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THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ADVENTURE GAMING

Nr. 10
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Arēs

STORY and GAME FEATURE

HARRY HARRISON'S

THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

Slippery Jim diGriz faces a deadly maze controlled by a computer programmed to kill.

Articles on
UNIVERSE
DELTA VEE
Complete Adventure for
DragonQuest
Critiques of
Outland ★ Dragonslayer
and Escape from New York

SPI

Preview of
StarTrader
and
Ghostship

Nr. 10, September 1981

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THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ADVENTURE GAMING

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ENCLOSURES: *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* map, counters and rules; Feedback card, subscription form.

Looking Ahead to Next Time

Ares nr. 10 will feature *Land of Faerie,* a strategic level simulation of the Third Fomorian War in which the Dark Elves and Dark Trolls struggle to seize the Places of Power in fair Albion. Material on Celtic myth and early British history will accompany the game; in addition there will be reviews, Science for Science Fiction, Facts for Fantasy, and much more.

When to Expect Nr. 11

Domestic Subscribers: If you have not received your copy of *Ares* nr. 11 by 11 December 1981, notify our Customer Service Department. Please include your Customer Code and issue of expiration, both of which should be found on this issue's mailing label, just above your name. *Foreign Subscribers:* Add eight weeks to the above date to allow for the tardigradous pace of international mail.

On the Cover

The immortal Stainless Steel Rat as portrayed by Timothy Truman, based on a concept by Redmond A. Simonsen.

Muse

With this issue, *Ares* and its brother magazine, *MOVES*, make slight course corrections in response to market information developed by feedback and by direct interview and reader comment at the recent MichiCon and Origins conventions. As you can see by this issue, *Ares* will begin to include articles directly related to games (i.e., analysis, technique, variants, etc.). *MOVES* will no longer publish material related to science fiction and fantasy games — only military and political games. This change points both magazines more in the direction you've indicated: sf/f games treated in *Ares*; military games in *MOVES*.

By the way, as with all SPI magazines, articles and features are *not* restricted to SPI products — we want material on all publisher's games. So, if you're inclined to write game-related articles on widely played sf/f games (see our games rating chart for guidance), submit a non-returnable copy of your manuscript to our Managing Editor along with a return postcard to notify you of acceptance.

We're looking for articles from 1500 to 5000 words in length. Pay rates are $.02 or .03 per word (depending on whether you've been published with any frequency heretofore). For game-related articles, SPI buys all rights.

Late Flash: *DragonQuest* wins Best Fantasy Role-Playing Game Award. At Origins 81, the Academy of Adventure Gaming Art and Design gave *DragonQuest* top honors in role-playing for 1980! *Redmond*

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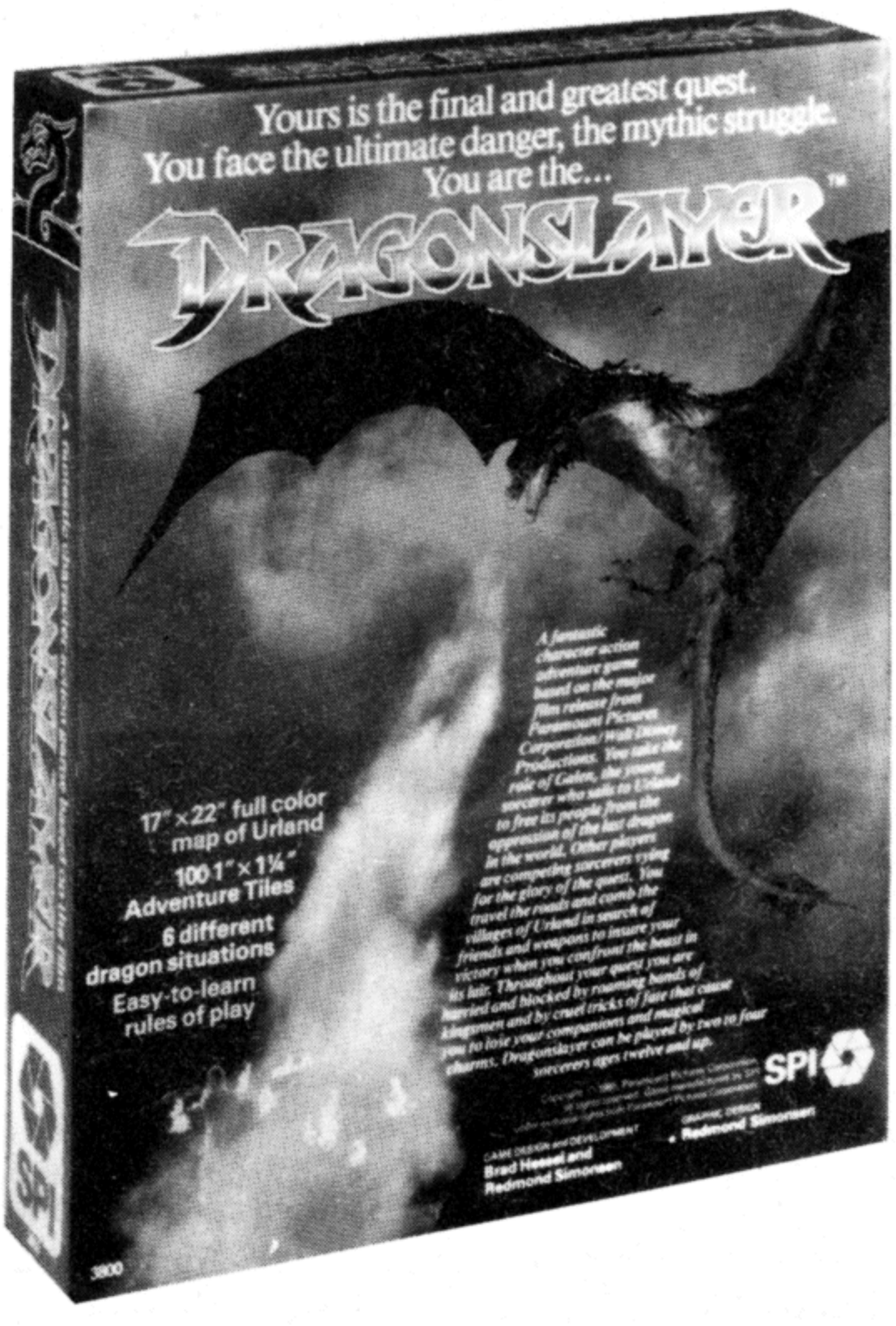
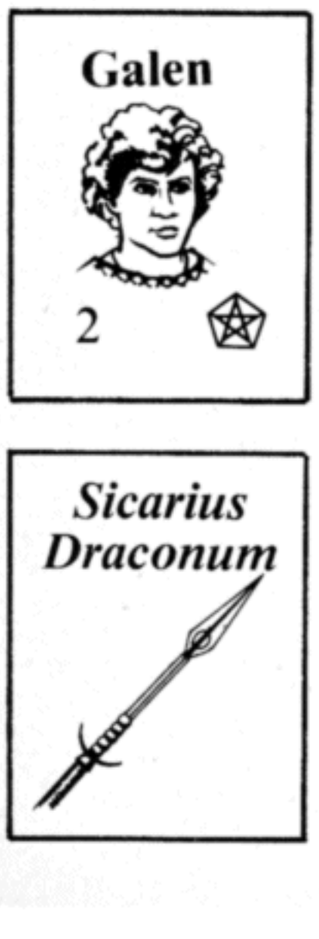
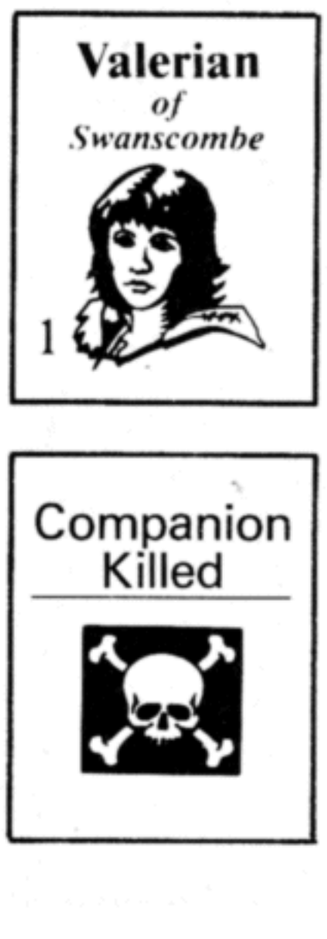
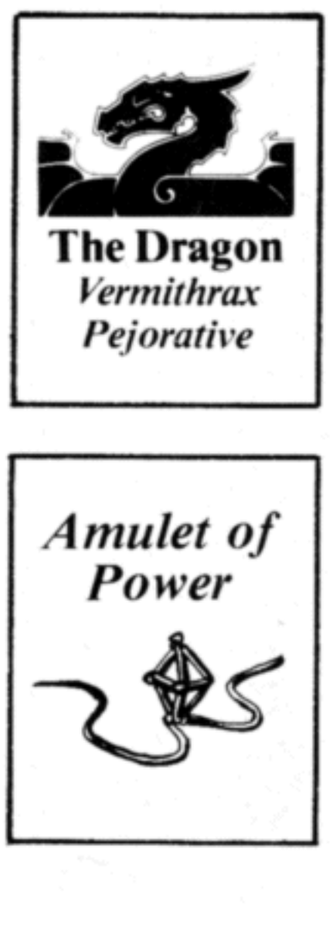








Designer's Notes

Universe Mini-Adventure #1: The Devil's Eye

Devil's Eye Horror Revealed!

SIDEWINDER (FP) - Survivors of the Devil's Eye (GLY-1) exploration party today described the tragic events of their visit last week to the unsettled planet during a press conference in Sidewinder Spaceport. Expedition leader George Bjorling told of the deaths of three members of the five-man team. Originally scheduled to conduct a low-orbit mapping of the planet only, the party decided to land the ship, the *Kalingrad,* in the heavily vegetated north polar region of Devil's Eye. There they set out for a quick survey of the multitude of life forms picked up by their scanners.

"I made a poor command decision," admitted Bjorling. "We were not properly equipped for that type of exploration having no weapons more effective than an old-fashioned laser pistol." Bjorling went on to say that they encountered "a fierce and deadly collection of creatures composed of organic and metallic mechanical parts. We found two or three versions of some creatures... One would be purely mammalian and docile while the same type of animal with a new steel-hard skin would attack ruthlessly. We lost Barnes, Williams and Lawson to seemingly docile creatures that ripped open their expedition suits with blade-like fangs and claws."

After the conference, Bjorling and his surviving crew member, Grace Bickers, went into seclusion in a GamLepCo retreat at an undisclosed location on Sidewinder.

The preceding is a newspaper bulletin that the players in our first *Universe* mini-adventure receive at the beginning of play. The adventure was originally conceived solely for use at *Origins '87* but has proven so popular with playtesters that we are preparing it for inclusion in an upcoming issue of *Ares*.

The adventure sends a party of adventurers to Devil's Eye in the Gamma Leporis double-star system (27 light years from Sol) to investigate the strange life-forms reported by George Bjorling. With an amphibian all terrain vehicle and an excellent array of weapons, the party is better equipped than their predecessors to deal with the dangerous creatures in the jungles of Barnes River. The party must not only overcome the harsh environment, but must also discover the secrets behind the metallic life-forms. Look for this adventure in *Ares* 11 or 12.

John H. Butterfield

Ghostship

Ghostship deals with the interception of an alien vessel passing near earth by the US space shuttle *Yorktown,* and with the exploration of the dark, quiet starcraft in hopes of finding its inhabitants. During the preparation before playing the game, the player must determine what faction on earth will finance the trip, which will affect victory conditions. He then chooses his characters. I have not yet decided whether the player may pick all his characters freely or if some should be selected randomly. Each will possess various attributes, special skills and a classification type (i.e., scientist, politician, military specialist, crewman, etc.). The characters' attributes will influence the results of each encounter.

The game itself will be an interesting combination of the chit revealing process of *Citadel of Blood* and the paragraph system of *Voyage of the Pandora*. Chits will serve two purposes. They will designate the shape of the ship by forcing certain passageways of the ship to be closed off. Also, they will identify the "finds" in each room or structure as they are entered. Each find chit will be cross-referenced to one of a hundred paragraphs which will identify what the object is or does. However, each paragraph will contain conditionals dependent upon characters, previously discovered finds and time limitations. This approach will greatly expand the possibilities of each paragraph and make the game more intriguing overall.

Ultimately, the goal of the game will be attempting to encounter the aliens who built the ship. It will not be a simple task, and only the correct combinations of events will accomplish this. Yet this will be the most interesting part of the game. Rules will be included to cover possibilities of communication, capture and combat. More often than not, the alien visitors will not be too pleased with having their ship ransacked and will retaliate in kind.

The game's victory conditions will be based on the amount of money and prestige the various finds are worth to the initial financier. For example, a find with a high probability of being a weapon will be worth more to the Pentagon than to the UN. Some of the finds may even be relatively worthless. Of course, the greatest amount of points will be given for contacting the aliens. However, in making such contact, the characters may not return at all.

Right now, *Ghostship* is being designed for solitaire play. However, ideas for multi-player versions are being worked on. In such a scenario, there would even be possibilities for the players to attack each other. Nonetheless, for the time being the emphasis of this designer's time is on the actual mechanics of the game itself. *Thomas Pecorini*

Star Trader

Preliminary design work on *Star Trader* has been completed, and I am beginning work on the game's first prototype. Playtests should begin in a week or two. The game's components will include a 22" × 34" map depicting the star systems in play, 200 counters representing starships and planetary trade agencies, and a 16-page rules book which will be divided equally between rules and random events paragraphs.

In *Star Trader* each of up to five players takes the role of the master of a merchant vessel, travelling the spaceways with cargoes exotic and rare. Starting with one ship and limited financial resources, each player tries to build a fleet of starships, amass a network of planetary bases, and dominate the trade-lanes of space.

Each turn in the game represents about three months. This time-scale was chosen for several reasons: I wanted the time-scale to be large enough so that the players would have a good shot at building a fleet in a scenario of moderate length. Also, the turns had to be long enough to allow for large price fluctuations. At the same time, however, the time-scale had to be small enough so that movement and the details of player interaction wouldn't become too abstract. Three month turns should work out as a happy solution.

Each turn the players buy and sell goods, negotiate with each other, react to unusual events, develop their network of trade agencies, and conduct acts of knavery aimed at making the other players' lives as difficult as possible. The players can also conduct a variety of illicit activities, such as smuggling, bribing customs, and evading law enforcement agencies.

I am working on the assumption that the far-reaching trade corporations of the future will be unscrupulous for the most part, and so the game emphasizes illegal activities; smuggling and piracy are common. Indeed, the quickest profits can be made by dealing in drugs and high-tech weapons. Naturally, a high degree of risk is associated with such ventures, however.

All markets, especially those for illegal goods, are highly volatile; every time a ship unloads its cargo, prices fluctuate dramatically. Timing and outwitting the other players have great importance; a player's profit on a voyage depends as much on when he gets to a star (and who gets there first) as on what he is carrying.

In addition to competition in trade, the players interact more directly, sabotaging each other's ships, subverting each other's crews, and even attacking each other's ships as they cruise between stars.

Banking and investment systems are also integrated into the game. Although these systems are abstract, they give the players more options to consider, and contribute to the variety of choices presented in the game. I also think that letting the players take loans out at usurious interest rates is a constant source of tension and excitement.

A detailed random-events system, using the *Voyage of the Pandora* paragraph format, will be included in the game. The variety of events presented should give each playing a distinct flavor. Each turn the players will be presented with smuggling opportunities, run-ins with Federation space troopers, and a multitude of unique incidents, from revolutions to meteor swarms.

This random-events system will be of particular interest to role-players; each paragraph sequence will be usable as the outline for an adventure in *Universe*, SPI's new science fiction role-playing game. *Star Trader* will be a completely independent game in its own right, but it is consistent with *Universe* and uses that game's rationale, technology, and history as a backdrop. *Nick Karp*

FICTION

THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

BY HARRY HARRISON

ILLUSTRATION BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN

"You are the only one who can save us, diGriz! Say that you will do it, I beg of you...."

The words were music to my ears. I try to be humble in my own simple way, but it is very hard. People keep telling me how great I am. They know that I have saved the universe — twice at least — so they feel, rightly enough I suppose, that I can do anything.

"...please help. Four men have died already, that is why we need you...."

His words dropped me from the heights of elation into the abyss of despair. I snapped at him.

"So that's what you need me for. To be corpse number five. You think I'll look good in a coffin?"

There it was, of course. You get a reputation and you have to live up to it — even if you die in the attempt. I rose from my chair and paced the length of the room, trying to ignore the delegates grouped uneasily against the wall. Why should I listen to them? Why me, James Bolivar diGriz, the Stainless Steel Rat? Outcast of society — yet still a hero of society? A lifetime criminal who was now being called upon for help by the very people I preyed upon. It wasn't fair.

"Not fair!" I cried. "I should be robbing you blind, not doing you favors." They nodded eagerly at this.

"Rob us, Jim, rob us! We don't mind. Only finish this little job first!"

I sighed deeply. There is no escaping one's destiny. "Before I decide, would someone mind telling me just what the hell this is all about?"

All they needed was the starting whistle. In an instant they had a hologram projector up and running. A holo of a satellite station sprang into existence before me, soft music played and a deep voice began speaking.

"This is the orbiting satellite, Stanyan VI. It is the port of call of all the deep spacers approaching the Stanyan System." The spidery form of a spacer drifted up to the image and docked to drive home the point. "Cargo is then transhipped to the thirteen planets that comprise this solar system. The operation is successful, safe and speedy." Violins swelled up in the background playing successful, safe and speedy music. I began to doze off — but a crash of brass and tympany woke me up.

"But everything has changed!" the announcer gasped. "It all began when this passenger shuttle went out of control...."

THE FAMILIAR EGG-SHAPED FORM of a shuttle swam into view, drifting towards one of the satellite's docking bays. It was completely under computer control; accidents were an impossibility, the retarding jets would fire and ease it into place. Then the impossible happened. Instead of the breaking jets being activated, the stern jets flared full on — sending it hurtling forward. It was over in an instant. The shuttle crashed into the solid steel of the docking port and burst open like a silver egg hurled against a wall. Air puffed out and froze instantly. Maimed bodies were hurled free — but unhappily did not freeze as fast as the air had done. I could not take my eyes away from this gruesome scene as the narrator continued in a hushed voice.

"Thirty-seven people were killed in this accident. Which proved to be no accident at all. When the mechanic went to examine the malfunctioning navigational computer, he found that a ten thousand volt current had been shorted through the metal door of the computer room...."

The holo of the space station puffed out of existence and was replaced by a lifesize image of the mechanic who had tried the handle on the hotwired door. I turned away.

"I've seen a fried corpse before, thank you," I said. "Can I have the rest of this nasty story straight without the sensational visual effects?"

The scene shifted back to the satellite again and the voice continued remorselessly.

"It soon became obvious that the navigational computer was not at fault. It had been overriden by the Central Control computer. This is the Galaxy grade, Mark 2500 model, absolutely reliable and never known to malfunction before...."

"There's a first time for everything," I shouted, trying to be heard over the booming voice and backup orchestra. "Will someone kindly switch off this ghastly holo show? Enough is enough."

The music died with a gasping rattle and the holo popped out of existence; the lights came back up. I turned and stabbed a finger at the cowering delegates.

"Now just bring me up to date without the special effects. You have a nutsy computer that has already polished off a lot of people. And it is a Mark 2500 which probably handles hundreds of flights a day, controls thousands of operations, along with hundreds of thousands of subfunctions as well — that must be one smart computer. If it has gone gaga it won't really like anyone coming near it. The four men who were killed — they tried to turn the thing off?"

The delegates all nodded together gloomily. I nodded as well. "I thought so. Have you evacuated the satellite?" At this they shook their heads even more gloomily. The leader of the delegation spoke.

"It won't let us. The Mark 2500. All of the ports are sealed and we can't get near the satellite. And there are over three hundred passengers trapped inside. You must save them, diGriz! Their lives are in your hands...."

"Not yet they're not! They are still in your hands which is why you are here — and why you are worrying so. You're all sweating — and I think I know why. This delegation represents the corporation that owns the satellite?" Reluctant nods. "And you also represent the insurance company that insures the satellite?" Heads nodding like crazy now. "So not only do you have a humanitarian interest in those poor souls trapped inside your hunk of space ironmongery — but you have a financial interest as well." Chins dropped to chests and a wave of financial despair sighed through the room. I smiled and shook my clenched fists over my head.

"Despair not gentlemen — diGriz will save you! I will turn off your kooky computer and save your prisoners!"

I waited until the cheers and shouts of joy had died down before I put the boot in.

"But, like you, I am a businessman as well as a humanitarian. My reasonable and very low fee for the job will be the miserly sum of two million credits...."

I turned away and lit a cigar while their moans of pain and cries of anguish echoed from the chamber walls. Then I puffed out expensive smoke and raised my hand for silence.

"For shame," I chided. "You'll get that sum back within a few days of operation." My voice grew cold. "But if you don't get back into operation and if the relatives of the people you have allowed to be destroyed by that mad machine decide to sue you...." Temporary interruption by wails of despair. "...why, you will have to pay out billions. You have sixty seconds to decide. The fee will be payable one million on signing and one million upon delivery of the main fuse from the crackpot computer. Fifty-five seconds."

"How will you do it?" someone called out.

"I'll tell you as soon as you have paid. A computer with sick circuitry is as nothing to the man who saved the universe. Twice." Which meant that I had no idea how I was going to do it, but that was my business and not theirs. Just as their business was earning money and mine stealing it. "Thirty-one seconds."

"It's robbery — but we agree. We have no choice."

NOR DID THEY. Which was why I had made the fee so large. As soon as the money had been credited to my account, I threw them all out and spread out the technical reports. This was not going to be easy. I forced away the nagging realization that it was not only hard but completely impossible. Never say die! The Rat marches on. There had to be a way.

Except that three weeks later, in a shuttle floating in orbit about the insane satellite, I still hadn't found it. Nor was the captain of the shuttle any help.

"You're number five," he said, in an exceedingly gloomy voice. "You'll never make it either. Croaked or crunched like the other four. That cockamamie computer will let you aboard all right. Like a fly into a web. Then..."

"Then it is my worry. And I can do without your pep talk. I'm suiting up now and I want to be launched as soon as this ancient machine of yours comes up with the orbital calculations that I asked for."

"Suicide..." was the last word I heard as I sealed shut the helmet of my modified suit. Modified in that all of the metal parts had been sprayed with insulating foam. The Mark 2500 was very free with its shortcircuits and two of my predecessors had been electrocuted. I had no desire to be fried for my efforts — even before I was inside the renegade satellite.

My plan for getting aboard the thing was simple enough, although once I was sitting alone on the nosecone of the shuttle I began to have doubts about it. Because to make the plan work I had to trust the computer aboard the shuttle. And I was not very happy about computers at the moment. I felt

the ship stir behind me, then the steady pressure on my back as it accelerated. This lasted a few seconds — then ended as the braking jets close beside me puffed out clouds of gas. The shuttle decelerated. I didn't. The spaceship fell behind me as I continued on in what I hoped was the correct orbit. Aiming for the spot in space where the satellite would be. Optimistically launched not only in the direction of Stanyan VI, but also moving outward in a course that would bring me down right on top of an emergency exit, I hoped.

But it worked. Despite my fears I watched the satellite get closer and closer until it filled the entire sky. I knew the thing had no missiles or guns — but it could use its deceleration fields to launch something heavy in my direction. That's how one of my predecessors had bought it. But I was coming in on the side away from the landing bays. I hoped.

The seconds ticked by and I had my thumb poised over the button of my braking jets. The computer back in the shuttle was supposed to give me the signal to brake — but as I said I was not trusting computers very much these days. Closer and closer, larger and larger the metal wall grew. And I knew I would splatter myself all over it in a few seconds more. Where was the signal? The computer had blown a fuse. I was good as dead! Yet if I braked too soon I would miss the station completely and float out into space. I couldn't wait any longer....!

"Fire now," the emotionless voice of the computer said. It did not have to repeat itself. My thumb clamped down, clouds of gas billowed out and around me. I couldn't see a thing! The firing ended and the gas cleared — and there was the side of the satellite just ahead of me.

I hit, tumbled, bounced away again — and grabbed an antenna mast just before I vanished back into interstellar space. After that I just held on for awhile, waiting for the air scrubber to evaporate the perspiration from my forehead — and from the misted up helmet in front of my eyes as well.

"You know, Jim," I said, ignoring the quaver in my voice, "you're getting a little old for this kind of romp. Time to retire, some quiet little planet, rob a bank or two when you get bored. Leave this interstellar suicide to the kids."

But, even as I muttered to myself, I was hard at work. It's okay to bitch as long as you are doing something constructive at the same time. I hauled myself down from the pole and kicked off in a neat arc that ended over the emergency exit. Which was labeled, by some moronic civil servant no doubt, EMERGENCY EXIT. Fine for me, but of little use to anyone on the inside trying to find their way out. There was a large handle in the center of the door labeled PULL. I did. It swung open neatly and I drifted into the airlock beyond. Entrance effected, troubles over.

Others might think that — but not me. I'm not called the Stainless Steel Rat for nothing. No sir. I know how to get through stainless steel walls and come out on the other side alive. Just ahead of me was an inviting, shining metal lever. Pull that once, the outer door would close, air would rush into the lock, and when the pressure was equalized the inner door would open automatically. Very simple. And very suspicious. Floating in the center of the airlock, touching nothing, I opened the toolbag on my hip and took out a multimeter. I jammed one prod into the handle — then touched the other to the wall close by.

There was a colorful display of sparks and the readout displayed *25,000 volts.* Very interesting. Mark 2500 was expecting me.

PUT AWAY THE METER and extracted a thick pad of insulation. Electricity in this quantity should be treated with respect. I wrapped the pad around the handle and tugged. The door slowly opened. I waited until it gaped wide before triggering a blast on my suit rockets. A strong one. Because as soon as I was past the door I would be in the grip of the satellite's gravity field.

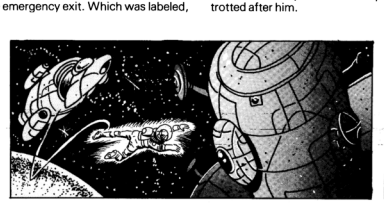
This shot me forward — and I began to drop as I came into the ship. But I hit the deck well away from the entrance and did a shoulder roll, coming up on my feet, fists clenched, ready for anything.

"Are you the new troubleshooter?" a voice said. I spun about to face a gloomy looking man dressed in a soiled boilersuit.

"No," I said, smiling warmly, "I am Santa and I'm here just in time for Christmas."

He just grunted at that, a serious type, his expression one of darkest gloom. He pointed over his shoulder with his thumb. "They're waiting for you in the rec hall. Got a message you were coming. This way." He turned and, almost as an afterthought, called back to me. "My name's Corona. Tech fifth class."

"My pleasure," I said, but if he heard me he gave no answer. I was really beginning to feel welcome. I peeled off the spacesuit and trotted after him.



Things were much better in the rec hall. There were about a dozen people waiting there and they burst out clapping when I entered.

"You're welcome indeed," I said inclining my head up in a courtly manner. "As you have heard, I am here to save you." My voice hardened. "I would also like to know how you heard I was coming — since the kooky computer controls all of the radio circuits in this satellite."

A handsome woman with gorgeous red hair held up a portable radio. "With this," she said. "If we put it in front of a viewport we can receive signals from the rescue ships out there. We just can't answer."

"You can now. I have a souped-up transceiver with me. Might I ask your name?"

"Trina. Deputy Commander of the station."

"And where may I ask is the Commander?"

She looked at me and her nostrils widened. "Didn't you do your homework? He was in the shuttle that crashed and started this whole mess."

"I know only what I am told." My nostrils flared to match hers. "Now would you mind introducing me to whoever is in charge now."

"An emergency committee of three. Myself, Dr. Putz here, and Commander Stark. Dr. Putz is Assistant Science Officer, while Commander Stark is Second in Command of security on the satellite."

"Assistant, Second in Command," I miffed. "I don't usually deal with the hired help. Where are their bosses?"

"Our superiors were killed in the same crash of the shuttle," Commander Stark growled. "What you see is what you get, diGriz."

"There is no time for petty squabbles," I told them. "I am here to save you. So you will give me all the help I need. Is that correct..?"

The emergency committee drew to one side and muttered to each other. They reached agreement quickly enough and Trina spoke for them all. "Agreed. You will pass your instructions through Technician Corona."

Corona's grunt hopefully indicated agreement. I nodded sagely. "A wise decision. The first thing I will need is a deck plan of this satellite."

"That's what they always ask for first," Corona said gloomily. He passed over a thick and dog-eared volume of plans. It was burned a bit at the edges and splattered with something that might have been blood. I had a dark suspicion. "Been used before?" I asked.

He nodded. "Four times." There was little humor in his smile. "Maybe five will be lucky."

"Thanks." I flipped through the pages. "You don't happen to remember how the other attempts on the computer were made, do you?"

"Sure do." He took the volume from me and flipped through it. He had a good, if morbid, memory and quickly indicated the various routes my predecessors had taken. Through the storage bays or radio room,

power central, food supplies, oxygen scrubbing, every way possible. Good intelligent plans — and all of them had failed.

"Any idea how you are going to go?" he asked, handing the plans back. I had none — but I wasn't going to admit this to the hired help.

"I have an idea, but I must perfect it. First some more information. See if you can pry the good Dr. Putz away from that five liter glass of beer and ask him he would be so kind as to join me for a moment."

"You wanted to see me?" Putz asked, wiping foam from his moustache with the back of his hand.

"If you would be so kind. As Assistant Science Officer you should know a thing or two about the Mark 2500 computer — shouldn't you?"

"Of course. In theory that is. I had nothing to do with the day to day operation."

"Even better. Would you then be kind enough to explain to me how a computer, which is nothing but a great big adding machine, could possibly go insane?"

"A GOOD QUESTION," he said, pawing his jaw in deep concentration. "I have given that much thought and come up with a possible answer. The Mark 2500 series have a memory capacity in excess of ten to the fourteenth power. That is rather large. As I am sure you know, the human brain has a memory capacity of ten to the twelfth..."

"Which means the computer is far smarter than a human being?"

"Not in the slightest. I said memory, not intelligence. A computer is just a complex machine programmed for certain functions. But with that capacity for memory it is certainly capable of intelligence. Perhaps some internal shortcircuiting took place. This is just speculation, mind you. If the same accident that saw intelligence rise in animals billions of years ago, if that accident occurred in a machine brain..."

"I follow your point. There is the possibility that it could grow, learn, develop a personality. A machine mind without morals, love or hate. Coldly efficient..."

"This is just speculation, mind you!"

"I realize that, Dr. Putz, and appreciate the help. But it is almost academic as well. I think it is more important to know just what the machine can do, not why it is doing it."

"It can do *anything* it wants aboard this satellite. It controls every function, every operation. If it wanted it could shut off our air, poison our food, destroy us in a hundred different ways."

"But it hasn't?"

"No. And that is most interesting. It has sealed the major airlocks and will allow no one in or out. It has cut off our radio communication. But other than that it has made no attempt to harm us. Though, of course, it has defended itself by killing those who were sent against it."

"Aren't you forgetting the landing shuttle that it wiped out?"

"I meant since that time. There was, perhaps, a good reason for destroying the shuttle." He looked around nervously. I leaned close and lowered my voice.

"You wouldn't care to expand on that point, would you, doctor?"

"Again, just a theory. The three senior officers in command of this satellite were on that shuttle. If the computer wished to take charge that would certainly be a good way to start."

"It would indeed," I said, my brain whirling with thoughts. Pieces were beginning to fall into place. "Now, if you don't mind, Dr. Putz, I am a little tired after my adventurous journey here. I intend to lie down and study these plans and will confer with you all in eight hours time. Will you please convey that message to your associates? Thank you."

I spun on my heel and exited. Corona was waiting by the door.

"We'll meet here in eight hours. I'll have a plan by then and I'll let you know what I need. All right?"

"You're the boss," he said, shambling off, then calling back over his shoulder. "Plenty of empty transit passenger cabins on M deck if you want to shut your eyes while you are making your plans."

"Just what I had in mind." I picked up my spacesuit and the rest of my equipment and headed for the elevators. I punched for M deck, exited there — and went straight to the emergency stairs.

"Well done, Jim," I congratulated myself, since no one else was there to do this job. Nor did I want anyone there at this moment. "As Dr. Putz said, this computer is a smarty. It must be eavesdropping on everything said in the public rooms."

It might also be eavesdropping on me in the stairwell I realized. And shut up. It should have a hard job listening to my thoughts. Corona had revealed that all of the previous attempts on the computer had been known by him. So they must have been discussed, planned in public. And been overheard. Well, that wasn't going to happen to Slippery Jim diGriz, not for nothing named Slippery! I had slipped away, the computer would not be expecting an assault yet. By the time it woke up to what was happening I would have put it to sleep forever. But how?

I SAT DOWN ON THE METAL STAIRS and flipped through the deck plans. The central computer was located, as you might very well imagine, in the center of the satellite. Which was ideal for the computer, but not so good for anyone trying to sneak up on it. I traced the various courses the other hopefuls had taken. All very imaginative. And all ending in the same way. And all complex. There had to be simple and quick way to get near the thing. But there wasn't. Instead of all the doors, hatches, floors and entrances, I wanted to get directly to it. Bore a hole straight down with a super laser? Good idea. Only I didn't have a super laser. I started to throw the plans aside — then pulled them back when something caught my eye. Of course! The hole was already there!

Drilled right through the satellite. From top to bottom. Passing right by the computer room. I permitted myself a chuckle of admiration and pleasure. You're a bright boy, Jim! I traced the opening with my finger.

The elevator shaft.

Nor would I make any attempt to reach the computer by elevator. That would be suicide. It was the shaft alone that I wanted. The magnetized boots on my spacesuit would get me there. To think is to act. Fast and smooth, that's the Stainless Steel Rat's motto.

I pulled on the spacesuit, checked my equipment, then went down the stairs to the lowest deck. The deckplans came in handy then because this was a machinery level. I slipped between the humming generators and clattering machines, working my way towards the bottom of elevator shaft 19. It was there, right where it was indicated on the diagram, with its number painted directly over the inspection hatch. All going according to plan!

I unclipped the hatch and lowered it gently to the deck, then poked my head through. Darkness. My light flashed up the shaft and I was aware of the bottom of the elevator far above. The way was clear to computer central. I did not stand around pondering the dangers, but went instantly into action — climbing inside and raising my boot and pressing it against the wall where it clung to the steel with magnetic cohesion. The gravity here was oriented towards the base of the shaft which made it difficult. But not impossible. I hung head downwards from the boots, uncomfortable but necessary. I switched off the current in the bottom boot and shifted it above the other. Current on, magnetized, stuck there. Then the other boot, repeating the process over and over.

And slowly, one clumsy step at a time I rose up the shaft.

It was hard work and tiring work. I was perhaps halfway there and panting loudly when I had to rest. I hung from the boots, gasping in air — when I heard it. A humming sound. What did it mean? With sudden and horrified realization I pointed my light upwards.

The computer had detected my presence in the shaft.

It was sending the elevator down to crush me!

I permitted myself one instant of panic, to promote the flow of adrenalin, then clamped down hard with my mental control. No panic, Jim! You've been in tight spots before. Think — don't react blindly.

I couldn't retreat and reach the bottom

of the shaft in time. I would be crushed if I tried. Could I force open one of the doors and get out at a different level? An unknown; I had no time to make experiments. So if I couldn't go down, or out the side — there was only one direction left. Up! I would have to tackle the elevator itself!

Which was easier said than done. Everything depended upon perfect timing rather than on speed. No panic, Jim. You know what must be done. My mind was calm as I leaned back and coolly examined the bottom of the dropping elevator. Closer now. Power off on my left boot, that's it. Hang backwards from the other boot and raise the left one over my head. The elevator dropped, appearing to go faster and faster. Right on top of me....

It was bang, crunch — and it almost killed me. As the metal bottom of the elevator hit my upraised boot I magnetized it and turned off the other one. My knee buckled at the impact and I slammed against the bottom of the elevator — then dropped back to hang, dazed, from the single boot.

There was no time for this kind of suicidal behavior. Despite my muddled head I raised by other boot; it clamped tight. Then I bent at the waist, my hand with the thermal lance outstretched. The intensely hot flame roared out, slicing through the steel floor like butter. I moved it in a quick circle, trying to forget the bottom of the shaft that was rushing towards me.

THERE WAS A CREAK OF METAL and I pulled aside just as the circle of metal flooring dropped free and fell. Now! I let go of the thermal lance, ignoring the bash it gave me in the face as it swung from its safety line about my wrist. Reaching up and seizing the metal edge of the hole in my gloves. Switching off my boots at the same instant.

For an endless moment I dangled in the shaft. Then, with a single spasmodic contraction of my muscles, I hauled myself up and into the elevator.

Just as it hit the bottom of the shaft.

I just sat there for a few moments after that. Breathing deeply — and enjoying the fact that I was still breathing. Looking down at the buffers and the floor of the shaft just below the opening in the floor. I would have been squashed like a beetle in another second. That didn't bear thinking about.

"On your feet, James!" I ordered. "No rusty collection of silicon chips is going to out-think you. Act! Now! While the thing is still off its guard. You are but moments away from victory!"

I acted. Pressing the button that sent the elevator back up the shaft. Would it work? It did. The computer was not in command for the moment. I tore open the door of the control panel and counted the floors as we rose. Just a few more ... there!

A blast from the thermal lance fused the controls and the elevator shuddered to a stop. Even as it did this I was pushing open the hatch in the roof and climbing out. The door to the computer room was just before me!

I did not waste time with delicacies. I simply burned off the door hangers and kicked the thing down. And dived behind it into the room, the lance still flaring, ready for anything.

It was anticlimax. The room-sized computer just chuckled to itself. Some memory discs whirred; lights flashed on and off in interesting patterns. It appeared to be completely unaware of my presence. I straightened up and turned off the flame.

I HAD PENETRATED TO THE CENTER of its brain. It had no receptors here. Perhaps. I was still wary. I walked forward cautiously — then stopped when I saw the small metal box of circuitry in the center of the floor. A single red light glowed on its top. A large cable emerged from its side and squirmed across the floor to vanish into the computer. I neared forward cautiously and unplugged the cable. The red light went out. I lifted the box and bounced it in my hand.

"I thought it might be something like this," I said aloud. "End of the insane computer." I walked to the control console and pushed down on the access key.

"Yes?" the calm, mechanical voice of the Mark 2500 said.

"You have sealed all of the airlocks?"

"Yes. I was issued overriding instructions."

"Cease this operation at once. And cancel any other abnormal instructions. Understand?"

"This operation is already completed. Normal operation resumed.

"Very good." I climbed out of my spacesuit. "Send out an announcement for all persons aboard the satellite to assemble in the rec room now."

I took the little metal box, but left all of my equipment, except for my pistol, then started towards the hall with the announcement booming in my ears from every loudspeaker I passed. The technician, Corona, was waiting outside the hall when I came up, his eyebrows lifted inquisitively.

"Are they inside?" I asked. He nodded. "Good," I said, handing him my pistol. "As far as I know this is the only weapon aboard the satellite. Stop by the door and cover me. I may need help. Do you know how to use this thing?"

"You bet! You can count on me."

"Good," I said, entering the hall, my flank protected. I faced the murmuring crowd that was jammed in there and raised my hands for silence. "It's all over," I told them. "The danger is at an end."

"You've disconnected the insane computer?" Trina asked...awestruck?

"No," I responded sweetly, "I just disconnected this." I held up the metal box for them all to see. "Computers can't go crazy because they are not sane to begin with. They are not human. But they can be programmed to appear insane — which is what happened here. With this."

THERE WAS A UNIVERSAL GASP, and Trina spoke the thought that possessed them all.

"Programmed? Someone caused all this. But who...?"

"Why not you?" I asked sweetly. "Your boss died in the crash of the shuttle. Perhaps you caused the crash in order to get his job. I looked at your personal record. You're very ambitious..."

"I'm also mechanically illiterate!" she snapped back. "Didn't you see that in my records? I'm an administrator, not an electrician. I couldn't possibly have designed or built that thing."

"True, true," I muttered, then spun on my heel and held the control box in front of Commander Stark's face. "But the commander here is no electronic dummy. His boss also died in the crash. You did it, Stark, to get his job!"

"Are you out of your teeny-tiny?" Stark sneered. "If you had looked at my file you would have seen that I volunteered for early retirement. I should have been home by now. The last thing I want is a better position. I just want out."

"Then we have the killer!" I shouted, pointing to the cowering Dr. Putz. "The assistant science officer, so jealous of his superior that he killed him. Then tried to palm me off with a dumb story about how a computer could go mad. He, a scientist, should have known better than to try and sell me that bill of goods. But he knew that someone had programmed the computer to appear to be mad. Himself!"

"You accuse me!" Putz screamed. "I know nothing about machines or computers! I am a geologist! Sent here as an emergency replacement. All I know is how to hit rocks with little hammers."

"Then," I said, jaw dropping more than a little, "if none of you did it — who did? Who had the technical knowledge for this job? Who knew the plans of the other rescuers, knew their every move so that he could thwart them..?"

I turned about as I said this — and looked into the muzzle of my own gun.

"That's right, you fool!" Corona sneered, the light of madness now visible in those piglike eyes. "I did it! Me, the one they laughed at, gave orders to! Well they aren't laughing or giving orders any more. I showed them...."

"Give me that gun," I said, stepping forwards as the others quailed back.

"Take it!" he screamed. And pulled the trigger.

