-playing; 6 = Classically-based fantasy; 7 = Anthropomorphic societies; 8 = Horror/occult; 9 = Other (please write in the category description)

37. How much money did you spend on fantasy books in the last twelve months? 1 = under \$10; 2 = under \$20; 3 = under \$30; 4 = under \$40; 5 = under \$50; 6 = under \$60; 7 = under \$70; 8 = under \$80; 9 = \$81 or more

38. What percentage of the money spent on fantasy books was spent on hard-cover books? 1 = 10%; 2 = 20%; 3 = 30%; 4 = 40%; ...9 = 90%

39. How many fantasy games do you own? 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; 5 = 5 to 10; 6 = 11 to 15; 7 = 16 to 20; 8 = 21 to 25; 9 = 26 or more

40. If you are a subscriber to *Ares*, indicate how you came to be one: 1 = An ad in *Strategy & Tactics*; 2 = An ad in *Analog*; 3 = An ad in *Games*; 4 = An ad in *Isaac Asimov SF*; 5 = An ad in a previous issue of *Ares*; 6 = An ad in another hobby gaming magazine; 7 = An ad in another magazine not mentioned here; 8 = Someone bought a subscription for me; 9 = Other (please specify on the Feedback card)

41. How did you purchase this copy of *Ares*? 1 = by subscription; 2 = by mail, as a single copy; 3 = in a store; 4 = it was passed along to me by a friend; 5 = other (please specify on the Feedback card)

42. Indicate on 1 to 9 fantasy-to-science-fiction spectrum where your interest lies. For example, if you're only interested in fantasy games and stories, you'd write "1"; if your interest were mainly fantasy but included some sf, you might write "2" or "3"; evenly divided interest would be "5"; and, of course, pure sf interest would rate a "9".

In order to determine editorial content, please rate the features in *Ares* on a scale of 1 to 9 (1 would indicate a

strong desire to see the feature eliminated from the magazine; 9 would indicate a strong desire to see the feature kept in the magazine).

- Fantasy fiction
- Science fiction
- Non-fiction article
- Non-fiction articles on sf/l as literature
- Game review
- Book review
- Film & Television Review
- Media
- Special illustrated pages (storyboards, bestiaires, etc.)
- Simulation game

Rate the following suggestions on a scale of 1 to 9, indicating if you would like to see these features appear in *Ares* (1 = no desire to see such a feature; 9 = strong desire to see such a feature).

- Articles on specific sf/l games
- Interviews with game designers
- Analysis of how to approach and play a game
- Letters to the editor column
- Surveys of sf/l games
- More science fiction stories
- More fantasy stories
- Articles on game design

Rate the following game proposals on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 indicating very little inclination to buy the game if published up through 9 indicating a definite intention to purchase it.

11. *Invasion Andromeda*. By the year 7566, humanity has filled the Galaxy with its civilization and has turned its eyes towards other galaxies. A massive armada of colonizing ships sets out towards the Andromeda galaxy; advance scouts report an ancient technological civilization, more advanced than humanity in every aspect except for military strength. The Andromedans seem utterly peaceful, utterly defenseless. As the human armada approaches the new galaxy, it is detected; the Andromedans send out their weak ships to slow the advancing humans while they seek to use their superior technology to defend their worlds. *Invasion Andromeda* would include an 11" x 17" map of the outer fringes of the Andromeda galaxy (at a scale of 3 light years per hex), and the rules would cover such features as Andromedan technology, open space battles, novas and supernovas, military production, and possible intervention by neutrals. A possible *Ares* Game. To sell for \$7.

12. *Across the Warp of Time*. Someone in the future is disturbing the flow of time on Earth. Wehrmacht panzer columns are seen streaming towards modern Dallas, huge herds of Triceratops are roaming through France, the Spanish Armada is seen sailing off the shores of a nuclear devastated China. A time war is in effect; two future eras are trying to alter the course of the history of our time lines. Both sides determine that certain turning points in history are vitally important and seek to secure these points to influence the future. Time armies are sent out to secure these temporal junctions, armed with futuristic weapons to alter, if necessary, the course of history. The armies of the future will make time jumps successfully. *Across the Warp of Time* will include four 11" x 17" geomorphic maps of different terrains on which important battles occurred; the randomness of a time jump will influence where the time armies land - if they arrive too late, the battle will already be over and that temporal junction lost. Also included would be 400 cardboard counters to represent the armies of the future and the past. To sell for \$15.

