

ISSUE 34 • MAY/JUNE 1984

# Different Worlds

THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

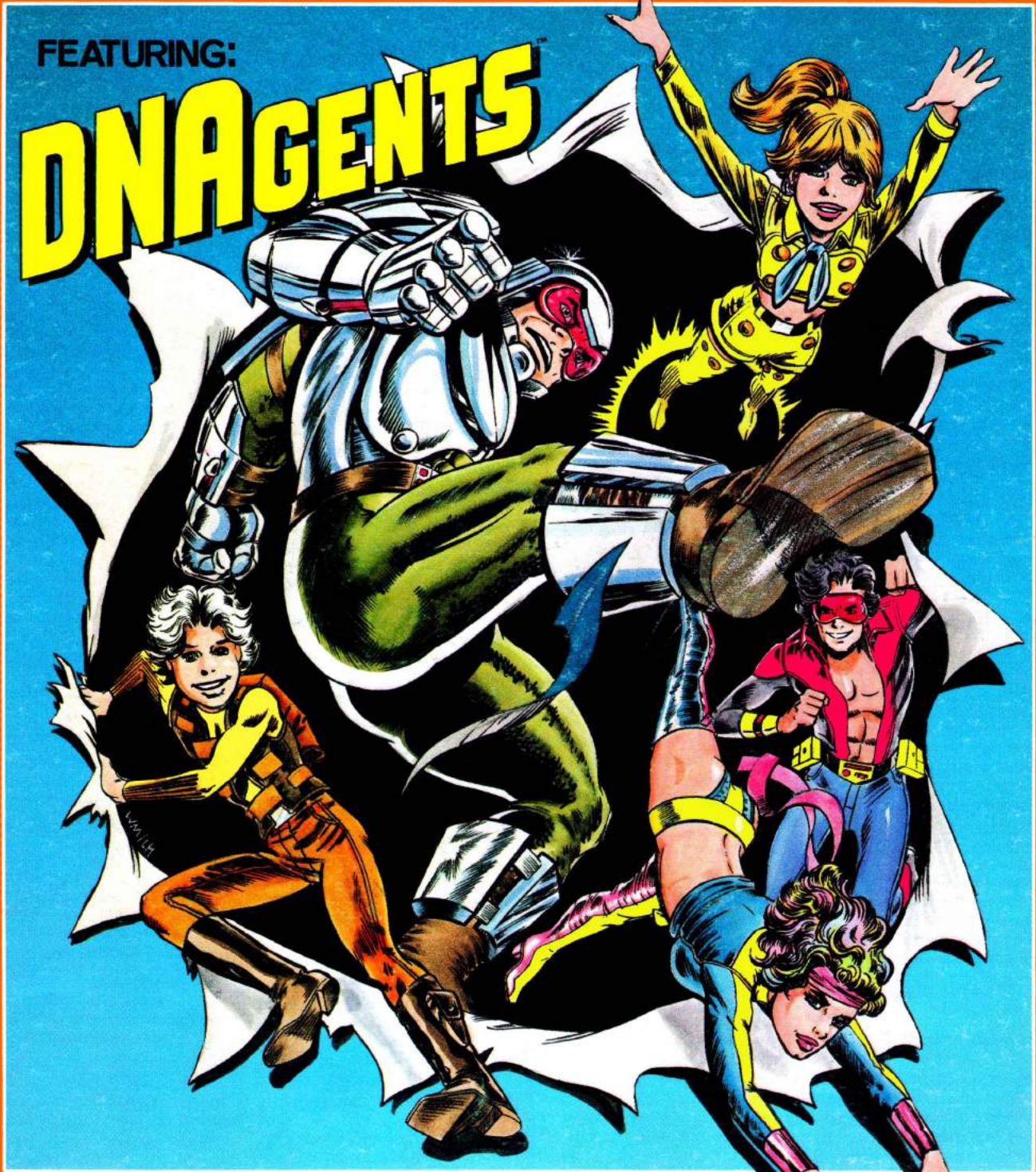
SUPERHERO SPECIAL ISSUE

\$3.00

Australia \$3.95

FEATURING:

# DNAGENTS



Special Call of Cthulhu Module Inside!

# Different Views

Send  
letters and  
comments to:

Different Views  
PO Box 6302  
Albany CA 94706

## Dull Issue 32

When I write to a magazine, it is usually to congratulate it for turning out an issue that pleased me. But this time I must say that is not the case. Issue 32 was by far one of the duller issues of *DW* that I have ever seen. There was almost nothing in it that was of any use to me and there was very little that I found interesting in it. Ken Rolston's "Cliff Dwellers" was interesting, but there is no place in my campaign for this type of culture. Not to say that other readers may not have found it of use. Ken did a top-notch job of writing as always, and it was a good read. I also can't see what possible use "Lost Ball Games" would be to anyone who plays role-playing games unless they like to get into long sessions of running back and forth with a ball, rather than exploring a city or trashing a few supervillains. All in all, it was boring. "The Kabbalah" was another boring piece. Who wants to change their magic system? If you want to do that then switch to another system. Don't botch up something that took a game designer years to design.

My one very major gripe is John Nubbin. Didn't Mr. Nubbin's mother ever teach him that if he didn't have anything nice to say don't say anything at all? This man never seems to enjoy the movies he goes to see and tries to get his few, but undoubtedly faithful, readers to follow in his own dissatisfied footsteps. For shame. But all critics seem to be alike.

When is *DW* going to go back to a standard format and stop doing special issues? Too many times I have picked up an issue and found that there was almost nothing to interest me, nothing to help me add a new touch to my role-playing. Isn't that what *DW* is all about? Maybe this sounds a bit selfish but I would like to see a little something for everyone in each issue rather than try and hit one special aspect of role-playing games at one time.

Michael R. Jarrell  
Tel-Aviv, Israel

*The policy of DW is to cater to the tastes of all adventure role-playing gamers. Issue by issue finds us using a special theme to generate interest. We do, however, strive to put in as much a diverse article mix as possible every issue.*

*Sometimes we fail a few of our fans, but for that all we can do is throw up our hands and cry "We tried!"*  
—Editor

## Not Bad Issue 32

I'd been waiting for this special issue for some time. It's not quite what I'd been hoping for, but it's not bad. The "Lost Ball Games" article was of interest, but I'm not quite sure we needed something that, unfortunately, doesn't have a larger place in most games. The "Cliff Dwellers" article was better, presenting intriguing ideas for gaming. The "Kabbalah" article was also interesting.

The "Sex and Romance in *Traveller*" article was somehow annoying. I'm first of all surprised that people needed to be told that romance needs to be a part of a science-fiction role-playing campaign. But, assuming there are players who never see a female player-character (let alone a female player, admittedly rare), I take exception to some of the article's points. I don't understand the rationale behind his statement that female characters should be played by female players. This for one thing means that if there are no female players, there are no female characters. And it restricts the players' ability to role-play. I won't dispute that a female could role-play a female better than I could, but I like to try every now and then. Maybe I can get some insights by playing a character who's not just like me. Equally restrictive were his comments on women in society. True, throughout most of history, women have been repressed. But there have always been exceptions—Joan of Arc is an obvious example. Since player-characters tend to be of heroic nature, I don't see why female player-characters have to suffer the lot of the majority.

David Dunham  
San Antonio TX

## Great DW

Thanks for a great magazine. I first started reading *DW* in January of last year. Ever since the Norse issue (issue 26), I've been hooked on the magazine due to its multitude of articles that are both stimulating and useful to role-playing campaigns.

I also find the artwork appealing, the covers of issues 31 and 32 are excellent.

I enjoy among other things "My Life & Role-Playing" and "Adventure By Design." For the first

one, I think Gigi's was one of the best. It's good that role-playing can be used for good things besides entertainment. Both "The Sunstone Multiverse" and "The Cup of Death" in issue 31 were excellent. Being an anthropology major, I thoroughly enjoyed issue 32's "The Cliff Dwellers" and "Lost Ball Games." Keep the good articles coming.

Leon Rivest  
Victoria BC

## Fantasy In Role-Playing

It appears your magazine is veering away from fantasy role-playing games and into the more esoteric games of superhero and horror. If this is the case I have grave doubts about resubscribing to your magazine which has had a lot of thoughtful articles about fantasy role-playing in the past.

Unsigned  
Valois NY

## Anti-Anti-Role-Playing Gamers

Though I thoroughly enjoyed issue 32, it is the "unpaid political announcement" in "Sword of Hollywood" which has special concern for me.

It is encouraging to see someone involved in gaming publications speak out against the anti-role-playing game movement which seems to be gathering force. Mr. DiTillio's comments are certainly a step in the right direction.

I also saw the broadcast, and I head the accusations that the people at Trinity Broadcasting Network were making. Most of their arguments were not only slanderous, but downright silly, as most of us who saw it would agree. I imagine those of you who saw the show probably chuckled when you heard a few of the stories they were telling; for instance, the demons in the rulebooks that screamed when they were thrown in the trash can, or the youth who claimed he learned to throw real spells from the game. But don't laugh too hard when they say these things.

These people take themselves seriously, and when they come to a judgment about something, it becomes part of their "divine" commitment to do "God's work." To do this "work" (which may include banning books, rock music, *D&D*, etc.), they have not only a TV network, but literally thousands of dollars at their disposal, tax free.

Don't get me wrong either. I am not calling all Christians Nazis.

According to an article in the same issue, Sandy Petersen, designer of *Call Of Cthulhu* (!) is a heartening example of a Christian who happens to like role-playing games. But the people at TBN are not of his caliber, unfortunately.

Like most "morality" movements, they tend to make a scapegoat of someone or something they don't understand, label it "humanistic" or "Satanic" (McCarty would have said "Communist," Hitler would have said "Jewish") and focus their wrath on it, so as to give themselves a sense of purpose. In this case, we are one of the targets.

I had a personal experience with this problem when I was president of a college science-fiction club which included role-playing games in its activities. A student religious group caught wind of us, and soon began to spread tales of "Satan worship" around campus. This made us unpopular, and soon we were being harassed by other students as well, including name calling, threats, hazing, and even assault. Needless to say, we lost many members and the club ceased to function as such, although those that remained became close friends (and still are).

I can't say I learned much about what to do when this situation arises, other than that laughing it off probably won't work, and neither will trying to talk sense to them, especially if they won't listen. All I can say is we had better start saying (doing?) more about this before it gets bigger than we are.

Ben C. Fenwick  
Norman OK

## Good & Bad

I find all your issues enjoyable. My favorite feature is "My Life & Role-Playing." However, I always read the fan letters and Gigi's letter first.

While all your features are enjoyable, the feature I least appreciate is the film reviews. Film reviews can be found in too many other media to make them truly desirable in your magazine.

George Chen  
APO NY

## Super Praise

I tried your "Nighthaunt" adventure from issue 32, modified for use with revised *Villains And Vigilantes*. When I first read it through, I thought the plot was rather worn-out and banal. You

*Continued page 40*

# The Gamer

Editor's  
Views

## THE ART OF GAME REVIEWING

Game reviews all too often conclude with a simplistic "You'll like it if you're interested in the product's subject or game system" without going into the product's actual merit in the overall marketplace. Should products be rated in terms of how good and interesting they are for the general market, and only then, if the reviewer is still compelled to do so, give another rating for those especially interested in the product? Products cannot be reviewed objectively if they are seen through the eyes of special interests. General gamers would be unfairly served.

Can a product for special interests be fairly reviewed objectively from a general gamer's viewpoint at all? Let us take the case of a playaid for a popular game with a mountain of digits that provide stats for random encounters. To a regular player of the game, it will provide him with hours of page-flipping and number-manipulating enjoyment. To a general gamer that does not play the game, it is pages of meaningless numbers

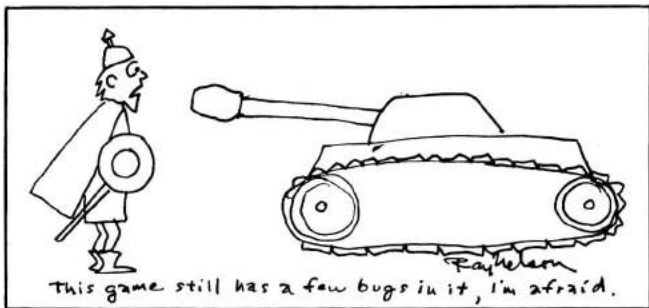
that do not excite him at all. This is more a reflection of the game than the playaid so the playaid itself should not be condemned for the faults of the original system.

If a product cannot be reviewed fairly from a general gamer's perspective, should it be reviewed at all? Is it worthwhile reviewing it for the narrower audience? Or should it only be announced that it is available and describe its function, and have reviewers concentrate on products with greater appeal? It seems there is a balance to be found.

Game reviewing is not yet an art, there are too many questions to be answered and impartial procedures yet to be devised. The art of gaming requires good game reviewing for it to reach the lofty goals we have set for it. Game reviewers need to be critical of games, be honest with their feelings and express them. It can only help gaming's future.

Happy gaming,

*Tadashi Ebara*



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May/June 1984

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# DNAGENTS

Cover illo  
By Will Meugniot



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## SUPERHERO SPECIAL FEATURE

Starring:

# DNAGENTS

By Steve Perrin

Illustrated  
by Will Meugniot



Who are the DNAGents? If you buy your games at a game store and your comic books at a newsstand, you've probably never heard of them. The DNAGents come from Eclipse Comics, an alternate publisher. The alternate publishers like Eclipse, First, Americomics, Pacific, Comico, Capital, and others are not like the regular newsstand publishers: DC, Marvel, and Archie. Their products are found in comic book specialty shops. The paper is better, the stories and art are innovative, and the plotlines usually stay away from superheroic cliches.

Eclipse Comics' *DNAGents*, created by Mark Evanier and Will Meugniot, provides a bridge between the experimentation of the alternates and the stick-in-the-mud supertypes of the majors. Yes, it is a superteam; yes, it is in modern-day earth; and yes, they fight supervillains. But there are significant differences in approach.

The team was created, literally, by a major conglomerate known as Matrix Technologies. They are test-tube creations and intended to be the slave special agents of the corporation. Unfortunately for Matrix, but fortunately for the enjoyability of the series, the agents have minds and personalities of their own. As this is written, the team is in its tenth issue, our naive heroes are beginning to get a good idea of just how nasty their employers/masters are, and their existence has been revealed to the world.

The DNAGents continually explore the problems of being alone in a world full of strangers. Despite their outer appearance, their fluorocarbon-based blood and the physical systems which support their powers make them not entirely human. Moreover, they are psychologically dependent on each other, each needing the others to reinforce their worth in the world. This conflicts with their natural interest in making contacts with the outside world. Each reacts differently to these conflicting needs.

In addition to these ongoing personal conflicts, the DNAGents must face the results of having the carefully guarded secret of their existence and method of creation revealed to the world.

### How to Use the DNAGents

We have supplied the game stats for this team in the three principal superhero role-playing games: *Champions* (Hero Games), *Superworld* (Chaosium), and *Villains And Vigilantes* (Fantasy Games Unlimited). Gamemasters for each of these systems will have to make up their own minds as to how to use them.

The first way is to simply start a *DNAGents* campaign. Using the comic books, the gamemaster puts together a campaign which will follow our test-tube terrors as they meet Megaman, Luger, Crossfire, the Commander, Stiletto, and all the other characters who populate the books.

The second way is to use the DNAGents as non-player characters—someone for the actual campaign heroes to run into. Perhaps the local heroes have run into evidence that Matrix is stockpiling radioactives in an unsafe manner. The heroes show up to put a stop to it, and the DNAGents are called in to protect the Matrix property.

Similarly, I have run a *Superworld* game in which one player played Rainbow and the other players ran other local heroes. The rest of the team had disappeared and Matrix pulled in other heroes to help Rainbow find the others.

The third way to use the characters is simply as models. Change the names and a few minor abilities and your campaign has a whole new crew of non-player characters, already fleshed out and with probable recognition value for the players. Are they heroes? Are they villains? Only the gamemaster knows for sure, and he isn't talking.

### The Creators of DNAGents

**Mark Evanier:** Spent most of his adult life writing comic books for such stars as Bugs Bunny and Goofy, and writing animation scripts for Hanna-Barbera and others. His recent run of writing on DC's *Blackhawk* has received almost unanimous critical acclaim.

**Will Meugniot:** (Sounds like Mineo) Started in comics fandom and drew several adventures of Tigra, the Were-Woman, for Marvel Comics. He met Mark Evanier when Mark was editing *Tarzan* and *Korak* for foreign distribution and he asked Will to illustrate several episodes of the strips. He has also done extensive animation work for Hanna-Barbera, Filmation, and Marvel Productions (Marvel Comics' Hollywood affiliate). □

# SCIENCE MADE THEM... BUT NO MAN OWNS...



## RAINBOW

### Mind-Reading Mistress of Illusions

Rainbow, the strikingly lovely mentalist, is the *de facto* leader of the team. She can read minds and project mental illusions which are usually only seen by one viewer. With effort, she can make them visible to everyone in the area. She uses her tele-

pathy to keep track of her teammates and act as the communications link with Matrix.

These powers also prompt her to look beyond everyone's surface statements to the reality beneath. She has dedicated herself to keeping the team together and operational as a Matrix special agent force. She tries to subdue her emotional leanings, excluding all relations outside the team.



## SURGE

### Master of Electricity

Surge can project lightning bolts and seems to have additional control over electricity. How much more should be seen in his upcoming four-issue mini-series which will be starting even as this magazine hits the

stands. He puts on a brash exterior and macho style to confront the world. He is convinced that the only way to get anything you want is to reach out and take it.

In many ways he is the most independent team member, yet his need for the solace of his test-tube siblings when his brashness is inevitably shot down is all the more poignant because of his normal independence.



## TANK

### Armored Strong Man and Gun Platform

Tank is immensely strong. Matrix has equipped him with bullet-bouncing armor with built-in weaponry. For all his power,

he is shy and withdrawn, the good-natured big brother of the team.

Tank has the most inquiring mind of the team, and continually wants to know the why of everything. An outsider girl took a yen to him when he first registered for the college where the team spends its between-adventures time, and he is perpetually torn between the attractions of Casey and his need to stay with his "family."



## AMBER

### High-Flying Telekineticist

Amber can continually create and control translucent disks with which she performs her telekinetic tasks. She is a perpetual 15-year-old girl in looks and attitude, and has a self-centered confidence that the team will always remain the same. Because of this confidence, she treats the team like a

teenager's home—it will always be there so it can be ignored. Amber is the perpetual free spirit and will try anything with anyone, once. She embraces any philosophy or viewpoint that comes her way with a naive joy. She cannot understand why anyone would try to mislead her or promote a cause without a logical basis, and will not examine anyone's claims for veracity or agreement with basic facts.



## SHAM

### Master of Face and Form

Sham is a shapeshifter, capable of taking on any face and almost any form within certain limits of mass. His normal body, however, is stuck in a thirteen-year-old shape, and he is the perpetual little brother to everyone else on the team. Like a child,

he clings to the team at all costs, even if he must disrupt the relationships of his teammates with outsiders to insure that his "family" will stay together. He is particularly close to Tank, and is bewildered by Tank's interest in an outsider girl. This has led to many confrontations between the two, as Tank attempts to have a relationship with someone he did not share a vat with. □



## SUPERHERO SPECIAL FEATURE

STARRING:

# DNAGENTS™

Stats  
for

# CHAMPIONS

By Ray Greer

Illustrated by Will Meugniot

### RAINBOW

VAL	CHA	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
15	STR	5	* Mental Elemental		40	"Hunted" by Matrix 14 or less
20	DEX	30	40* 8D6 Mental Illusion	8	40	Hunted by the Commander 11 or less
18	CON	16	20* 4D6 Mental Illusion		15	Unusual looks (hair) 14 or less
13	BODY	6	Area Effect Rad.	8	15	Secret I.D.
15	INT	5	20* 8D6 Mind Scan	8	10	Aloof from humans
23	EGO	26	20* 8D6 Telepathy	8	10	Workaholic
18	PRE	8	19 Dangersense 13 or less		20	Team leader
14	COM	2	10 Acrobatics 13 or less		5	No real memories
11	PD	8	15 Martial Arts		20	Loyalty to Matrix
12	ED	8			20	Experience
5	SPD	20				
13	REC	12				
56	END	10				
40	STUN	10				

OCV = 7  
DCV = 7  
ECV = 9  
PHA = 3, 5, 8,  
10, 12

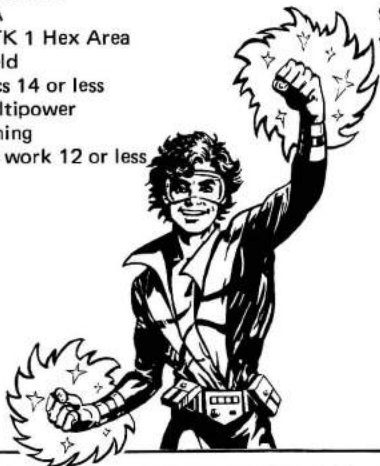


CHA Cost 151  
Power Cost 144  
Total 295  
Disadvan 295

### SURGE

VAL	CHA	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
15	STR	5	62 Multipower		40	"Hunted" by Matrix 14 or less
25	DEX	45	10 10D6 EB ½ END	5	40	Hunted by the Commander 11 or less
20	CON	20	5u 3D6 RKA	9	10	Berserk 11 or less, Rec 14 or less if losing or regulator threatened
13	BODY	6	2u STR 10 TK 1 Hex Area	4	15	Secret I.D.
15	INT	5	Static Field		5	Unluck 1D6
14	EGO	8	10 Acrobatics 14 or less		10	Hot-tempered
15	PRE	5	10 2 Lev Multipower		20	Overconfident
14	COM	2	10 +5" Running		5	No real memories
14	PD	11	5 Detective work 12 or less		15	Loyalty to Matrix
18	ED	14			12	Experience
5	SPD	15				
13	REC	12				
40	END	0				
41	STUN	10				

OCV = 8  
DCV = 8  
ECV = 5  
PHA = 3, 5, 8,  
10, 12



CHA Cost 158  
Power Cost 114  
Total 272  
Disadvan 272

## TANK

VAL	CHA Cost	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
60	STR *45	12	Growth (always on)		40	"Hunted" by Matrix 14 or less
20	DEX 30		-1 DCV, +1 HTH, -1 KB		40	Hunted by the Commander 11 or less
25	CON 30	20	2D6 RKA Autofire		15	Secret I.D.
15	BODY *6		OIF Armor 125 charges		5	Unusual looks (large) 8 or less
15	INT 5	10	Damage Resistance		10	Protective of others
14	EGO 8		OIF Armor		5	Curious
15	PRE *0	20	STR ¼ END		5	No real memories
12	COM 1		OIF Armor		15	Loyalty to Matrix
22	PD 11	3	Driving 13 or less		7	Experience
15	ED 10	3	Pilot 13 or less			
4	SPD 10	8	+4" Running			
16	REC 0					
50	END 0					
63	STUN 10					

OCV = 7  
 DCV = 6  
 ECV = 5  
 PHA = 3, 6, 9,  
 12



CHA Cost 166  
 Power Cost 76  
 Total 242  
 Disadvan 242

## AMBER

VAL	CHA Cost	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
15	STR 5	*	Magnetics Elemental		40	"Hunted" by Matrix 14 or less
23	DEX 39	40*	10 PD, 10 ED Force Field		40	Hunted by the Commander 11 or less
18	CON 16		Area Effect Rad.	8	5	Unusual looks (young) 8 or less
13	BODY 6	15*	STR 40 TK vs Metal only		15	Secret I.D.
15	INT 5		½ END Cost	2	5	"Cute"
14	EGO 8	20*	20" Flight	4	15	Naive
10	PRE 0	10	Acrobatics 14 or less		10	Protective of others
12	COM 1	10	2 Lev w/Elemental		5	No real memories
11	PD 8	10	2 Lev Move by, Move through		20	Loyalty to Matrix
12	ED 8	5	+1 PER		10	Experience
5	SPD 17	10	2D6 Luck			
13	REC 12					
56	END 10					
40	STUN 10					

OCV = 8  
 DCV = 8  
 ECV = 5  
 PHA = 3, 5, 8,  
 10, 12



CHA Cost 145  
 Power Cost 120  
 Total 265  
 Disadvan 265

## SHAM

VAL	CHA Cost	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
15	STR 5	23	Martial Arts +½ Dam		40	"Hunted" by Matrix 14 or less
28	DEX 54	36	30 pt. Gadget pool		40	Hunted by the Commander 11 or less
18	CON 16	10	U.V. Vision		12	Hunted by Megaman 8 or less
12	BODY 4	12	Shrinking (always on)		15	Light sensitive eyes
15	INT 5		+2 DCV, -2 PRE, +3 KB		15	Secret I.D.
14	EGO 8	10*	Shape Shift (+½)		5	Unusual looks (young) 8 or less
10	PRE 0	20	2 Lev Growth		10	Unlucky 2D6
8	COM -1		-2 DCV, +2 HTH, -2 KB		10	Shy
11	PD 8	5	1 Lev w/Fire Arms		15	Inferiority complex
12	ED 8	10	Acrobatics 15 or less		20	Loyalty to Matrix
6	SPD 22	5	Security System 12 or less		13	Experience
13	REC 12	5	Stealth 15 or less			
36	END 0	5	1 Lev Martial Arts			
39	STUN 10	5	Climbing 12 or less			
		3	Paramedic 12 or less			

OCV = 9  
 DCV = 9  
 ECV = 5  
 PHA = 2, 4, 6,  
 8, 10, 12



**Shape Shift:** A 15 point power that allows a hero to roughly alter his physical appearance. The changes are only cosmetic and do not change the hero's powers or abilities in any way. Sham has a +½ disadvantage because his clothes and gear do not change with him. (See *Champions III* for more details.) □

CHA Cost 151  
 Power Cost 149  
 Total 300  
 Disadvan 300



# SUPERHERO SPECIAL FEATURE

STARRING:

# DNAGENTS

Stats  
for

By Steve Perrin

Illustrated by Will Meugniot

# SUPERWORLD



## TANK

STR 18+39=57  
CON 16+10=26  
SIZ 18  
INT 13  
POW 16  
DEX 14+7=21  
APP 12

Characteristics 107  
Disadvantages 40  
Handicaps 35  
Experience 6  
Used 190  
Available 0

ACTION RANKS: 21/11/1.  
MOVE (m/AR): 8.

### SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Super Characteristics: STR, CON, DEX	30	0	30
Extra Hit Points: +20	10	0	10
Extra Energy Supply: +300	30	0	30
[D] Vulnerable Device: Regulator belt			+ 6
Armor: 20K/20E/20R	60	0	60
[D] Vulnerable Device (+1/6)			+10
[D] Failure Chance: 10%			+ 6
Kinetic Projection: 5D6 (guns)	5	0	15

Impale Chance: 20% 5 0 5  
Rapidfire 5 0 20  
No energy for guns 20 0 20  
[D] Vulnerable Device (+1/3) +20  
Clumsy: -30% Agility roll (roll=60%) +10  
Permanent Powers: Artificial creation limits life + 5  
Personal Problem: Must follow orders from Matrix + 5  
Personal Problem: Arch-enemy Commander + 5  
Psychosocial Problem: Shy + 5  
Psychological Problem: Waits for orders + 5

DAMAGE BONUS: 6D6.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Fist	75%	1D3+6D6	72%	—	18
Gun	68%	5D6	—	30 m	0

PROTECTION: Armor 20K/20E/20R.

HIT POINTS: 42.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 4) 342.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 60%; Climb 80%; Jump 70%.

## SHAM

STR 12  
CON 18+12=30  
SIZ 10  
INT 15  
POW 18  
DEX 17+17=34  
APP 11

Characteristics 101  
Disadvantages 2  
Handicaps 55  
Experience 5  
Used 163  
Available 0

ACTION RANKS: 34/24/14/4.  
MOVE (m/AR): 6.

### SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Super Characteristics: CON, DEX	29	0	29
Extra Hit Points: +10	5	0	5
Extra Energy Supply: +100	10	0	10
Impersonate: 40 SIZ	40	20 (A)	40
No Energy Cost for appearance of same SIZ			
	20	0	20
Gimmicks: 20 Gimmick pts	10	0	30
Defense: 20%	20	0	20

Armor: 3K/3E/3R 9 0 9  
[D] Vulnerable Device: Costume (+1/6) + 2  
Bad Luck: -30% Luck roll (roll=60%) +10  
Personal Problem: Must follow orders from Matrix + 5  
Personal Problem: Arch enemy Megaman + 5  
Physical Problem: Artificial creation limits normal life + 5  
Physical Problem: Looks like immature kid, forever + 5  
Psychological Problem: Inferiority complex + 5  
Psychological Problem: Rash actions in battle + 5  
Psychosocial Problem: No real living experience + 5  
Psychosocial Problem: Shy +10

DAMAGE BONUS: 0.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Fist	50%	1D3	50%	—	0

PROTECTION: Armor 3K/3E/3R; Defense 20%.

HIT POINTS: 30.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 5) 148.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 56%; Balance 40%; Disguise 65%.



## RAINBOW

STR 13  
CON 16+14=30  
SIZ 12  
INT 16  
POW 16+5=21  
DEX 18+7=25  
APP 17

Characteristics	108
Disadvantages	39
Handicaps	35
Experience	9
Used	191
Available	0

ACTION RANKS: 25/15/5.  
MOVE (m/AR): Run 14.

### SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Super Characteristics: CON, POW, DEX	26	0	36
Extra Hit Points: +10	5	0	5
Extra Energy Supply: +250	25	0	25
Emotion Control: 24 pt potency	8	16	24
Reduced energy cost to 2 per level	8	0	8
[D] Only useful to inspire fear (+1/3)			+11
[D] Only one target at a time (+1/6)			+ 6
Mind Search: Up to four minds at 3 km	5	15	15
[D] Only good for finding team members (+1/3)			+ 5
Telepathy: Up to 3000 km	6	12	18
Reduced energy cost to 2 per level	6	0	6

[D] Only one target at a time (+1/6)					+ 4
[D] Vulnerable Device for 3 levels (+1/6)					+ 2
Martial Arts	2	0	0		40
Armor: 2K/2E/3R	8	0	0		8
[D] Vulnerable Device: Costume (+1/6)					+ 2
[D] Failure Chance: 50%					+ 4
Extra Movement: +6 m/AR	1	1	1		1
Permanent Powers: Artificial creation limits life					+ 5
Personal Problem: Must follow Matrix orders					+ 5
Personal Problem: Arch-enemy Commander					+ 5
Physical Disability: Rainbow hair causes comment					+ 5
Psychological Problem: Feels responsible for teammates					+ 5
Psychological Problem: Minor paranoia					+ 5
Psychosocial Problem: No real living experience					+ 5

DAMAGE BONUS: 1D6.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Fist	70%	1D3+3D6	70%	—	3
Kick	45%	4D6	—	—	3

PROTECTION: Armor 3K/2E/3R.

HIT POINTS: 31.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 5) 301.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 83%; Balance 30%; Command 68%.

## SURGE

STR 15  
CON 15+10=25  
SIZ 12  
INT 13  
POW 15+5=20  
DEX 14+8=22  
APP 14

Characteristics	98
Disadvantages	35
Handicaps	49
Experience	8
Used	190
Available	0

ACTION RANKS: 22/12/2.  
MOVE (m/AR): Run 20.

### SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Super Characteristics: CON, POW, DEX	23	0	33
Extra Hit Points: +10	5	0	5
Extra Energy Supply: +300 pts	30	0	30
Electrical Projection: 10D6	10	10	30
Reduced Energy Cost: 1 pt/D6	20	0	20
[D] Vulnerable Device:			
Reduced energy mechanism—belt			+ 7
Absorption: 20 pts electrical damage to energy supply			
Reduced energy mechanism—belt	10	0	30
[D] Vulnerable Device: In belt			+10
Armor: 10K/10R	20	0	20

[D] Vulnerable Device: Costume (+1/6)					+ 3
Defense: +20%	20	0	20		
Extra Movement: +12 m/AR	2	2	2		2
Bad Luck: -45% Luck roll (roll=50)					+15
Imperceptive: -45% Idea roll (roll=20)					+15
Personal Problem: Must take orders from Matrix					+ 5
Personal Problem: Arch-enemy Luger the Assassin					+ 5
Physical Problem: Artificial creation limits normal life					+ 5
Psychological Problem: Reckless					+ 5
Psychosocial Problem: Loudmouthed braggart					+ 5
Psychosocial Problem: No real living experience					+ 5
Vulnerability: 1D6/MR if belt turned off					+ 4

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
<del>Fist</del>	65%	1D3+1D6	63%	—	3
Electric	68%	10D6	—	30 m	10 (30)

PROTECTION: Armor 10K/10R; Absorption 20E; 20% Defense.

HIT POINTS: 29.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 4) 345.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 60%; Dodge 55%; Fast Talk 75%.

## AMBER

STR 13  
CON 15+12=27  
SIZ 10  
INT 15  
POW 16  
DEX 15+8=23  
APP 13

Characteristics	97
Disadvantages	46
Handicaps	35
Experience	6
Used	184
Available	0

ACTION RANKS: 23/13/3.  
MOVE (m/AR): Run 8; TK flight 22.

### SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Super Characteristics: CON, DEX	20	0	20
Extra Hit Points: +10	5	0	5
Energy Supply: +200	20	0	20
Telekinesis: 45 STR	15	0	45
Reduced Energy Cost: To 0	45	0	45
[D] TK Force Field vs. only one attacker per AR (+1/3)			+30
Force Field: 20E/20R	20	20 (A)	20
[D] Versus only one attacker per AR (+1/2)			+10
Armor: 3K/3E/3R	9	0	9

[D] Vulnerable Device: Costume (+1/6)					+ 2
[D] Failure Chance: 45%					+ 4
Martial Arts	1	0	0		20
Permanent Powers: Artificial creation limits life					+ 5
Personal Problem: Must follow orders from Matrix					+ 5
Personal Problem: Arch-enemy Commander					+ 5
Physical Disability: Looks like immature kid					+ 5
Psychosocial Problem: Naive					+10
Psychosocial Problem: No real living experience					+ 5

DAMAGE BONUS: 0.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Fist	60%	1D3+1D6	60%	—	0
Kick	35%	2D6	—	—	0
TK grab	79%	STR 45	—	30 m	0
TK throw	45%	varies	—	—	0

PROTECTION: TK Force Field 45; Force Field 20E/20R; Armor 3K/3E/3R.

HIT POINTS: 29.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 4) 243.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 65%; Balance 50%. □

# Game Cons

Game conventions are the best place to meet new gamers. Organizers should send details of the convention at least six months prior to the event for announcement in this column.

For further information contact the convention organizers directly.

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ONOCON '84  
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## MayCon '84 May 19, 1984

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## FAL-CON 84 May 25-27, 1984

Bowling Green St Univ, Bowling Green OH  
No address given for requesting info.

## GAMEATHON 9 May 25-27, 1984

Event location not announced.  
R.C. Jones (send SASE)  
SWZ Gameathon  
1639 Eastern Pkwy  
Schenectady NY 12309

## GamesCaucus May 26-28, 1984

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GamesCaucus  
1550 Benton St (C)  
Alameda CA 94501

## MIGS V May 27, 1984

Kitchener-Waterloo Reg. Police Assoc. Rec. Ctr., Cambridge, Ontario, Canada  
Chris Goldsmith  
100 Lorraine Dr  
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## CAMP CON '84 June 2, 1984

Camp Emmanuel, south of Astoria IL  
Kevin B. Sager  
Box 833  
Astoria IL 61501  
(309) 329-2934 (home)  
(217) 323-1790 (work)

## GAMEX 1984 June 15-17, 1984

Chapman College CA  
GAMEX 1984  
PO Box 758  
Bellflower CA 90706

## Genghis Con VI June 15-17, 1984

Student Union, Univ of Denver, Denver CO  
Denver Gamers Association  
PO Box 2945  
Littleton CO 80161

## ORIGINS 84 June 21-24, 1984

Market Hall North, Dallas TX  
ORIGINS 84  
PO Box 59899  
Dallas TX 75229

## POLYCON '84 June 22-24, 1984

Cal Poly campus, San Luis Obispo CA  
SAGA  
Box 168  
Julian A. McPhee University Union  
Cal Poly State University  
San Luis Obispo CA 93410

## SUMMERCON 84 July 27-29, 1984

MIT Student Center, Cambridge MA  
SUMMERCON 84  
122 Bowdoin St (Apt 77)  
Boston MA 02108

## ATLANTICON '84 August 3-5, 1984

Towson State University, Baltimore MD  
ATLANTICON '84  
PO Box 139  
Middletown NJ 07748  
(301) 298-3135

## 1984 GEN CON August 16-18, 1984

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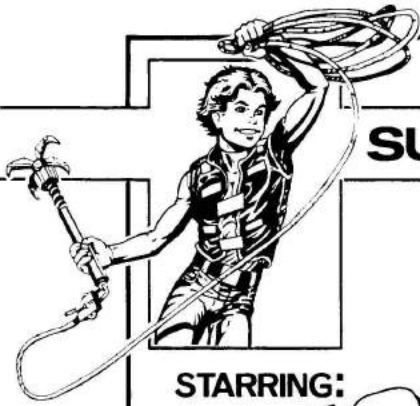
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## SUPERHERO SPECIAL FEATURE

# Stats for Villains And Vigilantes

STARRING:

# DNAGENTS

Illustrated by Will Meugniot

By Jack Herman



IDENTITY: Rainbow      SIDE: Good  
SEX: Female              LEVEL: 2  
AGE: Appears 19        EXPERIENCE: 4000

**POWERS:**

**TELEPATHY:** 250" range, thought scan PR=1/one action. Can act as a mental switchboard for up to 25 minds. Telepathic "tracking" costs PR=1 per person tracked/hour.

**MENTAL PROBE:** PR=5, Strength up to 162. Requires an attack as Mind Control to probe anyone with a higher MPS. Probe lasts 1D6 turns.

**ILLUSIONS (Holographic):** Full Sensory Spectrum PR=5, one action per turn to control movement only or to alter slightly.

**LOW SELF CONTROL:** Must wear functioning Regulator or loses control of powers. Regulators have back-up systems.

WEIGHT: 110 lbs	BASIC HITS: 3
STRENGTH: 16	ENDURANCE: 17
AGILITY: 16	INTELLIGENCE: 25
CHARISMA: 17	REACTIONS FROM: Good +2
HIT POINTS: 19	Evil -2
HEALING RATE: 1.2/day	DAMAGE MODIFIER: +3
ACCURACY: +2	POWER: 74
CARRYING CAPACITY: 319 lbs	
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 1D6	
MOVEMENT RATES: 49" on ground	
DETECT HIDDEN: 18%	DETECT DANGER: 22%

**ORIGIN & BACKGROUND:** Mutant genetically designed by Matrix Corporation as special agent.

IDENTITY: Tank              SIDE: Good  
SEX: Male                      LEVEL: 2  
AGE: Appears 19              EXPERIENCE: 3000

**POWERS:**

HEIGHTENED STRENGTH: +20.

HEIGHTENED ENDURANCE: +20.

BODY POWER: Mass x 2.

**ARMOR A:** ADR: 60—no special devices, but the suit helps him support his weight and the weight of lifted objects and maintain his balance.

**LOW SELF CONTROL:** Must wear a properly functioning Regulator or loses control of power. Regulators have emergency back-up systems.

WEIGHT: 300 lbs	BASIC HITS: 6
STRENGTH: 30	ENDURANCE: 30
AGILITY: 10	INTELLIGENCE: 12
CHARISMA: 18	REACTIONS FROM: Good +3
HIT POINTS: 61	Evil -3
HEALING RATES: 5.4/day	DAMAGE MODIFIER: —
ACCURACY: —	POWER: 72
CARRYING CAPACITY: 4500 lbs	
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 2D8	
MOVEMENT RATES: 70" on ground	
DETECT HIDDEN: 10%	DETECT DANGER: 14%

**ORIGIN & BACKGROUND:** Mutant genetically designed by Matrix Corporation as special agent.





IDENTITY: Amber  
SEX: Female  
AGE: Appears 16

SIDE: Good  
LEVEL: 2  
EXPERIENCE: 3000

**POWERS:**

TELEKINESIS: TK Capacity=320 lbs, with a rate of speed of 32" per turn at 28" range. Requires one action and one power point to set up as defense, PR=1 per attack repulsed after that.  
+2 TO HIT: Does 1D6 damage when TK used as an attack, but with Force Field attack type.

FLIGHT: Can ride force disks at 256 MPH, PR=1 per hour of flight.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM: Very gullible.

WEIGHT: 90 lbs  
STRENGTH: 16  
AGILITY: 14  
CHARISMA: 16  
HIT POINTS: 7  
HEALING RATE: 0.8/day  
ACCURACY: +1  
CARRYING CAPACITY: 257 lbs  
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 1D6  
MOVEMENT RATES: 46" ground, 1127" air  
DETECT HIDDEN: 10%  
DETECT DANGER: 14%

BASIC HITS: 2  
ENDURANCE: 16  
INTELLIGENCE: 14  
REACTIONS FROM: Good +2  
Evil -2  
DAMAGE MODIFIER: +1  
POWER: 60

ORIGIN & BACKGROUND: Mutant genetically designed by Matrix Corporation as special agent.

IDENTITY: Surge  
SEX: Male  
AGE: Appears 18

SIDE: Good  
LEVEL: 2  
EXPERIENCE: 3000

**POWERS:**

WILL POWER: Amplifies his Lightning Control.

LIGHTNING CONTROL (Modified): 60" range, does 2D8 damage at PR=4 or 4D8 at PR=8. To control electronic device: PR=4, Save versus Intelligence on D20, plus save vs. Agility on D20 to avoid mishap once per use if inexperienced with the device. To short out device—PR=4, 60% chance.

LOW SELF CONTROL: Must wear a properly functioning Regulator or loses control of powers. Regulators have emergency back-up systems.

PERSONALITY WEAKNESS: Short-tempered.

WEIGHT: 160 lbs  
STRENGTH: 15  
AGILITY: 13  
CHARISMA: 17  
HIT POINTS: 15  
HEALING RATE: 1.6/day  
ACCURACY: +1  
CARRYING CAPACITY: 390 lbs  
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 1D6  
MOVEMENT RATES: 43" on ground  
DETECT HIDDEN: 10%  
DETECT DANGER: 14%

BASIC HITS: 4  
ENDURANCE: 15  
INTELLIGENCE: 14  
REACTIONS FROM: Good +2  
Evil -2  
DAMAGE MODIFIER: +1  
POWER: 57

ORIGIN & BACKGROUND: Mutant genetically designed by Matrix Corporation as special agent.



IDENTITY: Sham  
SEX: Male  
AGE: Appears 14

SIDE: Good  
LEVEL: 2  
EXPERIENCE: 3000

**POWERS:**

TRANSFORMATION (Disguise): He can assume the appearance of any creature of relatively the same size and build. This includes the physical abilities of the shape assumed (body powers, wings, natural weaponry, etc.) but actual characters (Strength, Endurance, Agility, and Intelligence) as well as mass remain the same as normal. Disguise must come from actual sight or clear memory. Requires one action to change, PR=0.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM: Low self-image.

WEIGHT: 75 lbs  
STRENGTH: 17  
AGILITY: 16  
CHARISMA: 12  
HIT POINTS: 9  
HEALING RATE: 0.8/day  
ACCURACY: +2  
CARRYING CAPACITY: 245 lbs  
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 1D6  
MOVEMENT RATES: 49" over ground  
DETECT HIDDEN: 12%  
DETECT DANGER: 16%

BASIC HITS: 2  
ENDURANCE: 16  
INTELLIGENCE: 15  
REACTIONS FROM: Good +1  
Evil -1  
DAMAGE MODIFIER: +2  
POWER: 64

ORIGIN & BACKGROUND: Mutant genetically designed by Matrix Corporation as special agent. □





## SUPERHERO SPECIAL FEATURE

# SUPERWORLD ERRATA 2

By Steve Perrin

A role-playing game is an evolving process. *Superworld*, because of its complexity and general appeal, has undergone more evolution than most games in the form of questions which lead to reinterpretations of the rules. As the designer, I find myself torn between leaving the rules as they are because they have been published and they work, and tinkering further because of inequities that suddenly appear which were not obvious before. I tend to choose to tinker, but there is no obligation on the part of those who have the original game to change their game to fit my tinkering.

There is always a problem, then, when those who have changed the way they play their game meet those who adhere to the original rules. In such cases, the informed choice of the gamemaster is always final.

### SUPERHEROES BOOK

**Page 13. Movement Rates:** Normal movement for humans is 24 meters per melee round. However, this can vary depending on variations of STR and SIZ.

If the hero's SIZ as weight is more than 20 points higher than his STR, his movement is reduced by 6 meters per melee round for every excess 10 SIZ points or fraction thereof. Thus, if a character has a STR of 12 and a SIZ of 33, his movement rate would be 18 meters a melee round. If his SIZ was 43, his movement would be 12 meters a melee round, and so forth. If his SIZ is 51 or more in excess of STR he will not be able to move at all.

If the hero has Supermove, the power is similarly affected. At +21 SIZ, he gains 5 meters per action rank per level instead of 6. At +31 SIZ he gains 4 meters per action rank per level instead of 6, etc. If the SIZ is +71 he gains 1 meter per action rank, and he will always gain at least this much.

This lack of movement is balanced against gains in movement from SIZ as height.

Effects of +20 STR over SIZ

Conversely, if the character's STR is more than 20 higher than his SIZ as weight he gains 6 meters a melee round for every further +10 STR or fraction thereof over SIZ. Subtract any reduced movement from Micro SIZ from this addition. There is no increased benefit from Supermove for having excess STR over SIZ. This increase is in addition to gains in movement from SIZ as height.

Energy Cost for Gound Movement

Ground movement costs 1 energy point for every use in excess of a quartermove in an action rank.

### SUPERPOWERS BOOK

**Page 3. Purchase Restrictions:** (Experimental addition) "... levels allowed. Further levels can be purchased at three times the given hero point cost per level price. Energy costs per level remain the same. Also, this ..."

**Page 3. Hero Point Cost Per Level:** (Addition) If the gamemaster is willing, it is possible to buy a power at a smaller cost and prorate its effects. If buying an Energy Projection, for instance, one can spend 1 more point than necessary and get an addition of 1 point to the damage. If spending two more points, the Energy Projection will do an extra 1D3 of damage.

### MOVEMENT SPEED TABLE

STR-SIZ (as weight)	m/MR	Supermove add	Standing Jump (hor)	Running Jump (hor)
-126	0	+1 m/AR	none	none
- 71	0	+1 m/AR	none	none
- 51	0	+2 m/AR	none	none
- 41	6	+3 m/AR	none	none
- 31	12	+4 m/AR	none	none
- 21	18	+5 m/AR	none	none
-20 to -10	24	+6 m/AR	none	none
-10 to 0	24	+6 m/AR	1 m	1.5 m
0 to 10	24	+6 m/AR	2 m	3 m
10 to 20	24	+6 m/AR	3 m	4.5 m
21 to 30	30	+6 m/AR	4 m	6 m
31 to 40	36	+6 m/AR	5 m	7.50 m
41 to 50	42	+6 m/AR	6 m	9 m
51 to 60	48	+6 m/AR	7 m	10.5 m
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

### INFLUENCE OF SIZ AS HEIGHT ON DEFENSE, GROUND MOVEMENT, REACH

SIZ	Defense		m/AR	Reach	H-to-H	
	Range	H-to-H*			Attack	Visibility
-5	90%	45%	-11 m	—	—	-90%
-4	80%	40%	-10 m	—	—	-80%
-3	70%	35%	- 9 m	—	—	-70%
-2	60%	30%	- 8 m	—	—	-60%
-1	50%	25%	- 7 m	—	—	-50%
0	40%	20%	- 6 m	—	—	-40%
1	30%	15%	- 5 m	—	—	-30%
2	20%	10%	- 4 m	—	—	-20%
3	10%	05%	- 3 m	—	—	-10%
4	0%	0%	- 2 m	—	—	0%
5	0%	0%	- 1 m	—	—	0%
6-20	0%	0%	0 m	—	—	0%
21-30	-05%	-05%	+2 m	+1 m	+05%	+05%
31-40	-10%	-10%	+4 m	+2 m	+10%	+10%
41-50	-15%	-15%	+6 m	+3 m	+15%	+15%
51-60	-20%	-20%	+8 m	+4 m	+20%	+20%
61-70	-25%	-25%	+10 m	+5 m	+25%	+25%
71-80	-30%	-30%	+12 m	+6 m	+30%	+30%
81-90	-35%	-35%	+14 m	+7 m	+35%	+35%
91-100	-40%	-40%	+16 m	+8 m	+40%	+40%
101-110	-45%	-45%	+18 m	+9 m	+45%	+45%
111-120	-50%	-50%	+20 m	+10 m	+50%	+50%
121-126	-55%	-55%	+22 m	+11 m	+55%	+55%

\*H-to-H: Hand-to-hand, referring to any attack done at touch range.

Powers with set potencies will do 1 extra point for every extra point spent.

If using this rule, the normal roundoffs available to players no longer apply. If the player has a POW of 13, for instance, his maximum Energy Projection is 6D6+1D3, not 7D6, unless he pays double the price of the level of the remaining points for the level of projection.

Similarly, someone could prorate Flight so that, if the hero has a SIZ of 12, spending 9 points would allow him to fly 900 meters in 1 melee round. Only powers which have a flat benefit for a flat payment, such as Insubstantiality, or Dimension Shift, cannot be prorated in this way.

**Page 4. Absorption:** (Addition) Absorption cannot be used to bring a character's powers over his normal limitations. For instance, a POW 13 character cannot have Absorption increase his Energy Projection past 7D6 (or 6D6+1D3, as shown above). A hero with STR+SIZ of 26 cannot use his Absorption and regular hero points to add more than 26 hero points of STR to his STR.

**Page 9. Dimension Shift:** (Addition)

LEVEL: 1 SIZ point. Additional levels will either add 1 SIZ point to the amount shifted or add 1 dimension the user may travel to.  
PURCHASE RESTRICTION: Level effects and specific dimensions traveled to must be specified when power is purchased.

**Page 13. Gas Projection:** (Clarification)

GAME EFFECTS: The target must make a resistance roll based on his CON vs. the potency of the gas or be affected by it. *If the resistance roll is successful, there is no effect.*

"... Resistance and Absorption may be purchased to specifically work against gas and poisons."

**Page 13. Gimmick:** (Correction) Gimmick may be used to create equipment that simulates superpowers. This equipment may be used temporarily by others if *either the gimmick creator does not use the gimmick points for something else or they have enough hero points in reserve to use it.*"

**Page 15. Illusion Projection:** (Correction)

"Level: 3 SIZ points that appeal to all forms of one sense within 30 meters. Additional levels either add 3 points to SIZ ..."

An illusion that is normally visible will also be visible to infrared, ultraviolet, X-ray, etc. If it has a touch component, then it will be visible to radar, sonar, etc.

**Page 16. Invisibility:** (Correction) "... the energy cost for the invisibility for the power is equal to ~~the hero point cost of the power and all its advantages~~ half the usual cost for the power."

**Page 16. Mimic:** (Clarification) Mimic cannot be used to increase a hero's powers or characteristics beyond that limited by his characteristics. For instance, if Mocker has a POW of 10, he cannot Mimic Captain Wonder's 6D6 Energy Projection. He can only Mimic 5D6 of it.

**Page 19. Resistance:** The Resistance power can be bought to protect against all attacks which affect the characteristics or powers of a hero. These include Reduction, Mimic, Paralysis\*, Siphon\*, Hex\*, and powers used with the Transform Power\*. It is used before any POW vs. POW rolls or other elements of such attacks. If successful, the attack cannot work. If unsuccessful, 1 point of potency of the attack is negated for each level of Resistance. This version will not work against mental attacks such as Mind Blast, Mental Control, etc.

\* New powers undergoing playtest.

**Page 22. Micro SIZ:** (Correction) "For each point of SIZ (as height) under 4, he is 10% harder to hit *with ranged attacks*, 5% harder to hit *with hand-to-hand attacks*, and 10% harder to see with Spot Hidden or Observation."

**Page 24. Teleport:** (Addition) A level of Teleport may be bought solely to allow the user to teleport anyone within 1-meter radius of the user, as long as the SIZ of each of the other teleports is within the SIZ limits of the teleport power of the user. Thus, if Dimension Man has 14 levels of Teleport, plus 2 levels of Radius Effect Teleport, he can Teleport anyone or anything within a 2-meter radius of himself which has a SIZ of 14 or less. He cannot discriminate between those within the radius he wants to teleport and those he does not, though he can limit the radius of the teleport circle.

Energy cost is for all SIZ points moved. In the above example,

if there were two people of SIZ 13 and one of SIZ 10 within the radius, the energy cost would be 14 for D-Man, and 36 more for his passengers, a total of 50 energy points.

The same effect can be bought for the Dimension Shift power.

**Page 26. Impaling:** (Clarification) A level of Impaling must be bought for each 1D6 or level of potency of the power. A level must be bought for each 20% of effectiveness of the Impaling. Thus, if 3D6 of an Energy Projection is wanted, capable of Impaling 40% of the time when it hits, then 6 levels of Impale must be bought.

**Page 26. Radius Effect:** (Clarification)

LEVEL: 2-meter radius for one level of a power. Additional levels add 2 meters to the radius or 2-meter radius to another level of the power.

HERO POINT COST PER LEVEL OF POWER: 1.

ENERGY COST PER LEVEL OF POWER: 1.

**Page 26. Rapidfire:** (Clarification) A level of Rapidfire must be bought for each 1D6 or level of potency of the power. Thus, if Rapidfire is wanted for a 7D6 Energy Projection, you must buy 7 levels of Rapidfire for 21 points.

One cannot buy levels of Rapidfire to increase the number of rounds fired. Three levels of Rapidfire will not allow for 3D10 rounds hitting the target.

**Page 35. Burnout Chance:** (Change)

LEVEL: 1% burnout chance.

HERO POINT GAIN PER LEVEL: 2% of original cost of power.

This change in the level effect and hero point gain is to correct an inequity present when someone with a 6-point power can gain half the points back, 3, by claiming 15% Burnout Chance, and a hero with a 30-point power gains only 10% of the points spent back with the same burnout chance.

Using this system, the 30-point power user with a 15% burnout chance would gain 9 hero points (30x30%=9), not 3. If the 6-point power wants a 15% burnout chance, he will get two hero points (6x30%=1.8, rounded up to 2). In this way the user of a major power gains more benefit from a burnout chance and the user of a small power does not get an unseemly amount of hero points for a small disadvantage.

**Page 36. Failure Chance:** (Change)

LEVEL: 1% failure chance.

HERO POINT GAIN PER LEVEL: 1% of original cost of power.

The same note applies here as to Burnout Chance. Note that burnout happens after the power is used, but eliminates the hero's ability to use the power for several melee rounds. Failure means that the power did not work on that occasion, but may work in the next action rank. Failure still means that energy was used.

**Page 36. Vulnerable Device:** (Addition) Any vulnerable device may be attacked with an Energy Projection or Transmute attack. However, the device may make a resistance roll based on the hero points used to buy its main effect. For instance, if a character has a vulnerable device which is a gun which fires several different 7D6 effects, its resistance to Transmute and Damage is 21, no matter how many attacks or other powers it may have. This resistance number can be pro-rated if the transmuter or projector wishes to only transmute one part of it, such as the arm of an armored suit.

If a device has many different functions, the resistance should be determined by the most hero points in a protective power, if any. If there are no protective powers, the resistance is based on the highest hero point count for an offensive power.

It is also possible to buy Resistance as a power to protect the device, separately from Resistance bought to protect the user.

**Page 38. Energy Limit:**

LEVEL: 1 energy point unavailable. Thus, if 78 points are needed for LightRay to Fly (6 points), use his Energy Projection (for 18 points), and maintain both his activation of his 12K, 12E, 12R Force Field (for 18 points), and the Force Field's use against attacks (for 36 points), and he has an Energy Limit of 60, then he will be unable to use 18 points of energy and probably have to cut back his Force Field's ability to block damage if he wants to fly and project energy.

HERO POINT GAIN PER LEVEL: 1.

Energy Limit is per hero's action rank. This also means that LightRay, in the example above, cannot use energy for all of his Force Field if he used his other powers in the previous action rank, because there will not be enough energy available. □

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## GAME REVIEWS

*Continued from page 35*

& *Sorcery* or *RuneQuest* game systems, the gamemasters of *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Tunnels & Trolls* will find ease in using *Harn* and will need only adjust the magic level to suit his tastes. To the experienced gamemaster, *Harn* represents as much work and effort as the gamemaster's own campaign and could readily be used as another "dimension" or "mirror" world to which his group would still find the consistency expected in a well-run

world. The technical beauty of the map alone is worth the investment. And there are lots of good ideas in the *Harn*view that could be included in the experienced gamemaster's game.

The attractiveness of the *Harn* cover is a winner, and the excellent product within is a long-awaited dream for gamemasters and players alike. I hope that Crosby and friends will produce the *Lythia* map and other promised *Harn* playaids, and that other companies will take the hint that among gamers there is a huge hunger for quality work such as *Harn*. Enjoy. □

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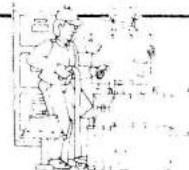
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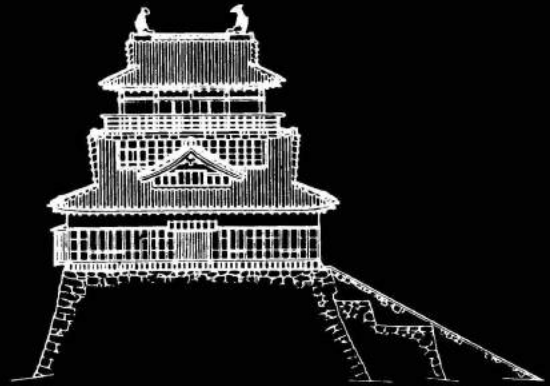
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## Innovative Tips for Campaign Masters

# Prophets & Role-Playing

### How to Make Life Difficult for Adventurer-Kings

By Jeff P. Swycaffer

Illustrated by David Dudley

*The jubilation of the people has faded, as the brave party of adventurers consolidates the small kingdom, located in the fantasy role-playing universe. The old king, now overthrown, was a bloody-handed tyrant, and none will miss him. Now, for a brief time, there will be a period of peace and normalcy.*

*It is a nice little kingdom. It is allied with its neighbors, it supplies enough food to feed its people, and a little bit more for export. It is in much better shape than it was when the adventurers took it over from its corrupt previous king.*

*Yes, it is pretty nice here. The adventurers are running it as a ruling jun-*

*ta, sure, and not one of them has royal blood in his veins, but they are doing a great job. The tax schedule has been worked out to be truly fair, public works are in progress, and things simply could not be better.*

*Does anyone ever stop to think that the old, corrupt king also started out this way?*

Fate, in the person of the gamemaster, is about to throw a +2 monkey wrench into the delicate machinery of the state. Civil strife can erupt when it is least expected; kings cannot keep a finger on the public pulse. Revolution is always possible.