THEN LOOKED DOWN AT THE GUN, pulling the trigger over and over again when nothing happened. My fist caught him hard on the jaw and he slumped to the deck, unconscious. I bent and picked up the gun — and smiled.

"Unloaded," I told the gaping audience. "I was sure from the very beginning that someone had programmed the computer to do all this dirty work. And whoever did that programming had to still be aboard the satellite. Therefore, since you were all under suspicion, I could take no one into my confidence. Hence the accusations — and the unloaded gun. Corona seemed the obvious suspect, but I just wanted him to prove it himself."

A ragged cheer began, raising quickly in volume. I smiled and bowed acceptance. Accepting as well the impassioned kisses of the ravishing redhead Trina. All this and two million credits too! ■■

Science for Science Fiction

by John Boardman, Ph.D.

Perennial Corn?

Maize, called by America's first European settlers "Indian corn," and now simply "corn," is America's biggest grain crop. It is extremely efficient at converting solar energy into food, as the Indians knew long before the Europeans landed. They had developed so many different domestic varieties that it was only recently that the wild ancestor was definitely identified: the Mexican grain *Zea diploperennis*.

There is, however, one major difference between *Zea* and domestic corn. *Zea* is a perennial, and yields a crop a year. Corn is an annual; after the stalk has produced its ears in the fall, it dies. Corn has to be planted afresh every spring. Nowadays farmers cannot even save any corn for seed, since almost all farmers plant hybrid varieties that do not breed true. New seed corn must be purchased each spring from the breeders of the hybrids.

There is a possibility, however, that a perennial corn can be developed. This, if feasible, would work a profound change upon American agriculture, which now plants 70 million acres in corn each year, for a total crop of nearly 7 billion bushels. If domestic corn can be crossed with *Zea* to produce a plant that is a perennial like *Zea* but yields as much as corn, then great amounts of time, money, and fuel can be saved. The fuel alone, which is used in plowing and sowing corn, amounts to 2½ gallons per acre per year.

Since *Zea* is a plant of the tropics, there is a suspicion that it or a corn-*Zea* hybrid might not adapt so well to the icy winters of the upper Midwest. If so, then the hybrid might be more useful in the tropics, large areas of which have not yet been brought under cultivation so efficiently. But *Zea* seems to do well in the cold Mexican uplands.

Considering the world's need for both food and fuel, plant geneticists have been handed a real challenge.

New Scientist, 8 January 1981

Solar System Maps

We have recently discovered that it is possible to acquire rather attractive maps of the moon and planets from the US Geological Survey. You can request a catalog of lunar and planetary maps from them (see address below); we provide a brief description of a few maps, their order numbers, and the price here. Orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable to US Geological Survey in US funds; a surcharge of 25% is added for orders outside the US, Canada, and Mexico.

I-1083 Geologic Map of Mars: A very attractive four-color map of Mars divided into geological provinces. Scale 1:25 million, 38" × 48". $1.50

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I-961 Topographic Map of Mars: Drabber than I-1083 above, this shows topography and albedo markings rather than geologic provinces. 36" × 42". $1.50

I-903 Reference Mosaic of Mercury: Composite photography of the third of Mercury's surface photographed to date. Scale 1:10 million, 23" x 26", $1.25

I-1171 Mercury: Relief and Albedo Markings Visible on Mariner 10 Images: A map of the part of the Mercurian surface which we have observed, with the various craters and terrain features named and labelled. $2

I-1239, I-1240, I-1241, I-1242 Preliminary Pictorial Map of Callisto, Preliminary Pictorial Map of Io, Preliminary Pictorial Map of Europa, Pictorial Preliminary Map of Ganymede: These are maps of the listed areas of the Jovian moons which were photographed by Voyagers 1 and 2. The differences among the four are quite remarkable. The few named features are labelled. Scale is 1:25 million. $1.75 each. (Black and white.)

East of the Mississippi, write:

US Geological Survey
Branch of Distribution/Eastern Region
1200 South Eads St.
Arlington, VA, 22202

West of the Mississippi, write:

US Geological Survey
Branch of Distribution/Central Region
Box 25286, Federal Center
Denver, CO, 80225

Note: SPI does not carry planetary maps. Please do not write us with any requests.

Greg Costikyan

The Great Explosion?

Most astronomers are convinced that the greatest explosive event that can occur presently is a supernova. As the final stage in the life of a large star, in a few days the star can be completely ripped apart and its matter and energy strewn out into the universe in a titanic explosion. A typical supernova, during this explosion, puts out as much energy as the other 100 billion stars in the galaxy together.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater explosion than this, except for the "Big Bang" from which the universe originated some 15 to 20 billion years ago. However, there is some indirect evidence indicating that on very rare occasions an explosion can take place that releases even more energy than a supernova.

This evidence began to accumulate over a hundred years ago, when the American astronomer Benjamin A. Gould (1824–1896) pointed out that there is an interesting array of bright young stars in this part of the galaxy. This group, called "Gould's belt," includes most of the bright stars that we see in the night sky. They are mostly hot, bright, blue-white giant stars which are using up their fuel much faster than our sun does and can therefore be expected to have shorter lifetimes.

Gould's belt consists of a system of stars with a diameter of 4200 light years and a thickness of 600 light years, whose center is about 300 light years away in the direction of the southern constellation Puppis. (The Solar System is thus within Gould's belt, but is not a part of it, being very much older.) The equatorial plane of this flattened disc of stars makes an angle of about 20° with the plane of the galaxy. The youngest stars in this aggregation seem to be closest to its center; the oldest stars in Gould's belt are about 60 million years old. The belt is expanding at a rate of about 10 kilometers per second.

Not only is the sun near the center of Gould's belt, but it is also near the center of a slowly expanding ring of hydrogen gas which was discovered in 1972 by the Canadian astrophysicists V.A. Hughes and D. Rutledge. This belt of gas is an ellipse whose center is about 900 light years away, and whose longest diameter is about 4200 light years. It is expanding at the rate of 6 kilometers per second. Interstellar dust seems to be distributed in a comparable pattern.

If the current expansions of these systems of stars, gas, and dust are traced back, it appears that they began, not far from the sun, about 65 million years ago. If this explosion is the result of an ancient explosion, it would have sent great shock waves through interstellar matter. Such shock waves would concentrate this matter in some places, and the greater gravitational attraction of these concentrations would pull in yet more matter. Eventually new stars would be formed — the stars of Gould's belt.

Nothing else is known in our galaxy comparable to Gould's belt. However, such rings of expanding matter are found in other galaxies. Around their rims are supernova remnants, suggesting that these explosions might have been triggered by the much greater explosion that created the ring of expanding matter.

While astonomers are investigating the remnants of a catastrophic explosion that happened about 65 million years ago, paleontologists have been looking for just such a catastrophe. It was about 65 million years ago that a great and sudden change took place in the earth's flora and fauna. Entire orders of animals, from microscopic forms of ocean life up to the dinosaurs, were wiped out in, by geological standards, a very short time. The evidence suggests a sudden lowering of earth's temperature, but far too short a period of time to bring on an ice age. A short spate of heavy radiation from a nearby astronomical catastrophe could have brought this about. Land plants could have survived as seeds. Insects and creatures which eat them would survive because insects can survive anything. Birds could forage over large distances for such food as might be available. But the dinosaurs and pleisiosaurs at the top of the food chain would have been doomed.

Monsters in the Sky, Paolo Maffei, 1976

Facts for Fantasy

by Susan Shwartz, Ph.D.

Charlemagne's Daughters

Though Charlemagne sent his sons away from the palace in order to train them for independent action as royal administrators, he kept his daughters close by his side. He refused to allow them to marry, but tolerated their love affairs and illegitimate children rather than lose their companionship. Whenever he sat down to eat in any of his palaces, he never took a meal without them. Historians of Charlemagne's court record that at such dinners, Charlemagne's three favorite daughters — Berta, Rotrud, and Gisla — were characteristically present. Only afterward does he mention Liurgard, the queen, and his other daughters.

While his boys were brought up austerely, too valuable to be treated like toys, the daughters were encouraged to dress as elaborately as they liked. Theodrada, another daughter, is described as wearing precious stones on her feet, hands, seams of her dress, her temples, and her breasts. Nor was this splendor for some major court ceremony, for Theodrada displayed her jewelry at a hunt.

The Carolingian Empire, by Heinrich Fichtenau, Harper Torchbooks, 1964

Romans of the New World

This was the name that the historian Francis Parkman gave to the Iroquois Indians. No group of Indians in the American Northeast affected the developing colonies of Europeans more. With Dutch and English-made firearms that the Iroquois acquired in the 17th Century, an alliance of five Iroquois tribes went east into the maritime provinces of Canada and west as far as the Illinois River. They crushed many of their traditional Algonkian-speaking enemies and took under subjection even some Iroquois-speakers who did not belong to their league. Since the Algonkians allied with the French in Canada, the Iroquois allied with the English. They fought on both sides during the War of Independence.

How did they accomplish so much, and who were these Iroquois who had such a profound effect on this country? Originally, they may have come from Cherokee country in Georgia and the Carolinas, or down from the north. In actuality, however, they developed just where the first colonists met them — primarily in upstate New York.

The Iroquois stressed community. In their own villages stood longhouses which could be 25 feet wide and 50 to 100 feet long. These frameworks of saplings, covered with sheets of bark, were subdivided into apartments that were occupied by closely related families. Running down the center of such longhouses were shared fireplaces. Each of the five tribes (who were joined by the Tuscaroras, as "younger brothers" and semi-clients) controlled two or more such villages. The village affairs were supervised by a local council. Above this council was a tribal council which met in the largest villages. These tribes were banded together in the "Great League of Peace," the confederacy which was governed by a council of fifty sachems who represented all the tribes. These men were elected by the clan mothers, who could not themselves sit on the council but who could recall representatives they considered unsuitable.

In central position and keepers of the league's fire, as their name implied, were the Onondagas. The four principal tribes in the League were the Cayugas, the Oneidas, the Senecas, and the Mohawks. At the beginning of the 18th Century, Iroquois territory extended from southern Ontario to Tennessee.

It is said that their League, with their elected sachems, had an effect on the American Articles of Confederation and the subsequent Constitution. It is certain the Iroquois had a profound respect for General — later President — Washington, of whom they created the myth that their gods established one particular paradise just for Washington alone.

League of the Iroquois, Francis Parkman; "The Iroquois Confederacy," *New World Archeology*, James A. Tuck, W.H. Freeman and Co., 1974

Fire Worship

Before the ancient Iranians considered fire a symbol of the supreme god, it was worshipped for its own sake. This fire-cult was probably one in which all Indo-European people participated. Some of its participants — called Mazdaists — were called *ateshperest*, or fire-worshippers. A title only accorded a few of the princes of Parthia was *fratakara* or fire-maker. Among the magi, or wizards, the *herbedh* or fire-chiefs were eminent. Two fire altars survive until this day, while many *atesh-gah* or places of fire, are preserved in many places.

No matter how highly developed pre-Muslim Iranian religion became, it retained a basic allegiance to fire, with the result that all Iranian rituals stress the glorification of light and how pure it is.

One expression of this belief takes the form of the myth of Atar (fire) within Brahmanism. While Atar is represented as the sun of Ahura Mazda, supreme god of the Iranians, we can suspect that this "son" precedes the father in mythic belief. Also, he is more than mere flame. As a personification, he brings mankind comfort and the way to live, in addition to wisdom, fertility and a paradise reserved for those who are virtuous. He defends the worlds against the principles of the Evil One. For Atar, the unforgivable sin is to cook dead flesh, which insults the Life Principle.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology

Sea-Sickness

Among many African tribes the king was also the high priest, with many rituals binding his life. For example, among the Ewe-speaking people of the slave coasts, the king was held to be unapproachable by his subjects. He was allowed out of his dwelling to bathe or to do other things only at night. The sole people who might speak with him were three elders and his personal representative, the "visible king," but even they had to sit on oxhide with their backs turned to him. He could not see horses or Europeans, and he was strictly forbidden to look upon the sea.

This prohibition is widespread. The king of Dahomey may not look out at the sea, nor may the Guinean kings of Loango and Great Ardra. To the northwest of Dahomey, Eyeo priests threaten the people and the king with death if they ever see it. In Senegal, the people of Cayor believe that if their king looks upon the sea, he will die within a year. He may not even cross a river (the chiefs of Mashonaland, particularly among the Rurikwi and the Nyadiri also suffer this stricture). When one chief had to cross the river, he was blindfolded and carried across as his people shouted and sang. Had he merely walked across, he would have — they said — been blinded or died. Certainly, he would have lost his power. In Madagascar too, the kings may not cross rivers or sail.

The Golden Bough, Sir J.G. Frazer, MacMillan, 1969

Siva

The Indian god Siva is the head of an ascetic religion. He is called an Isvara, a Lord and Master. While he wears the cord of the high Brahman caste, Siva is also the patron of people without status — vampires and demons. He is also in charge of ascetics who have repudiated all the classes of the world. The Jains called Siva *digambara*, or "clothed with space." Though he is described as naked, sometimes he wears a necklace of skulls.

Hindu art gives Siva (or Shiva) many different aspects. When it anthropomorphizes him, he appears with four arms. The two upper arms hold a drum and a doe; the two lower ones give and reassure. His forehead is sometimes marked with three stripes, and a third eye lies in its center. His hair is sometimes tangled and sometimes knotted into the ascetic's hairdress, and is decorated with a crescent moon and a trident. He rides on the bull Nandi.

Siva is a godly paradox. He destroys like time, yet is also merciful. While personally indifferent to pleasures, he is worshipped as the male generative principle. In Siva we can see the Buddhist and Hindu principle that the same thing must underlie good and evil, wretchedness and salvation. Sivaism destroys illusions and attempts to teach its followers to enter *lila*, the great game of life and joy. In this aspect, Siva is sometimes portrayed as Nataraja, lord of the dance.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology

Film & Television

OUTLAND

Executive Producer: Stanley O'Toole
Producer: Richard A. Roth
Director: Peter Hyams
Screenplay: Peter Hyams
Music: Jerry Goldsmith

Cast

Sean Connery	O'Neil
Peter Boyle	Sheppard
Frances Sternhagen	Lazarus
James B. Sikking	Montone

With each new movie writer/director Peter Hyams seems to get a little bit better. His latest production, *Outland,* seems to fit in nicely. Better than all of his other films, lacking many of his past mistakes, this new science fiction release, which seems to be basically *High Noon on Jupiter,* is a good, solid piece of summer fare. It is well worth a viewing, and is actually even better a second time.

Outland takes place on Io, a volcanic moon of Jupiter. Here, the Con-Am Corporation maintains a titanium mining operation. Everyone working there signs up for one-year shifts, unless they die on duty. The problem is that more and more people seem to be dying each month

This fact upsets the mining operation's security marshal, O'Neil (Sean Connery), who decides to find out why the mortality rate is rising. Everyone on Io merely shrugs at the question of the deaths, answering that "people get like that here. Some guys just can't take it." The answer is not good enough for O'Neil.

Below the surface of Connery's character, we discover a complex set of motivations. He has begun to believe that he is among those who can't take it. Assigned from one company operation to another, each tour worse than one before it, he loses his son and his wife, and seems to be losing his future. He is a man without allies, without friends. Connery's subdued, quiet performance reveals a man who has come to the end of the line. Older and unsure of himself though he may be, he does decide to make a stand.

On the surface, *Outland* is a story of drug abuse, corporate greed and insensitivity, and typical John Waynian western-film righteousness. Below the obvious, however, the film explores the terrors of identity loss, mechanization, and dehumanization.

In his last five films Connery has left behind the Bond image for good, revealing an ever increasing range as a dramatic actor. Here he plays a character who is far more vulnerable than any other in his past experience. O'Neil's triumph at the film's end is made more dramatic simply because we know he isn't invincible. He is human; he bleeds, makes mistakes, is reckless, gets tired, is insensitive (at times), and can't even play a very good game of racquet ball.

He is, at the same time, courageous, loyal, honest and strong. He is strong in a physical sense, of course, but what garners him the audience's respect is his strength of character. He could easily do his job, serve out his year, and get a better tour of duty somewhere else merely by keeping his mouth shut and not making waves. But he is willing to buck the corrupt status quo, and he fights for what he thinks is right. His morality is outmoded. The company does not want him to stop the drug flow into Io. The workers who are dying from the drugs don't want their flow interrupted. Still, O'Neil acts because he knows what is happening is wrong. He is a hero because he goes up against overwhelming odds, knowing that he is probably going to lose. He must make the attempt, though, because he knows no other way to act and because, by that point, the only thing he has left is his honor; he refuses to let his integrity slide away from him the way the rest of his life has.

Besides the intricate workings of O'Neil's character, however, the film has plenty to offer those who aren't primarily concerned with the people in their science fiction films. *Outland* contains a wealth of impressive special effects. Jupiter is perfect. Looming in the background, it is exactly represented down to its newly discovered ring. Io, however, is the film's true masterpiece. The Con-Am 27 mining operation is one of the most exactingly detail-perfect miniatures ever built for an American film. More impressive than the exterior of the mining operation, though, are the extensive sets which make up its insides. As Hyams envisioned it, there are no ray guns, lucite domes, conveyor belts or perma-pressed jump suits in evidence. Living space is at a premium, forcing the workers to herd into small functional units, which after a while begin to take on an almost penitentiary atmosphere.

Hyams explained: "The mining colony is a location, not a subject. A frontier is a hard, gritty, unpleasant place to be, and the people building it are always looking over their shoulders rather than ahead. Trying to stay alive and putting up with hell while making some quick, big money is the kind of commercial venture Con-Am #27 is involved in."

Hyams' vision is complete. The workers' areas are tight and unfrilled. Their quarters, dominated by the bunk area, are nothing more than layers of metallic, horizontal cages, one row piled atop the other, resembling pet store animal cubicles. (The design called for the beds to be made of thermal foam so they could be hosed down.) It is like living in an aircraft carrier-sized submarine, one which never surfaces to see the sun.

The layout of the mining operation is designed functionally and logically. The worker's private quarters have no extras, no luxuries. Only the general manager (Peter Boyle) has space to breath. Even though the marshal has some extra room in his quarters, it is the general manager who is the king.

It is just this type of difference which is played upon throughout the film. The manager has casual clothing, a large, comfort-filled office, money, whores and power. The marshal has a uniform, small quarters, low pay, a run-away wife, and middle age insecurities. Everything on the surface of these two characters points to the general manager as being the better off of the two, which is why one has to look beneath the surface to examine their inner qualities to find the cowardice of corruption on the one hand and the strength of integrity on the other. In an age of the anti-hero, it is delightful to see a film hero torn with indecision and yet willing to take a moral stand and fight for what is right.

Despite the introspective nature of the sub-plots, *Outland* is not a slow-moving film by any means. The action is constant; the thrills and surprises are many. Despite its science fiction setting, *Outland*, like *Alien*, is really a mainstream film. *Alien* was a horror film; *Outland* a western. This is not a complaint, however.

Like science fiction literature, science fiction films have a tendency to rely on the typical simplistic hardware and conventions of the genre, rather than mold real characters with convincing motivations. This depth of character has always been left for the mainstream film makers. Now that science fiction and fantasy are becoming more and more a part of the mainstream, however, the audiences are demanding greater respect for the characters' emotional levels, and intelligence from the filmmakers.

Outland is a good movie, and not just for science fiction fans. Its success will undoubtedly inspire a few tired, low-grade imitations. Hopefully, it will inspire a few more solid, interesting and entertaining films as well.

Christopher John.

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

Producer: Larry Franco & Debra Hill
Director: John Carpenter
Screenplay: John Carpenter & Nick Castle
Music: John Carpenter (in association with Alan Howarth)

Cast

Kurt Russell	Snake Plissken
Lee Van Cleef	Bob Hauk
Ernest Borgnine	Cabbie
Donald Pleasance	President of the US
Isaac Hayes	The Duke of New York
Season Hubley	Chock Full O'Nuts Girl
Harry Dean Stanton	"Brain"
Adrienne Barbeau	Maggie

After the success of the small-budget horror film, *Halloween*, everyone keenly awaited to see what director John Carpenter would do next. When the movie, *The Fog* came out, cries were raised that Carpenter's career was over; those of little faith announced that he was a one-trick director who had already shot his bolt. These people had obviously forgotten his earlier works, such as *Assault on Precinct 13*, and *Elvis*. They must have also been extremely surprised when his newest film *Escape from New York* was released.

Escape takes place in 1997, a time when the island of Manhattan has been turned into a penal colony. Escape from this maximum security prison is impossible; the tunnels have been sealed and the bridges mined and walled. The Statue of Liberty has become a guard tower from which infra-red goggled officers can blast escaping prisoners on sight. Radar and rocket-firing helicopters track the island constantly, forcing the three million criminals inside to prey on each other for survival.

Into the decaying remains of New York is sent Snake Plissken; his mission is to rescue the President of the United States after Air Force One is sabotaged and purposely crashed in the center of the island. The President is carrying a tape cassette crucial to the survival of world peace (there has already been at least one more World War). The catch is that the tape must be presented to the Russians and Chinese at a summit conference within 24 hours, or the threat of another World War is almost certain. Plissken, both a war hero and a famous master criminal (everyone who comes across him in New York greets him with: "Snake Plissken. I thought you were dead.") is offered amnesty if he can go in, rescue the President, and bring both him and the tape out safely, inside of the 24-hour time limit. To insure his continued co-operation, two microscopic explosives are implanted in Snake's main arteries which will kill him instantly if they are allowed to detonate.

The film is fast-paced and logically developed. Snake invades New York by glider, landing atop the World Trade Center. From then on, his next 22 hours are a hell of sewers, fights, and back-alley chases. Surrounded by rats, cannibals, and three million hardened criminals, he struggles to save the President and win his freedom.

Escape is Carpenter's best work to date, much more entertaining than *The Fog*. He has taken the old "one-man-might-succeed-where-an-army-couldn't" storyline and has decorated it with a fine cast and an extremely well thought out collection of sets and locations. (Most of the film was not shot in New York, but no one would ever be able to tell.) He has produced one of the best straight out action/adventure films of the summer.

Carpenter's vision of New York is a bleak, fire-lit one, the entire film taking place either at night, or inside poorly illuminated buildings. Very few sets were actually constructed for the film, although those which were are incredibly believable and elaborate. The central control center for the United States Police Force is more than the usual display of flashing lights and computers. Working video monitors offering three-dimensional readouts adorn the headquarters, and other recognizable bits of hard and software blend together to give the center a solid, functional look. By not setting the story too far in the future, Carpenter's presentation of things to come feels more believable simply through the high recognition values of known sights in the city. Coupled with the sets which make up the massive wall supposedly surrounding New York, Carpenter lulls one's disbelief in a rather outrageous plot situation.

Escape is not a special effects picture, however. Its main concern is with the people involved. Relying on a number of performers he has used before, Carpenter creates a realistic interplay among his characters. As usual, his bit players are a trifle too wooden, but they are on and off the screen quickly, doing little damage to the flow of the picture. For instance, in the opening sequences, there are a number of dully delivered lines from some of the secondary actors. Such moments are forgotten, however, when Kurt Russell and Lee Van Cleef exchange their pointed witticisms and ripostes. Carpenter has a talent for showcasing his stars which shines throughout *Escape*.

Another talent Carpenter has in abundance is his ability to inject humor into a dark situation without breaking the pace of his film. It worked well in *Halloween*; it works even better in *Escape*. The continuing "I thought you were dead" routines and the character of Cabbie (Ernest Borgnine) show Carpenter's ease with, and yet tight control over, humorous elements. Both of these running bits are used carefully through the picture and offer a necessary change of pace, as any good bit of continuing humor should do in a serious drama.

Of course, like any picture of this kind, *Escape from New York* is not a classic. It is solid summer entertainment of unusually high caliber. By not pretending to be more than it is, but by also not settling for any *less* than it could be, *Escape* becomes an exciting, fast-moving drama, the likes of which we haven't seen in years. Using a new, imaginative setting for what seemed to be a tired plot line, Carpenter has presented us with one of the better films of the summer.

Christopher John

DRAGONSLAYER

Producer: Hal Barwood
Director: Matthew Robbins
Screenplay: Hal Barwood & Matthew Robbins
Music: Alex North
Special Effects Supervisor (British): Brian Johnson

Cast

Peter MacNicol	Galen
Caitlin Clarke	Valerian
Ralph Richardson	Ulrich
John Hallam	Tyrian
Albert Salmi	Greil
Peter Eyre	Casiodorus Rex

After the death knell rang following the release of the simply dismal *Clash of the Titans*, few people expected much from the upcoming Paramount Pictures/Walt Disney production of *Dragonslayer*. Most moviegoers felt *Clash* would prove that stop-frame animation would look spectacular on the big screen and using the newer color film stocks. If anyone could pull off such a feat, they assumed, it would be master stop-frame technician Ray Harryhausen. Unfortunately, he couldn't, and *Clash* went down the drain. Thus, the feeling arose that *Dragonslayer's* dragon would prove to be a fairly mawkish creature.

Luckily, such is not the case. There is no doubt that *Dragonslayer* is destined to be a genre classic; it may be the best giant monster movie made by an American company. (With *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Dragonslayer* proving so popular, Paramount Pictures should be feeling quite comfortable by the end of the year.)

The film starts at Castle Cragganmore, the home of the world's last enchanter, Ulrich. A delegation of peasants has come to beg his aid in ridding their land of a dragon which has settled in their midst.

The dragon's rage is mollified twice yearly by an offering of young virgins. The victims are chosen by lottery and left chained in a prescribed ritual for the dragon to devour. Those who live in the kingdom are tired of sacrficing their daughters. The problem is that there is no sure way of eradicating the monster. Warriors tried in the past, losing their lives and provoking the beast to massive retaliations.

Some villagers feel that Ulrich can stop the dragon and are willing to take the chance. The king, however, does not care to rouse the beast. While the delegation is with Ulrich, the king's man, Tyrian, appears and slays the ancient wizard. The enchanter's apprentice, Galen, offers to slay the dragon in his master's stead, and leaves with the villagers; during their trek Tyrian slays the boy's servant as a last warning to stay away.

Galen refuses to listen. Armed with Ulrich's most powerful amulet, he attacks the monster's lair, burying it beneath an entire mountain. He is celebrated as a hero, but it turns out he has not slain the dragon. It bursts from its lair and wreaks havoc across the countryside, forcing Galen to face it again, and yet one last time.

There is much more to the story than this, but it would be unfair to reveal it. Barwood and Robbins have taken a simple story line, and added a number of inventive, interesting twists and surprises which would be ruined if mentioned here. There is a lady for Galen, a secret to Ulrich's death, and many surprises, but the most important thing in the film is Vermithrax Pejorative, the dragon.

Vermithrax, a 40-foot, two-ton giant with a 90-foot wingspan, was responsible by itself for a quarter of the film's 16 million dollar budget. Britain's Brian Johnson,

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Media

Curse of the Coaxial Cable Creature

The word *television* no longer implies mere commercial pap, as it did a decade ago. Computer links, video games, and cable-movie channels have broadened the medium, bringing it closer to the limits such a tool might have originally inspired. But this diversification brings with it a slightly Orwellian odor — the idea behind it all seems to be to keep you at home, in front of that little, glowing screen...as much as possible

The fad of home-subscription movie channels — perhaps the largest point of contention in the recent Writer's Guild strike against film studios — offers filmmaking, as an art, both life and death. Before an exploration of this paradox, though, a brief aside on the nature of art and audiences:

One factor in the recent deterioration of the movie-going experience (that is, seeing a film in a theatre) is the brace of viewing habits ingrained by watching television that many audiences bring into the theatre, in effect, playing one game by the rules of another. The incomprehensibility of many current films to many current audiences is, in many cases, due not to the density of a film, but to the Cyclopean TV eyeball audiences insist on retaining as an esthetic filter once inside the theatre. Commercial TV asks little attention in return for its endlessly recycled melodramas and cliched comedies, because selling products is its central interest. The result, as Pauline Kael pointed out, is that TV babes have an attention span the length of an average commercial, and since all those 60-second messages are identical (and equally ignorable) it never occurs to a TV viewer that one given minute may be more important than another one. While the sponge method works peachy for something as non-demanding as TV, the audience befuddlement that greets any film more cerebrally complex than *Chainsaw Cheerleaders* proves that it is not the road to fulfillment inside a theatre. Movies are not merely "big TV," and therein lies the loophole that makes cable movie services something less than wonderful.

A prime selling point for cable-movie vendors is the operative word *uncut*. Despite contractual clauses guaranteeing for directors editing rights for commercial TV on their own films, the results are nonetheless horrifying. Networks may legally chop out entire sections of a film, rearrange the remaining bits, loop in altered dialogue and salt the resulting Frankensteinian mess with up to 28 commercials per hour. Those who wait to see theatrical movies "for free" on commercial TV ultimately pay up in a far more mind-numbing coinage.

Uncut proved to be a heavy piece of selling artillery to those for whom the solution to substandard movies on TV was finding a way to make viewers pay admission without leaving their houses. Why trudge out in the sleet to see a movie when you could see it — *uncut* — at home?

Cable systems have fairly straightforward advantages. They may readily serve invalids and children. With tape, they make a great reference tool for movie buffs and columnists alike. In a crunch, they are obviously better than nothing. Many home box-offices scoop up features which suffered either truncated runs, or no runs at all, being dumped by their distributors onto overseas markets as a tax loss (as with *Thirst* and *The Ultimate Warrior*, respectively). In this sense, cable may serve the genre completist, but in another, they restrict their own comprehensivity willingly. That one in a moment.

The drawbacks to subscription channels have mostly to do with their poor physical representation of what might have originally been a 70mm, 6-track, Dolbyized extravaganza (like *Alien*). The TV receivers to which such systems must conform offer shrunken, distorted images (due to the size and scanning limitations of a cathode-ray tube), rotten sound (about which manufacturers keep making lavish promises and have, to date, done nothing practical), and the restrictions of TV aspect-ratio, which causes the elongated rectangle of a movie frame to be cropped into a square. With this last, the 70mm, Cinemascope and Panavision formats suffer even more, and in the case of "big-screen" video-beam and other picture-enlarging gimmicks, the problem is the same. That distorted, tiny picture is blown up to bathtub size, and only the viewer's headache *really* gets bigger. It looks okay across the distance of a smoky cocktail lounge, with a scotch or two to smooth away the fuzzy scanning lines.

One prejudice pay/cable and commercial TV have in common regarding movies is a fickleness for current films, a requisite that undercuts true completeness in programming for the former. Frequently, pay/cable is too eager to snatch up *new* films in favor of *recent* films, which languish unseen after their premiere theatrical runs.

Most new films now have cable deals written into their contracts before they ever appear in a theatre; films made exclusively for cable are with us already. These moves are all profit considerations, of course — that theatrical filmgoing seems continually on an endangered species list due to such machinations is another annoying byproduct of what the electronics corporations who crank out all the shiny, new video hardware call progress.

Unless you own a private screening room, you must go OUT to get real movies. While the distractions of the home environment may not detract from *Buck Rogers*, they just might from *Apocalypse Now*, cut or uncut. Movies on TV and movies in theatres might *seem* the same to the people pushing cable-TV, subscription services, and "Z" channels, but the only people to whom they really *are* the same thing are the indiscriminate.

David J. Schow

Books

Star Drifter, Dale Aycock, Leisure Books, $1.95
Vampires of Nightworld, David Bischoff Del Rey Books, $2.25
Space Doctor, Lee Correy Del Rey Books, $2.50
War Games, Karl Hansen Playboy Press, $2.50
Homeworld, Wheelworld, Starworld (To the Stars), Harry Harrison Bantam Books, $2.25 each
Schrodinger's Cat II: The Trick Top Hat, Robert Anton Wilson, Pocket Books, $2.50

Among the *Ares* feedback questions is one asking readers to indicate which single category of science fiction and which single category of fantasy they prefer. Thirty-odd percent usually choose space opera for SF and sword and sorcery for fantasy. Eleven percent choose "hard SF" and four percent choose "new wave." Feedback game proposals mirror this response; hard SF proposals (*The Human-Kzinti Wars, Dragon's Egg*, etc.) continually get lower ratings than trash SF proposals (*Night of the Androids, Rescue from the Hive*, etc.). The preferences of "adventure" and simulation gamers seem to run counter to the trends evident in science fiction since Campbell took the helm at *Astounding* in the thirties and began to turn SF from a pulp genre to a form of literature. At the same time, gaming is bringing thousands of new readers into the science fiction fold; the renaissance of fantasy in SF publishing is largely attributable to the popularity of role-playing games. The trend toward trash is reinforced by the movies, which prefer to do space opera (*Star Wars* and clones) than serious SF (of which there has been a dearth since *2001*).

Simultaneously, book publishers are beginning to speak of SF as the male equivalent of gothic romance (this despite the fact that *Star Trek*, fantasy, and feminist SF have brought increasing numbers of women into science fiction in the same way that role-playing games have brought increasing numbers into gaming). There is talk of "formularizing" the genre in the way that romances have been formularized. Laser Books, indeed, took precisely this approach and failed, but it may simply have been before its time. There is a real and increasing danger that science fiction, which was the only pulp genre to escape from its limitations to the status of literature, will undergo a reverse evolution and become, again, nothing more than another form of income-generating garbage.

Ares readers owe it to themselves — and to the literature for which they have some feeling — to reconsider their preferences. Devotees of *D&D* may feel that, in the abstract, sword and sorcery most describes the kind of fantasy they enjoy reading; but is it Conan and Edgar Rice Burroughs who come to mind as great writers of fantasy, or Tolkien, Donaldson, Wolfe, Le Guin, and Bradley? Science fiction gamers may think *Star Wars* is the kind of science fiction they

would like to see, but is E.E. Doc Smith their mentor — or Asimov, Heinlein, Niven, Ellison, or Wilson? In the future, do they want to see *Thongor of the Green Planet* or *The Sword of the Torturer? Imperium* or *Attack of the Mutants?*

This being said, we will proceed to review some space opera, which, after all, is enjoyable if not the be-all and end-all.

All of this is by way of introduction to... no, I'd better not put it that way. All of this is *not* by way of introduction to, because *Star Drifter* by Dale Aycock is quite an enjoyable little — dare I say it? — *space opera;* yes, quite enjoyable, and I don't wish to imply that it is caught in the pre-Campbell era or that it is enough to turn one's stomach. Quite the contrary. It is worth reading even if your forte is hard SF, though perhaps new wavers will find it a sterile recapitulation of overdone themes. The peculiarity is that it is published by Leisure Books, one of the smaller publishers in comparison to the giant conglomerates. Aycock is an appealing writer who deserves better distribution than Leisure may be able to provide.

The novel deals with the owner of a small interstellar trading company, threatened with bankruptcy as a result of pressure from the Federation — a sort of combination Ma Bell, Teamsters and Lloyds of London which wants the protagonist to sign up with them. He makes the mistake of falling in love with the heir to a planet, uncovering an interstellar conspiracy designed to impose tyranny on the galaxy, and so on and so on. The importance is not the plot, which is typical space opera, but Aycock's ability to flesh out characters despite slam-bang action and to turn a pretty phrase or two. *Star Drifter* is fun reading.

Karl Hansen's *War Games* is hardly classical space opera; indeed, its sexual themes are such that it could not have been published in the thirties. Nonetheless, it contains enough rapid action and meaningless violence to satisfy even the most frustrated Lensman aficionado. The protagonist is a scion of the rich in a pathetically decadent Terran empire (restricted to the solar system) — so decadent, in fact, that one suspects Hansen is saying "if you think modern America is decadent you ain't seen nothing." There's enough sadomasochism in the novel to choke Catherine the Great's horse (though I've read worse). Its saving grace is Hansen's imagination, which is remarkable. Hansen has given a great deal of thought to the potentials of biological engineering; the results are a series of bizarre and believable alien races bioengineered from human genes and capable of living, for example, in Titan's hydrocarbon atmosphere. Hansen seems well versed in biology and chemistry, though his physics leaves a bit to be desired.

Detrs, the protagonist, kills his parents to avoid their sadistic games and, with the aid of a gem with temporal powers, becomes an interplanetary thief. Eventually he is caught and sentenced to imprisonment; instead, he chooses to join the Empire's equivalent to the Green Berets, fighting a no-win war on Titan. The nature of warfare on Titan is quite reminiscent of Vietnam, and one wonders whether Hansen saw combat there. Detrs loses his precious stone and, as chaos falls on Titan and the Terrans begin to lose, seaches for a replacement. In the process he slaughters thousands, becomes addicted, goes cold turkey, meets his love and switches sides in the ongoing war. The climax is satisfying, but there's a clear bid for a sequel. (The novel was originally printed as a series of short stories, mostly in *Analog*, so one presumes that Hansen sees the story as an ongoing serial.)

War Games is involving and evocative; Hansen's descriptions of the Titanian scenery are believable and even lyrical. If, in the final analysis, *War Games* does not rise above the status of — that phrase again — space opera, the reason is that his characters are robots, there's very little warmth, and the protagonist is so bloody miserable it's hard to have much feeling for him. (Incidently, *War Games* has nothing to do with wargames.)

As long as we are talking of space opera, we should certainly consider Harry Harrison's *To the Stars*, published in three volumes as *Homeworld, Wheelworld,* and *Starworld*, since Harrison is both the master satirist of the genre and a practitioner thereof. *To the Stars* can safely be described as "action SF," though the more pejorative term "space opera" should probably be avoided, since the action is not as relentless as space opera requires and since Harrison is apparently trying to write something more.

To the Stars is written in the sparse, neutral style that is often accepted in science fiction as good writing — the sort of style which Asimov, in his later fiction, used so well. The story deals with a class-stratified, totalitarian future in which the elite of Earth have enserfed not only that planet's masses but the rest of the settled planets' as well. The protagonist of the three novels is Jan Kulozik, an upper-class engineer who eventually rejects his heritage and becomes one of the leaders of the revolution. The three novels divide logically into three stories: the first is "the man who learned better," in which the protagonist becomes aware of the tyranny of his society. The second is "man against nature," in which Kulozik overcomes the obstacles of the alien world to which he is banished for his rebellion. The last is "the revolution," in which Kulozik, the Israelis and friends overthrow the oppressors and bring freedom to the stars. All three themes are common ones; all are competently handled.

Harrison is best known in the genre for his satiric adventure stories — fast action written with an element of wit. *Bill, the Galactic Hero* and the *Stainless Steel Rat* stories come to mind. It seems clear that Harrison is trying to do something a little different — to write serious (in the sense of non-humorous) science fiction with something to say. Unfortunately, *To the Stars* is nothing more than competent adventure fiction. Harrison's characters are wooden, his prose contains little life, and when he engages in political commentary he generally stoops to the absurd. (The worst offense in this regard to his discussion of racism in America, a subject about which Harrison knows a good deal less than he thinks he knows.) Nonetheless, Harrison is incapable of writing a *bad* novel, and *To the Stars* is a fairly enjoyable way to kill some time.

Lee Correy (aka G. Harry Stine) writes in another subset of the genre for which I have little regard: superscience. Superscience is, in essence, hard science fiction taken to extremes: fiction in which the ideas and the machinery are all, and in which characterization and story-telling often fall by the wayside. Like space opera, superscience can often make enjoyable reading (witness *Dragon's Egg*) but is not a literature to be taken seriously. Lee Correy is a good enough writer as well as good enough technologist to overcome the shortcomings of the genre, however; his most superscience of novels, *Star Driver* (about a working Dean Drive) is still enjoyable as a novel.

Space Doctor is, in essence, another "man against nature" novel — though in this case, nature is vacuum, radiation, and the other hazards to be found in geosynchronous orbit.

The hero of *Space Doctor,* Dr. Tom Noels, is the on-site medic during construction of the first Solar Power satellite. He's faced with a unique task; for the first time, hundreds of men and women are working for lengthy periods of time in space, and he must, practically single-handed, develop the field of space medicine to prevent accident and death. His problems range from the trivial — how do you use a bottle-fed intravenous saline solution when there's no gravity to feed the solution into the vein? — to the stuff of legend — how do you save a busted ship whose crew members are slowly dying of asphyxiation? Simultaneously, he must deal with the nuts in the federal bureaucracy — who want to close down the entire operation because of a minor mechanical problem in the space suits — and his own personal problems.

Space Doctor drags a bit, and the love interest uses one of the oldest tricks around, but on the whole it is an interesting novel, well worth reading — especially for those interested in near-future exploitation of space.

David Bischoff's *Vampires of Nightworld* is a sequel to his previous novel, *Nightworld*. There is a sort of subgenre of novels which are fantasy-but-really-SF, if you follow, though none that I know of reverses the trick; *Nightworld* is such a world. In the previous volume, we learned that the fantastic creatures crawling Nightworld's night were actually cyborgs created by a madman calling himself "Satan," whom our hero (with some aid) put an end to. *Vampires* deals with the aftermath; one of Satan's underlings, a vampire, decides to subjugate Nightworld and become its new master of evil; naturally, our intrepid hero must stop him. Improperly handled, this might have been a sterile recapitulation of a theme adequately handled in the previous book. Bischoff's somewhat Victorian style and the cozy Victorianess of his characters are quite charming. The reader comes to care about the characters (much more than in the first book); and the adventures remain believable while retaining an element of the fantastic. His vampires are also quite interesting, being a variant of the "demon bacteria" theme; vampirism is a communicable disease, in essence, with viral colonies gradually taking over the body of the afflicted. *Vampires of Nightworld* is a pleasant fantasy (or SF)

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NEW!

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A DragonQuest Capsule Adventure

The Camp of Alla-Akabar

I. Introduction

The Camp of Alla-Akabar is a *DragonQuest* adventure to be played in about eight hours by one or two players with one character each. It is designed to be presented as a single adventure, although it can easily be incorporated into an existing campaign.

