

ISSUE 35 • JUL/AUG 1984

Different Worlds

DW THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

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Special
horror
Issue

Featuring:
CALL of
CTHULHU



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Different Views

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letters and
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Different Views
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Supergame Anyone?

Sometimes an editorial decision speaks louder by omission than by printed text. Your repeated and deliberate exclusions of *Supergame* (DAG Design) from your superhero issues seem to be in an effort to convince the gamers of America that this game has disappeared or is not worthwhile. The people who play and enjoy *Supergame*, throughout the country, know differently. All you're doing is alienating this large and growing portion of your readership.

Jay Hartlove
DAG Design
Sn Monica CA

Need I say more?

—Editor

Comments on Issues 31 & 32

I just got hold of issue 32 with its plea for comments; as I'm writing, I'll throw in some belated comments about issue 31 too. I am impressed with the physical quality of both issues (I liked the color of the *Stormbringer* module), especially the cover art. More importantly, I found the articles (with a few exceptions, such as the *Traveller* thing in 32) interesting, original & refreshing—I don't think any of the major

features would have made either of the two British prozines, which deal mainly with rigidly system-oriented subjects. I much prefer your freer, discursive style with its emphasis (at least in 32) on pretty esoteric matters—Aztec football & Jewish theology in particular. Yet the best of all was probably Gigi's contribution to "My Life & Role-Playing" in 31. There aren't many people who I admire more after seeing what they say about themselves, but Gigi definitely joins the list. I'm surprised you didn't get any letters about it—over here it would, published in a prozine, have provoked a storm of "who does this woman think she is anyway, what's it got to do with *Dungeons & Dragons*, keep politics out of gaming" style letters. Your readers are either pretty liberal (vote McGovern!) or pretty apathetic—better than being an extreme right survivalist nut like so many Brit wargamers seem to be, I suppose. Or perhaps your masculinists are still resting on their ERA laurels?

Finally, I was very excited at an ORIGINS photospread—at last, a chance to find out what all those American game designers look

like! Imagine my disappointment on discovering that they are all Gary Gygax's brothers—unless of course, Gary got the idea from Dave Arneson. . . ?

Other matters briefly: Larry DiTillio & the film reviews are entertaining; "Metal Marvels" would be better if the reviewer would say what he thought of the figures, rather than just describing them; Avalon Hill's *Dragon Pass* cover should go in the bin with the British *RuneQuest* cover. We don't all read *Heavy Metal*.

Fergus O'Connor
Surbiton, Surrey, Great Britain

Comments on Issue 33

After becoming a confirmed *Call Of Cthulhu* fan, I organized a Cthulhu campaign and subscribed to *Different Worlds*. I received my first issue, number 32, yesterday, and boy, was I impressed!

Even though there was no Cthulhu material in this issue, I was very pleased with the variety of articles within. The reviews of games, the *Morrow Project* module and information, the *Traveller* and *Villains & Vigilantes* variants, and of course, the "Letter from Gigi" all proved to me that your magazine really caters to all games, not just Chaosium games.

For six years I have subscribed to fantasy periodicals. My first subscription was to the *Dragon*, which I broke off because I was bored by their "only TSR" policy and the resulting lack of material on other, non-TSR systems.

After that, I had subscribed to that floundering chicken known as *Adventure Gaming*. Although this magazine had many of the qualities which I was looking for, I only received three issues. Perhaps their independency led to their bankruptcy.

Finally, I decided to subscribe to *Different Worlds*. I was impressed by your advertisement in the Chaosium catalog, and was also in desperate need for more Cthulhu material. I'm so pleased with the solitary issue that I own that I intend to subscribe to you guys for the duration. Congratulations on a great magazine!!

Noah Green
Middletown NJ

Issue 33 has to be rated with five stars. From the "Editor's Views" to "A Letter from Gigi," I found straightforward gaming philosophy to well-witted humor. The

staff at *DW* and the contributors to issue 33 are to be highly commended.

I had been hemming and hawing whether to jump into *The Morrow Project*, after being disappointed with *Gamma World* and *Aftermath*, but after reading Bill Worzel's articles I made a wise decision—I went out and bought *The Morrow Project*. I am overjoyed with its well executed game system and intelligent approach. Bill Worzel mentions Nick Voss' philosophy of the three things that get most people into trouble: "Thinkin', Figurin', and Somebody. . ." and after playing the game with some friends I can say, "No truer words were uttered."

Voss spoke about his transition in gaming in "My Life & Role-Playing" and I had flashbacks of my own gaming career. I, too, got into gaming via Avalon Hill's finer wargames. The transition from moving paper squares on a hexagonal board to the intangible world of role-playing games was similar to jumping with the static line wrapped around my throat. *The Morrow Project* is easy for the modern-tech types that can associate with modern weapons, computers, and state-of-the-art gadgetry. A great change from firing and range tables to adding a lot more factors for combat reality.

The scenario, "Operation Link-Up," was the icing for issue 33. After experimenting with the game in a couple of trial run scenarios of my own development, "Operation Link-Up" was the first pre-generated module I ran my group through. The consensus was, "Fantastic, great, oh boy, and wow!" The module will help all of us in developing our own scenarios.

All in all it can be said, "*Different Worlds* has landed and the situation is well in hand. . ."

David V. Chevalier
Council Bluffs IA

Your so-called "Post-Holocaust" issue of *DW* (issue 33) was a good one, but you couldn't fool me: it was really a *Morrow Project* issue. Nothing wrong with that, and at least you mentioned *MP* prominently on the cover. I would have liked to see at least something about the other post-holocaust games on the market, however.

But the *MP* info was interesting and amusing, and helps dispel the

Continued page 26

... YOU'RE ON A BARE DESERT, EMPTY
SAVE FOR A VAST HORDE OF
MENTALLY UNBALANCED ARMADILLO
RIDERS WHO ARE SWIFTLY
SURROUNDING YOU, SCREAMING
BLOODY MURDER. THEIR ARMOR GLEAMS
IN THE SUN AS THEY RAISE TASTFULLY
DESIGNED ART-DECO LANCES WITH
WHICH TO SLAUGHTER YOU, WHEN A
BIG BRUTE OF A MAN SHOUTS "HOLD!
HE THEN ASKS FOR YOUR SURRENDER
OR YOU WILL DIE! YOU ARE UNARMED,
NAKED, EXHAUSTED AND SUFFERING
FROM THIRST, WHAT DO YOU DO?



The Gamer

Editor's
Views

The Different Worlds TRIVIA GAME

Since trivia games have recently attained a popularity unheard of before, we present our version of an adventure gaming trivia test. There are no tricky questions, only simple direct trivia that can be checked easily. So take this test without any reference materials. This trivia test tests what you know, not what resources you have for getting the answers. For answers, check page 26.

1. In what magazine does the column "Arcane Graffiti" appear, and who is its regular writer?
2. What is Chaosium's mailing address?
3. Who is the designer of *Illuminati*?
4. For what game is Wilf Backhaus most noted for?
5. Who is on the cover of the *Stormbringer* game, and who drew him?
6. Who drew the cover of *Call Of Cthulhu* and where did he sign his name?
7. Who originally published M.A.R. Barker's *Empire of the Petal Throne*?
8. What is the name of the letters column in the *Dragon* magazine?
9. What is the name of the letters column in *Different Worlds* magazine?
10. In what issue of *Different Worlds* did Gigi D'Arn first appear?
11. *The Ruins of Chicago* is a module for what game system?
12. ICE's *Claw Law* is part of what role-playing game system?
13. What company publishes Role-Aids?
14. Who was the original publisher of *DragonQuest*, and who designed it?
15. Who are the four designers of

- the original *RuneQuest*?
16. In what city was ORIGINS '81 held?
 17. Who is the designer of FGU's *Bunnies & Burrows*?
 18. For what company does Paul Jaquays presently work for?
 19. In what movie did a kid yell, "Charisma of zero!"?
 20. Who is the editor of *The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*?
 21. Who is the designer of Tri Tac's *Fringeworthy*?
 22. What is the module number of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons' Against the Cult of the Reptile God*?
 23. Who is the designer of *Blade's Tunnels & Trolls*?
 24. Who produced the original *Dungeons & Dragons* miniatures?
 25. Who publishes the *Thieves' Guild* series?
 26. What magazine does Ian Livingstone edit?
 27. Where is Genghis Con held every year?
 28. What three character classes did the original edition of TSR's *Dungeons & Dragons* have?
 29. At what age do characters start at in GDW's *Traveller*?
 30. What store chain advertises the most in adventure gaming magazines?
 31. How many points do players start with in Hero Games' *Champions* to create a superhero?
 32. Who was the original publisher of *Bushido*?
 33. Who was the original editor of the *Dragon* magazine?

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ebara

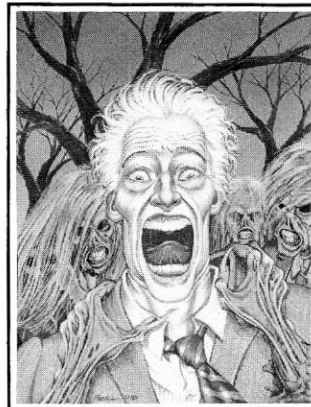
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Cover illo by
Steve Purcell

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By Steve Perrin

Special
Superhero
Module

Module between pages 24 and 25

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Staff: Tadashi Ebara editor. Lynn Willis, Greg Stafford, Steve Perrin, Sandy Petersen, John T. Sapienza, Jr., associate editors. Charlie Krank, Sherman Kahn, Gigi D'Arn contributing editors.

Sword Of Hollywood

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

By Larry DiTillio

Greetings and congratulations film-followers. It's April here in the center of the celluloid circus and that means news is rather scarce. The months of March, April, and May are buying times for television, and everybody connected with the tiny tube is hustling madly to find a space on the September slate for their creative inspirations. At the same time, the movie industry is gearing up for the big summer push, i.e., they are planning publicity for all the summertime blockbusters which keep the cock-eyed caravan of movie-making in the black. However, Ye Ol' Sword has a smattering of cinematic news of interest to gamers, and without further elaboration, let's take a look. . .

2010 gets a royal visit: *2010*, the sequel to the groundbreaking *2001* space epic, is now shooting at MGM studios here in Lost Angels. Work on the flick has been kept fairly hush, hush, but thanks to no less a personage than Prince Andrew of Great Britain, information has filtered forth. The good old Prince was given a tour of the formerly closed sets and the news hounds following him finally got a glimpse of things to come. Prince Andy managed to meet HAL, the erstwhile 9000 computer which caused all the problems in *2001*; saw the Soviet space craft housed on Stage 15, and met all the principals of the new film. The plot of *2010* has star Roy Scheider teaming up with Soviet pilot Helen Mirren and fellow Americans John Lithgow and Bob Balaban to search for Keir Dullea, now lost in space. Naturally, we all know that Keir became the vague and mysterious "Starchild" in *2001* and is nowhere to be found (or perhaps everywhere to be found). However, his spirit does make an appearance in the film. More than that, I simply do not know. *2010* does have everything going for it: big budget, good actors, good direction. Release should likely be around Christmas 1984, though it may crop up sooner.

Paramount looking to clean up on big three for summer: If you do not have stock in Paramount, now is the time to buy. Paramount is releasing no less than three biggies, two of which are guaranteed bets. I am speaking of course of *Indiana Jones and the Temple*

of Doom and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. May 23 is the date for Indy's arrival, with Captain Kirk and company following on June 1. On June 8, Paramount will hit the theaters with a spy spoof called *Top Secret*. Boy, that would be a good name for a game! Huh? You mean there is already a game by that title? Oh well, see the film, maybe it will give you some inspiration. By the way, *Star Trek III* is playing things really close on the board. Rumors are flying among science-fiction fans as to what the final fate of Spock will be. Most do not believe that Spock really bit the bullet in *Star Trek II* but there is gossip that he will be summarily finished off in *Star Trek III*. And the reaction is predictably violent. Paramount publicist Eddie Egan even got threatening calls and letters to the effect that if Spock was killed, his grandmother would be next. Boy, Trekkies can get crazy can't they? Anyhow, all our questions will be answered on June 1, so stop writing those nasty letters and making those terrible phone calls. Mr. Egan needs his rest! And besides, true Trekkies are never violent.

The Last Starfighter ready to land: Universal pictures has its own space opera coming up for summer, a goodie that combines elements of science-fiction computer technology and video-games to present a visual treat for all you galactic buffs called *The Last Starfighter* (see "Film Previews" *DW 34*). And here's an even bigger bonus, FASA, the game company which produced the *Star Trek* role-playing game

already has a *Last Starfighter* game in the works. So if you like the picture, you can play the game right after you see it. How's that for service? FASA also has a *Battlestar Galactica* game coming out, based on that now justifiably defunct TV series. Let's pray the game is better than the series.

Disney brews The Black

Cauldron: Animation buffs will be glad to hear that Disney Studios is at last re-entering the feature animated film arena with a stunning fantasy cartoon called *The Black Cauldron*. Disney has not produced an animated feature in a long, long time (expense being a major factor there), and I welcome their comeback. We should be seeing new techniques and first-rate artwork, as well as a story more sophisticated than the older Disney product. Cross your fingers. If it goes, I am sure. Disney will stay with what is undeniably their best contribution to the art of film-making, the animated film.

More animation news: Producer Nick Bosustow has optioned the rights to the book *The Rainbow Goblins* by Ul de Rico. Ul de Rico is an Italian illustrator whose work combines dazzling color with weirdly fantastic drawing. Bosustow plans a feature film from the book, his company's first venture into features. Don't hold your breath gang, if this film does go all the way, you won't be seeing it for at least a year, probably more like two. You could buy the book now, though, for a look at some wonderful illustration.

The Ferret in development for

TV: Centerpoint Productions is currently working on a bigger-than-life action-adventure farce called *The Ferret*. *The Ferret* will be a weekly series if the pilot film convinces the network big-wigs to give it a berth. The plot is as follows: A mild-mannered concert cellist and inventor (played by Sam Valenti) learns that his father, whom he presumed dead, is actually alive and functioning as a special agent for the President of the U.S. The code name of this agent is "The Ferret" (the part is played by veteran actor Robert Loggia). Anywho, Sam decides to become his father's helper and for this purpose goes through secret agent training at a hidden base in Montana (Montana? Oh well, it is a farce). There is a raid, during which Sam is separated from his father and believing him dead yet again, Sam takes over as the new "Ferret." His chief nemesis is a super-secret terrorist organization named GOG, presided over by the cruel but lovely Chandra (played by *Conan*'s Valeria, Sandhal Bergman, yum). Chandra has an odd pair of partners—Siamese twins, and the three of them make life miserable for the new "Ferret." Accent of the spy spoof is comedy, with Sam being a most inept agent, in the tradition of Inspector Clouseau. It could be a lot of fun, again if it ever makes the grade. You can at least expect to see the pilot, probably this summer. Watch for it.

Elvira stalks the world: Chief cutie of horror-movie fans here in Lost Angels is a nutsy lady in a sexy, black vampira dress named, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark. Elvira hosts *Elvira's Movie Macabre*, a weekly horror show during which she shows fright films and makes truly awful jokes about their plots. Elvira is one of those rare folks who are so bad they are good. Well fans, it seems Elvira's popularity is about to extend beyond the range of Southern California because her show has just been sold to five major TV stations around the country. These include Memphis-TN, Boston MA, New Orleans LA, Richmond and Norfolk VA, but each station will also beam Elvira to a total of some 35 cities nation-wide. So if you haven't heard of Elvirā, watch your local stations. She's coming your way, with her warped humor and occasionally a fine piece of



Daredevil archaeologist Harrison Ford is joined by Kate Capshaw and young Ke Huy Quan on a breathtaking adventure in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.
© 1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.

Continued page 22

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My Life & Role-Playing

Famous gamers reveal
their experiences
in role-playing.

FROM VERMONT TO ARIZONA

By Michael A. Stackpole

Mike is designer of *Blade's Mercenaries*, *Spies & Private Eyes*.

This article almost never got written. Don't be alarmed, it's nothing as drastic as viral meningitis. I didn't travel to Iran and have my hands cut off for stealing food. I've not decided to abandon gaming forever to pursue and solve cryptozoological puzzles. I merely had difficulty deciding what I would write about.

I tried to think about what made my life different from that of anyone who would read this article, and I don't think there is that much of a difference. Sure, I've designed games, but each and every time you decide to modify or ignore a rule in a game, you too are a designer. OK, I've had games published, but that is because I tried to have them published. My first two efforts at solo adventures for *Tunnels & Trolls* before *City Of Terrors* were rejected. I kept trying, and lightning struck.

My life is rather ordinary. Like all of you I have a mother and father. I was the eldest of three children, I went to school, played at sports without any great success, and I graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in history. Since you can't do anything with a history degree, and since I had sold *City Of Terrors* to Flying Buffalo at that time, I decided to take them up on their offer of a job upon my graduation.

See, ordinary and boring. So, if the "My Life" part of this article is uninteresting, the purpose of the article must be to write about role-playing. In this I have a subject I want to write about. I would like to share with you some of the observations I've made about role-playing from playing and running games the world over.

When I started playing, back in 1977, I was virtually the only gamer in Vermont, hence there was no one to learn from. I had to develop my own style of play. The first adventure I ran was horrid, I gathered monsters around a group of travelers who soon found parallels between themselves and General Custer's troops. That was boring, they died, and I felt no satisfaction.

The first secret, I discovered, to changing my style was to play out the

characters met by the players. Sure, doing a dragon by hissing all the S's in words is corny, but it works. You try to imagine what the dragon will say so you can maximize the difference between how you normally sound and how the dragon sounds. And as you start to try and think differently as the dragon you begin to discover the second secret of great role-playing: playing it by ear.

Every gamemaster has discovered acting through their gamemaster-characters, but the secret of gamemastering by ear is still largely unknown. If someone suggests a plan, suggests a use for a tool you had not foreseen, let them try it. All too many people who could be great gamemasters get locked up in having one solution to their problem, and will not let players exercise their creativity in the games. Nothing about the games is hacked in stone. Everything, even hardbacks, can suffer change without great harm.

This flexibility, playing the game by ear, is rewarding because it challenges the players to think instead of use the

*I was virtually
the only gamer
in Vermont . . .*

numbers of the game system to accomplish their ends. It also forces the gamemaster to think on his feet, a stimulating and creative process that is exciting. There is only one thing that beats it: the next and final secret.

The final secret needed to become a great gamemaster, a great player, is to acknowledge that all of this is a game and the outcome does not matter. Everyone will agree that any gamemaster may kill off all the characters at any time. It is not hard, the gamemaster just says, "You're all dead." Poof, it's done. Poof, the game is destroyed.

I was caught up in the trap of wanting to win, wanting to earn the respect of players by making their characters bow to the will of the villains I was sending them against. After all, if my adventure was tougher than they could handle they had to acknowledge my superiority, and therefore they would respect me.

Nonsense.

The heart and soul of role-playing is the character. I hate the designation of a "campaign game" because I think it



is wrong. If you think about all the great heroes in stories from Beowulf to Conan, were we at all concerned with the world and its creator, or were we concerned with the characters in the stories? The characters are the key to the stories that begat role-playing, and the characters should be the central figures in the games.

I look at role-playing as a "saga system" instead of a "campaign system." With games we have the luxury of taking a hero like Beowulf and running him in an adventure with Herakles or joining the two of them with Rustam as he fights the foes of Persia. The person running the world makes no difference, from the world's point of view, it is the legend of various characters that matter. The characters are the suns about which the worlds and games revolve.

Because the characters make all the difference, winning for a gamemaster is totally unimportant. The gamemaster's job is that of a bard, to relate what is happening and to record the results of the actions taken by the heroes. The best gamemaster remembers this and plays the games for his players, not for his ego. He gets his thrills from the sense of accomplishment felt by the players, not from any macabre desire to rend characters.

No tales of heroic adventure deal with the heroes striving against a foe to have, at the last second, some force come in and destroy their foe for them, yet this motif riddles games like cancer. The fat hand of the gamemaster entering a game to push characters in one direction or another destroys the very fabric of fantasy a good gamemaster tries to weave into his games. A gamemaster, like an author, should not intrude in the story of the heroes

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Illustrated by
John Sullivan

Special
horror
Feature

Blame It On Cthulhu

Creating Plots for

CALL OF CTHULHU



By Larry DiTillio

From a title suggested by Tadashi Ehara

February 24, 1922: Chinde in Portuguese East Africa is devastated by a cyclone.

May 23, 1925: Tajima, Japan, is rocked by an earthquake.

The Present: Your dog was just run over by a pack of six-year olds on tricycles and you lost your girl friend to a one-eyed dwarf with acne.

Question: What do these three incidents have in common?

Answer: You can blame them all on Cthulhu (especially the last one).

Blaming things on Cthulhu is a good first step in designing scenarios for *Call Of Cthulhu*. Why? Well, it is a simple matter of plot. More than any other role-playing game, *Call Of Cthulhu* requires a good plot, usually with many twists, turns, and deviations. The game system itself is responsible for this necessity. Cthulhu investigators are not treasure hunters, monster killers, or power brokers, they are seekers of knowledge and the knowledge they search for is deeply hidden (were it not, the world would be a most hideous place and the inves-

tigators wouldn't survive more than five minutes).

To simulate the mystery of Cthulhoid knowledge, scenarios must be carefully constructed to suck investigators in, allow them to learn a tiny bit, and then continue the search. For a sucking-in device, you use the tried-and-true technique known as "The MacGuffin."

MacGuffins: A "MacGuffin" is the object of a quest or investigation. The term was coined by the master of the suspense movie Alfred Hitchcock and denotes an additional irony—the

MacGuffin has nothing much to do with the real plot. It is just something to start investigators looking into things, whereupon they will find the true significance of the events occurring.

Almost all major disasters are perfect MacGuffins for *Call Of Cthulhu*. They demand interest and investigation; they cause mass destruction of people and property and their very size makes it easy to hide information for investigators to find. Let's take an example: On August 24, 1928, there was a subway train wreck underneath Times Square in New York City. Plenty of reasonable explanations, no doubt, but we are searching for a MacGuffin. So we decide that the wreck was caused by the engineer of the train, who survived but seems to be totally insane. He keeps babbling about "things coming out of the tracks, horrible things with gray, rubbery bodies and long talons." The officials don't believe this of course, but in checking out the tracks they found some strange tissue-like substance they can't seem to analyze. Ergo they call in one of the player-investigators (perhaps a professor of zoology, a doctor, a chemist, etc.). Your scenario is underway. You know that there is a hidden complex of ghouls in the subway system and this is what caused the train wreck (the engineer lost his sanity and failed to slow the train down on a curve). Now it is up to the investigators to speak to surviving passengers, make what they can out of the tissue sample (perhaps they have encountered ghouls before?), and eventually breach the hidden complex and come face-to-face with the ghouls.

Or perhaps the ghouls are only a small part of what lies underground. Could there be an old altar of one of the Cthulhoid gods down there, maybe with a small band of subterranean cultists who control the ghouls? Are there missing passengers from the train wreck who might have been snatched by the ghouls for sacrifices or breeding purposes? Is some deranged high priest building an underwater passage through which Deep Ones can enter the city unseen? The keeper is the only one who knows, but through the simple device of a train wreck, the investigators will soon find out.

Now let's examine the example a little closer. We don't want our intrepid investigators simply popping down into the subway and immediately finding our fiendish secret. We want them to use their brains a little first. So what information can we set up for them to discover? Well, in the library they could research accounts of other subway wrecks and perhaps

discover that there was a similar wreck only about two years before. There might even be the name of a survivor or two and these survivors might be interviewed and recall that they saw something moving on the tracks right before the wreck. Other subway engineers or subway officials might tell stories of things moving around down there (though it would probably require a bribe or a Fast Talk roll to get them to admit it). There might be a band of derelicts also inhabiting the tunnels who know right where the investigators want to go, but fear revealing themselves to any authority figures. At some point, the engineer who is insane might wind up murdered in his hospital bed under mysterious circumstances, indicating that someone might have wanted to keep him from talking any further. Little by little the investigators are discovering a kind of pattern around the subway wreck, but they have no inkling of the true horror about to unfold before their eyes. Perhaps they are frustrated, not able to ascertain what is going on, but sure that indeed something is. This might be the time to spring a little incentive in the form of a subway worker who actually knows that there is a secret entrance beneath the subway tracks and for a price can lead investigators to it. If they go for it, perhaps it is a legitimate offer or perhaps the "subway worker" is a cultist bent on getting them off the case and into a slimy thing's maw. Obviously, variations are endless and the more the merrier. The key is to keep the investigators looking, keep them guessing, and help them out when they get snarled.

Another way to use major disasters as MacGuffins in *Cthulhu* games is to link them. The scenario example above springs off a single incident, the subway wreck. However, there is no reason why several disasters could not all be blamed on Cthulhu with the investigators having to examine each one to find out what is going on. At the risk of repeating myself, let's take more train wrecks as examples. There was one on June 23, 1918, in Ivanhoe, Indiana. There was another one on July 9, 1918, in Nashville, Tennessee. On December 20, 1919, there was yet another one in Onawa, Maine. Suppose each wreck had the same mysterious circumstances and the investigators (or at least one of them) knew that. The actual wreck under investigation would be latest one, but the other two would have some bearing. Geographically speaking, there is a rough triangle formed by the three wrecks. Could it indicate the movement of a colony of Chthonians, following the orders of a

high priest of Shudde M'ell? Might that very priest have been in each area, shortly before each wreck? And what is his goal in wrecking trains? Perhaps the cargoes of each train were also similar, maybe each was carrying some item for scientific research, or some radioactive material that would increase fertility in Chthonians. If you want to get really massive, perhaps the Chthonians are carving out a rift to create faults along the East Coast that will make earthquakes possible and the high priest, guided by a renegade member of the Great Race is building an earthquake machine with things pirated from the wrecks!!!

Now all that came right off the top of my head. You can certainly do better with a little more thought. Linking disasters and blaming them on Cthulhu is easy and fun. Shipwrecks could point directly to ol' octopus jowls and his sunken city, the landing of meteorites in different areas could portend an arrival of some Outer God like Hastur, hurricanes could be a clue leading to the worship of Ithaqua. You can rely on history, using timelines in the sourcebook, or just make up your disasters as needed. I prefer the historical fact method, but if you can't find element for your plot, a little fictionalizing is okay. The desired end is a story for investigators to become involved with, so don't get too caught up in reality.