*From the desert wilds, a voice has been crying out. A lone priest. People have been listening to him. And the adventurers, secure in their towers or hobnobbing with the upper classes, are not aware of the danger that they soon will be faced with.*

In any popular movement, there will be a figurehead. He can be called a Prophet, or a Savior of the People. His focus might be religious, or it may be wholly political. Movements of this type do not happen very often; but when they succeed, the world is forever changed.

This article will deal primarily with the Prophet, a powerful religious figure, with strong supernatural power as befits his setting in a fantasy role-playing game world. Some of his actions will be familiar from history, and some from the modern world. These real-world parallels will be pointed out, although no Old-Testament Prophet ever had the huge amount of raw power that would be given to a high-level fantasy-gaming cleric.



## Echoes Of Trouble

"What has he been saying?"

"I only repeat his words. He said that since you had none of the blood of the old dynasty within you, you could not be King. He said further--"

"Be away with you, knave."

The holy man from the desert has been preaching for many years, certainly since the adventurers usurped the crown. He has a way with words, does the holy man, this Prophet. Some of the things he says frighten those who listen; some of his utterings fill them with hope.

For now, he is striding along from town to town, calling together those who would listen, and telling them the truth. He makes it simple, so that they can understand. They do.

Soon, he will come to the smaller, outlying cities, where the people are more sophisticated. Either he and his small band of permanent followers persuade the city's people of the truth of what he says (25% plus a modification for the Prophet's very high charisma), or else he wanders, from town to town, until he arrives at another small city.

What does he stand for? It is not clear, not to the adventurers in the capital city where rumors come, and worry has not.

### Trouble: Dealing with It

Too many gamers imagine that the King runs the kingdom, and that is that. Actually, the notion of the Establishment must be introduced. There are trade guilds, the church hierarchy, the nobles (some of whom are related by blood to the old King. . .), the city watch, and the army. Of these, only the watch and the army are truly loyal to the new King, and responsive to his wishes. It is suggested that the gamemaster carefully sketch the interrelations between these factions, at least within the capital city. That will be the site of the action soon. The principle lesson is that these factions are mutually mistrustful, and that the new King can have only a limited amount of influence over their actions. Thus, whenever actions are to be taken by the Establishment, and the new King wishes to urge one course upon them, his probability bonus is calculated as follows: King is a warrior, 15%; a priest, 10%; a magician, 5%. To that number, add his charisma, as a percent (assuming quantifiers between 1 and 25). This number may be added to or subtracted from any percentage roll taken to determine the Establishment's actions.

Naturally, the gamemaster may declare that these probabilities are incorrect, and character's actions may alter

them substantially.

### Trouble Grinning at You

The Prophet's teaching has begun to bear fruit. Up to this time, there have been no real actions that the adventurers could take. Do they go around prohibiting holy men from speaking? And yet, by the time things have gone far enough for them to hear about it, the Prophet's words have had the desired effect. The people have begun to wonder, and to speak among themselves, and to clamor for action.

A movement coalesces. Where before there were only individuals, each with private misgivings and desires, now there is a full-scale ground swell of opinion.

The Establishment can no longer ignore what is happening. It will almost certainly consider this movement a threat to the order of things, and their reaction will vary.

A. There is a 50% chance that the Establishment will react indecisively, strengthening their own position without attempting to harm the Prophet's.

B. There is a 35% chance that the Establishment will take actions against the Prophet. These actions could be to ban meetings of the Prophet's pilgrims and converts, and to seek the Prophet for imprisonment.

C. The last possibility, with a probability of 15%, is the classical pogrom on the part of the Establishment to annihilate the Prophet's converts and to kill the Prophet by any means possible.

If things were that simple, however, we would all be Egyptians yet, and

Pharaoh would be the emperor of the world. The nature of the Establishment is shown clearly in its slowness to react. The probabilities given above indicate the division of opinion. The adventurers, one of whom is assumed to be the King, cannot make this decision themselves. (As mentioned previously, the King may add his probability Bonus to whichever of these Establishment options he may choose.) But this slowness to react, this ponderous governmental lethargy, makes it impossible for option C to fully succeed. Option B, like most halfway choices, also has little effect. Both of these merely drive the converts "underground" into secret conclaves and bands. The Prophet will be sheltered by his converts during the exterminations or slaughters (or during the utterly inconsequential Keystone Kops chase routines, in which the army never knows which villages to burn and which are loyal. Zealots, after all, do not wear uniforms.)

The probabilities of options A, B, or C will be affected by the degree of radicalness of the Prophet's teachings, as well as by such considerations of alignment, Establishment unity and religion, and plain, honest fear.

### Trouble: Here and Now

The Prophet may assume military leadership of his people. He may also choose not to. Historically, some did and some did not. Moses did. Jesus did not.

The Prophet, at this time, is granted two powers, above and beyond those given by the game system. The first of these, the Miraculous Passage, and the



second of these, the Three Plagues, will be described later. They will be recognizable as being of Old Testament origin.

The Prophet appears, in person, before the Establishment's leaders. Since they have been, in all likelihood, searching for the Prophet for imprisonment and torture, this may cause some surprise and consternation. The Prophet now lays his demands before the leaders, the nobles, and the King. These demands are nearly always unacceptable. In fact, these demands are nearly always intolerable. Moses demanded freedom for a population of needed slaves; Martin Luther demanded drastic reforms in a very conservative church. Here, the Prophet may demand something like these, or official recognition of a new state religion, the expulsion of a rich class of foreigners, the outlawing of all magic use, or anything equally shocking.

What members of the Establishment have historically overlooked, time and time again, is that these demands are popularly desired. The Prophet could not have come as far as he already has without speaking to a deeply-felt need of the people. Establishments throughout history have gone down to the stones of rioters because of their inability to serve this need.

The Establishment will probably refuse to give in to these demands. The probability of this is 99%, and the adventurers may reduce this by no more than half of their probability bonus. Orders will go out for the arrest and execution of the Prophet.

The Miraculous Passage, if invoked now by the Prophet, gives him free passage back to a place of safety among the converts. The Miraculous Passage virtually guarantees that the Prophet will not be harmed by any foe on the path to this sanctuary. This ability may be used no more than five times, and each time it is used, it has a slightly increased chance of failure. The first time it is used, there is only a 1% chance of the Prophet being captured. The second time, 2%; the third and fourth times, 3%; the fifth time, 4%. Failure should come in the form of an almost completely unpredictable happenstance: a guardsman, befuddled by events he can never hope to comprehend, hauls the Prophet in; a crazed madman hurls himself atop the Prophet and bears him to the ground; the city gates close of their own accord.

Assuming that the demands have been rejected, the Prophet will now do one of three things: flee, signalling the failure of the movement; declare religious civil war (which may break out in any event, see below); or release the

## PROPHETS VS. THE ESTABLISHMENT TABLE

<i>Occasion</i>	<i>Chance of accepting demand</i>	<i>Establishment option if demand refused</i>	<i>Prophet's action if demand refused</i>
1st Demand	1%*	A: 50%** B: 35% C: 15%	Flee: 2% Release Plague: 94% Call for civil war: 4%
After 1st Plague	3%	A: 50% B: 25% C: 25%	Flee: 2% Release Plague: 92% Call for civil war: 6%
After 2nd Plague	7%	A: 35% B: 25% C: 40%	Flee: 3% Release Plague: 88% Call for civil war: 9%
After 3rd Plague	12%	A: 15% B: 15% C: 70%	Flee: 8% Call for civil war: 92%

\*Adventurer may add or subtract up to one-half of his probability bonus.

\*\*Adventurer may add or subtract up to the amount of his probability bonus.

First Plague. This first and mildest of the Three Plagues causes the spoilage of 70% of all food and drink in the nation, with massive famines and food riots following. Naturally, the Prophet's followers are not affected.

After the First Plague, the Prophet again goes in person to the Establishment leaders and repeats his demands. The Establishment now has a variable chance of accepting, depending upon whether option A, B, or C had been chosen earlier. The Prophet vs. the Establishment Table gives the probabilities involved.

If the Establishment does not accept, roll again to see if a religious civil war breaks out at the Prophet's calling, or if—a happy thought for the Establishment—the Prophet flees, leaving his movement to collapse in his absence.

If war does not erupt, and if the Prophet does not flee, the Second Plague is released. This is an insect plague of nationwide intensity, lasting one long, hellish week. Five percent of the population will die of the poisonous bites, and everyone save the Prophet's followers will be covered with itching insect bites. The Prophet's faithful will not be affected in the slightest, although their grain fields, along with everyone else's, will be totally devoured.

Again the Prophet goes in person before the Establishment. Again the roll is made for acceptance of his demands. If the demands are refused, and if war does not break out, or the Prophet flees, the Third Plague is released. This plague painlessly and mercifully kills all children under the age of ten throughout the nation, save the children of the Prophet's faithful. This means a loss of 15-20% of the nation's

population. There is no hiding from it, no appeasing it, no salvation from it. The results are difficult for the modern mind to imagine, striking as it does at the heart of life in those times.

After the Third Plague, roll again for acceptance of the demands, as the Prophet comes once again face to face with the leaders of the Establishment. The raw hatred expressed by these leaders at this meeting will be difficult to comprehend; many of them will have lost sons or daughters. And yet so persuasive and powerful is the Prophet that the chances of the Establishment accepting his demands is higher now than it ever was. Should they refuse, however, the Prophet shall either flee or open the ruinous religious civil war.

(Each time, after the roll for acceptance, the Prophet has the use of another Miraculous Passage. Should the Passage fail, as is possible if not likely, the Prophet is captured. This will cause the movement to collapse, as the Prophet will soon be tortured to death. There is a 35% chance, however, that a new Prophet will begin afresh with the same demands, carrying along the movement with renewed momentum. St. Paul carried Christianity to the world after the crucifixion of Jesus.)

### Trouble For All RELIGIOUS CIVIL WAR

The Wars of the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and the turmoil in the Arabian Peninsula in the years 624-634 AD are all examples of religious civil war. Pharaoh's pursuit of Moses and the Israelites is similar.

In this context the war will be worse for the nation than all three pla-

gues were, even in combination. Unless the action is resolved quickly in favor of one side or the other, the long campaigns and endless battles can devastate a country.

The first stage, and the bloodiest, is the consolidation of the Prophet's and the Establishment's hold on various cities. Riots and war will wash the streets with blood as each side attempts to gain control of the cities. The action in the capital city is most important, and will have the Prophet personally involved. At this time the Establishment's oversight comes home to them as the unexpected popularity of the Prophet's underlying grievance shows up. 25-35% of the people in the capital city, 20-30% of the people in other cities, and 20-70% of the army rise to fight for the Prophet, either in screaming mobs or in well-drilled military formations. At this time the small band of loyal followers that sheltered the Prophet at his worst of times, spread out and lead the new armies as his lieutenants. Of those who do not follow the aroused movement, many will hide in terror, while some will fight vigorously and loyally for the Establishment. The pitched battle for the Establishment palace should be fairly even in terms of battle effectiveness, although the raw numbers will heavily

favor the Prophet's mob. (Note that, although the troops may desert in droves, the fighting strength of an army is honed by its officers, who will remain loyal in proportions of 90% or more.)

After this stage of the war, each side will have absolute control of a few cities, and the campaign stage may begin. If the Establishment has lost control of the capital city, the King, or other surviving leader, can reasonably be assumed to have escaped by way of secret tunnels or open flight. If so, he may lead the campaigning from a temporary capital still under Establishment control.

This campaign stage will resemble a normal war, with maneuvering leading up to battles as in any ordinary war of conquest. Each side will field armies, buy mercenaries (with what little money remains in the treasuries), and lay siege to the enemy cities. Treachery, both in the armies and in the cities, will lead to monstrous shifts of fortune, and no one would bet a corroded copper on the final outcome. The only certain result will be a blasted countryside, a beggared and starving nation, and closed borders with mistrusting neighboring countries. No matter who wins, everyone will lose; the nation may be decades regaining

its wealth and strength.

This poverty is not permanent, of course. The battles over Islam, after the death of Mohammed, although weakening the Arabs at first, eventually unified them, allowing the faith to spread with extraordinary rapidity. Within four hundred years, the Islamic states had a culture and standard of living higher than those of any nation in Christian Europe.

#### Trouble in the USA

It would perhaps be an understatement to say that religious issues and role-playing gaming's treatment of them can be sensitive topics. This entire article is basically a very simplistic analysis of the mechanics of religious strife. With a very few modifications, the greater part of the article can be used to simulate ordinary civil wars, *coups d'etat*, and popular revolts. The "Prophet" might be a political or ideological leader (without the miraculous powers), such as Karl Marx, Thomas Paine, or Simon Bolivar. What is most essential to these rules is the fact that, without an underlying popularity, without a real, if far from obvious, public desire for change, no revolution is possible, be it religious or secular. The voice of the people is the voice of god. □



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# AD&D Variant

# Critical Hits & Fumbles

## The Ultimate Tables for Critical Rolls



*During the past three years, I have, as a gamemaster, used several different tables for critical hits and critical fumbles. As a player, I have seen my characters subjected to different tables as well. All the uses (and misuses) of any of these tables have been the result of our gaming group trying to find the ideal critical hit table. The choice has finally come down to a simplified system using D100s to figure out just what happened on that roll of "20" or "1" on the "to hit" roll.*

By Roy Pitta

*Illustrated  
by Rick Becker*

First off, let's look at the system for determining a critical hit. On any natural roll of a 20 on a D20, the attacking character is considered to have made a strike which will produce more than the normal amount of damage. Perhaps the most frightening of the critical hit tables I have ever seen used was the one using a D6 to determine what happened. A roll of "6" meant instant death, period. All well and good when you have hit an opponent, but not so great if your character is on the receiving end.

The problem is, no matter what level the character is, he has the exact same chance (5%) of a critical strike as does a character many levels above, or many levels below, him. So it was quite conceivable for the twelfth-level fighter to receive a critical hit from a first-level character, and be killed instantly. Which, no one can argue, is the way things happen sometimes in real life. However, the percentage chance in real life that a skilled fighter could be struck thusly by an unskilled fighter is far less than the chance that the more seasoned warrior will hit the inexperienced opponent in such a manner. How then, do we account for the greater experience and learned skills a higher-level character has over a lower-level character?

The method our group finally decided on was the following: On any natural roll of 20, the number needed for a hit is subtracted from the actual hit roll total (this may be more than

20, due to pluses to hit, or less than 20, due to minuses). The difference is then multiplied by 5%, and the result is the percentage chance that the character has, indeed, struck his opponent critically.

For example: Taurus the Fighter is fighting Dirk the Assassin. Taking into consideration armor class and levels, let's say that Taurus needs a 15 to hit Dirk, while Dirk, now in a face-to-face fight he did not want, needs, nonetheless, only a 12 to hit Taurus. Dirk rolls a 20 on his to-hit roll; with a bonus of 1 for proficiency, the strike comes out to 21. The difference, 9, when multiplied by 5%, comes to a 45% chance of Dirk having struck Taurus critically. Percentage die are rolled, and Dirk's roll of 48% is close, but not good enough. Damage would be figured in the normal manner.

Two rounds later, it is Taurus who rolls a 20. His chance to actually critically injure Dirk is a mere 25%. Lo and behold, the gods must be with him, for he rolls a 15 on the D100! Dirk has been critically injured.

Now we go to the Critical Hits Table to see exactly what has happened to Dirk. If he still lives afterwards, the fight goes on until one of them drops, gives in, or runs.

The Critical Hit Table you use is, of course, up to you. But I have taken the liberty of showing you the table I feel comes closest to what might happen in real life (see Table 1). Of course, you can adapt it to what you

feel would be better, keeping in those results you like, and substituting the ones you dislike. Like the *Players Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, these are not strict rules; they are merely guidelines which you can change to fill your own needs.

The same method is used to determine critical fumbles. Why should a tenth-level fighter have the same 5% chance to fumble as does a second-level cleric?

In the case of a fumble roll of a 1 on the to-hit roll, 1 is subtracted from the number needed by the character to hit his opponent. The lower the level of the attacking character, the higher a to-hit number he needs, and vice-versa. Which makes sense, since lower levels are an indication of a lack of skill and experience. Thus, if a character needing a 7 to strike his opponent rolls a 1, there is only a 30% chance that he fumbled. On the other hand, a character needing a roll of 16 to hit has, on a roll of 1, a 75% chance of fumbling. Inexperience in being unable to recover from possible disastrous errors, you know.

By the way, if this all seems too unfair to lower level characters who may have accidentally found themselves fighting a superior opponent, the gamemaster can make it up to them (if they survive) by throwing in a few bonus experience points for the little guys when they do get a critical hit, or when they manage not to fumble when they could have. A second level cleric who critically struck a twelfth-level fighter ought to receive more experience points for this act than the twelfth-level fighter would get for doing the same to that second-level holy man. With all his experience, it is almost expected of him!

But getting back to fumbles again, in the early days of my role-playing career, a 1 on a D20 meant "you dropped your weapon," or "your opponent gets a free swipe at you because you tripped," or whatever. Just as all critical strikes are not equal, all critical fumbles (read that "blunders") should also have varying consequences. Therefore, I have included Table 2, a Critical Fumble Table I feel takes a more realistic attitude towards mistakes made during combat.

So here you have, in a nutshell, what has taken my group three years to come up with. Feel free to use them as you like, or not. Personally, I am confident that our group will change the tables every now and again in our on-going effort to improve our enjoyment of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, so do not use them as gospel truths. Unless you want to. After all, you are the gamemaster. □

**Table 1:**  
**CRITICAL HIT TABLE**

<i>D100</i>	<i>Effect</i>
01-05	Instant death.
06-10	Badly wounded, cannot continue fighting; if wounds are not attended to in 5-10 rounds, he will die.
11-15	Takes full damage, will lose one hit point per round for five rounds, after which he will collapse.
16-20	Takes double damage.
21-25	Leg badly wounded, cannot run or maneuver; armor class increased by one, and takes one hit point per round.
26-35	Opponent's weapon arm injured; drops weapon, cannot use arm in combat until bandaged and healed.
36-50	Stunned for 1-3 rounds.
51-65	Breastplate of opponent split, armor class increases by four.
66-75	Armor strap cut, armor class increases by two due to interference from out-of-place armor.
76-85	Stunned for one round, drops weapon.
86-90	Forehead cut causes torrent of blood over eyes; impeded vision causes him to hit at -3, and he loses one hit point every two rounds.
91-95	Takes normal damage, plus two hit points per round damage until wound is attended to.
96-99	Takes maximum damage.
00	Takes double maximum damage.

**Table 2:**  
**CRITICAL FUMBLE TABLE**

<i>D100</i>	<i>Effect</i>
01-05	Trips and falls, loses weapon, is stunned for one round.
06-10	Trips and falls, loses weapon, but is not stunned.
11-15	Stunned for one round, drops weapon.
16-20	Drops weapon.
21-30	Drops shield; if character has no shield, helmet has fallen off. Next attack by opponent will strike at the unprotected head, and damage of 8+ knocks character unconscious.
31-40	Helmet falls over eyes, cannot see for one round, cannot attack while re-adjusting the helmet.
41-50	Lunge at opponent causes armor strap to snap, armor class is increased by 2.
51-60	Weapon is cracked. Can be used once more, then breaks.*
61-70	Weapon breaks, can still be used, but does one-quarter damage.*
71-80	Weapon breaks, is useless.*
81-85	Hit nearest ally. Roll normal damage.†
86-90	Hit nearest ally, do maximum damage.†
91-95	Trips into nearest ally, both fall to the ground, both stunned for next round.†
96-99	Knocks weapon out of nearest ally's hand, do half damage to ally.†
00	Kills nearest ally. Stunned for two rounds. If character is alone, he falls, breaks his neck, and dies.

\*Magical weapons get saving throw, but at -4.

†If character is alone, apply damage to character.

# STAR FLEET COMMAND

## Philosophy & Attitudes

### Guide to Role-Playing **STAR TREK**



By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

FASA has produced a marvelous game. It has a problem, though, a problem not an intrinsic fault of the game, but more a reflection of the faults of other games. Many people playing *Star Trek* have trouble adapting to what a friend of mine calls (not derogatorily), "a goody-two-shoes universe."

The average player has, perhaps, become accustomed to the premises of *Traveller*, where the average spacecraft is stolen and the average player-character is what can only be described as a terrorist, where laws extend no further than the atmosphere, if that far, and no further into a starport than the outer perimeter fence—a universe where every player-character is armed to the teeth with the most lethal weapons he can carry. Worse yet is the player whose experience is mainly a fantasy game—say, for example, *Dungeons & Dragons*. Such players suffer from three major disadvantages: they tend to be locked into a "kick-the-door-kill-the-monster-take-its-treasure-how-much-experience-do-we-get?" frame of mind; they tend to take combat somewhat frivolously—after all, they know they're tough and skilled—and they tend to take death somewhat lightly ("I'm at zero hit points again, where's the cleric?"). These last two become especially painfully inappropriate mind-sets when the typical personal weapon in a game has a "disintegrate" setting.

And so it occurred to me that it might be helpful to set down some of the philosophy and attitudes of the *Star Trek* universe. Some such discussion is included in the rules (and in the scenarios, especially the first); none of it should be anything new; but putting it in one place, labeled as background material for the game, may help the players of *Star Trek* to avoid getting court-martialled, starting wars, or dying.

**"I will not provoke an attack."**

This is touched upon in the tactical doctrine in the rules.

Starfleet stands ready to fight—but its mission is to not fight. Whenever there is a doubt about a situation, Starfleet officers are expected to err on the side of peace—even though it may place at risk, or even cost, their lives. Or their ships. Losing a starship and 432 trained personnel is a terrible loss, no matter how you look at it—but if it is a way to avoid war, it is an acceptable gamble.

So be hesitant to do anything that might touch off a paranoid-schizophrenic who might, just might, turn out to be a *potentially-friendly* paranoid-schizophrenic. Be reluctant to raise shields. Do not make powerful sensor scans unless they have made them first—and thus can be assumed that they know that a sensor scan is not an attack. Do not take reticence for hostility. Do not arm phasers or load torpedoes "just to be on the safe side"—if they detect you doing it, there will be no "safe side."

Bear in mind that a starship can absorb a considerable amount of damage without defending or striking back and still be an awesome force.

**"We'll see how they like havin'  
a full starship come down their throats."**

This is what makes the above strategy—calculated vulnerability—viable. The Federation starships, the cruisers, are far and away the most powerful class of warships in the known galaxy. No other government lavishes so much effort on producing just a few superb ships. The pay-off is in ticklish situations. If a friend changes sides, or an unknown becomes violent, or a known enemy catches you by surprise, they still have to work awfully hard to put a starship out of commission. This gives you a margin of error that can be used to defuse crises.

The other side of the coin is that if you are the one to initiate hostilities for some reason (it'd better be good), most opponents will back down or back out rather than face the wrath of a starship.



To remove this module from the rest of the magazine, simply bend the staples up with a knife or some other flat implement, and pull out the module. Be sure to bend the staples back. We recommend the module be kept in the *Call Of Cthulhu* game box.

# The Crystal of Chaos

*A search for a fabulous semi-mythical crystal leads the investigators to a horror heretofore unknown.*

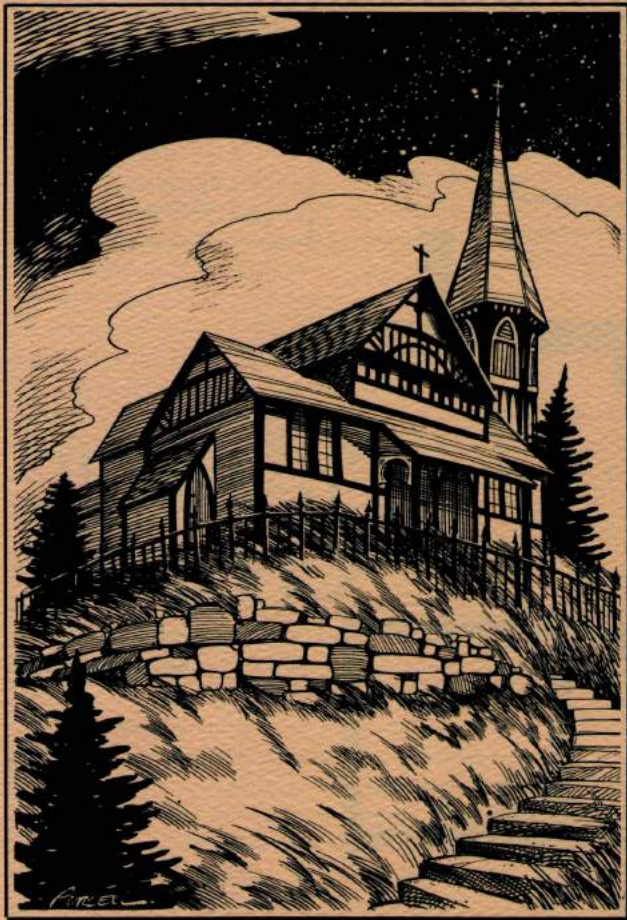
By Peter Gilham

*Illustrated by Steve Purcell  
Map rendering by Mike Blum*

CALL OF  
CTHULHU  
ADVENTURE

## PLAYERS' INFORMATION

The investigators have been contracted by one Professor Engels of Miskatonic University, Arkham, to trace the whereabouts of the semi-mythical Shining Trapezohedron. This fabulous crystal is reputed to harness powerful occult forces and could be dangerous in the wrong hands. Although vague as to the precise nature of these forces, the Professor stresses the need for caution in handling the Trapezohedron. He will pay each investigator his or her



expenses plus \$50 per week as long as the search seems likely to be fruitful. A bonus of \$200 each for finding the crystal is promised.

Unfortunately, the only clue the Professor can provide is that it fell into the hands of a sect known as "Starry Wisdom" in the 1840's.

## KEEPER'S INFORMATION

In 1843, Professor Enoch Bowen, archaeologist and student of the occult, found the Shining Trapezohedron in the tomb of the "forgotten pharaoh" Nephren-Ka in Egypt. Returning to Providence in 1844, he founded the Starry Wisdom sect, buying the old Free-Will Church for its headquarters. This cult used the crystal to summon Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, to whom they made blood sacrifices.

Public outcry at the suspected activities of Starry Wisdom led to the authorities forcibly breaking up the sect in May 1877. Most of the members immediately left the area, but the crystal remained in the steeple of the Church, where light filtering in prevented a full manifestation of Nyarlathotep.

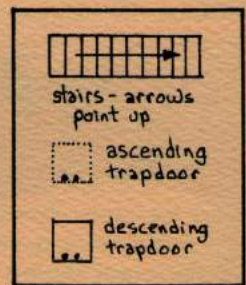
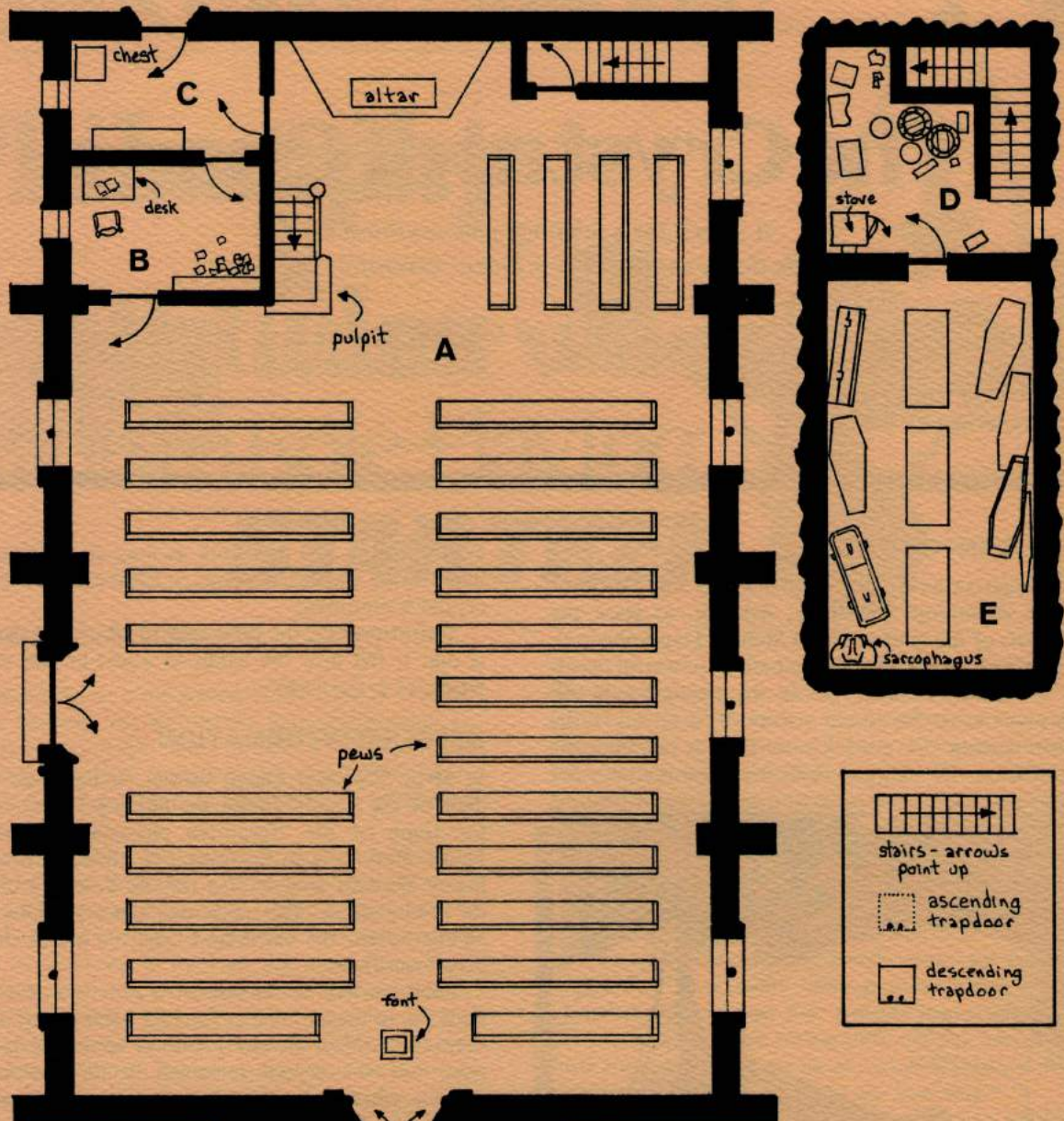
Local superstitions about the Church prevented anyone from entering the building until 1893. Then a reporter from the *Providence Telegram*, Edwin M. Lillibridge, found the crystal while researching reports that the building was haunted. Lillibridge was killed by the horror he inadvertently summoned, but the Church was never searched and his body never found. The building has not been entered since.