13. *In Search of the Taurans*. Earth has established her first colony on Tau Ceti 3; the first settlers discover the remains of an ancient people who once inhabited the planet but have now died out. Drs. Scrope and Boggs, rivals of long standing in the study of exo-archeology, seek to finance a trip to Tau Ceti and become the first scientists to reconstruct the history of the Taurans. *In Search of the Taurans* is a game of exploration and knowledge; each doctor must procure the funds for a dig, pick out a likely location for Taurian cities, and slowly uncover the history of the dead race. Play would be by "digging seasons"; the results of a season can be wiped out by sabotage from the other side. A flow chart would help players establish the structure of the alien race

and discover possible reasons for why the Laurans died. One 17" x 17" map, 100 counters. A possible *Ares* game to sell for \$6.

**84. Meelstrom: Frontier Exploration in the Argus Cluster.** In the far distant future, the technologically advanced societies are almost totally dependent on rare superheavy metals. Consequently, when an Antarean Federation Survey Mission reported the presence of vast quantities of the precious metals in the remote Argus Cluster, the four dominant races in the galaxy began a tense, fraught scramble to carve out territory in the cluster itself. But the Argus Cluster was not so easily conquered. Even the most modern equipment was barely prepared to deal with the awesome natural forces unleashed within the Cluster. Constant nova and supernova chain reactions and other space calamities make the Cluster nearly unmanageable and highly unliving for any living thing. In *Meelstrom*, each player represents one of the space-faring races bent on total domination of the Cluster. For 1 to 4 players, the game will pit Players against the perils of the unknown. Players will "create" the conditions in each hex they enter through card play. One beautifully colored map, 400 counters, plenty of cards, and short rules to enable Players to enjoy *Meelstrom* in an evening. \$18.

**85. Target: Earth.** An operational level treatment of the classic science fiction theme of an extraterrestrial invasion of Earth. Set in the present-day northeastern United States, the game would create the initial landings and subsequent confusion and hysteria of the populace followed by the timely (hopefully) deployment of military forces. With convincing full and nuclear air and ground weapons. Special rules would allow for variable capabilities and attributes of the invaders. Would include one 22" x 17" map, 200 counters and rules. To sell for \$8.

**86. Attack of the Giant Ants.** Spurred to gigantic size by nearby nuclear testing, a colony of ants leaves the Arizona desert to attack Phoenix. Driven back by the National Guard, the ants take refuge in *Meelstrom* under the sand. Immune to poison gas, the only way to eliminate the ants before they breed enough to attempt another assault is to enter their tunnels and attack them underground, man to insect. The Human Player has rifles, machineguns, flamethrowers, grenades, and bazookas, while the Ants have their own special weapons. The Human Player wins if he succeeds in killing the queen ant and her eggs before the eggs hatch, while the Ant Player wins by avoiding this eventuality. Rules would feature collapsing tunnels, acidic ant venom, digging new tunnels, hatching eggs, bester ants, and human panic. Would include an 11" x 17" map, 100 counters in a box for \$7.

**87. Space, 1989.** In 1989, Professor Eckhardt of Boston invented the amazing Ether Flyer, and, with his young assistant, made the first voyage of discovery outside the bounds of Earth, to the far side of the moon. Soon, news of his expedition spread around the world, and the colonization of the Solar System began. The moon was quickly partitioned between France, Britain, Germany, and Belgium, with small areas going to America, Spain and Hong-Kong. However, bitter Trade wars resulted by European officials) managed to fight off all attacks from the non-English powers. So it continued as Venus, Ganymede, and other Jovian satellites were settled by the nations of the 19th century. When the Great War broke like a storm over Europe, the conflict quickly spread to the colonies. *Space, 1989* depicts the struggle for mastery of the Solar System in all its Victorian splendor, from the turn of the century to the end of the Great War. The game would include a colorful 22" x 34" game map of the solar colonies, a small map for resolving major Ether Flyer battles, 400 counters and "historical" information. To sell for \$16.

**88. Godquest.** The heroes of mythology appeared in time of crisis to their peoples. The exploits of these legendary men and women have been recorded down through the ages, and the greatest have achieved immortality as gods and goddesses. In *Godquest*, a player takes the part of a heroine of ancient times, each with unique attributes that sets him apart from common men, and faces tasks that require superhuman prowess. In his heroic performance, he receives Deity Points; if not, he becomes a foot-

note in mythology. Each player also determines the kind of deity he wishes to become, but he who wishes to become the god of wine and merriment will face easier foes than the hero wishing to become the god of war; but he will not have the same martial abilities as the latter. Designed to be a quick-playing game for the whole family, *Godquest* would contain a 17" x 22" map, 200 counters, 100 cards, and short rules. To sell for \$12.