Character MacGuffins: Enough on major disasters. They are good for getting professor types, parapsychologists, scientists, and journalists—especially journalists—involved, but what if your players favor authors, private eyes, and dilettantes? A hint of mysterious circumstances could suck in such investigators, but it's a broad jump. What works better here are "character MacGuffins." In other words, some person gets the investigators going. "My father has disappeared," "There are strange noises in our cellar." "My wife has joined some kind of kooky religious group." The private eye is simply hired, the author or dilettante would probably be a friend of the keeper-character involved. Your professors, historians, journalists, parapsychologists, etc., could also enter the plot through a friend in jeopardy. What works terrifically once they are involved is to have the "character MacGuffin" murdered or captured, thus motivating the investigators into discovering the hidden layers of your scenario. To do all this well, play up the relationship of the keeper-character to the investigator while you are drawing him in. "Your best friend from college is dead, her head torn off, her body mutilated."

What else can the intrepid investigator do but try to find the killer? Naturally the police will be baffled (though they might provide the Fast Talker a lead or two) so justice falls into the hands of the investigators. Naturally if the college friend was torn to shreds by a Hunting Horror, the chances for justice are slim, but that really doesn't matter. All you are doing is motivating investigators to keep on looking.

Why Cthulhu?: While we are talking about motivation, let's look at *Call Of Cthulhu* from the "bad guys" point of view. Forget about things like Sand Dwellers and Shantaks for the nonce; they are only toadies anyway. The real guts of the *Cthulhu* game is the pantheon of outrageously alien deities which is the legacy of Lovecraft. What do we know about them? They are grotesque, monstrous in the most literal sense of the word. They are powerful too, bristling with arcane energy and vastly intelligent (and it is their intelligence that makes them really frightening). We know they once ruled the planet, but were somehow defeated. And we know that they are constantly seeking to come back and reassert their dominance over the pitiful masses of mankind. But why? Are the Cthulhoid gods consumed with a lust for power? Are they merely hungry? If they do come back, what will happen? Lovecraft does not do a whole lot toward explaining the why of his mythos. We know it is evil, we know it is dedicated to madness, death, and terror. But is there an explanation? Frankly, I don't know, so I take the only available route: I guess. My guess is that without helpless humans, the Cthulhu gods would be helpless themselves. They feed off terror, madness, and death, they were birthed by it and grow strong through it. They are the tangible evidence that evil does exist. They symbolize it and utilize it. They are the dark side of human nature, expanded to an incomprehensible degree. The part of us that revels in the slaughter of war; that sees rape as an acceptable activity; that torments the helpless and despises the weak; all of that is Cthulhu. So we circle around, back to motivation and now we have some kind of an answer. The Cthulhu gods want us for our sins. They derive strength from our beast sides and they want to keep growing. Perhaps their downfall was the dawning of civilization, the time when people started to question what they did and sought answers other than violence and hate. Cthulhu and his pals would like to see our towers topple and our minds bend, for then he could truly rule again. The ultimate result of this reign must be stagnation and obli-

vion but the last to die will be the Cthulhoids themselves, so it is acceptable. To them. If you accept this admittedly self-generated theory, you have a foundation for scenarios. You need not make the end of every *Call Of Cthulhu* story the opening of a gate or the rising of Cthulhu from his soggy sleeping place, you can build tales around the concept of terror for terror's sake. This should expand the possibilities, while at the same time giving your investigators a chance to discover this motivation as they delve ever deeper into horror.

Encounters: So much for Cthulhu theory, let's slither back to practice. *Cthulhu* scenarios should follow one cardinal rule: keep investigation high and encountering low. Put more simply, don't rely on combat to keep game play fun. The fact is, *Call Of Cthulhu* is designed to make combat a losing proposition for the investigators. You just can't take on those thingies with knives and guns and bombs. This does not mean you can't have plenty of action. Investigators are perfectly capable of taking on Cthulhu's human allies even if they fare poorly against inhuman ones. You can get plenty of hack 'n slash type gaming by using deranged cultists or fiendishly clever power groups who are trying to unearth the Cthulhoid secrets for their own benefit. If your players demand monsters, stick mainly to the lesser awfuls like ghouls and Sand Dwellers and when you do spring a major monster, try and provide ample opportunity for the investigators to run away. They will still be hurting in sanity, so killing them is not a cut-and-dried necessity. If they do not run away, then by all means bury them. Hopefully their next investigator will use a little more caution. Death is part and parcel of Cthulhu-hunting, but players will not come back if their investigators drop like flies every time they meet something.

Another word or two on human foes for *Call Of Cthulhu*. Not every person investigators encounter has to be a Cthulhu supporter. You can get plenty of mileage out of rival investigators, e.g., agents of various governments who are trying to get Cthulhoid power items or magic for their own use; collectors of arcane information; rival journalists trying to get a scoop; criminal organizations seeking vengeance for members who have died at cult hands, etc. The big plus in using such foes is that they can provide cannon fodder when an encounter does take place. Instead of your investigators getting sucked into a Shoggoth's gelatinous tummy, their rivals take the plunge. Sanity is lost all around and

the investigators can keep on playing. In the same vein, the keeper should strive to create keeper-characters who aid the investigators, basically men and women who have already delved deeply into the secrets of Cthulhu and have become professional Cthulhu-hunters. Such people might know some useful magic, at the very least they can know what doesn't work. Keeping in mind that such characters must also have taxed their sanities to some degree, you have a keeper-character that is interesting as well as helpful (the insane are always more interesting than the sane). These keeper-characters might also appear as enemies to the investigators when they first meet, since any Cthulhu-hunter would no doubt be somewhat suspicious of anyone involved with the Great Old Ones. By the same token, try using intelligent cult leaders as foes, instead of the usual raving high priest. Remember, Cthulhu is power and it is logical that the scent of power draws some above-average folk to the fold. In this case, investigators might very well be fooled into thinking they have an ally, only to discover at the last moment that they have been suckered into the very horror they were trying to avoid.

Information: I can't say enough about how important information is in a *Cthulhu* game. The entire story rests on investigators gathering enough information to take action. In detailing information for a run, ask yourself the following questions: (1) What is there to know? (2) Who knows it and how much of it do they know? One helpful way to organize this is to outline the plot of the story and then just list who has pertinent information on each part. Included in this list will be sources other than people, such as libraries, museums, newspapers, police files, private foundations, laboratories, universities, etc. Some sources may have more than one piece of information, many sources might have incorrect information (remember Cthulhu keeps his operations well hidden). Enemies and allies can certainly spring out of the information list and again distinctions between the two could be blurred (an enemy might give a credible piece of information as bait for a trap, while an ally might lie until he or she knows the investigators better). Also keep in mind the major stumbling block in unearthing Cthulhu secrets, i.e., most people will not believe there is a Cthulhu (fantasy games don't have this problem, most denizens of fantasy worlds need not be convinced that a dragon is flying around destroying towns). But try telling the cop who's putting the handcuffs on you because

you were found at the scene of a murder that the culprit was actually a flying snake and you're likely to wind up in a strait jacket in Bellevue. Indeed the more realism you can insert into a *Cthulhu* game, the better. The fact that investigators are working in a skeptical world makes their task harder and makes the horror even more horrifying.

Backlash: The end of most of Lovecraft's stories dealing with the Big C find the hero dead or at least partially bananas (if not totally). Assuming your investigators do not meet such fates at the end of every scenario though it is almost a sure bet that at least a few of them will), you are left with the question "What next?" This is where the backlash comes in. Cthulhu-hunters are dealing with hyper-intelligent beings who have powers and intuition that can only be guessed at. It is therefore logical that they can't blithely blow up cults or acquire Cthulhoid knowledge without opening themselves to some kind of repercussions. Such repercussions can lead to further scenarios in which the investigators do not so much investigate as defend themselves. If every time they go to sleep, they have weird dreams, they will naturally want to do something about it. If some leather-winged demon keeps busting up their university teas, they will certainly seek some sort of protection. This is where a hastily overheard rumor about some item of power deep in the Amazon jungles or beneath the Great Pyramids of Egypt can come in handy. Of course said item might be more hindrance than help, but there is no particular reason to inform them of that. What you want is an expensive expedition, liberally beset by the minions of great Cthulhu. Once again, keeper-characters are invaluable for keeping the game going in this vein. The investigators can't be expected to survive too many backlash attacks, so it is wise to use known keeper-characters as victims. For professors you have innocent students and colleagues, a journalist might lose his flapper girl friend (or gangster boy friend in the case of intrepid female reporters), a novelist could discover that a rival was snuffed while trying to sift through his notes.

The key to backlash scenarios is "loose ends." I have found that there is usually something in a *Cthulhu* scenario that investigators have overlooked or simply not come across and that single clue can be recycled into a catalyst for a backlash scenario. Let's take an example: The investigators have failed to find a Cthulhu tome hidden in the old mansion they investigated. They do their job anyway and

exorcise the stench of the Old Ones from the place but the book is left behind. However, a high priest of the cult whom they missed in their heroic sweep assumes they have the book and begins to launch attacks on them to get it back. Once they discover their foes are after a book, they should be able to infer that the book could be in their last scene of action, the old mansion. Presto—Cthulhu, you've got a backlash scenario.

Other backlash scenarios can be built around resurrected bad guys, escaped monstrosities, acquired books (either through the use of some information in the book that creates a backlash effect, or by having the book stolen back by surviving villains), or even insane keeper-characters. On that last, think of the fun you could have conspiring with one of your players to develop a backlash scenario based upon his or her madness. That is about as sneaky as a keeper can get, heh, heh, heh.

Improvisation: Since designing a scenario presupposes prior work, you might find it odd that I mention improvisation here. Nevertheless, more than any other game, *Cthulhu* benefits from a gamemaster/keeper who can improvise on the spot. Flexibility is good in any role-playing game, but in *Cthulhu*, it is a virtual necessity. The convoluted nature of the game often requires a side trip or two to get investigators back on track. Let me give you an example: In a campaign I was running that took place in New York in 1925, the investigators split into a variety of groups and one decided to hide out in Boston. I had nothing planned for Boston, but with a little quick thinking I hauled a keeper-character out of TOME's *Death In Dunwich* module and used him to get the roving investigators to break into the headquarters of the Hermetic Masters of the Silver Twilight out of Chaosium's *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* module. After his little side adventure the investigator better appreciated the fact that the reach of mighty Cthulhu knows no bounds and needless to say, he was anxious to get back to his buddies.

Published modules for *Cthulhu* are one easy way to improvise without having to roll up characters on the spot or try to figure out how big a room is. Moreover, melding separate stories in this way gives a truly global feel to the quest for those not of this earth. Another possibility for improvisation is the type of secret society I mentioned in the section on keeper-characters, i.e., a group that is not Cthulhu worshippers but desires the secrets of ol' tentacle puss. A visit

from some gaunt and ominous gentleman in the dead of night, offering a heady price for some unheard of book, is a perfect device for getting investigators back to the true path. The keeper can use such a society to hand over information that the investigators have missed. Naturally the keeper must remain cognizant of the fact that the group is now involved, but this is simple enough. Like any good Illuminati, such groups will prefer to remain on the fringe of things and let the investigators do the dirty work for them.

A last device for quick improvisation is to have a stock of Cthulhoid monsters handy. This is good if the interest starts to flag. You just place one in some deserted area (hopefully making the area somehow meaningful to your plot) and then let keeper-characters start spreading rumors. One of the problems in improvising in *Cthulhu* is justifying people roaming about the deserted areas most scenarios seem to take place in. However, a quick bit of thought can come up with a reasonable explanation most any time, just as long as you do not decide that it is time for Nyarlathotep to pop into that desolate New England graveyard.

Red Herrings: *Cthulhu* is a mystery game as well as a horror game and this is why I strongly suggest red herrings throughout a scenario. A good red herring is some standard occult incident: witchcraft, necromancy, a vampire or werewolf on the loose, etc. The mysterious circumstances could be blamed on Cthulhu, but really have nothing to do with him. It keeps the investigators guessing, and guessing keeps them involved. It also makes for a pleasant diversion from mounds of slime and ghouls. The only warning about red herrings is not to take the investigators too far off the track or unfairly suggest that the herring does indeed relate to their true goal.

The Goal: I mentioned true goal above and it sparked me into thinking what exactly the goal of a Cthulhu investigator really is. Most published *Cthulhu* scenarios have some set task, e.g., stopping Cthulhu from rising out of the sea, stopping Nyarlathotep from opening a gate, etc. But at best these ends are momentary. Let's face it, if those slimy deities want to come tromping over our green globe, there is little we can do to prevent it. So what do Cthulhu investigators seek? Well, what do Lovecraft's poor sap heroes seek? The answer is usually knowledge. Lovecraft's heroes want to know what the dark-spawned gods are all about. They want to find the magic and use it, travel to those whispered dimensions, seek the long-vanished and

look into its face. In the *Cthulhu* game things are no different. The investigators really want to see the horror, whether they stop it or not. They want to learn what is this Cthulhu thing all about? An admirable goal, but one which puts a burden on the keeper. That burden is to define Lovecraft's mythos and expand upon it. The limits of that expansion, as in any role-playing game, is the imagination of the scenario designer. Published modules help stretch that limit, as of course do the stories of the Cthulhu mythos itself, both Lovecraft's and those of other writers. Horror movies are also a good source of inspiration and ideas, though I caution you that filmic renditions of Lovecraft's work almost always wreak havoc with the Cthulhu mythos, relegating it mainly to the "Hoo boy, there's another monster" sphere. At any rate, the need to stretch the imagination in *Cthulhu* scenarios is one of the things that makes the game so much fun to play or run.

If you play a *Cthulhu* game like your average fantasy game hack 'n slash treasure hunt, you miss what it is all about. By the same token, it is not easy to design a *Cthulhu* scenario. You have to pay more attention to little details, keep player interest up without resorting to a fight every five minutes and re-create a "real" 1920's milieu for the investigators to function in. Atmosphere is of paramount importance and that is why I suggest full use of spooky music, pictures from the time period, and your own storytelling ability. It also helps to research the era a little to better maintain that atmosphere. Players will often want to employ knowledge of the 1980's as they play, but it is the keeper's job to remind that such knowledge did not exist in the time their investigators are functioning in. Notes are essential to a keeper, the more input from your players you can meld into your games, the better the games will be. Investigators should have backgrounds and distinct personalities from the moment of their inception. Naturally, it is not essential to stick strictly to that 20's period, but I find I enjoy the challenge of doing so. On the other hand, the idea of a scenario set in the London of Sherlock Holmes (with Holmes as a keeper-character) does make my mouth water. I am sure you can come up with your tasty ideas as well. The point is, remain true to the goal. No matter where your scenario takes place, let it add to the investigator's knowledge of Cthulhu, even as that knowledge slowly eats away at their sanity. □

Special
Horror
Feature

Death Scenes

Aftermaths of Cthulhoid Kills

Illustrated by
Brad Foster

By Sandy Petersen



One of the commoner fates of the hapless investigator in *Call Of Cthulhu* is to be slain or devoured by some alien terror. Naturally, this is often a time for sorrow, mourning, and frantic attempts to avoid that same fate for oneself, but it can also be helpful to the survivors. The very manner in which their comrade has met his doom may well provide other investigators with potent clues as to just exactly what they are up against.

Following are a series of 50 scenes, one for every type of monster included in *Call Of Cthulhu*, as well as one for the 11 new deities and alien races included in the *Cthulhu Companion*. A keeper may simply read the quote directly, or modify it to suit circumstances. Or he may simply use the information contained to invent his own death scenes. Naturally, not all beings will slay in exactly the same manner, but there will be similarities. In each case, the victim is assumed to be a male investigator.

Azathoth: "The entire house was leveled, as though by some vast catastrophe. Even the trees for several hundred yards around were injured and broken. Inside the house's ruins we found his corpse—recognizable only by the twisted gold ring set amidst the ruin of his left hand."

Byakhee: "His body lay twisted in the middle of the road. His throat was ripped out, but there was oddly little blood about. The rest of his body was slashed and torn, and his clothes were torn to rags. The corpse seemed strangely shrunken and pale."

Chthonian: "There was a great bruise, nearly a foot and a half across, encircling his body. A hole, with ragged edges, was bored into the base of his

throat, so deep that I could insert my hand. His whole corpse was coated with a thick layer of putrid slime."

Cthugha: "The corpse was burnt to a frazzle. His blackened skull and bones still sat upright on the smoldering car's seat. The forest for an acre about was still aflame."

Cthulhu: "All that was visible was a reddish discoloration near the center of the great green smear across the road."

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath: "Black pus filled the corpse's face and mouth. Open, ulcer-like sores covered half his body, still oozing a greasy clear liquid. The expression on what was left of his face was indescribable."

Deep Ones: "Slash marks were neatly incised across the victim's throat, as though someone had drawn four razor blades simultaneously through his neck. Four similar slashes encircled his arm, which was broken, as though some powerful thing had gripped him there unmercifully."

Father Dagon or Mother Hydra: "The great webbed footprint spread for several feet across the sand. In the middle of the print was our friend's body, torn nearly in half from the crushing weight of the Thing."

Dholes: "A great wad of mucus

engulfed the entire front half of the car, and a path was visible through miles of forest. But of our friend, there was no sign."

Dimensional Shambler: "We heard him scream, and rushed to his room. But when the door opened, all we found was a slight spatter of blood on the carpet and his despairing cry echoing faintly through space."

Fire Vampire: "The chair he sat in was untouched, but his skull was charred into an awful grimace, as was the upper half of his body. Weirdly, his arms and legs were untouched."

Flying Polyps: "His expression was unendurable, and we covered his face. His corpse was marred with regularly-sized circular pockmarks, like hollows in the sand. The flesh seemed slightly desiccated, as though baked in an oven, though it was only slightly reddened."

Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua: "All we found were his bones, sucked clean of flesh. A wet trail led away from the spot."

Ghouls: "The corpse was gnawed and chewed, as though by rats. The eyes had been neatly plucked from the sockets, the long bones cracked for marrow, and the back of the skull broken open to get at the toothsome gray matter. His belly was split open and completely gutted. Whatever had killed had viewed his entrails as quite a delicacy."

Great Race of Yith: "His body was intact, save that his head was severed cleanly, with surgical precision."

Hastur the Unspeakable: "Every bone in his body was crushed to a pulp, and his skin was one massive bruise, with dull purplish blood tinging all his features."

Hounds of Tindalos: "He lay flat on his back, a thin bluish slime covering his entire body. His head was severed and sat atop his chest."

Hunting Horrors: "The corpse was mauled as if by a wild animal. Erratically, and with no seeming purpose, portions of his body were curiously missing, as though some being, with alien logic, had selectively mutilated him."

Ithaqua the Windwalker: "The body was found frozen solid, buried halfway into the tundra, as though it had been dropped from a great height. When it was unearthed, both feet gave the peculiar appearance as of having been burnt to stumps, though crusts of ice clung to them."

Lesser Other God: "His corpse lay face down. The back was partially dissolved

away, eaten by acid, so that his spine and ribs were laid bare. His ribs were visibly cracked and splintered, and his skull broken, as well as corroded. His face and front were intact, though shoved into the earth as though by some great weight."

Mi-Go: "The victim's entire abdomen and chest were scissored open with dozens of tiny cuts and deep incisions. Blood pooled redly through the myriad wounds and the corpse lolled sideways on the ground."

Nightgaunts: "He had been carried off. A frantic sound, half-screaming and half frightened laughter, came from the night sky and we recognized his voice as he was carried away, toward that black mountain from which no man had ever returned alive."

Nodens: "His corpse was nearly intact, save for the mark of a single blow, breaking his collarbone and neatly sending the splintered end through his heart."

Nyarlahotep: "He was sprawled back on his chair, an awful look on his face, with scorch marks over his body. He had evidently been struck by lightning, though how lightning could have entered that windowless room remains a mystery."

Nyogtha: "His bed was smashed upon the floor, and he was not in it. A trail of destruction led to the window, where the grisly sight of one severed foot, caught in the jamb, met our eyes."

Old Ones: "His body was literally torn apart, though there were no cuts or punctures. His limbs were ripped from the body, and thrown asunder. Strange annular marks were seen on his limbs and around his torso."

Sand-Dwellers: "His body looked as though someone with a sharpened garden rake had struck him again and again, without sense nor reason. When we rolled him over, we could see that great hole through his back where whatever had slain him had chewed and clawed its way through to his liver."

Serpent People: "He lay dead, two great punctures in his throat, though only a trickle of blood oozed from them. Around the punctures his skin was so eroded that it gave way under the fingers, permitting a trickle of greenish liquid to drip out. This liquid pained the hands, and was quickly washed off, though a tingle persisted for several minutes. His skin was bluish and his face bright blue, his tongue blackened and protruding, and his eyes unrecognizably black."

Servitors of the Other Gods: "His

body was torn and bloodied with strips of skin removed, as though great whips and lashes had beat him with such force as to not only remove the skin, but break the bones underneath. All the whip marks were filled with blood and a thin greenish-clear juice, which stank of swamps."

Shantanks: "His head and upper chest were removed in a single great semi-circular bite."

Shoggoths: "The body was covered with putrescent slime, green and yellow shifting in the night air. The head had been literally sucked off the corpse, with ragged fragments of skin spreading all round."

Shub-Niggurath: "His entire body was smeared with a black cheesy material. Instead of a face, the front of his head was now a single suppurating sore, red and blue with glistening serum."

Shudde M'ell: "A hole had been bored completely through his torso, and all the blood and internal organs seemingly sucked out. The corpse was buried under at least a foot of stinking clear translucent slime."

Spawn of Cthulhu: "A great spatter of blood and guts lay on the ground, mixed with a pool of green slime. Of our friend, there was no sign, unless the blood and mangled organs signified his doom."

Star Vampires: "His body was absolutely white, completely drained of blood, and his bones and back were snapped. Great and deep claw-wounds injured his chest and legs, and he lay in a position impossible to an intact human body."

Tsathoggua: "On the ground was a wrinkled bag, withered, hairless, punctured with scores of holes, and empty of all except bones, which rattled bleakly as we poked it. The bag was our comrade's skin."

Y'gonac: "His lips and tongue had been methodically bitten out, as were various other parts of his anatomy. The wounds still dripped unclotted blood, though he must have been dead for hours."

Yig: "His body was swollen and cyanotic, puffed blue-black as with some fearful poison. Even as we watched in horror, the corpse suddenly split down the middle with a sloppy noise, oozing black poison and viscera everywhere."

Yog-Sothoth: "The right side of his face and his right arm were withered and wrinkled, no more than half their normal size. The rest of his body was seared and scorched to the point that it was dry as dust. It crumbled at a touch."

Abhoth: "We never saw him again. The only hint as to his fate were rumors of a particularly horrible worm-thing seen in later weeks on the mountain slopes. The worm-thing was reported to have his face."

Atlach-Nacha: "The corpse was covered with a thick, yarn-like material, tough as steel, but soft to the touch, and there were two thin needle-like holes in his face. His entire interior seems to have been liquefied and sucked out, leaving only the shell of a man."

Cyaegha: "The corpse was nailed upside-down to the front door, the throat slit, and wrists cut open. But no blood marred the clean floor."

Ghasts: "The body seemed to have been beaten by heavy sticks and then gnawed by wild animals. Great chunks had been chewed out of his side and arms. Whatever had done the deed must have come by night."

Ghatanothoa: "His body appeared to be a thousand-year-old mummy, though he could not have been dead more than a few days. His skin was hard as stiffened leather, and his flesh as hard as stone. A look of utmost horror and fear was on the face, whose eyes were closed tightly shut."

Gnoph-Keh: "The body was frozen solid as ice. But the frozen corpse had been broken—the shoulder and left arm had been snapped off and carried away by the unknown Thing in the Snow."

Gugs: "His spine was shattered, as from a colossal blow, and a great ragged bite split his body. Tufts of coarse black hair were still spasmodically gripped in his hands."

Lloigor: "The body lay face-down in a pool of peculiar blue-green water. He must have died of a heart attack, for no wounds were visible on him. Strangely, the autopsy showed no sign of atherosclerosis."

Moon Beasts: "Whatever had killed him had tortured him slowly before he died. There were penetrating wounds on his torso, and burns all over his arms. The firepit next to him gave mute evidence as to the source of the burns."

Zhar: "Only his watch, rings, and the silver plate from his skull remained. Everything even remotely organic had vanished forever."

Zoth-Ommog: "His body was peculiarly slouched, as though the entire interior of his torso had been pulped and squeezed together into a single solid mass. A poke showed that his ribs had been pulverized." □

Monsters of Green Hell

Amazon Artuams Part One

By Ernest Hogan

Illustrated by Ernest Hogan

"... and I realized the jungle takes you over and you become it," Jack Kerouac wrote in *On The Road*. It's true, I know, I felt it seconds after I entered my first jungle—I had entered a living thing, a gigantic super-organism that literally buzzed with life, where even the air is different and could be smelled and tasted even at a distance and made the thick tropical humidity seem like a primordial soup, or the bloodstream of a great vegetal god, and the steamy morning mist what the Jivaro Indians say it is—the final form of the souls of the dead. There was an impossible sense of freshness, the difference between the foliage and the air blurred, and as I breathed it, it entered me. The trail vanished after less than fifteen feet. In no direction could I see or hear any sign of that dream we call civilization, even though less than twenty feet away tourists from all over the world were milling around in the ruins of the Mayan city of Palenque, under its multi-leveled and almost unnaturally poetic canopy of butterflies, the largest dragonflies I have ever seen, and circling hawks.

Who knows what would have become of me if I hadn't turned around. In a few steps I would have been lost for sure. Maybe I would have been rescued by the mysterious magic mushroom community that rumor puts in that jungle. Or found another lost city. Or a lost tribe. Or the mythical tunnels that are supposed to connect all pre-Columbian ruins ... and ended up in the Amazon jungle—the Green Hell!

No, more likely the jungle would have done to me what it does to all intruders, what any organism does to an alien virus or bacterium: either incorporate it, or destroy it.

The jungles of South America have an incredible and efficient immune system. The air brings the often rabid vampire bat; malaria-carrying mosquitoes; the tiny, orange insects known as the *carradatos*, who infest the armpits, clothes, and skin, and according to

Claude Levi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*, a victim can only find relief in "taking off all his clothes and beating them vigorously while a companion carefully examines his skin"; large gray parasites that attach themselves painlessly and only appear later as swellings on the skin and have to be dug out with a knife; and the dreaded killer bees. The land is the home of the jaguar, who according to the Kayapo-Kubenranken, hunt with their fangs, eat raw meat and have the reflection of fire in their eyes because humans stole the secrets of fire and the bow and arrow from them; the *cunanauaru* tree frog that can shoot a whitish odorless secretion over a yard, causing blisters and removing the top layer of skin; the jungle-devouring *marapulta* army ants; and a wide variety of poisonous snakes. Lurking in the waters are alligators, poisonous snakes, piranha, electric eels and fish that can stun a mule, and the anaconda. This game is played for keeps.