## RESEARCH AND RUMORS

Information 1 to 3 can be found at any library.

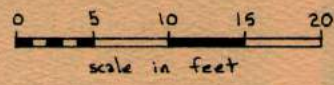
1. Starry Wisdom is included in a list of religious cults. The address of its headquarters is given as the Free-Will Church, Federal Hill, Providence. This information will be automatically found by the investigators.

2. A book on Egyptology refers to the discovery in 1843, by a Professor Bowen of Providence, in the tomb of an unnamed pharaoh, of a crystal "that shines in the dark." The chance of finding this information is half the investi-



# The Free-Will Church

Federal Hill, Providence



gator's Luck roll as the book would seemingly be unconnected with the Trapezohedron.

3. A successful Library Use roll will indicate the discovery in a book on the occult of a reference to a being known as the "Haunter of the Dark" which mentions that the "lost Trapezohedron" is a legendary source of its power. The passage states that the creature "could not emerge from the dark."

Information 4 to 8 can be found either at the offices of the *Providence Bulletin* or at Providence Central Library. Each requires a successful Library Use roll.

4. A July 1844 edition of the *Providence Bulletin* mentions the purchase of the Free-Will Church of Federal Hill by Professor Bowen and the establishment of a religious cult there against the will of the local Catholic community. The priest, Father O'Malley, was particularly vocal against this sect, calling it "tantamount to witchcraft."

5. In August 1853, an issue of the *Bulletin* carried a report of investigations by police into the Starry Wisdom sect. No evidence was found connecting a series of disappearances in the area to the cult.

6. An article on the continued disappearances of people in the Federal Hill area appears in the *Bulletin* in February 1866. It briefly mentions the results of the 1853 police investigation.

7. An article in a March 1872 issue of the *Bulletin* concerning witch cults refers to the rumors of the Italian populace of Federal Hill. The article hints at blood-sacrifice by an unnamed cult in the region, but emphasizes that no positive evidence exists.

8. An April 1877 issue of the *Bulletin* includes a small item on the forced break-up of Starry Wisdom by the authorities. It refers to public pressure on the authorities to enforce this closure.

9. The inhabitants of Federal Hill, mainly Italian, will be reluctant to talk about the Free-Will Church. A successful Oratory roll will gain the admission that bumping noises are often heard coming from the building at night and that the place is haunted; otherwise anyone approached will pretend not to understand English. Investigators persistently asking about the Church will soon be shunned by the people of Federal Hill. If approached, the priest of the nearby Spirito Santo Church, Father Merluzzo, will allow the investigators access to church records. A successful Library Use roll will find a small entry concerning "devil-worship" by Starry Wisdom, who "call up a demon which fears the power of light." This entry was made in 1853 by the then priest, Father O'Malley.

## THE FREE-WILL CHURCH

The Church lies at the top of Federal Hill, a maze of narrow alleys and stepped streets. Ancient, close-packed houses are the dwellings of the Italian quarter of Providence.

Overlooking a cobbled square, the Church stands on a weed-grown plateau supported by a crumbling wall and fenced by rusty iron railings. The iron gate is securely padlocked, but access can easily be gained through gaps in the railings. The knee-high weeds conceal the worn remains of gravestones. The building itself is in a state of decay, with many of the stone buttresses having fallen and most of the once-leering gargoyles missing. Surprisingly, however, the

large Gothic windows remain intact though blackened by grime.

Both entrances to the building are padlocked. The main double doors are also barred from the inside and anyone trying to force them open must match their STR against that of the doors of 25 on the resistance table. (If the bar is removed once inside, the doors' STR is reduced to 20.) The side door to the vestry is less secure, having a STR of 18. Another entrance should be made apparent in the form of an open window at ground level leading into the cellar (room D). This will be noticed by any investigator actively searching for such an entrance but is otherwise hidden by weeds.

The interior of the Church is in a similar stage of decrepitude. The faint light filtering through the dirt-blackened windows shows a thick layer of dust over everything, obscuring details, and masses of cobwebs across doorways and stairs and in the corners of rooms. The air is particularly stifling, smelling predominantly of rotting wood.

## INTERIOR DETAILS

**A. The Place of Worship:** The area is taken up mainly by the rows of pews. Those directly to the east of the altar were used by the choir. All were once finely carved, but the wood is now so rotten as to render them unsafe. The cushions upon their seats are mold-encrusted, many having been split and their stuffing removed by rats.

Massive stained-glass windows line the outer walls, almost reaching the 30-foot high vaulted ceiling. If cleaned, they will be seen to show unearthly creatures devouring human victims and killing knights or saints. Failing a SAN roll on seeing these costs 1D3 points.

The pulpit, though ravaged by time, is largely sound. However, a hole in the floor of the pulpit leads to a rat colony under the floor boards. Anyone climbing the pulpit steps will be met by a stream of 1D4 rat packs. Once driven off, the rats will not re-emerge for 1D3 turns.

The northern end of this room is dominated by the large stone altar. Placed on a dias, its sides are covered with *bas relief* carvings of pentagrams, stars, the moon, and other mystical symbols. Above the altar hangs an Egyptian ankh. Made of bronze, it is worth \$200.

To the south stands the font. About four-foot high and made of now-cracked marble, it is empty apart from dust and cobwebs.

Whilst in area A, the investigators will hear the scratching and scampering of rats and will occasionally see movement in the shadows. For every hour spent in this area there is a 15% chance of being attacked by 1D6 rat packs.

**B. The Study:** This room contains a desk and chair in the northwest corner and a bookshelf along the south wall.

Under the dust on the decaying desk lies the remains of a book. Having been left open, its pages have all been eaten away by rats and mold. Its cover identifies it as the Olaus Wormius translation of the *Necronomicon*, but it is now useless.

A book in the top drawer of the desk is marked "Starry Wisdom." Handwritten, it tells the history of the sect from its founding in 1844 to its dissolution in 1877, including mentions of public opposition to its existence and the police investigation of 1853, but nowhere confirming the rumors of blood-sacrifices nor naming Nyarlathotep, instead referring to him as "the Haunter in the Dark" and "the Crawling Chaos." Reading this book reduces



SAN 1D3 points and raises Cthulhu Mythos 3%.

All but the top shelf of books has collapsed, leaving the volumes to rot on the floor. All legible works remain on the shelf. There are six books on Archaeology, including two by Professor Bowen published in the late 1830's. Neither mentions the Trapezohedron nor Nephren-Ka. There are two books connected to the Cthulhu Mythos: one is the Golden Goblin edition of *Nameless Cults*, the other is handwritten (in the hand as the history of Starry Wisdom) and is titled *Notes from the Book of Eibon*. The latter adds 5% to Cthulhu Mythos, contains one spell (Summon Hunting Horror or Nyarlathotep), and costs 1D4 SAN points. The final surviving volume is called *The Occult in New England*. Reading it gives the normal chance (i.e., 100 minus current Occult percentage) to increase Occult knowledge by 5%.

**C. The Vestry:** In this room are a row of cupboards along the south wall and a chest in the northwest corner.

Hanging in the cupboards are the rotten, cobweb-strewn purple robes worn by the priests of the sect.

The chest is unlocked and contains items used in the ceremonies: ankh-like crucifixes, large black candles, sticks of incense, a sacrificial dagger, and a gold chalice worth \$50.

On the west wall above the chest hangs a faded tapestry on which is written:

*And at last from inner Egypt came  
The strange dark one to whom the fellahs bowed.*

(The middle section, some half dozen lines, is unreadable. The verse concludes as follows.)

*Then crushing what he chanced to mould in play*

*The idiot Chaos blew Earth's dust away.*

**D. The Cellar:** This room contains all sorts of junk: broken furniture, empty crates and trunks, and a rusty stove in the southwest corner. In the stove's fireplace is a key (to the door to the Crypt).

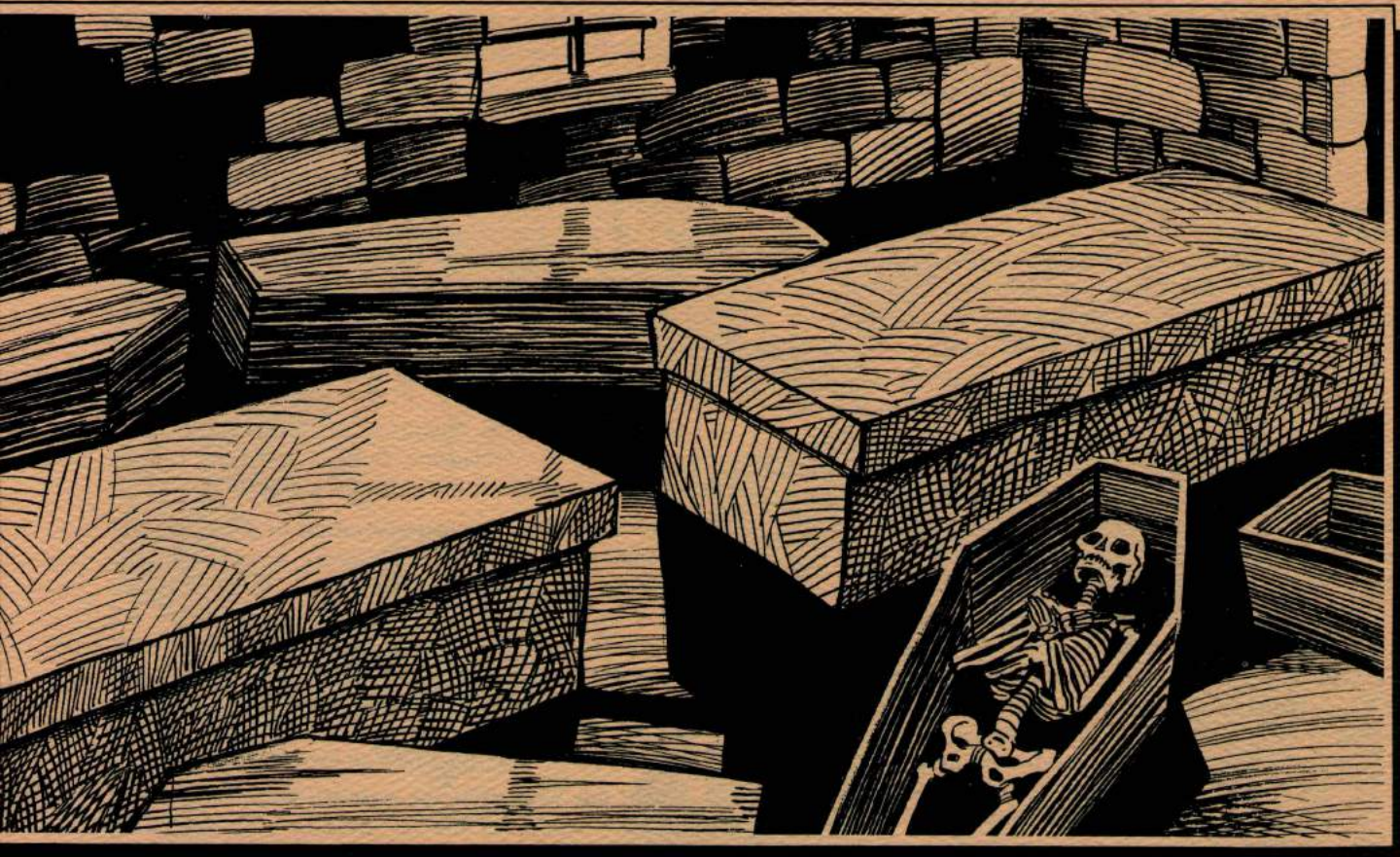
A window near the ceiling in the east wall is open and allows access into and out of the building.

The door in the south wall is locked. The key is hidden in the stove, but the lock is rusty and will only open if the investigator makes a POW x 5% roll. Alternatively the door can be forced open if the investigator overcomes its STR of 15 on the resistance table.

**E. The Crypt:** This room is dominated by three tombs along its center. Words on the top of each have been deliberately chiseled off. The southern most tombstone can be moved by STR 14 or more to reveal a pit beneath. Ten-foot deep, the bottom four feet are covered by hundreds of small bone fragments. A successful Zoology roll indicates that they are human, and a Spot Hidden roll shows that many have the appearance of being partially melted. These are the remains of the sacrificial victims that Nyarlathotep did not consume.

Around the tombs are some six coffins in varying stages of decay, three of which contain ancient skeletons. The other three are open and empty.

In the southwest corner stands an Egyptian sarcophagus, a further discovery of Professor Bowen. A Spot Hidden roll reveals a small slit in the lid at about eye level. Inside is an animated mummy, brought to "life" by the cult to use as a guardian. Watching through the eye-slit, this monster will attack any strangers five minutes after they



open the door to the crypt, or immediately if they open the sarcophagus or find the secret pit. It will not pursue investigators beyond the building.

#### MUMMY

STR 18 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 11 POW 13 DEX 10 APP 4

ARMOR: 2-point skin (q.v. Zombies for weapon immunities).

HIT POINTS: 14.

WEAPONS	Attack	Damage
Fist	70%	1D6+1D4

SAN LOSS: 1D6 (if SAN roll missed).

SKILLS: Move Quietly 50%.

**F. The Steeple—Ground Level:** A stone spiral staircase leads upwards. Against the east wall are four barrels covered in fungi. Having split many years ago, they are empty.

**G. The Steeple—Upper Level:** The staircase ends here, 100 feet up. The four small windows, one in each wall, have been boarded up, but light seeps through tiny cracks. In the center of the room is a four-foot high marble pedestal on which lies the Shining Trapezohedron, its glow obscured by dust. Its lid is open. At night, or if anyone falls victim to the crystal and the lid is then closed, sliding and bumping sounds will be heard from the room above.

Arranged in a circle around the pedestal are seven high-backed wooden chairs. On the wall, one behind each chair, are seven images of crumbling plaster, stretching from floor to ceiling and resembling the monoliths of Easter Island.

In a pile of dust in the southeast corner lies a skeleton. A reporter's badge on the lapel of his ragged suit identifies him as a journalist from the *Providence Telegram*. A notebook in his pocket names him Edwin M. Lillibridge and contains information numbers 4 to 8 in the "Research

And Rumors" section. A pocket diary from 1893 contains mundane entries, but ends on August first. A Spot Hidden roll will show that some of his bones seem to have been melted and charred, as if by acid.

(If the August 1893 issues of the *Providence Telegram* are subsequently studied, a Library Use roll uncovers a small item on the disappearance of reporter Lillibridge "while researching for a projected series of articles on the supernatural. His last known whereabouts was the Providence Central Library, and his subsequent movements remain a mystery.")

A ladder against the wall in the southwest corner of this room leads up through a sliding trapdoor to the room above.

**H. The Steeple—Top Level:** This room is bare. It has a low (five-foot) ceiling and no windows. The floor is clear of dust, and a Spot Hidden roll will reveal strange yellow smears.

At night, when the crystal is in darkness, Nyarlathotep materializes here. However, he cannot leave this room because of the streetlights shining through the cracks in the boarded-up windows below; and he cannot gather enough strength to withstand the light without making contact with a human through the Trapezohedron.

If Nyarlathotep is here (e.g., at night, or if the crystal has summoned him), the first investigator opening the trapdoor will hear a rushing sound and see shadowy movement out of the corner of their eyes as the Haunter is dispelled by the light from below.

The air here smells of long-dead carcasses, and anyone not making a CONx5% roll loses 1D3 CON points for 1D6 hours from the overpowering stench.

## THE SHINING TRAPEZOHEDRON

The Trapezohedron is a four-inch, irregularly-faceted crystal, black with veins of red. It is held suspended in an asymmetrical box by seven supports extending from the inner walls of the container. The box is made of a yellowish metal with a hinged lid and tiny *bas-reliefs* of monstrous figurines. In darkness, the crystal glows with an inner light.

The crystal's origins are in the distant past on planet Yuggoth, but it was known on Earth by the primeval inhuman civilizations of Antarctica and Valusia, and by the men of Lemuria, Atlantis, and ancient Egypt.

The Trapezohedron forms a link with this world for Nyarlathotep, the Haunter of the Dark. Whenever the crystal is in darkness (as it is when the lid of its box is closed), Nyarlathotep can materialize in a similarly dark place nearby. However, if it has not made contact with a human through the Trapezohedron, it cannot gather enough strength to face light and will be dispelled if it or the crystal are exposed to light.

Studying the crystal, a human must make a POW $\times$ 5% roll. Those who fail cannot look away and see visions of fantastic cities, titanous mountains, and the gulfs of space. This costs the viewer 1D6 SAN points. He or she will suddenly feel the presence of something evil watching from the other side of the crystal, and the visions abruptly end. This forms a contact between the terrestrial world and Nyarlathotep, but the Crawling Chaos cannot materialize in the presence of light and not until the Trapezohedron is in darkness. While the crystal is in Providence or its environs, Nyarlathotep will materialize in the steeple of the Free-Will Church. With a human contact, the Trapezohedron can be removed from darkness without affecting Nyarlathotep. The form that the being takes is that of a smokey outline with the impression of a red three-lobed eye. It can fly at great speeds with massive wings beating. However, until it has grown strong (as described below), it must remain in its place of darkness or be dispelled by light, though as time passes this light must be stronger than before, thus breaking its contact with its victim and our world.

To gather strength it will retain a mental contact with the viewer into the Trapezohedron. On each night after seeing the crystal, the victim will have horrific dreams in which the place where Nyarlathotep has materialized and something moving in the dark feature predominantly. Each week the dreamer must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 SAN points plus a permanent point of POW. When the victim's POW has reached zero, Nyarlathotep will be able to face light. It will then emerge from its hiding place and head directly to its victim to take over the now-defenseless body. (Note: If Nyarlathotep can get to his victim without exposing himself to light, before all his victim's POW is drained, he will do so, but must match POWs on the resistance table to possess the body.)

Nyarlathotep will now use his new body to ensure the destruction of the world (e.g., by aiding the development of nuclear weapons). The avatar of Nyarlathotep will possess the creature's INT, POW, and APP. STR, CON, DEX, and SIZ will be those of the human, the only external difference being a very deep suntan. (Actually, the avatar's skin glows in the dark, but Nyarlathotep will avoid such conditions that would reveal this.)

## THE MANIFESTATIONS OF NYARLATHOTEP AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The monstrous form of Nyarlathotep, described above, will materialize in the uppermost level of the steeple of the Free-Will Church, when either one of the investigators or Professor Engels, who will contact the investigators, becomes the potential avatar. As the creature absorbs its victim's POW over the following weeks, it will be able to face brighter lights. Thus it will soon be able to move down into the next level of the steeple at night, and then down into the main body of the Church. However, the street lights outside are too strong for it until the moment when its victim's POW reaches zero—thus it is confined to the Church.

During the weeks following the materialization of Nyarlathotep, the *Providence Bulletin* will carry the following stories which the investigators are likely to see:

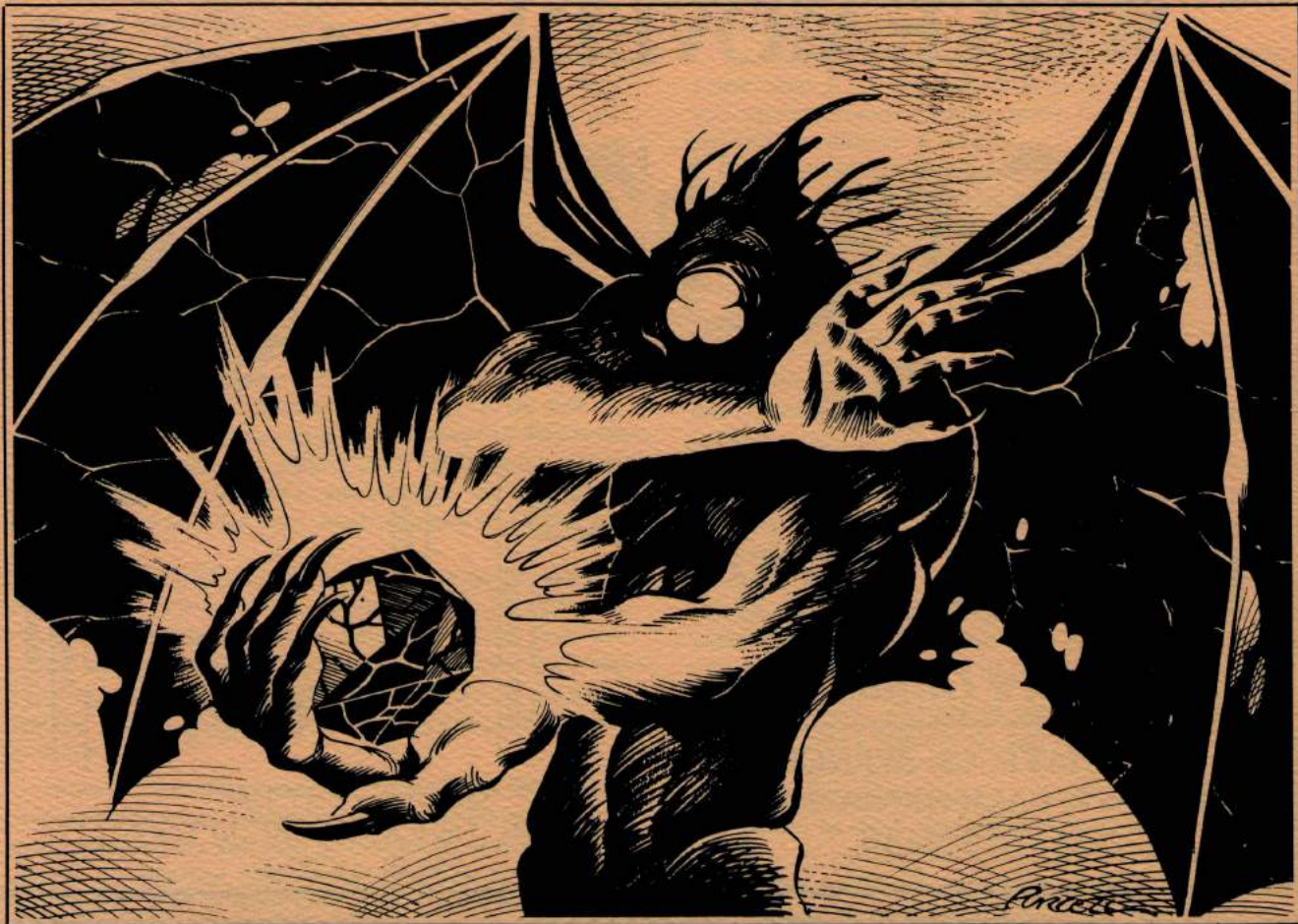
**1. Two days after the materialization of Nyarlathotep:** "Residents of Federal Hill, Providence, have complained of a plague of rats invading their homes. These creatures, some of an unprecedented size, have always been in evidence in this area but never in such quantities. Officials are at a loss to explain this sudden increase. Local figures blame the old Free-Will Church as the source, but cannot name the cause of this sudden exodus. The health authorities have promised to undertake an investigation."

**2. About one week after the materialization:** "Following last week's report on the rat invasion of Federal Hill, many inhabitants have moved away from the area, although health inspectors say the problem is now under control. The source of these vermin was positively identified as the disused Free-Will Church, which has long had a bad name in the region. Many locals regard the building as haunted. Indeed, in the past week reports of such hauntings have increased dramatically, and some claim this as the reason for so many people leaving the area."

**3. About two weeks after the materialization, following an electrical storm:** "Thursday night's storm brought chaos to Providence when almost half the town was blacked out subsequent to a power line being hit. However, no area seemed more agitated by this event than Federal Hill, where some 2-300 citizens stood vigil around the Free-Will Church. Long-rumored to be a haunted building, Thursday night's vigil was apparently to prevent evil spirits from leaving the Church by trapping it within a circle of lights."

During the time in which these reports appear, the potential avatar of Nyarlathotep will be experiencing horrifying dreams about the Church. Thus the party may take some action before the later reports appear.

Returning to the Church, the investigators will notice the following changes: all the interior furnishings (pews, desk and chair in the study, junk in the cellar, coffins in the crypt, etc.) have been thrown violently around and smashed—the broken pieces show signs of acidic damage; the smell from the uppermost level of the steeple has pervaded the entire building, though to a lesser degree, as have the strange yellow smears; Lillibridge's body and the mummy have both disappeared; cushions have been stuffed against the windows in the middle of the steeple, darkening it, and against some of those in the place of worship.



During the day, Nyarlathotep remains in the top level of the steeple, but at night it roams throughout the entire building, though it will take refuge in the steeple if the Church is entered.

For the first two weeks or so, Nyarlathotep can be dispelled, severing its link to our world, by the beam of a flashlight. After this, daylight or its equivalent is needed. Because of this vulnerability, Nyarlathotep will summon the following Hunting Horror to protect himself if threatened (he cannot summon more because of the limited space inside the Church):

#### HUNTING HORROR OF NYALATHOTEP

STR 29 CON 11 SIZ 34 INT 13 POW 23 DEX 16

ARMOR: 9-point skin. Bullets cannot impale.

HIT POINTS: 23.

WEAPONS	Attack	Damage
Bite	65%	1D6+1D3
Tail	90%	grapple

SAN LOSS: 1D10 (if SAN roll missed).

This monster manifests itself in the central level of the steeple. Any party accompanied by the potential avatar of Nyarlathotep will at first only be menaced by the Hunting Horror in an attempt to frighten them off, as Nyarlathotep does not wish to risk killing his contact with our world. If this fails to work, the Horror will attack the party, but will avoid harming the avatar (though it may grapple him). The Hunting Horror disappears if Nyarlathotep is dispelled.

However, while the Trapezohedron still exists, Nyarlathotep is never banished permanently. Thus the crystal

must either be kept within light all the time or be destroyed. This latter is best achieved by crushing it using some kind of heavy machinery or by destroying it with great heat, in , say a large blast furnace or a volcano.

#### THE AVATAR

Should Nyarlathotep reach the stage where its victim's POW is reduced to zero, he may still be returned to his own dimension by the investigators.

On the night that the potential avatar's POW drops to zero, a fierce electrical storm will erupt. Amid the chaos of thunder and lightning, the monstrous form of Nyarlathotep will leave the Free-Will Church and head directly for its victim. Any fellow investigators with him or her will witness the arrival of Nyarlathotep and the possession of the victim's body.

The human avatar can be killed by physical means, but will defend itself by summoning the Hunting Horror (above) and then escaping in the confusion.

If Nyarlathotep escapes, he will disappear from public sight for a few weeks before beginning a tour of colleges and scientific institutions, lecturing on scientific advances in military technology. At this stage, the investigators will have failed in their basic aim of preventing the return of the Great Old Ones and the Other Gods. Although they may still track down and kill the avatar, Nyarlathotep will already have sown the seeds of the future destruction of the world, by introducing nuclear technology . . .

—THE END—

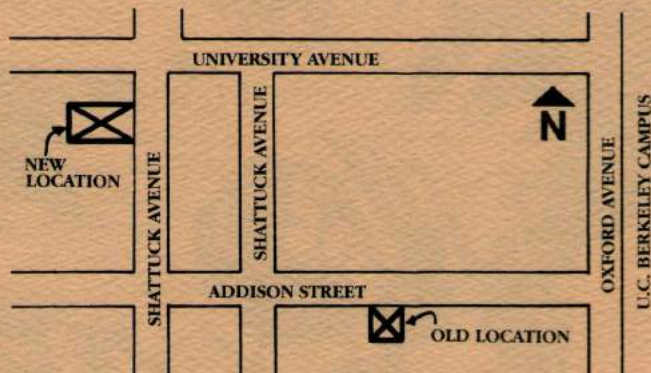
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### **"Set your phasers on stun."**

Do not forget to set your phasers on stun. Landing parties should adopt the same shoot-last-if-at-all attitude that starships in space do. Here is where things get dicey; unlike a Constitution-class starship, characters on a planet are no more difficult to take out than anyone else. Landing parties therefore tend to get in more fights. But let's keep it under control, please.