**89. The Land of Faerie: Imlric Troll-Road** contemplated the elfin captive to become a hero who was to be believed, the caste of Varg Elf-King, Imlric's foe of nine centuries, was ill-guarded for the elfin fleet was off in search of Jotun, land of the Norse giants. The capture of Varg's castle would avenge the death of Imlric's brother and might bring the Elf-King under the Troll-Road's power; it was too good an opportunity to be missed. The siege of Elorn Castle began the great war between the Dark Trolls and Dark Elves. In the end, neither side was the victor, because the fray exhausted the resources of Faerie which should have been used against the encroachments of men. A player represents either the Dark Trolls or Dark Elves. Each side maneuvers his forces across Old-England in an attempt to capture the vital strategic Places of Power (such as Stonehenge) as possible. Each side has terrible magic at its disposal, but incurs a debt to the gods each time such magic is used. A possible *Ares* game, to sell for \$6 to \$8.

**90. Sinbad the Sailor.** On his wedding day to the Princess Almira, Sinbad discovers that the evil wizard Ahmerr has spirited her away. Not only does Ahmerr lust for the princess, he also lusts after power through the vile use of various magics. Sinbad must pursue the evil Ahmerr, fighting off such monsters as the Roc, Cyclops, minotaur and other mythological beasts he meets while at the same time gathering a sufficient army of men and other friends, such as genies, djinns, and benign deities, to help him defeat Ahmerr's army of the dead. *Sinbad the Sailor* will include a 22" x 34" map of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the lands of Arabia; 200 cardboard playing pieces; 56 character cards; rules booklet; and various playing aids. To sell for \$15.

**91. Creation.** The entities we know as gods engaged in the ultimate power struggle to determine the spiritual and physical nature of our Earth. It was the most primal battle and yet the most sophisticated. In the game, the general principles of our major religions and myths become in direct conflict over the young world. Each of the six in players of Creation takes the part of one of the gods for group of gods seeking to create a world that obeys the laws of their creed. The 22" x 34" game-map represents an unformed world upon which the players place cards representing terrain, landmasses and natural laws while attempting to remove (destroy) the edifices placed by their opponents. A player's actions would have the ultimate goal in mind — a world that conforms to his god's concept of cosmic order. Despite its ambitious reach, the game would be relatively simple, playable in one evening. Would include 200 counters and about 100 cards, to sell for \$16.

**92. Magator.** This game would simulate the strategic and operational decisions of a nuclear war: the player would control the DCB's, bombers, nuclear submarines, cruise missiles, and other nuclear weapons of today's superpowers, and would try to neutralize enemy nuclear and conventional forces, as well as, in some situations, to kill civilian population. Victory would depend on efficiency of nuclear war, as well as relative strike strengths. Rules features would include: nuclear doctrine, ground-to-air missiles and other defense systems, command breakdown, city bombing, submarine tracking, and the effects of radiation fallout. Scenarios would include full-scale conflicts between the eastern and western alliances, US Soviet control, pre-emptive strike situations, Sino/Soviet bombing, third world situations, and multi-country conflicts. Situations would be modern for most scenarios, but potential superpower conflict in the 50's would also be dealt with. The game would have a 22" x 34" map and 200 to 400 counters; to sell for \$12.

**93. War of the American States.** American Independence has been won from England, but "States' Rights" regarding US Soviet control, pre-emptive strike situations, through a Constitution which has established the self-government of each state at the expense of the federal government. As a result, the thirteen states are strong rivals (much like the sovereign Germanic states in the 18th century), more than willing to go to war to preserve their hard-won rights. *War of the American States* is a multi-player, alternate-history simulation in which each player would control one state (or more) and attempt to build a

into the strongest and most influential entity on the continent through diplomacy, trade embargoes, industrial development, and hiring of foreign mercenaries (if necessary), each state would prepare itself for war — if one state grows too powerful. The game would include a 22" x 34" map of the thirteen colonies, 400 cardboard playing pieces, and various economic-military production displays. Depending on the success of the original game, the series might be expanded to cover other regions, as they develop into self-governing states. To sell for \$12.

**94. How many science fiction and fantasy magazines do you regularly buy or receive by subscription?** 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; .9 = 0 more.

**95. How many science-fiction magazines (Omni, Science Digest, etc.) do you regularly buy or receive by subscription?** 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; .9 = 0 more.