Then we come to the place where it gets difficult to tell where the reality ends and the mythology begins, where the primitive, innocent wonder of Henri Rousseau landscapes melt down into the dark, sinister jungles of surrealist Max Ernst. . .

There are warnings about urinating directly into a river, because of a tiny fish that can swim up the jet of urine into the bladder. It may be related to the *candiru* that William S. Burroughs described in his novel *Naked Lunch* as a small, eel-like fish or worm, a quarter-inch wide and two-inches long that can swim up a penis, vagina, or anus and hold itself there with sharp spines. Why? No one knows, since, "no one has stepped forward to observe the *candiru*'s life-cycle *in situ*." But times have changed, there just may be a fascist state with a concentration camp deep in Green Hell, where there can be heard horrible screams because a ghastly experiment is being performed on a political prisoner. . .

There is far more to the jungle than mere physical reality. It is as much a state of mind as a place, a dream, even for those who call it home. The overgrown, tangled labyrinth may not be so tangled to native eyes, but still it overloads the senses, stimulates the imagination, inspires fantasies, and visions—what the Jivaro call *artuams*.

The Huni Kui tribe say that there are sounds that cannot be identified as they echo mysteriously through the jungle, they call them the sounds of *yene*, an unexplainable spirit source, that always makes the listeners feel profoundly uneasy. The Yanoama say that in time of dark weather, a

woman's voice can be heard. She is Kumareme, has long hair, a beautiful, unpainted body, and just a glimpse of her is enough to drive a man mad, send him running, shouting after her to become forever lost in the forest. The Arawak of Guiana believe in beasts that were once human, their transformations triggered by breaking the widespread South American taboo against eating after sunset. The Jivaro in dreams and hallucinogen-induced visions often see Nungui, a black-clad, three-feet high, fat crop spirit dancing in their gardens that contain their staple, manioc plants, that they believe can and do suck the blood of anybody touching them, so women sing for them to suck the blood of enemies and not loved ones, and visitors wear a stick of manioc in their belts when passing through a neighbor's garden.

It is a way of looking at things, just like the ones that allowed Levi-Strauss to see a single file of Nambikwara Indians, making their way through the tall grass, the women carrying large wickerwork baskets above them as a column of giant ants carrying their eggs, or Americans to think that spending most of their lives staring into video screens is normal. It is partially the result of the jungle environment and tribal culture, but often augmented by the use of hallucinogenic drugs. Michael J. Harner in *The Jivaro: People of the Sacred Waterfalls* wrote that "within a few days of birth, a baby is given a hallucinogenic drug to help enter the 'real' world," it is also given to misbehaving children to see why they did wrong, and a special drug is given to hunting dogs. In Jivaro society, the two kinds of leaders, the shamans and the outstanding killers (*kukaran*) are those to whom the cooled hallucinogenic *natema* tea is the most important. *Natema* is called *yage* or *yaje* in Columbia, and by the Inca name *ayahusca* (vine of the dead) in Ecuador and Peru, and *caupi* in Brazil; it is made from a species of the *banisteriopsis* vine. Using such a drug, Huni Kui hunters are supposed to be able to walk through the overgrowth without being snagged because they can see the invisible world. The men of the Yanoama tribe blow a powder called *epena* into each other's noses through bamboo tubes so they can hear the noises of the forest spirits, then sing to invoke the Hekura spirits to bring bad luck to their enemies, and attract game—*epena* is also worn around the neck in a *cuiu* (a bamboo tube), or packed in leaves as a talisman.

So the myths of these peoples are often of a surreal and psychedelic nature. The rainbow is more than a

sign that rain has ended, but a cause of disease and natural disaster, a disjunction between the earth and sky after they were joined by rain, that takes the place of water, separates the earth and sky, and is identified with a snake—like the Vilela myth of a shy, solitary boy who while hunting birds was changed into a deadly, multi-colored snake. The Yanoama believe in Rahara, a snake many times larger than the anaconda. In the Toba-Pilaga and Mataco myths, women were originally toothed vaginas that came from the sky, stole men's meat and had to be tamed, and were transformed into earthly women, and became wives. Tacanu and Bolivian myths make the sloth the master of



destructive fire by means of its incendiary excrement, and if forced to defecate from the top of a tree the turd will shoot across the sky like a comet destroying the world and killing all living creatures, and in Guiana "the sloth's star" appears at the horizon at the start of the dry season and is believed to come down to earth to relieve itself. There is a strange South American type of werewolf that lives by night as a cannibal spirit being. Equally cannibalistic were a now extinct race of howler monkeys of the Caraja myths who were killed off with magic arrows—a gift of a snake that cured the hero of his ulcers—that were not poisoned, and had to be tempered with a magic ointment to keep them from turning on their user.

Being the largest land predator in South America, the jaguar is the subject of many myths. It was an adopted human son that stole fire and the bow and arrow from the jaguar in the Kayapo-kuberanken myth mentioned earlier, and it is only one of many strange, intimate human/jaguar relationships. According to the Mataco people, the first jaguar was originally a

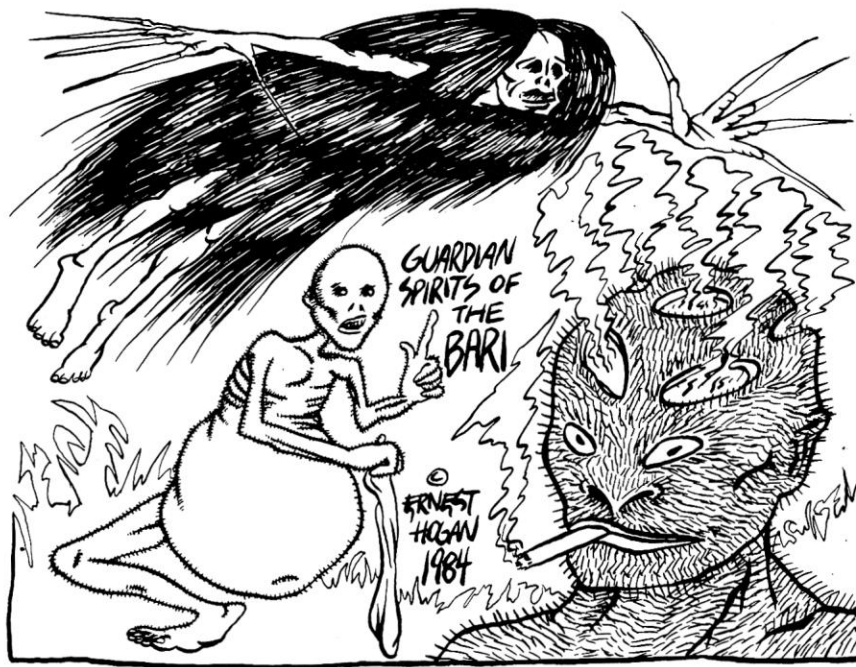
greedy woman who killed and ate her husband and children then ran off into the bush to undergo her metamorphosis. Another kind of jaguar woman is the jaguar's wife of an Opaye myth, she married a jaguar who was a great hunter and brought much game to her tribe, but after a while her mother noticed "black spots appeared on her body, and she grew claws on her hands and feet. Only her face remained human, although fangs were beginning to show on her mouth" (Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*). So the old woman used witchcraft to kill her daughter—infuriated, the jaguar left the tribe, and terrorized them with his roars. A similar transformation happens in the Tucuna myth of the jaguar's son-in-law, who after marrying the jaguar's daughter, returns home and starts breaking out in spots all over his body like those of the jaguar, and ends up leaving his human wives and returning to the jungle.

A rather unique image is that of the snake mistresses of South America. In a Bororo myth she is accidentally fertilized by the blood of a snake killed by her husband, and conceives a snake-son that talks to her and exits and enters her womb at will. The Tenetehera snake mistress has a snake-son who leaves her womb in the morning and returns at nightfall, and changes into lightning when killed by the woman's brother. The snake-lover in a Warao myth is carried around inside the woman's body and only comes out to climb fruit trees to provide for her.

And of course, the forests are saturated with spirits. . .

In 1918, when the grippe was caught by the Kaingang people for the first time, they died in such numbers that their corpses would lay around unburied and dogs fed on them, a man named Thunderstorm, according to Jules Henry in *Jungle People: A Kaingang Tribe of the Highlands of Brazil*, "rose up in his rage and fear and beat the trees because he was afraid of the supernatural beings (*nggiyudn*)." The *nggiyudn* are the spirits of all things that often appear in human form. Like the *kupleng*, the ghost souls, they inspire fear.

Equally dreaded are the many forms of the Jivaro *nekas wakani*, or true soul. First they appear as *suar iwanci*, "human demons," whose visible forms include deer and owls who haunt abandoned houses and gardens, repeating the life history of the deceased. Then the equivalent of a human lifetime is spent as a "true demon," they are permanently visible, look more or less like humans but are far uglier, they roam the jungle plagued by



hunger and loneliness, so they occasionally kidnap a human child for companionship. These children are found two or three days later, unharmed—the demons only want to play with them. When the true demon dies, it becomes a *wampang*, a species of giant moth or butterfly with wings that look like an owl's face, and are always hungry, when they fly into a house, a few drops of manioc beer are offered out of courtesy . . . it may be the soul of friend or relative. After an uncertain stretch of time, the *wampang's* wings are damaged by rain, it flutters, falls, and dies, changing into water vapor, merging with mists, fog, and clouds, its transformations and life cycle now over with.

Also lurking in those clouds and mists are the *butarico*, the spirits that the Bororo believe are responsible for rain, that have fangs and claw-like hands like the water goddess of the Maya.

The Hekura spirits of the Yanoama come in a variety of forms: that of the great anteater is invoked against the enemy during war by carrying a palm leaf in the hands, behind the back like a tail. That of the wild pig is invoked to make them dirty when they see ashes, with filthy banana skins, and act like wild pigs. Hamoriwe and Waikosheweiriwe are the Hekura of the spiders who are invoked to spin webs around plants to protect them, and when *epena* is blown around the village by a shaman, it is to aim the deadly sting of Hamoriwe at their enemies. There is also Wakairwe of the great armadillo, Okoriwe of the small armadillo, Pashoriwe of the monkey, and Waicognariwe of the anaconda who is invoked during storms.

There are no women Hekura, but among a kind of spirit the Yanoama call the Aramiseteri, there is one called Shinarimi (or cotton). She is tall, white, beautiful and strong, dresses like a man, knows how to suck away pain, sing the song of the Hekura, dances with open arms, and can steal the souls of the enemy's children. When she visits a village, strange things happen, like a roof being blown off by the wind.

The Yanoama also believe in the daughters of Hekuraganuma that live in the great mountains. They are lovely young girls with designs on their faces and bodies. They smell like a sweet white flower, and to smell that scent will cause hunger and thirst to disappear—a gendensend to a weary jungle traveler! They are invoked to drive away sickness by passing their hands over hot, feverish bodies and places that are in pain.

The Yanoama practice endocannibalism: the eating of the ashes of their dead, in banana pap, in a funerary feast called *reaho*. This is because if all the ashes of a corpse are not eaten, the spirit of the deceased will not become a harmless Peikaneporebe, but remain a Pore or Porena, and wander by night with eyes of fire, making frightening sounds in the forest.

So wouldn't you gobble up those ashes?

Of course you would.

Just as if you practiced preventive medicine like the Huni Kui, sickness would be unusual, the result of *iuxibo*, evil spirits entering the body, that can only be expelled by a stranger sorcery than the one that put it there. The *iuxibo* can also interfere in hunting, so painted designs on weapons are

improved to call upon the assistance of the forest spirits.

It is little wonder that shamans and sorcerers work their magic through the jungles of South America, not as some wild extravagance, but as a necessary part of life. The Kaingang practice the art of *tad'n*—to kill supernaturally. The Nambikwara work *nande*, that means any kind of threatening action and natural poisons as well as magical substances that are kept in the same kind of tube—one *nande* is a resin from a tree of the bombax species that have trunks swollen around the middle, throwing the resin at someone is supposed to cause them to swell up and die—they also use a flattened spike as both a practical and magical weapon, with a certain movement to ward off hurricanes, and thrown in a certain direction to kill the *atsay* (evil spirits of the bush). Caduveo medicine men use round stools, straw crowns, beaded net-covered gourd rattles and ostrich feathers to capture "animals" *bichos* (spirits) that cause disease, and expel them with the power of their own guardian *bichos*.

The Yanoama let their Shapori suck on them and chant to cure them when their *nohatipe* flees their body and causes illness. Sometimes the spirit of an old Yanoama *pagé* will inhabit a tree trunk after he dies, so all who pass must leave bananas, *beju*, or manioc cake, and ask the *pagé* to keep the weather sunny, and make the hunting successful.

And sometimes the sorcerers do battle with each other.

Among the Bororo, the *bari* (medicine men) are at odds with the *aroetowaraare* (priests).

A *bari* is a mediator between society and the universe. He becomes one through a revelation that includes making a pact with evil spirit beings who were once the souls of dead medicine men, have control over the stars, the wind, rain, sickness, and death, and have monstrous appearances: some are hairy with holes in their heads out of which smoke escapes when they use tobacco; others are flying monsters with the power to send rain out of their eyes, nostrils or long nails and hair; and some have only one leg, swollen bellies, and bat-like down all over their bodies. The spirits give the *bari* help when hunting, the power to change into a macaw, harpy-eagle, or tapir, and to see into the future—to tell if a sick person will die (they aren't above killing them to make their prophecy come true). He makes game and garden produce edible by taking his share first and sharing it with the spirits, who use him to assume bodily form, by putting him

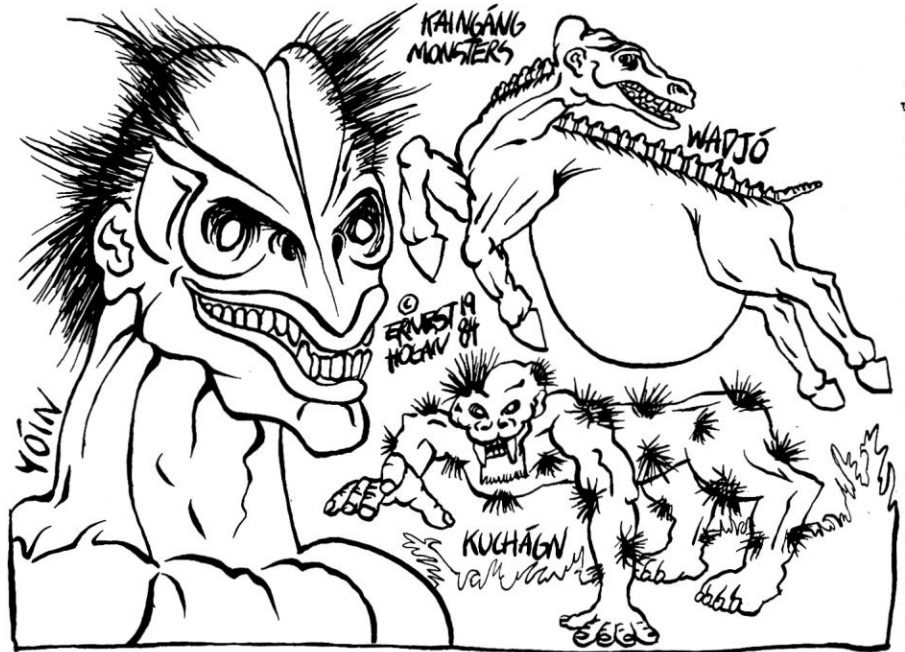
into convulsive trances. In exchange for their protection, they become the true owners of his possessions and even his body, they forbid him to throw away or destroy anything, even hair or nail clippings.

The aroettowaraare mediates between the living and beneficent spirits of the dead. He is the "master of the way of souls." There are many differences between them and the bari, and they hate each other. A master of the way cannot take offerings, can only eat certain foods, must not wear ornaments or bright colors, but he does not have any pact with the spirits, who appear to him in visions rather than taking possession of him, and he can only invoke them to help others. Bari predict death and illness, while the aroettowaraare nurses and cures, and sacrifices himself to save others. Like the bari, he is chosen through a revelation—a foul stench that pursues him. It is the smell of an aquatic monster called *aije*, that is as affectionate as it is repulsive—when it appears, he must endure its caresses.

A similar rivalry exists between the two kinds of shaman of the Jivaro: the evil, bewitching *wawek* (or *yahauci*) and the good, curing *penger uwisin*. Both get their power from *tsentsak*, magical darts from a nearly infinite number of forms, and are seen as spirit helpers that reside inside a shaman's body and are shot into the body of a victim to bewitch, and must be sucked out by other *tsentsak* for the cure.

These darts were discovered by Tsungi, the mythic first shaman, who is believed to be still alive and well, and living in an underwater house with walls of anacondas. He is described as white-skinned and long-haired and able to change into an anaconda. He supplies some shamans with *namura*, special quartz crystal *tsentsak* that are extremely deadly, and are used to kill shamans he is mad at, and not even the most powerful magic can save them.

A novice shaman must get his *tsentsak* from a practicing shaman. The veteran vomits up a brilliant substance



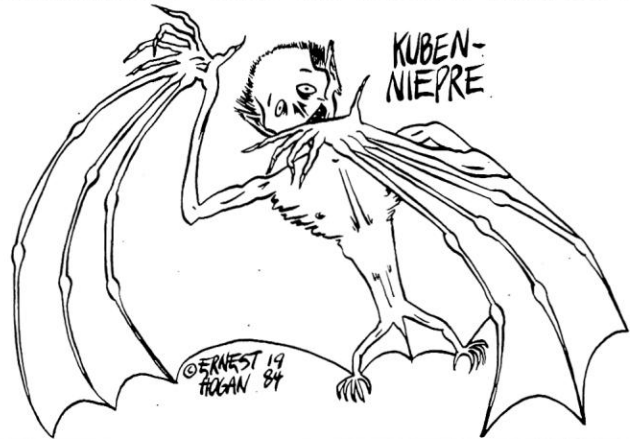
in which the darts live, cuts off a piece and gives it to the novice to swallow. This causes severe stomach pains that puts the novice in bed for ten days, where he repeatedly drinks *natema* and the higher shaman blows on and rubs his body, increasing the power of the transfer. Afterwards he keeps these spirit helpers in his stomach and regurgitates them at will, but when he runs out he must go back to his master for more, and he had damn well better have been loyal, faithful and submissive.

It may seem like a lot to go through for a little magic power, but there are things that go bump in the dark Amazonian night, monsters spawned by tribal ids rubbing against rough days and hallucinatory nightmares, mythic beings with powers so great that a shaman's power becomes necessary to defeat them.

The Kaingang tell of Yoin, who seizes men, women, and children with his bloody hands, shoves one clutching a little knife up the anus, cuts out the heart and intestines and eats them. His head is large, always shakes and has a

groove down the middle, is covered with a mop of hair that some say is red and others say is like a Negro's, his white eyes have red lids, his jaws are great and his neck long, and thick as his broad body, his belly blazes like a giant firefly when he flies at night, and his genitals are enormous. He kills because he is a "different thing and never calls men 'my people.'"

Other "different things" of the Kaingang include: pig-like Yunggi, who kills people by shooting them. *Wagdjo* who is tapir or horse-like with human nose, eyes, hair, arms, legs, and buttocks, an exposed backbone that sticks up, and flies through the trees with his flashing belly pouring smoke, ashes, and flames from his mouth and nose. *Kuchagn* never dies, can talk and make noises like a pig, attracting victims out into the bush and crushing them to death—he is described as having arms and ears like a man, but the beard of a tiger under his bloody mouth, hard bristles sticking out all over him in isolated clumps and walks on all fours, can cause a disease that starts with abdominal pains, causes



the skin to turn yellowish, bleeding from the mouth, then the victim turns black, rots, and bursts.

Oversized sex organs are typical features of Kaingang monsters; there is also a preoccupation with sex that includes a belief that death is often the result of intercourse with a supernatural being or a ghost. Both men and women can wake up sick, bleeding or insane because some monster has seduced or raped them during the night. One such creature is Vein, who was once handsome and man-like, has a smooth hairless body, red eyelids, and is hung like a horse and wanted to have sex constantly; one story tells of how he sodomized a man who killed him for it, and in another he is killed by a shaman after he devoured several entire communities. Women fetching water must beware of Water's Talking, an alligator-like creature who will try to seduce them.

The rivers of Guiana is the home of the Water Mamma, that rises out of the water, grabbing a canoe and all who ride in it, taking them to the bottom for death and demolition.

On the land in Guiana there is supposed to be the dreaded *camudi* snake that suffocates its victims with foul-smelling emissions, so people travel in pairs, so if one is attacked, the other

can beat and cut the air between his companion and the monster with his hair or a tree branch. The *camudi* may be related to the Kaypo *mru kaok* (that strangely also means "false" or "counterfeit" in their language), an aquatic, snake-like creature that is never seen, but is heard and smelled, and causes strokes and fainting.

The Yanoama are extra alert when one of their women is pregnant, her presence enrages a female monster called Sirurwe who will enter the village and suck people until only their skin is left. Inhaling *epena* allows them to see the 'enchanted ones' who live in beautiful underwater villages, and often abduct people and never let them go. They also believe in the Amahim, tiny men who live underground, who also kidnap people.

But not all the monsters of Green Hell are so bad, the Kayapo-Gorotire tell of Kuben Niepre, who has a human body and wings and feet of a bat, and is friendly. He likes to tickle people with his cold hands and pointed nails, causing laughter that is considered humiliating to the Indians—so one once got even by killing all the bats in his cave.

I wouldn't count on a friendly encounter though, the jungle maintains an uneasy relationship with its

residents, as long as they become part of it—outsiders, who remain outsiders, it treats differently . . . it's a different game.

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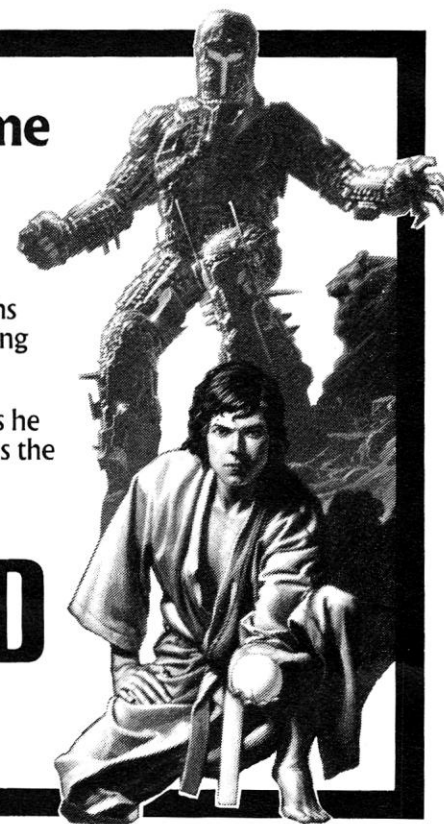
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HOLLYWOOD

Continued from page 4

horror. Elvira is played by a lovely lady named Cassandra Peterson and one look should convince you to stay tuned. Or tune out, since there's only two sides to Elvira, you love 'er, or your hate 'er. Personally Ye Ol' Sword will cuddle up to scrump-tiously wacky Elvira anytime.

And that's it for news. Onto my fan mail, all two letters of it.

Fans of the Sword: First off, Mr. Russ Heller wrote asking me whatever became of the *Dungeons & Dragons* and *RuneQuest* movies. Well, I've already filled you in on the *D&D* flick last column. As for the *RQ* movie, it seems like it is in movie-biz limbo. The major studios are just about through with making fantasy pictures, and as far as I know, the *RQ* movie was too big for independents like Roger Corman. I'll nose around a little bit more, Russ, to see if there's any more word, but frankly, I wouldn't count on seeing the picture this year. But thanks for your inquiry and kind words about Ye Ol' Sword.

Much thanks also to Leigh Blackmore, director of the H.P.

Lovecraft Bibliographical Centre in Thornleigh, Australia. Leigh wrote all the way from down under in response to my response to David Kraklow concerning the film *Cry Of Cthulhu*. Leigh says that back in '77, Paul Berglund (editor of DAW anthology *Disciples Of Cthulhu*) wrote to say that the film had been put on the back burner because the studio had backed out and the producers lacked the funds to make it themselves. Then in '79, *Heavy Metal* magazine contained an excerpt from the novelization of the film (this is one of the articles Mr. Kraklow referred to in his inquiry). Leigh can't say whether this novelization was actually published and sincerely wishes to solve the mystery of *Cry Of Cthulhu*. Anybody out there with more info?

Leigh also volunteered the following cinematic Cthulhoid data: About the same time as *Cry Of Cthulhu* was announced, American-International announced a version of *Shadow Over Innsmouth* but this too vanished (maybe Cthulhu is shy, eh?). However, in 1980, John Stryzik directed a 17-minute version of Lovecraft's *The Music of Erich Zann*, which was shown at several fantasy cons in the U.S.

(listen up con film program organizers, here's a Cthulhu film fer ya). An article by Stryzik on this film appears in *Lovecraft Studies No. 4*, published by Necronomicon Press. John plans to film a feature version of *The*

Case of Charles Dexter Ward according to Leigh, but nothing definite has surfaced yet.

And that's the whole enchilada from Less Angles. See you next time. And keep those dice rolling!