One major factor working for you in tense planetside encounters is everyone's friend, the phaser. It is probably the best weapon ever devised, just based on its flexibility. Armed with phaser-II's, or even phaser-I's, you should almost never have to opt for killing force. Precious few even roughly human-sized creatures are going to be able to shrug off the effects of a stun; even if they remain standing, another shot—or a right to the jaw—should topple them easily. If you suspect in advance that you are dealing with someone tougher than usual, you can always set for heavy stun.

If you find that you cannot stun your target, the disrupt setting is a nice compromise between subdual and death, harming the opposition while still leaving them the option to quit the party if they so desire. If even that fails to deter an attacker—and only then—you can set for disintegrate. Pretty much everyone and everything calls it quits at that point.

However, a cautious approach to such a problem does frequently allow an opponent to get close enough to hurt you while you are still putting him/her/it down. For this reason, all Starfleet personnel should take advantage of the opportunity to build up a good hand-to-hand rating. The higher your hand-to-hand rating, the more feasible it is for you to let an attacker close. As in starship encounters, use that extra time to try to talk your way out. Starfleet sometimes gives awards for mere victories, but they would rather give awards for avoiding fights.

Since the phaser can be set to subdue, harm or kill as desired, and can be used even at point-blank range, there is, incidentally, no good reason for a player-character to carry hand-to-hand weaponry.

### **"Maybe you're a soldier so often you forget you're also a diplomat."**

Remember that no matter how violent a situation gets, no matter how thoroughly it has been reduced to a struggle of power, your duty to Starfleet and the Federation is always to find another way. As Lazurus Long said, "Always remember that your enemy is never evil in his eyes. This may leave room for a compromise."

The ideals of the Federation demand that there is no such thing as a "just" or "honorable" war. This sets the Federation apart from the other empires of the galaxy, which tend to look upon it as the largest open asylum in history. History itself will judge—soon enough—whether the Federation's obsession with peace is a valid way of surviving. In the meantime, do not expect Starfleet to applaud if you start, or even merely fail to stop, a war—no matter how good your reasons.

### **"We won't kill today. It's that simple."**

Of course, Starfleet—and the Federation—have to deal with hard reality. The upshot is that Starfleet personnel

are expected to act as close to the lofty ideals of peace as is practical at the time.

So do the best that can be done. If you cannot prevent a war, stop it. If you cannot stop it, arrange a truce. If you cannot arrange a truce, settle for a cease-fire. If all else fails, confine the conflict.

The Federation's attitude towards war is that it is a disease which spreads. Starfleet is therefore expected to do some meddling in areas where it really has no business, if it will tend to eliminate the disease before it spreads to the Federation itself.

### **"Scotty, execute General Order 24."**

When all else fails, remember that behind the open hand and the velvet glove, never mentioned but always present, is Starfleet's iron fist. If you cannot find any other way out, then fight—but Starfleet plays hardball; it is the Federation's reputation for unexpectedly turning from milk-sops into berserkers that does the most to maintain the balance of power.

Again, the key are the starships. Nothing short of a squadron—a large squadron—can contain a starship. And while bringing such a squadron to bear, the enemy has to contend with the certainty of fearsome casualties.

General Order 24 requires the officer it is issued to bring the ship's artillery to bear on a target planet. No sane planetary government will fail to yield to such a threat; the starship will, at the very least, blast the entire civilization to the hunter-gatherer stage of cultural development. In extreme cases, the planet can be rendered totally lifeless. In very extreme cases, the very structural integrity of the world can be disrupted, leaving asteroidal debris.

Actually carrying out such an order carries with it a high risk of permanently breaking the careers of the officer who issued the order, and probably the officer who executed it, and possibly the latter's executive officer for failing to relieve him. Then there are such things as imprisonment and extradition (if the planet survived) to deal with as well.

But if it is really necessary, that firepower is available to the starship captain.

### **"There is no correct resolution. It is a test of character."**

Starfleet seems almost obsessed with the need to allow no one access to the power of a starship who might use it without cause. Starfleet Academy is laden with opportunities to drop out, tests to fail. The player-characters are the cadets who did not fail the tests. They therefore should be played as they are: the most level-headed, least-likely-to-panic, least-xenophobic people Starfleet can find.

Oddly enough, there is a cloud behind the silver lining of reason and non-xenophobia—too much fondness for other cultures and races can be a seductive lure—admittedly a trap few player-characters are likely to fall into. For more on this problem, see Admiral Kirk's forward to the novelization of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

### **"Permission to speak freely, sir?" (With no perceptible pause) "Granted."**

In the face of such rigorous selection—after all, scores,

perhaps hundreds, of worlds are being searched for a paltry few thousand officers to crew the starships—all the personnel of a starship can be expected to be smart, skilled and independent-minded. This means, especially, the non-player characters comprising most of the crew. They are not cannon fodder, and in the absence of senior instruction, they will not simply wait for things to happen—they may well take matters into their own hands.

This is a warning to the gamemaster as well as to the players. The crew members should be given to expressing opinions, frequently in a manner that would be considered insubordinate by any military organization except Starfleet. They will sometimes interfere in the actions of the player-characters—if in the opinion of the non-player character (i.e., the gamemaster), the players are going off the deep end.

**“If it’s me you want,  
I’ll have myself beamed over. Spare my crew!”**

In all role-playing games, there is a risk of death. However, if you fight hard and stay alert, you can generally survive, and you are almost never expected to do anything flagrantly suicidal.

That may not hold true in *Star Trek*. This is especially true if you are a senior officer, and most especially if you are the captain. There will eventually arise situations where the other players, or the ship, or even “just” a number of non-player characters can be saved only if a player walks quietly into the lion’s mouth. There were, of course, two such incidents in the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* alone—Captain Terrell and Captain Spock.

Starfleet does not require its officers to commit suicide. However, most such situations are such that failure to do anything is just as fatal as the action needed to save the rest of the party. In addition, while there may or may not be any official reprimand associated with a “Captain and department head first!” decision, an act of cowardice will almost certainly result in a command-fitness review—and probably denial; and even a merely uninspired effort to help your crew or ship, or any Federation citizens, or even any helpless sentients, might well be enough to wreck your career and confine you permanently to shore duty.

In other words, the player-characters are expected to act like heroes. Take chances. The gamemaster is watching, remember—there may not be a miraculous escape lurking around the corner, but on the other hand, there might be.

**“I don’t like to lose.”**

Speaking of miraculous escapes—a role-playing game, and especially *Star Trek*, is a classic example of god helping those who help themselves—or, at any rate, of the gamemaster helping them.

The only “hopeless” situation is one in which you have been disintegrated. Until then, a Starfleet officer should insist on playing the hand out. Always look for some way to acquire an advantage, no matter how slight. Psychological advantages are perhaps the most helpful of all, even though they have nothing to do with reality. The “diplomat” scenario provided with the game is a good example of never giving up (so is *The Wrath of Khan*, for that matter.)

A minor caveat to an earlier statement—a hopeless situation is also one in which the player-characters have given up trying for the win.

**“Phasers? You’ve got ‘em, sir.**

**I managed to recharge one bank.”**

**“Scotty, You just earned your pay for the week.”**

Related to never giving up is looking for openings to do something superficially impossible or miraculous. Sometimes you can try something patently absurd—and find the obstacles melt away before you.

If it is not in the Starfleet regulations, it should be: “The difficult we do immediately. The impossible we also do immediately.”

**“Space . . . the final frontier.”**

**“The human adventure is just beginning.”**

One of the most important things for both the players and the gamemaster to remember when playing *Star Trek* is one of the fundamental axioms of *Star Trek*: “Things are going to look up.”

The future, while it will not be a paradise, will be a place where many of the problems we face today have been solved, where the rest are coming under control, and where none will have caused the destruction of the human race.

This affects the scenarios the gamemaster sets up. Even the Klingons do not necessarily shoot on sight, and are sometimes open to reason. Contrariwise, a scenario about slave-trading in the Federation is unreasonable; while slavery may exist on worlds not yet inducted into the Federation’s civilization, the Federation itself has eradicated the vice.

It also affects the way the players run their characters. A Starfleet officer will take prisoners rather than kill in a fight. He will work to stamp out narcotics trading—not try to grab a piece of the action. Crews will operate in a civilized, harmonious fashion, even in the face of personal dislike—no knife-fights in the rec room.

**“Did we just see the birth of a new life form?”**

**“My God, Carol, look at it.”**

**“He has illusions and you have reality.**

**May you find your way as pleasant.”**

The final piece of advice is to remember that *Star Trek* offered more than an assurance that the future would be a place relatively free of race riots and pollution. It will also be a place of wonders.

It may be satisfying to outwit a Klingon captain in a duel; but the gamemaster should try from time to time to present a scenario that just leaves the players and their characters watching something beautiful or wonderful unfold.

Check out the books of astronomical art for ideas and images. There are plenty of such books out there, by Chesley Bonestell and his successors. There are also books—Carl Sagan’s *The Cosmic Connection*, for example—which also dwell on the possibilities for exotic beauty and grace among the stars.

And keep in mind the word “transcendent.” That work, perhaps more than any other, sums up everything *Star Trek* aspires to. □

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# Game Reviews

James Bond 007/Gamesmaster Pack/D&D Basic Set/Tarsus/  
Thieves' Guild IV-VI/Shadows of Yog-Sothoth/  
The Ruins of Chicago/The Compleat Alchemist/  
The Spirit Stones/Far Traveller 1/Harn



## JAMES BOND 007

By Gerard Christopher Klug, et al (Victory Games, Basic Set \$12.95, rulebook \$9.95)

## GAMESMASTER PACK

(Victory Games, \$8.95)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

Every genre has its *numero unos*: King Arthur in fantasy, Conan in sword & sorcery, Captain Kirk in science fiction, Sherlock Holmes in the detective story. In the spy genre, there is no doubt *numero uno* is James Bond 007. I have been a fan of that curious hero since his first film appearance 21 years ago, and my delight in his escapades have yet to fade. Thanks to Victory Games, role-players now have a chance to recreate the adventures of the world's most well-known spy in all his tuxedoed glory. Unlike most role-playing games, there is no need to explain the milieu of the game. You have doubtless seen it at least a dozen times on the silver screen. So let us move right on to the nuts, bolts, and Berettas of *James Bond 007*.

The *James Bond 007* rulebook is 158 pages long, soft-cover. It can be bought separately or in a boxed set. The boxed set includes twelve character sheets (very nicely organized sheets, I might add, and kind of pretty too), two six-sided dice, and two ten-sided dice. Assuming you have the dice, you really only need the book, so if you are money-conscious, save the extra three bucks and pass the box by (there is a detachable, xeroxable character sheet in the rulebook). On the other hand, the box is useful for storing supplemental material, though you cannot get a great deal in it.

The *007* rulebook is divided into twenty chapters. The first eleven constitute the player section, the last nine the gamemaster section. The book is profusely illustrated with sketches appropriate to the Bondian universe, but they are hardly overwhelming. On the other hand, the writing is first-rate: clear, readable, and entertaining. It is also printed in large type, a big bonus for those of us with eyes that are permanently damaged from reading close-set lines of role-playing game information.

The player section of the book uses an interesting lay-out, in which player information is given in a large-type left-hand column and gamemaster notes are in a smaller-type right-hand column. In this manner, the players can read what they can do, without bothering about mechanics. This makes the Bond game a very enjoyable reading experience for players. At the same time, the gamemaster gets his specific mechanics in small, easy-to-find doses. Indeed, I required only one read-through to feel that I could both play or gamemaster the game without too much difficulty. This is aided by the fact that the game itself works on two basic concepts, an Ease Factor and a Quality Results Table. To explain them briefly, for any particular task a player wishes to perform (e.g., firing at an enemy, driving your Aston-Martin DB-V at top speed along a mountain road with a helicopter in pursuit, seducing the villain's girlfriend) the gamemaster assigns an Ease Factor from one-half to ten (ten being dirt simple, one-half being a real choppbuster). Whatever skill or characteristic is appropriate to the task is multiplied by the Ease Fac-

tor, resulting in the final Success Chance. This can range from 01-300. Once this is determined, the player rolls percentile dice. If he rolls equal to or under his Success Chance, he succeeds. However, what he rolls is then checked against the Quality Results Table to see how well he succeeded. This table is broken into four results ranging from 1, Excellent, to 4, Acceptable. Depending on the "Quality Rating" of the roll and the task being performed, the player will achieve a greater or lesser degree of success (e.g., if firing a gun, a Quality Rating of 1 will give better damage than a Quality Rating of 4).

This interesting system is explained in about one and a half pages in the introduction to the game (chapter 1), and once it is understood, you virtually know how to play the game because every mechanic uses the same concept. In fact, once you read up to page 16, the designers suggest you immediately go to chapter 20 and play the solitaire adventure there, referring to appropriate rules as needed. For the adventure, there are six characters from the Bond mythos, fully statted. These include Bond himself. You need merely fill out a sheet (which saves you flipping back and forth) and you are to play. And guess what, they are not lying. You can breeze through the solitaire with a minimum of reading. As a fan of simplicity and play ease, I found this more than delightful. After all, how many role-playing games can make you comfortable with the system in only sixteen pages? The first chapter also includes an example of play which is wonderfully breezy and well-written. This example takes a familiar scene from the movie *Goldfinger* and presents it in the two-column format, in the left-hand column, the scene is told straight, in the right-hand column, you read the same scene as it would be played by a gamemaster and one player. Very good and very helpful in learning to run the game, something which cannot be said for many examples in role-playing game rules.

The other ten chapters in the player section deal with specific areas of play. They are: Creating a Character, Skills, Combat, Chases, Interacting with Non-Player Characters, Gambling and Casino Life, Hero Points, Experience and Character Growth, and Equip-

ment. Character creation is a build system. Players may start as Rookies, Agents, or "00's," and depending on which rank is played, the player is given a number of Generation Points with which to build his character. In building a character, the player literally pays for everything including physical appearance, height, and weight. Two optional rules allow a player to pick weaknesses and prior fields of experience in order to acquire more Generation Points. Even though they are listed as optional rules, I suggest using both. They add flavor to the game. Character creation is given in a step-by-step procedure and I found that it took no more than an hour to set up three players with Rookie characters, fully ready to play. I should add that none of the players had ever read the rulebook and one had never even played a role-playing game before. Once a character is created, everything the player needs to know is easily found on the character sheet. The designers even went as far as to include a multiplication table showing every possible combination of Ease Factor and Primary Chance, a boon to the mathematically inept. All characters in the Bond game are assumed to work for M.I. 6, though characters from other intelligence services, or even independents, could be used as well. One enjoyable concept of character creation is money. They are assumed to have as much as they need when they start a mission. After all, who has ever seen Bond worry about money? With this refreshing concept, characters can live in beautiful flats, drive expensive cars, and wear the best of clothes, as befits a Bondian spy.

Skills in the *007* game are all based on characteristics, of which there are five: Strength, Intelligence, Dexterity, Willpower, and Perception. There are 24 skills in all, from Boating to Torture (only non-player characters may employ Torture). The Primary Chance for each skill use is derived from a formula based on appropriate characteristic plus Skill Level. Skills and Skill Levels are purchased with Generation Points at the start, and later with Experience Points. Characteristics may also be raised in the same manner. Characteristics range from 1-15, with characters starting out with all characteristics at 5. The skills section is complete, including the

base time to perform a function using the skill, what happens if it succeeds, and how it is used in game play. The skills are "blanket skills" (i.e., a Piloting skill enables you to fly any aircraft, and is also used for things like a quick pre-flight check or even finding parachutes on an aircraft). All characters start with Driving and Charisma at Skill Level 1 and three "abilities": Connoisseur (asking for the proper wine, impressing a member of the opposite sex with your gourmet knowledge, etc.), First Aid, and Photography. These abilities have a Primary Chance of 20 and can never be altered. Characters without a certain skill may still attempt to use it, by making a roll based strictly on the characteristics on which the skill is based (though at a drastically reduced Ease Factor). In other words, characters may do just about anything, though not necessarily well.

Combat in *007* is both simple and deadly. There are only two kinds, Hand-to-Hand and Fire Combat (Hand-to-Hand includes throwing knives, shuriken, etc.). There are a variety of options open to characters in each category, such as striking a specific blow, or taking a bead on an enemy with a gun. Damage is not rolled, but is rather meted out according to the Quality Results Table. All weapons have a Damage Class ranging from A, smallest, to L, the largest. Each player-character and non-player character also has a Hand-to-Hand Damage Class based on Strength, the highest being C. The Damage Class is co-referenced with the Quality Rating to give one of six possible outcomes: Stun, Light Wound, Medium Wound, Heavy Wound, Incapacitation, and Kill (e.g., hitting an enemy with a Walter PPK, which is Damage Class E, and achieving a Quality Rating 2 will give the target a Heavy Wound). Wounds are cumulative in effect, so a character taking two Light Wounds automatically has a Medium Wound. It is a much easier way to handle damage than keeping track of numbers, but it also makes the combat system fairly deadly, especially when heavy weapons are in use, simply because one hit can easily be a Kill. The designers freely admit this and urge the players to avoid combat whenever possible. However, there is an edge that player-characters have that most non-player characters do not, and this edge takes some of the sting away. This edge is called Hero Points. Characters accumulate these by making Quality 1 rolls, the gamemaster can give them out for great feats of derring-do. Hero Points are used to alter dice rolls

made against the player-character, or by the player of the character. One Hero Point moves any Quality Rating either up or down one step, thus one Hero Point can change a Quality Rating 4 to a failure (e.g., to avoid being hit because of a non-player character dice roll), or to a rating 3 (e.g., to hit a villain harder than the dice say you did). Hero Points are hard to acquire and are spent only in the most dire need, but they do make it possible for player-characters to perform the kind of fantastic feats James Bond is noted for. Players may use Hero Points when they wish in any amount.

Another feature of the *007* game is chases, and there is a specific sequence for them that works nicely. Players bid an Ease Factor starting at 7. The lower the bid, the more risky the maneuver in the chase, and everyone involved in the chase must use the same Ease Factor to perform whatever maneuver they pick. There are five possible maneuvers, the last being Trick, which is simply any crazy plan the players wish to try (like tilting a car onto two wheels to get down a narrow alley). The chase sequence is used for all manner of chases, car after car, helicopter after man on foot, etc. The gamemaster bids for the non-player characters according to his knowledge of their possible death wish. If a maneuver fails, a safety roll must be made. If that fails, a mishap occurs.

Characters also acquire Fame Points. They indicate how recognizable the character is to enemies. Bond has a ton of them, the characters should avoid Fame Points lest their covers be easily blown. They are acquired at the beginning by physical appearance (the better looking you are, the more Fame Points) and later by specific actions in game play. Fame Points can also be subtracted through expenditure of Experience Points.

The equipment section of the game is a dream for any Bond fan. It details in sketches and text the most familiar accoutrements from the Bond films. There is a catch in getting equipment, namely good old Q, head of the equipment branch, who must be persuaded to issue anything other than standard equipment (and this is not so easy).

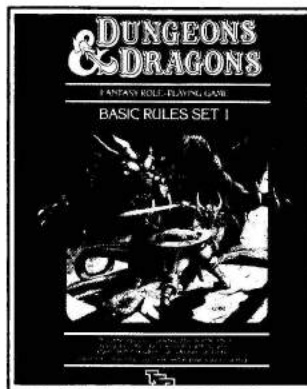
The gamemaster section is as well-written and informative as the player section. There is a full detailing of M.I. 6 and its personnel, a marvelous random encounter table (I usually hate such tables, but this one works beautifully), a passel of Bond's allies and enemies statted for game play, the background of Bond himself, a "Thrilling Cities" sec-

tion with maps and information on places like London, Tokyo, Rio, etc., and a detailing of an organization known as TAROT (Technological Accession, Revenge and Organized Terrorism). TAROT is included because the designers were not able to use the familiar SPECTRE organization from the Bond films due to contractual obligations. This was my only disappointment in the game, but the system is easy enough so that fans can stat SPECTRE for themselves. The gamemaster section ends with the solitaire adventure "The Island of Dr. No," which can also be a gamemaster run adventure with a minimum of work.

Overall I give *007* the highest marks as a game. It is easy and fun to play, and it simulates the Bond films (not the books, as fans know there is a big difference) excellently. Players could even play Bond himself with ease, using the stats provided (of course the mission would have to be big). Most of all, the designers have instilled the flavor of Bond, the color, the dash, the improbable stunts, and the adventure we expect from the world of Bond. Moreover, since it works in a milieu that players can easily relate to, it is more vivid than most spy games on the market. Most of all, it is true to its subject, the designers state that it is not created to play hard-edged spy stories in the John Le Carre genre, it is Bond, plain and simple. About its only drawback is that it is table-heavy—there are numerous tables scattered throughout the book. The answer is a gamemaster screen and that is

available in my next topic of review, the *Gamesmaster Pack*.

The *Gamesmaster Pack* consists of a gamemaster screen with all necessary tables, a pad of forty character sheets, an 11"x17" grid (white lines on blue, one-inch squares), and 23 die-cut cardboard playing figures with plastic bases. The figures are of Bond, Jaws, Oddjob, assorted agents and guards, and other characters from Bond films. There are also four car figures, a helicopter, and a van. Unfortunately there are only ten bases in the pack, a strange bit of chintz, considering the \$8.95 price of the pack. Also annoying is the fact that it comes in a shrink-wrapped "half-box" (i.e., there is no cover to the box, making storage difficult). Now, the gamemaster screen is in my opinion a virtual necessity for play, but it is kind of galling to have to pay for the *Gamesmaster Pack* to get it. The figures are nice, but the does not need them all that much (in fact, I opted to purchase some small toy cars for chases instead of the die-cut figures). I think Victory Games would have pleased more fans by including the gamemaster screen in their boxed set and bumping the price there a little. As it stands, the *Gamesmaster Pack* seems sparse for the price—but fans of the game will probably want it anyway. The alternative is flipping through the rulebook a lot for the various charts or making your own screen. The extra character sheets are helpful, but I still feel a little ripped-off by the pack. I love the game enough to live with that. □



## DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: BASIC RULES SET 1

By Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson; revised by Frank Mentzer (TSR, \$12)

Reviewed by Ken Rolston

The latest version of the original fantasy role-playing game, this edition replaces the Eric Holmes'

*Revised Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. In keeping with the recent dramatic improvement in TSR's product quality, *D&D: Basic* is a smart-looking, smart-reading set of rules written specifically to introduce beginners to fantasy role-playing gaming.

The boxed set contains a 64-page Players Manual, a 48-page Dungeon Masters Rulebook, and polyhedral dice with marker. The Players Manual opens with an introductory narrative and a solo adventure, thrusting the reader immediately into the action. The dramatic presentation of the narrative and the solo, strikingly illustrated by Larry Elmore, provides a smooth transition from adventure fiction to adventure gaming, deferring technical rules discussions until the reader's imagination is engaged. The following sections on character classes, character creation, and how to play in a group introduces mechanics gradually, discussing only what is immediately necessary for the

player. The *Dungeon Masters Rulebook* opens with a simple introductory dungeon where the resolution of each encounter is carefully explained. The procedures and rules section is in alphabetical order by topic, followed by sections on monsters, treasure, and creating dungeons.

The rule changes from the Holmes edition are relatively minor, but sufficient to make the new version incompatible with the old. Some changes are for streamlining: for example, most ability bonus charts are based on a single basic chart. Some changes are for game balance: now individual magic users and clerics have fewer spells, and elves advance in level very slowly to compensate for their game advantages. Some changes are additions: monster morale is emphasized, and two-handed weapons always lose initiative. Some changes are patches on old problems: invisibility of objects is covered, and clerical healing cures paralysis. The changes are generally attractive, though far from a comprehensive revision.

The presentation and appearance is the package's greatest strength. The improvement over earlier *D&D* editions is remarkable. Elmore and Easley's illustrations are top-notch, the layout is attractive and well-organized, typography is effectively used for emphasis and reference, and common procedures are summarized in checklist form throughout the text. The writing style is clear and accessible, the tone informal and inviting. Mentzer has organized the presentation on educational principles, specifically targeting an audience of readers unfamiliar with the jargon and formal style of game design.

The style is informal, humane, and—to a certain extent—moral. The basic concept of fantasy role-playing games are explicitly and simply expressed. Even the restrictive, "don't-do-this" sections are advisory rather than preemptory in tone. Strong emphasis is laid on solving the social problems that arise in fantasy role-playing games. Players and gamemasters are carefully told not to confuse player roles with character roles. Gamemasters are told how to handle arguments and rule disputes in a sensible manner to preserve a pleasurable game atmosphere. One quote particularly illustrates the dedicated attempt to prevent bad feelings among players: "Any thief who steals from friends is usually not permitted to adventure with them again." The gamemaster is repeatedly advised to admit that he is not yet an expert gamemaster when difficulties arise, emphasizing the cooperative

rather than the authoritative role of the gamemaster. I perceive an irony in the moral tone of the rules. Players are advised to avoid introducing elements of current religious beliefs, and the subject of the religions to the clerical character class is studiously avoided. On the other hand, there we are, blithely butchering goblins, looting tombs, and playing thieves. This is not a criticism of *D&D*, which has a more moral tone than most fantasy role-playing games; it is simply a reflection on the conventional elements we take for granted in adventure gaming.

The accent is on light entertainment with plenty of weird stuff, with less emphasis on logic and

internal consistency of setting, characterization, plot, and mechanics. The result is a free-wheeling style generally identified with beginning players. This impression derives partly from the package's focus on beginning players, but is also a fundamental feature of the traditional *D&D* style of fantasy role-playing. For gamers who prefer elaborate campaign settings, complex characters, and coherent, self-consistent rules, systems like *RuneQuest*, *Swordbearer*, and *Chivalry & Sorcery* are more appropriate. For gamers who just want to have a good time, lots of actions and weird stuff, *Dungeons & Dragons: Basic Rules Set 1* is just right, particularly if it is likely to be an infrequent pastime

rather than an obsessive hobby.

Is the *Basic Rules Set* complete? Technically yes—the package contains ample material for many hours of gaming. However, the *Expert Rules* are really necessary if a regular gaming group develops. Personal observation indicates that young players will go through the set's three character levels in no time at all, and the gamemaster will certainly want access to higher level rules to handle the non-player character antagonists in his adventures. Nonetheless, this is an excellent introductory package, perfect for youths and casual beginners—good-looking, smooth-reading, right-spirited, and reasonably priced. □



## TARSUS

By Marc Miller and Loren Wiseman (GDW, \$12)

Reviewed by Terrence McInnes

"What do we do now?" is a question commonly asked by *Traveller* players once they have rolled up their characters. *Tarsus*, the first in a series of boxed *Traveller* adventure modules by GDW, answers this question, and offers much more.

*Tarsus* not only provides players with a linked series of adventures, it provides an entire world and its attendant star system as an adventure setting. Moreover, players do not even have to generate characters. They can select characters from among the dozen pre-generated adventurers provided in the module.

Indeed, if the players are planning to use the series of linked adventures contained in the module, GDW strongly recommends they use three pre-generated characters, especially Sharik Resteff, the central character who was called home to Tarsus, and to mystery and adventure, by an emergency on her father's noble ranch.

What is Tarsus like? It is the first planet out from a relatively dim orange-red K9 star, and is one

of four planets in the system (the others are two gas giants and a barren ball of rock). Tarsus' most striking feature is its 61 degree axial tilt. This causes rapidly changing and extreme seasons—most especially in the polar regions—as Tarsus orbits its star once every 91 standard days. The noble herds—large herbivore grazers—follow the seasons, and Tarsun ranchers follow and harvest the nobbles for their meat and hides. These agricultural enterprises are the mainstays of the Tarsun economy, and the source of most of its exports to nearby industrial worlds in District 268 of the Spinward Marches.

The description of Tarsus—the physical environment, the planet's history, and its government and society—have been exquisitely detailed. The creation of this world, its people and its star system, represent many months of hard, detailed work. Much of the data dealing with the Tarsun system and the planet's physical environment appears to have been developed with the planetary/star system generation methods presented in GDW's new *Traveller* Book 6, *Scouts*.

Tarsus' climate, oceans, its vast plains and impenetrable tanglewold forests, weather, animal life, even its paleontology have been thoroughly developed to provide players with a complete adventure setting.

Everything a gamemaster needs to run an adventure on Tarsus—from a simple call at Newland Down starport by a Free Trader to a complex on-planet adventure lasting many months—is presented in the module's planetary data book. In addition to five linked campaign booklets which provide the adventures referred to earlier in this review, the boxed module contains a full-color map of the planet, a close-up map of the Tan-

glewold region which is a setting for one of the five adventures, the aforementioned character cards, and a map of District 268—which will be the setting for additional GDW boxed adventure modules.

While the physical world is excellent, Tarsun society leaves something to be desired as an adventure setting. Tarsus, in spite of its wild weather, is too tame. The various factions of Tarsus' population have long ago reconciled their differences, and there is no longer any tension between them. The government is a planet-wide democracy with everyone participating by voting through their personal communicator/computer terminals.