Before play begins, the GM should read and familiarize himself with the character descriptions and possible situations. *The Camp of Alla-Akabar* relies primarily on the players discerning clues presented to them by the GM during encounters. Further explanation starts in Chapter IV.

II. How to Read the Maps

Two maps are provided with the adventure, one for the overland journey and one for the layout of the camp. Both maps are on hex grids; the scale for the overland map is 1 hex/2 miles, and the scale for the camp is 1 hex/5 feet. **Note:** If the GM wishes to place the adventure on the *Frontiers of Alusia* map, he should use Jungbar (hex 30-098) as the town and Korvin's Wells (hex 43-099) as the oasis. He should adjust all descriptions to fit if he does make this change.

III. Briefing for the Players

After many weeks of travel, the characters arrive in a large coastal town with their resources dangerously low. The characters find an inn and have dinner. After their meal, the bartender starts a conversation with the characters, as they are new faces in town. Explaining their plight and need for employment, they are told of the public notices posted in the town square.

The characters adjourn to the square, where they indeed find notices of openings. Only one draws their interest:

ENTERTAINERS WANTED

Seeking skilled male and/or female entertainers for engagement in small settlement beyond the mountains. Must be willing to travel through rugged terrain; Prima Donnas need not apply. See Rory at the Inn of the Daring Damsel between sundown and closing.

A few simple questions around town inform the characters that beyond the mountains lies the desert, where there are reports of marauding tribes of bandits. Few people from the town have any reason to go into the desert, as they rely upon trade arriving in town to supply all their needs.

At the Inn of the Daring Damsel, the characters are led to a back room, where they meet a halfling who introduces himself as Rory. He will ask them their specialties as entertainers as well as request a brief demonstration of their best work.

If sufficiently impressed with the audition, Rory will explain that he is acting as an agent for a travelling band in the desert who is seeking some diversion after completing a long and exhausting trek. He will ask questions about the characters' abilities to handle themselves in tight situations, as there is a chance the audience may become rowdy and downright unruly.

If the characters fill the bill, Rory will take their names, saying they have a good chance. He will answer any questions the characters have about where and for whom they may be employed.

Rory explains, in answer to any questions, that he is the personal manservant for Alla-Akabar, a leader of a tribe of bedouins who have spent the better part of the last year to the north. They rest near these mountains every year around this time; the tribe leaves the town alone, so no one bothers the tribe. Rory is in town to pick up supplies for the camp and find suitable entertainment for the men. Transportation will be provided to and from the camp, and the engagement should be no longer than a week. For these shows, the characters will be paid by Alla 500 Silver Pennies, plus whatever gratuities are thrown from the crowd.

Later that evening, the characters are approached by a man wearing a cape whose face is shadowed by a large hood. He asks if he may sit with them and introduces himself as Xarak. Wondering if they are contemplating taking the employment in the camp of Alla-Akabar, he informs them that — if they are — he has an offer which may be of interest to them.

He is seeking information concerning two women, named Kerona and Shyrila, who were taken by the tribe almost a year ago. He wishes to know where they may be and what, if anything, has happened to them. He says he does not care how this information is obtained, so long as it is the truth.

He further informs them that he is offering a bonus. He will pay them 300 Gold Shillings each to get the information, and he will add on 200 Gold Shillings more if, in addition to getting the information, they can eliminate Alla-Akabar and bring back some proof that he is dead.

If the characters accept the offer, Xarak will stress that time is of the essence, and the information retrieval and the killing should be accomplished as quickly as possible. Xarak will stay to answer any questions he can (see Chapter IV), and then he will bid the characters good night and good luck.

Later that night, Rory appears and tells the characters they have been hired on as entertainers and will meet them late in the morning by the stables with horses and mules packed for the journey to the camp.

When they meet Rory, they will immediately leave and set out toward the mountains. At the end of that day, they follow a ravine and arrive at the edge of the desert. There the halfling starts transferring the supplies to a number of camels which he tethered there on his way into town. The next morning, after making sure that everyone is clothed properly to guard against the dangers of crossing the desert (see Chapter V), the party sets out across the sands.

After two days of travel, the party enters the camp of Alla-Akabar.

IV. Briefing for the Gamesmaster

The Camp of Alla-Akabar is designed such that at least one character should be able to skillfully entertain the camp. They should not be allowed to fake it without failure. Thus, Troubador or Courtesan skills are needed, and creative use of Talent Magic would come in handy. An Assassin skill might help in the attempt to kill Alla.

Rory and Xarak were telling the truth as far as they went; in fact, they are working together. Xarak has been waiting for Alla's tribe to make their annual encampment near this town. He waited for word of Rory's arrival in town and approached him about the possibility of an alliance. Rory was open to such an offer, as he is becoming more and more disgusted with the treatment he receives in camp. He was leery of becoming too involved, as Alla has shown qualities of omniscience. Xarak explained how he could keep Rory separate from the scheme by approaching the entertainers after Rory informed him who the most likely candidates were. **Note:** If the GM incorporates this adventure into his campaign, he may have to go through several characters before finding suitable ones.

There are some things, other than his complicity, which Xarak will not discuss with the party. If questioned, he will give a description of the two women (see Chapter VI for details), but he will not reveal that they are really his wife and daughter, who were taken during a raid. He will not tell the party

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that his daughter wears an amulet similar to his, as he believes she is not in the camp. The GM should refer to Xarak's description in this Chapter for full details concerning the amulet and Xarak's appearance.

Rory will give the physical details of the camp as he knows them, and he will speak of the people in the camp during the overland trip. Full descriptions of the camp and its inhabitants are covered in Chapters VI and VII.

There are things neither Xarak nor Rory can know which present major obstacles to the party in completing the mission. It is up to the players to piece together the clues obtained through encounters with NPC's. Among these facts are the following:

1. The daughter has become Alla-Akabar's mistress.

2. The daughter is being kept drugged.

3. Alla's bodyguard, Garn, is a hobgoblin who is much more than he appears to be.

There is also a time factor to be considered. Xarak has told the party the deed must be done quickly. While he was discussing the deal with Rory, a bedouin from the camp who had come into town on his own had overheard their plottings. Xarak and Rory managed to capture him and are keeping him alive, trying to get information out of him, but he will not talk. They have decided to proceed with their scheme. At the end of three days, or at the GM's discretion, this captive will have managed to escape and made his way to the camp, arriving early on the morning of the fourth day to reveal Rory's treachery. Xarak will not mention the captive to the party, as he fears this would cause them to think again about his proposal and turn it down.

Xarak is in his mid-forties. He is very mysterious, because he wishes to maintain a low profile for fear of repercussions from his revenge. He is not trained as a fighter, although he has gotten some instruction in the use of a dagger, so he will under no circumstances accompany the party. He is obsessed with gaining what he feels is his rightful revenge, but he places finding his wife and daughter even higher. Xarak's physical characteristics are:

PS: 12	**MD:** 13	**AG:** 11	**MA:** 6
PB: 10	**EN:** 14	**FT:** 18	**WP:** 22
PC: 13	**APA:** 9		

Xarak has no magical abilities, and he is Vernal-stars aspected. He is a Rank 10 Merchant and a Rank 5 Mechanician. He speaks Common and Elvish at Rank 8, and reads and writes Common at Rank 8. He carries a dagger concealed in his cloak and can use it at Rank 5.

Xarak's hair and beard are grey with white at the temples. His left cheek is scarred and shows no sign of ever receiving the care of a Healer. His face has become a permanent mask of grimness and resolution. His eyes are always watchful and slightly glazed with obsession.

Xarak's description should only be given by the GM if the players are inquisitive and ask for it. If they do, the GM should include that Xarak is wearing an amulet with a stylized design of a bird in flight. It is an inch and a half in diameter and shows a high quality of workmanship.

Xarak spent many years building up a profitable system of trade routes and amassing a sizeable fortune. He met Korena during one of his journeys and they were soon wed. Shyrila, their daughter, was the pride of Xarak, and he loves her dearly. He had taken her and Korena on one of his trading journeys when she turned 16 as he believed she should begin learning about the world. It was during that trip that his caravan was attacked by Alla's men and his wife and daughter abducted.

Xarak survived the attack, just barely, and was left for dead until found by some peaceful nomads. Since then, he has travelled in hope of uncovering news of his family's fate, until it became obvious there was only one place to find out...in the camp of Alla-Akabar. Realizing he lacked the proper training to execute such a mission, he began to formulate plans.

Xarak will stay in town until the party returns or he receives word that Alla is dead or is searching for the man behind the plot to assassinate him.

If Xarak's daughter is returned to him in good health, he will lavish a reward of an additional 500 Gold Shillings on the party.

V. The Desert

It is important to retain the flavor of the desert nomadic life throughout the adventure. This should begin when the party transfers their supplies to the camels in the mountain camp. If one of the characters is a Ranger specializing in Waste, the GM must decide how aware of survival techniques in the desert he is.

Travel in the desert with a horse is impossible, as the beasts will become exhausted and die trying to make it through the soft sand. By the same token, characters will find walking through the desert with the aid of a specialized Ranger will fall into the Medium Exercise range on the Fatigue and Encumbrance Table. Without the specialized Ranger, walking falls into the Heavy Exercise range. This fatigue loss applies only if the characters have taken some precautions against dehydration and exposure (wrapping themselves in burnooses or some sort of flowing robe-like garments). If the characters must make a hasty exit without such precautions, they will lose one Endurance Point for every day exposed, in addition to the fatigue loss. The GM should give some indication of these consequences during the adventure, as the party's escape should be planned or else they may die on their way back.

There is a further loss of ½ Endurance Point per 4-hour period if the party fails to take water into the desert. Also, wearing any armor other than Cloth will result in another loss of ½ Endurance Point per day, multiplied by the armor's weight factor.

The GM should consult the Encounter Chart (see Chapter VIII) for the possibility of sandstorms and their effect upon the party if they are caught in one.

If members of the party have lost half their original Endurance, there is a 50% chance per day that hallucinations will set in, or they may start to wander aimlessly.

VI. Description of Non-Player Characters

1. ALLA-AKABAR

Somewhere in his thirties, the charismatic and handsome (Omar Sharif is a good role model) Alla-Akabar leads his band of 45 bedouins in a life of prosperous pillaging and looting. He is always charming, and his men are fiercely loyal to him, ready to eliminate any who pose a threat to him. Alla is Sun aspected, and his physical characteristics are:

PS: 17	**MD:** 18	**AG:** 14	**MA:** 6
PB: 21	**EN:** 14	**FT:** 22	**WP:** 19
PC: 15	**APA:** 10		

Alla is a Rank 10 Military Scientist, a Rank 6 Ranger (specializing in Waste), a Rank 5 Healer, Rank 2 Thief, Rank 3 Courtesan, and a Rank 10 Beastmaster specializing in Great Land Mammals, Humanoids, and Lizards. He uses a Scimitar and a Bolo at Rank 7. In camp, he rarely goes about armed, relying on his men's loyalty and the protection of Garn. He can speak, read, and write Common and Bedouin at Rank 8, and speak Hobgoblin at Rank 5.

Alla has become almost a demi-god to his men. He treats them fairly when it comes to dividing treasure and captive women. His men have prospered under his command. The bedouins have stayed with him for a long time, and some have come back on a regular basis, as they respect and revere him as a leader.

Alla continuously amazes his men by anticipating their wishes. If a man expresses fear, Alla is soon there to comfort him without anyone reporting the circumstances. Other examples of past behavior include...

...A man who received word that his family was being thrown out of their home for nonpayment of rent was presented with a fine gem from Alla's own coffers and aided in returning to his home. The man and the camp were awestruck by this unrequested generosity.

...Several times overly greedy bedouins plotted to steal from the general fund. Before any of their plans came to light, Alla had them whipped, claiming their evil intent was known to him, and he knew they had to be punished.

...The few times plots have been hatched to assassinate Alla, he always seemed to know about them even as the ideas formed. He has dealt with these types most firmly.

Alla, while a brilliant tactician and awesome warrior, does tend to flamboyance. He enjoys the adoration of his men and cultivates it. He views each man as a part of his own family, to be treated with kindness and tolerance. Outsiders are another matter. Alla, while he may only punish members of the tribe, will swiftly execute visitors who break rules or try to bring ill to his men.

He does have one weakness, though: Alla is quite a ladies' man. Female visitors to the camp will find themselves the object of his attentions if they are fairly pretty. Alla has always had first choice of female captives and his men acknowledge this right. This situation does not please Alla's wife, but it never seems to bother his mistress.

There is a very definite reason for Alla's omniscient, mystical powers: Garn.

2. GARN

Visitors to the camp, when introduced to Alla, will not help but notice the rather large individual who usually accompanies Alla: his bodyguard, Garn.

Garn is a hobgoblin who usually dresses in little more than pants. He is often seen wandering aimlessly about the camp carrying his war club or whip. The bedouins do not socialize with Garn for several reasons. One is that Garn is physically intimidating, being slightly more than seven feet tall and rather imposingly muscled, covered with coarse dark hair. Also, Garn doles out punishment when Alla calls for it. He may flog, burn him, or flay the offender and do all this before hanging him out to dry in the sun. The third reason they do not communicate is that Garn does not speak and seems to understand only Hobgoblin.

Alla speaks fluent Hobgoblin, so he can issue orders to Garn, and in public Garn "speaks" only to Alla through use of a sign language. Because of Garn's apparent ignorance, the bedouins have no fear about vocally taunting him or speaking freely while he is around. But they never stop Garn when he sticks his head through the opening to their tents or helps himself to a piece of fruit or food anywhere he finds it. Garn's physical characteristics are:

PS: 21 **MD:** 16 **AG:** 15 **MA:** 20
PB: 6 **EN:** 16 **FT:** 23 **WP:** 12
PC: 14 **APA:** 10
NA: Hide absorbs 2 Damage Points.

Garn is Death aspected, uses his War Club at Rank 4, his Scimitar at Rank 5, his Whip at Rank 10, and both his Garrotte and Spear at Rank 3. He is also a Rank 5 Assassin, Rank 7 Ranger (specializing in Waste), and has Rank 5 with Stealth.

In truth, Garn is neither mute nor stupid. He is in fact a very practiced Adept of the College of Necromantic Conjurations and has the following spells and ranks (Spell Code/Rank Achieved): T-1/6; G-1/6; G-3/5; G-6/3; G-7/10; G-9/3; G-10/10; Q-1/1; S-1/4. He also speaks, reads, and writes Hobgoblin, Common, and Bedouin at Rank 9.

Garn's potential was recognized early by a powerful mage of the College of Necromantic Conjurations who took in the young hobgoblin as a protege. Garn learned quickly and decided to seek his fortune in the civilized world. Although Garn entered town well dressed and obviously cultured, the townspeople reacted to him as to a monster and fell upon him. After resoundingly beating Garn, they dragged him down to the river and threw him unceremoniously in.

This entire episode was witnessed by a much younger Alla-Akabar, who was at the time a third-rate cutpurse. He did not share the people's revulsion to Garn and, after they dispersed, dove in to rescue the hobgoblin. Garn listened to Alla's proposal: separately they were ineffectual, but if they worked together they could become a potent force. Garn considered the words carefully and finally decided to throw in his lot with Alla, who soon formed his band.

Garn's meanderings through the camp are responsible for Alla's omniscience. Since the men speak freely when he is about, he is in a perfect position to eavesdrop. He reports everything to Alla, who acts upon the information he thus obtains.

Garn is often frustrated having to play the hulking brute, as he gets no intelligent conversation from anyone but Alla. He spends his nights in the tent next to Alla's practicing his spells and rituals after making sure no one is about. He accepts Alla's penchants for lavish loving and winsome women, but warns Alla they will prove his undoing.

If the party decides to test Garn and manages to surprise him, there is a chance he will utter some simple words if he fails to roll under 4× his Perception.

3. ALLA'S MISTRESS

Alla is rarely seen about the camp without the company of his young mistress. She is a lovely young thing with tanned skin and light blonde hair, who spends most of her day lounging about the tent or just outside or hanging onto Alla's arms. She is always displaying her devotion to Alla and her love for him is obvious. She wears houri garb of silks and some bracelets, rings, and other jewelery. If the party checks out the jewelery, they will find it to be first class work, especially her amulet — one and a half inches in diameter, featuring a stylized design of a bird in flight. She is never referred to by name, just as "Alla's Woman," or by Alla as his "Little Flower," or "Star of the Desert." The Mistress' physical characteristics are:

PS: 12 **MD:** 18 **AG:** 20 **MA:** 8
PB: 21 **EN:** 10 **FT:** 14 **WP:** 11
PC: 6 **APA:** 11

Sun aspected, she can read, write, and speak Common at Rank 8 and speaks Bedouin at Rank 4. She is also a Rank 2 Merchant and Rank 6 Courtesan. She can use a Dagger at Rank 3.

The mistress is Shyrila, Xarak's daughter, who is being kept drugged by tranquilizers and love potions. If spoken with, she will appear to be an air-head with brief moments of lucidity. While under the influence of the potions, she is devoted to Alla and will fight rather than leave his side. Twenty-four hours after the last dosage she will regain her common sense and identity. She will become shocked at the state of her clothes and the amount of make-up she is wearing and may blame whoever is around unless calmed down and acquainted with the facts. She will be very eager to rejoin her father, whom she thought dead. It would be inadvisable at this point to remind Shyrila that, for the past year, she has been the sexual plaything of a man with a lot of imagination.

The party will not immediately recognize her from Xarak's description. If asked to describe the women he is looking for, Xarak will describe the younger woman as a fresh-faced young girl with medium-brown hair, inquisitive eyes, and a ready smile. She now has her hair bleached and, at Alla's command, overdoes her make-up and underdoes her clothing.

Korena, when last seen, had dark brown hair, with a good figure and a Physical Beauty of 19. She was in her late thirties when abducted; it is up to the GM to decide what has become of her.

4. DELIAN

The presence of Shyrila is a major source of annoyance to Alla's wife, Delian. She is still quite beautiful but, in Alla's estimation, getting on in years (she just passed 25). Desperately in love with her husband, she is biding her time until he tires of his current fling, as he always does. But this affair has gone on longer than the previous ones, and she is growing increasingly perturbed. Delian's physical characteristics are:

PS: 13 **MD:** 15 **AG:** 18 **MA:** 5
PB: 20 **EN:** 12 **FT:** 20 **WP:** 14
PC: 10 **APA:** 11

Sun aspected, she speaks Common and Bedouin at Rank 8 and is a Rank 7 Courtesan. She is also Rank 4 with a dagger (which she is not at all hesitant to use), kept in her section of Alla's tent under her pillow.

Delian knows about when the mistress arrived, but she does not know her real name. Delian does remember how the girl looked at first and the fact her hair has been bleached. She also remembers at first the girl would put up a fight, but "Alla must have won her over."

Her dislike of the girl is pronounced, and she will be amenable to a plot to kidnap the girl, but will immediately report to Alla any inkling she has as to a plot to hurt him. By doing this, she feels she will prove her worth to Alla. Occasionally out of sheer loneliness, Delian takes a lover. If Alla hears of anyone mistreating Delian, he will kill the person responsible.

Delian believes what everyone believes about Garn, so the players will gain no new insights here.

5. RORY

There are seven halfling servants working in the camp at any one time. These halflings have average characteristics and may be created as the GM needs them. The one exception is Rory.

Rory is Alla's personal servant and acts as major domo for the rest of the servants. He has served Alla for a number of years, hoping by providing excellent service that Alla may one day set him free. He lays out Alla's clothes after he has cleaned them, cooks all of Alla's personal meals, and keeps Alla's headquarters neat. Rory's physical characteristics are:

PS: 9 **MD:** 17 **AG:** 14 **MA:** 5
PB: 15 **EN:** 15 **FT:** 19 **WP:** 20
PC: 16 **APA:** 10

Rory has no special skills or talents, nor does he have Rank with any weapons, as he was taken during a raid on a settlement of halflings and pressed into service. He does speak Common at Rank 8 and Bedouin at Rank 5, and is Moon aspected.

Rory has been biding his time hoping to be released, but has become disillusioned. Because Rory knows if the party's purpose is discovered he will be punished, he agreed to Xarak's deal only after Xarak planned to approach the party separately. To make sure no suspicion falls on him, Rory will not allow the party to use his food to poison Alla and, while he will talk to the party, he will not help them in the execution of their assignment.

Rory is more nervous since returning from town, as he wonders if Xarak can hold the captured bedouin until the deed is done. Upon arriving back in camp, Rory will be surreptitiously preparing to escape when the party has killed Alla or under the cover of any disturbance. He will try to make sure of what happens so he can report to Xarak.

Rory knows when Shyrila arrived, but does not know her name or how she is being kept. He did not associate the painted hussy with the virginal girl Xarak described. He knows of Delian's growing hatred for the girl and the general happenings around camp. He does not know about Garn.

6. TALAN

When Alla realized he would need a constant supply of potions to keep Shyrila interested, he decided he needed a skilled alchemist. Until then, he needed potions only to eliminate enemies and quiet his slaves. He found Talan in a city to the northwest, glutted with alchemists. Talan was open to the proposal despite Alla's reputation, simply because he was and is too busy working on his magic and mixtures to care much about what goes on around him. If engaged in conversation, he will talk shop, but will become bored and cut short any conversation on other subjects. Once he begins talking about alchemy, he may (60% chance) talk about the potions he supplies for Alla's mistress. Talan's physical characteristics are:

PS: 9	**MD:** 12	**AG:** 13	**MA:** 23
PB: 12	**EN:** 12	**FT:** 16	**WP:** 21
PC: 12	**APA:** 10		

Talan is also an Adept of the College of the Sorceries of the Mind and has achieved the following Ranks (Spell Code/Rank Achieved): T-1/3; T-2/5; T-3/4; G-1/2; G-2/2; G-5/8; G-7/9; Q-1/4. He can read, write, and speak Common at Rank 9 and speaks Bedouin at Rank 4. He is a Rank 8 Alchemist (specializing in potions and medicines), Rank 3 Healer, and Rank 2 Astrologer. If Alla is uncertain before a raid, he will go to Talan to get a feeling of how the skirmish will go. He also possesses Rank 2 with a Dagger, but is certainly no fighter and would more than likely be oblivious to a major invasion. He is Sun aspected.

Talan provides a combination of potions: Control Person, Binding Will, and love philtres of various descriptions. All these are provided for Alla's use. A more complete listing of the ingredients can be found in the description of his tent in Chapter VII.

If asked about Alla's omniscience, he will relate how he has ofttimes gone to Alla suggesting they make a potion using this talent, but Alla has always refused.

7. THE BEDOUINS

There are 45 to 50 men in the camp. They are pleased with their latest haul, but are waiting for Alla to arrange to have a fantastic piece of jewelery sold so the proceeds may be divided. They are loyal to Alla and will follow him blindly. Average characteristics for the bedouins are:

PS: 21	**MD:** 18	**AG:** 15	**MA:** 7
PB: 12	**EN:** 16	**FT:** 24	**WP:** 15
PC: 10	**APA:** 11		

All bedouins will have Rank 1 to 3 with Scimitar, Spear, and/or Bolo. They speak Bedouin at Rank 8 in addition to their 20% chance for speaking Common at Ranks 1 to 5. Among them, they will have some Beastmaster skills (Ranks 1 to 5), Ranger skills (Ranks 1 to 4), Thief and/or Spy skills (Ranks 1 to 5). The lieutenants will have slightly higher characteristics and Ranks than the rest of the men have.

The bedouins will wear no armor in camp except when on guard duty over the treasure or slaves or when going into battle. Even then they wear only leather armor lest they start roasting in the desert heat. Suggested encounters for the bedouins can be found in Chapter VII describing the camp.

If asked about the two women, there will be a 12% chance the bedouin asked will remember Alla pulling a girl out of the slave pen, but will not be sure at all what happened to her. If the bedouins are asked what happens to captured women in general, they will state most are sold at slave auctions. There is a 23% chance they will tell the characters Alla keeps a record of slave transactions in with his maps and plans in his quarters. Given a detailed description of Shyrila and Korena, there is an 18% chance they will be remembered as the girl who is now Alla's mistress and an older woman who may have been a close friend or relation.

8. THE SLAVES

The bandits have taken prisoners on their raids and are preparing to sell them at the marketplace.

If the party decides to try to gain information or assistance from the slaves, it should be noted while they have skills, their depleted condition and lack of upkeep in these skills will make their effectiveness very low. They know nothing about Korena and Shyrila. If called upon to help with the entertainment, they will be too weak, thin, and ineffectual to make a difference.

If the party tries to enlist the slaves' help in a revolt, they will find no allies in the pen. If freed, the slaves will just break into a mad rush to get away from the camp (this will provide a diversion, if that is what the characters want).

VII. The Camp

9. BACKGROUND

At the end of each year's raids, the bedouins look forward to returning to the oasis which they have made their safe haven. While at the oasis, they relax and celebrate. The highlight of this respite is always the entertainment Alla provides for his men.

The men will be eager and friendly with the entertainers, as they are hoping for an exciting evening. If a female is included in the party, word will rapidly spread through camp, bringing every bedouin to see how pretty she is. But male entertainers will also be welcomed, as the bedouins enjoy acrobats and jugglers.

The tribe's reaction to the entertainment will depend heavily on the type being presented. If the entertainers depend upon the spoken word (ballad singing, anecdotes, etc.), most of the tribe will not understand Common and will not be amused. Non-verbal forms (talent magic, acrobatics, mime, dancing, etc.) must be judged separately by the GM based on his estimation of the act's effectiveness. If the entertainers are not sufficient, Alla will pay them off after the first night and see that they get back to town.

All entertainment, punishment, and proclamations are presented to the men in the open area in the center of the tents. At night, two large bonfires are maintained in this area as indicated.

10. ALLA'S TENT

The camp consists of 15 circular tents, each approximately 15 feet in diameter. Upon their arrival, the party will be escorted to the largest of these tents (Tent 1), where they will be greeted by Alla (accompanied by his mistress), his lieutenants, Delian, and Garn. This meeting will be held in section C of the tent, where Alla conducts all his professional business. Section A is where Alla's mistress sleeps, and he spends most of his nights there. Delian sleeps in section B, dreaming of the day when Alla tires of the young girl.

Alla's tent is strewn with large pillows and cushions, which are used as chairs. Two short tables are in evidence, set with bowls of fruits or other delicacies in the manner of a buffet. Hanging lamps illuminate the entire area. In section A, there is a medium chest containing Alla's maps of the desert, plans for future raids, and records of the tribe's transactions.

11. GARN'S TENT

Next to Alla's tent are Garn's quarters (Tent 2), which he occupies alone. The two tents appear to be separate, but there are concealed slits in both tents allowing access to one from the other. Garn and Alla often meet late at night to discuss strategy and the state of the camp. Alla makes sure the mistress is asleep by using potions.

Garn's tent is rather spartan compared with the rest of the camp. Garn owns a war club, whip, gilded scimitar, and bolo. Garn is very alert to strange sounds coming from Alla's tent, and the slightest suspicion will bring him padding silently through the slits to investigate after grabbing his whip and scimitar.

If Garn happens upon intruders in Alla's quarters, he will first attack with the whip, then with the scimitar. If there is more than one intruder, Garn will use his spells to confuse them and then attack.

The Camp Map

Tent 1

Tent 2

Tent 3

Tent 4

Tent 5

Tent 6

A

B

C

Fire

Fire

Goats and Camels

Slaves

1 hex = 5 feet

= Palm tree

= Rock (bedrock)

= Loose sand or dry earth

= Water

The Overland Map

City

Camp ■

1 hex = 2 miles

= Desert

= Plain

= Rough

= Mountain

12. THE TREASURE TENT

In a tent (Tent 3) near Alla's will be the tribe's treasure, consisting of four small chests containing 513 Truesilver Guineas and Alla's personal treasure chest with 279 Truesilver Guineas. This tent is guarded around the clock, and the two guards outside the tent have a clear view of the front of Alla's tent, so they may also watch for any late night visitors. Inside the tent is another guard. He is an added precaution to watch a piece of jewelery the tribe has acquired, a medallion with a diamond set in it worth about 200 Gold Shillings. All guards on duty will wear leather armor under their robes.

Any attempt to overpower these guards will result in shouts which will rouse the rest of the camp and bring the unchecked wrath of 45 bedouins down on the heads of the party. If captured, the party will at best be thrown naked into the desert without food or water after having been blindfolded. At worst, they will be publicly flogged and hung out to dry in the desert sun. Females may be thrown to the men and then tortured.

13. THE BEDOUINS' TENTS

The remaining tents are similar in design. Each is decorated in cushions and blankets with very little hard furniture. They are supported by a single pole in the center which is embedded in the sand (the sand around the oasis is firmer than in the surrounding desert). It would take a combined Physical Strength of 30 or more to knock the post over and bring down the tent. In addition, these poles will take 25 Damage Points before splitting. Each tent has its own hanging lamp and a few botas filled with water. Other botas are hung at various points about the camp.

The bedouins share these tents. Any males in the party will be placed in tents where there is room. Females will be placed in the smaller tent (Tent 4), unless they are invited to stay in the quarters of Alla.

Since the adventure does not require the specific placing of characters other than the major NPC's, the GM should use his discretion in determining the results of any investigation of the tribe's tents by the party. Some suggestions are...

...The occupants of the tent are of a particularly lusty frame of mind and a trifle impatient for the women Alla will be sending for.

...These bedouins are more avaricious than the others, and have managed to hoard a small cache of gems (worth 500 Silver Pennies) which they have hidden in one of their pillows.

...These men are being kept under guard, as they have stolen from the private stores of Alla. They are scheduled to die at a combination flogging and beheading.

...These bedouins are very occupied in dicing for Silver Pennies. One of them speaks Common well enough to invite the characters to join.

...This tent is the quarters for Alla's lieutenants. They all speak Common to one degree or another and will tell of past raids and great treasure and of their allegiance to Alla. They are very respectful when speaking to Delian, and one of them may be carrying a torch for her or, indeed, may be her current lover.

...These men are initiating an intramural wrestling match in the camp. All male characters will be invited to join in and test their mettle. The GM should make one of the bedouins a very strong fellow who challenges all who enter the camp.

...One of the occupants of this tent spends most of his time keeping a fine edge on his scimitar and bolo skills. He is probably very manic and will challenge any and all to test their skill against him.

These encounters are suggested to challenge the players's survival instincts and keep the discovery of Xarak's daughter from becoming too simple a task. These suggestions may be applied to groups or individuals as the GM sees fit.

14. TALAN'S TENT

The northernmost tent (Tent 5) is Talan's workshop and sleeping quarters. He spends most of his time there (a 90% chance he will be in) perfecting his serums and potions. Occasionally, when Talan makes a mistake in mixing, a flat explosion can be heard resounding throughout the camp. Usually Talan has managed to escape injury, so he brushes himself off, extinguishes any smoldering embers on his clothes, shrugs his shoulders, and returns to work.

A search of Talan's workshop will reveal a wide variety of ingredients for potions. The inventory would include bloodroot, cyclamen, ginseng, amaranth, belladonna, caper, coriander, earthnut, jimson weed, and valerian. Talan's stores were severely depleted during the past raiding season. He gave Rory a shopping list of herbs and equipment to get for him when Rory went into town. He is very anxious for his return, and there is a 75% chance that Talan will be the first person to greet the party when they arrive in camp. He can be seen every night, however, making a delivery sometime after dinner to Alla's tent.

15. THE SERVANTS' TENTS

The halfling servants bed down wherever there happens to be room. Rory, though, stays in the second small tent near Alla's, as he must be ready to answer his master's summons. Rory's tent (Tent 6) is very sparse; he has a bedroll and a few changes of clothing, but no personal possessions.

Since returning to camp, however, Rory has been sneaking food into his tent (containers of rice, dried meat, some fruit) as he is preparing to leave when and if the party kills Alla. If the party manages to sneak up to Rory's tent at night, there is a 20% chance they will find him preparing a small travelling bag. Rory is not overly brave, and he will tell all when threatened with pain or death.

16. OUTSIDE AREAS

On the far side of the oasis, probably downwind from the rest of the camp, are kept the goats, sheep, camels, and slaves.

Two guards watch over the slaves, but they are not worried about a possible escape, as the slaves are too weak and are chained together. The guard has the keys. The chains are anchored to posts which encircle the slave pen.

The animals are docile and not easily scared. The camels are recalcitrant, bad tempered beasts requiring much prodding to move. A character with a Beastmaster skill of Rank 2 specializing in Great Land Mammals will have little problem getting them moving; for all others, the proposition is a bit more difficult.

During the time the tribe is in the oasis, they will be eating comparatively well.

The main drink in the camp is water with goat's milk served as an occasional change. Usually the goat's milk is fermented down and turned into a liquor. The men know Alla has some good wines in his tent, but they are not allowed to touch them, as they are reserved for his special guests.

17. RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The camp is a bustling place during the day, remains fairly busy through supper, and quiets down after the entertainment at night. It will be rare during daylight that wandering characters would not run into someone, and this is reflected in the Frequency and Chance Encounter given in the Camp Danger Table. Not every encounter will prove dangerous (a reaction roll should be made upon meeting every NPC and bedouin), but the possibility of running into someone (or something) is rather high.

Thus, while the characters are in camp, a roll must be made at the appropriate intervals and, if the percentage rolled is less than or equal to the Chance of Encounter listed, an additional roll must be made on the Camp Encounter Table to see who or what was encountered.

In addition, an Overland Encounter Table is provided. This is for use once the party has reached the desert, with the frequencies and time intervals explained. Until the party has arrived at the desert, the encounters (if the GM desires them) should be determined as per the *DragonQuest* rules. There are two encounters on the desert chart which are not covered in the rules as they stand: Sandstorms and the Sand Golem.

Sandstorms come up suddenly and last for D+5 hours, with winds reaching 30mph. Characters caught in such a storm should find shelter immediately. If they insist upon continuing, they will lose one point of Fatigue (Endurance when Fatigue is lost) for each hour in the storm. There is a 90% chance that a party walking through a sandstorm will head off in a random direction unless there is a Ranger specializing in Waste among them.

The most fearsome danger facing the party is the legendary Sand Golem.

Sand Golem

NATURAL HABITAT: Desert

FREQUENCY: Very Rare **NUMBER:** 1 (Unique)

DESCRIPTION: Sand Golems are humanoid in shape and composed entirely of sand, with eyes of gleaming obsidian. They stand 10 to 15 feet tall. A small amount of sand continuously falls from their body like water off a man emerging from the sea.

TALENTS, SKILLS, AND MAGIC: Sand Golems can swim through sand as humans move through water. When a Sand Golem is in this state, only the black eyes can be seen, but they are often mistaken for ordinary stones. Sand

Golems have no magical abilities or skills. They can be harmed by any weapons except Class C, which do no damage. Because the Golem is composed of shifting sands, its structure gives it an effective natural armor.

MOVEMENT RATES: Running: 300
Sandswimming: 200

PS: 23-30 **MD:** 0 **AG:** 10-14 **MA:** 0
PB: 6-10 **EN:** 13-17 **FT:** 21-24 **WP:** 10-12
PC: 6-10 **APA:** 10-11

NA: 4 DP due to composition

WEAPONS: Sand Golems use no weapons. They can attack with both fists without penalty at a Base Chance of 35%, doing D + 2 damage. When the Golem is standing on sand, it can extend its arm to attack into an area two hexes beyond its own.

COMMENTS: No one is sure where Sand Golems came from; perhaps they resulted from a failed experiment by an Adept of Shaping Magics. They are very aggressive and will attack a party of up to seven beings. A Sand Golem's life is known to depend upon its keeping contact with the sand, as that is how it replenishes itself. The Sand Golem must be in contact with a large area of sand to extend its arm in attack. Rarely does a Sand Golem travel out of the desert, as when it loses contact with sand it loses one Endurance point per pulse until it crumbles. Damage done to a Sand Golem when it is not in contact with sand is not absorbed by the creature's NA.

IX. Assassination

Should the party attempt to murder Alla in his sleep, it will be necessary for them to steal into his sleeping chamber. During playtesting, some inconsistencies presented themselves involving such actions. We suggest that, if the party fails their stealth roll, another roll be made based on 3 × Alla's Perception to awaken him.

Should a character manage to creep up on a sleeping Alla, then Alla should get a roll based on 4 × his Perception. In either case, the Tactical Stage begins when Alla has awakened. If he does not wake up, the party should have no difficulty in simply cutting his throat, so long as Alla is alone. If Alla is sleeping with someone, they should get similar Perception rolls. Even the slightest untoward noise, however, will bring Garn to investigate.

X. Final Notes

The Camp of Alla-Akabar is intended to be as complete as possible to save the GM unnecessary labor. Naturally, the GM will have to use discretion and imagination at certain points, as everything the players might wish to know could not have been covered. The NPC's have been given fairly complete backgrounds in order for the GM to incorporate them into his own campaign beyond the completion of the adventure.

It is also suggested that the GM make some minor alterations in the maps and encounter descriptions to prevent players who also have copies of the adventure from becoming too overconfident. This situation should be treated as a guide for the GM, not as a rigid and restrictive scenario.

In playtesting, Garn always managed to survive since most players were so surprised to find him a far more dangerous adversary than they expected that they would quickly flee after physically confronting him. This proved interesting later in the campaign for Garn sometimes would find his way to a city where those characters happened to reside. Upon meeting Garn, the characters expected to have to fight him, feeling sure he was there to exact revenge. On the contrary, he eloquently thanked them for killing off a man who had grown far too soft and weak to be useful. Alla's death had allowed Garn to take control of the band, and he and the bedouins were much the happier for it. Garn's leadership proved more efficient (since he wasn't spending all his time in bed with a mistress) and everyone's wealth rose dramatically.

It should be pointed out that the relationship between Alla and Garn should be well considered by the GM before the adventure begins, as any hesitation on Garn's part to come to the aid of Alla would swing the advantage clearly in the party's favor in terms of accomplishing the assassination. Most player reaction to the adventure indicated that this adventure, more than most, required accurate acting by the GM of the NPC's since most of the information the players will be able to obtain will come through conversation with those individuals.

Finally, the intent of the design was that the camp and the whole adventure should have an air of mystery associated with Arabian intrigue. The GM should strive to emphasize this feeling, and some have gone so far as to play the soundtrack to *Lawrence of Arabia* or Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* during play, both of which helped set the right mood.

THE CAMP OF ALLA-AKABAR DESIGN CREDITS

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Camp Danger Table

TIME	FREQUENCY	CHANCE OF ENCOUNTER
Daytime	every ¼ hour	95%
Evening	every ¼ hour	75%
Night	every ½ hour	50%

Overland Encounter Table

Before the party reaches the desert, the GM should determine any random encounters using the Encounter Tables in *DragonQuest*. Once the desert is reached, use the following table. Check every 12 hours, with a 20% encounter chance.

01-10	**D + 3** Dingos
11-20	**D** Buzzards
21-35	**+ 6** Scorpions
36-50	**+ 2** Tarantulas
51-60	**D − 2** Camels
61-75	**D + 2** Humans (with camels)
76-95	Sandstorm
96-00	Sand Golem

CAMP ENCOUNTER TABLE

DICE	DAYTIME	EVENING	NIGHT
01-20	Garn	Garn	Garn and Alla
21-30	Rory	Rory	Rory
31-35	Talan	Rory and Alla	Talan
36-37	Shyrila	Shyrila	**D** Scorpians
38-40	Alla	Alla	**D + 2** Tarantulas
41-45	Delian	Delian	Garn
46-50	**D − 5** Servants	**D − 7** Servants	**D − 8** Servants
51-65	**D** Bedouins	**D + 2** Bedouins	**D − 5** Bedouins
66-75	**D − 3** Bedouins	**D** Bedouins	**D − 7** Bedouins
76-95	**D − 7** Bedouins	**D − 3** Bedouins	**D − 8** Bedouins
96	Scorpion	Talan	Shyrila
97	Asp	Alla	Delian
98	Tarantula	**D − 2** Scorpions	Alla
99	Black Widow Spider	**D − 5** Tarantulas	Asp
00	Escaped Slave	Asp	Escaped Slave

 # Being: A number of the given persons or beings appear equal to a roll on **D10** modified by the number given. Modified rolls of zero or less are treated as **1**.

DragonNotes A Regular Feature For DragonQuest Players

By Gerry Klug

With this issue of *Ares*, I take over the writing and responsibilty for *DragonNotes*. The great advantage of being able to write a bi-monthly column is that I can communicate with the *DragonQuest* playing public directly and offer help, suggestions, information, and guidance for all you hardy souls who play what I consider to be the number one FRP game on the market.

First, let me introduce myself. By the time you read this, some of you will have seen my name mentioned in the credits for *Universe* (elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on that game by me) and realize I am involved in science fiction role-playing. But *DragonQuest* players will not know why I came to inherit this column and take over the spiritual guidance of the *DragonQuest* line of products.

Being a role-player for five years prior to beginning work for SPI, I played many games including *D&D, AD&D, The Fantasy Trip, Traveller, En Garde, Gamma World, Runequest* and *Boot Hill*. My emphasis has always been in fantasy role-playing, however, and I was in the process of attempting to design my own game when SPI released *DragonQuest*. Rapidly I discovered *DQ* was the best game available and thought SPI might need freelance adventure designs. I offered to do one and they accepted my offer (you will find the results of that assignment in this issue, titled *The Camp of Alla-Akabar*). The relationship was cordial and mutually agreeable, so they offered me a staff position to work on the new SPI science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*.

After a while it became obvious I was the person most familiar with *DragonQuest* (being the only person here who actually played it regularly) and I was then assigned to write this column. I enjoy *DragonQuest* immensely, playing the game twice a week. I GM a campaign which has existed since September of last year, and play characters in a friend's campaign which was started last August. Hopefully my experience with the game and the information I have garnered since working at SPI will aid us all in enjoying the game even more than we do now.