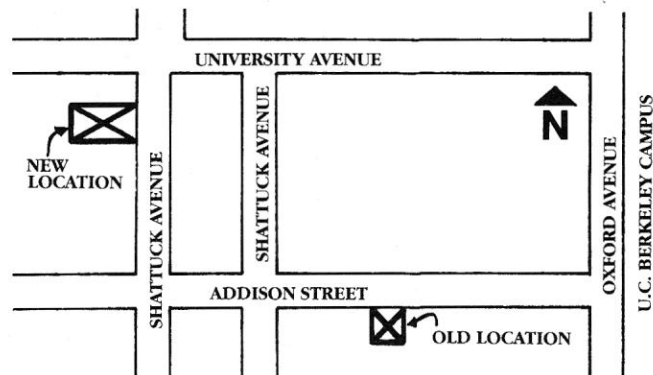
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The Expanding Universe of Traveller

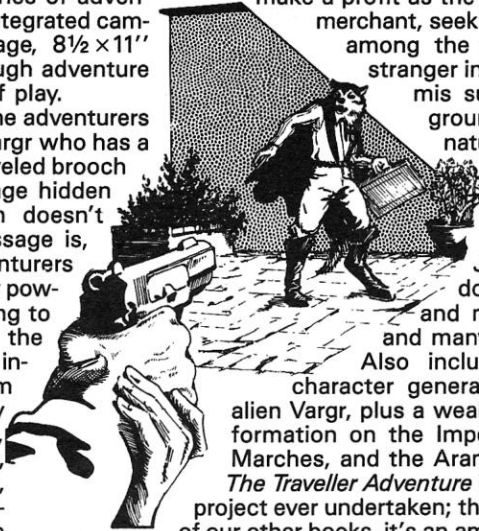
Why do more people play Traveller than any other science fiction role-playing game?
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Actually, it's much more than an adventure: it's a whole series of adventures making up an integrated campaign. It's a 160-page, 8½ x 11" book filled with enough adventure to last for months of play.

It all starts when the adventurers meet Gvoudzon, a Vargr who has a stolen treasure: a jeweled brooch with a secret message hidden within it. Gvoudzon doesn't know what the message is, but soon the adventurers find that a great many powerful people are willing to kill to get it. Soon the party find themselves involved in a museum burglary, an attack by Vargr commandos, lanthanum smugglers, bureaucratic intrigues, kidnapping, and a full-scale megacorporate



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-dominium 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.

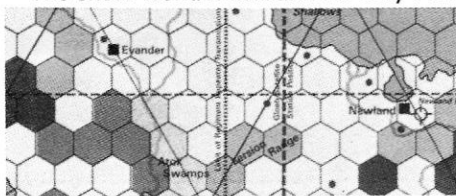
At 56 pages, *Murder on Arcturus Station* is longer than most Traveller adventures, but it's still only \$5.

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

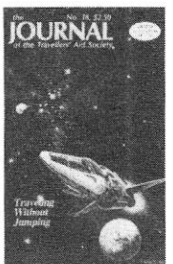
This supplement is a handy aid for the referee using Book 4, *Mercenary*. It contains over 200 pre-generated *Mercenary* characters from all branches of the Army and Marines, ranks from private to colonel, and tech levels from 7 to 15.

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.

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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.

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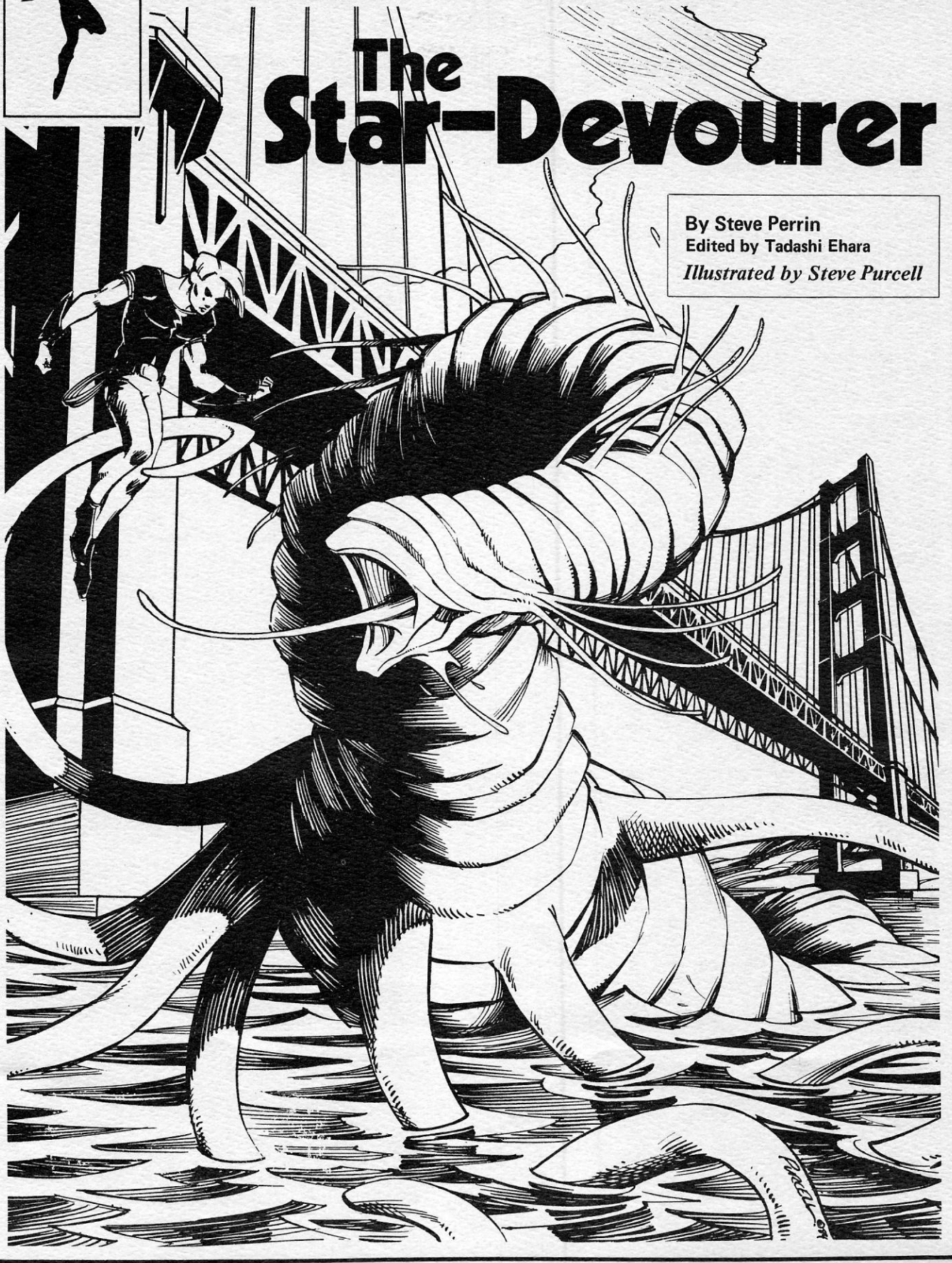




Module for **SUPERWORLD, CHAMPIONS, V&V**

The Star-Devourer

By Steve Perrin
Edited by Tadashi Ehara
Illustrated by Steve Purcell



Special DIFFERENT WORLDS Module

Special horror Feature

EVIL MAD CULTISTS CREATE HAVOC & MAYHEM! IN THE CITY OF HEARTS.

The sun set over the Golden Gate Bridge as I watched from the Berkeley Marina. Later that evening I crossed the Bay Bridge into my favorite city San Francisco. Its city lights were sparkling like a multi-faceted jewel.

I stopped off at the Atrium Lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel for a drink, my favorite spot in The City. The women were there as usual among the conventioners. You have to be careful of San Francisco women, they'll steal your heart away. It doesn't seem to matter whether they're natives of the area or visitors from other places, just being in The City gives them a feminine sensuality that men easily fall for. Small wonder the official city song is "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." I've known many who have.

I was watching the ball room dancers, keeping an eye on the pair of Asian women at the next table, and listening to the music when it happened. It was a long earthquake, the scary kind, especially when you're inside a tall building. My whole life flashed through my mind as I heard some women and a few gays scream. Then the giant steel Eclipse Sculpture in the middle of the lobby began to roll off its fountain base, scattering water and guests to the exits. The quake lasted some thirty seconds before it finally stopped.

I immediately left for the Vigilance Committee Headquarters. I figured I'd be needed.

This scenario is set in the San Francisco Bay Area, but can be adapted for use with almost any other city by judicious switching of prominent landmarks. The Statue of Liberty is equally deserving of destruction as the Golden Gate Bridge, though the New York gamemaster might be a bit pressed to discover a similar wild area to Mount Tamalpais within range to see the statue.

THE PLOT

Cultists of the Darkspawn operating under the name of the Order of Stellar Propitiation are attempting to raise a cthulhoid monster to destroy San Francisco during the 1984 Democratic Party Convention. By offering a major metropolis to the Star Gods during a major political event, the Cultists feel they will please their blood-thirsty masters and ensure their favor in the eyes of the Undying Ones.

The monster is based on a Dhole, a worm-like cthulhoid creature usually found on other planets riddled with their cavernous tunnels. This particular Dhole is approximately 550 metric tons weight, about 100 meters long, and about 8 meters in diameter.

The monster first appears between the Farallone Islands and the Golden Gate Bridge. It is approaching the north end of the bridge. By the time the heroes appear on the scene, it will be about 100 meters from the north tower.

THE CULTISTS

The Cult of Stellar Propitiation is bringing a monster down from the stars to devour San Francisco as an object lesson to the rest of the world and as proof of their devotion to their uncaring masters.

Their first action was to rob the Asian Art Collection of the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park of some Pacific island idols needed for the ritual. This should be the point at which the heroes are brought into the scenario, after the robbery has been committed. Witnesses say that several men in business suits suddenly joined hands and "looked hard" at everyone around. The witnesses went to sleep, and woke up to find the statues gone. If asked, the museum people will say the only other person in town known to have such a statue is Jeremiah Colbert, a rich eccentric recluse who brought one in an auction five years ago. Jeremiah is a pawn of the cultists. If the heroes don't think of it, a policeman or the museum curator on the scene should suggest that they go to Colbert's home to safeguard the last of the statues.

When the heroes get to Colbert's home, a mini-mansion in the Seacliff district of The City, they will be met by Colbert's houseboy, an aging Polynesian who will tell them that Mister Colbert is not home at present. The houseboy is affable and friendly. If the heroes show any kind of official status at all, he will invite them in to safeguard the master's treasures. Most of Colbert's valuable collection is in a basement display room, but the heroes see no statue of the kind that was stolen. If they question the houseboy, he will tell them that such a statue is kept in the vault, to which he does not have the combination. If the heroes have any way of looking into the vault, they will not see a statue, but there will be an empty place on a shelf that may have held a statue of that shape. If the heroes ask where Colbert is, the houseboy will inform them that Mister Colbert has gone to a worship service in Marin County, near Mount Tamalpais. Since the day is not a normal worship day for most known religions, the heroes might ask what the religion is. The houseboy does not know its name but he believes that it is a religion based on Polynesian practices, and its time of worship depends on certain configurations of the stars.

If the heroes get the hint, they might move on to Mount Tamalpais. As they approach the Golden Gate Bridge area, they will see a monster approaching the bridge. Otherwise, the heroes will hear a newscast (or be contacted by the police) describing the monster that is approaching the Golden Gate Bridge.

The Cultists, who include Jeremiah Colbert, are on top of Mount Tamalpais. They have just summoned the Star-Devourer, and must go through another ritual to direct its efforts. If they are stopped, the monster will proceed steadily to Mount Tamalpais and then stay there until it has been on this world an hour.



Stats for Villains And Vigilantes

STAR-DEVOURER

SEX: N/A
AGE: Centuries
SIDE: Evil
LEVEL: 30
EXPERIENCE: Lots

POWERS:

1. SIZE CHANGE: To 550 metric tons. Permanent condition.
2. HEIGHTENED STRENGTH: +10.
3. HEIGHTENED AGILITY: +22 (18+22-28 Agility Modifier =2).
4. NATURAL WEAPONRY: Shoots web with 5-inch diameter (26.5 feet) with 10 Structural Points. Range 2200 inches (4 miles). Cost 2 Power Points each.
5. INVULNERABILITY: 12 points.
6. WILLPOWER B: Usable as defense versus any attacks based on Mind Control.
7. SPECIAL ANIMAL POWER: Burrow 100' a turn through loosely packed soil.
8. Can never shunt damage from Hit Points to Power Points.
9. Cannot stay on Earth unless hour-long ritual is completed.

WEIGHT: 1,100,000 lbs
STRENGTH: 20 (1.6)
AGILITY: 2 (.2)
CHARISMA: 20
HIT POINTS: 13,940
HEAL RATE: 11,000/day
ACCURACY: -6
CARRYING CAPACITY: 2,200,000 lbs
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 10D10
MOVEMENT RATE: 294"
DETECT HIDDEN: 6%
ORIGIN & BACKGROUND: Interstellar monster meant for devouring worlds.

BASIC HITS: 22,000
ENDURANCE: 20 (2.2)
INTELLIGENCE: 7 (.9)
REACTIONS FROM: Good -3
Evil +3
DAMAGE MODIFIER: -3
POWER: 49
DETECT DANGER: 11%

Stats for Superworld STAR-DEVOURER

STR 105
CON 150*
SIZ 105
INT 7
POW 35
DEX 9
APP 50

HERO POINTS
Characteristics 461
Disadvantages 0
Handicaps 55
Experience 218
Used 734
Available 0

*The monster recovers hit points at a 1D3 rate (except on 96-00 rolls), and recover 2D3 on a roll of 01-37.

ACTION RANKS: 9.

MOVE (m/AR): Crawl 42m; Reach 9m; Burrow 50m; Swim 42m.

SUPERPOWERS

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Extra Hit Points: +256	128	0	128
Armor: 35K/35E/35R	105	0	105
Adaptability: All	6	0	18
0 E for Adaptability	18	0	18
Energy Supply: +1000	100	0	100
Mindblock: +20	20	0	20
0 E for Mindblock	20	0	20
Burrowing: 100m/MR (leaves tunnel)	50	50	50
4m Radius for crush attack	38	0	38
0 E for crush attack	95	0	95
Snare: 18D6	18	18	54
4m Radius for snare	36	12	36
Extended Range for snare: 480m	4	24	72
1/3 E for snare	108	0	108
Clumsiness: -36% from Agility roll			+12
Imperceptive: -27% from Idea roll			+9
Personal Problem: Enemy—entire world			+10
Physical Problem: Existence depends on Cultists			+10
Skill Limit: -25% Hide, -45% Jump			+14

DAMAGE BONUS: +19D6.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Crush*	95%	19D6	—	23m	156
Snare	90%	18D6	—	480m	54

*This is equivalent to a fist attack, as the monster has no hands.

PROTECTION: Armor 35K/35E/35R; Defense 45%; Protection vs. mental attacks 55.

HIT POINTS: 384.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 18) 1185.

SKILLS: Hide 0%; Jump 0%.

SPECIAL NOTES: Monster called from beyond the stars. Its sole function is the destruction of worlds.

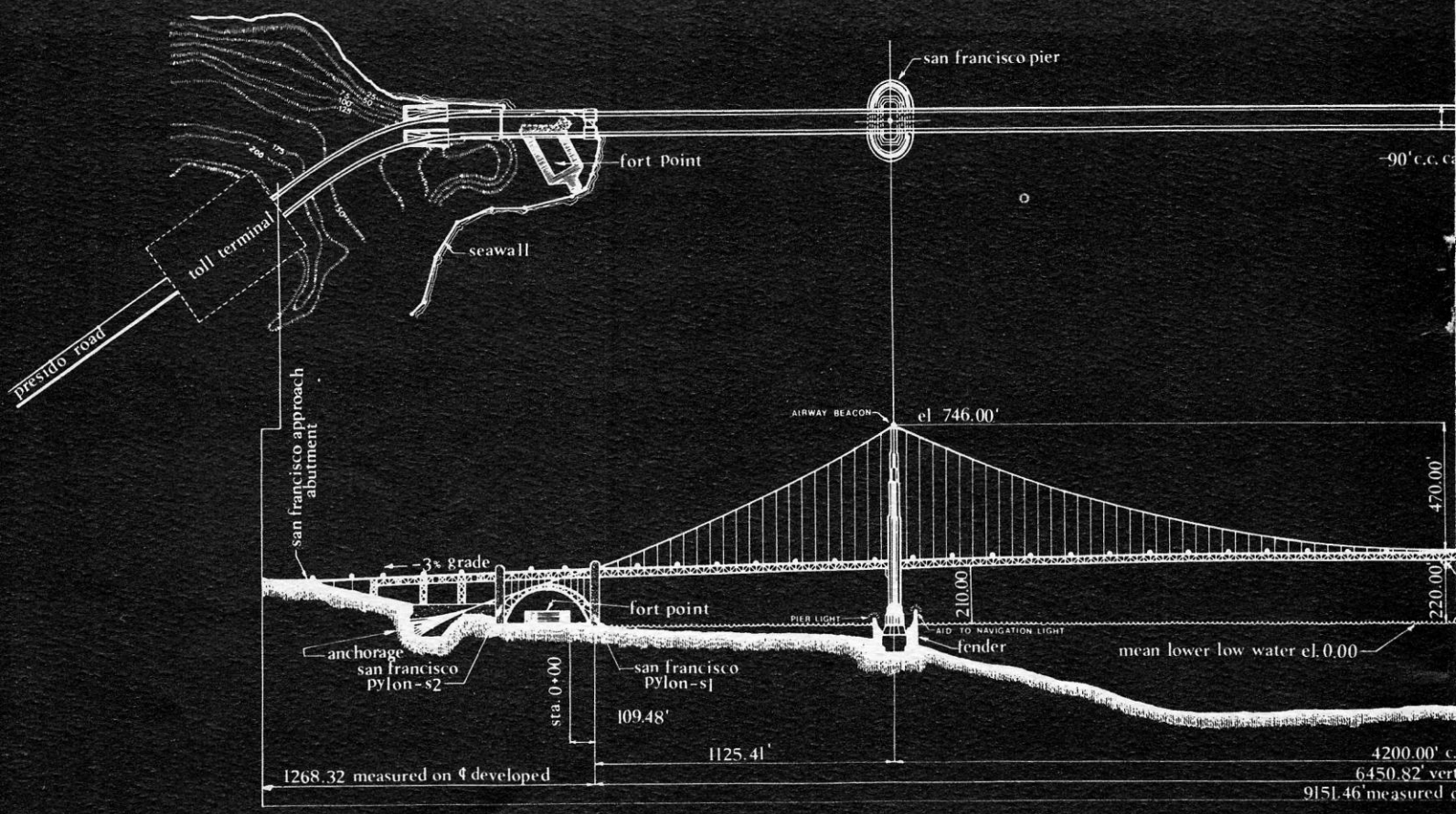
Stats for Champions STAR-DEVOURER

By Ray Greer

VAL	CHA	Cost	Powers	END	100+	Disadvantages
105	STR	0	Life Support		140	"Hunted" by the World, 14 or less
15	DEX	15	Armor 30 PD, 30 ED		40	No limbs; crawls
150	CON	300	Ego Def 41		25	Existence depends on Cultists
58	BODY	20	Tunneling 10"	10	20	Alien culture
4	INT	-6	10 Lev of Growth, 0 End, gets figured stats, no reach, +10" running		30	Unusual looks (monster), 14 or less
54	EGO	88	-19 DCV, -19 KB, +19 HtH			
105	PRE	0	*can use Str in 1 Hex area without HtH pluses			
0	COM	-5	No climbing			
40	PD	0	100m long, 8m diameter	4		
41	ED	0	9D6 Entangle 1/4 End, 2" rad			
2	SPD	-5	8 Lev Entangle			
51	REC	0				
400	END	50				
355	STUN	170				

OCV = 5
DCV = -14
ECV = 11
PHA = 6, 12

CHA Cost 627
Power Cost 909
Total 1536
Disadvan 355
Experience 1181



THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
SAN FRANCISCO

FACTS ABOUT THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

- Height of span above water: 67 meters
- Height of towers above water: 227 meters
- Length of span between towers: 1280 meters
- Width of bridge: 27 meters
- Depth of water at deepest point: 103.5 meters
- Depth of water around north tower: 9.1 meters

SUPERWORLD FACTS

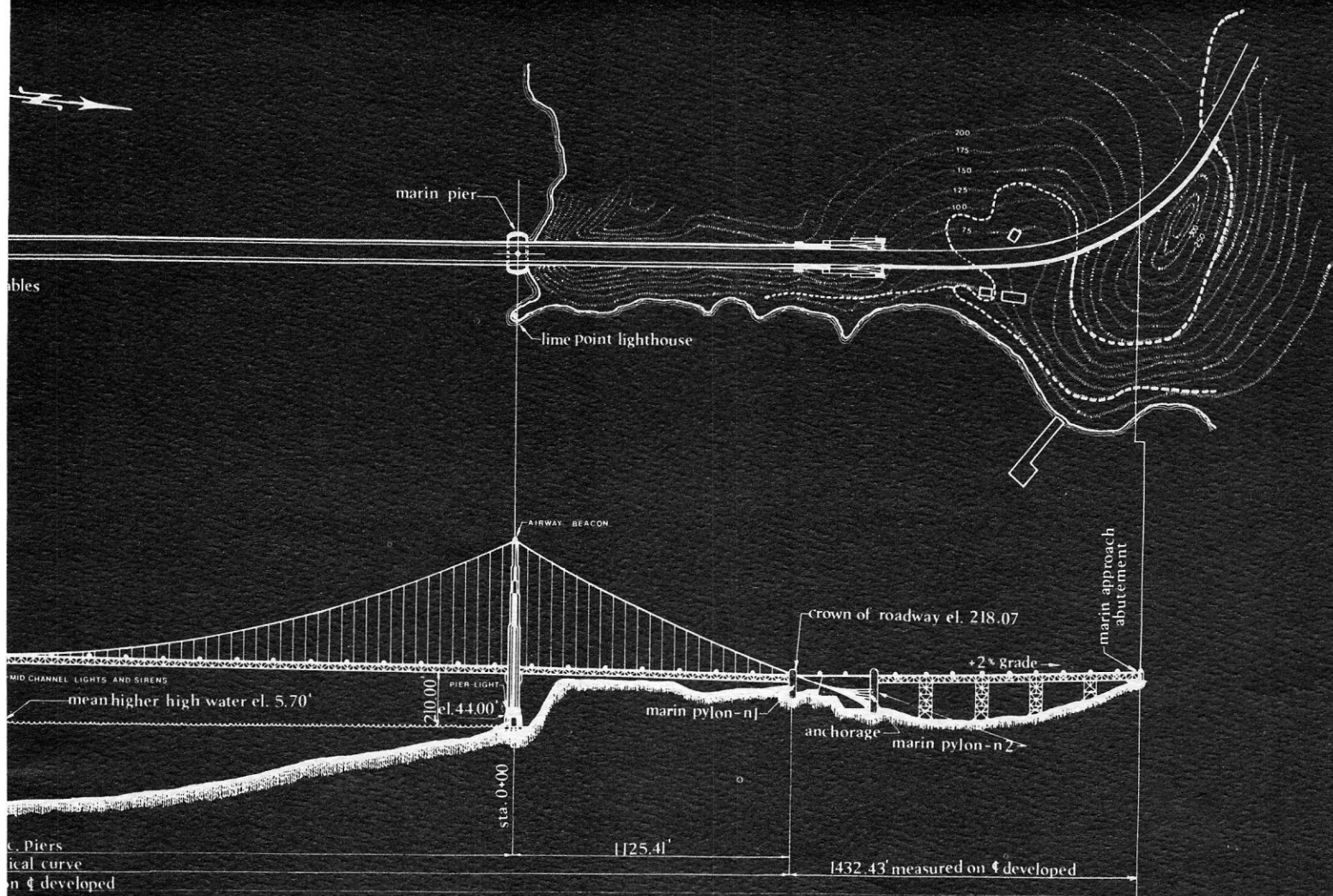
- Resistance: 15
- Segment SIZ: 43

If the Star-Devourer crawls onto the bridge, it will not collapse the bridge towers but it will ruin the roadway and perhaps break through and fall to the water again, which will be unlikely to hurt the monster.

FIGHTING THE MONSTER

The heroes should soon realize that fighting this monster is an exercise in futility. If some superstrong flying type attempts to pick it up and fly off with it, it will hug and crush him. If a telekinetic has the power to lift its mass, it will resist being picked up with its own strength, though this would keep it from moving as long as it fights the TK. It is possible that many specialized attacks will eventually wear it down, but mostly it will be unaffected by constant attacks. When it reaches the northern side of the bridge, it will come out of the water and attempt to move toward Mount Tamalpais. If the Cultists finish their incantation, it will suddenly turn and move toward the Moscone Center in downtown San Francisco where the Democratic Party Convention is in full swing.

Intelligent heroes will rapidly figure out that they should try to stop the problem at the source. If they have not followed the clues outlined before, the gamemaster will have to allow for some other indications of the source of the problem. Anything ranging from psychic currents



THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

leading to Mount Tamalpais visible to psionic/mystic-oriented heroes to a police report that witnesses have reported strange glows and chantings on the mountain will be sufficient.

CULTIST TACTICS

If attacked, the Cultists will split into groups of three, all of whom will Gestalt with the others. They will then do combined Mind Blasts at any foes. When all potential pursuers have been stunned, the Cultists will make a run for it.

There will be a trio of Cultists for each hero who approaches them. Moreover, there will be one Cultist without the powers of Mind Blast and Gestalt, but is otherwise the same, acting as lookout for each approaching hero. They will attempt to stop the heroes as best they can.