These devices are linked by radio to the central planetary computer located on Tarsus' inner moon, and by the moon's communication relay center, to each other. Information available to adventurers from the computer and the instant communications throughout the settled hemisphere of the planet made available by the communicators—such as weather forecasts and storm warnings—removes a lot of the risk from living and adventuring on Tarsus. Even the Fifth Frontier War has bypassed Tarsus, removing a great potential source of adventure.

SUSAG, the great Imperial pharmaceutical and chemical megacorporation, appears to be the only cause of tension and conflict on the planet as it uses skuldugery to gain access to raw materials for its drug manufacturing facilities.

*Tarsus* is designed for beginning *Traveller* players as a companion to the *Traveller Starter Set*. It can be used by beginners as a first *Traveller* adventure once characters have been generated. For veteran gamemasters and players, however, the adventures in the module are a bit too pat, lacking

the tension and uncertainty of earlier *Traveller* adventures such as *Twilight's Peak* or *Night of Conquest*.

There are two additional specific problems with *Tarsus*. First, the designers leave out a major weather factor that would be caused by the planet's extreme axial tilt, a factor which would affect nearly all facets of Tarsun life. The massive temperature variation from pole to pole during the summer and winter seasons would cause continuous high winds from the cold pole to the hot pole across the equatorial regions. These winds have not been dealt with in the planetary data book, merely alluded to in the name *Sea of Winds* for the planet's northern ocean.

Several effects would be caused by these winds. Structures would have to be solidly built close to the ground, indeed, many dwellings might be underground. Air travel would be hazardous if not impossible, especially in air rafts during a good portion of the local year. Spacecraft landings could be quite hazardous unless real-time wind speed and direction information were automatically transmitted to approaching craft over a computerized ground controlled approach system (this would rule out landings elsewhere than at Newland Down starport).

The second problem deals with the treatment of cold-weather clothing—a problem that crops up elsewhere in *Traveller* literature. Battledress, combat armor, and

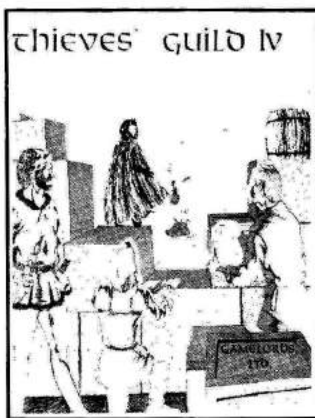
vacc suits are given massive negative DMs on die rolls to simulate the negative effects of cold weather on their wearers. This is unrealistic.

Since all three items are designed to be worn in vacuum situations, they would of necessity be heavily insulated and include internal heating and cooling systems. A person wearing a vacc suit while in shadow on a vacuum world would be exposed to temperatures much lower than any encountered on Tarsus. Conversely, a person wearing a vacc suit in direct starlight within the habitable zone of a star would be exposed to temperatures much higher than Tarsun maximums. These three types of garments would therefore have to be much more

capable of protecting a wearer against extreme heat and cold, and would probably be the best type to wear in these situations.

There are, however, relatively minor quibbles in an overall well-conceived and well-written GDW product. It is a "must buy" for beginning adventurers. Veteran gamemasters will find it an excellent setting for their own campaigns, too.

The boxed module concept is outstanding. It allows for much more adventure material and supporting documentation than GDW's adventure booklets. If handled correctly, boxed modules could become the new standard for *Traveller* adventures in the years to come. □



### THIEVES' GUILD IV THIEVES' GUILD V THIEVES' GUILD VI

By Kerry Lloyd, Richard Meyer, et al (Gamelords, \$6.50, \$6.50, and \$7.50 respectively)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Over a period of several years, Gamelords has been creating their own set of role-playing rules, to be called *The Fantasy System* when it is published as a boxed set sometime in 1984. They have been publishing it in pieces, together with scenario packs, divided into sections and chapters so that the user can take the new pages for each subject and put them in order in a notebook, thus making them easy to find. This innovative method is so logical you would think everybody would use it, but in practice stores resist packs of loose-leaf pages as unsalable. Gamelords has now bowed to this demand and has started selling their *Thieves' Guild* packs as bound books. However, they are still dividing them into sections and page numbers under their original system, so any gamer who wants to unstaple the

books and punch the pages with the necessary three holes can assemble the system in an organized way.

The clever thing about their publishing their game mechanics in pieces this way is that *TG* fans will playtest them as they come out, and any problems will be brought back to Gamelords at conventions and by mail. Thus, when the full system is published, it will be better tested than most systems, and should be a good value for anyone looking for a *Dungeons & Dragons*-type system with better organization (the system uses character classes, levels, experience points, etc., but with more emphasis on role-playing than the current edition of *D&D*, and with what seems to me to be mechanics that are better integrated mathematically). For this reason, I am going to pay more attention to the scenario sections of these packs than the game mechanics chapters. The scenarios are set in the same world as the City of Haven, and some take place in the city.

*Thieves' Guild IV* begins with a table of contents for the system as a whole, showing where the pieces from *TG I-IV* fit together, and a glossary of abbreviations.

There are new mechanics for sensory abilities, including spotting hidden objects and sensing ambush, and rules for stakeouts and tailing people. The scenarios set two groups of thieves against each other in Haven. Most of the thieves will be members of the Thieves' Guild of Haven, but there is a splinter group called the Black Hand that seeks to take over leadership of the city's underworld. The first scenario is an addition to chapter 7, "Cat-Burglary Scenarios and Second Story Adventures." It is a most audacious plan by the Black Hand to infiltrate the Guild headquarters and to steal from the most protected area the skull and hands of the founder of the Guild. This is, of course, impossible—Rogues' Roost is better guarded than the homes of the city's nobility, or so the Guild believes. It will take great cleverness on the part of the players to succeed in this, even assuming that they already are familiar with the lower floors as former members of the Guild. I think it may be necessary for at least some to be pretending to be active Guild members to make entrance possible. And this is not the least of the difficulties in the form of traps magical and other-

wise and the presence of the real Guild members and officers in their home. This is a well-constructed problem scenario.

The second scenario is an addition to chapter 8, "Armed Robbery Scenarios and Pursuit Adventures." This begins with a section on the history of the Guild and the Black Hand, and discusses the fact that the characters in these scenarios (and others in the series) face the most difficult of opponents—others of their same occupation and skills (whether played by other gamers in competition, or in the more traditional way with the player group trying to outwit the gamemaster). Since in an adventure-oriented group the gamemaster tries to be "fair" rather than the ruthless opposition that a tournament competition produces, I think that the burglary scenario is best run in the traditional way—it is difficult enough as it is. The second scenario lends itself to a good mixture of role-playing and competitive maneuvering and could do well with two teams of players. Here, the Guild has sold protection to a wealthy family, who have had the Black Hand steal a set of ten magical crystal goblets. The Hand, to win, must successfully smuggle the goblets away; the Guild must get them back to their owners.

Two smuggling routes are covered in this section, and the gamemaster might want to divide the ten goblets into two groups of five each to make use of both opportunities for play. The first route is overland by caravan, and the members of the caravan are well described by personality and motivations. For each major merchant a complete schedule of activities is given, so that the gamemaster knows where everybody is and what they are doing at each part of the day and night before

the caravan leaves, when the players attempt to tail them and discover their secrets. This makes it easier for the gamemaster to role-play the merchants, and makes them ready for use as personalities later in the campaign, too. The second route is by ship from the harbor of Haven down river and overseas. For this, the harbor and some of its more notable denizens are described, as are a series of ships to be investigated. This not only sets up the scenario, it also brings Haven's harbor to life for the benefit of anyone using the city pack (published by Gamelords in three sections separated). Maps of the harbor/dock area and the city as a whole are included, as are diagrams of the seven floors of Rogues' Roost.

*Thieves' Guild V* begins with the usual Gamelords introduction and updated table of contents. The addition to the game rules this time is six pages on shield and armor, including a neat way of doing the calculations ahead of time and presenting them on a line for attack and defense factors on the character sheet to speed up play. This may be more than you really wanted to know about shields, but it looks like it should be playable.

The first scenario is an addition to chapter 9, "Temple Looting Scenarios and Tomb Robbing Adventures." This is a somewhat whimsical adventure, for the illusionist's tomb is full of illusions that will baffle the intruders but which are not really designed to be deadly. And the illusions change if the characters are driven out and return, for variety. The final trap, however, is quite deadly if the thieves have the bad judgment to desecrate the illusionist's final resting place, instead of simply looting the room. Whether to apply this is really a matter of taste and can always be adjusted by the gamemaster.

The rest of the pack is the first part of a new chapter 11, "Assassination Scenarios and Espionage Adventures." The orcs in the mountains north of Haven have been driven out by invading lizardmen. The orcs were forced into an existence as bandits until recently, when a new leader has begun gathering them together as a nation again. His army has captured a castle and is using it as headquarters for conquest of the region. The frontier nobility cannot muster enough soldiers to take on this unexpected foe, and their commander has hired a small group of volunteers to infiltrate the orcs in disguise and assassinate their leader, hoping thus to destroy the orc's morale and organization. There is also a bonus for

any family members rescued from the castle.

This is a suicide assignment, and Gamelords supplies characters to be played by gamers who do not want to risk their regular campaign characters. The players have major role-playing difficulties with their disguise, considering that few of them speak the orcish language or understand orcish culture—or look like orcs! And once they reach the castle, they face the same problems that medieval foes had penetrating castle defenses, plus the difficulties orcish customs create for everyone in the pecking order, described in detail for the benefit of the gamemaster. The castle is obviously based on real castles and thus is usable for anything a gamemaster needs a castle for, although the real fun is the assortment of orcish personalities supplied here as the inhabitants. The pack includes what the major personalities are doing for most of four days of activities, which is the period the players have to case the joint and make their moves. Whether or not they succeed in assassinating the chief of the orcs, this is obviously going to be an important political movement in the world of Haven and can be the spinoff point for a series of scenarios of your own creation.

*Thieves' Guild VI* is as usual something completely different. It adds sea-going thievery to the system. Ship handling is bluntly described here as emphasizing role-playing at the expense of technical accuracy, with recommended references for those who want more of the latter in their game. Even so, the errors such as mistaking port for starboard on the ship diagram, and east for west on the compass diagram, are irritating and leave me uncomfortable as to the accuracy of the rest of the ship handling mechanics. The gamemaster should look critically at this section before using it, but in general these rules seem adequate for most purposes.

For some reason, an item of major interest is hidden in the back of the ship combat rules instead of being given its own chapter. This is the introduction to magic spells and the mages who use them. These six pages are really only a glimpse at the magic system for *The Fantasy System*, and I found them too short for what they were provided for, a way to handle the activities of the mage(s) on board the ship scenarios later in the volume. For example, the mages have specified areas of magic they specialize in, but no specific spells are given for each—which means there is a lot of work the poor gamemaster must do before running the scenarios.

This work may well be worthwhile, however, as the magic system is interesting in itself. It is an incremental system, in which the range, intensity, etc., of spells depends upon the expertise of the given mage. Spells are divided into seven types, and each type must be learned separately, so a mage might be quite skilled with some types of magic and quite inept with others. I only wish Gamelords had given us about four times as much explanation of the system, including an "expert" column for the top mages (in the spell chart). It may be that more will be supplied in the planned companion volume, *Lair of the Freebooters*.

The scenario takes place in the Bircean Sea, over 3,000 miles from Haven. A map of the sea and the lands around it is given, as are descriptions of the nations having shipping there. "Character sheets" are included for a list of ships, covering their cargo and the quality of their officers and crews. Each ship is, in effect, a scenario for piracy in itself, although they can also be sources of information or methods of fencing the pirates' loot from other prey. There are also a large number of warships for the pirates to worry about. So much space is required for ship information that this pack lacks the usual Gamelords detailed descriptions of major personalities, but a sketch of the general nature of

the owners and captain is given for each ship to give flavor to each encounter and allow the gamemaster to invent connections between incidents, which is important and keeping continuity in a campaign.

Three three packs illustrate the wide range of Gamelords activities. Because they are designed around *The Fantasy System*, gamemasters using different game systems will have some work to do in adapting *TG* scenarios for their own use. But in general, the scenarios are keyed to personalities and political and economic motivations rather than to game mechanics, and to that extent the *TG* packs may be considered usable in other game systems. Gamelords designs their products to enhance role-playing, which is not system-specific and can be applied even in very different kinds of game, such a levelless system. In fact, the personalities created for these packs are so interestingly done that the packs can serve as a source of non-player characters for use in the gamemaster's own scenarios. And the scenarios supply ideas for spinoffs because they are designed to allow for different approaches, instead of having only a single linear plot line as some other products do. So even if you are not particularly interested in thieves for role-playing, the *Thieves' Guild* line is worth looking at for ideas. □



## SHADOWS OF YOG-SOTHOTH

Edited by Sandy Petersen  
(Chaosium, \$10)

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

*Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* is the first scenario supplement for *Call of Cthulhu* from the game's publisher. The book contains nine scenarios, seven of which are linked to form a continuing adventure or campaign. The book is 72 pages long, plus eight pages of pull-out material at the center fold. In addition to the text, there

are numerous maps, diagrams, and illustrations.

The seven linked scenarios form an exemplary *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. There is an earth-shattering plot, where evil forces are gathering to raise the island of R'lyeh and loose the demon Cthulhu on the world, but the investigators (player-characters) only begin the first scenario knowing about the "Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight," an eccentric men's club in Boston. Finding clues that evil, cultish forces are up to something, the party is directed to New York, where they must investigate "Look to the Future," and get more information. The following three scenarios, "The Coven of Cannoch," "Devil's Canyon," and "The Worm that Walks" provide the investigators with more clues, magic items, and danger as the cultish plot tries to maintain the secrecy of their evil plot. The final two scenarios in the series, "The Watchers of Easter Island" and "The Rise of R'lyeh," allow the investigators to travel to the South Pacific and deal with Great Cthulhu on his home ground.

The other two adventures, called bonus scenarios, are of a more



limited scope. "The People of the Monolith" is an exercise in subtle Transylvanian horror, while "The Warren" is a more straightforward exercise in underground terror. It is both interesting and satisfying to note that all of the adventures in this book, especially the bonus scenarios, follow story lines actually used by Lovecraft in his Cthulhu stories.

Overall, these are well-written and imaginative scenarios, which will do well either standing alone, or played in sequence to re-create the R'lyeh Expedition of 1923. The two bonus scenarios are also appropriate situations for investigators, although they should appeal to different sorts of players.

Playtesting revealed some flaws in the book which should be noted. While the scenario plots were all consistent and contained no contradictions or lapses, there were problems with details of rules application and overall organization. The rules which I felt to be misapplied were the sanity checks, which some of the authors have required for seemingly trivial causes—the main effect of these trivial shocks is to delay the game by causing unnecessary trouble to the investigators which does not serve to advance the plot. Also, there is a problem

with party armament: many of the scenarios would seem to work better with relatively well-equipped adventurers who have gotten access to heavy military weapons—I do not like to blow away whole parties of adventurers, and players do not like this result either. In the playtest campaign, the investigators were heavily armed and exotically equipped (machine guns, private Zeppelins, etc.), and still had a hard time.

Then there is the organization. Each scenario does contain the material needed to run the adventure, but finding it and having it handy is another question. Many of the scenarios have a lot of non-player characters, situations, maps, etc., and the tendency of the layout people was to string them together without enough introductory, transitional, and connective text to make everything findable. I have had to take pen and paper to make side lists of things to organize some of the scenarios. None of the maps, diagrams, or plans have anything like a grid overlay to ease the construction of a tactical table map.

Overall, though, this is an excellent collection of first-rate *Call Of Cthulhu* scenarios. All keepers (gamemasters) should get *Shadows of Yag-Sothoth*. □

was from something called Damocles instead of Prime Base. But, strangely enough, it was on the proper frequency and the correct code procedure was used.

Damocles informed the G-12C team that the new mission is to recon out the Chicago area and to secure a particular university campus in preparation for the development of a forward Morrow Project base.

Since no other MP teams or help can be reached by radio, it indeed looks as if the task for the characters is one that they will have to shoulder alone.

In this scenario of paradoxical encounters, the struggle for life and for power are as different as those who wish to role-play in it. Therefore, the player must be careful not to lose himself in this game but try as best he can to role-play between fantasy and reality.

The scenario has many possible encounters and each person or group is nicely presented in the manual. I believe that whoever the readers of this MP scenario are, they will be left with a mental lust for more Timeline pre-packaged game scenarios.

Note that in this scenario, the players and project director (gamemaster) will be forced to use their negotiating skills to the limit. If the players do not negoti-

ate well, the war survivors will more than likely have fresh slaves or meat for their stew pots. Yes, fraternising with the right natives could do you some good but error in choosing your allies will definitely be fatal.

This critic believes this MP scenario is an extraordinarily deadly scenario. After I ran this scenario through three groups of players, I have come to the realization that a greater responsibility than ever is placed on the project director by the *Ruins Of Chicago* scenario. Indeed, a great effort is needed to communicate to the role-players just how deadly and real the rubble-filled streets can be when used by the cunning and capable inhabitants of Chicago. The ever-present forboding fear, violence, greed, mystery, and evil treachery are all here for the MP director to instill into the minds and hearts of the players. This is a task that is difficult but possible for a serious project director.

The total game package is user friendly, having all necessary information, maps, and systems for the project director to run this scenario. Also included is a table on various possible city encounters, human and non-human. There is also a section on typical characteristics of some of the city dwellers which I liked.

In the last pages of this 48-page manual, there are two sections of particular importance that must be mentioned. The section titled "Play of the Game" covers subject matter such as the wake-up radio message and its possible handling. The team's movement and encounter possibilities are discussed in regard to the inhabitants of the 22nd-century city. Other

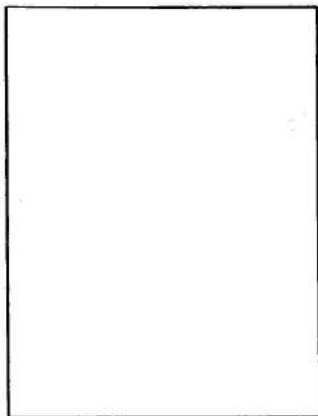
locations including the Freezone, Fort Morrow, and the University are dealt with factually; however, thankfully, there is room for flexibility.

The other section is entitled "Designers Notes" adds yet another dimension of insight into the game's possible avenues of playing. It also outlines a guide of good play strategy that any role-player should never forget.

The only trouble I had with this scenario was in the section covering the locations of the areas the different clans were claiming, for themselves, as shown on the large inside map. An example is the Jewish Clan which is centered in the Evanston Golf in Skokie. However, on the map supplied, I had to label territories "A" through "H" and until I began looking up these places on other maps, I would never have known where the right territory would be since I am not familiar with that city. The manual listing of clan centers should have been printed with not only the area name, but also the supplied map letter for easy location.

I might add that I found very few typesetting errors and, overall, the illustrations were good. I do hope Timeline will use more illustrations of some of the key non-player characters in their future releases.

Once again Timeline has composed a role-playing game scenario that will be looked upon by others as a standard of supplemental game documentation. *The Ruins of Chicago* is one of the best scenarios a project director could possibly invest in for his own enjoyment as well as that of his players. □



## THE RUINS OF CHICAGO

By Bill Worzel and H.N. Voss  
(Timeline, \$6.95)

Reviewed by Barron E. Barnett

This scenario book is for Timeline's *Morrow Project* game.

Recon team G-12C is one of several teams that were cryogenically frozen in 1983 with the intended mission of crowd control, rescue and medical emergencies in the Chicago area immediately after the war.

However, upon awakening, the team finds themselves in an ominous era that does not fit into the situation they had anticipated. For one thing, the wake-up call



## THE COMPLEAT ALCHEMIST

By Steven Cordovano and Stephen Michael Sechi  
(Bard Games, \$7.50)

Reviewed by Martin Wixted

Billed as a "Fantasy Role-Playing

Supplement," this is a magazine-sized book designed to present the alchemist as a viable character class. The 55-page book includes sections on creating the alchemist, ingredients for alchemical operations containing herbs, animal parts and alchemical implements, sections on poisons, powders and experimental results.

When creating the alchemist, the character begins knowing certain information. Notably how to read and write 'alchemical script'—a complex and ancient language using symbols and code words (included in the book)—ability to 'Read Magic,' and the ability to 'Locate/Identify plants and animals.'

The alchemist experience system is structured in levels, gained by acquisition of experience points *a la Dungeons & Dragons*. Such a system would seem difficult to adapt to, say, *RuneQuest*.

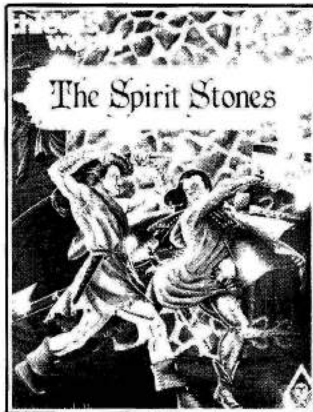
Certain abilities are gained auto-

matically upon reaching the next level of experience. These abilities include such things as elixirs at first level. Some elixirs include amnesia, aphrodisiac ('Save, or victim falls in love with first person in sight. Duration: 1-4 hrs'), charisma, cure blindness/disease/paralysis, detect illusions, flying, friendship, heroism, invisibility, minor healing, and protection from evil. At second level, the alchemist can make toxic powders; at third level, the alchemist can produce compounds such as 'glue' and 'oil of slipperiness.' The Fourth level alchemist has graduated to making devices such as 'lenses' and 'prisms' as well as the 'rod of detection.' Levels 5-10 include provisions for manufacturing such diverse and unrelated items as talismans, potions, dusts, solvents, and gases. Most of these items seem to be rewrites of items/spells culled from *Dungeons & Dragons* as evidenced by their names and effects. At eleventh level, the alchemist can produce mechanical constructs such as a robot dragon; and finally at twelfth level (the last for detailed products), the alchemist has a chance to attempt to create new life.

Looking over the supplement, it appears the designers were content to structure the alchemist as a *Dungeons & Dragons* character class, pretty much ignoring any problems with converting to other systems. There seems to be no attempt to organize or set up a unified system, merely renaming spells (and converting the effects into alchemical products). The illogical design I think is more a reflection of the original game and the designers of this supplement should not be brought to task for it.

As a supplement for *D&D* players wishing for a new type of character class to play, I recommend this as a fair to good system, needing no alteration to fit into the *D&D* cosmology. As a supplement to more logically designed systems, it is at best a reference book, containing a list of common herbs and plants, as well as alchemical supplies.

Perhaps the designers might consider reworking the supplement, or putting forth another version compatible with other system. Until then, *The Complete Alchemist* must be relegated to just another *D&D* character class. Something it does not deserve. □



## THE SPIRIT STONES

By Bill Fawcett  
(FASA, \$7.50)

Reviewed by Paul Ryan O'Connor

Take three pages of original essay by Lynn Abbey, throw in a loosely developed "find the dingus" scenario, and pad the thing with seven pages of material reproduced directly from other products, and you have *The Spirit Stones*, a 44-page *Thieves' World* adventure from FASA. *The Spirit Stones* is the second *TW* adventure FASA has produced. Unfortunately, *The Spirit Stones* is a significant step backwards from FASA's previous *TW* effort, *Traitor*.

*The Spirit Stones* begins with an essay on the S'danzo by Lynn

Abbey. The S'danzo, as seen in the *TW* books, are a culture of fortune-telling gypsies, of which a fortunate few are gifted with true prescience. The essay concerns the history of the S'danzo, including their origin. Of central importance to the adventure is the introduction of the legend of the spirit-stones. The spirit-stones are materially worthless gems that are of great importance to the S'danzo people.

The scenario casts the players in the roles of male S'danzo. Due to misfortune, the spirit-stones have been stolen, and it is up to the players to track down the stones in the streets of Sanctuary. All the players have to go on, initially, is a description of the thief believed to have taken the stones.

Thus begins what could easily have been an excellent product. Unfortunately, *The Spirit Stones* receives only about half the development it needs to be a truly worthwhile publication. It is all the more frustrating to realize that instead of investing the effort it deserves, the designer instead elected to fill out *The Spirit Stones* with needless duplication from other products.

Characters appearing in *The Spirit Stones* are defined using the same generic statistical guidelines pioneered in *Traitor*, FASA's first *TW* product. The system is better developed this time around. A table is provided allowing the

character descriptions to be partially translated to any role-playing game system basing its characters around six-sided dice. The prospective gamemaster will still have to translate each of *The Spirit Stones*' characters to whatever system he is using before play can begin.

The four characters provided for the players to use are well defined. With a little alteration, the adventure can easily be run using characters of the player's own invention. Using the provided characters will best preserve the flavor of the scenario.

At this point, the product takes a nose dive. The first place the players are likely to investigate is the Lily Garden, one of the larger houses along the street of the Red Lanterns. The author then reproduces the floorplan of the Lily Garden originally printed in *TW*, presumably a product that anyone using this module already has. Worse yet, the description provided of the Lily Garden is dumped directly from the section concerning the same in *Traitor*. No new information is provided—indeed, information that was presented in *Traitor* that could be of vital importance is left out of this printing altogether! The section concludes with the following lame reference:

"More detailed information on the four bouncers and the workings of the Lily Garden can be found in *T1*, *Traitor*, also from FASA, *Chaosium's Thieves' World boxed set*, and of course the anthologies edited by Robert Asprin."

Well, of course. What is a pre-prepared adventure supposed to do anyway? Refer me without warning to another product that I may not own? Reproduce information from a product I already do own? Suggest I dig into a reference source that I had hoped to avoid by buying the product in the first place? How is the average over-worked gamemaster sup-

posed to cope with this sort of crap in the middle of an adventure? Absolutely inexcusable.

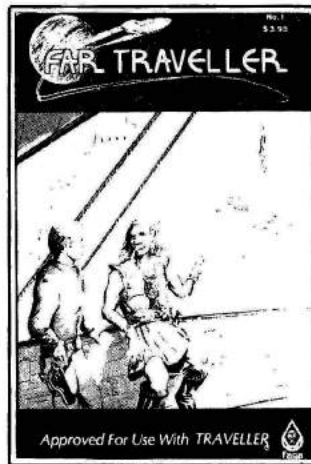
Unfortunately, this is only the beginning. We are next treated to reproductions of the floorplan for the Golden Lion Inn first published in *Traitor*. Even if I could tolerate having three pages of new product chewed up by information I have seen before, my blood would still boil at the omission of any key whatsoever for use with these maps! To add insult to injury, the Golden Lion shares only the most peripheral connection with *The Spirit Stones*. Details of the Mermaids Rest, an inn mentioned elsewhere in the text but never detailed, would have been far more useful.

At this point, *The Spirit Stones* completely struck out with me. There are, however, a few redeeming features in the second half of the product.

Two of Sanctuary's fences are detailed, each of which is a reasonably interesting character. A richer family of Sanctuary is given some attention. Details of a ship and its crew are touched upon. A temple built in honor of Shirpi is mapped and described. They appear out of nowhere, it is *deja vu* time again.

Caften's estate, a welcome side adventure first appearing in *Traitor*, shows up in the closing pages of *The Spirit Stones*. The description is lifted verbatim from the pages of *Traitor*. This is the last straw.

In summation, I strongly urge against the purchase of *The Spirit Stones*. For someone already owning *Traitor*, the reproduction presented here makes purchases of *The Spirit Stones* nearly a redundancy. For someone not owning *Traitor*, the adventure could prove difficult to play. For anyone, this product is not worth the cover price. And for a lover of games, the wasted potential of this product is a cold slap in the face. □



## FAR TRAVELLER 1

Edited by J. Andrew Keith  
(FASA, \$3.95)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

In 1982, FASA began publishing what had previously been an independent magazine devoted to *Traveller*, entitled *High Passage*. The product improved considerably by its association with FASA, particularly since J. Andrew Keith was appointed as editor of the magazine. However, the short-lived partnership between FASA and the original *High Passage* ended after four issues. The upshot is that FASA decided to publish an-

other *Traveller*-oriented magazine, and *Far Traveller* made its appearance. But since FASA has gotten busy with their *Star Trek* line, this magazine has also ceased publication. Good luck in finding it.

Like *High Passage* before it, *Far Traveller* in many ways resembles a supplement or play aid more than a magazine. The format of several small regular columns and features clustered around a central adventure continues. In this case, items such as equipment,

library data, a subsector map, and the always interesting Port Authority Handbook are included.

By far the bulk of this issue's pages, over fifty out of a total of 64, are devoted to adventures on the planet Roakhai. The world is described in extensive detail. A complete set of encounter tables, both for animal life and non-player characters is provided; there are several pictures of the creatures of the planet, accom-

panied by some explanatory text. A map of the world is augmented by a number of excellently rendered and nicely detailed city maps. Roakhoi is a world on which Aslan and Human live side by side in a unique culture. Notes on population and history, philosophy and religion, economy and trade, language and government serve to bring the world to life.

Other sections of the magazine plug into the Roakhoi material. Half-dozen pages describe the

"Lion's Den," a tavern in the Roakhoian city of Wayah, and its patrons. A brief adventure, an "adventurette" as it is called, is included, involving the search for the missing niece of an Aslan noblewoman on Roakhoi. The plotline is self-contained or can be used as the starting point for a larger campaign.

*Far Traveller* was a good buy. With FASA's backing and the Keith brothers' editorial and artwork, it was too good to last. □



## HARN

By N. Robin Crossby  
(Columbia Games, \$20)

Reviewed by Morgan Woodward

*Harn* is a new star in the growing line of gamemastering aids that have entered the role-playing gaming industry in the last few years. While many companies have attempted to publish world environments for the gamemaster to use with various game systems, none have until now produced a game aid that was both as geographically intact and as readily usable in any given fantasy role-playing system.