Recently I attended Michicon, a convention sponsored by Metro Detroit Gamers in Rochester, Michigan. This was my first opportunity to communicate directly with loyal *DragonQuest* players (and other role-players in general), and also their first chance to let me know their feelings about the game. The message to me was loud and clear: give us more support material (adventures, supplements, etc.) and re-design the original cumbersome combat system. On both counts we are proceeding rapidly.

As this column is being written, I am in the midst of a redesign of the combat system, which will replace the old one by the third printing of *DragonQuest* and should be ready some time this fall. Reaction to the combat system has been good and blind test copies are going out shortly. The third printing means a few very good things: 1) *DragonQuest* has sold about 15,000 copies in one year and sales continue to rise, 2) it will probably appear in the stores in a new form, as a hard bound book, 3) massive addenda changes will be incorporated into the new printing. All this became possible because the popularity of the game continues to grow, and I feel very strongly this is because of the enthusiasm the regular *DQ* players are communicating to the "unbelievers." Keep up the good work!

Among the upcoming supplements and adventures are Steve Jackson's *World Generation* and Paul Jaquay's *Enchanted Wood*, both due out in the fall. Since they have been described in this column before, I won't talk about them again, save to say they are both tremendous designs. Also, we are actively soliciting freelance adventure designs and are continuing the design work for *Alusia* follow-ups as well as boxed city, boxed world, and the *DragonQuest II* projects.

I feel this column should be a way of disseminating additional rules material to *DragonQuest* players. Although the rules are certainly not errata free, most GM's I talked to found their own answers to rules questions within the books which already exist. What concerned them most was additional material and rules not covered in the original game which they felt was desperately needed. In partial answer to their request, below is another adventure skill, **Horsemanship**. This skill is treated in all respects as Stealth, and will appear (in a slightly revised form, thanks to the combat system changes) in the next printing of *DragonQuest*.

[83.4] **An adventurer will use horsemanship to direct animals which he rides.**

An adventurer may use his horsemanship with any animal or monster which he would ordinarily ride (such as horses, donkeys, camels, elephants, etc.). Enchanted or Fantastical monsters do not necessarily fall into this category, and the GM must make rulings governing these situations.

The character's player will roll percentile dice whenever his horsemanship is called into play. A character's horsemanship is equal to [(Adjusted Agility + Willpower)/2 + (Rank × 8)]. In the above equation, round all fractions down. The type of mount a character is riding will modify his horsemanship as follows:

Donkey	−10
Mustang	−12*
Quarterhorse	0
Dire Wolf	−10
Draft Horse	−5
Palfrey	+15
Warhorse	−5*
Camel	−15
Mule	−8
Pony	+10
Elephant	−10

An * indicates a negative modifier unless animal is trained by the rider; in that case, the modifier is 0.

The GM should also take into account the familiarity the character has with the individual animal type and apply modifiers thereby (e.g., the first time a character finds himself atop a camel should be worth at least an additional −15).

A character's horsemanship is called into play whenever he wishes his mount to perform an unusual or difficult action. Also, in every Pulse in combat a horsemanship roll must be made. Any mount can be directed into moving at a walking pace or even a brisk trot; an unusual or difficult action would be to break into a gallop (or charge), turn sharply around, come to a halt once goaded into a gallop or charge, jump an obstacle, etc. During combat, horsemanship is called into play during every pulse to: a) keep the mount controlled, b) regain control if it is lost, and c) direct the mount to take any specific Action, whether Maneuver or Martial. Remember, only a Warhorse can be directed to enter into Close Combat by its rider, and all other mounts will attack only if directly assaulted.

A successful roll (equal to or less than the modified percentage) will result in the mount obeying the directions of the riders. A roll above the modified percentage but *less* than the modified percentage + the rider's Willpower indicates the mount either does nothing or continues to do whatever it was doing. A roll above *both* of these indicates the mount will either disobey the rider, buck, attempt to throw the rider, or some other unpleasant result. The actual occurrence must be decided by the GM and should become worse the farther the roll is above the modified percentage.

If the GM judges the rider has totally lost control of his mount, the rider may take no other action until he has regained control (presuming he managed to stay mounted).

Using horsemanship costs no Action Points while in combat unless no other Action is taken that Pulse, in which case use constitutes a Pass Action. A trained horseman receives certain abilities as he rises in Rank:

Rank 3: Pays normal Action Point cost for Martial actions

Rank 5: May use weapons of 2 readiness points

Rank 7: May use two weapons at once

Horsemanship has a maximum Rank of 10 and an Experience Multiple of 125. Every adventurer has it at Rank 0 when beginning play. Rising in Rank is accomplished as Stealth (see 87.6, paragraph 2).

When I read the rules for *DragonQuest* for the first time, I was astounded they had

[continued on page 29]

DeltaVee Enhanced

by Justin Leites

Tactical space combat games which use a relatively realistic game system tend to be exceedingly deadly. Even when one side has a large advantage, there will still be heavy casualties in any battle. For this reason, character-players in SPI's science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*, will largely prefer to avoid combat as much as possible. The tactical combat rules as embodied in *DeltaVee* and the way the scenarios have been set up favor maneuver over actual combat. Most of the scenarios in *DeltaVee* are escape maneuvers, for logical reasons within a role-playing universe.

In an offensive combat, laser and particle beam weapons are intended to damage individual pods while a missile may be able to destroy an entire ship. There is no such thing as a defensive posture in space combat; both sides are going for victory at any expense.

When one considers that in a role-playing game the whole idea is to keep a character alive and growing through adventures, a head-to-head confrontation will probably see some, if not all, the characters killed. While on a planetary expedition a character may be able to escape through his use of skills or quick wit, in a space combat these abilities will be of limited advantage. Furthermore, the costs involved in building and owning a ship, particularly a merchant ship, may make any combat prohibitively expensive. Though the costs of building a ship is not as expensive in *Universe* as in *Traveller*, it will take a long period of adventuring to replace any lost ship.

Thus, the scenarios for *DeltaVee* were designed to keep the characters and their ships in existence for further adventures. In addition to escape, another popular maneuver is threaten-and-board, in which a more heavily armed ship can threaten a weaker ship. Once more, the character interaction takes place in an environment (inside a ship) where the characters' skills and wits can best be utilized. It is not unusual in a game to have a merchant ship yield a rich cargo simply under the threat of combat, an exceptionally cost-efficient method of gaining wealth.

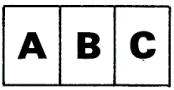
The *DeltaVee* scenarios played down combat in favor of escape. The most important lesson to be gleaned was that a player should never exceed the maneuver rating of a ship with the velocity rating. A ship that can no longer weave is an easy target for missiles. A player who maneuvers a ship properly should be able to escape with only minor damage about fifty percent of the time.

For players who are more interested in testing *DeltaVee* as a tactical *combat* system, the following scenarios offer a chance to explore the tactics of such an approach. These scenarios will give players a better, albeit bloodier, feeling of ship-to-ship combat.

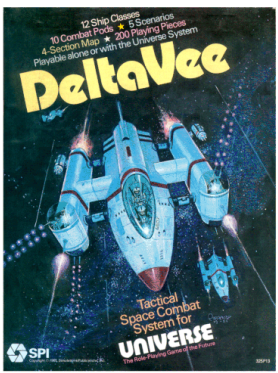
SCENARIO 6: Battle for B'Mali

B'Mali, a small, mineral rich planet on the periphery of the Federation, has decided to break off its ties with the central government. Normally, the Federation would let the peripheral planets have a certain amount of autonomy, but B'Mali has large quantities of rare fissionables the Federation requires. Thus, a punitive action is begun to bring B'Mali back in line.

Map Deployment:



Note: B'Mali is positioned in hex 0707 on Map A.



Player 1 (B'Mali) Deployment:

The B'Mali player has 100,000 Trans with which to purchase his fleet (the colonists traded plutonium to a rather shady – i.e., piratical – trade conglomeration in exchange for the ships). Expenditures for the ships and pods are listed in the accompanying Craft and Pod Cost Chart (left over Trans are lost; no partial expenditures may be made). Ships are set up on hex 0707 of Map A using any facing and with a velocity of 1.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

One *Spear* (spaceship counter A) with two arsenal pods, one battle communications pod, one tractor pod, one crew pod, and one energy pod. Two *Swords* (counters B and C), each with two heavy weapons pods, one battle communications pod, one battlecraft pod, (with a *Terwillicker-X*) and an energy pod. All ships begin in hex 0101 of map C facing any direction and with a velocity of 7.

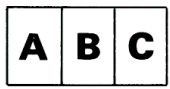
Victory Conditions:

The B'Mali player must destroy two of the Federation ships or he loses. Also, in order to win he must keep all Federation ships from landing on the planet. The Federation player wins if he lands any ship on the planet.

SCENARIO 7: Battle of Tau-Kati

Not long after the Federation took control of Tau-Kati, the Federation scouts encountered an alien patrol ship. Though communications were attempted, the aliens proved hostile, firing on the scouts who barely were able to escape safely into hyperspace. Now the aliens are sending a fleet into human space. For the first time, two cultures will meet in combat to determine the fate of two expanding hegemonies.

Map Deployment:



Player 1 (Alien) Deployment:

The Alien player gets 14 ships equivalent to the *Terwillicker-X*. These ships never expend Energy Units (though they are considered to carry the normal number of units as indicated on the Spaceship Attribute Chart, 4.9) unless they receive damage to their engines. The ships then suffer all penalties for such damage to their engines. All ships are deployed within two hexes of 0707 on Map A facing in any direction and with a velocity from 1 to 6. (**Note:** Players may wish to experiment with other alien vessels as oulined in the accompanying module.)

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Three *Swords* (spaceship counters A, B and C) each with one arsenal pod, one heavy weapons pod, one battle communications pod, one energy pod, and one tractor beam pod. All ships start within 1 hex of 0707 on Map C with any facing and an initial velocity from 2 to 5.

Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy more than 50% of the other player's ships automatically becomes the winner.

SCENARIO 8: The Bomb

The terrorist organization, *Basqua Revista,* has secretly manufactured a hydrogen bomb in the prison colony on Ganymede and has commandeered one transfer and one guard ship to transport the bomb to earth. They threaten to destroy the Federation headquarters unless their demands are met. Inside sources on Ganymede were able to alert the Federation in time, and now a hastily assembled fleet is being sent out to intercept the terrorists and save earth.

Map Deployment:

Note: Earth is in hex 0707 on Map E.

Player 1 (Terrorist) Deployment:

One Corco *Gamma* (spaceship counter A) with three battlecraft pods (with a *Terwillicker-X* battlecraft) and one *Piccolo* (counter B) with one buffered cargo pod. The ships are deployed facing in any direction in hex 0808 on Map A with a velocity of 3.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Two *Daggers* (spaceship counters A and B) with a heavy weapon pod and a crew pod each. On each turn after the Terrorists have fired their first shot (either particle, laser, or missile, but *not* a shot from the battlecraft), the Federation player rolls a 10-sided die twice. On each roll of 1, another *Dagger* (counters may have to be created) appears on hex 0707 of map E (earth) with any facing and a velocity of 0; each new *Dagger* contains an arsenal pod and an energy pod. (**Note:** Players will have to move Map A to the position of Map E when all ships have left Map A.)

Victory Conditions:

The Federation player must destroy the cargo pod on the *Piccolo* before the ship enters into earth's orbit. The Terrorist player wins if the *Piccolo* enters earth's hex with the cargo pod intact (he does not have to land the ship in order to win).

SCENARIO 9: Firepower

Posedy, a large military contractor, has built a ship they claim can beat any other ship ever made. The Federation authorities, dubious at best over the claim, offer Posedy the chance to prove this boast by putting down the continually rebellious citizens of Hai-Katu 4.

[continued on page 35]

CRAFT AND PODS COST CHART

SHIP TYPE	*COST (IN TRANS)*
Terwillicker-5000	3,100
Terwillicker-X	6,900
Dagger	12,200
Sword	22,100
Spear	27,900
Piccolo	5,400
Flute	20,700
Clarinet	14,100
Corco Gamma	6,700
Corco Zeta	6,400
Corco Iota	17,500
Corco Mu	14,500
Corco Omega	1,000
PODS	
Arsenal	5,000
Battlecraft (pod only)	500
Communications	3,000
Energy	250
Heavy Weapon	3,000
Hunter	2,000
Light Weapon	1,700
Jump	1,500
Tractor Beam	2,500
Crew	100

HIT TABLE

FIRST DIE	*SECOND DIE:*	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
			Part of Target Hit			
1		Critical	-	-	-	-
2		Bridge	Engine	Bridge	Engine	-
3		Forcefield	Pod 8	Pod 16	Pod 24	Pod 32
4		Pod 1	Pod 9	Pod 17	Pod 25	Pod 33
5		Pod 2	Pod 10	Pod 18	Pod 26	Pod 34
6		Pod 3	Pod 11	Pod 19	Pod 27	Pod 35
7		Pod 4	Pod 12	Pod 20	Pod 28	Pod 36
8		Pod 5	Pod 13	Pod 21	Pod 29	Pod 37
9		Pod 6	Pod 14	Pod 22	Pod 30	Pod 38
10		Pod 7	Pod 15	Pod 23	Pod 31	Pod 39

When a ship is hit, roll a 10-sided die to determine which row of the Hit Table to use. Roll the die again and cross-reference the second die result with the first number rolled to find where the ship was hit. If a ship does not have sufficient pods to match the number rolled, roll the second die again until one of the pods on the ship is hit. - = No effect.

Note: Players may wish to substitute this Hit Table in place of the table that appears in *DeltaVee.*

HEAVY CRUISER AND TRANSPORT

The two ships covered in this section were the ultimate products of the Federation's weaponry. The Military Transport could carry one entire fleet, and the Heavy Cruiser *was* an entire fleet's worth of weaponry. As the Federation's territory expanded and potential hot spots developed, nine Cruisers were finally commissioned. For over three hundred years these Cruisers, accompanied by the Transports with their complement of *Swords* to act as scouts, preserved peace throughout the Federation space.

No scenarios have been included for these ships, since they proved to be all but invincible in combat (when used properly). Players are encouraged to create their own scenarios if they wish to test the limits of these space dreadnoughts. Players should use the Hit Table at lower left when using these ships in battle in addition to the Heavy Cruiser Hit Table and Missile Hit Chart in this section.

Each Heavy Cruiser has four independent forcefields, which should be numbered on the Spaceship Log. Whenever a forcefield is hit as indicated on the

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

The scenarios included in *DeltaVee* (and in this article) take place in human occupied space. No alien races have yet been discovered, though such an encounter is inevitable as exploration ships continue to chart unknown stellar systems. Players who wish to experiment with possible alien spaceships in combat may create scenarios using the ships described in this module.

Ram Jet

The alien culture which designed this ship has not yet achieved hyperjump ability for interstellar travel. Existing within a closely packed stellar cluster, they have instead developed travel by ram jet, which takes much more time for transit from one system to the next. The ram jet uses a vast electronic grid to trap the hydrogen atoms that exist in the interstellar medium. The hydrogen is either stored for later interplanetary travel or burned directly by fusion in the massive ram jets.

This alien vessel does not use pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a *bridge, engine* or *forcefield* hit, it is considered a ***hull*** hit and treated like a bridge hit on normal ships; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on *Pods 1-5,* it is considered a ***grid*** hit and is treated like an engine hit on a normal ship; 3) if any other Pod number is rolled, it is considered a ***miss*** and there is no damage involved (the human player

Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die to determine which forcefield is affected on the Heavy Cruiser Forcefield Table. If one or more forcefields is destroyed on a Heavy Cruiser and a missile subsequently hits the ship, refer to the Missile Hit Chart to determine which pods are destroyed. In addition, the player must spread three additional hits over the Heavy Cruiser as per 9.8, using the accompanying Hit Table.

MISSILE HIT CHART

#1 Destroys Engines, Bridge, and Pods 1–10.

#2 Destroys Pods 11–20.

#3 Destroys Pods 21–30.

#4 Destroys Pods 31–40.

If a missile hits a Heavy Cruiser, each area not protected by an intact forcefield is destroyed. **Example:** If Forcefield **#2** is destroyed, a missile hit would destroy Pods 11–20, though the other forcefields would not suffer immediate destruction. However, the player must also roll for three additional hits on the Hit Table, as per 9.8 of the *DeltaVee* rules.

HEAVY CRUISER FORCEFIELD HIT TABLE

DIE	*FORCEFIELD HIT*
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	4
9	4
10	Roll twice (circuitry hit)

When a forcefield is hit on the Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die. The number indicates which of the four forcefields was affected. If a 10 is rolled, then massive circuitry damage has occurred; roll the die twice more to determine the two forcefields affected. If another 10 is rolled during this process, two more forcefields are affected. It is possible for a multitude of forcefields to be affected by this process.

CRUISER/TRANSPORT ATTRIBUTE CHART

ATTRIBUTES	*HEAVY CRUISER*	*MILITARY TRANSPORT*
Cost	Classified	Classified
Number of Pods	39	39
Velocity Rating	1	1
Maneuver Rating	3	2
Energy Capacity	288	264
Energy Burn Rate	24	24
Streamlined	No	No
Burster Class	2	1
Armor Class	2	1
Forcefield Class	2	1
Civ Level	8	7
Target Program	−6	−4
Number of Forcefields	4	1
Storage Pod Ability*	Yes	Yes

***A Storage Pod takes up four pods worth of space on a ship. It can store any other military ship (except another Heavy Cruiser or Transport Vehicle), which may be launched following the same procedure as launching battlecraft. □□**

does not roll the die a second time as indicated in the instruction for the Hit Table).

Other specifications for the alien ram jet are given in the accompanying chart. **(Note:** The ram jet has one forcefield.)

Solarship

Another slow interstellar form of travel, this alien ship uses a large, thin, reflective sail to gather the light from a star to propel it through space. It too is used primarily by alien cultures in tightly packed stellar clusters. Since travel is so slow, taking hundreds of years per transit, these cultures rely heavily on robots to handle the craft during their long trips. Only one such ship has ever entered human occupied space; the guiding robots immediately opened fire on the scout ship, forcing the crew to return fire. The ship was destroyed and its point of origin never properly established.

In combat the solarship has damage applied to it using the modifications as specified for the ram jet. Other specifications are listed in the accompanying chart.

Modular Ship

These alien vessels are really a number of individual pods which are loosely connected and which can act independently. In battle the pods break apart and act like individual ships, or they can keep bunched together as the alien commander wishes. Due to the mind link technique developed by this species, the individual pods are able to attack as one; however, they are disadvantaged in that if one pod leader is hurt, the others also share his distress and ship's damage.

Each ship is made up of a variable number of pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a *bridge, engine,* or *forcefield* hit, it is considered a *miss*; and there is no effect; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on *any of the Pods* of the ship, then *all* the Pods will suffer the same damage (thus, if the ship were composed of 4 Pods, then each Pod would take the same damage if the human player rolls a 1, 2, 3 or 4); if any other Pod number above the number actually composing the ship is rolled, it is considered a *miss* and no damage is taken (the human player does not roll the die a second time).

Each pod has the same specifications as indicated in the accompanying chart.

Pulsor

The alien culture which developed this ship has never established communications with humans. Though several of these ships have been sighted, none has ever been caught or studied thoroughly. These ships have been called the "ghosties" and "Flying Dutchmen" by humans; the few readings gathered by pilots seem to indicate that these ships are pure energy. Standing Federation Orders state that no ship will fire on these pulsors, though an occassional hot shot pilot has been known to let loose a few laser blasts at the strange vessels...all to no effect.

The pulsor is known to have a velocity rating and maneuver rating of **10**, and the one observation of its fire power (destroying an asteroid in the ship's path) indicates that it has a burster class of at least **2**. No other specifications have been determined (the ship is too atypical for the standard *DeltaVee* system).

ALIEN SPACESHIP ATTRIBUTE CHART

ATTRIBUTES	*RAM JET*	*SOLARSHIP*	*MODULAR SHIP*[3]
Number of Pods	See 2	See 2	See 3
Velocity Rating	2	4	4
Maneuver Rating	3	4	7
Energy Capacity	See 4	See 4	288
Energy Burn Rate	See 4	See 4	12
Streamlined	yes	yes	yes
Burster Class	1	2	2
Armor Class	1	2	2
Forcefield Class	1	1	2
Civ Level	8	7	8
Target Program	−4	−6	−6

Notes:

1. Each Pod of the Modular Ship has these specifications.

2. These ships do not have pods.

3. The Modular Ship has a variable number of pods, depending on the size of ship encountered.

4. These ships are always considered to have sufficient fuel to function throughout the length of any battle. ■■

There's Only One Universe ...and How It Came to Be That Way

by Gerry Klug

My first assignment upon being hired by SPI was to assist in the development of the science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*. Being a veteran of role-playing, I was intrigued with the possibility of being in a position to "fix" all the ill written and illogical rules I felt had been perpetrated on the science fiction role-playing community beforehand. When I started on the project, John Butterfield, the game's designer, had done much of the preliminary work already and what I saw excited me. Here was a science fiction role-playing game which seemed to solve the problems its predecessors had created.

John and I discussed what we felt the game should do and contain, and we came up with a number of items which we knew should be specifically addressed: 1) the rules should be tightly written so even a non-role-player could attempt to play the game without the need for a consultation every other page, 2) the game should be playable shortly after purchase, so it had to have an adventure included, and 3) everything the rules implied could be done with a skill or in a situation should be defined and delineated so as to make life easy for the GM. We feel we've succeeded and have created a game which is at least possible for a novice GM to pick up and referee, and at the same time, designed a game which stands up to comparison with any other in its field.

What should the veteran role-player look for when he purchases *Universe*? Among the many systems which the game features are two which stand out as unique: the Skills and World Generation systems. Both of these provide information and utilities not found anywhere else in role-playing game design.

When John was writing the Skills section, he was very concerned that the phrase, "up to the GM's discretion" did not become a catchall cop-out for us when we couldn't explain something. This concern led John to use a *task* system, whereby each skill has a set list of tasks which the skilled individual may attempt to perform and, if successful, yield specific results and/or information.

Each task is defined by a formula which figures the percentage chance a character has of performing it. The formula takes into account the proficiency of the character with the skill and any applicable characteristic of the character which may affect the outcome. Various modifiers may be applied also. Therefore, even characters with the same skill level may have a slightly different chance to succeed in the same task due to differing characteristics.

This task system allows the GM to rationalize any other situation which the player feels his character's skill should apply to. By comparing the unknown situation to the examples given, the GM may derive a chance of success (if any) which would apply in the situation and be fair. The GM is not left out in the dark attempting to define what a certain skill means (you don't have to have a degree in planetology to use the skill).

Also unique is the way in which skills are improved. Whenever a character uses a skill, percentile dice are rolled. Each skill has a range of several numbers indicated which add an experience point to the character's skill if one of those numbers appears on either die. These points are accumulated and cashed in later on to raise the skill by one level. In most cases, the numbers needed combine in such a manner that a successful use of the skill will, more often than not, gain an experience point whereas an unsuccessful use would not. Experience Points are not arbitrarily awarded in the game (unlike many other role-playing games) by the GM; the players themselves keep track of their advancement. There are guidelines for skills' use so none can be over-used in a manner designed to simply gain skill points.

The World Generation system is interesting enough to play as its own game. Science fiction role-playing has been crying out for a good, simple, complete and easy World (including both planets and moons) Generation system for a long time, and *Universe* may have the answer. In my experience as a *Traveller* referee, I always felt the need for an easy system for rapid star system generation. Often the players would travel in unexpected directions, and I would have to stop the games for long periods of time while I rolled dice. Needless to say, this was very boring for the players.

The *Universe* World Generation system is three tiered so that first, a cursory generation may be accomplished to give broad generalizations of the system and its worlds; second, a detailed look is then established for each world's geography and planetology; and third, specific details are given about settlements, resources, spaceports, law levels, etc. While the highly detailed examination of each world is lengthy, the cursory glance takes 5 minutes and gives both the GM and the players enough information to make such basic decisions as whether or not to stay and explore this system, what there is of interest, and so forth. This quick glance assumes all the players have done is hyperjumped into the system and are examining it from the jump point with their scanners.

The World Generation system also details how to actually draw the worlds in a system. Rather than simply generating a series of numbers, the *Universe* system helps you portray the geographic features of the world on a *world log*. The world logs contain graphic layouts of the various size worlds as viewed from both the north and south poles. The GM generates the details of the world and draws in each *environ* (a space on the world which is a square 4000km across) the geographic type which exists there. As each environ is drawn in, the visual picture of the world begins to take form, and the GM mixes and matches environs to form the kind of world picture he desires.

Along with Skills and World Generation, the rules for *Universe* detail Character Generation, Equipment, Robots, Character Action, Space Travel, Creatures, NPC's and gives a full adventure to start the GM and the players right off, once they've invested their hard earned money in the game.

Included in the *Universe* package (both basic set and boxed version) is an Interstellar Display which details all stars located within a 30-light year radius of Sol (our sun). Each star is located using a Cartesian coordinate (X, Y, and Z) system, and its astronomical data is detailed. Various binary and trinary stars are also detailed with their configurations and data noted. All of the major stars' distances (in light years) are also given in a road-map style matrix (hm, let's see; the distance from Alpha Centuri to Sigma Draconis is...) for easy travel planning. All of *Universe* (for now) takes place within this sphere of stars and the GM generates the characteristics for each himself. Thus, while the map would remain the same from campaign to campaign, each GM's details of the stars would differ, creating interesting comparisons.

The Display itself is a work of art, being visually stunning as well as absolutely practical for play. We at SPI are wondering whether *any* map of its kind is really accessible to the public at this time, or do we have the only one? Many people have mentioned they would buy the map just for itself, gaining the information it contains. Alone it would be a valuable addition to a GM's science fiction source library.

Concern about the problems facing novice players or GM's when they picked up *Universe* for the first time was expressed often during the project, but especially in regards to the Adventure Guide. *Universe* has three rules booklets: the Gamesmaster's Guide (containing the rules), an Adventure Guide (containing creatures, non-player characters, and the adventure), and *DeltaVee* (the spaceship combat system). In the Adventure Guide we gave the fledgling GM as much guidance by example as we had room for. A crucial element for any beginning GM is the creation of other people with whom the characters interact. The list of 40 non-player characters provides the GM with examples of the myriad kinds of people to place in the characters' path. Some are deadly, some serious, some humorous, some inconsequential, but all interesting and, I hope, inspirational. GM's may use these NPC's straight out of the booklet as they are or change them to fit individual tastes. It is through the GM's non-player characters that the players most directly interact with the GM, which may be the single most enjoyable element of role-playing.

Also detailed in the Adventure Guide are various creatures. With the laws of probability being what they are, there is no way we could have listed every kind of alien creature explorers might find outside our solar system, and our list of 40 doesn't pretend to include all possibilities. What it does do, however, is set up an easily adapted system of mix-and-match powers which the GM can use to create creatures of his very own, and

[continued on page 32]

DRAGON NOTES *[continued from page 24]*

left out (overlooked?) overland movement rates. How *did* one get from point "A" to point "B?" Aportation? Elevators? Subways? So, one of the first things I did was create an overland movement chart which I have used ever since in my campaign with little modification. What changes were made concerned mounted movement rates, for which I consulted Al Nofi once I began to work at SPI; he provided me with extremely valuable information regarding strategic cavalry movement throughout history. Thus, I believe the accompanying Overland Movement Chart is accurate not only in a "fantasy" sense (working in a campaign) but in a "historical" sense as well.

Some of you are undoubtedly asking, "Why do men on horses move at the same rate as men on foot?" Well, it has been shown historically that while horses can indeed move much faster than a man in short bursts, over the long haul the amount of movement evens out. The greater speed is neutralized by the fact horses have to stop and water, graze, etc., while humans need to stop less often.

[83.5] OVERLAND MOVEMENT CHART

	RATE OF EXERCISE			
TERRAIN	*LIGHT*	*MEDIUM*	*HEAVY*	*STRENUOUS*
Cavern	5/-	10/-	15/-	20/-
Field	15/15	25/25	30/40*	35/50*
Marsh[1]	-/-	5/5	10/10*	15/15*
Plain	15/15	25/25	30/40*	40/50*
Rough[2]	10/5	15/10	20/15*	25/-
Waste[3]	10/5	15/10	20/10*	-/-
Woods[4]	10/5	15/10	20/15*	25/-

Number before the slash indicates movement in miles per day on foot; number after indicates mounted movement (assuming horses). Rates for other animal types must be adjusted by the GM. The day assumes a total of 8 hours marching.

The effects of adverse weather must be adjudged by the GM.

Notes:

-: That type of movement at that particular exercise rate is impossible.

1: Movement rates assume some sort of passable terrain; total swamp is impassable except by canoes (sometimes).

2: If terrain is mountainous, halve rates on foot and prohibit mounted movement.

3: If terrain is desert, the GM should apply strictures regarding effects of heat, dehydration, etc.

4: If terrain is deep woods, halve the movement rates.

*: In these rate of exercise categories, the horses' rate will deteriorate 33% per day. They can travel at these rates for approximately 4 consecutive days and then they will die.

Any paths or roads negate the effects of other terrain and the Plain movement rates are employed when using them.

The main advantage in mounted movement is that the rider does not get nearly as tired and can perform some tasks at the end of the journey; treat the rider of any mounted beast as expending Fatigue at a rate one less than normal (i.e., a rider mounted on a horse which is moving in the Heavy column himself loses Fatigue in the Medium column).

In the next issue, I will talk a little about Character Generation, Experience Points and Treasure. ■■

FILM & TELEVISION *[continued from page 13]*

responsible for many of the impressive effects in both *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Alien* (he won an Academy Award for his special effects in *Alien*), was in charge of making Vermithrax believable. The dragon was built at George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic, Inc. outside of San Francisco. After construction it was shipped to England for Johnson to use in conjunction with his small stop-frame models.

Graphic artist David Burnett was the dragon's designer. "The most important actions for the dragon come in the final battle's flying sequence," said Burnett. "Because of this action, we decided very early along to design a dragon that looked best when flying. The emphasis on flight, subsequently, dictated that the dragon look light enough to fly, and have an enormous wingspan." Vermithrax is not *just* a mindless engine of destruction. Since the monster was supposed to register intelligence (along with a wide range of emotions), he had to be designed with more care than the typical movie monster. "The key to Vermithrax is the relationship of the brow to the horns, much like a man's temple and forehead structure. The dragon's brow sweeps back. It has a frown and a slightly human, intelligent look. This is not a creature that is simply programmed to eat, but a creature with a mind — albeit a malevolent one.

"You won't feel sympathy for the dragon," explained Burnett, "but it will have a kind of majesty. We didn't want to end up with the Alien which was too repulsive to look at."

They needn't have worried. The dragon is a graceful, yet menacing presence. The blend of giant-sized moving pieces with stop-frame work is so deftly pulled off that in places it is hard to tell what kind of effect is being employed.

But, praise to the special effects aside, there are better reasons to see *Dragonslayer.* The film offers hope that there will be a long line of fantasy films to come. The *Star Wars* boom has brought us more science fiction and fantasy films one after another than we have ever had before. Many of them have been exploitive and poorly made, but not all. *Dragonslayer* is more than "boy-meets-monster, boy-kills-monster, boy-gets-girl."

The film is a subtle study of early 6th Century Britain. The clothing is rough and hand-stitched. There is no dyed cloth, heeled footwear, or paving on the highways. The movie is populated with real peasants, subservient to authority and tired of day-to-day existence. They obey their king out of fear, for with no freedoms, they dare not complain.

Another touch of realism is the struggle evident in the film between the vanishing magicians and the early Christians. Not willing to bend their knee to popular culture, Barwood and Robbins have portrayed the world as realistically as possible. The villagers turn their backs on their druidic roots and run off to be baptized, hoping that the Christian God can stop Vermithrax. They cheer at the dragon's death, but give the credit to their God. The king also comes out to the dragon's smoldering carcass and drives his sword into it while his councilor proclaims him the "dragonslayer." The real heros, Galen and Valerian, are ignored by all and must move on lest they become victims of the bowdlerizers.

The characters in *Dragonslayer* are portrayed as real human beings. Galen is a brash, sometimes insufferable snot. Often arrogant and childish, he is a hero who needs to be taught a lesson. Similarly, there are brave people, sensible people, cowardly people, stupid people, and so forth populating the film. Though the dialogue is occasionally stiff, there is a believable reality. When the people and settings of a fantasy are as carefully wrought as they are here, it is easy to get an audience to accept as small and wonderful a thing as a dragon.

Christopher John

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Feedback Results, *Ares* nr. 8

Rank	*Item*	*Rating*
1	Games Rating Chart	6.83
2	Games	6.79
3	Science Fiction Game Sampler	6.67
4	Designer's Notes	6.45
5	Ragnarok (article)	6.42
6	Ragnarok (game)	6.37
7	Pandora's Link	6.34
8	Science for Science Fiction	6.11
9	Facts for Fantasy	6.11
10	Film & TV	6.10
11	Books	5.94
12	Media	5.86
Ares 8 Overall		6.66

Games

Griffin Mountain

Authors: Rudy Kraft, Paul Jaquays & Greg Stafford
202-page softcover book, 20" × 29" monochrome map.
CHAOSium Co., $16.00

Adventure supplements for role-playing games have been assiduously avoided in this column, because there are only so many ways to express displeasure with a type of product. The seminal adventures had player-characters kicking down doors and slaughtering monsters in the non-privacy of the latter's dungeon rooms like so many dogs answering Pavlovian bells, or presented the characters with vast, airy dungeons thinly disguised as "wildernesses." Admittedly, not every gamesmaster had or has the time to construct adventures — let alone worlds — but what was available commercially had less imagination than an autopilot.

There is, of course, a learning curve for the design of adventures, just as there is with other game-related product. Either Flying Buffalo or Metagaming introduced the number paragraph style of adventure, which neatly presented the simplest of adventures without insulting the players' collective intelligences. Full-size adventures then began to offer multiple options, instead of single-solution puzzles or monster shooting galleries. But nothing has advanced the state-of-the-art quite as much as *Griffin Mountain*.

Though generically classed as an adventure, *Griffin Mountain* is properly a sourcebook. The subject is not a single expedition, which can only be used once for a given group of player-characters, but a thorough examination of a 20,000 square mile area in about the same detail as a Michelin guide. Instead of the location of the nearest AAA and the best restaurants, the gamesmaster is supplied with extensive background on local politics and beings. The authors have inextricably tied the package to the *Runequest* rules, though a hardy gamesmaster can convert the statistics to another system with a concentrated effort.

The mountain of the title is as convenient a landmark as any in the Balazar-Elder Wilds territory, which is a small part of the world of Glorantha. Greg Stafford introduced his fantasy vision to adventure gaming in the brilliant *White Bear and Red Moon*. (This wonderful name was brutally sacrificed on the altar of the great god Marketing, and now the game tamely goes by the name of *Dragon Pass*.) Glorantha is no Tolkien regurgitation, no pseudo-medieval hodge-podge, no "magic is really science"double-talk, but a genuine, original fantasy. The world needs no support from game materal, and perhaps suffers slightly because it is viewed only from a role-playing and board game perspective.

Here the Crimson Bat spreads terror, the Red Moon's influence is greatest up to the Glowline, the Lunar Empire wars with (among others) Sartar, and the characters are swept into the epochal Hero Wars. Perhaps Roger Zelazny's *Jack of Shadows* conveys a vaguely analogous sense of wonder, perhaps Professor M.A.R. Barker's Tekumel is more "realistically" described, but Glorantha is certainly a unique experience.

Balazar and Elder Wilds are, essentially, a refuge for characters from the Dragon Pass area. At Dragon Pass empires clash and great magics are unloosed, which is hardly healthy for beginning or moderately-experienced characters. True, the Lunar Empire has designs on Balazar, but the Imperial rulers content themselves with thoroughly infiltrating the tribes and fortresses with their agents. If and when the Empire enters in force, the divided peoples should fall swiftly to its armies, but for now its energies are directed elsewhere.

The character of the barbaric tribes and the semi-civilized folk in their fortresses is deftly sketched in several of the beginning chapters. We learn of the Balazaring tribesmen's love for their dogs, of King Glyptus of Elkoi's emulation of his Lunar masters, of Joh Mith's caravans, which unite the region as much as anything else. These soften the harsh impact of character statistic presentation, which often makes this sort of book look like an accountant's vacation reading.

What makes *Griffin Mountain* an evolutionary step in the progression of adventures is its treatment of player-characters. The world is real enough — and frightening enough — so that the player will not chivvy the gamesmaster until they rule all they can see. Young and inexperienced characters have their niches in society, with plenty of potential to rise in the world. However, success come from hard work, sacrifice and a little luck, which makes it all the more rewarding. No matter how powerful the characters become in game terms, there are beings who can put them in their place. The ancient powers are a part of this magical land, and not just something the gamesmaster tosses out at the start of his first adventure, never to be heard from again.

The sourcebook does inherit a problem common to works of this genre: much of the information is for the gamesmaster's eyes only. The time-tested stop-gap answer — that the players not be allowed to look at the text — is still the only truly satisfactory way to deal with this problem, though the sheer wealth of material makes it hard for any but the killjoy to anticipate all the surprises this area affords.

The authors recognize this potential drawback, and do address it from time to time. Rumors are not necessarily always true or false; the gamesmaster is given a set of rumors, and he may decide on the veracity of each (while remaining consistent with the rest of the scenarios!). Map locations are not fixed for all points of interest, which can disconcert the player who sneaks a look.

Griffin Mountain is a textbook illustration of how to sustain interest in a fantasy campaign: make it seem real. The gamesmaster inevitably puts more energy into his characterizations of the non-player characters because they are presented as fleshed-out beings. Players pay especial attention to rumors which they have to pay for and which are not always revealed as true or false at the end of the current adventure. A caravan guard's job is not so unpalatable when Joh Mith takes the guard with him to exotic locales without exposing him to excessive risk. If this sounds like an argument for the suspension of disbelief, it is. Believable fantasy is the key to a successful adventure or campaign.

Consider Gonn Orta, a centuries-old giant who must decide between joining his ancestors as part of a mountain range or remaining the premier dealer in magical objects north of Dragon Pass. (Gonn Orta, his younger giant friends and his troll dependents are one of the more amusing — and interesting — encounters.) Or the Vampire of Gork Hills, who may or may not still stalk the land. Or Gondo Holst's caravan, which is a front for the most nefarious of activities. Because of these wonders, it comes as a disappointing surprise that Griffin Mountain is named for the griffins that inhabit its peak. The best recommendation for the material is that the reader will want more when he reaches the end of the book.

Not that *Griffin Mountain* is without its faults. Many anachronistic *D&D*isms pervade the monster and some of the people descriptions. (The term *"D&D*ism" is not meant as a slur on TSR's work on that role-playing game. If the company pioneered much work in the role-playing genre, it stands to reason that it originated many of the mistakes.) There is no reason, for example, for most of the creatures to have standard treasures no matter when they are met. Nor does the Balazar-Elder Wilds region have to be so conveniently self-contained (though this arrangement vastly simplifies the organization of information). The major drawback, for the majority of role-players, is the linkage with the *Runequest* system. *RQ* may be one of the better sets of role-playing rules, but it is hardly one of the most widely disseminated.

The layout of the text is extremely graphically attractive. Salient points are highlighted in each section, while the sections are clearly separated by topic or for new entries. It is a pleasure just to leaf through the pages of *Griffin Mountain*: if the reader is one of the many who collect game products to look at and not necessarily play, he will be quite satisfied by the content and style.

Griffin Mountain is not just better because it is bigger. Messrs. Kraft, Jaquays and Stafford have created a campaign which demonstrates, by example, what a gamesmaster should prepare for a serious role-playing campaign. They understand what should be highlighted as important — we are, after all, viewing a culture as adventurers rather than, say, as scullery maids — and, even more basically, what should be included. There is no magical, mysterious formula for writing successful adventure or campaign material; only solid work, imagination and an understanding of the needs of the role-playing public are required.

"Oh, to be on Griffin Mountain... you will be leaving there too soon."

The Lords of Underearth

Design: Keith Gross
24-page rules booklet; 12" × 14" map; 84 counters; bag, die, box.
Metagaming, Inc., $3.95

All right, it's time to put to rest that old wargamer's tale that mini-games are for mini-brains. There is an art to design for a

small package, just as there is for the monster games. *Ogre* and *The Creature That Ate Sheboygan* are not, perhaps, the most thought-provoking of subjects, but both provide enjoyment and a completed game in about two hours.

Metagaming, which originated the small game concept several years ago, did give credence to the sneers of traditionalist gamers with its recent slew of execrable product. It takes a special skill — which is thankfully not that prevalent — to define the boundaries of incoherence as did the *Holy War* rules, or to have the gall to repackage the ancient childhood game of "rock beats scissors beats paper" as a new release. (News may be slow getting to certain parts of the country.) The unlamented *Dimension Demons* — which has little to do with dimensions and nothing to do with demons — looked good by comparison to some of the poor material which comprise the last seven Metagaming releases.

The Lords of Underearth, on the other hand, is an excellent example of how to make a good mini-game. None of the design concepts will bowl the players over with their originality, nor need they do so. The rationale is quite familiar to role-playing if not the fantasy audience: dwarves, in the course of a mammoth underground renewal project, have unearthed enough treasure to warrant the attentions of greedy adventurers, monsters and armies.

The map displays a labyrinthine complex underneath a mountain. Passageways are graded by how wide each one is: a dragon has no difficulties flying through the wide corridors, but cannot even enter the narrowest of tunnels. The military companies have limited attack capabilities without the proper room to maneuver. With similar elegant touches, designer Gross bends some of the most conventional design concepts into rules uniquely suited to subterranean warfare.