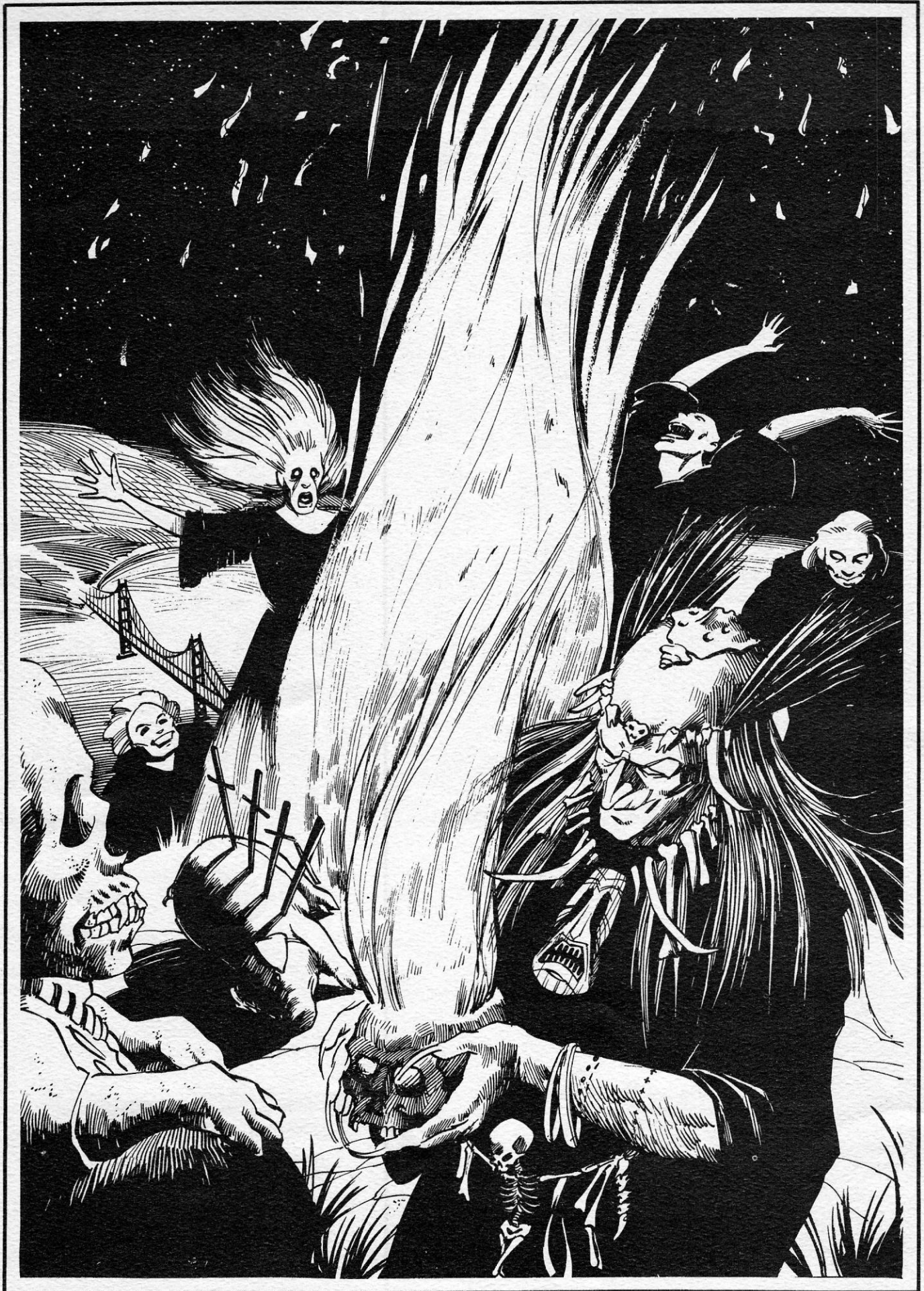
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CULTISTS AND THE STAR-DEVOURER

As long as the Cultists who participated in calling the Star-

Devourer are awake, the monster will remain on Earth. If all Cultists are knocked out, or voluntarily cease thinking about keeping the beast on the planet, it will leave. However, if the creature is allowed to stay for more than one hour, it will stay forever until slain.

Another way of breaking up the summoning is to seal all the dozen idols away in separate boxes, away from where the stars can see them. (The stars, of course, can see them in sunlight, since the stars are still there, just blanked out of normal sight by the sun.) □

*WILL THE SUPERHEROES
STOP THE MAD CULTISTS
IN TIME?
OR WILL THE MONSTER
DEVOUR SAN FRANCISCO?!*



Stats for an Average Cultist

Stats for Villains And Vigilantes

CULTIST

SEX: Usually male
AGE: 20-60

SIDE: Evil
LEVEL: 2
EXPERIENCE: varies

POWERS:

1. PSIONICS—Gestalt: Ability to willingly hook up with two other Cultists with this power to use Psionic Attack. Can extend hookup to more than three if make successful Mind Control attack against fourth and further members.

2. PSIONICS—Mind Blast: Uses Mind Control combat chart, but with level instead of (9) as basic attack. If linked with other Cultist, the levels are added together. If attack is successful, target loses 1D20 Power points, with usual results of fatigue if all Power points lost. Power cost = 5.

3. ARMOR B DEVICE: Robes of ADR 50.

WEIGHT: 150 lbs BASIC HITS: 3
STRENGTH: 12 ENDURANCE: 10
AGILITY: 11 INTELLIGENCE: 14
CHARISMA: 10 REACTION FROM: Good —
HIT POINTS: 4 Evil —
HEALING RATE: .75 DAMAGE MODIFIER: +1
ACCURACY: — POWER: 47
CARRYING CAPACITY: 204.6 lbs
BASIC HTH DAMAGE: 1D4 MOVEMENT RATE: 33"
DETECT HIDDEN: 10% DETECT DANGER: 14%

ORIGIN & BACKGROUND: Fanatic followers of the Dark who wish to propitiate their idea of nature of the star gods by giving them a city to ravage.

Stats for Superworld CULTIST

STR 12
CON 10
SIZ 14
INT 12
POW 12
DEX 16
APP 10

ACTION RANKS: 16/6.
MOVE (m/AR): Run 12m.

Superpowers

	Level	Energy	Hero Pts
Energy Supply: +200	20	—	20
Armor: 6K/6E/6R	18	—	18
[D] Vulnerable Device: costume (1/6)			+ 3
[D] Failure Chance 15%			+ 3
Gestalt: Contact with two minds	2	24/MR	24
Mind Blast: Potency 6	2	6	6
[D] Failure Chance 15%			+ 1
Added Damage: +1/die from light-based weapons			+ 6
Bad Luck: -30% Luck roll			+10
Imperceptive: -30% Idea roll			+10
Personal Problem: worships Dark gods			+10
Personal Problem: enemy—Seeker			+10
Psychosocial Problem: reclusive zealot			+ 5
Skill Limit: Climb -25%; Jump -25%			310

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry	Range	Energy
Fist	50%	1D3+1D6	50%	—	3

PROTECTION: Armor 6K/6E/6R (85% chance).

HIT POINTS: 12.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 2) 222.

SKILLS: Climb 30%; Jump 20%; Observation 60%; Science (Occult) 60%.

SPECIAL NOTES: If one member of a trio goes down, the other two will attempt to forcefully Gestalt with one member of the other trios, thereby giving that member the Mind Blast of 5 Cultists, for a potency of 30.

Stats for Champions CULTIST

By Ray Greer

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END	50+	Disadvantages
15	STR	5	15	Armor 9 PD, 9 ED		20	Worships the Dark gods
15	DEX	15		OIF Robe, Act 14 or less		10	Reclusive zealot
10	CON	0	15	Telepathy 3D6 0 End only usable with Cultist		20	2D6 Unluck
11	BODY	2				15	+½ times Stun light based attacks
10	INT	0	15	Ego Attack 2D6, act. 14 or less	4		
10	EGO	0	10	+2D6 if in telepathic contact with one Cultist, act. 14 or less	+4		
10	PRE	0					
10	COM	0	8	+2D6 if in contact with two Cultists, act. 14 or less	+4		
3	PD	0					
2	SPD	0	14	+4D6 if in contact with three or more Cultists, act. 14 or less	+8		
5	REC	0					
40	END	10	6	Knowledge skill—Occult 15 or less			
22	STUN	0					

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

CHA Cost 32
Power Cost 83
Total 115
Disadvan 115
Experience 0

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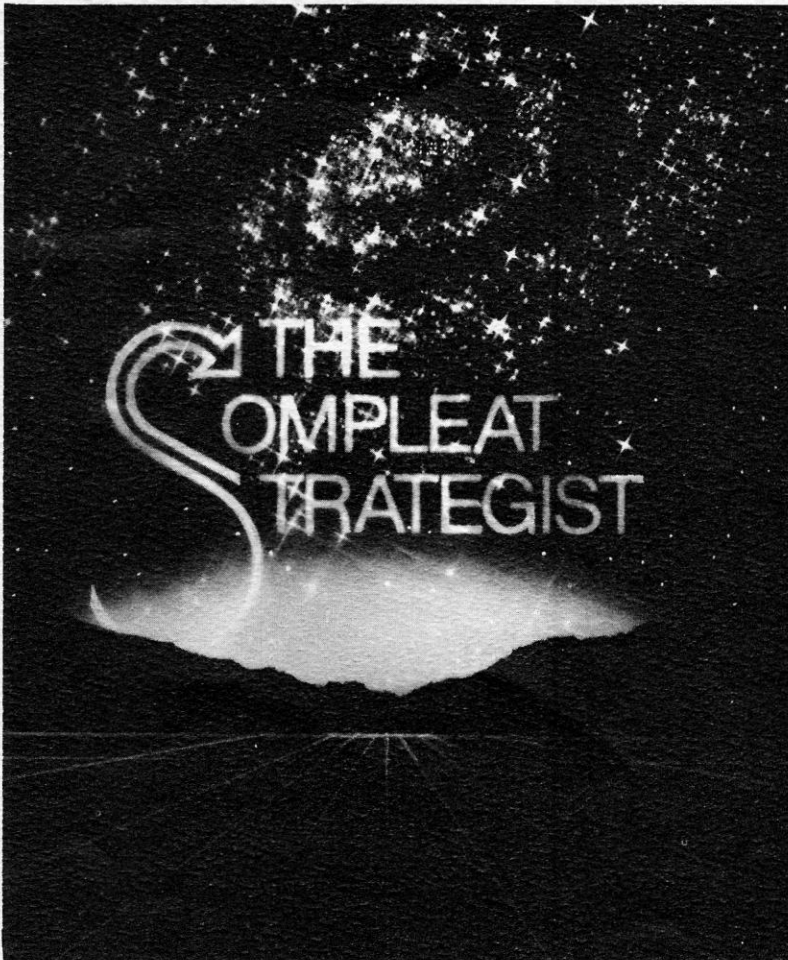
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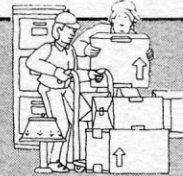
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LETTERS

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impression that *MP* is a combat-oriented game. The scenario, while it appears rather incomplete, and puts a large burden on the gamemaster to make things come out according to the plot, furthers *MP*'s image by providing a situation where insight and morals come into play.

I rather liked Greg Costikyan's article on magic. Well presented, with an interesting insight about fantasy role-playing.

Your reviews seemed well-written, but the review of *Monster Manual II* didn't seem very balanced. A review is presumably supposed to point out weak points, while this one did not. Yes, the reviewer claims that a "dragon shortage" is the book's major flaw, but this is a matter of taste. Some of us find it hard to believe the number of dragons encountered (and killed!) in fantasy role-playing campaigns. The reviewer seems to have fallen prey to the "more is better" syndrome. A larger variety of dragons only strains one's suspension of disbelief, while more detailed dragons with credible motives and personalities would heighten it. The creation of a complete society is of far more value, as Mr. Beno-

witz points out elsewhere in his review.

As I don't play *Traveller* or *V&V*, I can't comment on those articles, but I really can't complain that they were there, as they appeared concise and useful to those who do play.

David Dunham
San Antonio TX

Comments on Issue 34

Good going! I just picked up your latest issue (*DW 34*) at a game store and it's great! Your feature on the *DNAgents* gave me a look at some of the superhero games' character stats and let me find out which system to get (I still can't decide between *Champions* and *Villains & Vigilantes*).

But that's not my main reason for considering that issue one of my favorites of any game magazine; it is because of the *Call Of Cthulhu* module. I hold the Lovecraft story "The Haunter in the Dark" near and dear to my heart (it's the first and best Lovecraft story I've read), and have often tried to fit it into my campaign but I never had any luck, but your version was perfect! It was close to story but made it less deadly for the adventurers but was still horrifying and dangerous enough to be exciting. □

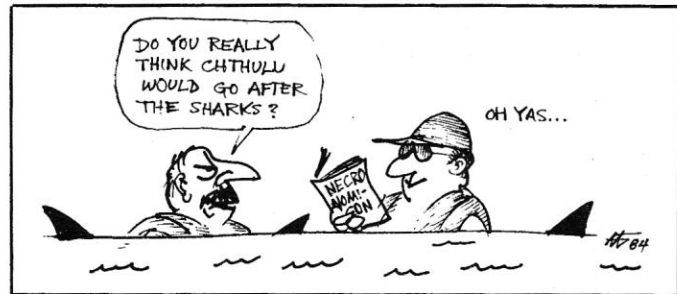
Aaron Fichtelberg
Fullerton CA

TRIVIA GAME ANSWERS

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1. *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Mike Stackpole.
2. PO Box 6302, Albany CA 94706.
3. Steve Jackson.
4. *Chivalry & Sorcery*.
5. Elric, Frank Brunner.
6. The late Gene Day, on a tombstone.
7. TSR Hobbies.
8. "Out on a Limb."
9. "Different Views" (better have gotten this one right).
10. Issue 2.
11. *The Morrow Project*.
12. The Rolemaster series.
13. Mayfair.

14. SPI, Eric Goldberg.
15. Steve Perrin, Ray Turney, Steve Henderson, and Warren James.
16. San Mateo.
17. B. Dennis Sustare.
18. Coleco.
19. *E.T.*
20. Loren Wiseman.
21. Richard Tucholka.
22. N1.
23. Ken St. Andre.
24. Miniature Figurines.
25. Gamelords.
26. *White Dwarf*.
27. Denver.
28. Warrior, mage, and cleric.
29. 18.
30. The Compleat Strategist.
31. 100.
32. Tyr Gamemakers.
33. Tim Kask. □



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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.

If you wish to see your convention listed in Different Worlds, send us the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact for further information, number of attendees expected, and number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service, but please, game cons only.

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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

OMACON 4 August 3-5, 1984
Holiday Inn-Old Mill, Omaha NE
OMACON 4
2518 S 167th St
Omaha NE 68130

Colonial City Gamefest '84
August 10-12, 1984
Mt Vernon High School, Mt Vernon OH
Colonial City Gamefest
1003½ E Gambier St
Mt Vernon OH 43050

1984 GEN CON August 16-19, 1984
Univ of WI, Parkside Campus, Kenosha WI
TSR/Dieter Sturm
PO Box 756
Lk Geneva WI 53147
(800) 558-2420

ARCANACON II August 23-26, 1984
University High School, Parkville,
Melbourne, Australia
ARCANACON
c/o 105 Cardigan St
Carlton 3053
Australia

EARTHCON IV September 7-9, 1984
Holiday Inn, Cleveland State University,
Cleveland OH
EARTHCON IV
PO BOX 5641
Cleveland OH 44101

10th Annual Council of 5 Nations
October 5-8, 1984

Event location not announced
I.M. Lord (send SASE)
SWA 10th Council
1639 Eastern Pkwy
Schenectady NY 12309

Crusader Con IV October 19-21, 1984
Metropolitan State College, Denver CO
The Auraria Gamer's Club
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Denver CO 80201-3395

COGACON 84 October 20-21, 1984
South Terrace, Ohio Union, Ohio State
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UTHERCON IV November 9-11, 1984
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CAPCON '85 April 5-7, 1985
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MY LIFE & ROLE-PLAYING

Continued from page 9

he has assembled to face his adventure.

Players must also contribute to this process. Stop having characters act like para-military morons. The most dangerous thing about a character is the mind of the person playing the character. You may not be able to make deductions your character would be incapable of, but you can play your character in a consistent manner, allowing for thought and growth.

How many times has a character faced death or grave injury without coming away with a mental scar? Getting half eaten by a giant beetle is bound to make a character bit shy of a giant beetle on his next adventure. It is logical, reasonable; let your characters grow. The greatest mark of a great character is when that character marches into certain doom because, against your best wishes, it is what the characters would do.

So, my life is ordinary, as you can see. I hope my brand of gaming is not so ordinary. But that is not how I would like to keep it. I hope sharing it will make it common because the games are the most creative experience you can share in, but it is a process of sharing. Be flexible, be creative and discover the winning in playing as opposed to the winning in the final outcome of the game.

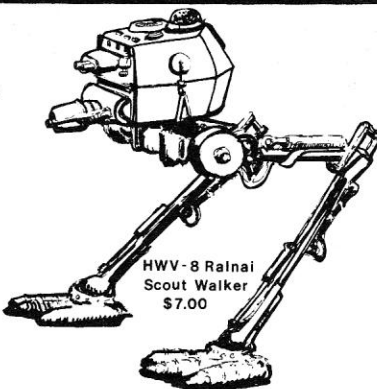
If you do that maybe you will find yourself writing this article in the future. □

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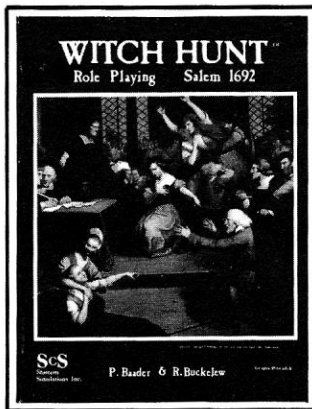
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Game Reviews

Witch Hunt/Behind Enemy Lines/Thieves' World/Q Manual/Autoduel Champions/The Asylum/Fate of the Sky Raiders/The Mines of Keridav/Dungeonland/The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror/Deathstroke/Forms And Charts



WITCH HUNT

By P. Baader and R. Buckelew (Statcom, \$10)

Reviewed by Sandy Petersen

Witch Hunt is a rather weird conception. Although there have been other role-playing games based on minor periods of history and/or obscure cultures, *Witch Hunt* must hold some kind of record for both history and strange culture. It covers only two years of history: 1691-92, and only a single small area of the U.S.A.—Salem, Massachusetts Colony, and the surrounding region. Unlike nearly every other role-playing game on the market, *Witch Hunt* is set up so that the players take an adversary relationship to one another; one group of players running the magistrate and witch-finders, while the others run the witches themselves. The gamemaster himself is called the Town Crier, and is also part of the town society, an interesting concept which fails.

Witch Hunt is contained in a black box with a period painting on the cover. Inside is a 46-page rulebook adequately and attractively illustrated in the engraving style of the 1690's; a two-sided character sheet on cardstock, for the purpose of photocopying more; a strange and seemingly incomplete map of Salem Village, one assumes circa 1690; and the ubiquitous dice, in this case a pair of miniature D20s.

Statcom's quality standards vary in a bizarre fashion, almost as if they had been cursed (?). For instance, the map of Salem is greatly flawed, though it looks rather nice, with little houses and trees drawn in with some detail. There is no church house given, though one little building looks like it has a belltower. "Gaal" is

misspelled, humorously, and presumably in error, "Gaal." And there is no map compass explaining which way is north. When I opened my copy of the rules, I found that pages 13-14 and 31-32 were misplaced, causing me some annoyance. Other than such blunders, production quality was fine.

The rules themselves are difficult to read, thanks to the fact that around two words in every sentence are in all-caps. They start off with a character creation in a D100 system. As has been the tradition, different classifications of the D100 result have been given names (so that, for instance, if your Intuition is 96-00, you are classified as Primordial). But thankfully, these names are little-used in the game itself. Instead, when some important deed needs to be done, a character simply rolls D100. If he rolls under his characteristic, then he has succeeded. Out of 10 characteristics, 5 are mental (Wit, Knowledge, Intuition/Premonition, Wisdom, and Will), and not all are useful to both character classes, which consist of the Magistrate and the Witch. As a character increases in experience levels, his mental attributes also increase.

There is a short combat section, which is not well-explained. All characters have the same chances of success using a musket (any roll of 5-50 hits, rolls of 1-4 being misfires), and the wounds are moderately deadly. Two shots spell doom for almost any character. Gunshot wounds do damage in proportion to one's Constitution score, so sturdier characters simply take more damage. These odd results can partly be explained away by the fact that it is obvious that the authors had no intention of allowing gunfights to become part of any campaign. Fisticuffs is covered in somewhat more detail, but is still not particularly interesting.

Then there are rules for searching for and arresting witches, along with a number of percentile charts, leading to perhaps more random results than a good gamemaster would desire. The magistrates are also allowed to know up to three spells, though the exact spells known, if any, are decided during character creation—new spells are evidently not learnable. It makes little difference, as character development is manifestly

not an integral part of *Witch Hunt*: the fun is in the chase itself, rather than in the characters.

The magistrate also gets the help of a Staff of Law. The *Dungeons & Dragons*-ish term simply refers to a long staff with a sort of hook on the end, a common policeman's tool of the period. For some reason, one must roll randomly to find out if one's magistrate can possess one of these contraptions.

Magic is assumed to be real in *Witch Hunt*, and a list of 20 spells is given for the potential witch character. The witch must roll for each spell to see whether or not he knows it, but when he increases a level, can attempt to see if he knows it again. Some of the spells have bland foolish names, such as "Beneficial to Subject," while others reek of fascinating Puritan evil, such as "Witch's Ladder," or the dread "Black Fast." A little information is given on each spell as to how it was cast and what material is needed. I wish there had been more such information given, as the tidbits included were priceless. It is possible for one's spell to backfire, though the effects are unspecified.

Again differing from other role-playing games, *Witch Hunt* has victory conditions (sharing this feature with *Alma Mater*). There are also experience points, though there are only 4 levels to be gone up.

Witch Hunt ends with a brief description of the political intrigue infesting Salem at the time and some floor plans of

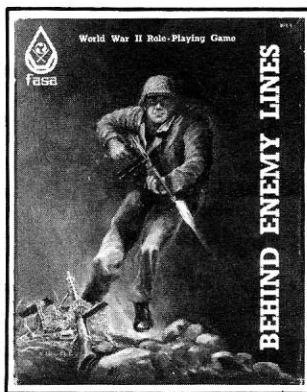
typical buildings. There is also a brief overview of a tour of Salem and a bibliography.

At the back of the book is a "complimentary" (sic) scenario, "The Shadow of the Dark Man," based on an actual historical incident. It is really no more than the beginning of a scenario. The players are supposed to take it from there.

Witch Hunt's rules are not really very good, and at every turn it is possible to find holes and oversimplifications. However, for such a limited-run game as this must inevitably be, these are not necessarily fatal flaws. More serious is the fact that there is not enough background information. The only mention of the *Long Lost Friend* (a famous witch grimoire) is in a context that only implies that it is a book at all. The gamemaster must do a great deal of work, as must the players. It is definitely no game for hack-and-slash playing or wargaming. Only those heartily devoted to role-playing would enjoy *Witch Hunt*.

The company promises modules for the future. I await them with interest.

Summing up, *Witch Hunt* is eccentric. It might be good for a laugh and even a short campaign. The information it does include on the time of the witch trials makes it a useful supplement to such games as *Call Of Cthulhu*. If you do not play *Cthulhu* or some other game in which *Witch Hunt's* background, spell lists, maps, and floor plans would eventually become useful, I cannot recommend *Witch Hunt*. But otherwise, it's not a bad purchase. □



BEHIND ENEMY LINES

By William H. Keith, Jr., et al (FASA, \$20)

Reviewed by Ian R. Beste

With the publication of *Behind Enemy Lines*, role-playing games have returned to their roots—wargames. Originally, *Dungeons & Dragons* was a spinoff of a miniatures campaign, and for some time fantasy role-playing was regarded as an odd sort of wargaming. Several militarily-oriented role-playing games have appeared in the last few years—*Recon*, *Merc*, *Commando*, *Privateers & Gentlemen*—but *BEL* is the first set in the most popular wargaming period of all time, World War II. Not only is *BEL* the only game in its class, it is also fairly well done. The only drawback it has is that World War II is not a good role-playing period because

modern war doesn't inherently produce a good role-playing setting.

The physical appearance of *BEL* is functional and reflects FASA's slowly improving production ability, though not yet up to the level of *Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game*. Inside the two-inch deep box are three rulebooks that cover basic rules, event tables, and missions, two counter sheets of 70 counters each, three cardstock sheets of charts and tables, one cardstock sample character sheet, and four 11"x17" sheets with mission maps in red and black. The counters are of passable quality, with hard-to-make-out pictures and uneven die-cutting. The paper quality is acceptable, not slick or tissue-paper-like.

As to the rules themselves: overall, they are designed to be easily understood and playable. *BEL* is not, by any means, trying to be a simulation. Leave that to *Squad Leader*. Rather, *BEL* feels more like *Traveller*, a feel reinforced by the need for D6s only. The *BEL* designers are apparently hoping to give the players the feel of fast-paced modern combat, rather than aiming to show all the component parts of violence as the designers of *Aftermath* tried to do.

Character generation is easy: Strength, Endurance, Weapons Handling, and Agility are determined by rolling 1D6+4, while Stamina (hit points) is the average of Strength and Endurance. Weight is determined by a die roll with modifiers for Strength and Agility. There are 18 skills which can be acquired three ways: as part of a character's background, through basic training, and as acquired through combat experience. The combat experience rules, which determine what campaigns the character has already been in, are somewhat equivalent to the prior service rules in *Traveller*, allowing the player to run an experienced player-character who won't get killed off so quickly. The player also rolls to determine whether his character is from the country or the city; this affects background skills and also helps to create a player-character's personality. Note, however, that the sort of player-character that can be created through this process is a foot soldier in the U.S. Army—no tankers, fighter pilots, Marines, Germans, Soviets, or partisans. There are rules for paratroops and Rangers, but that's it. This limits the number of situations that the gamemaster can create, unless he is willing to do his own research.

Combat is straightforward. The characters base chance to hit is

dependent upon range (Close 8+ on 2D6, Medium range 10+, Long Range 12+, Extreme range 14+), number of bursts fired, skill with that weapon, Weapons Handling ability, movement, concealment, cover, and evasion. In other words, the *Traveller* combat system with some modifications. The biggest difference is in how player-characters take damage; 2D6 are rolled to determine severity (light, moderate, and severe wounds, or outright death). Each result has a damage point change and other specified effects. The section on wounding comes before the section on combat, together with rules on exhaustion. Interestingly, the only difference specific types of weapons make is in whether or not they can be set to fire automatically. This is a refreshing turnaround from combat systems that never seem to tire of making fine distinctions between weapons, and points out the fact that in wartime, it does not matter whether it is a 7.62mm or a 7.92mm round that hits you. It's whether or not you are dead. Equipment fanatics (and God knows there are a lot of them keen on World War II) may object; I say, "Go play *Aftermath* or *Morrow Project*."

The rules on sighting include a full page of tables that are hardly self-explanatory, making them difficult to reference quickly. In addition, the instructions on Table 1 to "shift 1 row lower" and "shift 2 rows lower" should be to shift "higher." Constant use of these tables slow the game. My advice: the gamemaster should use the Sighting Tables only when the player-characters know something is out there but can't see it. Otherwise, the gamemaster should use his own discretion as to visibility (or consult the table secretly) in order to maintain the tension in the game.