The *Harn* package physically consists of a two-section folder, a 22"x34" technical map, a 32-page "Harnview," and a 64-page "Harndex." Both booklets are standard 8½"x11" size, with brown lettering and numerous maps and illustrations. The Harnview is indexed and page numbered, while the Harndex is an alphabetical reference and is also page numbered.

The map of *Harn* is a beautiful piece of lithographic work consisting of one centimeter (3/8") hexes and a larger square grid location system superimposed. This grid system eliminates the need of the old SPI-style four-digit location system such as is used in products like the Judges Guild game aids. The actual map surface is 20"x29" from border to border. The left side of the

map contains a large terrain key and scale. There is a small white space of about 7"x4" which could be used for further notes by the gamemaster. There eight different terrain categories listed, which correspond to vegetation types rather than the usual altitude listing on other maps. These consist of: ice, snow, or rockfield; alpine; needleleaf forest; mixed forest; mixed woodland; heath; cropland, pasture; and water. There are four different contour symbols used indicating hills, mountains, marshlands, and reefs. There are 13 other map features shown including rapids, points of interest, and trails.

Although this sounds like a lot to remember, the environments mesh well with the altitude you would expect certain vegetation to be found. Thus, needleleaf forests are prominent around the cooler mountain ranges, and the heathlands tend to fall in poor-drainage areas. It should be noted that the map is without political boundaries. These are covered politically in the Harndex and historically in the Harnview. The gamemaster is thus able to mentally adjust these to suit a particular event or change within his campaign. The scale of the map is one centimeter to five Harnish leagues, 20 kilometers, or 12½ miles. As can be seen, the scale is compatible with any system and has a workable cardinal number if you use the local Harnish league.

The only possible problem with a map of this diversity is for those persons with a color-blind problem in the greens. Even I have a slight problem telling the "heath" green from the "cropland" green, and these two colors make up the majority of one of the major western nations. Also, the "fords" symbol could be different, as the small dark blue dots in the middle of the river is at times hard to discern. Gamemasters should review the map before game play to ensure that they are familiar with the rivercrossings. Most of this will occur at the various trails, roads, etc., that dot the map and thus can be picked out more easily. I find the map to be one of the

most viable I have ever seen, short of actual government small scale maps. Perhaps the new *RuneQuest* packs will take a cue.

The "Harnview" is divided into two major sections; the "overview" and "using Harn." The "overview" consists of a reduced map of northwestern Lythia (a future publication), an introduction, a cultural map, and essays on culture, religions, economics, history, and chronology. The introduction points out the editors' basis for Harn—a magic-weak, money-poor equivalent of ninth- to fourteenth-century Britain, with the exception of having more timber and higher-priced metals. There are several "civilized" human cultures, two "unique" cultures, and a host of uncivilized humans and gargans (orcs with a difference).

There are ten major religions and a guide to church hierarchies listed. The deities remind one of the *RuneQuest* cults—indeed I was able to convert to *Harn* almost intact seven of these directly from *RuneQuest/Borderlands* material. There are some major differences, but the ease of the conversion is my point.

Economics in Harn is based on 13th century Britain with more currency available. There are no bronze or copper coins and very rarely any gold; the major coin is the silver penny. A nice touch is the division of the coin into breakable fourths which allows the halfpenny and bit used commonly in ancient times. Guilds play a major part in the makeup of Harn and cross both political and social boundaries. For example, any serf that can make his way to a mine will be protected by the miners' guild if he works there for two years. At that time he is granted freeman status. Needless to say, this causes problems with the nobility, but, the mines provide silver and iron and these items provide armies.

The history section covers a sweep of Harn in a style that is interesting to the reader. Starting from a prehistory generalization, it flows through highlights and cumulates in an epilogue giving

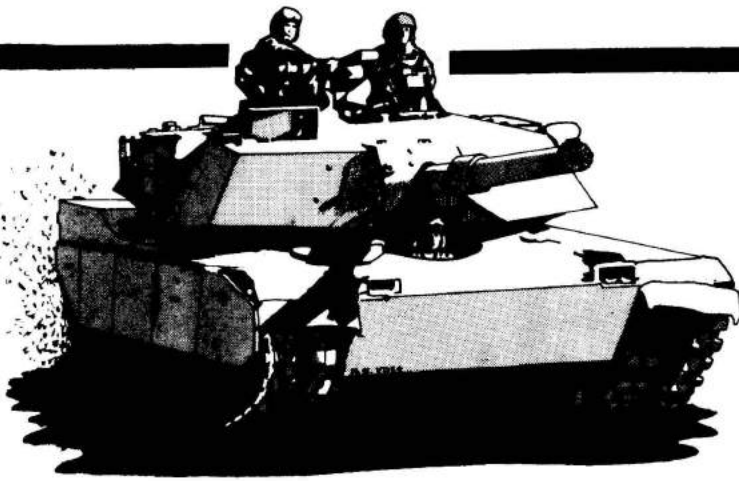
the gamemaster a feel for the current state-of-affairs in regional areas. The section is illustrated by small maps and various sub-headings.

In "using Harn" comes a section explaining the terrain types on the map. Then there is a character generation table that allows the gamemaster to integrate a player-character into Harn's social system. It somewhat resembles the *Chivalry & Sorcery* birthtables. There is also a "time & motion" section, a one-page scenario idea section and a random encounter table. Finally, there is a very fine daily weather generation system that is simple, yet presents a coherent weather pattern based on the seasons. The Harnview concludes with a well-worked movement table for overland travel.

If you think that Harnview's 32 pages covers a lot, the Harndex is even more encompassing. The Harndex uses a different format than usual. It is set up as an alphabetical listing of information, cross-indexed and illustrated as needed. With a little practice, the gamemaster finds that this format allows both quick and easy access to a truly huge amount of cultural and factual information on Harn. Prices for guild items are set off in blocks, all the various holdings of nobles are shown in small blocks away from the text, and numerous small inserted maps highlight and accent the text in such a way that the gamemaster feels he is using a computer terminal rather than a small booklet. Several non-Harn issues are covered as well, such as the explanation of a "manor." Though some gamemasters may find this material not essential, the gaming public as a whole will profit as the gamemaster now has a handy reference as to the makeup and layout of various terms dropped about in gaming these days.

How useful is *Harn*? To the beginning gamemaster, it is a blessed blend of data and gaming ideas. Although I suspect that the world of Harn is better suited for the complexities of the *Chivalry*

Continued page 16



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# The Expanding Universe of Traveller

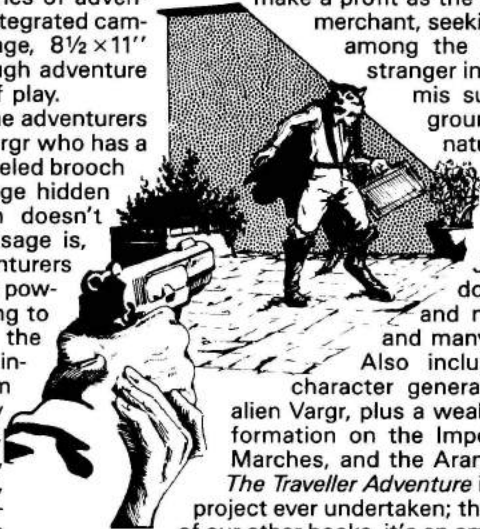
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tradewar. Meanwhile, they must try to make a profit as the crew of a subsidized merchant, seeking cargo and patrons among the strange worlds and stranger inhabitants of the Aramis subsector: the underground city of Leedor, the nature-worshipping dictatorship of Pysadi, the eugenic elitists of Paya, the alien matriarchy of Yebab, Junidy with its co-dominion of humans and native "Dandelions", and many others.

Also included is a complete character generation system for the alien Vargr, plus a wealth of background information on the Imperium, the Spinward Marches, and the Aramis subsector.

*The Traveller Adventure* is the largest Traveller project ever undertaken; the equivalent of 6 to 8 of our other books, it's an amazing bargain at \$12.

## Murder on Arcturus Station

A corporate executive has been murdered on Station Three of Arcturus Belt. It's up to the referee to decide which of the nine suspects is guilty. Was it the executive's estranged wife? His mistress? The Solomani rebel? The Aslan noble? The adventure tells how to construct each of the possible crimes: motives, clues, alibis, even misleading clues pointing to the wrong suspect.

Then it's up to the adventurers to solve the mystery by questioning the suspects, discovering clues, and using their powers of deduction. But watch out: the murderer may strike again.

*Murder on Arcturus Station* is a classical mystery in the tradition of Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers—except that it takes place in an asteroid belt, one of the suspects isn't human, and several of the others are possessed of odd cultural quirks.

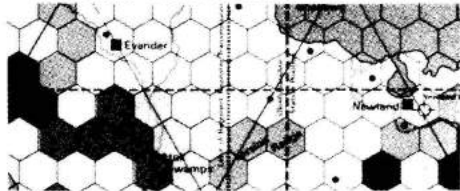
At 56 pages, *Murder on Arcturus Station* is longer than most Traveller adventures, but it's still only \$5.

## Tarsus

When a game takes in the entire universe, it's easy to forget how large and complex even a single world can be. Traveller boxed modules, of which *Tarsus* is the first, are intended as demonstrations of how much scope for adventure one planet, described in detail, can provide.

The 24-page world data book covers the world's history, geography, climate, flora and fauna, and the myriad other details that make this world unique in the universe.

Five scenario folders deal with a few of the possible adventure situations, including the maneuvers of various political factions and the megacorporation SuSAG, rumors of strange events deep in the tanglewald, and trouble on the family ranch. Also included are 3 maps and 12 character cards. The entire world is available for only \$12.



## Scouts

Traveller Book 6 offers expanded treatment of the Scout Service similar to *Mercenary's* and *High Guard's* expansion of the Army and Navy. It describes the organization and history of the service, including all its various component offices and branches. A detailed character generation system offers new skills and makes provision for service in all branches of the Scout Service.

In addition, the book contains new rules for generating complete planetary systems: number, spectral type, and temperature of stars, habitable zones, and the number and orbits of all the system's planets and their moons. Rules for generating factors affecting a world's climate are also included: albedo, orbital eccentricity, average surface temperature, axial tilt, and the greenhouse effect are all taken into account.

The new rules are fully compatible with the original Traveller world creation rules, and systems already generated under the original rules may be expanded easily.

As an example, two complete stellar systems are included: Regina and Sol. Price: \$6.

## Veterans

This supplement is a handy aid for the referee using Book 4, *Mercenary*. It contains over 200 pre-generated *Mercenary* characters from all branches of the Army and Marines, ranks from private to colonel, and tech levels from 7 to 15.

*Veterans* is especially useful when players are recruiting a mercenary unit. Each character is given a full resumé for the players to see; information reserved for the referee is in a separate section. Price: \$5.

## The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society

The *Journal* is a quarterly magazine crammed with new Traveller material. Each issue contains two ready-to-play scenarios, a description of an alien race, and much more. If you're serious about Traveller, the *Journal* is for you.

Issue #18 is now available. Single issue: \$2.50; subscriptions: \$9 per year in the US and Canada, \$18 (includes airmail) elsewhere.



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# Metal Marvels

This column reviews die-cast metal miniatures used to represent characters in role-playing games.



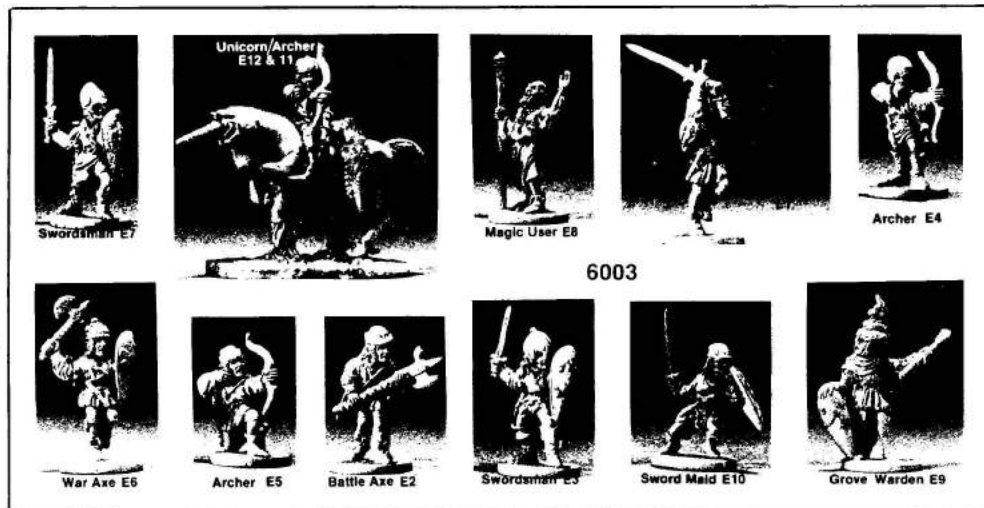
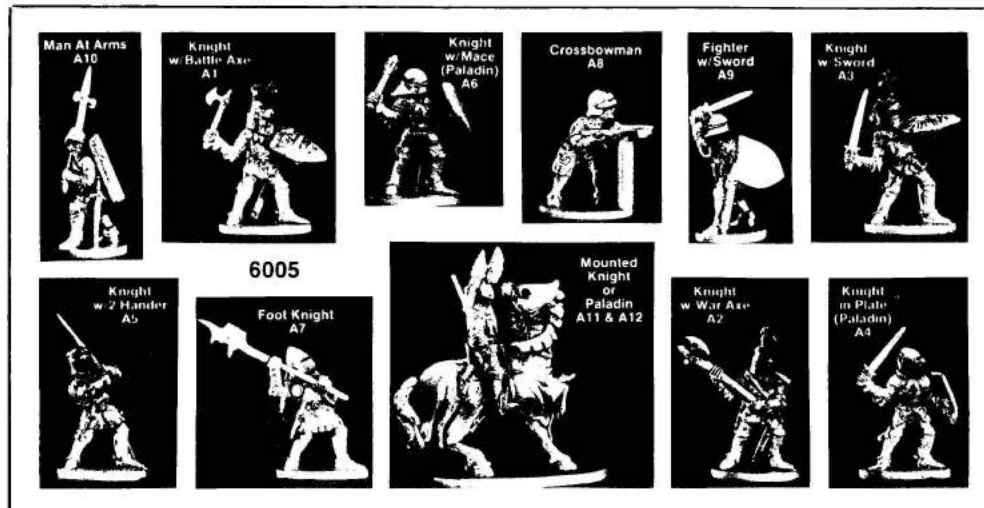
Elves of the Silvan Brotherhood (6003, \$9.95)  
Knights, Fighters & Men at Arms (6005, \$9.95)

Reviewed by John T. Sapience, Jr.

*Grenadier Models has regrouped and come back stronger than before its loss of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons license with TSR Hobbies. Most of the old yellow boxes have been renamed and re-issued with new covers so the figures are still available—until they are replaced with better ones, as has already happened with boxes 2010-12 (orcs and monsters). Here we have two brand new sets in the Fantasy Lords large-box line. Both are in the standard Grenadier scale, averaging 27mm head to foot, and both were sculpted by Andrew Chernak. Both sets come with simple starter scenarios.*

*Elves of the Silvan Brotherhood* contains eleven figures in thirteen pieces, part of Grenadier's policy of including something unusual to round off a set. The standing elves offer something for everybody in the way of figures: one with mace, two with axes, two with bows, and four with swords of different kinds (shortsword, broadsword, bastard sword, and greatsword), plus a magic user, rounded off by an archer mounted on a unicorn!

Few figures show as much attention to weapon detail as in this set. I am particularly happy with the figure with greatsword, which has at last a sword of the right length and mass, and even has the double guards to allow different grips. The bastard sword has a similar design, although the figure is holding the sword in one hand (he must be strong). The broadsword and shortsword are nice if less notable (I would have preferred a broader blade on the shortsword). The single-handed sword users are equipped with tall narrow shields decorated with leaves, acorns, and other nature symbols, as is the fighter with the battleaxe. The elf with the great axe has his shield slung over his back, while the leader holding a mace has his shield resting on the ground (this has to be a noble, from the elaborate unicorn hel-



met and full suit of chain he wears).

The archers both are shown with bows drawn to shoot, but one is standing and the other is kneeling. The magic user is the only figure not wearing cap or helm, and is baldheaded. He wears what seems to be ceremonial robes with slit sleeves and embroidered ornamentation, and he holds a gnarled staff with a large carved acorn at its top.

The last figure is in three pieces. One is a unicorn in motion, with both front hooves off the ground. Next is the rider, sitting bareback and in the act shooting an arrow. She has a quiver strapped to her back and a sheathed sword at her waist. The third piece is a pack thrown across the back of the unicorn with two extra quivers of arrows and a shield. Like all the figures in this set, great attention was given to details on the

clothing (such as the fineness of the rings of elvish chain) and equipment (for example, the arrow quivers are woven reeds). I am happy to see that one of the standing elves with sword and shield is also female, since most figures are of males.

While the elves wear chain for protection, the figures in *Knights, Fighters & Men at Arms* are almost all knights in full or half-plate, and closed helms. Like the elf set, these figures are done in great detail of clothing and equipment, including heraldry on shields and one tunic. There are ten standing figures and one mounted knight on a barded warhorse. Three of the standing fighters are in chain (men at arms), one with sword and shield, one with crossbow resting on his shield, and one with a pole arm. The rest are in plate (knights): one with mace and shield, one

with battleaxe and shield, one with great axe, one with halberd/billhook, two with sword and shield, and one with bastard sword held two-handed (I would have preferred a greatsword with this figure, as in the elf set). In addition to the great detail sculpted into each figure, this set offers accessories to be glued to figures as desired. There are four shields, five scabbarded swords, and six ornaments for helmets. This allows the gamer an unusual flexibility to individualize each figure to taste.

*These sets illustrate the increase in quality in the Grenadier line over their older figures, such as the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons line. I like them, and I think you will too. These are some of the most attractive figures on the market and they are attractively priced at less than 85 cents each. □*

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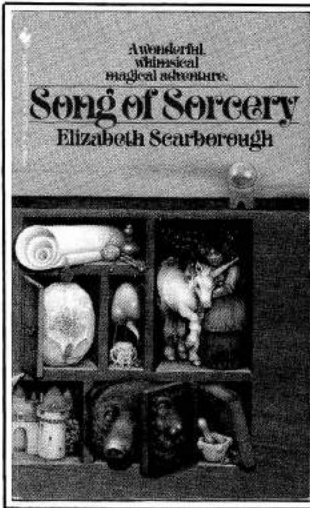
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# Books & Gaming

Reviews of books with interesting world settings useful for creating imaginative role-playing campaigns.



## SONG OF SORCERY THE UNICORN CREED

By Elizabeth Scarborough  
(Bantam, \$2.25 and \$3.50)

Reviewed by David Dunham

Some books are amusing, and some are full of action, but few succeed at both. Elizabeth Scarborough's *Song Of Sorcery* manages to be both funny and exciting.

*Song Of Sorcery* is the story of Maggie, a young hearthwitch who goes out looking for her sister, who, acting quite out of character, left her husband and ran off

with a gypsy. Maggie is accompanied by her grandmother's cat familiar as chaperone, and Colin, a minstrel fresh out of minstrel school. In the course of their journey, they meet a wide assortment of creatures, natural and supernatural. They help a gnome, avoid being eaten by a dragon, and encounter the gypsy band. It becomes apparent that a devious evil sorcerer is behind many of their troubles, so they head for his lair. The action steadily mounts, until the expected happy ending.

Maggie comes from a magical family. Her grandmother can turn people into animals, and her aunt can see what is happening at distant places. Maggie's own magic is domestic. As a hearthcrafter, she can light fires, preserve food, do general housecleaning, grow vegetables out of season, reweave torn clothing, and reconstitute dried fruit. Her gathering spell keeps eggs from falling out of a basket, and her expanding spell is useful for stretching leftovers or otherwise providing enough food.

Although these spells are intended to be useful around a home, they turn out to be handy to have along on an adventure. For example, Maggie unravels her underwear, and reweaves it into a new set of clothes to obtain a disguise. The catch is that the magic has to have a domestic application. At one point she uses an enchanted

shovel against someone, but she has to inform her magic that she wants to push the cow aside for milking.

Not only are magicians restricted in their fields of magic, but certain things give them trouble, most notably rowan trees, to which witches are allergic. A ring of rowan trees around a lord's castle protects him from sorcery.

This book reminded me of T.H. White's *A Once and Future King* in its tone. Although the setting is quasi-medieval, many of the amusing allusions are to much later things. While I generally disapprove of such anachronisms, in this case they were justified by the entertainment value.

Overall, I found *Song Of Sorcery* a fun book to read. Though it got too whimsical at times, things did make sense. The spells should be of use to anyone who wants to incorporate everyday magic into her campaign, rather than the powerful magic usually associated with magic users.

*The Unicorn Creed* continues Maggie's story. It begins with the king making her a princess. She is not especially pleased with this, and so Maggie, Colin, and Moonshine, the unicorn who has attached himself to Maggie, set out on a quest to return the unwanted crown. Along the way they discover that someone is capturing the kingdom's unicorns, who turn out to have an impor-

tant role in the land's well-being. And Moonshine needs to learn more of the Unicorn Creed (which is in limerick form!), since his knowledge of it is sketchy and he is faced with ambiguous ethical decisions.

This book is more of the same. There were some very funny scenes. Domestic magic again had some imaginative and useful applications—Maggie weaves rushes into a boat, reties a villain's shoelaces, and uses a sweeping spell to cover her tracks. I cannot really point out any bad aspects, other than the unreasonably high price, and the possibly excessive length, but this book did not seem to have the same spark as *Song Of Sorcery*. It appears as if Ms. Scarborough has fallen into a rut. There are certainly less entertaining ruts for a writer to be stuck in, but I can only recommend *Unicorn Creed* if you enjoyed *Song Of Sorcery*. □

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## DIFFERENT VIEWS

Continued from page 2

can bet I won't tell my players that! After the game, positive superlative adjectives were flying like power blasts! I asked for criticism, but nobody had any.

Ed Heil  
Holland MI

### Mystery No More

I am writing in response to your review of TOME's *Death In Dunwich* (DW 32). As a playtester for that scenario, I can speak from experience.

*Death In Dunwich* is a mystery story, and can only be approached and understood, let alone reviewed, as such. You are correct in assuming that the players shall become confused and that they will walk down blind alleys in pursuit of misunderstood clues.

Yet this is the scenario's very strength. For once the investigators do not need to pretend against prior knowledge. They have entered a true mystery. The world is suddenly more vast and obscure than they expected, also more complex and rich. This surprise is not a "cheap ruse" but a test of flexibility and intelligence.

An enigma baffles those who seek to penetrate it. The discovery of knowledge is the reward of that search. You have done Mr. Wimble and his readers a great disservice by inconsiderately revealing the story's plot. Not only could this callousness decrease sales, but it could also ruin, for many potential players, the joy of a mystery solved.

G. Wolfe  
West Chester PA

### Monster Mash

Once again I feel I must comment

upon one of your game reviews. The review of *Monster Manual II* (issue 33), while praising the execution of the book, completely overlooked the important question of whether the book is necessary. The review of *Privateers And Gentlemen* did well by addressing the point of why anyone should buy that game. In contrast, the *MM II* reviewer did not. He seems to assume that (a) of course more monsters should be published, and (b) that more monsters is inherently a good thing. Neither are necessarily true; a major complaint one can level at the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* system is that it provides a diversity of monsters but not a diversity of individual monster personalities. The reviewer praises *MM II* for introducing more devils, which he calls a "... real improvement..." How does more equal better? He then calls the introduction of four

new types of dragons as a "very weak point." How does fewer equal worse? The most telling sentence is: "After six years, *AD&D* players are getting tired of the same standard dragons." Oh, really? Diversity and newness are not an automatic function of new monsters. I have the unfortunate suspicion that the reviewer is not used to dragons possessing individual personalities. If all dragons of a type behaved the same, of course dragon encounters would become tiresome (I am assuming of course that players are continually meeting dragons). But if every dragon differed from every other, even others of the same type, the players wouldn't have to become tired of them. In short, I would suggest that the reviewer not get a new dragon, he should get a new gamemaster. □

Ian R. Beste  
Berkeley CA



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# What's New

New products and publications for the adventure role-player. Game companies are encouraged to send samples of their new releases for announcement in this column.

## NEW SYSTEMS

**Lands of Adventure** (FGU, Box 182, Roslyn NY 11576, \$12) by Lee Gold. This fantasy role-playing game comes boxed with a 32-page rulebook, a 28-page "Culture Pack" describing mythical Greece and medieval England, a character sheet, two six-sided dice, and two twenty-sided mini-dice.

**Other Suns** (FGU, \$16) by Niall Shapero. This science-fiction role-playing game comes boxed with a 72-page "Characters and Skills" book, a 64 page "Starships & World Building" book, an 11"x25 1/2" gamemaster screen, a character sheet, three six-sided dice, and two twenty-sided mini-dice.

**To Challenge Tomorrow** (Ragnarok, 1402 21st St NW, Washington DC 20036 \$7.95) by David F. Nalle. A science-fiction role-playing game it comes in a zip-lock bag with three booklets: a 32-page "Role-Playing" book, a 36 page "Worlds of Adventure" book and a 20-page "Adventures" book.

## FOR AFTERMATH

**A2: Sydney** (FGU, \$7) by Phil McGregor. This 52-page book is a sequel to *Operation Morpheus*. Included are 25 community descriptions with a discussion of their political organization, economics, attitudes, and military capabilities.

## FOR BOOT HILL

**BH4: Burned Bush Wells** (TSR, Box 756, Lk Geneva WI 53147, \$?) by Jeff Grubb. This 32-page module is set in the dead of winter in a small town. It contains encounters both in town in the surrounding hills, and leads the adventurers into a conflict between two factions of townspeople.

## FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

**The Fungi from Yuggoth** (Chaos-

ium, Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302, \$10) by Keith Herber. This 80-page book leads the investigators around the world in search of the sinister Brotherhood of the Beast, and to foil their plans for the "Day of the Beast."

**Curse of the Chthonians** (Chaosium, \$10) by Dave Hargrave, Bill Barton, and William Hamblin. This 80-page book contains four scenarios: unexplained murders at an amusement park, a final confrontation between ancient sorcery and advanced science, "Thoth's Dagger" from *DW 27*, and part 2 of "Thoth's Dagger," involving an expedition to the lost city of Iram.

**Whispers from the Abyss and Other Tales** (TOME, Box 319, Kirkwood NJ 08043, \$10) by Chip Bickley, Ed Wimble, and Tom Bailey. This 72-page book comes with a fold-out 11"x21" double-sided map. There are three scenarios: two involves a trip on a zeppelin, the other is an investigation into the disappearance on Roanoke Island of England's first colonists in America.

**The Horrible Secret of Monhegan Island** (Grenadier Models, Box 305, Springfield PA 19064, \$?) by Gary Pilkington. This 48-page book leads the investigators to a small island off the coast of Maine in search of a missing young girl. The islanders are inexplicably strange and secretive.

## FOR CHAMPIONS AND SUPERWORLD

**Adventure Number 4: The Great Super Villain Contest** (Hero Games, 92A 21st Ave, San Mateo CA 94402, \$6) by Dennis Mal-lonee. This 32-page book contains eight new supervillains and a plot to embarrass, defeat, and destroy the superheroes of earth.

## FOR D&D

**AC1: The Shady Dragon Inn** (TSR, \$?) by Carl Smith. This 32-page module also comes with a 17"x22" double-sided map. It provides over a hundred pre-generated characters, divided first by character class and then by party.

## FOR GAMMA WORLD

**GW4: The Mind Masters** (TSR, \$?) by Phil Taterczynski. This 32-page module for beginning and intermediate players describes an adventure to investigate rumors of a stockpile of ancient artifacts. Along the way, adventurers will encounter hostile nomad tribes.

## FOR PRIVATEERS AND GENTLEMEN

**The King Over the Water** (FGU, \$6) by Jon Williams and J. Andrew Keith. This 32-page book contains a multi-part adventure for characters in the Royal Navy during the Seven Years War, plus a historical summary of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign and adventure on Acre.

## FOR ROLEMASTER

**Campaign Law** (ICE, Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902, \$10) by Peter C. Fenlon and John David Ruemmler. This 56-page book describes setting up (gods, climate, cultures, etc.) and running (flow of events, price tables, non-player characters, etc.) campaigns, as well as the sample adventure "The World of Vog Mur."

## FOR SPACE OPERA

**Star Sector Atlas 12: The Korellian Empire** (FGU, \$6) by Phil McGregor. This 48-page book describes two sectors of the Korellian Imperium as well as their history, social institutions, government, religion, armed forces, etc.

**Seldon's Compendium of Starcraft 2** (FGU, \$6) by Edward E. Simbalist and Robert N. Charrette. This 48-page book describes warships in general service at four human interstellar nations. They include star fighters, star bombers, cruisers, destroyers, star ships, battle stars, raiders, scouts, corvettes, etc.

**Casino Galactica** (FGU, \$5) by Steven B. Todd. This 20-page book describes a luxury resort with hotel, casino, entertainment and sports-related facilities, and shops. There are seven scenarios including descriptions of the resort staff and any notable guests currently at the resort.