The map gives *Lords* its flavor, and the game is trailored to take advantage of the challenges inherent in conflict in this most unusual terrain. For additional variety, the mapsheet can be cut into three geomorphic pieces, though I have not experimented enough with this approach to recommend it one way or the other.

The scenarios initially appear to be unbalanced in the favor of the inhabitants. This advantage is illusory, for the player on location must alert each of his units before he can use them. The marauding player hopes to dispatch the sentry units, which can alert friendly units within four hexes, so that he can destroy the powerful companies piecemeal. The game accelerates at a dizzying pace, as the invader is forced into desperate action by the mobilization of the forces of Underearth. The game is, at heart, a study of fantasy commando actions, and few other situations excite the imaginations of the game players as does this type of raid.

The scenarios ingeniously combine themes long ago cliched by fantasy writers with inspired victory conditions. (I do not have enough experience with *Lords* to state whether or not it is balanced, but the conditions sure do generate a lot of fun.) There are the defeated remnants of an army fleeing into their stronghold; a surprise orc attack on the Dwarven New Year (no doubt to regain the pre-67 borders); the usual draconian barbecue party at which the dwarves are unwilling guests; good guys trapped in the caverns by an evil wizard; and a free-for-all for the gold. The last scenario is almost a game unto itself, as the players try to direct the nasties towards each other, and fervently hope that the dragon is dead as rumored.

My only disagreement with the design is the use of a hex-grid for the map. Hexes are a superfluity, both aesthetically and practically. The architecture of the tunnels is twisted into natural configurations by the regularities of the hex-grid, when hashmarks could just as easily have bounded each movement area.

Metagaming is also making forward progress with its physical quality. The company has come out of its Dark Ages to discover the mystical process of die-cutting. The counters still show a tendency to self-destruct when touched by human hands though, by way of compensation, the illustrations are quite attractive. The map is drawn in unappetizing shades of green and blue, mounted on decently heavy stock, and is acceptably functional during play. The rules, most importantly, are remarkably clear — for any company, not just Metagaming — though the rules writers left a few minor flubs to remind us they are human.

Lords demonstrates that small fantasy boardgames can be the result of quality work. The emphasis is on the simple and the playable, but never on the simplistic. While other summer 1981 games are stoking winter fires, *Lords* will be played in front of those fires.

Second Thoughts

A spirited correspondence with Oregonian reader Donald Mckinlay has caused me to conclude that I was overly harsh in dismissing Yaquinto's *Shooting Stars* (#6). The premise, as dreadful as it may be, should not have wholly overshadowed a decent vector-based movement system — whatever the system's antecedents. *Shooting Stars*, when considered solely as a game, can be ranked with *Vector 3* and *DeltaVee*, both of which are at least acceptable space tactical games. My apologies to Steve Peek, who tells me that the background which so infuriated me was added by another person well after the game part of the package had been completed.

The design team for Flying Buffalo's *Tunnels and Trolls* point out that the game functions best as an introduction to role-playing and as a vehicle to get time-constrained players in and out of dungeon adventures quickly. *T&T* is probably the best role-playing product in these two respects; however, I still believe it swiftly pales once the players want to get into any deeper involvement in role-playing (see *Ares* #3).

A gremlin wormed its way into the review of Steve Newberg's *Dark Stars* (#9). The three non-human races travel by slower-than-light travel. Only the Terrans have developed FTL travel.

Readers are invited to comment on opinions expressed in these pages. My words, after all, are writ in paper, not in stone.

Eric Goldberg

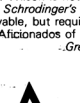
BOOKS *(continued from page 15)*

novel, head and shoulders — well, head — above most of the miasma that is fantasy being published today.

Schrodinger's Cat II: The Trick Top Hat is Robert Anton Wilson's sequel to *Schrodinger's Cat I: The Universe Next Door*, and, naturally, the second book in a trilogy. Like *SC I*, it is a sequence of disjointed and arbitrarily connected episodes dealing with a couple dozen characters, some of which live in different universes from each other, occurring at variously different times, some synchronously. Wilson seems to have taken upon himself the task of attempting to enlighten through confusion, a distinctly Zen and certainly discordian process. Cutting through the verbiage (much of which is delightful), one comes to the core of Wilson's argument. Wilson's premier metaphor is Schrodinger's cat, which he sees as the antithesis of Pavlov's dog. Schrodinger once stated an apparent paradox; suppose one locks a cat in a box, and connects to a shotgun in the box a mechanism triggered by the decay of a radioactive atom. After one half-life, there is a precisely 50% chance that the atom has decayed and that the cat is dead, and a 50% chance that the atom is yet whole, as is the cat. There is no way of finding out whether the cat is dead or not except by opening the box. Is the cat dead or alive? According to modern physics, there is no way of telling. According to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, one can never determine the position and velocity of a particle. This is because the process of observation changes the system. Wilson answers Schrodinger's paradox by analogizing to the uncertainty principle; the cat is neither dead nor alive (or perhaps both) until an observer opens the box. The process of observation changes the system. Thus, Wilson claims, reality is a subjective concept; he stipulates what Heinlein calls multi-ego solipsism.

Wilson is a peculiar writer. In some ways, he is the culmination of so many trends in science fiction; in others, he is the rejection of so many. He rejects linear storytelling, scientific extrapolation, and style-neutral prose; indeed, his favorite writer and, often, model is Joyce. On the other hand, he is certainly writing science fiction; his book is a purposeful exploration of the philosophical consequences of modern physics. (Readers should be aware that modern physics does not necessarily support Wilson's assumptions any more than Darwinian biology supports social Darwinism; Wilson is analogizing and theorizing, nothing more.) Thrown into the potpourri is a dollop of sex, a magnum of Wiccan magic, and more than a bit of mysticism. Wilson is not a writer for the unwary; the *Schrodinger's Cat* series is immensely enjoyable, but requires a reader who will think. Aficionados of space opera need not apply.

Greg Costikyan



GAMES RATING CHART

SCIENCE FICTION & SCIENCE FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Traveller	GDW	7/77	12	7.5	39	8.2	5	5.5
2. Imperium	GDW	12/77	10	7.3	32	8.1	6	2.5
3. Creature...Sheboygan	SPI	4/78	6	7.1	63	5.0	1	6.5
4. GEV	MGC	5	3	7.1	41	5.0	2	6.5
5. Freedom in the Galaxy	SPI	6/78	20	7.1	36	7.0	7	5.5
6. Starfleet Battles	TFG	79	13	7.1	29	6.5	2	6.5
7. Ogre	MGC	5/77	3	7.0	52	4.8	1	6.5
8. Cosmic Encounters	EP	76	12	7.0	23	3.5	1	2.0
9. Voyage of the Pandora	SPI	1/81	na	6.9	81	6.5	2	9.0
10. Dark Nebula	GDW	2/80	6	6.8	11	5.5	2	2.5
11. Battlefleet: Mars	SPI	4/77	18	6.8	32	6.8	6	3.0
12. John Carter of Mars	SPI	5/78	20	6.7	32	6.0	4	5.5
13. Stellar Conquest	MGC	2/75	13	6.7	22	5.8	6	3.0
14. Asteroid	GDW	80	6	6.7	19	5.5	2	4.0
15. TimeTripper	SPI	7/80	8	6.5	12	6.0	2	7.0
16. Objective: Moscow	SPI	3/78	27	6.5	18	5.0	30	5.0
17. Triplenatary	GDW	9/73	10	6.5	12	5.7	2	4.0
18. Villains & Vigilantes	FGUI	na	6	6.5	5	na	na	na
19. Wreck of the Pandora	SPI	5/80	8	6.4	69	6.0	3	7.0
20. Space Opera	FGUI	80	18	6.4	8	6.0	4	1.0
21. Snapshot	GDW	6/79	8	6.3	19	5.3	1	4.0
22. After the Holocaust	SPI	1/77	18	6.3	22	7.5	7	7.0
23. Mayday	GDW	2/78	6	6.2	21	4.9	2	4.0
24. Starship Troopers	AH	7/76	15	6.2	53	5.0	2	3.5
25. Starweb	FB	76	10	6.2	12	5.5	na	na
26. Invasion: America	SPI	12/75	18	6.1	30	5.5	6	4.5
27. Bloodtree Rebellion	GDW	11/79	13	6.1	28	6.0	5	2.5
28. Doctor Who	GW	na	20	6.1	4	na	na	na
29. Belter	GDW	6/79	12	6.0	11	5.8	4	2.5
30. Starforce	SPI	9/74	12	6.0	45	6.0	4	4.5
31. Outreach	SPI	11/76	12	6.0	36	6.0	5	4.0
32. Dune	AH	6/79	15	6.0	25	na	na	na
33. Robots	TFG	5	8	6.0	11	5.8	2	5.5
34. Star Fall	YP	8/79	13	5.9	8	na	na	na
35. War in the Ice	SPI	1/79	18	5.9	26	6.8	5	4.5
36. Star Soldier	SPI	1/77	12	5.9	27	7.1	7	3.5
37. Godsfire	MGC	79	16	5.9	14	7.1	8	1.5
38. Starfleet Battle Manual	GS	77	6	5.9	10	6.3	5	1.0
39. Warp War	MGC	77	3	5.9	37	4.5	1	5.0
40. Time War	YP	8/79	13	5.9	8	na	na	na
41. Marine: 2002	YP	12/79	17	5.8	6	6.1	4	5.0
42. Starfire	TFG	6/78	5	5.7	8	na	na	na
43. Trek-80	JG	na	15	5.7	3	na	na	na
44. StarGate	SPI	4/79	4	5.7	30	5.5	2	6.0
45. Olympica	MGC	na	3	5.6	24	5.5	1	2.0
46. Space Quest	TYR	na	na	5.6	5	na	na	na
47. Ice War	MGC	78	3	5.6	23	5.0	2	6.5
48. Lords of Middle Sea	TC	7/78	10	5.6	6	na	na	na
49. Ultimatum	YP	6/79	na	5.6	9	4.5	1	1.0
50. WorldKiller	SJ	3/80	8	5.6	58	3.5	1	4.0
51. Double Star	GDW	3/78	10	5.6	15	5.5	5	5.0
52. Cerberus	TFG	6/78	4	5.6	7	na	na	na
53. Artifact	MGC	80	4	5.5	10	5.5	2	6.0
54. Alpha Omega	AH	7/77	15	5.5	11	na	na	na
55. Chitin: 1	MGC	77	3	5.4	28	5.8	1	3.5
56. Awful Green Things	TSR	80	8	5.4	28	5.2	2	6.0
57. Vector 3	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	30	5.8	2	3.0
58. Titan Strike	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	29	6.0	2	5.5
59. Kung Fu 2100	SJG	80	3	5.3	16	5.3	3	5.7
60. Gamma World	TSR	78	10	5.3	21	na	na	na
61. Hot Spot	MGC	79	3	5.3	12	5.8	1	2.5
62. Starships & Spacemen	FGUI	na	7	5.3	8	na	na	na
63. Black Hole	MGC	78	3	5.2	23	5.0	2	6.5
64. Warriors Green Planet	FF	na	6	5.2	4	na	na	na
65. Rivets	MGC	79	3	5.2	30	5.2	1	2.1
66. Invasion of Air Eaters	MGC	79	3	5.2	18	5.6	1	2.4
67. Strange New Worlds	BL	na	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
68. Asteroid Zero-Four	TFG	6/79	4	5.0	9	na	na	na
69. Strike Team Alpha	GS	78	7	5.0	2	na	na	na
70. Metamorphosis/Alpha	TSR	76	5	5.0	23	6.0	9	1.0
71. War Sky Galleons	FF	na	6	4.8	4	na	na	na
72. Space Marines	FnT	na	6	4.8	4	na	na	na
73. Star Fighter	BL	na	na	4.7	5	na	na	na
74. 4th Dimension	TSR	79	10	4.6	6	na	na	na
75. Darkover	EP	79	12	4.5	7	4.5	3	3.0
76. Space Patrol	GS	77	5	4.4	5	na	na	na
77. Alien Space	GS	73	7	4.4	11	na	na	na
78. Star Probe	TSR	na	na	4.4	12	6.0	5	2.5
79. Annihilator/One World	MGC	79	3	4.4	18	2.5	1	1.5
80. Holy War	MGC	79	3	4.3	16	5.5	1	2.5
81. Galactic Conquest	FGUI	na	4	4.3	5	na	na	na
82. Galactic Grenadiers	RP	na	16	4.3	5	na	na	na
83. Star Lord	FB	9/72	5	4.3	5	6.0	4	4.5
84. Rift Trooper	AW	7/76	7	4.3	5	na	na	na
85. War of the Worlds	TFG	80	na	4.3	7	na	na	na
86. Starquest	OSG	na	4	4.1	7	na	na	na
87. Colony Delta	FGUI	na	12	4.1	4	na	na	na
88. Space Fighters	GS	78	5	4.0	4	na	na	na
89. Timelag	GmS	na	4	4.0	2	na	na	na
90. Superhero 2044	GS	77	7	3.8	7	na	na	na
91. Star Law	SPI	1/76	5	3.7	32	5.5	2	6.0
92. Formalhaut II	AW	na	7	3.6	6	na	na	na
93. Starfaring	FB	76	4	3.6	3	na	na	na
94. Arms Race	DC	na	na	3.4	3	na	na	na
95. Flash Gordon	FGUI	na	6	3.3	3	na	na	na
96. Quazar	EG	76	12	3.1	5	6.0	12	2.0
97. Stalk-1	C·C	4/76	12	3.0	2	na	na	na
98. Cyborg	EG	78	9	2.9	4	na	na	na
99. Warriors of Dark Star	TSR	na	na	2.6	3	na	na	na
100. War of Star Slavers	AW	na	13	2.3	4	na	na	na
101. ?	DC	na	na	2.0	7	na	na	na

FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Runequest	TC	8/78	12	7.4	16	7.0	7	1.0
2. DragonQuest	SPI	7/80	12	7.0	35	6.5	6	1.0
3. Melee	MGC	79	3	7.0	52	5.3	1	6.5
4. War of the Ring	SPI	11/77	20	7.0	58	6.1	6	4.5
5. Robin Hood	OSG	80	5	7.0	10	5.8	2	6.0
6. Adventures in Fantasy	EG	80	25	6.9	17	6.5	6	1.0
7. Wizard	MGC	79	3	6.9	39	5.8	1	6.0
8. White Bear/Red Moon	TC	11/76	10	6.7	16	5.0	3	6.0
9. Chivalry & Sorcery	FGUI	na	10	6.7	27	7.0	6	1.0
10. Dungeons & Dragons	TSR	12/74	10	6.7	62	6.5	5	1.0
11. Swashbuckler	YP	80	7	6.7	16	4.5	2	6.0
12. QUIRKS	EP	80	12	6.6	9	5.0	23	4.0
13. Death Test	MGC	79	3	6.6	35	5.8	1	1.0
14. Divine Right	TSR	79	10	6.5	18	5.2	4	8.0
15. Swords & Sorcery	SPI	7/78	20	6.5	35	6.0	3	5.0
16. Bushido	TYR	na	10	6.5	7	6.8	5	1.0
17. Nomad Gods	TC	5/77	10	6.4	12	5.2	3	6.0
18. Advanced D&D	TSR	79	39	6.4	49	6.0	5	1.0
19. Citadel of Blood	SPI	11/80	8	6.4	68	6.5	2	7.0
20. Intruder	TFG	1/80	4	6.4	16	5.7	2	6.0
21. DeathMaze	SPI	11/79	8	6.1	40	5.1	2	5.0
22. Tunnels & Trolls	FB	75	8	6.1	18	6.6	5	1.0
23. Hammer of Thor	SPI	3/80	19	6.1	6	6.7	4	3.0
24. Valkenberg Castle	TFG	1/80	4	6.1	9	na	na	na
25. Gondor	SPI	11/77	4	6.0	38	5.5	4	4.5
26. En Garde!	GDW	7/75	10	6.0	18	5.7	2	6.2
27. Arena of Death	SPI	9/80	8	6.0	66	6.0	1	6.0
28. Treasure Silver Dragon	MGC	80	4	6.0	17	6.0	2	6.8
29. Empire of Petal Throne	TSR	8/77	25	5.9	21	7.4	9	1.0
30. Sauron	SPI	11/77	4	5.8	39	6.6	4	5.5
31. Dungeon!	TSR	75	10	5.8	29	na	na	na
32. Sticks and Stones	MGC	78	3	5.7	23	5.0	2	6.5
33. Wizard's Quest	AH	79	15	5.6	21	4.5	2	2.0
34. Demons	SPI	11/79	8	5.6	32	5.2	2	7.0
35. Elric	TC	7/77	5	5.5	9	4.5	3	3.0
36. Sorcerer	SPI	10/75	15	5.5	36	6.0	2	6.0
37. Swordquest	TFG	12/79	5	5.5	8	na	na	na
38. Monsters Monsters	MGC	79	4	5.5	15	6.0	1	1.0
39. Beast Lord	YP	6/79	15	5.4	6	7.0	5	4.0
40. Stomp!	TC	11/79	3	5.4	10	na	na	na
41. Citadel	FGUI	na	5	5.4	8	na	na	na
42. Tribes of Crane	SS	78	3	5.4	8	na	na	na
43. Lords & Wizards	FGUI	na	12	5.3	8	na	na	na
44. King Arthur's Knights	TC	7/76	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
45. Arduin Grimoire	GG	78	28	5.1	11	na	na	na
46. Sire's Revenge	TSR	79	7	5.0	22	na	na	na
47. Spellmaker	BL	na	na	5.0	7	na	na	na
48. Mythology	YP	4/80	14	5.0	6	7.0	3	4.5
49. Spellbinder	TFG	80	4	5.0	6	5.8	3	3.0
50. Shooting Stars	YP	80	7	4.9	5	na	na	na
51. Dragon Lords	FGUI	na	na	4.9	4	na	na	na
52. Sword Quest	TFG	12/79	5	4.9	13	na	na	na

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: AH=Avalon Hill; AW=Attack Wargaming; BL=Battleline; C·C=C-in-C Metalcasting; CL=Cleaver; DC=Dave Casciano Co.; EG=Excalibre Games; EP=Eon Products; FB=Flying Buffalo Inc.; FF=Facts & Fantasy; FGUI=Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc.; FnT=Fantac; GDW=Game Designers' Workshop; GG=Grimoire Games; GmS=Gameshop; GS=GameScience; GW=Games Workshop Ltd.; JG=Judges Guild; MGC=Metagaming Concepts; OSG=Operational Studies Group; RP=Ral Partha; SJG=Steve Jackson Games; SPI=Simulations Publications Inc.; SS=Schubel & Sons; TC=The Chaosium; TFG=Task Force Games; TSR=Tactical Studies Rules; TYR=Tyr Gamemakers; YP=Yaquinto Publications. *Acceptability Rating* is the game's overall popularity. *% Played* is the percentage of readers who have played the game within the last twelve months. *Complexity Rating* is the relative complexity of the game on a scale of 1 (simplest) to 9. *Solitaire* is a game's ease of solitaire play on a scale of 1 (nearly impossible) to 9.

Universe *[continued from page 28]*

he is encouraged to do so. The creatures are very detailed; they are *not* broad generalizations which leave you with the feeling you've just read a text on basic zoology. We've gone in for visual and tactile descriptions rather than classifications, which will help the GM to referee them and the players to relate to them.

The rules were written with the beginning role-player in mind. No set of role-playing rules is easy; many people are intimidated by the "oh my god, it's as long as a book!" feeling they receive when they first pick it up. Our stated purpose, however, was to write rules that anyone could understand. Avoiding role-playing jargon as much as possible, we tried to say things in plain English (with the help of our editors), and say them as succinctly as possible.

The novice role-player who wants to try *Universe* should start out by leisurely reading through the rules and examining the Interstellar Display and other aids provided. If he intends to GM, he should read the enclosed adventure, checking back to the rules whenever the descriptions of characters or situations therein raise questions. He should gather his group of players together for an evening before they actually play and let them see the Gamesmaster's Guide, showing them the sections on Character Action, Skills, and Character Generation in particular. Then they should use the personal combat rules and run a firefight with the characters provided in the adventure.

This approach will solve two problems: it will get them through a personal combat situation, which is often the hardest system to learn, and it will familiarize them with the characters they will play in the adventure. Each player should then choose a character from those provided and agree when to meet again. If they can procure a copy of the rules to read before play begins, so much the better. The fledgling GM should spend any intervening time becoming conversant with the *encounter* systems (character vs. non-player character, character vs. creature), the story line of the adventure, and the world on which the adventure takes place.

When all meet again to play out the adventure, it should become clear what problems have arisen which should be discussed then, before any misunderstandings take place. The first play-through is going to be very rough and all concerned will undoubtedly miss rules, misinterpret rules, and forget about rules. These are all necessary happenings and the evening should not be billed as anything else except a fun time for all.

If the GM has succeeded in sparking a little interest in the players, he should have them back over to play out other scenarios in the star system the adventure provides while he starts creating his own *Universe*. ■■

Feedback

Reader Survey, Ares nr. 10

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 enclosures 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" an AVERAGE rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

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.

4. Return of the Stainless Steel Rat (game)
5. Return of the Stainless Steel Rat (story)
6. The Camp of Alla-Akabar (adventure)
7. There's Only One Universe
8. DeltaVee Enhanced
9. Science for Science Fiction
10. Facts for Fantasy
11. Media (review)
12. Books (review)
13. Film and Television (review)
14. Games (review)
15. DragonNotes
16. Designer's Notes
17. This issue overall

18. Is this issue better than the last one? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

19. Did you send in the feedback card for your last issue of *Ares*? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

20. Assume that you don't subscribe to *Ares*. Would the quality of this issue alone motivate you to subscribe? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

21. For how many issues have you had a continuous subscription to *Ares*? 0 = I do not subscribe; 1 = This is my first issue; 2 = This is my second issue; 3 = This is my third issue...8 = This is my eighth to tenth issue; 9 = I am a *Lifetime Subscriber* to *Ares* (regardless of the number of issues received).

22. Your age: 1 = 13 years old or younger; 2 = 14-17; 3 = 18-21; 4 = 22-27; 5 = 28-35, 6 = 36 or older.

23. Your sex: 1 = Male; 2 = Female.

24. 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.

25. How long have you been playing conflict simulation games? 0 = less than a year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2 years . . .8 = 8 years; 9 = 9 or more years.

26. 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 = 41 or more hours.

27. 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.

28. 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 = *WorldKiller*; 7 = *BattleFleet: Mars*; 9 = *Air War*.

29. What percentage of the games you plan to buy in the next year do you expect will be SPI games? 1 = 10%; 2 = 20%; 3 = 30%; . . 9 = 90%

30. Pick the one area of science fiction that you must enjoy reading: 1 = Space opera/science fantasy; 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 (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/sociological/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 to 10; 6 = 11 to 15; 7 = 16 to 20; 8 = 21 to 25; 9 = 26 or more.

33. 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 = Superhero/heroic adventure; 7 = Anthropomorphic fantasy (e.g., *Watership Down*); 8 = Horror/occult; 9 = Other (please write in the category description).

34. 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 evildoer); 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).

35. 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.

36. 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 a previous issue of *Ares*; 5 = An ad in a sf/f gaming magazine; 6 = An ad in a science fiction magazine; 7 = An ad in a science fact magazine; 8 = An ad in another kind of magazine not mentioned; 9 = Other (please specify on the Feedback card).

37. 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 interests would be "5"; and, of course, pure sf interest would rate a "9".

38. How many persons, including yourself, will read this copy of *Ares*? 1 = 1; 2 = 2...8 = 8; 9 = 9 or more.

39. Would you like to see role-playing adventures rated in *Ares* Feedback and then listed in a way similar to the Games Rating Chart? 1 = yes; 2 = no. 0 = no opinion.

40. Would you like to see computer games rated in *Ares* Feedback and then listed in a way similar to the Games Rating Chart? 1 = yes; 2 = no. 0 = no opinion.

41. Do you own or plan to buy one of the following microcomputer systems? 0 = I have no interest in microcomputers or microcomputer gaming; 1 = I own an Apple II; 2 = plan to buy an Apple II; 3 = own a Radio Shack TRS-80; 4 = plan to buy a TRS-80; 5 = own an Atari 800; 6 = plan to buy an Atari 800; 7 = own some other microcomputer; 8 = plan to buy some other microcomputer; 9 = have no plans to buy a microcomputer because I already have access to a microcomputer.

Questions 42 and 43 ask about your income and possessions. Since feedback cards are anonymous, we hope you'll be willing to help us develop statistical information to help us attract advertisers; if you'd rather not, simply respond "0" for your answers. Thanks.

42. Your individual personal income: 1 = less than $5000; 2 = between $5,000-10,000; 3 = between $10,000-12,500; 4 = $12,500-15,000; 5 = $15-17,500; 6 = $17,500-20,000; 7 = $20-22,500; 8 = $22,500-25,000; 9 = over $25,000.

43. Your total household income: 1 = less than $10,000; 2 = between $10-15,000; 3 = $15-17,500; 4 = $17,500-20,000; 5 = $20-22,500; 6 = $22,500-25,000; 7 = $25-30,000; 8 = $30-40,000; 9 = over $40,000.

Question 44 through 62 ask about purchases you've made during the past twelve months or plan to make. Please answer the questions with the statement that is most correct: 1 = I have bought such an item within the past twelve months; 2 = someone else in the family or house has bought this item within the past twelve months; 3 = I plan to purchase this item in the near future; 4 = someone in the family/house plans to purchase this item in the near future; 5 = there is no intention of buying this item.

44. Hand-held electronic game
45. Television video game
46. Video cassette recorder
47. Video disk player
48. Hand-held electronic calculator
49. Digital or LED clock radio
50. Digital or LED watch
51. Portable color television set
52. Console color television set
53. Polaroid-type camera
54. Instamatic-type camera
55. 35mm camera
56. Super 8-type movie camera
57. Videotape camera
58. Hi-fi or stereo component system
59. Hi-fi or stereo modular system
60. Cassette tape recorder/deck
61. Radio/speakers/tape deck for car
62. Portable electric typewriter
63. Do you belong to a record/tape club?
64. Do you belong to a videotape club?
65. Do you belong to a military book club?
66. Do you belong to a science fiction book club?
67. Do you belong to a mystery book club?
68. Do you belong to a history book club?
69. Do you belong to a theatrical book club?
70. Do you belong to a literary/publisher book club?
71. Do you belong to a book-of-the-month club?
72. Do you belong to a computer book club?

73. Would you like to see more articles on *Ares* games (such as the *DeltaVee* article in this issue) included in *Ares*? 0 = no opinion; 1 = yes; 2 = no.

74. Would you like to see more articles on other science fiction and fantasy games by other publishers, examining such things as variants and additional scenarios, operational analyses of the tactics and strategies in playing these games, game profiles, and so forth? 0 = no opinion; 1 = yes; 2 = no.

75. What is the one feature in the past few issues of *Ares* you feel needs change to make it better (through alterations in quality, quantity, format, etc.)? 0 = don't change anything; 1 = the game; 2 = the fiction; 3 = science fact/fantasy background articles; 4 = material connected with the game; 5 = DragonNotes; 6 = reviews of the media; 7 = reviews of the games; 8 = art work; 9 = game analysis articles.

76. How would you describe how often you play *Ares* issue games? 0 = I never play the games; 1 = I rarely play the games (not more than once or twice); 2 = I often play the games (about four to ten times), 3 = I frequently play the games (more than ten times).

77. How often do you play *Ares* issue games with other players? 0 = I never play the issue games; 1 = I play the games solitaire only; 2 = I occasionally play the games with one or more players; 3 = I almost always play the issue games with one or more players.

We would like to find out how you feel about having role-playing adventures appear in Ares. Please answer questions 78 and 79, using the appropriate responses. 0 = I don't care if such adventures appear in Ares or not; 1 = I would like to see such adventures appear rarely (not more than one a year); 2 = I would like to see such adventures appear occasionally (about once every two or three issues); 3 = I would like to see such adventures appear frequently (at least every other issue); 4 = I would prefer that such adventures not appear at all. Rate each kind of adventure seperately.

78. DragonQuest Adventures
79. Universe Adventures

Rate the following game proposals on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 indicating very little inclination to buy the game if published and 9 indicating a definite intention to purchase.

80. The Krishna Chronicles. Under the leadership of Brazil, the human species has created a galaxy-wide Empire. In one corner of this Empire is the beautiful world of Krishna, with its lovely blue forests and the warrior na-

tives who sail their square-riggers beneath the three moons. It is a world of swordsmen and sorcerer-kings who battle constantly, kept "protected" in its pristine innocence from the encroachment of technology. Humans may visit this lovely world, but they must swear to ignore technology and live by the code of the broadsword. *The Krishna Chronicles*, based on the stories and novels by L. Sprague de Camp, would recreate at an operational level the clash of armies vying for control of Krishna. There would be two game systems included in the game: the first would be a character game in which players take on the roles of various humans interfering in Krishna's history and would emphasize the various goals and personal combats the characters would experience, and the second would be a campaign game for control of the various magical and barbarian kingdoms of Krishna. The rules would cover magic vs. technology, leading campaigns, individual duels, the various beasties and beauties of Krishna, and other chromatic detail for a rich fantasy world. To sell for $20, including a short story or article by Mr. de Camp (subject to agreement with the Author).

81. The Corridors of Time. What started out as a normal scientific expedition into the future via the time dilator has suddenly turned into a terrifying headlong plunge towards eternity. A party of four scientists are being tunneled into the future at ever increasing speeds, though they are able to stop the machine at certain times in the future, they are unable to reverse their course. If they are not careful, they may bypass the sun's death and even the death of the universe. *The Corridors of Time* would use a modified *Voyage of the Pandora* paragraph-story system and *TimeTripper* game system tactical display. Part of the game would be discovering what has caused the dilator to malfunction — internal mechanical failure, outside manipulation, or possible sabotage — and then reversing the machine's course before the universe ends. Along the way the one to four players would meet unusual beings of the far future who may be either helpful or antagonistic and who may even decide to join the time travellers in their adventure. *The Corridors of Time* would contain a 22" x 34" mapsheet containing time tracks and tactical displays, 200 playing pieces, and rules with an extensive paragraph selection. A possible game for the small fry! $12.

82. License to Kill. As agent #2 leaned over to light his cigarette, he caught the furtive movement of a figure in the darkness. Casually flicking the still lighted match away, he stretched his arms and brought them down behind his head where his Baretta was concealed. In a lightning quick move, he dropped to one knee and pumped the full clip into the man who was by then only 3 feet away. Fity, he thought. *License to Kill* is a role-playing game based on the exploits of James Bond, Napoleon Solo, Our Man Flint, and any other suave, body-beautiful-age secret agent hero you may have known. (Any relationship between this game and the real world will be purely coincidental.) Important concepts in the game's design would be solo adventures (the secret service agents worked best when not encumbered with "helpers"), group play within an Agency of sorts, gadgetry of these heros (what has Q come up with this time?), sex, scenario generation, suspension of reality, etc. Anything — however unlikely — these heros would be able to do in the novels or movies, the players will be able to do in the game (yes, even fall out of a plane without your parachute, catching your enemy and taking his parachute away). The game would contain a Gamesmaster's Handbook, Agent Training Manual, combat display, and full introductory scenario. To sell for $20.00

83. Chronicles of Amber. Based on Roger Zelazny's fantasy series, this game would put the player in place of one of the children of Oberon, as they struggle with each other to gain power throughout time as well as in beautiful Amber. A map would be included detailing various locations where personal combat may take place, as well as plans of the castle and the Pattern of Amber. Actually utilizing the Deck of Trumps, each player would have some control over his siblings' actions and locations through the use of the cards, but would himself fall prey to others who can control him in the same manner. Accurate personal combat system would be included to resolve those minor fraternal spats. Amongst other possible inclusions is an army combat system with siege rules for those times when tempers get out of hand. Alliances (and broken promises) would both be encouraged. The game would include one 22" x 34" map, 200 counters, 50 tiles and 16 pages of rules in a 2" box for $18. Availability subject to agreement with the author.

84. The High History of the Runestaff. Based on Michael Moorcock's sweeping epic of heroic adventure in the far future, this game would chronicle the efforts of Dorian Hawkmoon to defeat the maniacal demons who call themselves the men of Granbretan. Covering both the three volumes of the History of the Runestaff plus the Chronicles of Count Brass, the game would pit Hawkmoon, Count Brass, Oladhan, D'Averc, Bowgentle, and the forces of Kamarg against Baron Meliadus and the advancing forces of the Dark Empire. The game would start soon after the initial onslaught of Granbretan's forces and continue until the razing of either Londra or the Karmag. The characters would battle the enemy forces and go on quests to seek aid from such artifacts as the Sword of the Dawn and the Runestaff itself. Additional scenarios would start at the defeat of Granbretan and the search of Hawkmoon for his wife and children, captured by the Dark Empire even as victory was within his grasp. With both a personal combat and army combat system, a random event system would simulate the sometimes strange workings of the destiny of the Runestaff itself. The game would include a 22" x 34" map, 200 counters, 50 tiles, 16 pages of rules, to sell for $18.00. Availability subject to agreement with the author.

The Lair of the Worm. *This* **DragonQuest** *adventure depicts the attempt to track down and kill Scratha the Dragon, recently risen from its century long sleep. Set on the* **Frontiers of Alusia** *map, this would be a trilogy of adventures, each requiring two sittings to play through, thus taking approximately six sessions of play in all. Each adventure would be complete unto itself or they may be played together in order to form an epic adventure. This adventure would emphasize brain power rather than brawn, as the only real way to even the odds against the beast are to collect two artifacts of power lost long ago in combat against the worm's father.* **The Lair of the Worm** *could sell in two different configurations; please rate them separately.*

85. A trilogy pack of three booklets or one soft-bound book with all three adventures included; to sell for $15.00.

86. Each adventure published separately in soft-bound booklets; each booklet to sell for $6.00.

SPI believes there is a need for introductory role-playing games, games the non-role-player could pick up without needing divine guidance. These games (questions #7 through #9) would be narrow in scope, dealing with a specific "world" within their genre, rather than attempting to cover all the bases at once. They would include an introductory scenario and give guidelines for rules expansion. All would include 32 pages of rules (rules and adventure), one map or display, and possibly 100 counters. Each would debut in **Ares** *and would then be available separately for $6 to 8.*

87. Tieron Vanwa. Fantasy role-playing in a world where magic and religion are bitter enemies. The world in which it takes place includes humans and elves, but all other creatures are semi or non-intelligent. Characters would choose whether to believe in the gods or in magic (which is considered heresy in the Church). All characters would be able to use magic or perform miracles, and also to train and become proficient in the arts of personal combat. Emphasis would be placed on character (personality) creation, allowing players to mold their characters as they wish, and improve whichever facet of their personality they wish. Combat would use a matrix system and no dice, allowing for the superior swordsman to defeat his opponent by wits and skill. Monsters would be used as tools of the personalities hostile to the characters, rather than being an enemy unto themselves.

88. Adventures in Alien Space. Science fiction role-playing in unexplored space. Characters would be the inhabitants of a Federation starship whose mission is to explore strange new worlds, investigate their findings, and transmit any conclusions to the nearest Starbase. Problem-solving would be emphasized, since personal combat is viewed by the Federation as a last resort when dealing with virgin worlds. The skills detailed would deal mainly with the ability to analyze and gather data. The heart of the GM's duties will be to generate worlds for the players to explore. A system for the creation of these worlds would be included, as would systems for the creation of artifacts, creatures, and other problems for the characters to solve.

89. Laredo. Wild West role-playing in the world of *Gunsmoke, Have Gun Will Travel, Bat Masterson, The Wild, Wild West,* and any other fanciful TV western you might have seen. Characters would choose to be proficient at any number of talents, including horsemanship, handguns, roping, robbing, riding (the three R's), trick shooting, ambush, etc. No characteristics as such would be used nor an experience point system; rather, each talent would be improved as it was used. Included would be a map of the pony express routes, train lines, and stage coach routes, as the players choose to be lawmen or villains. Play would include setting an ambush, fighting duels, chasing the villains, wooing the schoolmarm, and so forth.

90. Superhero! Ultra Lad and Snake Woman bound towards Dr. Psycho and his evil beasts. Buildings crumble and subways upheave as the daring duo valiantly battle the metal monstrosities. Things look bleak for the forces of good; the mad scientists brain-drain ray is sapping their wills. But Mr. Amazing appears in the nick of time in his Amazomobile and decks Dr. Psycho with one mighty blow. Now leaderless, the mecho-beasts grind to a halt. *Superhero!* is a role-playing game of fantastic heroics and adventure set in the present day. Players take the role of a superhero or a supervillain, each created using a unique hero/villain generation system. A large selection of possible origins, powers and weaknesses allow the players to recreate any existing superbeing or to develop one from their own imagination. The Gamesmaster introduces other heros, villains, victims and scientific gadgetry into play to lead the heros and villains into quest and battle (quite often against each other). The game would include a 64-page book of simple rules and "story" pages, a selection of combat displays for every type of environment on and around earth (air, space, underground, city, mountain tops, etc.), and 200 counters of various shapes and sizes. To sell for $8.00 in a box.

91. The Role-Player. A bi-monthly 40-page magazine devoted to all types of role-playing games. *Universe* and *DragonQuest* adventures and supplemental material would be featured each issue. Columns, reviews and advice on all role-playing products would be included regularly. $15 per year.

92. The Cygnus Carina Arm. A *Universe* supplement with an expanded Interstellar Display. The 22" x 34" map would be similar in appearance to the existing display, but would be at a scale of 10 to 16 light years to the inch with Federation space at the core. Known beacons would also be shown and extensive rules for creating additional stars would allow the GM to create his own interstellar communites. Astronomical phenomena such as O and B type stars, neutron stars, wolf-ravet stars, nebulae, interstellar dust clouds, dwarf stars, comets, binary and trinary star systems, gas giants, black holes, and the theoretical worm holes and white holes would be explained. The Federation's discoveries beyond settled space and an adventure in the form of a long-range exploration mission would complete this supplement. To sell for $12.

93. Metropolis. A *Universe* supplement with a complete map and guide to a city of the 24th Century. The map would present the individual and mass transportation, structure and support networks of the central area of a capital city at a scale of 1:2500 (1 cm = 25 meters). Starscrapers, modular housing projects, hydroponic parks, skyports, spaceport terminals, industrial complexes, leisure centers and other points of personal and commercial interest would be shown using a color-coded three-dimensional mapping system. Smaller maps of a mining town, a pioneer exploration settlement and a psionic institute would also be included. Special rules for character combat in built up areas, a host of urban NPC's, and guidelines for transferring information from the maps to the Action Display would complete the supplement. To sell for $10.

94-96. No question.

Call for Game Proposals

In the Feedback section of every issue of *Ares* we propose about a dozen fantasy and science fiction game ideas for your approval or disapproval. We would like also to hear your ideas. Type them up and send them to the attention of John Butterfield here at SPI. Follow the format of the proposals in this issue: 10 to 20 typwritten lines including a brief background, a description of game mechanics (what other game might it be similar to, if any) and a summary of possible game parts. All submissions shall be understood to be freely given to SPI with no expectation of remuneration or the retention by the submitter of any rights to any intellectual property or idea implicit or explicit in the suggestion.

DELTA VEE ENHANCED *(continued from page 26)*

Map Deployment:

A	B	C

Player 1 (Posedy) Deployment:

One Corco *Mu* (spaceship counter A) with ten arsenal pods, one battle communications pod and one energy pod. The ship is set up facing any direction in hex 0707 on Map A with a velocity of 5. **(Note:** All pods and the hull have an armor level of 2. Also, the ship has a forcefield of 2.) One *Dagger* (counter B) with one energy pod and one crew pod. This ship enters in hex 0707 on Map A under the following condition: If at any time the energy pod on the *Mu* is damaged or has used up all its energy, the *Dagger* may be brought on to refuel the ship. The *Dagger* may transfer its energy pod to the *Mu* if it is in the same hex with the other ship for one friendly Movement Phase. The *Mu* must jettison one of its pods to be able to accept the new energy pod (a destroyed pod fulfills this condition).

Player 2 (Hai-Katu) Deployment:

Three Corco *Gamma* (spaceship counters A, B and C) each with a light weapon pod and two buffered cargo pods. Two Corco *Zetas* (counters D and E) each with a hunter pod, a light weapons pod, a crew pod, two buffered cargo pods and an energy pod. One Corco *Iota* (this counter must be created) with two hunter pods, a tractor beam pod, three buffered cargo pods, a crew pod, an energy pod and a jump pod. One Corco *Mu* (this counter must be created) with two light weapons pods, two hunter pods, a battlecraft pod (with a *Terwillicker-5000* battlecraft), a tractor beam pod, four buffered cargo pods, and two crew pods. These ships are deployed anywhere on Map C facing any direction, and with a velocity from 1 to 4.

Victory Conditions:

For each ship the Posedy player destroys, he receives one Victory Point. If the *Dagger* resupply ship is brought into play, the Posedy player loses one Victory Point. If his ship has more than six pods *damaged*, he loses 2 Victory Points. If more than three pods are *destroyed*, he loses 2 Victory Points more. If the *Mu* is destroyed, the Posedy player automatically loses. The Posedy player wins if he has 2 Victory Points by the end of the game. **(Note:** The game continues until one side is completely destroyed; it is thus possible for the Posedy player to have at least two Victory Points, but still lose the game if his ship is destroyed.)

SCENARIO 10: The Chess Players

Marjan and Gandapor are multi-billionaires who have built far-flung financial empires. Usually acting outside Federation laws, the two men have been known to do anything to make an extra Tran or two. Frequent raids on each other's shipping has lately caused such strain that each man is determined to eliminate the quasi-military fleets of his rival. The two assembled fleets meet near Beta Hydra to determine which empire will come out on top.