The rules for random fire add a necessary and well-done element to the game as they simulate the effects of a big messy battle in which lead and steel are flying all over the place. Other combat rules cover artillery fire, mortars, flamethrowers, hand-to-hand combat, night, and anti-tank warfare. The anti-tank rules include separate data and hit location tables for 6 German and 2 American tanks. This limited selection will no doubt annoy the tank-lovers who will complain that their favorite model was left out. There are rules for troop quality, medals, prisoners and interrogation, mines, communications, explosives, and miscellaneous gear. All this is followed by rules for paratroops and Rangers (but none of my favorite, the U.S. 10th Mountain Division which

served in Italy), and several pages of weapon data, with drawings by William H. Keith, Jr., that could have been better. The one-page section on "Surviving Behind Enemy Lines" is simply how to survive in modern combat and applies equally well to any modern-period combat role-playing game such as *Recon*, *Merc*, or even *Morrow Project*.

The second rulebook, "Event Tables," is just that, encounter tables with lots of nasty things to throw at players. This book also has a lot of white space that could have been used to either flesh out some of the events, provide some sample gamemaster-characters, set out diagrams, or other useful things. Nonetheless, this is a useful set of tables, and I recommend consulting it before drawing up an original mission. Because of the specific setting and circumstances of *BEL*, these event tables rarely produce the illogical or bizarre events gamemasters produce using fantasy role-playing game encounter tables (first, 237 orcs, then a red dragon, then a mermaid. . .).

The missions in the third book, "Missions," are well executed scenarios that don't strain a player's credulity. Start off with the four shorter missions, called "incidents" that are commonplace sort of actions in warfare—"Pillbox on Hill 409," "Machinegun Hilton," "Night Encounter," and "Deadly Crossfire." I recommend "Machinegun Hilton" because hack-and-slash players will soon learn that you can't hack-and-slash your way through a platoon of seasoned Wehrmacht infantry liberally equipped with Gewehr 43s and MG 34s. After letting the players sweat out these incidents, the gamemaster should then let them try the three missions—"The Jaws of the Trap," "The Long Patrol," and "Rescue from the Sky." The last is a sort of an OSS operation that will probably be hard to fit into an on-going campaign.

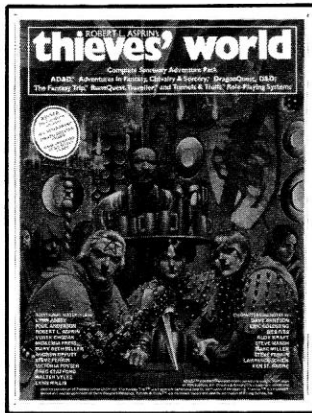
So, overall, a commendable effort by FASA. Too bad they picked such a poor role-playing setting. The designers, on page 5 of the first rulebook, argue that the actions of the ordinary infantryman in the typical squad, drafted and given the dirty job of defeating the Nazis, is a form of heroism. True, but depressing. Modern warfare with its incredible casualty-producing capacities, has forced armies to spread out its combat units, no longer massed in lines of spearmen, archers, or musketeers. Dispersal, cover, and advancing by bounds is the modern mode of operations. All this requires individual courage and initiative.

Yet, the armies have grown larger, the battlefields more expansive, with machines becoming the real killing devices. Thus, any one individual is less important in the Industrial Age army. In *BEL*, one role-plays a man who is trying not to gain gold, steal a spaceship, or gain rune powers, but who is trying to survive. How can a player role-play against artillery, booby traps, random machine gun fire? The mission and incidents provided in *BEL* do not cover all the kinds of actions that occurred in Europe in 1944-45. The real casualty-producing operations, Normandy, Hurtgen Forest, Aache, the advance through the Low Countries, Battle of the Bulge, could only be represented in this game as a constant series of Random Fire, artillery, and mortar events. Adventure games, as role-playing games are often called, deal with adventure, unusual and dangerous events that can be exhilarating and/or rewarding; modern warfare is not an adventure for the poor bloody infantry. It is a tiresome business of confused teamwork, masses of men gathered in small groups, bound together by ties of friendship that exist because of the need for mutual security, men fed again and again into the mouth of battle with a low chance of eventually surviving. John Ellis' *The Sharp End: The Fighting Man in World War Two* (New York: Scribner's, 1980) points out that the infantry battalions and regiments of the Allied forces suffered the bulk of all battlefield casualties, usually around 80% of the total divisional casualties. Ellis says that one man in three could expect to become a battle casualty, that is, removed from the fighting line to an aid station, and this doesn't include minor front-line injuries. Further, 60-75% of these casualties were caused by artillery and mortar fire. Front-line divisions could expect 50-80% casualties per month, the bulk of the losses coming from the infantry. Forget role-playing in real full-scale battle; the players will grow tired of it, just like in real life—except that they have the option to quit.

The best use players and gamemasters can make of *BEL* is as a game of special operations. A campaign game of *BEL* with the players a bunch of infantrymen will become boring. Set it up so that the players get to try different characters and different situations each game session. Or throw reality to the winds and make your own version of Sgt. Rock or Clint Fury, or the Rat Patrol (or Clink Eastwood in *Kelly's Heroes*. . .). This will allow everyone to enjoy the versatility of the

game system and get a chance to role-play. If FASA could produce supplements, players could be

French Resistance fighters, British Commandos, Yugoslav Partisans, German Fallschirmjager. . . □



THIEVES' WORLD

By Lynn Abbey, et al
(Chaosium, \$18)

Reviewed by Paul Ryan O'Connor

Thieves' World represented an important milestone in the adventure gaming industry when it was first published in 1981, and I do not think this product has lost much of its importance over the last few years. If you have not bought *Thieves' World* by now, you should.

Included in the *Thieves' World* box is a large wall map of the city of Sanctuary; a small game-master's map of the Maze quarter of town, and another map detailing the underground of that same quarter; a 64-page book detailing gamemaster's information about the city; a 64-page book listing the vital stats of the personalities of Sanctuary; and a 16-page book telling the prospective player what his character knows about Sanctuary as he enters the game.

Thieves' World remains the definitive fantasy city module for role-playing gaming. *Thieves' World* details the city of Sanctuary in role-playing game terms, as seen in the first two books of the tremendously successful series of *Thieves' World* fiction anthology series edited by Robert L. Asprin.

The *Thieves' World* fiction anthologies are unique in that each individual story is contributed by a different author, each of whom draws upon a common background while adding something new to the myth of Sanctuary. Chaosium maintained this unique spirit when they produced *Thieves' World* by drawing upon the expertise and authority of experts familiar with nine different role-playing systems. *Thieves' World* is a true generic adventure pack in that it describes the city of Sanctuary in terms that any gamemaster can use, but at the same

time provides specific character stats to which the gamemaster may refer.

Thieves' World includes contributions by people prominently associated with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Adventures In Fantasy, Chivalry & Sorcery*, *DragonQuest*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *The Fantasy Trip*, *RuneQuest*, *Traveller*, and *Tunnels & Trolls*. A casual glance at this list reveals that *Thieves' World* has stood the test of time a bit better than some of the gme systems for which it was written, which is at the same time a tremendous tribute to *TW* and perhaps the single greatest fault I can find with this product.

The *TW* maps broke new ground for elegance and clarity. The maps show a simple, uncluttered overhead views of the city, naming major roads and structures. Multi-story buildings are instantly recognizable by the symbol of one square within another, while all one story buildings are simply drawn as blocks. The physical quality of *Thieves' World* is up to the Chaosium's usual high standards. This is a handsome product.

The Players' Guide to Sanctuary is my favorite of the three books included in *TW*. The Players' Guide is a wonderful innovation in role-playing, allowing the gamemaster to quickly provide his players with all the "common knowledge" their characters would have. This book gives a players'-eye view of the politics and personalities of the city, a brief bit of history, and a complete glossary of terms, names,

and places the characters are likely to encounter as they adventure in the city. Players will have a rough time of it in Sanctuary if they do not read this book—but that's their responsibility, and one less thing that the overworked gamemaster has to worry about.

The Gamemaster's Guide For Sanctuary book fills in most of the information left out of the Players' Guide. This book contains a few essays on effective role-playing in the urban environment, but the majority of the book is given over to detailing specific areas of Sanctuary. The final part of this book is filled with floor plans and descriptions of 14 different buildings of the city. These descriptions are adequate for game play, but are best used as examples for gamemasters wishing to develop other areas of the city.

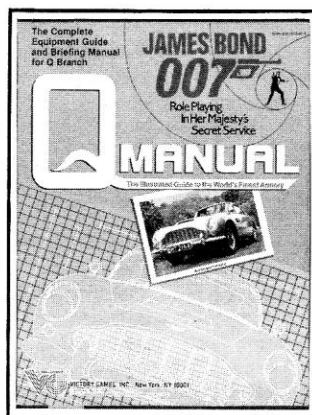
Midkemia Press did a good job developing business generation and encounter charts for several regions of the city, which form the bulk of the Gamemaster's Guide. The gamemaster is thus given the option of either detailing Sanctuary on his own before the game begins, or of rolling up the details of each street as needed during play. What this means is that the gamemaster will have to invest a great deal of his time before the city of Sanctuary is fully detailed—each building on the map is not keyed and described. *TW* provides the necessary minimum outline—the gamemaster must fill in the rest.

The third book details the stats of the personalities of Sanctuary. This book was written largely by the authors of the game systems for which *TW* is intended. Each game system is given a separate chapter. It is interesting to

examine how each role-playing game authority rates characters from the novels against each other, but don't expect to gain any insight on how characters translate from one system to another by reading this book. The contributors were apparently given free reign to examine and detail whichever characters they wished, and the stats given here are more a product of whim than of careful consultation with the *TW* anthologies text. Still, the book is useful if you need to know the Prince's stats quickly, and helps point gamemasters in the right direction for developing their own *TW* characters.

The strength of *TW* is that it is incomplete. Large areas of the city (most notably the palace) are left vague. The materials included with the game convey the spirit of Sanctuary, and give a fair number of specific details, but the gamemaster is never overwhelmed with pages and pages of information that must be assimilated before play can begin. The *TW* gamemaster must involve himself with this product more than with any other pre-packaged scenario I have seen, and this insures that games using this product will have the vigor usually lacking in "third party" adventures. *TW* is not a crutch for the imagination, but rather it is a catalyst instead.

TW has outlived the usefulness of some of the systems for which it was written, and quality support products for *TW* have not been produced. The product requires a great deal of gamemaster input before it can be used. But the charm and quality of *TW* is as strong today as it ever has been, and I can see no way to give *Thieves' World* anything but my highest recommendation. □



Q MANUAL

By Greg Gordon
(Victory Games, \$9.95)

Reviewed by Anders Swenson
The *James Bond 007* adventure

game seeks to create the mood of the classic James Bond novels and motion pictures. Since an important aspect of James Bond is the endless stream of superciliously described technological hardware (not to mention the endless catalog of luxury goods and travel spots), a supplement devoted to super hardware is to be expected. This volume is 137 pages.

The *Q Manual* is probably required reading for any *007* gamemaster so one question I had was whether it would be useful for other modern-day games such as *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes, Espionage*, or *Top Secret*. After all, there are few sources of stats for modern-day machines, especially with numbers pre-digested for adventure game use. So, let us study the volume at hand.

The book treats several categories of ironmongery: Weapons, Vehicles, Common Devices, Security Devices, Exotic Devices, and Drugs. There are additional chapters on Q Branch history and personnel, and on equipment design notes. Appendices cover the abbreviations used in the book and summarises the numerical information for the vehicles and weapons described in the book.

Each entry contains a paragraph describing the weapon/vehicle/device, noting both its characteristics and history. This is followed by a Q Evaluation and occasionally a paragraph of game information. The Q Evaluation is mostly chrome, telling about how a device was used or misused in the field by Bond, 004, 006, or other M.I. 6 staff. The game informa-

tion is sometimes exasperating, tending to be big on noting that movie heavies often drive Chevy Caprices, while their bosses tool around in black Caddies.

The weapons chapter is divided into sections covering pistols (24 types listed), shoulder arms (13 listed), and miscellaneous weapons, from guided missiles to toenail-clipper caltrops. Other sections describe archaic weapons, such as swords and crossbows, and accessories, such as special holsters and infra-red gunsights. The only heavy infantry-style rifle listed was the British Number Four rifle—nothing on the M1 Garand or the M14/15 with which the U.S. government has flooded the armies of the world.

The chapter on vehicles is subdivided into land vehicles, air vehicles, and water vehicles. The land vehicles listed number 58 and range from the inevitable

Aston-Martin sports tank to a GMC semi-trailer tractor to a VW beetle to an endless series of luxury cars. The air vehicles include airliners, light planes, helicopters, and a jump belt. No typical heavy helicopters or military fighters are covered, although we do get the SR71 and U2 types, both of which are rather atypical. The water vehicles are all small craft ranging from yachts to racing boats to submarines.

The next three chapters get down to the nuts and bolts of the fantasy spy trade—the plastic knives, gun-umbrellas, tracer radios, and truth drugs—of which spy movies are really made. Such fantasies as the infamous yo-yo buzz saw and Oddjob's hat are included, as are truth serums and the poison of the black widow spider.

The final chapters are of differ-

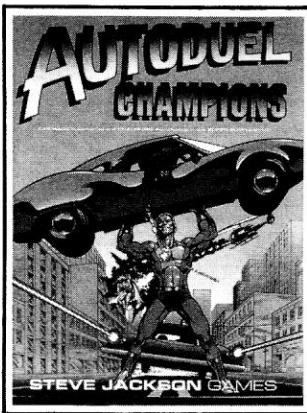
ing utility. The history of the Q Branch and the biographies of the imaginary scientists thereof seem totally superfluous—better that we should read of the stats of agents 004 and 006. The equipment design chapter, on the other hand, is a valuable explanation of the philosophy and formulae used to derive the values given in the first 7 chapters, with some notes on using weapons, vehicles, and devices not listed in this collection.

Overall the *Q Manual* is a reasonable survey of hardware which could occur within the scope of a *James Bond 007* adventure. While it is entirely possible that *007* gamemasters would wish to include more and different types of equipment in scenarios, the material in this book would be an excellent basis to interpolate their game stats from.

Gamemasters using other rule

systems will have less use for the *Q Manual*. First of all, most weapons listed in the *Manual* are covered specifically in the rule-books for *Espionage* and *MS&PE*. While the vehicle descriptions will be of greater use—neither of the other rule systems has much in the way of vehicle lists—the most useful chapters of the *Manual* for the non-*007* gamemaster will be in the spy stuff: for bugs, tracers, and miscellaneous widgets which take up a full third of the book.

As stated earlier, if you are a *007* gamemaster, you have probably already purchased this volume, and if not, it would be worthwhile, as it is an useful addition to the rules. For gamemasters using other systems, the *Q Manual* contains a lot of lore which could be of use in a campaign, but its purchase should depend on the affordability of its price tag. □



AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS

By Aaron Allston

(Steve Jackson Games, \$10)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Autoduel Champions is a supplement to both Steve Jackson Games' *Car Wars* and Hero Games' *Champions*. When I first heard about it, I said that it was impossible. However, no one asked me, so they've once again done the impossible. However, not without flaws. . .

The first section of the book gives rules for creating autoduelists compatible, more or less, with *Champions*. Actually, the rules are completely compatible with *Espionage!*, since, like that system, characters start out with 50 points plus disadvantages and buy stats and skills. The resulting characters are tougher than agents in *Champions*, but weaker than superheroes. This understood, the two systems are completely compatible. The concepts of upper limits on stats and "Package Deals" for being

members of organizations, also from *Espionage!*, are here as well. In fact, if you play *Espionage!*, these rules easily duplicate any care chase you've ever seen James Bond or the like participate in and are worth the money.

However, *Champions II* had rules on creating cars which work for the *Champions* player. The only advantage to these rules for someone with *Champions II* is that anyone who also plays *Car Wars* can easily pick these rules up and use them.

The second section contains the long awaited rules for helicopter combat in *Car Wars*. It plays well and adds a few new weapons to the growing list for that system. It's now possible to build Blue Thunder or any other copter from movies or literature (although rules for other aircraft are still missing—probably because jets can't fly in *Car Wars'* fuel-deficient future).

In fact, the only complaint I have about these rules is that the copter counters included in the rules obscure too much ground below them due to the necessity of showing the span of the blades.

The third section contains rules for superheroes in *Car Wars*, based on a conversion from *Champions*. Since *Car Wars* is a game of movement and combat, only those powers which fall into one or both of these areas are included.

These rules are definitely the weak point of the book. Since there isn't any stat like Endurance in *Car Wars*, the best power in the book becomes Density Increase, which incorporates a level of Armor and a level of Strength (except for the jumping) and a level of Damage (the equivalent of

Body in *Champions*) for the same cost as the Strength or the armor alone. Growth has similar advantages. Shrinking has nothing to recommend it, because Dexterity gives the same subtraction to be hit and also gives a plus to hit. Of course, the special effects are different, but unless your heart is set on playing the Atom or Antman, you can get by without shrinking.

Another complaint with the combat powers is that going from level 1 with a power (which does 1D6-1) to level 2 with the same power (which does 2D6-5) actually involves a decrease in the average done. This same flaw is repeated from level 4 to level 5 and every three levels beyond that. A half a point may not seem like much, but gaining that extra level costs 30 points. Another thing left unexplained is what happens if the subtraction is larger than the roll. Obviously the target doesn't gain damage points from the attack, but does he take one point of damage (i.e., the roll must have a minimum value of one) or does he take no damage (a minimum of zero)?

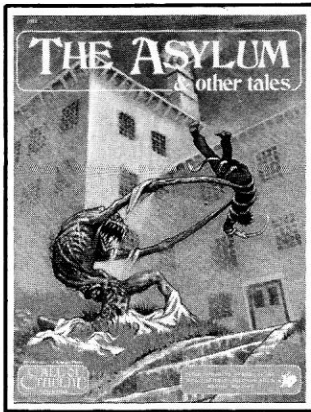
The movement powers of Running and Flying allow the characters to move like vehicles. However, it never states what their acceleration is considered to be. I borrowed from similar powers in *Champions* and gave them free acceleration to maximum, but then do they get handling minuses for large decelerations like cars do? It should have been stated somewhere.

The final complaint I have against this section is that the scale is so rotten for superheroes.

The map included with the scenario for this section is so large and the pieces so small that it takes a long time to move them around on it (real time; in game time, the entire scenario gets finished in 15 seconds or so). This makes the scenario seem to go slowly unless you've got heroes with a lot of movement ability.

Both scenarios suffer from a map which gives away too much. The scenario from section one would have been better served by a map of the asphalt plain; the fact that the map showed something else was a tip-off that there was something going on there instead of just at the plain. The map for the *Car Wars* superhero scenario had damage points for all buildings, and schematics of where things were to start off, and the location of the villain's hidden underground carport printed on it, right where everyone could see them at the start. Also, since even the text examples in section one had their own pieces supplied as cardboard heroes, why weren't pieces supplied for the villains in the scenario in section three? (Okay, a giant crab wouldn't have been much use elsewhere, but the other pieces weren't that bad).

Would I recommend this supplement? It depends. For helicopter rules in *Car Wars*, yes. For autodueling rules in *Champions* or *Espionage!*, yes. A good campaign could be worked out using the stats in section one and doing the driving in regular *Car Wars* scale, although what to call the resultant system I don't know. For superheroes in *Car Wars*, though, I can't recommend it unless you add the stat of Endurance. □



THE ASYLUM

Edited by Sandy Petersen
(Chaosium, \$10)

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

The Asylum is Chaosium's second book of scenarios for *Call Of Cthulhu*. The volume is 80 pages long, including 4 pages of playaids.

The 7 scenarios in this volume are each intended to stand alone and are not part of a continuing campaign. But some of them can be used as standard situations that can come up in the course of Cthulhu campaigns from time to time such as a fancy occult auction, an ocean voyage, or the omnipresent asylum.

Scenario 1, "The Auction," begins in the refined circles of upper-class Austria and presents investigators with the problems of conducting an occult investigation in a foreign country. Scenario 2, "The Madman," is a quiet, low-key adventure which is a pleasant change of pace from the overpowering level of many Cthulhu scenarios. Scenario 3, "Black Devil Mountain," is a nicely constructed adventure which combines role-playing and problem solving with some good old monster-slaughtering. The title scenario, "The Asylum," presents the classic Cthulhu combination of mad scientists, primitive cultists, and an evil global plot. "The Mauritania" is a shipboard adventure, again in the rarified strata of high society, which combines a number of 1920's and Cthulhu mythos plot elements on board a luxury ship. The shipboard action is significant in that not all of the evil action comes from the Cthulhu worshippers, although there is plenty of cultish activity too. "Gate from the Past" is a rather basic monster-slaughter where the typically underarmed, urbane investigators are sent to do a job more typical in a fantasy game than in *Call Of Cthulhu*. The last adventure, "Westchester House," is based on a well-known San Jose tourist spot and is the ideal foil for investigators who have lost

their sense of perspective, wonder, and skepticism.

Overall, these adventures are well-written and easily playable. Before running any of these adventures, the prospective keeper should, of course, read through the material carefully, keeping in mind not only on how to fit the adventures together and with the rest of his campaign, but on how the adventures would best fit the tastes of the keeper and his investigators. For instance, I prefer to base my adventures in Los Angeles so many of the New England sites are changed to western locales: degenerate lobster-backs are changed to half-human Mexican Indians, etc. Another thing to watch is the random encounters. I prefer to decide for myself which encounters will occur because limited play time requires some efficiency in finishing the main

plot of the scenario. I decide in advance which encounters will be needed to carry the plot through, and use the rest of the scenario as resource material in case the investigators get their own ideas on how the adventure will flow. For instance, in "Black Devil Mountain," there is a remote possibility of an encounter with a little girl who regularly plays in the eldritch woods near the cult site. Since I like the idea of a little girl with an exotic taste in play areas, I included the encounter when I ran the adventure, and ran the other encounters as needed or as a logical result of the investigators' actions.

The Asylum has some of the same problems as its predecessor *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*: some of the scenario chapters are poorly organized, and some sanity-loss situations are down-

right silly. Also, I would prefer the keeper-characters to be on a list or on a table as that would be easier for me to work from. As for the inappropriate sanity-loss sections, each keeper should decide for their investigators how much of this they would put up with, and how much the investigators can stand being whittled down by trivial things in between the truly mind-shattering encounters. It is the same sort of issue as whether the investigators should be restrained to arm themselves as real civilians from the 1920's, or whether the investigators should be able to exercise their creativity in finding portable instruments of destruction.

Overall, this is a fine collection of Lovecraftian adventures well worth the attention of enthusiastic keepers and completist fans of H.P. Lovecraft. □



FATE OF THE SKY RAIDERS

By J. Andrew Keith
(FASA, \$6)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Fate of the Sky Raiders is the final part of FASA's "Sky Raiders" trilogy. Together with *Legend of the Sky Raiders*, and *Trail of the Sky Raiders* (see reviews in *DW 21* and *22* respectively), this new booklet forms the closest thing to an adventure of truly epic proportions that has ever been produced for *Traveller*. Although GDW has begun a project of similar scope in *Research Station Gamma* and *Twilight's Peak*, and is supposed to continue the thread of adventure in further release, the "Sky Raider" trilogy is now complete, and rather impressive. Using the three adventures together, a game-master can run an enduring mini-campaign that is high on interest and excitement. Although *Fate of the Sky Raiders* can be used

independently of the first two adventures, a linkup is certainly more satisfying; it is, after all, the final part of a continuing series of adventures and will make more sense and have greater meaning to players who have gone through the first two adventures.

Fate of the Sky Raiders picks up sometime after the events in *Trail of the Sky Raiders*. Once again, the central figure is Lorain Messandi, daughter of the late Professor Jothan Messandi. As the first volume in the series related, Professor Messandi had formulated a theory concerning the semi-legendary culture of the Sky Raiders. Lorain, in her own work, came across evidence that discredited her father's theory; in her capacity as an archaeology on the staff of the Institute for System Studies on Alzenei (Jungleblut subsector of the Far Frontiers sector, beyond the Imperium) she has undertaken the task of discovering the truth behind the Sky Raiders legend. The two previous adventures have chronicled Lorain's efforts and the growing body of knowledge she has amassed concerning the Sky Raiders. The discovery of a Sky Raider space craft with intact computer tapes revealed that the Sky Raiders were a group of humans who had fled the destruction of their interstellar empire by the First Imperium in a huge asteroid-starship. The culminating effort in the search for their secret is about to begin, as Lorain assembles an expedition to intercept the asteroid, still hurtling through space after thousands of years.

The Survey Cruiser *Inquisitor* has been outfitted for the mission. *Fate of the Sky Raiders*

devotes 8 pages to a description of the 800-ton starship, the equipment available to the expedition, and a listing of pertinent game-master-character members. The scientific team is given special consideration, with capsule biographies and illustrations. The player-characters form a part of the expedition as well, either as hired help for security and general support, or as hold-overs from their prior work with Lorain Messandi (if *Legend* and *Trail* have been used previously).

The adventure really begins when the *Inquisitor* intercepts the massive asteroid craft; it displaces nearly fifty billion tons and is capable of transporting millions of people. A cutter with an exploration party is dispatched, but once they have reached the asteroid they find to their surprise and dismay that the *Inquisitor* has abandoned them. The group is faced not only with the danger of exploring the unknown quantity the Sky Raiders' craft represents, but they must discover a means of returning home as well.

The bulk of the booklet's 60 pages is given to a description of the interior of the asteroid. The Sky Raider ship is a vast complex of repetitive modules. These include control, industrial, and agricultural complexes and power centers, docking bays and surface modules. A foldout mapsheet provides detailed displays of each type, and portions of the text describe their condition and possible events and encounters. Although portions of the asteroid are in disrepair, much of its facilities are still functioning, to a lesser or greater degree.

Even after these many years, the asteroid ship is still inhabited.

Though the Sky Raiders fell to mutiny and civil war, and a general decline in technical abilities, their descendants still manage a primitive existence. Tables and guideline are provided for generating these cultures. Player interaction with them will form a significant part of the scenario; good relations with asteroid-indigenous cultures will likely prove crucial to finding a jump-capable Sky Raider starship and readying it for departure. If the problems confronting the players aren't enough already, the gamemaster has the option of introducing Eneri Kalamamaru, a greedy merchant who has served as the villain of the first two books, and his expedition into the situation. Since Kalamamaru is concerned only with looting the planetoid for the riches the Sky Raiders acquired, his activities are likely to make things difficult

when dealing with the natives, as well as posing a threat of a more direct nature.

The scope of *Fate of the Sky Raiders* is broad and impressive, a fitting finale to an imaginative and challenging series of adventures. An enterprising and resourceful gamemaster could make it a memorable playing experience.