*Please rate the following games on a 1 to 5 scale, with "1" indicating a particularly strong dislike for a game and "5" an especially favorable opinion. Please rate only those games which you have played (against an opponent or solitaire) at least once in the last twelve months. If you have not played in the last twelve months, please do not rate it (respond "0" in the space). All games listed are SPI published, unless otherwise specified.*

**96. The Wreck of the B. S. M. Pandora**

**97. Marine: 2002 (Y/P)**

**98. Cyborg (EG)**

**99. Darkover (EP)**

**100. First Fantasy Campaign (J/G)**

**101. Sea Steed & Battle Riders (J/G)**

**102. War Cry & Wattle Lute (J/G)**

**103. Trek-80 (J/G)**

**104. Perilous Encounters (T/C)**

**105. Intruder (TFG)**

**106. Valkenburg Castle (TFG)**

**107. Swordquest (TFG)**

**108. Starfighter (FB)**

**109. The Tribes of Crane (SS)**

**110. Star Master (SS)**

**111. Swords & Spells (TSR)**

**112. Sniir's Revenge (TSR)**

**113. 4th Dimension (TSR)**

**114. Chaimnail (TSR)**

**95-96.** No questions

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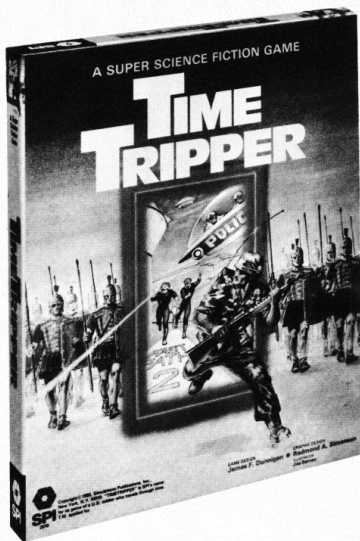
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*TimeTripper*, an adventure game for one to four players, begins in Vietnam of 1971 when a U.S. infantryman, Timoid Zapetski, accidentally creates a time warp. He is carried back to some of the most famous battles in history and forward to the far future to meet fantastic opponents. In his encounters in time, he has the opportunity to recruit enemy soldiers and creatures and take them with him as possible allies to his next encounters. Meanwhile, he must learn to control the time flux as he uses his modern weaponry to hold off the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex, Greek hoplites, Nazi infantry, the futuristic Timepolice, and the powerful Timelord. Optional rules allow for multi-player TeamTripper Games and for a Time-master who controls the events of the past and future at his whim. *TimeTripper* contains an 11" x 17" tactical display (with past and future time displays), 100 cardboard playing pieces, rules booklet, and various playing aids.



							Nell Experience	 Alf	Alf Current Endurance
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							Alf Weight Carrying	Alf Experience	 Tim
							Tim Current Endurance	Tim Weight Carrying	Tim Experience

							Claymore	Skag Current Endurance	Skag Weight Carrying
						M72 Rkt	Radio	 Skag	Skag Experience