Each player has 175,000 Trans with which to build a fleet using the accompanying Craft and Pod Cost Chart. Each player should keep his fleet secret until the combat begins; at the end of the game players should examine each other's expenditures to make sure the opponent is more honest than the billionaire he is representing. If a player cheats, he automatically loses.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C	D

Player 1 Deployment:

Before ships are set up, the player secretly writes down one hex number on any map. When play is ready to begin, the player sets up his fleet within one hex of the hex chosen, facing in any direction and with a velocity of 1 to 4.

Player 2 Deployment:

The second player sets up his fleet following the same directions as those for the first player.

Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy his opponent's fleet entirely is the winner. ■■

Down in the Dungeons?

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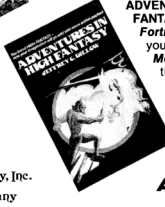

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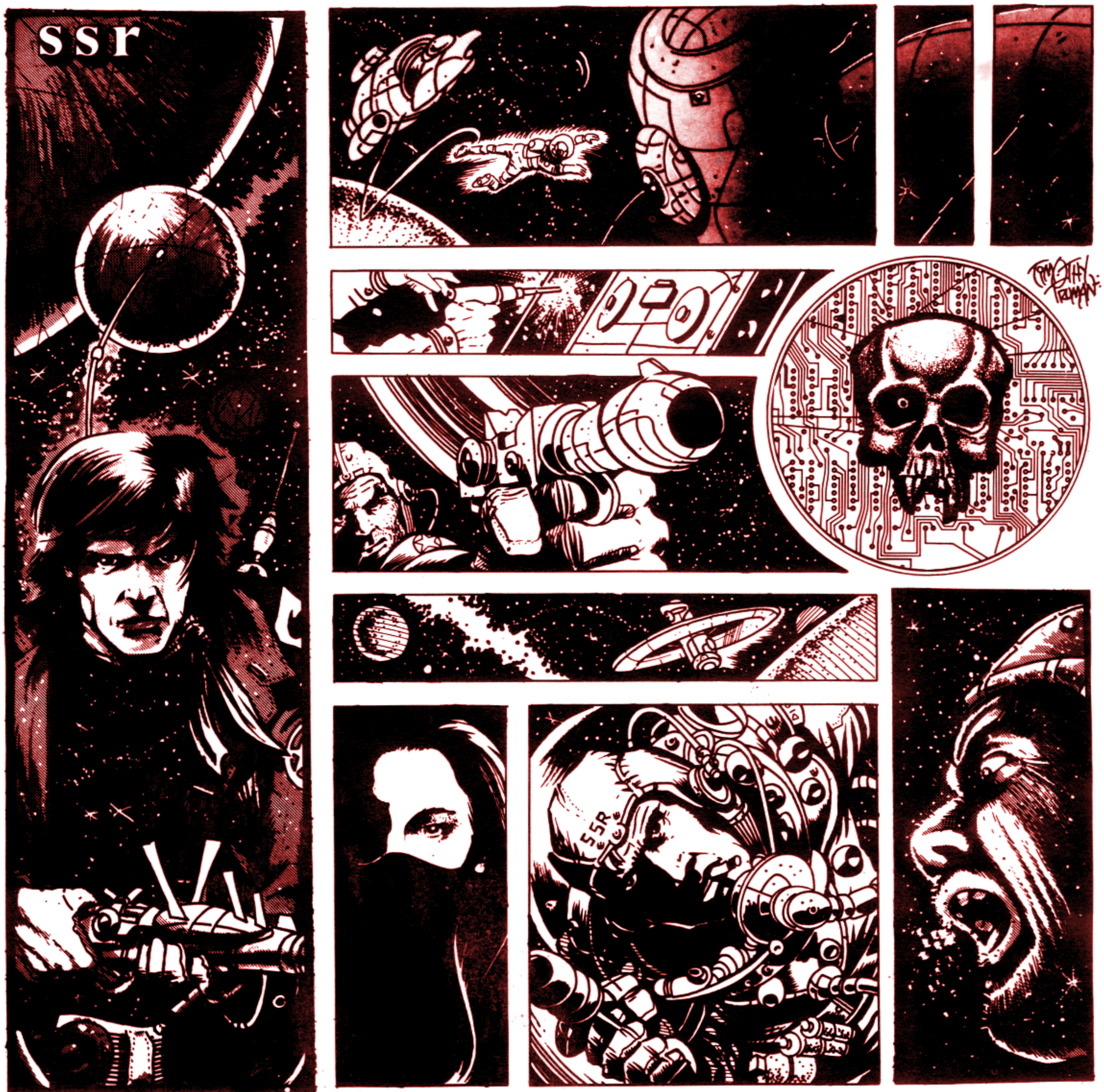
HARRY HARRISON'S
THE RETURN OF
THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT
RULES OF PLAY



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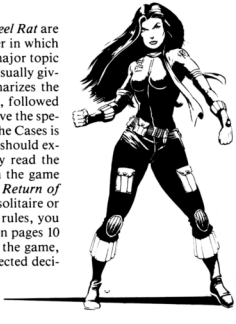
Paragraphs

Read This First:

The rules to *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* 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 usually given a General Rule or description which summarizes the rules in that Section. This is, in most instances, 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 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 and a "trial run" made. *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* is designed to be played solitaire or with two players. Note that, when reading the rules, you should avoid reading through the paragraphs on pages 10 through 15. These paragraphs are the heart of the game, and their intent is to challenge you with unexpected decisions and events.



Names and characters used by permission of Harry Harrison.

Inventory of Game Parts

Each copy of *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* should contain the following components:

One 22″ × 34″ mapsheet

One sheet of 140 die-cut counters

One 16-page rules folder

Two dice (not in *Ares* edition)

If any of these components are missing or damaged, notify SPI, Customer Service Department, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010.

Rules Questions

We hope you enjoy this SPI game. Should you have any difficulty interpreting the rules, please write to SPI, phrasing your question so that it can be answered by a simple sentence, word, or number. You must enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. Write to: SPI, Rules Questions Editor for The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010

[1.0] Introduction

Once again, the lives of helpless victims are at stake and a champion must be found. A space station dominated by a berserk computer, must be penetrated; the computer, malevolently misprogrammed, must be shut down; the villain, prodded by a motive known to none, must be exposed. And what man alone can accomplish so much without straining your credulity to its breaking point? What master of interstellar derring-do can uncover a plausible solution to an impossible dilemma? Who but Slippery Jim diGriz — the man who has already saved the universe twice — once more abroad in *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*.

[2.0] Game Components

GENERAL RULE:

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat consists of one 22″ × 34″ map, 140 counters (80 single size and 60 double size), and a 16-page booklet of rules and story paragraphs. The boxed version also includes two 6-sided dice.

CASES:

[2.1] THE MAP

Printed on the game mapsheet are two Tactical Displays and the Space Station map, as well as various tracks and tables. Note that the Space Station is printed around one of the Tactical Displays. The tracks and tables include: two Alertness and Suspension of Disbelief Tracks (one for each Tactical Display); the Terrain Key; the Die Roll Chit Holding Box; the Villain Matrix (16.25); the Hand-to-Hand Combat Effects Table (12.16); the Weapons Table (12.28); the Wound Table (12.47); and the Decompression Table (14.3).

The numbering system printed on the Space Station map identifies each of the boxes on the map. Outwards, the boxes are numbered **A1**, **A2**, **A3**, **B1**, **B2**, **B3**, **C1**, **C2**, and **C3**. Clockwise, starting and returning to the top of the display, boxes are numbered from **01** to **60**. Thus, the topmost box of the display is **C301**, and the box immediately counterclockwise to it is **C360**.

[2.2] THE PARAGRAPHS

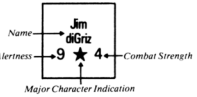
The paragraphs describe all the events that may occur during the game. Each is assigned a three-digit number; these numbers identify the paragraphs and do not affect the sequence in which they are read.

[2.3] THE PLAYING PIECES

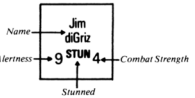
The counters include 36 Villain Chits, 8 Character counters, 7 Robot Stunned markers, 17 Robot counters, 46 Equipment counters, and 26 game markers.

SAMPLE COUNTERS

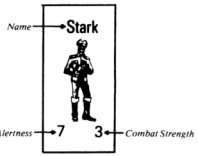
Major Character Counter: Front



Major Character Counter: Back



Minor Character Counter: Front



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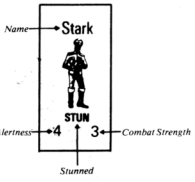
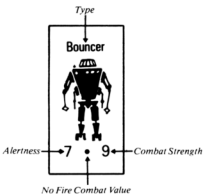
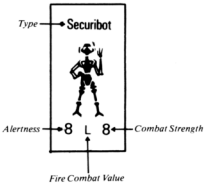


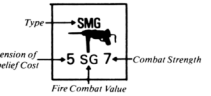
Robot Counter: Front



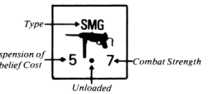
Robot Counter: Back



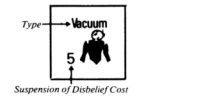
Fire Weapon Counter: Front



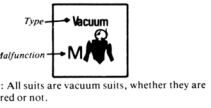
Fire Weapon Counter: Back



Suit Counter: Front

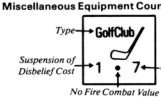


Suit Counter: Back

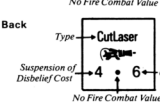


Note: All suits are vacuum suits, whether they are armored or not.

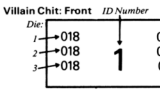
Miscellaneous Equipment Counter: Front



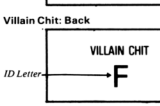
Back



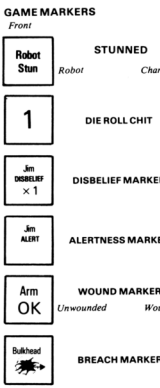
Villain Chit: Front *ID Number*



Villain Chit: Back



GAME MARKERS



[3.0] The Cast

Not necessarily in order of appearance.

James "Slippery Jim" diGriz: The galaxy's greatest criminal — and crime fighter — our hero, debonair, balding, with a taste for the finer things in life.

Angelina diGriz: His wife; competent, beautiful, and insanely jealous. If anyone is a match for diGriz, it's another diGriz.

Commander Stark: Grizzled, dour, and a military SOB, Stark is Assistant Chief of Security aboard the space station.

Deputy Commander Trina: Red-haired and attractive, Trina is acting commander of the station.

Dr. Putz: Bearded and somewhat loud, Putz is assistant science officer, originally trained as a geologist.

Rita Marz: Young and somewhat vague, Marz is a waitress at the Mexican Mensch, one of the better restaurants on the station.

Joe Woloski, MBA: Pudgy and rather excitable, Woloski is a businessman trapped on the station when it was isolated by the mad computer.

Technician Corona: Greasy and clad in overalls, Corona does most of the station's day-to-day maintenance.

[4.0] Sequence of Play

CASES:

[4.1] HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Follow the steps outlined in 4.2 (Set-Up), and then follow the Game-Turn Sequence outlined in 4.3. During each Game-Turn, you will be referred to one or more paragraphs; when referred to a paragraph, read it and follow the instructions therein. When one Game-Turn is completed, begin another. Continue to play out Game-Turns until (a) your character is dead; (b) your Suspension of Disbelief Index exceeds 75; or (c) the computer is deactivated. In the first two cases, you have lost; in the last case, you must refer to the clues given you by the paragraphs in the course of the game, and try to figure out the identity of the villain. You have won if you succeed in (a) deactivating the computer without spending more than 75 Suspension of Disbelief Points, and (b) correctly identifying the villain.

[4.2] SET-UP

A. Villain Determination
Sort the Villain Chits and choose one stack of chits, as specified in 5.0. Roll one die and place a Die Roll Chit with the same number as the die roll in the Die Roll Chit Holding Box on the game map.

B. Outfitting
Place the Suspension of Disbelief markers and the Alertness marker on the appropriate tracks on the game map. Place Wound markers on the Tactical Display. Choose the equipment your character is to take with him into the space station, and place counters for such equipment on the Tactical Display.

C. Entrance
Decide whether you wish to play Jim or Angelina. Place your character's counter in any box on the Space Station Map which contains an entry arrow (see Terrain Key).

[4.3] GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

A. Movement
Examine the position of your character on the Space Station Map and choose one adjacent box to which you wish him to move. Determine the effects of moving through the door between the two boxes (if any); if there is no door, determine the effect of using the cutting laser. If your character does not have the cutting laser and there is no door, he may not enter the box. Next, move your character's counter into his destination box.

B. Exploration
Determine the contents of the new box. If the box was previously visited, skip this step.

C. Interaction
Unless the box is empty or contains nothing of interest, your character may be forced to make a decision, engage robots or characters in combat, and/or make an Alertness Check. Use the rules for such to resolve this kind of interaction.

D. Reorganization
If the box contains any equipment, your character may pick the equipment up. At the same time, you may move the equipment markers on the Tactical Display and give any allied characters equipment or take equipment away from them. Weapons may be reloaded (if ammunition is available), and pills and first aid kits may be used. Jim may rearrange characters and robots in his control on the Tactical Display; if Jim has been joined by new characters or robots, place their counters on the display.

[4.4] COMBAT SEQUENCE

A. Initiative Determination Segment
Determine the Alertness Ratings of each being (i.e., characters and robots) involved in combat. The being with the highest Alertness Rating has the First Being Segment; the being with the second highest Rating then has the second Being Segment; and so on, until each being has conducted a Being Segment.

B. First Being Segment

1. *Movement.* The being may *either* move one box on the Tactical Display *or* change its facing by 90°; it may not do both.

b. *Equipment.* If the being is stunned, it becomes unstunned, but may take no further action. If it is not stunned and is adjacent to an enemy being, it may engage that being in hand-to-hand combat. If it has a fire weapon, it may use that weapon to attack an enemy being. If it is a character, it may exchange equipment.

C. Subsequent Being Segments
The being with the next highest Alertness Rating repeats Segment B; this continues until all beings have executed a Being Segment. Once they have done so, a new Combat Round is begun. Combat Rounds are repeated until (a) your character is dead, or (b) all your opponents are dead or enslaved.

[5.0] Villain Determination

GENERAL RULE:

In order to win, you must correctly identify the villain responsible for warping the computer's programming. At various times, your character will meet some of the characters

who may be responsible, and will discover clues which may help him identify the villain. There are six possible villains (see 3.0).

PROCEDURE:

Each of the 36 Villain Chits is a double-sized counter. On one side of each counter is printed a letter from **A** to **F**; on the other side are six three-digit numbers and a single-digit ID Code (see 2.3).

1. Sort the Villain Chits by letter. Stack all chits with the same ID letter together. Once you have six stacks of six chits each, flip each stack over so that the numbered sides, not the lettered sides, are showing.

2. Shuffle the stacks of Villain Chits around on the table and select one stack at random. The objective is to choose a stack of identically lettered Villain Chits without knowing the letter code of that stack. Move the stacks about on the table until you have forgotten the letters of the various stacks. Choose one stack, and put away the other chits; they will not be needed for the rest of the game. Avoid looking at the letters of the discarded chits.

3. Roll one die and place the Die Roll Chit corresponding to the number rolled in the Die Roll Chit Holding Box on the map.

[6.0] Outfitting

GENERAL RULE:

Before the game begins, you must determine what equipment your character will bring with him into the space station.

PROCEDURE:

1. Examine the equipment counters and choose the equipment you wish to take. Most types of equipment are self-explanatory; some are explained in 11.0.

2. The left-hand number on each equipment counter is its Suspension of Disbelief cost. If you choose a particular piece of equipment, you must pay this cost; move the Suspension of Disbelief markers on their track to reflect the expenditure. Note that the countermix limits the equipment which is available. For example, there are only two cutting lasers, and they are printed on the back of a breath mask and the golf club. You may take up to two cutting lasers, and if you take both, you may not also take either that breath mask or the golf club.

3. Take the counters for the equipment you have chosen and place them on the Tactical Display. A vacuum suit (only) may be placed in the Suit box; other equipment must be distributed among the To Hand, On Body, and Leg Sheath boxes. (Equipment that is To Hand may be used at once; using equipment On Body entails a brief delay; and Leg Sheath equipment requires a longer delay).

Note: You *must* take a suit and you may take up to eight other pieces of equipment. Additional equipment may also be taken, but doing so entails a Suspension of Disbelief cost. Pay **5** Disbelief Points for each additional piece of equipment (above and beyond the cost indicated on the counter). Place such equipment any convenient place on the Tactical Display. (During play, all excess equipment is considered to be On Body.)

[7.0] Movement

GENERAL RULE:

In the course of the game, move your character's counter on the Space Station map. The map consists of the three multicolored rings, representing decks, surrounding Jim's Tactical Display. Each ring is separated from the others, and each is subdivided into three bands of rooms. The outer deck is C Deck, the middle B Deck, and the inner A Deck. A Deck is above B Deck, which is above C Deck. Thus, for example, box **A226** is above box **B226**, which is above box **C226**. During movement, your character may move from his current box to any laterally adjacent box; diagonal movement is not permitted. Movement from one deck to the next is permitted only in Accessway boxes, although downward movement is also permitted via the cutting laser.

CASES:

[7.1] **ENTRY**

[7.11] At the beginning of the game, you must determine where your character will enter the space station.

[7.12] Some boxes on the Space Station Map are marked as potential entry points. Place your character's counter in the Entry Box of your choice.

[7.13] On the first Game-Turn, omit the Movement Step and proceed directly to exploration. It is assumed that the character has reached the entry box without mishap.

[7.2] **LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS**

[7.21] After determining the adjacent box to which you wish your character to move, determine the nature of the boundary between the the two boxes. There are two types of boundaries between boxes: bulkheads and doors (see Terrain Key). Note that diagonal movement is not permitted, nor may a character jump from one box to another without moving through the intervening boxes (**Exception**: see 7.5).

[7.22] If the boundary is a bulkhead, movement between the two boxes is prohibited unless your character or a character moving with him has the cutting laser To Hand. If the cutting laser is available, follow the procedure outlined in 7.4.

[7.23] If the boundary is a door, the character must open the door before he can move into the box. Follow the procedure outlined in 7.3.

[7.24] If Jim occupies an Accessway box, he may move from his box to a box with the same ID number on an adjacent deck. Thus, a character in A136 could move to B136.

[7.25] If the cutting laser is available, the character may move from one deck to the next lower deck, even if he is not in an Accessway box. In essence, the laser is being used to cut a hole in the floor. Follow the procedure outlined in 7.4; if a breach is successfully made, move the counter one deck downward. Note that the laser may *not* be used to move upward.

[7.26] A character may never move through one of the heavy lines separating decks, even with the cutting laser.

[7.3] **DOORS**

[7.31] Delegate one character to open the door. If no other characters are accompanying your character, he is automatically assumed to be the one opening the door.

[7.32] Roll two dice; take the number rolled on one die as the first digit of a two-digit number, and the number rolled on the other as the second digit. Refer to the paragraph with the same number as the number rolled. **Example**: if a **2** and a **3** were rolled, refer to paragraph **23**.

[7.33] Read the section of the paragraph labelled Door and follow the instructions.

[7.34] The door is impassable if (a) the door is locked and the lockpick is not available; or (b) the door is electrified and the insulated gloves are not available; (c) the door is strung with monofilament and solvent is unavailable. The character may not move through an impassable door; place an Impassable Door marker in the box with the hinges image pointing toward the door. The door will still be impassable if the character returns.

[7.35] If a door is locked and your character (or a being with him) has a loaded laser pistol, laser rifle, slugthrower, or SMG, he may shoot the lock out. The door is automatically opened (remove the Impassable Door marker) and the weapon is automatically unloaded; flip it to its unloaded side. (Note that robot's weapons never become unloaded, and thus robots may shoot out locks with impunity).

[7.4] **THE CUTTING LASER**

[7.41] If your character has the cutting laser To Hand, he may move through bulkheads, floors, and impassable doors.

[7.42] Roll two dice and add the numbers rolled; refer to the paragraph corresponding to the resulting number and follow the directions therein. **Example**: If the rolls are **6** and **4**, refer to paragraph **10**.

[7.43] If you successfully breach a locked door, remove the Impassable Door marker.

[7.44] If you successfully breach a bulkhead or floor, place a Breach marker in the box. If the breach was made in a bulkhead, place the marker with the Bulkhead Breach side up and point the top of the counter toward the side of the box where the breach was made. If the breach was made in the floor, place the marker with the Floor Breach side up.

[7.45] A bulkhead breach opens a permanent means of access between two boxes. On future Game-Turns, your character will be able to move between the two boxes without using either a door or the cutting laser. A floor breach will always allow downward movement to the next deck.

[7.5] **SPECIAL MOVEMENT**

[7.51] Boxes **A107**, **A123**, **A137**, and **A153** are connected across the center of the space station by a shuttle moving inside a tube. A character may move from any one of these four boxes to any other without moving through a door or using a cutting laser.

[7.52] If your character has a functioning suit, he may move from any Entry Box to any other Entry Box. In essence, he is moving outside the station in space from one Entry Box to another. Any characters with him who lack functioning suits must be left behind.

[7.6] **BUGGING OUT**

If your character enters a box and you roll for the contents of the box, you may decide to bug out. Return your character's counter to the box from which he entered, place an Impassable Room marker in the box, and continue play.

[8.0] Exploration

CASES:

[8.1] **RESTRICTIONS ON EXPLORATION**

[8.11] After moving your character into a new box, determine the contents of the box.

[8.12] Roll two dice, taking one roll as the first digit of a number and the other as the second; refer to the paragraph of the same number.

[8.13] Read the section of the paragraph labelled with the type of box your character has entered (Accessway, Accommodations, Corridor, Industrial, Service).

[8.14] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is impassable. In such a case, place an Impassable Room marker in the box and move the character back into the box from which he entered. He may not enter the box now or on a future Game-Turn.

[8.15] If you have rolled for an Accessway box and then move from the box to another deck, do not roll again for the new box; it is of the same type (null-grav tube, elevator, or whatever) as the box you left and contains nothing of interest.

[8.2] **PREVIOUSLY VISITED BOXES AND CHARACTERS**

[8.21] If a character moves through a door or enters a box for which he previously rolled to determine a paragraph number, do not roll again. Presumably, your character dealt with the contents of the box or the door on his previous visit, and no further investigation is necessary. You should find that you rarely forget which boxes your character has visited; if, however, you do forget whether or not he has visited a box, roll for the box on the assumption that he did not.

[8.22] If a paragraph states that your character encounters a character you know to be dead or who is currently accompanying your character, ignore the paragraph. The room is empty of characters, although other aspects of the paragraph description may still apply.

[8.3] **ALERTNESS CHECKS**

[8.31] A paragraph may require a being to undergo an Alertness Check.

[8.32] To resolve a check, roll two dice, add the numbers rolled together, and compare the resulting total to the being's Alertness Rating. If the number is equal to or less than the Alertness Rating, the being has passed the check. Otherwise, he has failed. The paragraph will stipulate the effects of passing or failing a check.

[8.33] Note that the Alertness Ratings for Jim and Angelina are variable, while the Alertness Ratings of all other beings are constant (except when stunned; see 12.42).

[9.0] Clues

CASES:

[9.1] **VOLUNTEERED CLUES**

[9.11] As your character investigates a box, you may be instructed to refer to a Villain Chit. **Example:** You will be told to "refer to Villain Chit #3." In this case, find the Villain Chit with the ID number specified by the paragraph. Note that there are six Villain Chits for each ID number; however, at the beginning of the game, you will have discarded five out the six. Take the Villain Chit from the stack you chose at the beginning of the game.

[9.12] On each Villain Chit, six three-digit numbers are printed (see 2.3). Find the three-digit number corresponding to the number on the Die Roll Chit. For example, if the Die-Roll Chit number is **1**, refer to the first number on the Villain Chit; if it is **4**, refer to the fourth number; and so forth.

[9.13] Refer to the paragraph corresponding to the number found on the Villain Chit. **Example:** If the number is **068**, refer to paragraph **068**. This paragraph will give you a piece of information — a clue. Eventually you will build up a number of clues and from them, you must try to identify the villain.

[9.2] **STUMBLING OVER CLUES**

During Interaction in any Game-Turn, you may choose to "stumble over" a clue. Spend **5** Suspension of Disbelief Points and move the Disbelief markers accordingly; then refer to the Villain Chit of your choice and to the appropriate paragraph. You may stumble over only one clue per Game-Turn (**Exception:** see 16.2).

[10.0] Combat: Set-Up and Initiative

CASES:

[10.1] **SET-UP**

[10.11] All combat takes place on one of the Tactical Displays. If your character is Jim, use the Jim display; if your character is Angelina, use the Angelina display. If both main characters are engaging in combat in the same room, use either display and use the counter of the other character on the display in the same manner as counters for minor characters and robots. The position of your main character is assumed to be the center of the display, and other beings are placed in the concentric rings surrounding his position.

[10.12] Outside the center position, the display is divided into 12 boxes. Three concentric circles — labelled Near, Middle, and Far — are each divided into four quadrants — front, rear, left, and right. Consequently, there are 12 possible positions around the central character.

[10.13] When combat is initiated, a paragraph will describe the deployment of opposing robots and characters. It will state the number and type of robots to be deployed and the names of the characters, the boxes on the display in which they are deployed, and their facing. **Example:** "Securibot, middle left away" instructs you to place a Securibot counter in the middle ring in the left quadrant of the display and to orient its counter so that the figure's feet on the counter point *away* from the center (i.e., toward the Far ring).

[10.14] Beings accompanying your main character will already be deployed on the Tactical Display when combat begins; see Reorganization, 15.0.

[10.15] You will note that the robot and character counters are double-sized. When facing inward or outward they will overlap the box boundaries. It should nevertheless be possible to position these counters such that their positions on the display are clear.

[10.2] **INITIATIVE**

[10.21] The order in which beings (main characters included) move and attack is determined by their Alertness Ratings. The being with the highest Alertness Rating moves and attacks first, followed by the being with the next highest, and so forth. Note that Jim's and Angelina's Alertness Ratings depend on the current positions of their Alertness markers; the Alertness Ratings of all other characters and robots are printed on their counters (see 2.3).

[10.22] If two or more beings have the same Alertness Rating, they move and attack in the following order:

1. Main characters (Jim and Angelina)
2. Beings accompanying main characters
3. Other characters
4. Other robots

Note that there may be more than one being in each category; in such a case, you may decide which acts first.

[10.23] A stunned being's Alertness Rating is always **3** less than its printed rating. This rules does *not* apply to Jim and Angelina.

[11.0] Combat: Movement

CASES:

[11.1] **FACING**

[11.11] During the movement portion of a Being Segment, the being may either change its facing by 90° or move one box on the Tactical Display, but not both.

[11.12] The facing of a being other than Jim or Angelina is changed by rotating its counter. **Example:** A being facing clockwise on the display could rotate to face inward or outward, but not counterclockwise.

[11.13] The facing of the character at the center of the display (Jim or Angelina) is changed by moving all of the other counters on the display. **Example:** If you want your character to turn left to face the counters in his left quadrant, move all counters on the display one quadrant in a clockwise direction. Thus, the counters which were in his left quadrant are now in his front quadrant; he has turned to the left. If he turned right, all counters would be moved counterclockwise. Note that counters remain in the same

ring, but change quadrants. Remember, when turning Jim, to maintain the same facing for characters and robots who change quadrants (e.g., a robot that faces counterclockwise in Jim's left quadrant continues to face counterclockwise once it is in his front quadrant).

[11.2] MOVEMENT

[11.21] A being may move one box in the direction it faces *only*. For beings other than the main character, move the being's counter into the box its head points toward. It may not move into any other box. If the being is the main character, move all beings in his front quadrant one box inward (i.e., toward the center of the display) — except that beings already in the Near Forward box remain there — and move all beings in the rear quadrant one box away from the center — except that beings already in the Far Rear box remain there. Beings in the left and right quadrants do not move. No facings are changed. **Example**: There are beings in the Near Forward box, the Far Rear box, the Left Middle box, the Right Far box, the Far Forward box, and the Middle Rear box. The first four beings are not moved. The Far Forward being is moved to the Middle Forward box and the Middle Rear being is moved to the Far Rear box.

[11.22] There may be any number of beings in a given box (although only the main character may occupy the center position).

[11.3] UNCONTROLLED BEINGS

[11.31] Characters and robots which are fighting your main character follow a rigid movement procedure. You make no choices for beings you do not control.

[11.32] During the movement portion of such a being's Being Segment, it will move or turn according to the following schedule of preferences — i.e., if **1** applies, it will follow the instructions of **1**; if not, and **2** applies, it will perform **2**, etc.

1. If the being is *not* facing inward, it turns inward. (Note, for example, that if it were facing outward, you could choose whether to turn it clockwise or counterclockwise.)

2. If the being has a Fire Combat Value or equipment with such a value, it does nothing.

3. If the being is in a box containing an enemy being (i.e., one you control), it does nothing.

4. Otherwise, it moves one box inward. (If in the Near box, it does nothing.)

[11.33] Guardians, unlike other robots, may never move; they may turn, however.

[12.0] Combat: Resolution and Equipment

CASES:

[12.1] HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

[12.11] If, during the equipment portion of its Being Segment, a being is in a box on the display containing an enemy being, it must engage the enemy being in hand-to-hand combat. Your character and all characters and robots under your control are enemy to all other beings, and vice versa.

[12.12] If there are two or more enemy beings in a box, you may decide which of them is attacked.

[12.13] If an enemy being is in a near box and facing inward, it must engage your main character; this rule supercedes the preceding.

[12.14] Each being has a Hand-to-Hand Combat Strength. The strength of each robot is printed on its counter (see 2.3). Characters have strengths printed on their counters as well. These character strengths are used *only* when a character is defending against a hand-to-hand attack *or* when it does not have any equipment To Hand. When a character attacks with equipment To Hand, it uses the Combat Strength printed on the equipment counter rather than its own. **Exception**: When Jim or Angelina is attacked by a being in the Near Front box, the Combat Strength of equipment To Hand (if any) is used to defend, not the character's Combat Strength.

The main characters, unlike others, use their printed strengths in defense only when attacked from the rear or side or when they have no equipment To Hand.

[12.15] To resolve a hand-to-hand attack, subtract the Hand-to-Hand Combat Strength of the being subject to the attack from the strength of the attacking being. Refer to the Hand-to-Hand Combat Effects Table (12.16). Find the number calculated at the top of the table. Roll a die; find the number rolled along the left-hand side. Cross-reference the combat differential with the die-roll to yield a result. Combat results are explained in 12.4.

[12.16] **Hand-to-Hand Combat Effects Table**
(see mapsheet)

[12.2] FIRE COMBAT

[12.21] If a being is not required to engage in hand-to-hand combat and has a fire weapon or Fire Combat Value, it may engage in fire combat instead.

[12.22] Some robots and some pieces of equipment have Fire Combat Values (see 2.3). A robot whose counter has Fire Combat Value is considered to have a fire weapon; a character has a fire weapon if he has a piece of equipment with such a value To Hand.

[12.23] A being facing clockwise or counterclockwise relative to your main character may fire into any of the three boxes in the quadrant toward which it faces. **Example**: A being in the Middle Right box facing counterclockwise could fire into any of the three forward boxes.

[12.24] A being facing outward or inward may fire into the first occupied box in the being's quadrant in the direction it faces. **Example**: A being in the Far Forward box could fire into the Middle Forward box, Near Forward box, or at the main character. If, however, the Middle Forward box were occupied, the being could fire only into that box and no farther.

[12.25] Beings may only fire at enemy beings. Only one being is the target of a given fire attack. You may decide what being is the target if there is more than one possibility. However, a being you do not control will automatically fire at your main character whenever possible.

[12.26] To resolve fire combat, find the Fire Combat Value of the firing being or equipment at the top of the Weapons Table (12.28). Roll two dice, add the rolls together, and find the number along the left-hand side of the table. Cross-reference die roll and Fire Combat Value to yield a combat effect. (Effects are explained in 12.4.)

[12.27] If one of a main character's arms is wounded, subtract **1** from the Weapons Table die roll when he uses a weapon. If both arms are wounded, subtract **3**.

[12.28] **Weapons Table**
(see mapsheet)

[12.3] SPECIAL FIRE COMBAT RULES

[12.31] Grenades work differently from other kinds of equipment with Fire Combat Values. A character with a grenade To Hand may throw the grenade into any box into which he could fire. *All* beings in that box are subject to a grenade attack; resolve as for other kinds of fire combat. A grenade thrown at your main character also affects all beings in Near boxes. The grenade is removed from play after its effects are determined.

[12.32] Gas guns and gas grenades have no effect on robots or characters wearing functional suits or breath masks. Gas does affect unprotected characters; malfunctioning suits are no protection against gas.

[12.33] The Bartender's weapon, unlike those of other robots, may become unloaded. The Bartender has an **S** rated weapon because he carries a supply of shot glasses which he may propel at great speed. This capability is generally used to slide glasses down a bar, but provides a useful makeshift weapon. A Bartender becomes unloaded in the same way as other weapons; Bartenders may never be reloaded in the course of the game, though they may, of course, engage in hand-to-hand combat.

[12.4] COMBAT EFFECTS

[12.41] As a result of hand-to-hand or fire combat, a being may suffer a combat result of **S** or **D** or no effect at all.

[12.42] An **S** result stuns the target being; if it is a character, flip the counter over to its stunned side; if it is a robot, place a Robot Stunned marker on the robot's counter. A stunned being loses the equipment portion of its Being Segment. It may move and change facing, but cannot initiate hand-to-hand or fire combat or exchange equipment. At the end of its useless Equipment Segment, it becomes unstunned. The Alertness Rating of a stunned being is reduced by **3** for initiative purposes. **Exception**: Jim and Angelina do not suffer a temporary loss of **3** Alertness Points if stunned. Instead, they lose **1** Alertness Point *permanently*; move the Alertness marker to reflect this loss.

[12.43] A **D** result destroys or kills the target being. Remove its counter from play. **Exception**: Jim and Angelina are not killed by **D** results, but are wounded instead. Roll a die and refer to the Wound Table (12.27). The entry corresponding to the die roll will indicate the area of the character's body which is wounded. Flip over the appropriate body part counter on the Tactical Display to the wounded side. If a character is subsequently wounded in the same body area, roll on the Wound Table until an unwounded body area is rolled. A character wounded in all six body areas is dead. A **D** also causes a character's suit to malfunction and costs a main character 2 Alertness Points.

[12.44] A result on the Weapons Table marked with an asterisk (*****) indicates that the firing weapon is unloaded. Flip the weapon counter over to its unloaded side. Unloaded weapons may not be used to deliver fire combat attacks. Robots may never become unloaded (**Exception**: 12.33.) Weapon ammunition must be expended to reload unloaded weapons; see 13.2.

[12.45] Your character may avoid a stun result by expending **2** Suspension of Disbelief Points, or avoid a wound by expending **5**. Move the Suspension of Disbelief markers to reflect the expenditure and ignore the effects of the combat result.

[12.46] A stunned being remains stunned until the end of its next Equipment Segment. At that time, remove the Robot Stunned marker or flip the character to its unstunned side.

[12.47] **Wound Table** (see mapsheet)

[12.5] EQUIPMENT

[12.51] Characters other than Jim and Angelina may wear a suit and carry one piece of equipment each. This piece of equipment may either be To Hand (represented by placing the equipment counter *on top of* the character counter) or On Body (represented by placing it *beneath* the character counter).

[12.52] During a character's equipment portion of its Being Segment, it may swap one piece of equipment in the To Hand box for a piece of equipment in its On Body box. A character who exchanges equipment may not also engage in hand-to-hand or fire combat.

[12.53] Jim and Angelina may each carry nine (or more) pieces of equipment. During an Equipment Segment, either may (a) swap the contents of his To Hand box for the contents of an On Body box, or (b) swap the contents of an On Body box for the contents of a Leg Sheath box. Note that one of the involved boxes in a swap can be empty. Note also that it effectively takes two Combat Rounds to move a piece of equipment from a Leg Sheath to a To Hand box. A character who exchanges equipment may not also engage in hand-to-hand or fire combat.

[12.54] If a friendly character is in a near box, your main character and he may swap the equipment they each have To Hand. Neither character may otherwise exchange equipment, fire, or engage in hand-to-hand combat during the same Combat Round. Similarly, two characters you control in the same box may swap equipment To Hand. Jim or Angelina may swap equipment with one (only) character per Equipment Segment.

[12.55] Robots may never carry equipment.

[12.6] UNCONTROLLED BEINGS

[12.61] Beings you do not control follow a rigid procedure during the Equipment Segment; you make few choices for beings you do not control.

[12.62] When it is the Equipment Segment of a being you do not control, refer to the Enemy Equipment Flowchart.

[12.63] Look at the question at the upper left-hand side of the flowchart. Answer the question in your mind, and follow one branch of the chart beneath the question, depending on the answer. This will lead either to an instruction, or to another question. If the branch leads to an instruction, follow the instruction. If answering a question on the flowchart leads to another question, answer that question and continue answering questions and moving down the flowchart until an instruction is reached. Follow that instruction; the Segment for the being is now over.

[12.64] **Enemy Equipment Flowchart**
(see page 16)

[13.0] Special Equipment Rules

CASES:

[13.1] ELECTRIC PROD

Although the electric prod is listed on the Weapons Table, it is not a fire combat weapon. It is used exclusively in hand-to-hand combat. When a character with a prod To Hand initiates a hand-to-hand attack, roll on the Weapons Table under the **E** column and apply the result to his target, instead of resolving the attack normally.

[13.2] RELOADING WEAPONS

If Jim or Angelina has a weapon reload On Body for a weapon that is To Hand, he may expend the weapon reload (remove it from play) and reload the weapon during the equipment portion of the Being Segment. Flip the weapon counter over to its loaded side. Reloading a weapon takes a full Equipment Segment, during which time no other action may be taken. Unloaded weapons may also be reloaded during Reorganization.

[13.3] CIGARS

If a character has the humidor To Hand during and Equipment Segment, he may light a cigar. For the remainder of the Interaction (i.e., for the rest of the combat in which the cigar is lit), **1** is subtracted from all Weapons Table die-rolls when the character is subjected to fire from an **L** or **LR** weapon. He need not keep the humidor To Hand to continue receiving this benefit. This rule represents the attenuating effects of smoke on laser fire. The humidor is considered to contain an unlimited number of cigars, so the character may smoke a cigar each time he enters combat if you like.

[13.4] SUITS

If the target of fire from an **L** or **LR** weapon is wearing a suit with reflective armor, **3** is subtracted from the die roll on the Weapons Table. If the target of a fire combat attack from a **S** or **SG** weapon or an explosive grenade is wearing a suit with body armor, **3** is subtracted from the die roll on the Weapons Table. Robots and characters wearing functional suits are never affected by gas guns or grenades. A malfunctioning suit does not protect against gas, but still affects fire if it includes reflective or body armor.

[13.5] ROBOT SLAVERS

Robot slavers, unlike all other kinds of equipment, have two Combat Strengths. The first is for use against characters, and the second for use against robots. If a character with a robot slaver To Hand inflicts a **D** combat result in hand-to-hand combat on a robot, you immediately gain control of the robot, and retain control for the remainder of the game.

[13.6] GRENADES

Illumination Grenades: When combat occurs in a dark area (see 14.2), a character may throw an illumination grenade into any box on the Tactical Display. For the remainder of the combat, the display is considered lit; darkness rules cease to apply.

Smoke Grenades: Smoke grenades are thrown in the same manner as other grenades. A box on the Tactical Display into which a smoke grenade is thrown is considered full of smoke for the remainder of the combat; beings in smoke-filled boxes are subject to darkness rules (14.2), and beings outside smoke-filled boxes may not fire into or through such boxes.

[13.7] NOSTRUMS

[13.71] First Aid Kits and Pain Pills

During Reorganization, your character may expend either of these pieces of equipment to cure one wound. Remove the equipment counter from play, and flip over a Wound marker to its unwounded side. Alertness Points lost as a result of a wound are *not* restored by first aid kits or pain pills.

[13.72] Scotch and Pep Pills

During Reorganization, your character may expend either of these pieces of equipment to increase your character's Alertness Rating by two points. Move the Alertness marker to reflect this increase. The increase is considered permanent within the scope of the game. Your character *may* increase his Alertness above **9**. If he does so, flip the Alertness marker over to the **+10** side and assume that the Alertness Rating is actually ten greater than indicated by the marker's position.

[13.8] MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

[13.81] Flashlight

A character with a flashlight On Body may ignore the effects of darkness (14.2), but *not* the effects of smoke.

[13.82] Insulated Gloves

Some paragraphs describe electrified doors. If your character has insulated gloves To Hand when you turn to such a paragraph, he is protected against the effects of electrification.

[13.83] Lockpick

Some paragraphs describe locked doors. If

this is the case, and your character has the lockpick, you may immediately swap the equipment your character has To Hand with the lockpick. The door will now open (but your character will have the lockpick To Hand, which may not be terribly useful if the room he enters contains enemies).

[13.84] **Monofilament Solvent**
Some paragraphs describes doors strung with monofilament traps. Monofilament is a molecule-thin fiber capable of cutting through almost anything. Your character will be unable to move through such a door unless he has the monofilament solvent. The solvent is removed from play and the door becomes passable.

[14.0] Vacuum and Darkness

CASES:

[14.1] **VACUUM**

[14.11] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is vacuum-filled. If your character enters such a box from one that does not contain vacuum, he (and all beings with him) undergo decompression.