Unfortunately, *Fate of the Sky Raiders'* total presentation is marred by some significant problems, only one of which (luckily) is a design weakness. The Sky Raider descendant cultures on the planetoid are an important aspect of the adventure, and I found their presentation in the book to be somewhat skeletal, adequate for play, but requiring a considerable amount of embellishment on the gamemaster's part to do justice to the scenario. Other,

sloppy, mistakes are prevalent, a severe disappointment considering FASA's usual high standards and the not insubstantial asking price of the booklet. Typos and just plain misspellings are all too common. A page reference is alluded to and not given, the reactions for the scientist Vledistart Mirost are given under Lorain Messandi, while no reaction table is given for Lorain. In the section listing Kalamamaru's crew, one character is listed twice, and another one-and-a-half times; the rules refer to an artifact value table that I couldn't find. Screw ups like this should never appear in a finished product.

Despite these errors, *Fate of the Sky Raiders* is a good adventure, and that is the main consideration. Those *Traveller* players who have come this far with the "Sky Raiders" epic will not be disappointed with its final chapter. □

The gamemaster alone knows that Keridav conquered the dwarves and uses them as slave labor in the mines, and that orcs and other nasties are all over the valley. This information was extremely well-written and fun to read, but as is obvious, there is not too much that is new here. Of course, *The Mines of Keridav* is slanted toward beginning characters (up to 4th level, they say) and the rescue-the-princess scenario seems to work well for beginners.

There are minor twists, e.g., the princess has kind of grown fond of Keridav and will not allow a party to harm him. She is also something of a bitch and will cause all kinds of haughty-princess-type trouble while being returned to her old man. And finally, if they do return her, they will find themselves stiffed by the king. These touches add a little to the overall plot, but not enough to take it out of the realm of *deja vu*.

The wilderness which the party must plumb to reach the mines is chock full of awfuls, including a family of green dragons and a family of black dragons, baboons, giant ants, wyverns, gorgons, orc patrols, griffons, and a unicorn. There is also a castle where a band of highwaymen are holed up, but the castle is not detailed since it forms the basis of a companion scenario called *The Demon Pits of Caeldo*. They suggest you buy the scenario or build the castle yourself. The various creatures in the wilderness seem separated enough to be reasonable (hard to tell, of course, since the map has no scale), but I question pitting low-level characters against families of dragons (the green dragons in particular do not even speak, making negotiations impossible; of the black dragons, no news is given about speaking). Of course, the adventurers might not encounter the dragons, but if they do, I question their chances of living.

In the mines themselves, the adventurers will mainly be facing orcs, though new monsters include razor bears (smallish bears with razor-sharp claws and carapaces along the head and spine), kangakats (cross between a wildcat and a kangaroo with a heck of a leap), and shooting snakes (snakes which spit pebbles at their prey like sling bullets). The party can get help against the orcs by freeing the dwarves imprisoned in the mines. A good idea, there are lots of orcs.

Outside of wilderness trekking and dungeon delving, *The Mines of Keridav* includes the village of Farvelor for more subtle role-



THE MINES OF KERIDAV

By Kerry Lloyd
(Gamelords, \$6.95)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

The Mines of Keridav is a generic fantasy adventure module from Gamelords, the publishers of the *Thieves' Guild* system. I have a distinct opinion on things termed 'generic,' i.e., "It may look like a Ritz, but it sure don't taste the same." However, in spite of that bias, I found *The Mines of Keridav* a good attempt at an "all-systems" module.

Stats for monsters and non-player characters are given in an all-system code which breaks down thusly: armor equivalency (running the usual gamut from no armor, up to plate and shield), movement (based on feet covered in a six-second combat turn), creature level (the effectiveness of a monster in combat or the level of a character—this is one rating that works better for systems that use levels), damage done (what kind of dice are rolled and any

pluses to hit with a specific attack or weapon), and damage potential (good ol' hit points).

Plenty of space is left beside each character/monster description for the gamemaster to write in his own favorite stats, but each character is also fully statted for the *Thieves' Guild* system, so players of that system will not need to do any work to use the module. The *Thieves' Guild* stats appear in the back of the book, so they do not get in the way.

There is not a great deal of magic in the module, but what there is listed in general terms, so that gamemasters can find an equivalent spell in their preferred system.

The module suffers mainly from being too "D&Dish," my greatest loathing in supposedly generic modules, but since *Thieves' Guild* itself is closer to D&D than any other system, it is understandable.

Less understandable is the wretched maps of the wilderness area around the mines and of the mines themselves. There are four of these, three levels of the mine and one of the wilderness. They are hex-gridded and center-stapled to the book. They have no scale, no legend, are difficult to read, and embarrassingly amateurish in their rendering.

Beside the main maps, there are four single hex maps, showing the town of Farvelor, the steading of Thos, the Castle Caeldo, and the main entrance to the mines. There is also a non-hex map of the entire village of Farvelor, a layout of Skenshi's tavern and hostel, and small square-grid layouts of each of the major places in Farvelor. These major places include a squire's manse, a bordello, a cordwainer's shop, a jail, a jeweler-

goldsmith shop, a bowyer-fletcher shop, a mercenary guild, the house of a mage, and an apothecary-chirurgeon-undertaker. The maps are handy, adjoining the appropriate text section, but once again, none of them will take a prize for aesthetics.

The same can be said of the artwork in the book, which is best termed "adequate." The cover is horror, a color piece that shows an orc (who looks more like the big bad wolf from "Little Red Riding Hood") inside the mines, holding a whip above a dwarf. It is best termed "yuck."

So much for maps and art, what about the adventure itself? Well try this—Princess Irzeena, daughter of King Harol has been captured by a wizard called Keridav. Harol is offering 20,000 gold coins and a barony to whomever returns the princess to him, plus a 10,000 gold coin bonus for the head of Keridav.

Keridav's lair is located in old dwarven mines in the Valley of the Tiraval (the players are not told this, they only know the lair is 150 miles north along the Great Road by rumor, and the rumor, according to those awful maps, does not seem quite true).

When the party gets to the valley, they pick up other information about the war between the steadfast dwarves who once had mines on the Cliffs of Vardern and the great conglomeration of goblins, hobgoblins, and orcs who attacked them. Since the villagers fled and the dwarves stood alone, there is a rift between dwarves and human valley dwellers and no dwarves have been seen in the vicinity for many years. There is also rumors of orcs near the cliffs and a dragon.

playing. Here is where the module shines brightest, with interesting and well-drawn non-player characters for lots of interaction. In fact, the village may be worth the price of the module if you do not have a good one already.

On the whole, the module is well-organized text-wise and logical in the description of the mines and the village (something you do

not always see in published modules). It is well-written and has the puckish type of characters indicative of Gamelords. (Keridav, the mage, gets flustered and stutters when he faces a foe at close range, making his spells go awry. Delicious.)

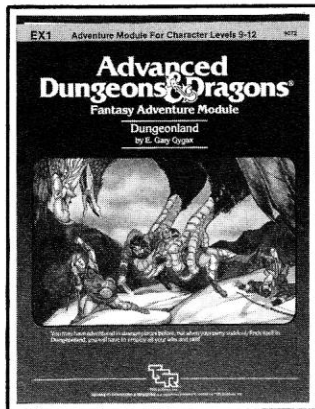
The module also offers possibilities for expansion and would be fairly simple to integrate into a campaign, though I think its bet-

ter use is as a starting point for a new campaign of beginning role-players. It offers very little for veterans of fantasy role-playing and my recommendation to the hard core is pass. If you are a new gamemaster and want an easy-to-run module with lots of outlets for role-playing, plunk your bucks down, ignore the cover and the maps, and buy *The Mines of Keridav*. □

Mr. Gygax handles the dramatic values of the adventures well. Both modules begin with an orientation phase, and then continue through a series of scenes which end in a definite and appropriate climax—which is a nice benefit from having a story to follow. In general, the encounters in *The Land* are more combat oriented than those in *Dungeonland*.

The creatures in these two adventures follow the standard AD&D monster description format without any surprises. Many of the creatures in the modules are straight *Monster Manual* monsters transplanted into Wonderland—for instance, the Duchess' baby is actually a wereboar. In most cases, this is a boon to the gamemaster since there are relatively few new creatures to learn and more mental effort may be put into role-playing. Certainly there are so many monsters written up for AD&D that just about every permutation and combination of stats have by now been given a name and a few hundred words of history. Between the two books, there are only 7 new monsters and only a few new magic items.

Given the limits of AD&D, this is not a bad job. The idea, of course, is not to rewrite Alice but to construct a fantasy role-playing game with encounters similar to those found in the two sourcebooks. And, with this perspective in mind, the two adventures succeed nicely. I would rate these two modules as excellent, certainly among the most imaginative adventures published in our hobby. □



DUNGEONLAND THE LAND BEYOND THE MAGIC MIRROR

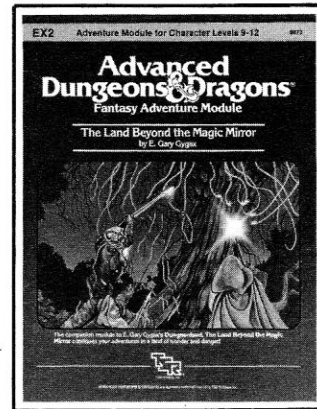
Both by E. Gary Gygax
(TSR, \$5.50 each)

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

Well, Mr. Gygax has finally joined the crowd, the crowd that has succumbed to the temptation of putting a bit of Lewis Carroll into a corner of the old dungeon. The notion of mysterious potion bottles labeled "Drink Me," giant animals acting in weird and unpredictable ways, etc., are stock elements in the fantasy role-playing genre. In these two modules, the designer takes the giddy step of committing his view of a particular literary work in terms of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* rules.

Yes, these are the two halves of the Alice cycle: *Dungeonland* is based on *Alice In Wonderland*, and *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror* is the counterpart of *Through the Looking Glass*. Both modules are presented in the usual TSR style: a 32-page book inside cover folders. The cover illos of both volumes seem to be scenes from *The Land*—the *Dungeonland* illo is of the Giant Crow from the "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" episode.

Well, how does a subtle and wordy children's story get translated into an essentially hack-'n-slash game system? How many experience points do you get for offing the White Rabbit? The designer has presented his material in such a way that many

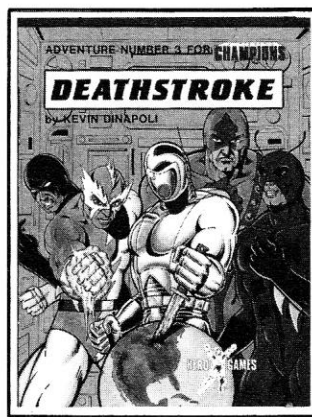


adventurers will get the notion that there may be more to the adventure than simple monster crunching, although most of the characters are provided with combat stats and tactics to be used in case of melee.

Naturally, only a sampling of the encounters from Lewis Carroll are included in the modules: from *Alice*, the Pool of Tears, the Drink Me/Eat Me potions, the Garden (including the Caterpillar), the Giant Dog, the Duchess, the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Tea Party, the Croquet Game, the Mock

Turtle, and the Court of the Queen of Hearts; from *Looking Glass*, the Giant Flowers, the Chessboard, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Walrus and the Carpenter, the monsters from Jabberwocky, Wool and Water, Humpty Dumpty, the Lion and the Unicorn, the White Knight, the Red and White Queens, and the mad coronation feast.

In the introduction to *Dungeonland*, Mr. Gygax urges the potential gamemaster to do his homework and reread the Alice books before running the adventure. I would concur—with the added reproof that anybody who does not care enough about the originals to want to reread them should not bother running these adventures. For one thing, the size of these modules, even with small type, is hardly enough to do justice to a literary classic as well as to provide adequate continuity. The gamemaster is responsible for ensuring that the mood of the game is kept at a suitably high tone, as the point of the adventure should be to appreciate the weirdness of the scenes, not as an exercise in half-bakedness on the part of the adventurers.



DEATHSTROKE

By Kevin Dinapoli
(Hero Games, \$5.95)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

This is a 24-page scenario for *Champions*. This one is big—a group of supervillains has found a rogue scientist who has designed a machine that can cause melt-

downs at every nuclear power plant in the country. Now they can sit back and dictate terms. Except that a small band of superheroes has decided to thwart their scheme.

My first reaction was that this one was too big, as the results of failure of the heroes can permanently alter the campaign for the worse (anyone for a *Champions/Gamma World* combo?), but the scenario is designed to allow the heroes a second chance if they're captured, and there is an emergency rule that can save the campaign, albeit in a *deus ex machina* manner.

The scenario is split into two parts. The first is a quick battle to get certain materials the villains need for the device and the second is the battle in the villains' headquarters to destroy the device before the villains can use it. This allows the adventure to be stretched over several sessions. The main problem with this is

that three months are supposed to elapse between the two parts and the players in my campaign (and I suspect most others) won't allow the villains that much time. The scenario allows for the heroes to go in early, but then the device is not complete, lessening the threat. Of course, the heroes do not need to know this, and it is easy to change this aspect.

The villains are from *Enemies II*, thus making the gamemaster pay twice for their stats and character sketches and even the same drawings of them. Of course, since these are the villains involved, at least they were presented in a manner that enables the gamemaster without *Enemies II* to use them as well. Also, the villains have been updated using the revised and *Champions II* rules. The problem is that these villains, as previously presented in my campaign, are not right for this scenario any more (for one thing, one of them is dead). Using all

new foes would have avoided this problem. Another point before moving on—the front cover depicts these villains, tipping off anyone who has seen it and who has run into them before that they are behind it all.

A new agent organization is also introduced in this scenario: Special American Tactics (SAT). They are rather like Marvel's S.H.I.E.L.D., a U.S.-based law-enforcement branch. They dislike U.N.T.I.L. for interfering with internal U.S. problems, although they will work with them if the

situation warrants, as in this case. My main objection is the name—why they picked SAT when Special American Methods (SAM) is much more patriotic sounding and only one word different (although a slightly less military word) is beyond me.

There are also rules on how to allow players to take the role of the villains in this or any other scenario, freeing the gamemaster from much of his paperwork during the run (updating 6 supervillains and 20 agents all at once is often a bit difficult). I recommend this primarily for experi-

enced players and gamemasters, though, due to the larger number of unknowns in this type of play.

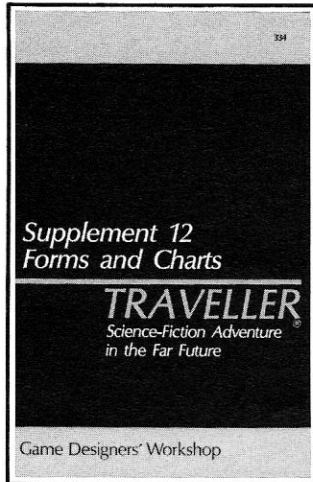
All in all, you get a couple of good hours play and some new background for your campaign with this scenario and I heartily recommend it to *Champions* gamemasters everywhere. If you play *Villains And Vigilantes* or *Superworld*, or one of the other superhero games, there is some pretty good material in here for you as well, if you are willing to take the trouble to convert it over. □

Imperial Calendar, a valuable aid in keeping track of time within a campaign.

The actual usefulness of *Forms And Charts* to a given campaign depends on the individual campaign. If, for instance, sector and subsector maps have already been made out (or the campaign is set in any of the pregenerated sectors, such as the Spinward Marches) these forms would be of little use; similarly, if there is little ship design activity in the campaign, the design forms and deck plan grids may prove superfluous. On the other hand, a new campaign just getting started may find the models presented to be helpful in getting things organized.

Of course, as one may expect from GDW, the graphic presentation of the forms and charts is excellent. Permission to copy the forms for private use is given. While GDW has set up some of the charts for use with a typewriter, one should be forewarned that the spacing is set up for 12 characters to an inch, rather than 10; thus machines with pica spacing are useless in cases where GDW has pre-spaced forms, such as the boxes for UPPs, locations, or world names.

While *Forms And Charts* may have limited use for some *Traveller* players, the availability of these forms is welcome for those seeking to better organize their campaign. □



designed to help *Traveller* players store and record information.

As the name implies, this supplement is a collection for charts and forms for recording information pertinent to *Traveller* campaigns. The material presented is divided into four broad classifications: personal forms, dealing with character data and abilities; ship forms, concerned with construction, design, and data recording for starships and other spacecraft; mapping forms for sectors, subsectors, and worlds; and miscellaneous forms for x-boat messages and mercenary documents. Several of these forms have already appeared in other sources, such as the mailing wrappers for *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* or in any of the second edition *Traveller* rules. In most cases these forms have been improved, and in some instances, completely revamped for greater utility. These include the familiar personal data and history form, which is now backed with a reverse side for recording finances and equipment inventories and a substantially revised worksheet for starship design. New items include forms for recording new skills tables, new weapons and equipment records, cargo manifest, world terrain key, animal encounter chart, mercenary tickets, and x-boat message forms.

All of the charts and forms included in the booklet are of considerable value in helping to record the vast amounts of data that comprise a *Traveller* campaign. In addition to the forms themselves, short paragraphs explaining the use of each are found at the beginning of each section.

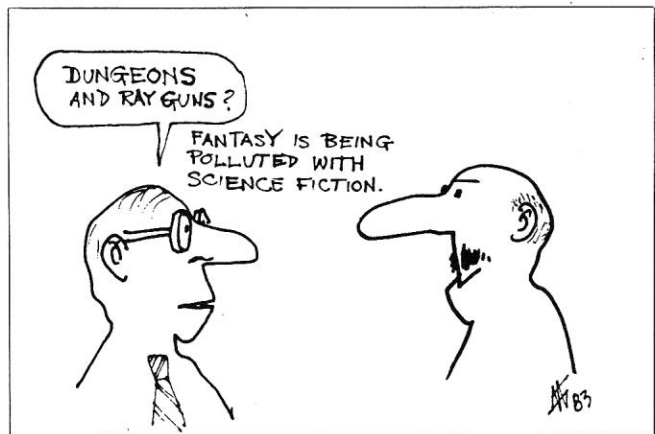
GDW has also saw fit to provide two other short sections in the book. The first is a set of 12 sample identification cards, issued by such diverse organizations as the Imperial Navy, the Interstellar Scout Service, several megacorporations and transport companies, research stations, and a university. These make good props for role-playing, as well as adding color to the game. Perhaps of more practical use is the

FORMS AND CHARTS

By Marc Miller (GDW, \$5)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Forms And Charts brings to an even dozen the number of supplements that GDW has produced for their science-fiction role-playing game *Traveller*. The supplement series has been used primarily to impart information to *Traveller* players: such things as game-master-character listings, animal encounters, starship information, and subsector maps have been featured. *Forms And Charts* is something of a turn-about from this purpose; rather than supplying information, this booklet is



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Playtest Notes

Playtesting is an important part of game design. In this column playtesters give their views and opinions on a game they recently playtested.

Playtesting

RuneQuest

By Jeff Okamoto

Early in the summer of 1983, I had the good fortune to be invited to playtest Chaosium's *RuneQuest 3*. I had played *RuneQuest 2* for about three years and fantasy role-playing games (i.e., *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*) for about three years before that and *RuneQuest* was by far my favorite. I was curious to see how the rules were going to be changed as well as curious to see how the Chaosium ticked, so I accepted immediately.

At that time, *RQ3* was just a manuscript: a four-inch stack of computer printout. Nevertheless, it was amazing! It included a fully percentile-based system with percentile skill bonuses replacing the old bonus system. A more fully fleshed-out and realistic combat system included disarming and a more realistic way of handling damage to weapons and shields. A better-defined and more coherent magic system replaced the phrases "battle magic (also called temporary) POW" with the phrase "magic points" and left "POW" referring only to the actual characteristic. In addition to the spirit magic and divine magic, a whole new magic system was included: sorcery! These people can cast wonderful spells but at a cost of many magic points and a lot of time to cast their spells. There was also to be a chapter on civilization which Greg Stafford hadn't written yet.

At this time, Charlie Krank was running the house campaign on an alternate Earth and the characters were trying to track down invaders who had awesome magical abilities. The rules went through small and large changes at this time as things began to pop up and as disgruntled players who had lost their characters (including me!) suggested changes.

After about three months of this, the rules were called complete and work began to typeset them for production. Charlie had to work on this, so Sandy Petersen took over as gamemaster.

Sandy's campaign revolved around a

place of relative safety deep in the Genert Wastes called the Tunneled Hills. Here we embarked on adventure and more rules changes.

Surprisingly, though, there were few changes to be made. The rules stood on their own with only a little fudging and turned out to be very realistic and the game sometimes generated hilarious situations.

As we struggled through the Genert Wastes, we suffered acutely from thirst. Our stricken comrade was dying before our eyes. When we could no longer stand it, we took some water from the Krjalki Bog and our shaman used his healing spirit to cleanse the taint of Chaos. Fortunately for us, it worked and we slaked our thirst somewhat.

On the lighter side of the rules, there were many funny incidents. First there was the dark troll who, after a party member was possessed in spirit combat, decided to knock him out by hitting him with his poleaxe (!!) but wound up rolling a critical hit instead. He caused 30 points of damage, whereupon Sandy ruled that the hapless victim had been split in twain.

Then there was the time when we entered Rowdy Djoh Lo's in Pavis. A morokanth (played by Greg), on being told by the great troll bouncer to give him a tip, took him literally and

grappled him to the ground.

But by far and away the funniest thing that ever happened, happened to me. I was playing a Storm Bull berserker who, with three others were fighting three scorpion men, one of whom shot fire from his tail. One character went down from the fire, another killed the fire-squirter but went down from injuries. The third was trying to get on his high llama with only one arm (not an easy task, let me assure you). I had thrown a Berserker Divine spell on myself and was about to clobber the scorpion men with my sword when a scorpion man hit me and maimed my weapon arm. So, berserk that I was, I proceeded to bludgeon the scorpion men with my shield and knocked two of them unconscious before I was brought down by a simultaneous hit to the head which rendered me unconscious.

I could also tell you about the orange dark troll and the shaman with the foot-long nose, but I think you get the picture.

Overall, I would have to say that the third edition rules are complete and realistic. They are slightly more complex than before, but not remarkably so. From the beginning of my playtesting, I had no real doubts that the rules would turn out well. If we did not like a certain portion, we would always talk about it and change it if we could argue our point.

I had a fun time at the Chaosium, playtesting and talking with everyone. I have learned a lot about what goes on in game design and production as well as learned some secrets about Glorantha which I have sworn to keep secret. I look forward to more playtesting and just playing with some of the best people I have ever met. □

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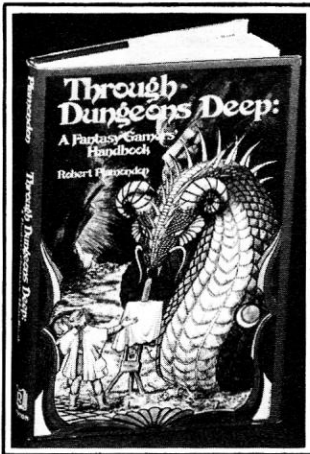
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Books & Gaming

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



THROUGH DUNGEONS DEEP A Fantasy Gamers' Handbook

By Robert Plamondon
(Reston, \$18.95)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Is there a need for a book explaining the role-playing game hobby? Apparently a number of authors think so, for there are about a half-dozen of them in print now. Since I am listed on the acknowledgments page in *Deep* with six other people, you might want to take my views with some salt. In my opinion, there is a need for this kind of book, and Robert Plamondon has done a very good job of presenting his subjects fully and fairly. One of the odd things about the games themselves is that they generally give little space to explaining to the novice what the game is designed to do, what the gamer can expect to get for his investment of time and money. The result has been endless argument within the hobby over what aspects of the game deserve greatest emphasis, because the game authors didn't tell the reader what they thought about it. I believe that this has produced some of the criticism and outright attack the hobby has received from non-gamers, particularly religious groups, who simply don't understand role-playing games because there was no source to supply this guidance.

Deep is divided into many short sections, breaking the discussion down into main topics as chapters, and dividing the chapters into subtopics which are explained in detail, often with illustrations from the author's own gaming experiences. Each chapter starts with an introductory sec-

tion to give the reader perspective on the details to follow, a technique that game designers would do well to follow. Each chapter ends with a wrapup that explains again the perspective, and gives a lead-in to the next topic in the following chapter. This is an excellent method for retaining the attention and understanding of the novice and the outsider, and is one of the reasons why I think that *Deep* is a good choice for the gamer to give to parents or friends who want to know more about this strange, time-consuming hobby.

But I don't want you to get the impression that this book is only for the inexperienced. On the contrary, it contains the distilled experience of an expert gamer and gamemaster, and is filled with tips that anyone can benefit from. I've read it twice so far, picking up new insights on the second reading. *Deep* is much more than an overview of fantasy gaming, it goes into considerable detail on such things as playing a character whose intelligence is significantly higher or lower than the player's. The book also sheds light on what motivates the gamer (a topic most gamers probably haven't thought much about). For example, the chapter on treasure begins with this observation: "Anyone who has played *Monopoly* knows that imitation wealth can be almost as much fun as the real thing. Fantasy role-playing games, which appeal to the storyteller and adventurer in all of us, use the prospect of treasure to appeal to our avarice." This knack of getting to the heart of the subject in a few, well-chosen words, makes *Deep* both educational and fun to read."

The first third of the book is about constructing and playing a character. The rest of the book is of interest to the player, but is more directly useful to the gamemaster, for it concerns how to run a successful game and how to build a campaign world. This is presented in practical terms with illustrative anecdotes, and not only takes a how-to-do-it approach but also covers human motivation, including the double-think involved in suspension of disbelief during the game. *Deep* also has appendices with short reviews of games and magazines, and a discussion on using miniature figures in gaming.

No product is without flaws.

Perhaps it is unfair to complain about the limits the author set on his subject, but I was disappointed to see detailed coverage of fantasy gaming alone. The role-playing game hobby includes a vast range of subjects, including science fiction, superheroes from the comics, privateering and piracy on the high seas, espionage and counterterrorism, adventures among the samurai—you name it, there's probably a game about it on the shelves or in production. I also am uncomfortable with the emphasis the author put within the fantasy gaming subject upon dungeons as the framework or subject matter, even going so far as to title his book prominently as *Through Dungeons Deep*. Many experienced gamers feel that the dungeon concept is unsuitable for good character development, and regard the dungeon as a "gilded hole" that has no rationale for existing. While the author attempts to rebut that objection to an extent, it seems to me that catering to that aspect encourages

bad habits. On the other hand, it may simply be a shrewd pitch by the author to the largest audience in the hobby—people who either play *Dungeons & Dragons* already, or are not aware that there are other games in the hobby. The latter thought may have been the reason for including reviews of other games, a nice idea but one that gives you opinions that go rapidly out of date as games go out of print or into revisions.