								M16 Ammo	Shotgun Ammo
								M16 Loaded	Shotgun Loaded

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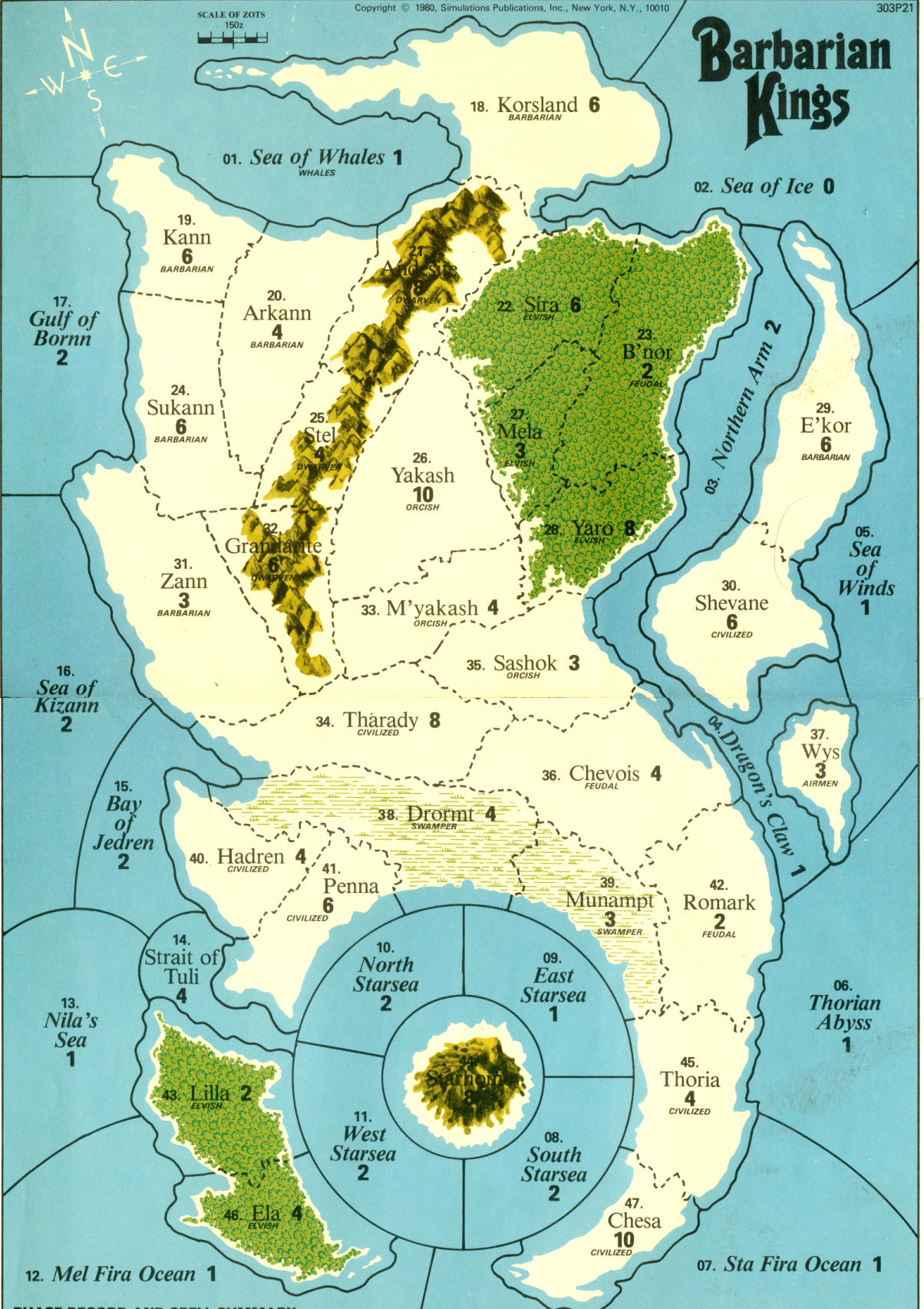
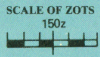


# Barbarian Kings Counter Section Nr. 1 (100 pieces): Front

Quantity of Sections of this identical type: 1. Quantity of Sections (all types) in game: 1.

 • 010 4	 • 011 4	 • 012 4	 • 013 4	 • 014 4	 • 020 4	 • 021 4	 • 022 4	 • 023 4	 • 024 4
 • 030 4	 • 031 4	 • 032 4	 • 033 4	 • 034 4	 • 040 4	 • 041 4	 • 042 4	 • 043 4	 • 044 4
 • 050 4	 • 051 4	 • 052 4	 • 053 4	 • 054 4	 1 411 2	 1 412 2	 1 413 2	 1 414 2	 1 415 2
 1 611 2	 1 612 2	 1 613 2	 1 614 2	Phase	 1 416 2	 3 421 3	 3 422 3	 3 423 3	 3 424 3
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 3 221 2	 3 222 2	 3 223 2	 3 224 2	 3 225 2	 3 226 2	 3 233 3	 8 3514 2	 8 3515 2	 8 3516 2
 3 311 2	 3 312 2	 3 313 2	 3 314 2	 3 315 2	 2 331 4	 2 332 4	 2 333 4	 5 2711 2	 5 2712 2
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 2 121 2	 2 122 2	 2 123 2	 2 124 2	 2 125 2	 2 126 2	 6 2134 3	 6 2135 3	 6 2136 3	 8 4951 2

# Barbarian Kings



## PHASE RECORD AND SPELL SUMMARY

<b>Alliance Phase</b> Plot Harmony (M) and Bickering (M); Signatures; Reveal Harmony (M) and Bickering (M)	<b>Tornado Phase</b> (E)	<b>Finance Phase</b> Collect Tax; Maintain or Disband; Purchase units; Illusory units: \$1 (I)	<b>1st Magic Phase</b> Kill Wizard or Hero: \$8 per person (N); Kill unit: \$5 per unit (N); Allegiance (M)	<b>Movement Plot</b> Plot Movement; Clairvoyance (M)	<b>2nd Magic Phase</b> Mind Control (M); Stormy Sea or Mountain; Freeze Sea or Flood (E); Invisibility (I)	<b>Movement Execution</b> 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.; Detect Illusion (I)	<b>Combat Phase</b> Announce Combat	<b>3rd Magic Phase</b> Raise the Dead (N)
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