[14.12] For each robot and for each character wearing a functional suit, roll two dice and refer to the Decompression Table (14.3). Find the entry on the table corresponding to the die roll.

[14.13] For each character without a suit or with a malfunctioning suit, roll one die, add **6** to the die roll, and refer to the Decompression Table.

[14.14] A result of Equipment Breakage means that one piece of equipment carried by the character (if any) is destroyed and removed from the game (you may decide which); a result of Suit Malfunction means that the character's suit (if any) is no longer air tight; flip the suit counter to its Malfunction side. Other results are per the combat results.

[14.2] **DARKNESS**

[14.21] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is dark. When combat occurs in such a box, hand-to-hand combat is unaffected, but movement is affected.

[14.22] During a being's Movement Segment, roll a die; on a roll of **1** or **2**, the being turns left; on a roll of **3** or **4**, it moves ahead; on a roll of **5** or **6**, it turns right. This rule applies to major characters as well as other beings on the display.

[14.23] During a being's Equipment Segment, it will engage in hand-to-hand combat if possible; otherwise, it will automatically fire a weapon or throw a grenade if it can. A character will fire a weapon if it has one To Hand. The weapon is fired forward. If there is a being in the line of fire (regardless of whether it is friendly or enemy), it is subject to a fire combat attack. If there is more than one potential target, determine which is to be the target of the attack by some random method.

[14.3] **DECOMPRESSION TABLE**
(see mapsheet)

[15.0] Reorganization

PROCEDURE:

During Reorganization, determine what equipment is available, including equipment in the room according to the paragraph description and equipment carried by defeated enemies. You need not pay Suspension of Disbelief Points for equipment you pick up while in the space station. Then, exchange and allocate equipment as you wish. Equipment may be moved from box to box on the Tactical Display, given to or taken from friendly characters, etc. The only limitations are the limitations on the amount of equipment each character may carry. At any time, you may increase the carrying capacity of your main character by one piece of equipment by spending **5** Suspension of Disbelief Points. Note that taking more than nine pieces of equipment initially increases your character's carrying capacity for the rest of the game.

If you leave any equipment behind, place the equipment counters in the box on the Space Station map. You may return at a later Game-Turn in order to pick it up if you wish. Jim and Angelina may remove their vacuum suits if you wish. Removing a suit opens up an empty box on the Tactical Display which may be used to hold any other piece of equipment. The "suit" box becomes an On Back box, and is treated in the same manner as Leg Sheath boxes. A suit may be redonned during Reorganization on any subsequent Game-Turn. Minor characters may *not* carry two pieces of equipment by forgoing a suit.

Once equipment is dealt with, arrange all characters and robots under your control on the Tactical Display. The counters of beings accompanying your character are always placed on the Tactical Display. They may have any facing and may be in any quadrant(s), but must always be placed in near boxes. During reorganization, you may freely change the positions of friendly beings, within these restrictions.

[16.0] Deactivating the Computer and Winning

CASES:

[16.1] **DEACTIVATING THE COMPUTER**

[16.1] The computer is located in box **B216.** When your character enters this box, turn immediately to paragraph 75. Once you have followed the instructions of that paragraph, the computer is considered deactivated.

[16.12] Immediately after deactivating the computer, you may "stumble over" any number of clues (see 9.7).

[16.2] **IDENTIFYING THE VILLAIN**

[16.21] Once you have deactivated the computer, you must attempt to identify the villain. State your best guess as to the villain's identity, then flip over the Villain Chits.

[16.22] Refer to the Villain Matrix (16.25) and cross-reference the ID letter on the Villain Chits with the number of the Die Roll Chit in the Die Roll Chit Holding Box. This will yield a three-digit number.

[16.23] The three-digit number from the Matrix is the paragraph number which identifies the villain. Refer to this paragraph and find out whether you were correct.

[16.24] If your guess was correct, and your Suspension of Disbelief Index is 75 or below, you have won the game.

[16.25] **Villain Matrix**
(see mapsheet)

[16.3] **SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF**

[16.31] If, at any point, your character dies, the Suspension of Disbelief Index exceeds **75**, or you incorrectly identify the villain, you have lost the game.

[16.32] Add **5** Suspension of Disbelief Points for each character your main character killed during the game. You lose no points if (a) you "killed" the character with gas (which actually knocks out the character for the duration of the game), or (b) the character attacked your character first.

[17.0] Playing with Two Players

GENERAL RULE:

If two people wish to play *Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*, one plays Jim and the other Angelina. Each has his own Tactical Display.

PROCEDURE:

During set-up, the two players alternate choosing equipment, so each has a fair chance for the equipment he wants.

The players' characters must enter at different points on the Space Station Map.

During the game, the player's alternate Game-Turns.

If one player's character enters a box previously visited by the other player's character, the box will be empty save for equipment left by the first player.

The two players may not engage in combat with one another.

If the two players' characters meet one another, they may, at the players' option, move together; the players then take each Game-Turn at the same time. They engage in combat together; place one of the characters' counters on the Tactical Display of the other, in the same manner as for minor characters. When an enemy being is directed to attack a "major character," it should attack either Jim or Angelina, whichever is nearer.

When a player's character deactivates the computer, he immediately has a chance to identify the villain. If he does so successfully (and his Suspension of Disbelief Index is **75** or less), he has won; otherwise, he has lost. If he loses, the other player must immediately attempt to identify the villain (he may stumble over as many clues as he likes before he does so); if he correctly identifies the villain and his Suspension of Disbelief Index is **75** or less, he has won. Otherwise, he has lost as well; it is possible for both players to lose.

Note that both players use the same set of Villain Chits.

EVENT PARAGRAPHS

These paragraphs, arranged numerically from 001 to 225, are the heart of *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*. It is strongly recommended that the player **not read through** the entire Paragraphs Section; examination of the paragraphs, other then those to which you are referred during play of the game, will destroy the element of surprise that is so important to the game.

Note that, when a paragraph refers you to the instructions of another paragraph, the symbology "►#" is used to indicate the new paragraph number.

001. Monofilament criss-crosses the door opening. The character has failed to see the extremely thin wire, and has tried to enter the room. He has been cut by the monofilament and suffers a **D** result. The monofilament may be dissolved by solvent; if no solvent is available, the door is impassable.

002. As the door begins to open, a trap door opens beneath the feet of the character. If the opening character is anyone other than Jim or Angelina, the character falls through the trap door and disappears. The remainder of the group may leap over the trap and walk through the door. If Jim or Angelina is the opening character, ►085.
Cutting Laser: Laser overheats and interior components melt down. Discard laser.

003. The accessway is a null-grav tube. However, the gravity is on. The character noticed this before stepping out over empty space. He suffers no ill effects, but the accessway may not be used to move to another deck.
Cutting Laser: The character drops the laser and something goes crunch. It is broken. Discard it.

004. The accessway is a staircase. Someone has sawn through the metal stairs on one side; luckily, this was noticed before the stairs were used. If you are careful, the stairs can still be used.
Cutting Laser: While cutting into the floor or wall, the laser cuts into a water vent. The laser is short-circuited. Roll a die for each robot you control; on a **1**, that robot is short-circuited as well. Remove the laser and short-circuited robots from play.

005. The elevator works jerkily, but satisfactorily.
Cutting Laser: Character succeeds in making breach.

006. Your characters arrive on A Deck.
Cutting Laser: Character succeeds in making breach.

007. Your character does so.
Cutting Laser: Character succeeds in making breach.

008. An explosion rocks through the elevator; a charge on the cable has blown. If the accessway is on C Deck, it is now inoperable. Otherwise it plummets to C Deck and is thereafter inoperable; roll a die for each being in the elevator. **1-4**: no effect; **5-6**: **D**.
Cutting Laser: Character succeeds in making breach.

009. Jim or Angelina falls into the box on the Space Station map one deck below his current box. None of his characters and robots fall with him, and he is separated from them. The new box contains **2 Securibots** (far rear inwards, middle left inward) and **1 Hired Gun** (middle right inward).
Cutting Laser: Character succeeds in making breach.

010. Monofilament criss-crosses the door opening. The character saw the extremely thin wire, and caught himself before walking through it. However, the monofilament makes the door impassable; it may not be used except by expending monofilament solvent.
Cutting Laser: While cutting the wall or ceiling, the character is splashed by molten metal. If he is wearing a suit, the suit protects him but malfunctions (flip its counter). Otherwise, the character suffers a **D** result. A breach is successfully made.

011. ***Accessway:*** Choose one being to enter the square. That being makes an Alertness Check; if it passes, ►003; if it fails, ►086.
Accommodations: There is an Olympic-size swimming pool in the room with beach chairs around it and a bar at the rear of the room. A dead body is lying face-down in the center of the pool. If you enter, ►125; otherwise, move back out of the box.
Corridor: There is a communications device along the side of the corridor. You may ignore it (in which case continue play) or speak into it (in which case ►072).
Door: Door is electrified. If the character is not wearing gloves, roll on the Weapons Table under electric prod and apply the result to the character.
Industrial: You have entered the ship bay; there is no air — only vacuum. The bay is a huge cavern open to space with gantries and docking ports scattered about. No ships are presently docked. You are immediately attacked by **1 Cargomaster** (far front clockwise), **2 Stevedores** (far left inward, far right inward), and **1 Gantry** (middle left clockwise).
Service: You have entered a storeroom containing goods for a gourmet store. Caviar, cheeses, wines, and various other goods are scattered about. You may obtain Scotch and/or a humidor and cigars if you wish.
Cutting Laser: As you begin to cut, you note that the warranty on your laser runs out today. The laser promptly fails. Remove it from play.

012. ***Accessway:*** Choose one being to enter the box. That being makes an Alertness Check. If it passes, ►004; if it fails, ►087.
Accommodations: You have entered Marsha Tregonsee, a store carrying designer space equipment. All characters in your party may acquire vacuum suits, and any with malfunctioning suits may replace theirs. No suits with reflective or body armor are available, however.
Corridor: **1 Handyman** is in the process of laying down a new rug in the corridor. It attacks (front far clockwise).
Door: Door is locked.
Industrial: You have entered what seems to be an inactive metal foundry. The floor is strewn with what seem to be perfectly round ball-bearings. If you try to walk on the floor, you will slip and break your spine. The box is impassable; return to the box from which you entered.
Service: You have just entered a spartanly appointed one-room apartment with a pull-down bed and small kitchenette. It is filthy. Corona is sitting on the bed and staring at you groggily. You may attack (►146) or begin a conversation (►164).
Cutting Laser: Someone forgot to replace the power-pack on the laser. It fails. Remove it from play.

013. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You may enter (►073) or leave it alone, in which case you may not use the accessway but may proceed.
Accommodations: You have entered The Greep Got Your Tongue, a restaurant specializing in Venerian cuisine. It is empty. In the kitchen are innumerable jars of pickled and crottled greeps. Make an Alertness Check for your main character. If he passes, ►109; if he fails, ►126.
Corridor: The floor of the corridor is bare; there are rolls of rug against one wall. Apparently the rug is shortly to be laid down. A cannister of monofilament solvent lies atop the rug; you may take it if you wish.
Door: Make an Alertness Check for the opening character. If the character fails, ►001; if he passes, ►010.
Industrial: You have entered the airplant — a giant room filled with vats and piping. Air bubbles through giant vats of algae, replenishing the oxygen and transporting it elsewhere in the station.
Service: You have entered the crew cafeteria. It is thoughtfully painted in daylglo purple and orange. One wall of the room is devoted to little boxes with glass windows, in which sit sandwiches, stasis-frozen hot meals, and the like. **3 Garcons** (front middle clockwise, left far inward, front near inward) and **1 Maid** (rear near clockwise) attack you.

014. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You may decide not to enter (in which case, continue play) or to use it (in which case, ►005).
Accommodations: You have entered the Princess Suite, a palatial set of two bedrooms and living room with bar, goldfish pond, datalink, sunken sitting area, and work space. Rita is at the datalink, watching a rerun of an old Gorblemish & Jones classic. You may attack (►127) or open conversation (►110).
Corridor: The corridor is dark. You may move down it (►074) or avoid it, in which case back out of the box.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a dark, vacuum-filled room with no gravity. Make an Alertness Check for your main character; if he passes, ►167; if he fails, ►175.
Service: You have entered a control center of some kind. There is communications equipment apparently used to direct incoming traffic to the station; it is unmanned since there is no traffic at the moment. In addition, there is a console which allows you to examine the interiors of some rooms of the station. You may use it to look into three rooms of the station. Choose three boxes on the Space Station map; roll for each, as per the normal procedure. Read the appropriate paragraphs, then make a note of the paragraph numbers and the ID codes of the appropriate boxes. If you enter one of these boxes, refer to the appropriate paragraph instead of rolling again.

015. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You may choose not to enter it, in which case you may not use the accessway; or you may use it (►225).
Accommodations: The room is a hotel-style single — closet-sized, upholstered in ugly colors, with a single bath. You may delegate one being to investigate the room (►076), or proceed normally.
Corridor: The corridor is dark. As you enter it, a laser is fired toward you. You may (a) attack in response, ►134;

(b) shout "who's there?" ►141; or (c) use your flashlight (assuming you have one) to see who is there. ►153.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You are in a large, well-lit room, the center of which is occupied by a massive, pulsating lump of flesh fed by nutrient tubes. The lump is, in fact, chicken meat being grown artificially. The room also contains **1 Farmer** (rear middle inward), **1 Gantry** (front far clockwise), and **1 Stevedore** (left near counterclockwise) which immediately attack you.

Service: You have entered a two-room apartment with a wall-sized video screen. Putz is sitting on the bed reading *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta.* You may attack (►149) or converse (►166).

016. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. Delegate one being to enter it and ►077. Alternatively, you may decide not to use it, and continue play.

Accommodations: You have entered an empty two-room private apartment. A valuable Oriental carpet lies on the floor, and the furniture is of the rococo Imperial Zizlebartzian style. A bottle of pep pills stands on the service by the bed; you may take it if you so desire.

Corridor: Along the side of the corridor is a box labelled "Emergency Station." You may pass it by or choose one being to open the box (►078).

Door: The door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a closet-sized room containing what appears to be a jury-rigged still. You may take one of the bottles lying about; it contains vodka, but treat it as Scotch.

Service: You have entered the crew lounge. It contains a number of comfortable chairs, a bar, and a coffee dispenser. It also contains **1 Bartender** (right far inward) and **1 Garcon** (left middle inward) who attack.

017. The villain must have had access to areas of the station off-limits to visitors (068), thus, Woloski, not a station employee, is eliminated. Dr. Putz and Trina support each other's stories (048, 060) and neither has a reason to lie; they are eliminated. If Corona's story (018) is correct, all three other characters have alibis and no one is the villain — an impossibility. Consequently, Corona must be lying. Either Corona, Stark, or Rita was not in the restaurant. Stark says he wasn't (038) which makes him a suspect, but he has a reason for lying; he doesn't want Trina to know he has been seen with Rita. Furthermore, if Stark were not there, why would both Rita and Corona say he was (018, 083)? If Rita were not in the restaurant, why would Corona say she was — and why would Stark deny that he was? But if Corona were not in the restaurant, the picture falls into place: Rita is telling the truth; Stark is lying to avoid Trina's wrath; Corona is cleverly supporting Rita's story in order to lend credence to his own. An important point is that no one claims to have seen Corona. Corona has no alibi and is the villain.

018. ***Clue:*** Corona says he saw Stark flirting with Rita in the restaurant.

019. ***Clue:*** Trina says she was with Dr. Putz.

020. ***Clue:*** Stark denies he was in the restaurant; he says he was with Trina.

021. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube.

Accommodations: You have entered the sauna. You walk forward through billows of steam. Suddenly, you come face-to-face with **1 Securibot** (near front inward) which attacks you.

Corridor: There are **2 Securibots** (both far front inward). Engage them in combat.

Door: The door is electrified. If the being is not wearing gloves, roll on the Weapons Table under **E** and apply the result to the opening being.

Industrial: You open the door; the room is vacuum-filled (undergo decompression). You have entered a vast room open to space; a powerful beam of light enters from space and is focused onto a grid of some kind; this seems to be the power room, drawing energy from solar mirrors outside the station. You may bug out, or enter (►079).

Service: You have entered what appears to be a communications room. It contains a number of hyperdetectors, an Amalgamated Journalists Interstellar ticker, and a datalink console. If you wish, you may investigate the console (►080); otherwise, continue play.

022. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase.

Accommodations: You have entered a hardware store. Among other equipment, it contains flashlights and insulated gloves. You may pick these up (as many as the countermix allows).

Corridor: The corridor is empty. Along one side is a small compartment labelled "Emergency Station." You may open it if you wish (►154). Otherwise, continue.

Door: Door is locked.

Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may, if you wish, pry open a crate. If you do, roll a die: **1-3:** ►148; **4-6:** ►165.

Service: You have entered the station's brig: a small corridor flanked with barred rooms. There are **2 Securibots** (both front middle inward) who attack you.

023. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You may use it (►005), or not (return to the box from which you entered).

Accommodations: You have entered The Cockroachs' Sweettooth, a store devoted to candied insects. You may try one if you like. If you do, roll a die: **1-2:** ►081; **3-4:** no effect; **5-6:** ►186.

Corridor: The corridor is dark. As you enter it, a laser is shot toward you. You may (a) attack in response, ►135; (b) shout "who's there?" ►142; or (c) use your flashlight (assuming you have one) to see who is there, ►155.

Door: Make an Alertness Check. If the character fails, ►001; if he passes, ►010.

Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may pry open a crate if you like; if you do, ►168.

Service: The door to the room has a sign saying: "I value my privacy highly." You may bug out, or delegate one being to enter the room first (in which case, ►176).

024. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. You may delegate one character to enter it (►007), or you may bug out.

Accommodations: You have entered a small hotel-style double with wall-to-wall carpeting, bath, and video terminal. There is **1 Maid** (left middle inward) in the room; it attacks you. Proceed to combat.

Corridor: The corridor is empty. Along one side is a small compartment labelled "Emergency Station." You may open it if you wish (►156).

Door: As you attempt to open the door, a steel anti-decompression seal slams across the doorway. Make an Alertness Check for the opening character. If you fail, ►191. Otherwise there is no effect, but the door is impassable (you may use a cutting laser to open it).

Industrial: You have entered what appears to be a machine shop. You may pick up a cutting laser, insulated gloves, and/or a lockpick if you wish.

Service: You have entered a large, well-lit room with several standing tables and a pot of coffee-stained printout. Woloski sits in a chair sipping a plastic cup of coffee and reading. He has a laser rifle across his legs. You may attack (►170), or converse (►177).

025. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. You may delegate one being to enter (►077), or bug out.

Accommodations: You have entered a small meeting room with a central table, comfortable chairs, notepads, ashtrays, and water. If all characters are wearing functional suits and/or breathing masks, there are no further effects. If at least one character is not so outfitted, make an Alertness Check for your main character. If he passes, ►082; if he fails, ►187.

Corridor: The corridor is lit. You run into Trina. You may attack her (►136), or engage her in conversation (►157).

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a clean room full of piping and a rather nasty smell. A breathing mask is on a peg by the doorway. You may take it. The pipes are carrying raw sewage, which is apparently being processed and then piped into vats of algae. There is **1 Gantry** (front middle inward) and **1 Farmer** (far front clockwise) in the room. Proceed to combat.

Service: You have entered a large, carpeted office with a teak desk and oil paintings on the wall. A man in a military uniform is crouched over the carpet with a club. You may attack (►171) or converse (►183).

026. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator.

Accommodations: You have entered an apt., 3 rm pqt flrs, frn, EIK, wbf. It contains **1 Maid** (rear near inward) and **1 Bartender** (left far inward). They attack.

Corridor: The corridor is a moving walkway. At the other end of the corridor you hear a whirring sound. The walls bear murals depicting Mediterranean scenes. You may bug out, or continue (►200).

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may pry open a crate if you like. If you do, roll a die: **1-3:** ►181; **4-6:** ►172.

Service: You have entered a garishly painted two-room apartment; the walls are covered with posters of stim stars. There is a hammock in one room. On a desk you find a note; refer to Villain Chit **#2.**

027. Only station employees could have committed the crime (068); Woloski is a visitor; therefore, he has an alibi. Trina and Putz support each others' stories (060, 048); they both have alibis. Either Stark or Rita or Corona was not in the restaurant. Stark probably was in the restaurant, because all three agree he was (018, 028, 050) and it is unlikely that all three are lying. That leaves Rita and Corona. If Corona was not there, Rita is telling the truth and Stark is lying both when he says Rita was not there and also when he says Corona *was* there. But why would he lie about Corona? Doing so gains Stark nothing; indeed, doing so hurts him; by supporting Corona's claim to be present, he indirectly supports Corona's claim that Stark was flirting with Rita — something Stark does not want known. Logically, if Corona were absent, Stark should say so. Suppose Rita were not there. Then Stark was telling the truth and Corona was lying when he said Stark was with Rita. Why should Corona lie? Because he has a grudge against Stark, and knows that Trina will be upset with Stark if Trina believes Stark to be flirting with Rita. All the pieces fit if Rita were the villain; otherwise there are unanswered questions. The villain is Rita.

028. ***Clue:*** Rita agrees that she was in the restaurant with Stark.

029. ***Clue:*** Trina is upset to hear Stark was with Rita.

030. ***Clue:*** Dr. Putz says Trina is pregnant by Stark.

031. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator.

Accommodation: You have entered the Wheel of Chance, a giant casino. The gravity is off, but the room is a giant centrifuge with tables and carpeting along the rim. You are attacked by **1 Croupier** (middle right clockwise) and **1 Bouncer** (middle left counterclockwise).

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: As the character opens the door, gas spurts out from the jam. If the character has an undamaged suit, he is not affected. Otherwise, roll on the Weapons Table under the "gas grenade" column and apply the result to the character. Subtract **3** from the die-roll if the character is wearing a breath mask. Only the opening character is affected.

Industrial: You have entered a large warehouse containing cylinders of metal. **1 Gantry** (left far clockwise) is loading them into transportation containers. It drops them and attacks. Otherwise, roll on the Weapons Table under clockwise) and **1 Handyman** (right far inward).

Service: You have entered a medium-sized office with a bare carpet and a tacky metal desk. Trina is leaning over it studying a printout of the station clock plan. You may attack without provocation (►173) or converse (►180).

032. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an escalator. You may use it (►193), or bug out.

Accommodations: You have entered a gun store. Stark is standing at the counter with a laser rifle in his hands, facing away from you. You may attack (►111), or open conversation (►128).

Corridor: Woloski is walking down the corridor ahead of you, nervously clutching a grenade. You may attack (►137), or converse (►158).

Door: Door is locked.

Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may pry open a crate. If you do, roll a die: **1-3:** ►194; **4-6:** ►181.

Service: You have entered a large room with bookcases full of books and journals along the walls, geological maps of several planets, microscopes, and a large cylindrical machine in the center of the room. As you enter, the cylindrical machine begins to hum. You may hurry through the room, or pause to investigate the situation more thoroughly (►182).

033. ***Accessway:*** An elevator comes to your floor. The door opens. If you step inside, ►005; otherwise, you may not use the accessway.

Accommodations: You have entered Paddy's, a dingy Irish bar with shamrocks on the windows and a vomit-stained wooden floor. It contains **2 Bartenders** (left middle inward, right middle inward) and **1 Bouncer** (rear middle clockwise) who attack. Once combat is over, you may obtain a bottle of Scotch, if you wish.

Corridor: The corridor is dark, but empty.

Door: If the characters are on C Deck, the door opens. Otherwise, ►002.

Industrial: You have entered a gunsmithy. SMG's, laser rifles, and pistols are available, as well as ammunition. Take what you want within the limits of the countermix.

Service: You have entered the physical plant storeroom. There is a small desk with a dataconsole; the walls are lined with tools and boxes of spare parts. Insulated gloves, flashlights, cutting lasers, and lockpicks are available.

034. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You press the button and the door opens. Inside **s 1 Hired Gun** (near front inward). Proceed to combat. You may not bug out.

Accommodations: You have entered a large, pink-decorated suite equipped with null-G sleeping plates, a small swimming pool, red velvet carpeting and upholstery, leather wallpaper, and mirrored ceiling. Sitting on the bar is a bottle of pain pills and an electric prod, which you may take.

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a room filled with industrial machinery, currently inactive. Upon investigation, you discover that this is a plant manufacturing and boxing soyburgers for export. You also discover **1 Handyman** (near front inward) and **1 Securibot** (left middle inward). Proceed to combat.

Service: You have entered what seems to be a storeroom for robots. Garcons, Securibots, and Bouncers stand against the wall; they are deactivated. You may quietly return to the box from which you entered, or you may investigate (► 195).

035. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. If you wish to use it, ►008. Otherwise, return to the box from which you entered.

Accommodations: There is a sign on the door saying, "The Playful Soup, Food for the Sophisticated Rglimian, Others Please Don Protective Garments." If you choose to enter, ►96; otherwise bug out.

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered an infirmary, complete with pharmaceutical closet, several hospital beds, etc. First aid kits, pep pills, pain pills, and Scotch (medicinal purposes, naturally) are available.

Service: You have opened the door on a room absolutely crawling with insects. You may bug out, or enter (in which case, ► 197).

036. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. If you wish to climb it, ►089. If you wish to descend, ►007. Alternatively, you may bug out.

Accommodations: You have entered a small apartment modestly decorated in the modern manner. One of the rooms is strewn with hunks of rock, a light box, arcane scientific paraphernalia, and a paper-covered desk. Putz is seated behind the desk. You may (a) shoot him down in cold blood, ► 129; or (b) converse (► 112).

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a large room filled with transparent piping and machinery. The transparent piping is apparently carrying green, algae-laden water into the machinery; from the machinery issue packets of Ding-Dongs, Dojos, and other processed cake products.

Service: You have entered a small storeroom filled with every tobacco product imaginable: chewing, smoking, and snorting, from Knitzian cigar-leaf cigarettes to Old Lip Cancer shag. You may take a humidor and cigars.

037. Only station employees could have committed the crime (068): Woloski is a visitor; he has an alibi. Trina and Putz support each others' stories (048, 019), and neither has a reason to lie; they have alibis. Everyone else agrees that Corona was in the restaurant (069, 070, 071); that leaves Rita and Stark. If the villain is Rita, Corona is lying. But Corona has no reason to lie. If the villain is Stark, everyone else is telling the truth. Furthermore, Stark is the only character no one else has seen. Stark is the villain.

038. ***Clue:*** Stark denies he was in the restaurant.

039. ***Clue:*** Woloski says he was with Dr. Putz.

040. ***Clue:*** Trina says she was with Stark.

041. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. If you wish to climb it, ►007. If you wish to descend, ►090.

Accommodations: You have entered the library. There are several dozen terminals, a megabaud line-printer, and a bookbinder.

Corridor: The corridor is empty. Along one side is a small compartment labelled "Emergency Station." You may open it if you wish (► 159).

Door: ►031, Door section.

Industrial: You have opened a door onto a huge room filled with trays separated vertically by about a foot in each direction. At the bottom of each tray is a lighting system; the top is covered with soil and a variety of vegetables. Numerous small robots run along tracks among the trays harvesting vegetables. Because of the small separation among trays, the room is impassable.

Service: You have entered a long room in which the walls are covered by lockers. You may open a locker if you wish. If you do, roll a die: **1-3:** ► 188; **4-6:** ► 201.

042. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube. Choose one being to enter it and ►096.

Accommodations: You have entered a cheese store. You may eat some brie or cheddar if you wish (no effect).

Corridor: The corridor is dark. If you have a flashlight, ►143; otherwise, proceed.

Door: Door is locked.

Industrial: You have entered a room that looks like a combination garment factory and machine shop. The larger machines are used to cut through the tough fabric required in the manufacture of vacuum suits. Vac suits are available; your main character and those with him may acquire suits, including suits with armor, within the limitations of the countermix.

Service: You have entered a long room in which the walls are covered by lockers. You may open a locker if you wish. If you do, roll a die: **1-3:** ► 198; **4-6:** ► 203.

043. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube. Choose one character to enter it and ►097.

Accommodations: You have entered what seems to be a storefront under construction. Blocks of plastic, sheet metal, and tools are scattered about. One of the tools is a monofilament cutting device — treat it as a monofilament sword. You may take it if you wish.

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: Some juvenile has left a bucket of water balanced over the door. As the character walks through the door, the bucket falls, drenching him. If he has the cutting laser or a laser weapon To Hand, the equipment is short-circuited; remove it from play.

Industrial: You have entered the shuttle bay. There is no air (undergo decompression). It is a cavernous room open to space with three docking ports; one shuttle is currently docked. You may, if you wish, go from this box to any entry point box.

Service: You have entered a large room with bare metal walls. In the center is a small but serviceable swimming pool around which has been dumped a couple of hundred pounds of sand.

044. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You press the button and the door opens. Inside is Technician Corona. You may attack (►093), or converse (►097).

Accommodations: You have entered the Emperor Zizlebartz Suite, tastefully furnished with rococo furniture of the Zizlebartzian period, olive wall-coverings, and a bright orange wall-to-wall carpet. **1 Handyman** (far front clockwise) is repairing the bar, and **1 Maid** (left middle counterclockwise) is making the bed. They attack.

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: The door opens.

Industrial: You have entered an electronic equipment storeroom. Voicetypers, breadboards, and miscellaneous equipment lie about. You may continue, or investigate (in which case, roll a die: **1-3:** ► 189; **4-6:** ► 204).

Service: You have entered a large room with thin metal partitions. Each partitioned area contains a small desk, two chairs, a datalink, and a voicetyper.

045. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube. Deputy Commander Trina is floating down it toward you. You may attack (►094), or converse (►117).

Accommodations: The room is an attractive two-room hotel suite. Woloski is lying on the bed, wearing a Nehru jacket. Lying on the bedside table is a pinhead grenade. You may attack (► 113), or converse (► 130).

Corridor: You find Rita unconscious in front of an open compartment labelled "Emergency Station." If you have the first aid kit or pep pills, you may expend the equipment to awaken her, in which case ► 160. Otherwise, continue on your way.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: You have entered a long hall full of clanking machinery. The machines seem to be stamping cheap Saturday night specials out of blocks of metal. You are attacked by **1 Gantry** (left middle clockwise) and **1 Hired Gun** (front far inward). Once combat is over, you may pick up a slugthrower (unloaded) if you wish.

Service: The door has a sign saying "To the Trade." The box contains a large, dimly lit room filled with valuable antiques: 20th Century self-wetting dolls, preserved Coca-Cola bottles, 21st Century tin foil art, etc.

046. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. Woloski is descending it. You may attack (► 100), or engage in conversation (► 118).

Accommodations: You have entered a bare two-room apartment. It is completely empty except for a skeleton in one room which has a wire leading from a wall socket to a small hole in its skull.

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: Door opens.

Industrial: A sign on the door states: "Danger: Sterilization Processing. Approved Personnel Only." You may enter (► 205), or bug out.

Service: You have entered a large, comfortably furnished office with book cases and a large leather couch. Behind a desk stands a Bouncer type robot dressed in cravat and suit. It says, "And how are we today, Mr./Mrs. Di Griz?" You may (a) bug out; (b) respond, ►206; (c) ignore it, ►210; or (d) attack, in which case the bot is front middle inward.

047. Either Trina or Corona and Woloski are lying (019, 084, 058); neither Corona nor Woloski has a reason to lie, but Trina does: she doesn't want Stark to know she was with Woloski. If Trina lied, then all three were in the restaurant and all three have alibis. Rita and Stark support each others' stories, and neither has a reason to lie (049, 059). Dr. Putz's story (048) is supported by Trina (019), but Trina has a reason to lie; if she did, Dr. Putz has no alibi and is the villain. Dr. Putz is the villain.

048. ***Clue:*** Dr. Putz says he was in his office with Trina, and that she is pregnant by Stark.

049. ***Clue:*** Rita says she was in the casino with Stark.

050. ***Clue:*** Stark says he was in the restaurant with Corona, but not with Rita; he says Corona has a grudge against him.

051. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube.

Accommodations: You have entered the games room. There are a number of cocoon-like tanks around the room; each bears a legend, such as "Barbarian Hero," "Horatio Hornblower," or the like. As you examine these, one of the cocoons activates: ("Star Gate! YOU are the climactic Battle of Fnurglewitz leading the forces of freedom against the evil Emperor Zizlebartz himself! 25Cr.") and Corona steps out. You may attack (► 131), or converse (► 151).

Corridor: The corridor is empty.

Door: As the character opens the door, gas spurts from the jam. If the character has an undamaged suit or breath mask, he is not affected. Otherwise, roll on the Weapons Table under the "gas gun" column, and apply the result to the character.

Industrial: You have entered a large, clean room containing white-painted machinery. On the walls are glass shelves covered with pill bottles. You may take one bottle and take one of the pills inside. If you do so, roll a die: **1-2:** ►207; **3-4:** ► 211; **5-6:** ► 215.

Service: You have entered a sign saying "Qwertyuiop Processing Center: Oxygen-Breathers Don Protective Garments." You may proceed (►216), or bug out.

052. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase, which Dr. Putz is laboriously ascending. You may attack (► 101), or engage him in conversation (► 119).

Accommodations: You have entered a delicatessen. After examining the stock, you decide that pastrami, matzoh ball soup, and meat knishes will be of no value to you in your quest.

Corridor: The corridor is tackily decorated with paisley carpeting and wallpaper.

Door: The door is locked.

Industrial: You have entered a medium-sized, white-painted room with comfortable plastic chairs and horizontal flat-screen terminals. On one wall, a sign says "Terminals Access Games Library Only." In the room are **2 Garcons** (both far front inward) and **2 Croupiers** (far front clockwise, far front counterclockwise). They attack.

Service: You have entered a small, two-room apartment with bath and kitchenette. There is a rope rug on the floor, printed wallcoverings, a cot, and worn but comfortable furniture. A bookshelf covers one wall, full of printouts of American literary classics — Heinlein and the like.

053. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator.

Accommodations: You have entered The Mexican Mensch, a restaurant specializing in the cuisine of Nueva Jerusalem. The menu includes pastrami tacos, refried bean knishes, and chopped liver chili. There are **4 Garcons** in the restaurant (front middle inward, front far clockwise, left far clockwise, right far clockwise). They all attack.

Corridor: The corridor is dark. Walking down it, you trip over something. You may (a) attack it, ► 139; or (b) say something, ► 161.

Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a gray-walled room. In the center of the floor is a meter-diameter hole. From the walls to various distances above the hole poke pipes of various sizes. There are scorch marks on the ceiling. There is no gravity in the room. You may bug out, or you may continue (in which case, ►208).
Service: You have entered a huge room filled with a hundred or more tables, each surrounded by a dozen chairs. The top of each table is protected by a stasis field, in which sit 12 servings of distinctly rubbery-looking chicken. **5 Garcons** (two front far inward, two left far inward, one right far inward) and **1 Securibot** (rear middle inward) are in the room. They attack.

054. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube. Rita is sleeping in it, suspended in mid-air. You may (a) leave her alone, in which case proceed; or (b) wake her up, in which case ►102.
Accommodations: You have entered the Morocco Suite. The entire floor is covered with a huge matress, and the walls, ceilings, and chairs (beanbag) are all covered in red Morocco leather.
Corridor: The corridor is empty.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered the robot repair room. Several partially disassembled robots lie on work tables. On one shelf you discover a box of robot slavers; you may take as many as you like within the countermix limits.
Service: Peering through the door, you see a room filled with cardboard boxes. You may bug out, or choose one being to enter the room, in which case ►209.

055. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator. You push the button and the elevator arrives. The doors open; inside is Stark. "Who the hell are you?" he barks. You may attack (►103); or converse (►122).
Accommodations: You have entered a typical hotel room. Proceed.
Corridor: The corridor is empty.
Door: The door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a dingy olive-painted room containing decrepit machinery. In bins connected to the machinery are plastic Marys, statuettes of the Emperor Zirlebartz, and tiny souvenir flashlights. You may take a flashlight, if you wish.
Service: You have entered an auditorium. Close-packed seats slant toward the stage. As you walk through the auditorium, an evil laugh comes through the loudspeakers; then the speakers being to screech. Sub- and supersonics are coming through; you being to feel panicky and nauseated. You being to suffer from dark flashes; you are being knocked out. You retreat rapidly; the room is impassable.

056. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase.
Accommodations: You have entered a two-room apartment, the floor of which is covered with paper, dirty socks, and empty pizza boxes.
Corridor: The corridor is dark. Walking down it, you trip over something. You may (a) attack it, ►162; or (b) say something, ►144.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may, if you wish, pry open a crate. If you do, ►218.
Service: You have entered a gymnasium. **2 Referees** (treat as Bouncers; left far inward, right far inward) attack.

057. Dr. Putz does not deny Woloski's story (030, 039), and neither has a reason to lie; they are presumably innocent. Trina and Stark (040, 020) both have reasons to lie — to protect one another, since Trina is carrying Stark's child (030). Stark has a reason to deny he was with Rita, since Trina would be upset if he had been. Neither Corona nor Rita has a reason to lie (018, 028), so presumably they are telling the truth and Stark was in the restaurant. Trina is the villain.

058. ***Clue:*** Woloski says he was in the restaurant with Trina and Corona.

059. ***Clue:*** Stark agrees he was in the casino with Rita, and is upset to hear that Trina was with Woloski.

060. ***Clue:*** Trina says that she was with Dr. Putz, and is upset that Stark was with Rita.

061. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube.
Accommodations: You have entered a tennis court.
Corridor: Dr. Putz is walking down the corridor toward you. You may attack (►145), or converse (►163).
Door: If the characters are on C Deck, the door opens. Otherwise, ►002.
Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may, if you wish, pry open a crate. If you do, ►219.
Service: You enter a small office with a desk; from the office lead two doors. You may take door #1 (►214), or door #2 (►220). (All three rooms are part of the same box on the Space Station Map).

062. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube.
Accommodations: You have entered a tobacconists. You may obtain a humidor with cigars if you wish.
Corridor: The corridor contains **1 Hired Gun** (front far inward). Engage it in combat.
Door: Door is locked.
Industrial: You have entered a gravitronic workshop. Gravity grids lean against the walls, and the work tables bear widgets, frammistans, and gizmos, all important tools for gravity technicians. As you enter the room, the gravity suddenly increases to 7G's; each being in your party must make an Alertness Check; those who fail suffer a **D** combat result; those who pass are unaffected. Proceed with play.
Service: You have entered a vacuum suit storeroom. Vacuum suits of all types are available, within the limitations of the countermix.

063. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is an elevator.
Accommodations: You have entered the White Egret, a bar which advertises stout on tap. Several destroyed Garcons and a Bartender are strewn across the floor. Trina is sitting at the bar with a drink in one hand and an SMG in the other. You may attack (►133), or converse (►152).
Corridor: The corridor walls are painted chartreuse.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: The box is entirely filled with helium; unless your main character is wearing a functional suit or breath mask, he may not enter. Other characters may not enter without suits or masks; you may leave them behind if you wish. Robots are free to enter. If you enter, ►221.
Service: You have entered a funhouse. You may bug out, or ►222.

064. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase.
Accommodations: The room is a giant, well-kept jungle garden. In one corner is a six-person hammock; in another is a datalink.
Corridor: A flashlight is lying against the corridor wall. You may take it.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a huge, empty hangar.
Service: You have entered a small storeroom. On the shelves are cannisters of monofilament solvent and a cutting laser. You may take them.

065. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a null-grav tube. A deactivated Hired Gun is floating in the tube. You may (a) leave it alone, ►104; (b) activate it, ►123; or (c) activate it after planting a robot slaver on it (assuming you have such a device), ►106.
Accommodations: The room is a standard dingy hotel room. In a drawer in the clothes closet is a flashlight.
Corridor: The corridor is empty.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a warehouse. You may, if you wish, pry open a crate. If you do, ►223.
Service: You have entered a small storeroom containing cardboard boxes. You may open one if you wish, ►224.

066. ***Accessway:*** The accessway is a staircase. A Handyman is cleaning the stairs. You may (a) bug out; (b) attack, ►107; or (c) ignore it and just use the stairs, ►124.
Accommodations: The room is a modest private apartment with modularized bookshelves and a deep couch. **1 Handyman** (rear far inward) is at work in the apartment. It attacks.
Corridor: The corridor is empty.
Door: Door opens.
Industrial: You have entered a body bank. The temperature is quite low. Along the walls are transparent tanks containing body parts and what seem to be whole humans immersed in solution; all are unconscious.
Service: You have entered a circular room in the center of which stands a table surrounded by chairs. The walls are covered by floral wallpaper, and the carpeting is a rich red. On the table is a platter containing a cooked gorblefish in stasis. You may eat it if you wish (no effect).

067. Either Stark or Rita and Corona are lying (038, 028, 018). Stark has a reason to lie: he doesn't want Trina to know he was with Rita (029). Dr. Putz and Trina support each others' stories (048, 019); they are eliminated. If Stark is lying and Rita and Corona are telling the truth, Stark, Rita, and Corona were all in the restaurant. Thus everyone has an alibi — except — aren't we forgetting Woloski? Woloski is the villain.

068. ***Clue:*** The villain must have had access to areas of the station off-limits to visitors; only station employees could have committed the crime.

069. ***Clue:*** Corona says he saw Rita in the restaurant, and that Stark was not there.

070. ***Clue:*** Stark says he was in the restaurant with Corona, but not with Rita.

071. ***Clue:*** Rita agrees Corona was in the restaurant, but denies Stark was there.

072. Your character says "Hello?" and the comm device issues forth a macabre, electronic chuckle. All the doors to the room immediately slam and lock. If you have the lockpick, you may proceed normally; otherwise, you may use the cutting laser to make a breach and continue play. If you have neither, ►183.