## FOR STAR FRONTIERS

**SF3: Sundown On Starmist** (TSR, \$?) by Garry Spiegle. This 32-page module describes an adventure to a planet whose surface is a frozen waste crossed by giant canyons, kilometers deep. Its inhabitants are members of a primitive, nomadic culture but with a single village which displays their excellent workmanship.

## FOR SUPERWORLD AND CHAMPIONS

**Bad Medicine for Dr. Drugs** (Chaosium, \$6) by Ken Rolston. This 52-page book describes a campaign in four episodes that takes

place in a high school where a student has died of a drug overdose which exposed a plot to turn all of humanity on to drugs.

## FOR TO CHALLENGE TOMORROW

**Expansion One: Triad** (Ragnarok, \$3.50) by ?. This 32-page booklet describes an isolated colonial region with fourteen worlds. There are individual planetary descriptions, three scenarios, and rules modifications.

## FOR TOP SECRET

**Agent Dossiers** (TSR, \$?). This is a packet containing sixteen character sheets.

**TS005: Operation Orient Express** (TSR, \$?) by David Cook. This 32-page module comes with a 21"x33" map. The adventure involves using the European rail network for agency operations. The agents must complete six major on-train operations successfully.

## FOR TRAVELLER

**The Traveller Adventure** (GDW, Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702, \$12) by Frank Chadwick, et al. This 154-page book describes a campaign that starts out as a trading voyage and turns into a quest for the secret of a jewelled alien ornament.

**Adventure 10: Safari Ship** (GDW, \$5) by Marc W. Miller. This 48-page booklet describes an expedition to a distant planet in search of a rare and beautiful animal. Includes deck plans and descriptions for the Animal Class Safari Ship.

**The Drenslaar Quest** (Gamelords, 18616 Grosbeak Ter, Gaithersburg MD 20879, \$6.95) by William H. Keith, Jr. This 64-page booklet describes an adventure on a watery world to salvage a valuable cargo from a sunken star freighter.

**The Mountain Environment** (Gamelords, \$5.95) by J. Andrew Keith. This 48-page booklet provides rules for the travel and survival in rugged terrain. Rules cover rock climbing, accidents and falls, endurance, pressure and altitude, basic mountaineering gear, adventures, etc.

**Ascent To Anekthor** (Gamelords, \$5.95) by J. Andrew Keith. This 56-page booklet describes an adventure to accompany a rich thrill-seeking adventuress ascent an unconquered mountain. Encounters include an old love, an old hatred, and howling enigmatic creatures of legend.



**A Pilot's Guide to the Drexilthar Subsector** (Gamelords, \$5.95) by J. Andrew Keith. This 48-page booklet describes a single subsector of Reavers' Deep on the Imperial frontiers. Provided are 27 planetary descriptions.

**Wanted: Adventurers** (Gamelords, \$5.95) by John Marshal. This 48-page booklet describes twenty short adventure situations ranging from a luxury cruise to a mercenary expedition.

**Startown Liberty** (Gamelords, \$5.95) by John Marshal. This 48-page booklet describes a rough and tumble district where adventurers can find anything from entertainment to the worst sorts of crime and corruption. The book is a collection of detailed random encounter tables.

#### FOR V&V

**Most Wanted Volume 1** (FGU, \$5) by Jack Herman. This 24-page book comes with over a hundred cut-out counters. The module provides complete data on thirty supervillains from the files of C.H.E.S.S. Headquarters.

#### FOR AUTODUEL GAMES

**TurboFire** (AutoVentures, 1002 Warrington Dr, Austin TX 78753, \$7) by Aaron Allston. For 2-8 players, this 32-page book describes a series of professional armed-conflict road races in the year 2012.

#### FOR ANY SYSTEM

**Within the Tyrant's Demesne** (Gamelords, \$6.95) by Walter Hunt and Richard Meyer. This 48-page book describes the people and places of a small oligarchic kingdom. There are three scenarios with numerous encounter descriptions.

**Lair of the Freebooters** (Gamelords, \$6.95) by Janet Trautvetter, et al. This 48-page book describes the people and places of a

small island paradise. There are three scenarios plus numerous random encounter descriptions.

**Shipwrecker** (Role Aids/Mayfair Games, Box 5987, Chicago IL 60680, \$6) by Sue Stone. For 3-6 characters of levels 4-7, this 32-page book describes an adventure into a pirate stronghold in search for gold.

**Evil Ruins** (Role Aids, \$6) by Stephen T. Bourne and Martin F. King. For 4-8 characters of levels 2-5, this 32-page book describes an adventure into an old castle to solve a mystery centuries old.

**The Keep** (Role Aids, \$6) by Daniel Greenberg, et al. For 3-6 characters of levels 9-12, this 40-page book is based on the Paramount Pictures film of the same name. The adventure involves time transport through three ages, first in a precataclysmic world, then in 1476 in the Balkans, then in 1941 shortly after the arrival of the Germany army there.

**Deadly Power** (Role Aids, \$6) by Laurel Nicholson, et al. For 4-8 characters of levels 6-9, this 40-page module describes an adventure to retrieve a box of seeds which produced leaves that when smoked gave the smoker a powerful magical effect.

#### MAGAZINES

**The Central Ohio Gamer 5** (War Game Designs, 6119 E Main St (202), Columbus OH 43212, \$5 per year for twelve monthly issues) edited by Paul T. Riegel. This 20-page issue includes a report on a *Star Fleet Battles* campaign, modern armies of the world, the best armies of the world, and a scenario for WWII.

**Fantasy Book 11** (Fantasy Book Enterprises, Box 60126, Pasadena CA 91106, \$3) edited by Dennis Mallonee. Published quarterly, this 80-page issue contains fourteen short stories and one poem

including a Cthulhu Mythos tale by Brian Lumley.

**The Journal of Weapons & Armor: Vol. 2, No. 1** (Matthew Balent, Box 431, Detroit MI 48231, \$1.25) edited by Matthew Balent. Published quarterly, this 20-page digest-sized issue includes "The Historical Impact of Archery," "Caernarvon Castle," and "The Development of European Armour and Weapons."

#### PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMES

**Horizons End!** (Schubel & Son, Box 214848, Sacramento CA 95821, rules \$3.50) by Duane Wilcoxson. This is a post-holocaust survival game set in a distant colony world. The 48-page rules booklet sets rules on interplayer communication, special encounters, alliances, etc.

#### OTHER GAMES

**Dark Cults** (Dark House, RR1, Box 140-A, Theilman MN 55978, \$4.95) by Kenneth Rahman. The game comes in a zip-lock bag with 108 playing cards and a rules folder for two players, one playing "Life" who tries to prolong the

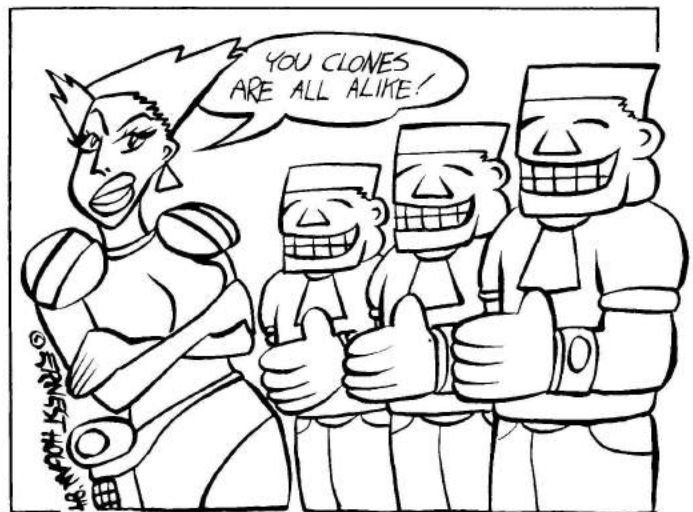
lives of characters while protecting them from terrifying events, and the other playing "Death" who tries to destroy the characters by employing, among others, evil cultists.

**Elric** (Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214, \$16) by Greg Stafford and Charlie Krank. This is a new edition of a fantasy boardgame based on Michael Moorcock's *Elric* series. For 1-4 players, it comes boxed with a 22"x32" mounted map, 320 counters, 16-page rulesbook, and a die.

**Who Killed Roger Ellington?** (Just Games, 133 Meadbrook Rd, Gdn Cy NY 11530, \$16) by ?. Comes boxed with seven invitations, eight character packets, a murder scenario, a dramatic recording, and a sealed solution. For eight players, each playing a suspect of a murder of an unpopular industrialist.

#### ACCESSORIES

**Dice Bag** (Norton Games, Box 5261, Co Spgs CO 80931, \$3.50). This is a corduroy 6"x5" bag with a draw string. □



#### FILM PREVIEWS

*Continued from page 45*

for the training/testing/recruiting, et cetera, of young men and women with exceptional skills so they can save the Earth, or some other world, or something. It has never been used for a film, and yet the concept is already boring. Of course, the concept of King Arthur is boring to some, and yet George Lucas did a good job with *Star Wars*.

And so, in the final analysis, like any other idea, only the finished version of Universal Pictures' *The Last Starfighter* will tell us how good a job has been wrought by those in charge. Early indications show that it might be a pretty

good one.

Indeed, outside of *Indiana Jones & the Temple of Doom*, *The Last Starfighter* may be the most fun picture of the season. Certainly the effort is there. Director Castle and production designer Ron Cobb worked for a year together before the camera began rolling. The team has made large use of Digital Productions' Cray Super Computer, a piece of equipment which can produce simulated scenes which seem to actually be able to suspend an audiences' ability to discern the difference between a live action intercut and its photographically realistic simulations.

Also, it has gathered a top-notch cast, again in the Lucas manner;

veteran character actors for the older roles, and good solid, and yet relatively unknown faces for the younger, more focal parts.

One could cram a preview with names and deeds, but in such limited space, it would seem more important to talk about spirit. The people working on *The Last Starfighter* are filled with it. There seems to be a sense with them that they have done good work, and are proud of it. Maybe it is the fact that most of the cast and crew have never made a science fiction picture before—novel enthusiasm, and all that. Maybe it is hype, or at least self-delusion.

It may be, but I don't think so. *The Last Starfighter* looks good. Those scenes previewed move

with energy and excitement. The costumes look good, the special effects and make-up look good, and the whole production bespeaks a quality that one finds in an *Outland*, or an *Alien*; it seems a picture made by people intently interested in what they are doing.

*And, this is a statement to be made about most of what is headed out way this year. Star Trek III: The Search for Spock, Ghostbusters, Children of the Corn, Supergirl, and a dozen and a half more genre films are being aimed at us right now. As always, it will be a time to watch our dollars carefully but, all in all, it looks like a year that cannot help but make up for a lousy 1983.* □

# Sword Of Hollywood

Cinema news and reports  
of interest to  
adventure role-players.

By Larry DiTillio

"Glad to see you folks," as the shoggoth said to the investigators.

At the Eight Annual DunDra-Con up in good ol' Sam Mateo, Sandy Petersen and I talked to a representative of the ORIGINS game convention later this year in Dallas about a film program for that event. Sandy and I put together a list of varying films we thought represented game systems quite well. The idea was to come up with a film for each system, something that epitomized the game in question. I won't bore you with the whole massive list (a list which made said rep from Dallas blanch in horror) but here's a few samples: for *Call Of Cthulhu*, *The Haunted Palace* or *Die, Monster, Die*; for *Pendragon*, *Excalibur* (what else?); for *Traveller*, *Darkstar*; for *Tunnels & Trolls*, *Time Bandits*; and for *Dungeons & Dragons*, *The Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy* (yes, that is a real film title).

How would you Sword Of Hollywood fans like to pitch in on this little game? Send us your suggestions for what film best represents any given game system and I will pore through the list and publish the results in this column. Just send your suggestions to *Different Worlds*, PO Box 6302, Albany CA 94706, and they will pass them on. Who knows? This could start a whole new era in film programming for conventions.

**FIRE AND BRIMSTONE FOR MARVEL PRODUCTIONS:** A very sad note here from Lost Angels, the main facility of Marvel Productions, the branch of Marvel Comics dedicated to film and television work, burned to the ground in the middle of February. Virtually the only thing left standing was a brick wall. The fire took place in the dead of night so no one was hurt, but it is bound to slow up some of mighty Marvel's film and television output. My regrets to the mighty Marvelites and let us hope they are rebuilt soon.

**THE D&D FILM STILL AROUND:** I do not recall how many times I have mentioned a film based on TSR's *Dungeons & Dragons* game in this column, but at the recent hobby trade show in Anaheim, I talked to one of TSR's people about it. He said that a script by James Goldstone is in existence, but TSR has failed to find any major studio willing

to produce it. According to this gentleman, they are still shopping around, so don't give up the ship yet.

**DISNEY STARTS THE BALL ON OZ:** Principle photography on a \$20 million production of *Oz* began Feb. 21st in London. This new version of *Oz* has been in the works for almost three years at the Disney complex and fulfills a life-long Disney ambition to bring the *Oz* books to the screen. The film will not be a remake of *The Wizard of Oz*, but rather a whole new fantasy adventure based on the wonderful kingdom created by L. Frank Baum. It is live-action, not animation, and special effects will include a clay animation process, puppetry, and stop-motion photography, all with the latest state-of-the-art technology. For those of you who have not perused the *Oz* books, well, you don't know what you're missing. The *Oz* series contains some of the most madcap and zany creatures you have ever seen, and this new Disney production is going to bring a passel of them to life. Should be plenty of role-playing material there, fer sure. Look for a release probably around Christmas 1985.

**CONAN II IN THE CAN:** *Conan, King of Thieves* has completed its shooting and is now in the editing stage, probably for release this summer. See further details in this issue's "Film Previews" column (page 45). *Conan II* director Richard Fleischer's next project will be none other than that flame-tressed she-devil with a sword, *Red Sonja*. Now there's a film I dearly want to see.

**LEGEND READING:** Ridley Scott, the director of *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, is tackling fantasy in a big budget extravaganza called *Legend*. The production is now being prepared and first step is composition of music for the film. This is not the usual procedure, music for a film is usually done after shooting, but Mr. Scott is hardly your usual type. Part of the music includes a gigantic ballet number for goblins who set a forest afire. Ballet for goblins? Guess we will just have to wait and see. Set to star in the picture is Tom *Risky Business* Cruise. The picture is described as a cross between *Beauty and the Beast* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.

**CHUCK NORRIS RIDES AGAIN:** The latest addition in the on-going line of Chuck Norris beat-'em-up films is called *Wild Force*. It will start filming in Finland soon. Chuck is no great shakes as an actor, but his pictures wisely recognize that fact and concentrate on what he does do well, namely action, action, action. Expect this one probably in 1985.

**FIRESTARTER TO ARRIVE IN MAY:** The latest lensing of a Stephen King book is scheduled to appear in your local bijou in May. It is called *Firestarter* and is about a little girl with pyrokinetic powers (in other words, she can set things on fire with a thought). I personally think Stephen King is one of the most talented writers of our time, unfortunately his works have almost always suffered on screen. Mayhaps *Firestarter* will change that trend.

**ANIMATION TIDBITS:** The new Don Bluth animated video game *Space Ace* should be in your arcade when you read this. If it is a hit, expect news of a TV series to follow.

Ye Ol' Sword himself is back to work on new episodes of *He Man and the Masters of the Universe*. Our tentative goal right now is to do an additional 39 episodes to join the original 65. Don't look for 'em too soon. After all, we have to write them, and draw them, and all that other good stuff.

There is a very slim possibility that *Dragonriders Of Pern* will also become a TV series for the kiddies. Development on the concept is in the works right now. Whatever happens, I can promise you will hear it before virtually anybody.

Incidentally, knowing Ye Ol' Sword is a game buff, it should come as no surprise that I often use game concepts in writing *He Man* scripts. This includes spells, characters, traps, and plot twists. In fact, I even inserted a much-beloved dragon from one of my game supplements into a show and much to my delight the character proved popular enough to warrant a sequel. See how games and films fit together? *He Man* fans should also keep an ear open for famous names from gaming, an inside joke I sometimes like to throw in my animated stories.

**ROCK AND ROLL CAN NEVER**

**DIE:** At least that seems to be the central concept of a new entry into the rock-horror field called *Rockenstein*. The melding of rock and horror has worked to good effect in films like *Phantom of the Paradise*. We will see how it works out here. *Rockenstein* is in the initial stages of development, no scheduled shooting date yet.

**FROM THE PAST:** "Even a man who is pure in heart and says his prayers by night may become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms and the autumn moon is bright." These are the immortal words of Maria Ouspenskaya in *The Wolfman*, words by which she convinces Larry Talbot that he is indeed cursed with the mark of the beast. But it is not the Wolfman that is creeping out of the past this time, but a little-known werewolf film produced during the heyday of the Hammer Film horror era. The film was called *Curse of the Werewolf* and starred that dynamite English film actor Oliver Reed. Like all Hammer films, *Curse of the Werewolf* melded solid production values and melodramatic style with liberal dashes of gore. Its plot was a radical departure from all other man-into-beast films—to wit, most wolfmen-types achieve their status by being bitten in the first reel by some roving were. Not so with good old Oliver. His lycanthropy stems from a genuine curse. This curse begins when an evil (and I do mean evil) feudal baron forces a peasant to beg like a dog for a scrap of food and then imprisons the man in the darkest, darkest cell of his dungeons. Years go by, the poor peasant becomes more beast than man and the evil baron is just as nasty as ever. He decides to jump on the bones of an innocent peasant girl, who not only rebuffs him, but manages to stick him with a knife. Outraged, the baron comes up with a most vile idea. He locks the girl into the cell with the now totally-animalized peasant. The girl is brutally raped, but not killed. She bears a child. And zingo, the curse is rolling. The child has strange dreams, dreams in which he is a ravine beast killing sheep. These dreams take on substance when the boy wakes up one morning and finds himself covered with blood. Enter an old family retainer who knows of the curse and tries to defuse it. She

Continued page 46

# Film Previews

Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan  
Conan, The Destroyer  
The Last Starfighter

Previewed by John Nubbin

*Granted. . . Last year I complained a lot. Truth. . . Last year there was a lot to complain about. Hope. . . This year looks a lot better. Below. . . A preview of three of the films hoping to make '84 the summer to remember.*

## GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, LORD OF THE APES

Director . . . . . Hugh Hudson  
Producer . . . . . ?  
Photography . . . . . John Alcott  
Screenplay . . . . . P.H. Vazak/  
Michael Austin

### CAST

Tarzan . . . . . Christopher Lambert  
Jane. . . . . Andie MacDowell  
d'Arnot. . . . . Ian Holm

Looking to be the run-away sensation this summer is Warner Bros. newest Tarzan epic. Director Hugh Hudson has approached the project with the same zeal which made his last picture, *Chariots Of Fire*, a universal award winner. For once it appears that someone is trying to do the Tarzan legend correctly; after all the flubs in the past, we can only applaud such an effort.

The history of *Tarzan of the Screen* is a sad one. For decades, people have made Tarzan films somehow always missing the mark. Even Edgar Rice Burroughs' own production company failed to make a good one. Tarzan has always looked too clean, too civilized. With neat hair, no scars, and not much of a jungle manner, almost all of the ape men we have seen so far have been fairly tame in comparison with what is headed our way.

"I want totally naturalistic realism," explained Hudson, "as though this bizarre episode really did happen in Africa in 1886. There was a shipwreck, a child

was born and became undernourished because his mother's milk dried up, the mother died, apes invaded the hut and the father was killed, the baby was kidnaped by an ape mother who had lost her baby in a tribal fight, the child grew up. I want it to be *enfant sauvage* rather than Johnny Weismuller."

Hudson has gathered an interesting crew to help him create his ultimate Tarzan, including Dr. Earl Hopper to keep check on the movie's psychological and social plausibility, and Prof. Roger Fouts, a primatologist who has successfully instructed chimpanzees in sign language for the deaf.

Half the apes on the screen will be real, the other half creations from Rick Baker's studio (the man responsible for Dino's *King Kong* . . . the only good thing in that movie). Advance stills and short film clips of the jungle scenes offer no clues as to which apes are from the trainer's cages and which ones from Baker's make-up table.

And, likewise, those selfsame stills and clips also show a Tarzan and his Africa like we've never seen them before. Hudson claims his film "asks you to consider how society lives, halfway be-

tween the apes and the angels, aspiring to go up, yet coming from down there."

If we are lucky, Hudson's film will be everything he thinks it is, and we will have the first authentic Tarzan since the character was created over seventy years ago. It's about time.

## CONAN THE DESTROYER

Director . . . . . Richard Fleischer  
Producer . . . . . Raffaella De Laurentis  
Photography . . . . . Jack Cardiff  
Screenplay . . . . . Stanley Mann

### CAST

Conan . . . . . Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Zula. . . . . Grace Jones  
Bombaata . . . . . Wilt Chamberlain  
Taramis. . . . . Sarah Douglas

The one almost everyone is ready to hate. The sequel to the worst, most pointless, gawd'ful fantasy film ever made. What else, but *Conan II/King Of Thieves/The Destroyer*, or whatever they are calling it this week.

Well, it just might not be the disappointment everyone is looking forward to. My first column for *Different Worlds* was on the first Conan film; I hated it, and let that fact be known in no un-

certain terms. I'm not so sure, however, that I will have cause to do such the second time around.

Schwarzenegger, who looked very much Howard's Conan in the first film looks even better in the second. He had shed a few pounds, and tightened up what is left, making himself look even more the part than last time. Most everyone else from the first production from the head people on down (save Arnold) have been replaced, most of the changes being for the better.

There is more in its favor than better stars and a better director, though. This time around, it may have somewhat of a story as well. In the first, we were treated to an unbearable mash where a cowardly slave battled the Californian life style and set a stone temple on fire. This time, more of an attempt to write a real fantasy has been made, with less comedy, and more sword and sorcery.

Whether the stigma of the first film can be left behind, only time will tell. Paramount was able to shake off the black mark of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* by giving the public what they wanted in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. We can only hope Universal was taking notes.

## THE LAST STARFIGHTER

Director . . . . . Nick Castle, Jr.  
Producer . . . . . Gary Adelson  
Photography . . . . . King Baggot  
Screenplay . . . . . Jonathan Betuel

### CAST

Centauri . . . . . Robert Preston  
Alex . . . . . Lance Guest  
Maggie . . . . . Catherine Mary Stewart  
Grig. . . . . Dan O'Herihly

We have seen the story in a dozen forms now—certain video games are placed in the arcades, not just for fun and quarter gathering, but

*Continued page 43*



Lance Guest in *Last Starfighter*  
Copyright © 1984 Universal City



Dan O'Herihly in *Last Starfighter*  
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Christopher Lambert in *Greystoke*  
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Andie MacDowell in *Greystoke*  
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Arnold Schwarzenegger, et al, in *Conan II*  
Copyright © 1984 Universal City Studios

# A Letter from Gigi

Adventure gaming news and gossip from the nosiest gamer-reporter in the world, Gigi D'Arn.

Dear Tadashi,

Did you know I was the Official Adventure Gaming Gossip Columnist for the 1984 Olympics?

Why can't people like us see the world for what it is sometimes? It's probably because our imagination runs away with us.

"Fineous Fingers" will not appear in *DW* after all. Rather it will appear in *Fantasy Gamer* in all its glorious color starting with issue 5. At least you got RAY NELSON, Tadashi, the inventor of the propeller beanie. By the way, the name of the editor of *FG* is CHRISTOPHER FRINK and the guy who sends out their press releases is GERALD SWICK. Believe it or not!!!

Is Ral Partha going to get the US miniatures rights to *RuneQuest 3* from Trollkin Forge?

Was KEN ST. ANDRE happy with STEVE PERRIN's editing in *Stormbringer*? Only the look-alikes know for sure.

Six of the "Big Seven" licenses for adventure gaming have been signed up: *Conan* (TSR), *James Bond* (Victory), *Lord of the Rings* (ICE), *Marvel Comics* (TSR), *Star Trek* (FASA), and now *Indiana Jones* (TSR). This leaves *Star Wars* as the only non-licensee. Do I hear six figures?

Reston Publishing has just released GREG STAFFORD and BOB ALBRECHT's *The Adventurer's Handbook*. It's for teachers and parents who know nothing of role-playing games.

Is there an underground gossip sheet called the *Cthulhu Chronicle*? I haven't seen one but Rumour reports that the last one uncovered some internal difficulties at TSR. Is it the *National Enquirer* of adventure gaming? Or is it just Cthulhu?

Is there going to be a *Traveller* movie? I hear negotiations are going on. Speaking from experi-

One can grow so bored with being God.



ence (my ex's divorce lawyer occasionally works for the studios), GDW better have a good movie lawyer.

When MICHAEL MOORE left TSR for Victory Games, as a farewell present, he got an "I Hate Lake Geneva" T-shirt.

Where is DAVID A. FELDT? He published the role-playing game *Legacy* in 1978, wrote a "My Life & Role Playing" article for *DW*, and then disappeared.

Sad news: GEORGE V. SCHUBEL died of a heart attack February 16, 1984. My condolences to the family.

Five ex-TSRers have gotten together to start a new adventure game company called Pacesetters Ltd. Their first three releases will be *Chill: Adventures into the Unknown*, *Timemaster: Adventures in the 4th Dimension*, and *Star Ace: Adventures in Space*. All are role-playing games slated to appear this summer. Good luck gentlemen—based on the box covers, you'll need it.

I heard TOME's ED WIMBLE got an appendicitis right after he read *DW 32's* review of his *Death In Dunwich* module. TOME's next *Call Of Cthulhu* module will be STEVE RAWLINGS's *Glozel Est Authentique*.

Victory reports the *James Bond 007* line has passed 100,000 in unit sales.

Coleco has the best role-playing game design department but they're all doing video games. Their Adam computer, by the way, appears in deep trouble. Returns are reported very high, and J.C. Penneys (for one) has stopped distribution.

MIKE STACKPOLE reports that KEN ST. ANDRE did not submit any game designs to Blade in 1983.

In the driver's seat for The Worst Adventure Game Cover of the Year Award is Avalon Hill's *Powers & Perils*. It's probably also

in the same seat for The Worst Adventure Game Title of the Year Award.

I hear KEN ROLSTON is working on a two-volume *Stormbringer* adventure for Chaosium. And LARRY DiTILLIO is supposed to be working on a one-volume. Is there going to be a *Superworld Companion*?

AutoVenture's first release, *TurboFire* by AARON ALLSTON, is out. They plan to have five more supplements by the end of the year, next is *Hell On Wheels*.

One of the panels sponsored by the Game Designers Guild that GREG COSTIKYAN is putting for this year's ORIGINS in Texas is "Adventure Gaming Dead?" I hear you're invited to this panel. What's your answer? By the way, I will definitely try to make this year's GDG Annual Banquet and Beer Bash held every Saturday night at ORIGINS.

Can you believe it? ERIC GOLDBERG is still promising to do that *Stormbringer* review.

Love,

Gigi

## HOLLYWOOD

Continued from page 44

declares that the boy needs love and gentle care to keep the beast within. This he gets, until he grows up into our hero, Oliver Reed. He has not changed to a beast since his first dream. But suddenly a love affair seems to go awry, pressure builds up, and our boy transforms. Now, this film did not have the bone-cracking,

jaw-wrenching transformations of modern-day lycanthrope flicks like *The Howling*, but Ollie still cut quite a swath as the hairy harbinger of fanged death. At one point he has himself locked in a cell so he cannot kill. His captors think he's insane—until the moon rises and he rips the cell door out whole and goes on a rampage. Naturally the werewolf does not survive, but while he's alive he gives you your money's worth.

*Curse of the Werewolf* was the only lycanthrope movie Hammer made during their peak period and it was a goodie. Like many of the films I speak of in this section, it can be difficult to catch, but it does appear on TV every now and again. You might also write your local horror movie host (if you have one) and suggest it. Small channels usually are amenable to such request, especially if the film exists in their library. It

is well worth viewing, both for the monster action and the well-conceived plot.

*Well, whaddya know, it is the end of yet another brief segment with you guys. Next time around, some more game-oriented features from the silver screen and more news of what's happening in the City of Angels. Keep those dice shaking and attend your local cinema—with notebook!*

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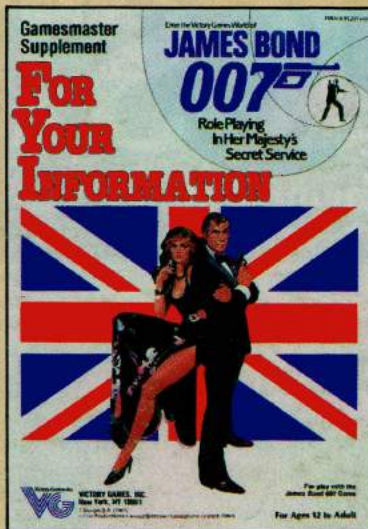
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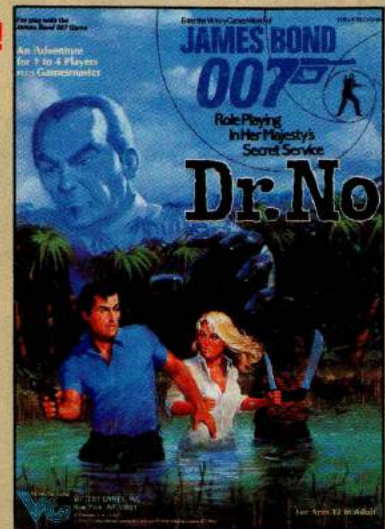
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