073. The elevator door closes, then the elevator stalls. The door will not open. If you have the cutting laser, you may (a) cut open the door and return to your original level; (b) cut open the top of the elevator and climb up the next deck upward; or (c) cut a breach in the floor and climb to the next deck downward. Roll normally to see what the cutting laser does. If you do not have the cutting laser, then ►184.

074. If you do not have the flashlight, ►185. If you have the flashlight, make an Alertness Check for the carrying character. If he passes, ►190; if he fails; ►185.

075. Put all the robot counters (other than counters of robots moving with your character) into a cup. Shake the cup. Pick up five robot counters from the cup. You must fight these five robots. (**Note**: Robot counters are double-sided. You must fight the robot on the side of the counter you look at first. If you are unsure which side to use, flip the counter as you would a coin and use the side that lands face-up.) Place the counters in the following positions on the Tactical Display (place the first counter chosen in the the first position, etc.): front far inward; left far inward; right far inward; rear far inward; front near clockwise. If you manage to destroy or enslave all the robots without pushing your Suspension of Disbelief value over 75, you may deactivate the computer; you do so automatically, simply by stating that you are doing so.

076. The bed is equipped with an automatic massage machine. The investigating party must make an Alertness Check. If it passes, it suffers no ill effects; otherwise the massage machine grabs the being and pummels it wildly, inflicting a **D** result before you can pull the being free.

077. The being begins to ascend the staircase and touches the railing — which is electrified. Roll on the Weapons Table under the **E** column and apply the result to the being.

078. The emergency station contains a bottle of Scotch and a flashlight; you may take them.

079. As you enter the room, one of the reflecting mirrors begins to turn toward you. You may press on (►202), or you may bug out.

080. You access the personnel records, and may discover any one Clue (your choice). However, by activating the datalink, you have alerted the computer to your presence; your investigations are halted by **4 Hired Guns** (all far rear inward). The console will be destroyed in the ensuing firefight.

081. The creature contains an awareness-heightening drug. Your Alertness Rating is increased by one point.

082. You hear a hissing sound. You may leave the room (return to your previous box), or continue (►187).

083. ***Clue:*** Rita agrees that she was in the restaurant with Stark, but says that Corona was not there.

084. ***Clue:*** Corona says he saw Woloski flirting with Trina in the restaurant.

085. Make an Alertness Check for the being. If he passes, he manages not to fall through the trap; the door is open and may be used. If he fails the check, ►009.

086. The accessway is a null-grav tube. However, the gravity is on in the tube. The being failed to notice this before stepping into the tube. If on C Deck, it suffers no ill effects, but the tube cannot be used to move to another deck. If on another deck, the being falls to the appropriate box on C Deck, suffering a **D** combat result in the process. If the falling being is your main character, he is separated from the other beings in his party.

087. The accessway is a staircase. Someone has sawn through some of the metal stairs, a fact your being failed to notice. It plunges through the stair to an untimely death. (A main character is wounded instead.)

088. Inside the elevator are buttons marked A, B, and C. Which do you push? **A:** ►006; **B:** ►008; **C:** ►095.

089. At the top of the stairs is **1 Guardian** (far front inward). Engage in combat.

090. At the bottom of the stairs is **1 Guardian** (far front inward). Engage in combat.

091. A great glob of acid, held together by surface tension, is floating in the center of the null-grav tube. Luckily, the being noticed the glob and was able to halt his forward motion before smashing into it. The accessway is unuseable, however.

092. At the top of the tube (on A Deck) is **1 Guardian** (far right inward). If you are on A Deck, you may engage it in combat. If you are on some other deck, there is no safe way to approach it and the accessway is unuseable.

093. Corona has a laser pistol On Body and is front middle inward. If he is killed, the elevator may be used.

094. Trina has a slugthrower To Hand and is left middle inward. If you kill her, ►098. The tube may be used after combat is concluded.

095. The elevator arrives on C Deck.

096. Make an Alertness Check for the being. If it passes, ►091; if it fails, ►116.

097. Corona talks briefly with you, and volunteers a clue; refer to Villain Chit #1. He then volunteers to join you; he has a laser pistol On Body.

098. In one of Trina's pockets, you find a notepad with a clue; refer to Villain Chit #5.

099. Trina volunteers a clue; refer to Villain Chit #5.

100. Woloski is unarmed. You have just shot him down in cold blood. Congratulations.

101. Putz has a bottle of Scotch To Hand. He is front near inward. If you kill him, ►120.

102. She wakes up with a start and pulls a laser pistol from a shoulder holster. You may attack (►121), or you may converse (►115).

103. Stark has an SGM To Hand; he is front middle inward. If you kill him, you may use the elevator.

104. Nothing happens. You may use the accessway with impunity.

105. Rita surrenders; ►115.

106. The robot activates; you control it.

107. You kill the robot; it does not defend itself.

108. The body is clutching a live grenade in its right hand, its thumb over the firing mechanism. You notice this before it explodes and toss it away from the party.

109. **1 Hired Gun** and **1 Bartender** (both front far inward) appear from behind the bar. You heard them as they approached. You automatically have the First Being Segment of the Combat Round.

110. Rita starts guiltily and explains that the station is practically empty and she saw no harm in taking advantage of the accommodations. She volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #2), and is willing to join you. She has a bottle of Scotch To Hand, and refuses to carry any other weapon. Assume her Alertness to be **2** less than normal due to drunkness.

111. Stark has a laser rifle and is middle front outward. Proceed to combat. After combat, you may pick up Stark's laser rifle and obtain new ammunition for any of your weapons.

112. Putz volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #4) and offers to join your party.

113. Woloski is front middle counterclockwise and has an explosive grenade To Hand. After combat is resolved, make an Alertness Check for your main character. If he passes the check, ►150; if he fails, resume play.

114. The body is clutching a live grenade in its right hand, its thumb over the firing mechanism. As you examine the body, the thumb slips; you fail to note the grenade before it explodes. The investigating character is subject to an explosive grenade attack; roll on the Weapons Table to determine the result.

115. She apologizes for pulling the gun and reholsters it; her nerves have been on edge since the computer went bonkers, and she has started carrying a gun as protection against the robots, some of which have gone berserk. She volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #2), but refuses to join you.

116. A great glob of acid, held together by surface tension, is floating in the center of the tube. Unfortunately, the being was unable to halt its forward movement before drifting into the glob; it suffers a **D** combat result. The accessway is now clear and can be used.

117. Trina talks with you and volunteers to join your party. If you accept her offer, ►099.

118. Woloski talks with you and volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #6). He refuses to join you, however, saying that it's not in his job description.

119. Putz offers you a bottle of Scotch, refuses to join your party, and volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #4).

120. On Putz's body you find a note. See Villain Chit #4.

121. Rita is front middle inward and has a laser pistol To Hand. Proceed to combat. If Rita is still alive after the first Combat Round, ►105; otherwise, resume play.

122. Stark talks with you, volunteers a clue (Villain Chit #3), and insists on joining you (you may not refuse). He has an SMG To Hand.

123. The robot attacks. It is near front clockwise.

124. As you walk past, **1 Handyman** (left near inward) attacks you. The robot automatically has the first Being Segment of the first Combat Round.

125. The body appears to have been shot through the forehead by a laser. Make an Alertness Check for your main character. If he passes, ►108; if he fails, ►114.

126. You are attacked by **1 Hired Gun** and **1 Bartender** (both far rear inward). You failed to hear them as they appeared from behind the bar. Proceed to combat.

127. Rita is front far outward and is armed with a bottle of Scotch. Proceed to combat.

128. Stark converses with you and volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #3). He refuses to join you. You may replenish your ammunition from the stocks in the store, but new weapons are not available.

129. That's precisely what you have done. He made no effort to defend himself. You may ransack the office and discover pep pills.

130. Woloski wakes up, talks to you, and volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #6). He offers to join you. He has an explosive grenade To Hand; if you decide not to let him join you, he will give you the grenade if you like.

131. Corona has a laser pistol On Body. He is left middle clockwise. If you survive, you will find a diary in his pocket which will provide a clue (see Villain Chit #1).

132. Corona has a laser pistol To Hand. He is front middle inward. If you survive, you will find a diary in his pocket (see Villain Chit #1 for a clue).

133. Trina is right middle inward with an SMG To Hand.

134. You are fighting Stark, who is always a little trigger-happy. Since neither of you has a flashlight, you will have to fight to the finish. Stark is middle front forward and has a laser rifle To Hand. Use the rules for darkness.

135. You are fighting **1 Hired Gun** (middle front forward). Use the rules for darkness.

136. Trina is front middle inward and is carrying a slugthrower.

137. He is front far inward and has an explosive grenade To Hand.

138. The compartment contains a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit; you make take the latter if you wish.

139. You are fighting Corona. He is front near clockwise, and has a bottle of Scotch. After the first round of combat, assuming neither of you is dead, you may cry halt (in which case ►161) or continue fighting.

140. Corona screams "Now I've got you, Zizlebartz!" and fires his pistol. Proceed to combat; Corona is front middle inward and automatically has the First Being Segment of the Combat Round. This illustrates the dangers of confusing simulation with reality. If you survive, you will find a diary in his pocket (see Villain Chit #1 for a clue).

141. It's Stark. He apologizes for shooting and says there seem to be a lot of berserk robots running about; he assumed you were one such. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #3) and offers to join you. He has a laser rifle To Hand.

142. You're shot at again. You are fighting **1 Hired Gun** (middle front inward). The robot automatically has the First Being Segment of the Combat Round.

143. Along one side of the corridor is a small compartment labelled "Emergency Station." You may open it if you wish (in which case, ►138).

144. It shoots at you. It is **1 Guardian** (front near forward). It automatically has the First Being Segment of the first Combat Round.

145. Putz is middle front inward. He has a slugthrower On Body.

146. Corona screams "Don't shoot!" and dives under the bed. He talks to you from that position, his voice muffled by the mattress. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #1), but categorically refuses to join you.

147. Corona finishes off the bottle, then volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #1). He offers to join you.

148. The crate contains ammunition for an SMG. You may take some if you wish (within the restrictions of the countermix).

149. Putz is near front forward. He has no weapon. You must undertake one Round of combat; if you wish to break off thereafter, you may, but Putz will not volunteer any information.

150. You have noticed a note crumpled up in the wastebasket (see Villain Chit #5 for a clue).

151. You say "Hello..." Corona whirls and pulls his laser pistol. You make attack (►132), or continue the conversation (►140).

152. Trina indicates that she blew up the robots in the bar when they attacked her. She volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #5) and offers to join you. She has an SMG to hand; a bottle of Scotch may be taken from the bar.

153. It's Stark. He shoots out your flashlight (discard it), then apologizes. There are a lot of berserk robots running about, and he assumed you were one. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #3) and offers to join you. He has a laser rifle To Hand.

154. The compartment contains a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. You may take the former it you wish.

155. You are fighting **1 Hired Gun** (middle front forward). Use the rules for darkness.

156. Gas sprays from the open compartment. Roll on the Weapons Table under the "gas grenade" column to determine the effect on the opening being. Robots and characters with functional suits or breath masks are not affected by the gas.

157. Trina volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #5). She refuses to join you.

158. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #6). He is not interested in joining you.

159. The compartment contains a breath mask which you may take if you wish.

160. Rita opened the compartment and a knock-out gas jetted from it. She volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #2). She is willing to join you, but has no weapon.

161. It's Corona. He is drunk. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #1). He is in no shape to accompany you.

162. Wise of you. It is **1 Guardian** (front near forward). Your main character automatically has the First Being Segment of the first Combat Round.

163. Putz volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #4). He offers to join you; he has a slugthrower On Body.

164. Corona seems passive but hostile. He asks if you have any Scotch. If you do, you may give it to him (in which case, ►147); otherwise, continue play.

165. The crate contains sardines.

166. Putz volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #4). He is not interested in joining you.

167. You find the lightswitch. The room is filled with vats of silica gel in which crystals, each some meters across, are growing.

168. The crate contains grenades. Roll a die: **1-2**: explosive; **3-4**: gas; **5**: smoke; **6**: illumination. You may take as many as you wish, within the limits of the countermix.

169. The being noticed the tripwire across the bottom of the doorway and thuś does not trigger the shotgun trap. The box contains a luxurious three-room apartment with antique Swedish "modern" furniture, Zizlebartzian statuary, and an aquarium filled with gorblefish from Planet Zare. No one is there. Memos on the desk in one room indicate that it is Stark's apartment.

170. Woloski is front middle clockwise with a laser rifle To Hand

171. You are fighting Stark, who is middle front clockwise and has a golf club To Hand. If you both survive the first Round of combat, you may break off (in which case, ►178).

172. The crate contains robot slavers. You may take some, within countermix limitations.

173. Trina has an electric prod On Body and is front middle inward.

174. The being fails to notice the tripwire across the bottom of the doorway and triggers the shotgun trap. Roll on the Weapons Table under "SG" and apply the result to the being. Thereafter the box may be freely entered; it contains a luxurious three-room apartment with antique Swedish "modern" furniture, Zizlebartzian statuary, and an aquarium filled with gorblefish from Planet Zare. The room is empty; it seems to be Stark's.

175. You fail to find the lightswitch or any other exit from the room; it is impassable.

176. Make an Alertness Check for the entering being. If it passes, ►169; if it fails, ►174.

177. Woloski offers a clue (see Villain Chit #6). He is willing to join you.

178. It's Stark. He has a golf club To Hand. He volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #3) and offers to join you.

179. The crate explodes; it was trapped. Roll once for each being in your party on the "explosive grenade" column of the Weapons Table.

180. Trina is considering ways of getting at the computer. She volunteers a clue (see Villain Chit #5). She is willing to accompany you.

181. The crate contains smoked eels and salmon.

182. You find a cutting laser in the room; simultaneously, the hydraulic press in the center of the room explodes. Roll on the "explosive grenade" column of the Weapons Table for each being in your group, and apply the results.

183. One door opens and **4 Securibots** and **2 Hired Guns** beging to enter. Place one Securibot far forward inward and begin each combat. During the Initiative Segment of each Combat Round, one robot (your choice of which) will enter the far forward inward box, until all six robots have entered.

184. You wait in the elevator for several minutes; then the door opens. In front of you are **2 Hired Guns** and **1 Securibot** (all near forward inward). Engage in combat.

185. In the darkness you failed to notice a single strand of monofilament strung across the corridor. Your main character suffers a **D** result. You may proceed without further mishap.

186. The creature gives you a mildly upset stomach. Reduce your Alertness Rating by one point.

187. All characters in the party without functional suits or breath masks are knocked unconscious by gas. If everyone is unconscious, ►192. If your main character is unconscious, but other characters in the party are not, ►199. If your main character is not unconscious, but others in the party are, you must leave them where they lie and continue play.

188. The locker contains **1 Garcon** (front near inward) which attacks you.

189. You find a cutting laser. You reach out to touch it; it is electrified. Roll on the "E" column of the Weapons Table unless you have insulated gloves To Hand. You may not take the laser unless you have the gloves.

190. You notice a strand of monofilament strung across the corridor before you walk into it. You duck under it, and proceed along the corridor without mishap.

191. If you have the lockpick To Hand, it is caught in the plate and destroyed. Otherwise, the being suffers a **D** combat result.

192. You wake up in the brig. You have lost all equipment and robots; any characters with you are still with you, also without equipment. You are in a small cell. You wait there until Woloski arrives, somewhat upset; he saw you being carted off by robots and has come to release you. He has a laser rifle that he will give you, but he will not join your party. He offers a clue (see Villain Chit #6). If Woloski is with you or dead, you manage to leave the brig through an air duct. Roll a die: **1-2**: you are on A Deck; **3-4**: B Deck; **5-6**: C Deck. Roll again: **1-2**: first ring of the deck; **3-4**: second ring; **5-6**: third ring. Roll two dice, taking the first roll as a first digit and the second as a second; this is the position of the box (if the first digit is a six, reroll). EXAMPLE: You roll a 3, 2, 5, 4. You are in box B154. Place your main character's counter in the appropriate box and proceed with play.

193. The escalator is running in the opposite direction from the one you wish to go. At the top/bottom of the escalator is **1 Guardian** (far front inward). Each Movement Segment for each of the beings under your control, the being moves one box away from the Guardian because of the movement of the escalator; this may be offset by moving toward the Guardian. Beings you control may sacrifice their Equipment Segment in order to move a second box toward the Guardian (a net of one box closer). Proceed to combat.

194. Crate contains a gas gun and three reloads.

195. Two of each suddenly come alive and attack. They are **2 Garcons** (left far clockwise, right far clockwise), **2 Bouncers** (front far inward, rear far inward), **2 Securibots** (left far counterclockwise, right far counterclockwise).

196. In the center of the floor is a drain. About a third of the way across the room, you are suddenly hit by a massive jet of liquid. Nozzles all over the room are tracking your movement. Rgliminas absorb their food directly through the skin, and this is a typical Rgliminas restaurant. Any electrical equipment you (or characters with you) have To Hand (lasers, electric prods, power packs, flashlights, robot slavers), is shorted out; remove such equipment from play.

197. This is a greep storeroom. The greeps are disgusting, but they let you pass without mishap.

198. The locker contains a vacuum suit. You may take it.

199. They drag you out of the room (return to the previous box). If you have pep pills, they are expended to wake you up. Otherwise you must spend three Suspension of Disbelief points and you are again awake. Other unconscious characters remain unconscious; you must leave them behind.

200. You do so. Nothing of interest occurs.

201. The locker contains **1 Securibot** (front near inward); it attacks.

202. Roll a die; the number rolled is the number of times the mirror will fire at you as you run across the room. All shots will be directed at your main character. Roll once on the Weapons Table under the "L" column for each shot; ignore Stun and Unload results.

203. The locker contains a cutting laser.

204. The equipment is sitting on a set of metal shelves; as you touch a voicetyper, you discover that the shelves are electrified. Unless you have the insulated gloves To Hand, roll on the "E" column of the Weapons Table to determine the effects. There is no equipment of use.

205. The floor is a conveyor belt, covered with packages of chicken parts and packaged cakes. There is a walkway running over the belt across the center of the room. You walk across the walkway; midway across the room, there is a blinding flash. Roll on the "L" column of the Weapons Table for each being in your party and apply the results. The food (and possibly you as well) has been sterilized by an X-ray laser.

206. It talks genially to you as you edge your way across the room and through another door.

207. It's a pain pill. Cure one wound (if you have any).

208. As you float through the room, there is a hissing sound followed by a large explosion. A fireball appears over the hole in the floor. If snuffs out immediately; since there is no gravity, there is no convective overturn to bring new oxygen into the flame. The pipes which extend into the snuffed flame suck at the gas, separating out the chemicals formed In the brief flame. All beings in the room are subject to concussion from the explosion; roll on the explosive grenade column of the Weapons Table for each being, and apply the indicated results.

209. Make an Alertness Check for the being. If it passes, ►217; if it fails, ►212.

210. It says "Now don't be hostile. I can't stand hostility," and attacks you. It is front middle inward.

211. It's a pep pill. Your Alertness Level is immediately increased by two points.

212. The being walks into a monofilament wire strung across the bottom of the door, suffering a **D** result. The wire trips an explosive planted in a box of grenades; the grenades explode, filling the room with shrapnel. Roll for each being in your party on the explosive grenade column of the Weapons Table and apply the results.

213. The boxes contain explosive grenades. You may take some within the limitations of the countermix.

214. You have entered a small observation room with a window along one wall looking into a padded cell. In the observation room is **1 Hired Gun** (front middle clockwise) which attacks.

215. It's an hallucinogen. That'll teach you to take strange pills. Your Alertness Level is reduced two points.

216. You open the door. The room is filled with chlorine. Roll for each character in your party on the gas grenade column of the Weapons Table, and apply the results. Characters with functional suits and breath masks are unaffected.

217. The being notices the monofilament wire running across the bottom of the door and warns the rest of you. Proceed with play. You may open one of the boxes if you wish (in which case, ►213).

218. As you pry open the crate, you jostle the plastic explosive it contains and break the airtight seal which prévents it from exploding; it explodes. Roll on the explosive grenade column of the Weapons Table for each being in your group and apply the indicated results.

219. The crate is empty. As you examine it, **1 Stevedore** (near rear inward) rounds a corner and attacks you from the rear.

220. You enter a large padded cell with a mirror along one wall. The mirror suddenly shatters and you are attacked by **1 Hired Gun** (left middle inward). The robot automatically has the first Being Segment.

221. The area is a superheavy metal foundry; superheavy metals must be processed in oxygen-free atmospheres. The foundry contains **2 Securibots** (left far inward, right far inward) and **1 Cargomaster** (middle front inward).

222. The funhouse is, needless to say, controlled by the computer. You are tumbled down slides at 3G's, run through circular corridors spinning at 78RPM, blown in the face by air at bruising pressures, etc. Each being in your party must undertake an Alertness Check; each being that fails suffers a **D** result.

223. The crate is empty.

224. The box contains illumination grenades. You make take as many as you wish, within countermix limitations.

225. Regardless of what button you push, the elevator goes to C Deck (if already there, it goes to A Deck). The door opens; **1 Securibot** (near front inward) and **1 Guardian** (far front inward) are waiting for you. Fight them.

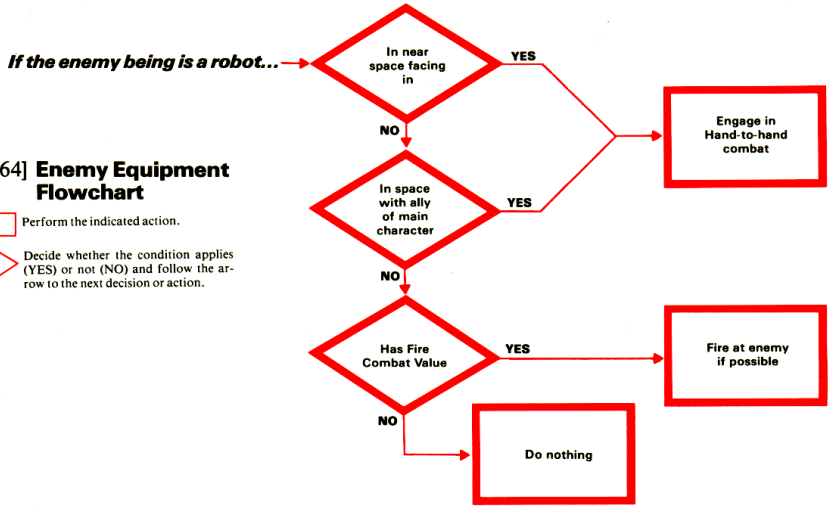
Design Credits for *Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*

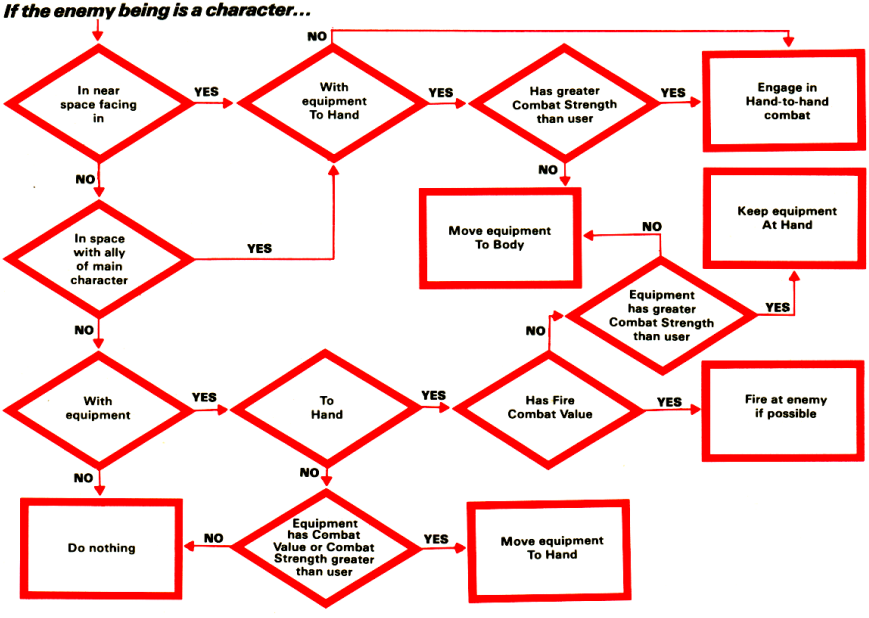
Game Design and Development
Greg Costikyan
Physical Systems and Graphics
Redmond A. Simonsen
Playtesting
Tom Gould, Nick Karp, Tom Pecorini, Max Weissman
Production: **Ted Koller, Manfred F. Milkuhn, Michael Moore, Bob Ryer, Ken Stec**

[12.64] Enemy Equipment Flowchart

Perform the indicated action.

Decide whether the condition applies (YES) or not (NO) and follow the arrow to the next decision or action.





The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat Counter Section Nr. 1 (140 pieces): Front

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

MAIN CHARACTERS

Jim diGriz 9 ★ 4	Jim DISBELIEF × 1	Jim DISBELIEF × 10	Jim ALERT
Angelina diGriz 9 ★ 5	Angelina DISBELIEF × 1	Angelina DISBELIEF × 10	Angelina ALERT

BirthMask 1 • 3	ElectProd 3 E •	1stAid 2 • 3	GasGun 2 G 6	GasCrstr 1 • 3	GasCrstr 1 • 3
GolfClub 1 • 7	Humidor 1 • 5	1stAid 2 • 3	Humidor 1 • 5	LaserPistl 3 L 6	GasCrstr 1 • 3

SlgThrwr 3 S 7	SlgThrwr 3 S 7	SMG 5 SG 7	SMG 5 SG 7	S Ammo 1 • 3	S Ammo 1 • 3	S Ammo 1 • 3
Vacuum 5	Vacuum 5	Vacuum 5	Reflctive 7	BodArmr 7	ReflecBod 10	S Ammo 1 • 3

Robot Stun	Robot Stun	Robot Stun
Robot Stun	Robot Stun	Robot Stun

EQUIPMENT

LaserPistl 3 6	LaserRfle 5 LR 9	L Power 1 • 3	L Power 1 • 3	L Power 1 • 3	L Power 1 • 3
ExplGren 2 • 4	ExplGren 2 • 4	ExplGren 2 • 4	GasGren 1 • 4	GasGren 1 • 4	GasGren 1 • 4

LockPick 1 • 4	MonoSlv 1 • 3	MonoSlv 1 • 3	PainPills 2 • 1		
BotSlaver 3•4/10	BotSlaver 3•4/10	BotSlaver 3•4/10	PainPills 2 • 1		

GAME MARKERS

Leg OK	Head OK	Body OK	Leg OK	Head OK	Body OK	Bulkhead	Bulkhead	1	3
Arm OK	Arm OK	Leg OK	Arm OK	Arm OK	Leg OK				5

018 018 069	1	084 018 018	083 028 071	2	049 028 028	038 050 070	3	059 020 038	048 048 048	4	048 030 048	060 060 019	5	019 040 019
068 068 068	6	058 039 029	018 069 084	1	018 018 018	028 071 049	2	028 028 083	050 070 059	3	020 038 038	048 048 048	4	030 048 048

VILLAIN CHITS AND SUSPECTS

060 019 019	5	040 019 060	068 068 058	6	039 029 068	069 084 018	1	018 018 018	071 049 028	2	028 083 028	070 059 020	3	038 038 050
048 048 030	4	048 018 048	019 019 040	5	019 060 060	068 058 039	6	029 068 068	084 018 018	1	018 028 069	049 028 028	2	083 028 071

059 020 038	3	038 050 070	048 030 048	4	048 048 048	019 040 019	5	060 060 019	058 039 029	6	068 068 068	018 018 018	1	018 069 084
028 028 083	2	028 071 049	020 038 038	3	050 070 059	030 048 048	4	048 048 048	040 019 060	5	060 019 019	039 029 068	6	068 068 058

018 018 018	1	069 084 018	028 083 028	2	071 049 028	038 038 050	3	070 059 020	048 048 048	4	048 048 030	019 060 060	5	019 040 040
048 048 048	4	048 048 030	019 060 060	5	019 040 040	029 068 068	6	068 058 039	028 028 028	2	028 071 049	020 038 038	3	050 070 059

Garcon 8 • 3	Garcon 8 • 3	Garcon 8 • 3	Garcon 8 • 3	Garcon 8 • 3
Handymn 5 L 7	Croupier 8 • 5	Croupier 8 • 5	Bouncer 7 • 9	Bouncer 7 • 9

ROBOTS

Hired Gun 8 LR 9	Hired Gun 8 LR 9	Hired Gun 8 LR 9	Hired Gun 8 LR 9	Trina 6 4
Bartendr 6 S 5	Bartendr 6 S 5	Bartendr 6 S 5	Hired Gun 8 LR 9	Corona 7 4

Putz 5 3	Rita 6 2
Stark 7 3	Woloski 6 2

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The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat Counter Section Nr. 1 (140 pieces): Back

Stun	Stun	Stun
Stun	Stun	Stun

SMGAmo 2 • 3	SMGAmo 2 • 3	SMGAmo 2 • 3	SMG 5 • 7	SMG 5 • 7	SlgThrwr 3 • 7	SlgThrwr 3 • 7
SMGAmo 2 • 3	ReflcBod M	BodArmr M	Reflctive M	Vacuum M	Vacuum M	Vacuum M

LR Power 2 • 3	L Power 1 • 3	GasGun 2 • 6	Flashlight 2 • 6	BrthMask 1 • 3	CutLaser 4 • 6	
S Ammo 2 • 3	LaserPstl 3 • 6	InsGloves 1 • 4	Flashlight 2 • 6	InsGloves 1 • 4	CutLaser 4 • 6	

Jim ALERT + 10		Jim diGriz 9 STUN 4
Angelina ALERT + 10		Angelina diGriz 9 STUN 5

4	2	Floor	Floor
6			

Body W	Head W	Leg W	Body W	Head W	Leg W
Leg W	Arm W	Arm W	Leg W	Arm W	Arm W

PepPills 2 • 1	MnoSwd 4 • 10	MnoSwd 4 • 10	GolfClub 1 • 7	LR Power 2 • 3	LR Power 2 • 3	LR Power 2 • 3	LR Power 2 • 3	LaserRfle 5 • 9	LaserPstl 3 • 6	
PepPills 2 • 1	Scotch 1 • 6	Scotch 1 • 6	Scotch 1 • 6	IllumGren 1 • 4	IllumGren 1 • 4	IllumGren 1 • 4	SmkGren 2 • 4	SmkGren 2 • 4	SmkGren 2 • 4	

Cargo Master 4 • 6	Stevedre 3 • 7	Stevedre 3 • 7	Stevedre 3 • 7	Farmer 1 • 8						
Securibot 8 L 8	Securibot 8 L 8	Securibot 8 L 8	Securibot 8 L 8	Securibot 8 L 8						

Trina STUN 3 4	Gantry 3 • 5	Maid 2 • 2	Securibot 8 L 8	Securibot 8 L 8						
Corona STUN 4 4	Maid 2 • 2	Guardian 6 L 0	Guardian 6 L 0	Guardian 6 L 0						

Rita STUN 3 2	Putz STUN 2 3	VILLAIN CHIT F	VILLAIN CHIT F	VILLAIN CHIT F						
Woloski STUN 3 2	Stark STUN 4 3	VILLAIN CHIT F	VILLAIN CHIT F	VILLAIN CHIT F						

VILLAIN CHIT A	VILLAIN CHIT A	VILLAIN CHIT A	VILLAIN CHIT A	VILLAIN CHIT A						
VILLAIN CHIT B	VILLAIN CHIT B	VILLAIN CHIT B	VILLAIN CHIT B	VILLAIN CHIT A						

VILLAIN CHIT C	VILLAIN CHIT C	VILLAIN CHIT C	VILLAIN CHIT B	VILLAIN CHIT B						
VILLAIN CHIT D	VILLAIN CHIT D	VILLAIN CHIT C	VILLAIN CHIT C	VILLAIN CHIT C						

VILLAIN CHIT E	VILLAIN CHIT D	VILLAIN CHIT D	VILLAIN CHIT D	VILLAIN CHIT D						
VILLAIN CHIT E	VILLAIN CHIT E	VILLAIN CHIT E	VILLAIN CHIT E	VILLAIN CHIT E						

HARRY HARRISON'S THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

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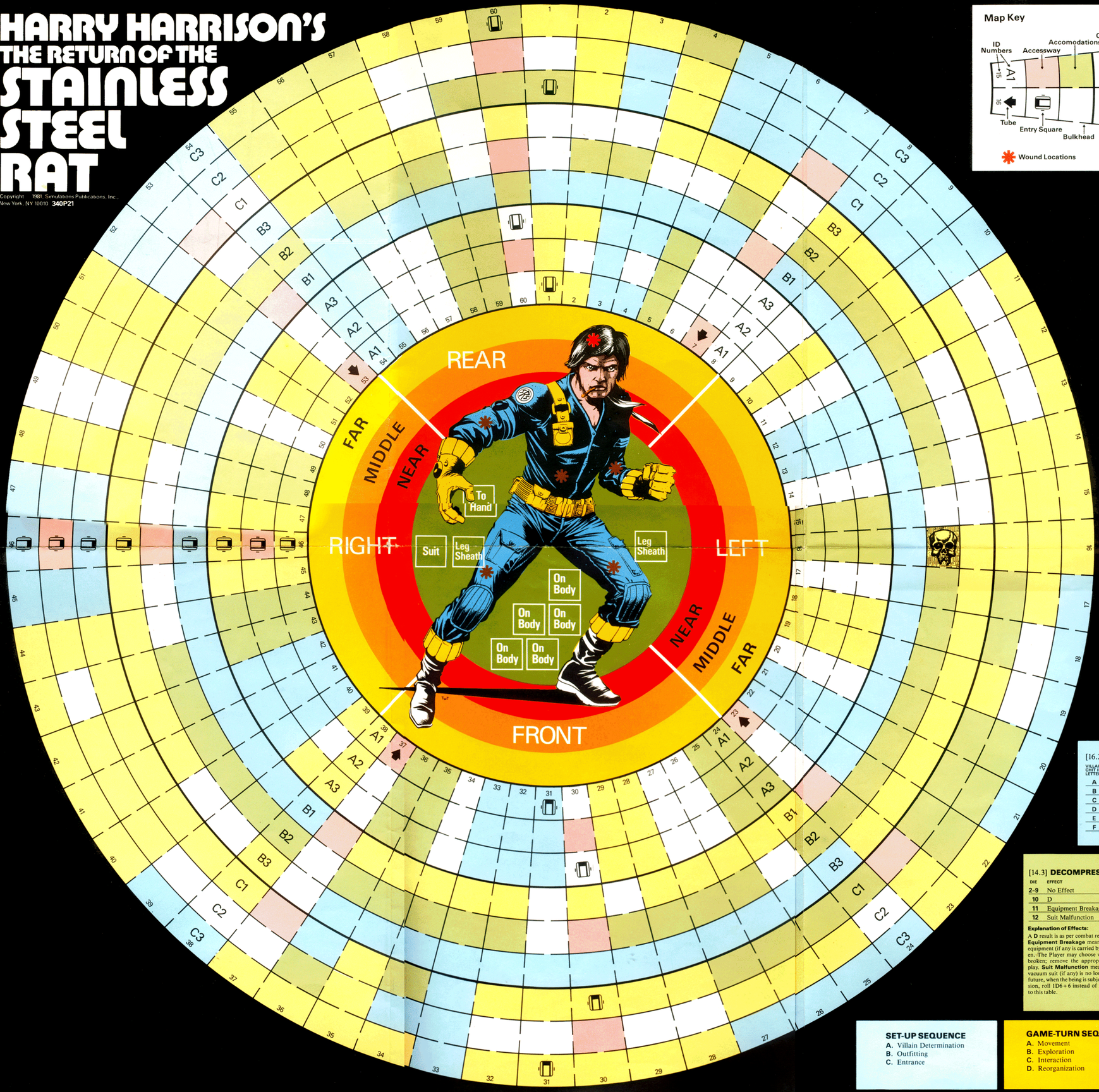
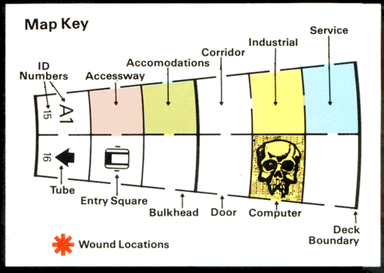


Map Key



Die-Roll Chit Box

Jim's Suspension of Disbelief Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Jim's Alertness Track

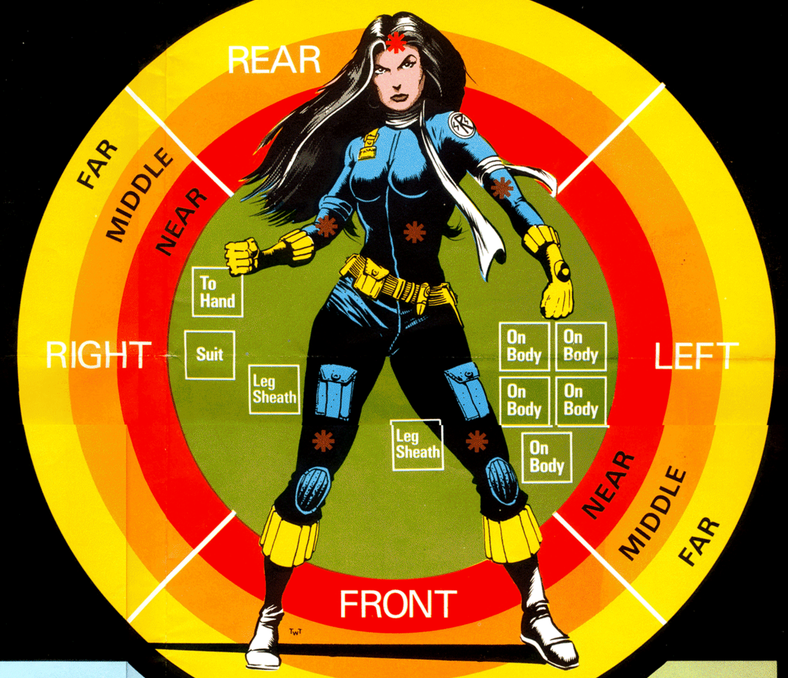
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Angelina's Suspension of Disbelief Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Angelina's Alertness Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



[16.25] VILLAIN MATRIX

VILLAIN CHIT ID LETTER	DIE ROLL CHIT 1	2	3	4	5	6
A	017	027	037	047	057	067
B	027	037	047	057	067	017
C	037	047	057	067	017	027
D	047	057	067	017	027	037
E	057	067	017	027	037	047
F	067	017	027	037	047	057

Cross-reference the Die Roll Chit with the Villain Chit ID letter and refer to the indicated paragraph to find the villain's identity.

[12.47] WOUND TABLE

DIE	BODY AREA
1	Left arm
2	Right arm
3	Left leg
4	Right leg
5	Head
6	Body

Your character is wounded in the area indicated by the die roll; invert the appropriate counter on the mapsheet to the Wounded side. If you roll an area of the body that is already wounded, roll again.

[14.3] DECOMPRESSION TABLE

DIE	EFFECT
2-9	No Effect
10	D
11	Equipment Breakage
12	Suit Malfunction

Explanation of Effects:
A **D** result is as per combat results.
Equipment Breakage means that one piece of equipment (if any is carried by the being) is broken. The Player may choose which piece is to be broken; remove the appropriate counter from play. **Suit Malfunction** means that the being's vacuum suit (if any) is no longer airtight. In the future, when the being is subjected to Decompression, roll 1D6+6 instead of 2D6 when referring to this table.

[12.16] HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT EFFECTS TABLE

DIE	−4	−3 or −2	−1	0	1	2	3 or 4	5 or 6	7
1	–	–	–	–	–	–	S	S	S
2	–	–	–	–	–	S	S	S	D
3	–	–	–	–	S	S	S	D	D
4	–	–	–	S	S	S	D	D	D
5	–	–	S	S	S	D	D	D	D
6	–	S	S	D	D	D	D	D	D

S: Defender stunned. **D:** Defender killed (if the defender is Jim or Angelina, a D result calls for a wound and causes the character's suit, if any, to malfunction). (-): No effect. A combat differential less than −4 is treated as −4; a combat differential greater than 7 is treated as 7.

[12.28] WEAPONS TABLE

DICE	GasGren 1 • 4	ExplGren 2 • 4	ElectProd 3 E •	GasGun 2 G 6	LaserPist 3 L 6	LaserRifle 5 LR 9	SlugThrower 3 S 7	SMG 5 SG 7
	FIRE COMBAT VALUE E			G	L	LR	S	SG
1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	S	–	–	–	–	–	–	S
3	S	–	–	–	–	–	–	S*
4	S	–	–	–*	–*	–*	–	S*
5	S	D	S*	–	–	D	–	S
6	S	–	S	S	–	S	S	D
7	S	D	S	–	S*	D*	S*	S*
8	D	S	S	S	D	D	D	D
9	S	D	D	D	D	D	D	D*
10	D	D	D	D*	D*	S*	D	D*
11	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
12	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D

S: Stunned. **D:** Killed (Jim and Angelina wounded). (-): No effect. *Weapon unloaded.

Modifiers:
−3 if laser fire is used against reflective armor
−3 if SMG or slugthrower is used against body armor
−1 if laser fire is used against target smoking cigar
Gas does not affect robots and characters with functioning suits.

SET-UP SEQUENCE

A. Villain Determination
B. Outfitting
C. Entrance

GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

A. Movement
B. Exploration
C. Interaction
D. Reorganization

COMBAT SEQUENCE

A. Initiative Determination Segment
B. First Being Segment
   1. *Movement*
   2. *Equipment*
C. Subsequent Being Segments