Through Dungeons Deep is an excellent book, within the limitations discussed above. I wonder why it was printed only as an expensive hardcover that costs more than many games. This can only limit its availability to the gamer, which is the market it deserves to reach, not the library or school market. I hope that Reston will arrange with the author to do an updated edition, and publish it as a paperback for mass distribution. But even at its current price, I recommend *Deep* to anyone looking for ideas to improve your campaign. □

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Following game outlines, players generate and then assume the personalities and physical characteristics of Known Space explorers. These explorers then face challenges and mysteries, as though in a Niven tale. During play, an additional participant, the gamemaster, interprets the *Ringworld* game rules and manipulates setting, time, the forces of nature, and living opponents. The players determine their explorers' actions; the game rules indicate in an impartial manner how encounters and combats are resolved. A *Ringworld* game session becomes a drama of successive dangers and triumphs, shared by all.

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Cities. Aerial traffic around it is visible. To the right rise the awesome rim mountains; beyond them is a glimpse of the rim wall itself, 10,000km distant. To the top of the frame and millions of kilometers away soars the full magnificent width of Ringworld, with its characteristic day/night divisions. Painting by Ralph McQuarrie.

Larry Niven's Ringworld

COMPONENTS:

Explorer Book: introduction, human explorer creation; pursuits and skills; game system; essays on Earth, the Belt, Canyon, Down, Gummidgy, Home, Jinx, Margave, Plateau, Silvereyes, We Made It, Wonderland; Kzin explorer creation and in-depth essay; Puppeteer explorer creation and in-depth essay.
Human Space Technology: autodocs, computers, drugs, energy systems,

autopilots, memory plastics, medicinal and recreational drugs, boosterspice, stasis fields, gravity generators, hand-guns, heavy weapons, vehicles, vac suits, water tools, much more.

Creatures Book: complete statistics and lengthy descriptions for aliens (including Grogs, Outsiders, Kdatlyno, Dolphins, and Bandersnatchi), hominids (including City Builders,

Healers, Ghouls, Grass Giants, Muck Ogres, Hairy Ones, Machine People, Valley People, and Vampires), and unusual Ringworld flora and fauna.

Ringworld Book: essays on Ringworld history, the Pak, rishathra, the structure of Ringworld, the shadow-squares, scrith, mysteries of Ringworld, energy and power, Fist-of-God, eyestorms and punctures, the rim transport system,

attitude jets, control and repair centers, and more; Ringworld hominid technological devices and weapons; a complete introductory journey to and adventure on the surface of Ringworld; gamemastering tips; plus much more. Other components include dice (2D6, 1D8, 2D20), explorer sheets, game reference sheets, visions of Ringworld (four essays), the Ringworld printout.

NEW! AT A GAME, HOBBY, OR COMIC-BOOK STORE NEAR YOU!

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

Chill (Pacesetter Ltd, Box 451, Delavan WI 53115, \$?) by Gali Sanchez and Garry Spiegle. "A Frightfully Fun Role-Playing Game," this horror-fantasy game comes boxed with an 8-page Introductory Folder, a 16-page "Terror in Warwick House" scenario book, a 64-page Campaign Book, a 32-page "Horrors from the Unknown" book, a 27"x21½" two-sided map, 140 counters, and three 10-sided dice. "Adventures into the Unknown."

Elfquest (Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany CA 94706, \$20) by Steve Perrin. "The Official Roleplaying Game," based on the popular comic book series, it comes boxed with a 72-page Elfbook, a 36-page Worldbook, a 22"x17" map, a 4-page Example of Play, 4 pages of Reference Sheets, a 32-page book of Character Sheets, two 20-20-sided dice, and three 6-sided dice. Includes additional material provided by series-creators Wendy and Richard Pini not included elsewhere.

Fringeworthy (Tri Tac, Box 61, Madison Hgts MI 48071-0061, \$?) by Richard Tucholka and Robert Sadler. A new edition of a science-fiction role-playing game, it is an 108-page book.

Lords Of Creation (Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214, \$?) by Tom Moldvay. "A Role-Playing Game of Travel Through Time & Space," it comes boxed with a 64-page Rulebook, a 64-page Book of Foes, a 20-sided die, a 10-sided die, and a 6-sided die. The rules describe 53 weapon types ranging from swords to proton beamers. 450 foes, 53 combat skills, 100 non-combat skills, and 60 special powers.

Marvel Super Heroes (TSR, Box 756, Lk Geneva WI 53147, \$?) by

Jeff Grubb. "The Heroic Role-Playing Game" based on the Marvel comic books, it comes boxed with a 16-page Battle Book, a 48-page Campaign Book, a 16-page "Day of the Octopus" Official Game Adventure book by Bruce Nesmith, 8 character cards, 25 counters, a 32"x21" two-sided map, two 10-sided dice, and a crayon.

Middle-Earth Role Playing (ICE, Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902, \$8) by S. Coleman Charlton. "A complete system for adventuring in J.R.R. Tolkien's world," this 112-page fantasy game includes 28 races and cultures including Hobbits, Elves, and Dwarves, 6 professions, 25 weapons, 25 creatures, 400 spells, etc., and a scenario. *MERP* for short.

Powers & Perils (Avalon Hill, \$?) by Richard Snider. A "Fantasy Role Playing Game of Unique Dimensions," it comes boxed with a 44-page Character Book, a 52-page Combat and Magic Book, a 60-page Creature Book, a 52-page Book of Human Encounters and Treasure, a 24-page "County Mordara" adventure book, a pad of character sheets, two 10-sided dice, and a 6-sided die. "It transports you from the drudgery of mundane existence into cataclysmic worlds, where the Shadows live and myriad eldritch encounters await the valiant."

FOR ADVANCED D&D

World Of Greyhawk (TSR, \$?) by Gary Gygax. A "Fantasy Game Setting," it comes boxed with an 80-page Guide, a 48-page Glossography, and a two-piece 45"x35" map of Eastern Oerik. It provides "a panoramic view of... an active world filled with decaying empires and dark forests." "The Most Famous Fantasy Campaign World Ever Created."

DL1: Dragons Of Despair (TSR, \$?) by Tracy Hickman. First in the Dragonlance series, this 32-page module is designed for 6-8 characters of levels 4-6. The quest involves a search for a lost clerical magic through visiting strange places and encountering bizarre draconians and spectral minions.

N2: The Forest Oracle (TSR, \$?) by Carl Smith. This 32-page module is for 6-8 characters of levels 2-4. "Crops wilt, leaves wither on the trees, and animals must leave the once-fertile Downs valley or die. All who dwell there

must abandon their homes or perish—unless your party can lift the curse."

UK2: The Sentinel (TSR, \$?) by Graeme Morris. First in the two-part Adlerweg series, this 32-page module is for 6-10 characters of levels 2-5. "Murder one night... mercy the next... strange writings in blood on the walls. The attentions of a skulk are a curse to any village, but the thought of one which has gone mad is more than Kusnir can endure!"

UK3: The Gauntlet (TSR, \$?) by Graeme Morris. Second in the Adlerweg series, this 32-page module is for 6-10 characters of levels 3-6. "Bravery is commonplace in these heroic times, but will bravery be enough to liberate the ancient Keep of Adlerweg and to thwart the dark forces which strive to cast down its ancient walls?"

FOR BOOT HILL

BH5: Range War! (TSR, \$?) by Philip Taterczynski. "Wild West Game Adventure," this 32-page "Special Campaign Module... simulates the Old West conflict between cattle ranchers and shepherders, rivals for grassland and water." Includes 12 scenarios, 6 pre-generated player-characters, over 200 gamemaster-characters, a city map, etc.

FOR D&D

AC2: Combat Shield and Mini-Adventure (TSR, \$?) by David Cook. "All the tables you need to run combat for Basic and Expert adventures are included in this durable (24"x11" cardstock) screen." It also comes with an 8-page "Treasure of the Hideous One" Expert treasure-hunt adventure.

FOR D&D BASIC GAME

B6: The Veiled Society (TSR, \$?) by David Cook. "Specularum. Three warring factions, one murder. The Torenescu, Radu, or Voiloi—who is responsible?" For character levels 1-3, half of this 32-page module is a "Special Cut-out Section for Adventure Play" of paper buildings. Also comes with 12 cut-out characters.

FOR D&D EXPERT GAME

XL1: Quest for the Heartstone (TSR, \$?) by Michael L. Gray. This 32-page module is for 6-8 characters of levels 5-10. "The icy cavern is deathly quiet. Strange light gleams from a frozen pool. Suddenly, a huge reptile thunders

from the depths of the pool, sending glistening shards of ice in every direction. Is this your final battle?"

FOR GANGBUSTERS

GB5: Death In Spades (TSR, \$?) by Trace Raye Hickman. A 32-page module for characters of levels 5-7, it also comes with 8 I.D. cards. "The Oberklein Mansion was the scene of murder ten years ago. Now a supper club owned by Enrico Mancussi, it once again surfaces as the scene of foul play, the scene of death."

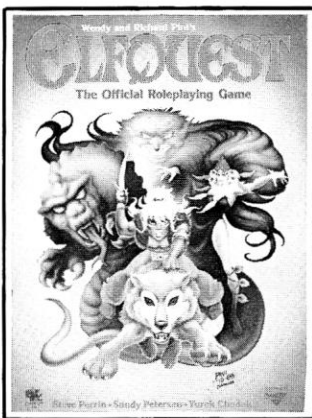
FOR JAMES BOND 007

Dr. No (Victory Games, 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214, \$?) by Neil Randall. For 1-4 characters, it comes boxed with a 48-page Gamemaster Guide, a 17"x11" Dr. No's Fortress map and gamemaster screen, and a "For Your Eyes Only" Top Secret Classified Information envelope with 8 Mission Sheets. "Welcome to the island of death."

For Your Information (Victory Games, \$?) by Gerard Christopher Klug. Comes boxed with a 72-page gamemaster's supplement and three pads with 30 gamemaster-character cards, 12 M.I.6 Document forms, and 12 M.I.6 Dossier forms. "New Rules and Special Features" include brainwashing and amnesia, undercover agents and impostors, adventure generation system, real-world intelligence agencies, additional gamemaster-characters and thrilling cities.

FOR LORDS OF CREATION

The Horn of Roland (Avalon Hill, \$?) by Tom Moldvay. For newly created characters, this Expansion Module comes boxed with a 52-page book and 5 sheets of Special Player Aids. "The characters are



faced with a series of bizarre events, including a murder mystery. During the course of their investigation, the characters chance upon stranger and stranger settings, until they eventually confront their ultimate adversary."

FOR MIDDLE EARTH

Bree and the Barrow-Downs (ICE, \$6) by Heike Kubasch. This 40-page module contains gamemaster-characters, color layouts of Bree-land, Silent-Head, and the villages of Bree, Archet, Staddle, and Combe, and over twenty barrows including the mounds of the ancient Dealin Kings. "Here at the crossroads of the northern Dunedain Kingdom is located the oldest surviving settlement of Hobbits."

FOR ROLEMASTER

The following are all part of ICE's Loremaster series.

The Cloudlords of Tanara (\$10) by Terry M. Amthor. This 64-page book includes color layouts of 3 underground citadels, scenarios for lower, medium, and upper level characters, detailed layouts of villages, capitals and holy places, and a color map of Tanara. "Sail to the troubled land of Tanara which lies sheltered along the coast of the continent of Jaiman. Meet. . ."

The World of Vog Mur (\$6) by Peter C. Fenlon and John Ruummler. "A tropical island group teeming with adventure," it is also in Campaign Law. This 36-page book contains the Chronicles of Elor (a history of the islands), a Muri-Elven dictionary, stats for all the central characters, creatures, and wild beasts, color maps of the 3 isles and layouts for all the important sites, and layouts of the massive fortress of Encla Turic.

The Shade of the Sinking Plain (\$10) by Roger Walker. This 60-page book contains over 15 layouts including a 14-level tower and the marsh-bound castle of the Shade, an enormous battle barge, 11"x16" quad map of the region,

new spell lists, etc. "Can you face the challenge of an unknown power and survive to enjoy your reward? In your quest you must overcome superior numbers, mysterious sorcery, and the Sinking Plain itself. . ."

FOR STAR FRONTIERS

SFAC1: Official Character Record Sheets (TSR, \$?). This 32-page book of 16 two-page character sheets also comes with short instructions on "How to Use the Character Record Sheets."

SFKH1: Dramune Run (TSR, \$?) by Douglas Niles. This 32-page module is for 3-6 characters.

"One man and his crew against the mob! Making the run that no man has dared before. . ."

SFKH2: Mutiny of the Eleanor Moraes (TSR, \$?) by Ken Rolston. First in the Beyond the Frontier series, this 32-page module is for 4-8 character. "The atomic stardrives ignite, whipping steam into the toxic atmosphere. Before long your ship will lift off, stranding you—unless you stop the Mutiny on the Eleanor Moraes!"

FOR STAR TREK

Star Trek II, Starship Combat Simulator (FASA, Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680-6930, \$?) by David F. Teeple, et al. A tactical space combat game for two or more players, it comes boxed with an 8-page Basic Starship Tactics book, a 24-page Advanced Rules book, a 16-page Starship Data and Combat Charts book, a 4-page Introduction to Starship Combat, a 16-page book of control panels and tactical displays, a 34"x22" Starship Combat Hex Grid, 78 starship silhouette counters, 112 display counters, and a 20-sided die.

FOR TOP SECRET

TS006: Ace Of Clubs (TSR, \$?) by Merle M. Rasmussen. This 32-page introductory adventure is for 2-6 novice-level agents. "The Ace of Clubs luxury resort is actually a spy school, and all is not well. Instructors are dying mysteriously,

and the club's administrator has called you in to answer some questions."

FOR TUNNELS & TROLLS

Solo 18: Beyond the Wall of Tears (Blade, Box 1210, Scottsdale AZ 85252-1210, \$7.95) by K. Martin Aul. This 52-page "extra-large" adventure is for a single character. "Without warning, the evil creatures came from their shadowy land and kidnaped your little sister. . . To save (her), you must undergo the mystical 'Dreamwalking' ritual and face the most frightening denizens of your own nightmares."

FOR AUTODUEL GAMES

Hell On Wheels (AutoVentures, 1002 Warrington Dr, Austin TX 78753, \$7) by Aaron Allston. This 32-page solo-adventure comes with its own Quick Combat System. "A gunslinger heads into the badlands to rescue a 'princess' held captive by a monstrous warlord. Our hero's badly outnumbered. . .but well equipped. He's riding a 4-wheel drive Lamborghini Countach, and his gun's a side-mount Vulcan gatling!"

FOR ANY SYSTEM

Dungeon Planner Set 1: Caverns of the Dead (Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10, England, \$?) by Gary Chalk. Comes boxed with an 8"x11" area map, a 31½"x22" dungeon map, a 4-page Encounter Tables book, and an 8-page adventure book. "What will your adventurers find in the Royal Tombs of Eastern Koss? Vampires? A gang of bandits? Or maybe the tomb and treasures of the legendary Orm?"

PLAY-BY-MAIL

Viking Quest (Royal Oak Enterprises, Box 635, Sagle ID 83860, \$?) by ?. This is a 7-page reprint of a computer printout describing a game where you play the leader of a band of 30 Vikings trying to regain their conquered land.

MAGAZINES

The Chronicles of Chaos 1 (Michael R. Jarrell, American Embassy/GSO, APO NY 09672, \$1) edited by Michael R. Jarrell. A fanzine devoted to Chaosium's *Stormbringer* role-playing game and Michael Moorcock's works. This 18-page issue includes articles on poisons and drugs for *Stormbringer*, a book review, a review of the *Stormbringer Companion*, and a solo-adventure for the game.

The Devil's Advocate 16 (MUDDA Adventure Gamers, Box 104, Union Basement, University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052, Australia, \$1 Australian) edited

by Rhys Howitt. A magazine devoted to role-playing games, this 44-page issue includes articles on *Stormbringer*, *DragonQuest*, magical swords, *Super Squadron*, poisons, etc.

Heroes 1 (Avalon Hill, \$3) edited by William E. Peschel. A bimonthly magazine covering Avalon Hill and Victory Games' role-playing games, this 48-page premier issue includes articles on the Lunar Empire, *Powers & Perils*, *Amoeba Wars*, *Lords Of Creation*, and *RuneQuest*.

SOURCEBOOKS

Contemporary Weapons (Palladium Books, 5669 Casper Ave, Detroit MI 48210, \$4.95) by Maryann Donald. This 52-page booklet describes firearms from pistols to machine guns manufactured after 1930 or are still otherwise commonly used. Though the book does not describe a game system, it provides stats useful for role-playing.

Weapons and Castles of the Orient (Palladium Books, \$4.95) by Matthew Balent. This 52-page book provides useful descriptions for the fantasy gamer of weapons, armor, and defensive works found in the Far East.

FANTASY FOREST BOOKS

These booklets are 80 pages each (TSR, \$1.95 each). "Pick a Path to Adventure."

Book 5: Dungeon Of Darkness by John Kendall. A young girl's village is raided and her parents are prisoners in the Dungeon of Darkness. She must rescue them with the help of the Good Knight of the Golden Dragon.

Book 6: Star Rangers and the Spy by Jean Blashfield and Beverly Charette. A young boy chases a spy through space, encountering strange blobby creatures along the way.

HEARTQUEST BOOKS

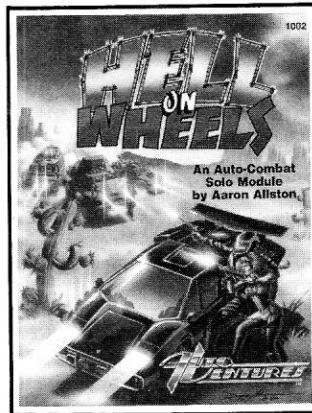
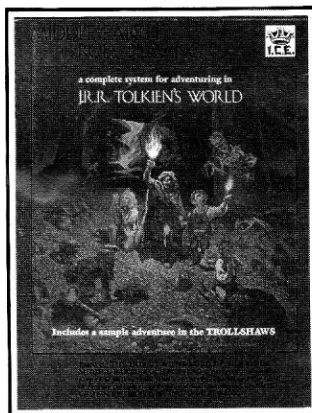
These pocketbooks are 160 pages each (TSR, \$2.25 each). "Pick a Path to Romance and Adventure."

Book 5: Moon Dragon Summer by Linda Lowery. A young woman attempts to slay the Moon Dragon with the help of a mountain man.

Book 6: Lady of the Winds by Kate Novak. A peasant girl leaves home to escape an unwanted marriage for a life of adventure and romance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dragons (S. Erif Thunen, Box 184, Albion CA 95410, \$?) by S. Erif Thunen. An any-year calendar and dragon coloring book. The user can fill in the days of the month himself for any year he wishes. □



Film Reviews

Reviews of outstanding feature films of interest to adventure role-players. Good movies are indispensable sources of gaming ideas.

INDIANA JONES and the TEMPLE OF DOOM™

Producer Robert Watts
Director Steven Spielberg
Music John Williams
Photography . . Douglas Slocombe
Screenplay Willard Huyck/
Gloria Katz

CAST

Indiana Jones . . . Harrison Ford
Willie Scott Kate Capshaw
Short Round Ke Huy Quan

Reviewed by John Nubbin

6:00 pm. . . Times Square. . . New York City.

Lucasfilm and Paramount Pictures are about to unveil their latest, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. The tension is razor-layered, and people are waiting—waiting for the sequel they knew was inevitable ten minutes into its predecessor. It is a different tension than that which surrounded theaters showing *The Empire Strikes Back* for the first time; this time the audience knows that George Lucas can fail. They remember the sellout, merchandising free-for-all of *The Return of the Jedi*, and nervously squirm, wondering what will happen once the picture starts.

Rumors have spoken of audiences laughing, groaning, and

walking out. Word has it the picture is, well—bad. The program books are cheaper than those for *Raiders*, less colorful, less dramatic. But it is Lucas, and Spielberg, and Ford, and Williams, and Slocombe, and all the rest, and so people continue to wait—watching their digitals and crossing their fingers. What they get is not what a lot of them were hoping for, and hardly anything like what they expected.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom returns the daredevil archaeologist to the screen with twice the daring, the action, the speed, and the comedy of the first film. It is a smashing eruption of fights and dangers, quicker moving, but more loosely strung together than those of its ancestor. When comparing the pictures, the second one loses; *Raiders* is the better of the two. It simply took itself more seriously.

Temple, on the other hand, has only minor things wrong with it, and is still, at its worst, a highly enjoyable, satisfying emotional rollercoaster that leaves its audiences just as drained as the first. The main difference between the two films is that Spielberg's button-pushing is more obvious

here. If he wants people crying, or excited, or gripping their seats, or laughing, he will do anything to get them there, even if it stretches credibility to its absolute limits.

Jones, as everyone knows by now, is lured into a quest for a tiny Indian village's holy rock, a relic stolen by members of a sinister religious cult, long believed dead. This is, of course, like saying that *Raiders* was about Jones trying to beat the Nazis to the Ark of the Covenant. A lot is being left out here. There is little point in going in deeply, though. Those who have seen it know what happens, and those who haven't don't need things ruined for them.

What is really important here is the flavor, the texture of the film. *Temple* has a feel all its own. In many ways, it is a sillier, more slapstick film. The 'kicking-the-antidote' scene is taken too far; the 'runaway mine cars' scene goes on so long, that one must wonder just how long the mine tunnels are (and how high up they must start, considering they exit from a cliff wall).

Still, though, there are balancing touches—the machine gun wielding gangster in the beginning

laughs as crazily as any screen psychopath we have ever known as he guns down crowds; the high priest who plucks living hearts from his victims' chests, the guard being ground to death in the rock crusher, Short Round's whipping, and a score of other scenes make everyone squirm with an unfamiliar uncomfortableness. There are seemingly thousands of dangerous looking insects and serpents this time, making the picture a nightmare of alien faces—when we aren't looking at our heroes dodging scorpions and giant lizards and waves of cockroaches, we are forced to watch children being beaten to death, or helpless bearers being disintegrated as volcanic sacrifices.

And ultimately, the only thing which can be said is that *Temple* is a balanced picture, it is simply that the balance is a more extreme one than that of *Raiders*—many of the situations and the characters are more outlandish. Kate Capshaw, as the sassy nightclub singer, Willie Scott, is a fair enough replacement for Karen Allen's Marion, and Ke Huy Quan's Short Round is a hundred times more memorable than John Rhys-Davies' Sallah (one, it's a bigger part & two, Quan is a natural-born scene stealer). Harrison Ford's Jones is tighter, more direct, and much further developed. What we know about him is consistent; what we learn makes sense.

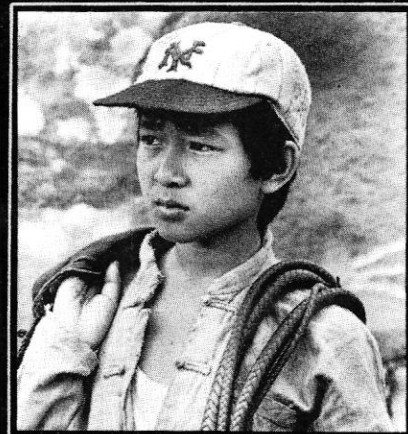
The fights are a bit more unbelievable—Jones beating fifty cultists is one thing, Short Round holding off dozens with a torch is another. As in the battles, the special effects around them go a



Harrison Ford stars as the daredevil archaeologist Indiana Jones.
©1984 by Lucasfilm Ltd.



Kate Capshaw portrays Willie Scott, the sassy nightclub singer.
©1984 by Lucasfilm Ltd.



Ke Huy Quan plays Short Round, Indiana Jones' loyal and daring young sidekick.
©1984 by Lucasfilm Ltd.



Kate Capshaw performs a rousing number at Shanghai's Club Obi Wan. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.

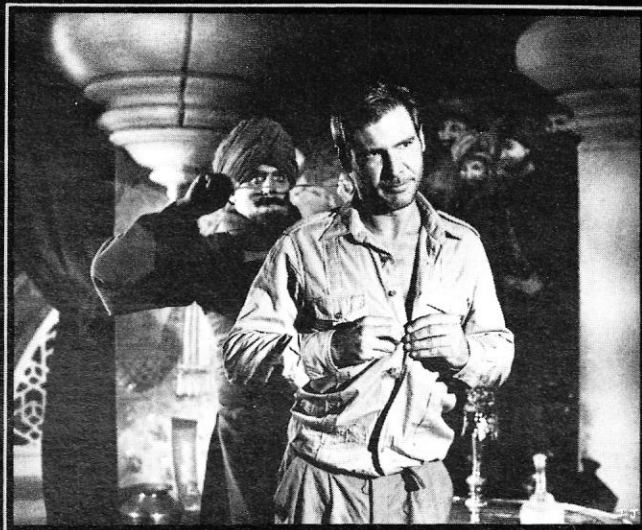


Harrison Ford and Ke Huy Quan search for an escape from the spike chamber. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.

bit too far. Too much is tried. By being overly ambitious, the filmmakers almost lose their audience with an over abundance of noticeable splice images and obvious mattes which somewhat cheapen otherwise highly impressive scenes.

And, in the end, this is really Spielberg's only crime, trying to do too much. It is easy to see where the director could have pleased everyone by simply remaking *Raiders*. If *Temple* had been made with tongue a little less firmly in cheek, it could have been just as serious, just as exciting, in just the same way as Indy's first adventure. Trying to be different, though, Spielberg has presented a totally different type of Indiana Jones adventure, one with a different sense of purpose, pacing, and drama. It is more of a pulp adventure, more of a thirties film than the first. What it lacks in drama, and true climactic tension, it makes up with energy and spirit.

Producer Watts feels that Indiana Jones is a popular hero mainly because he shows his own vulnerability. "Indy is not invincible," he told us. "Though he is obviously an extremely physical man, he's not always stronger than his opponent. Indy pulls



A palace assassin approaches an unsuspecting Harrison Ford. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.

through by his own guts, determination, wit, and intelligence." One could argue that it is Ford's natural 'little boy beam' that shows through here as it did when he played Han Solo, and nothing inherent in the character itself which makes Jones so vulnerable. It is not worth the debate.

Jones is Ford, and vice versa. Like James Bond, someone else may play the role some day, but

no one will ever be believed in it as Ford is. Only Ford could have made a picture so much more disjointed, and humorous, work so well. But, he did—and it does. *Temple* works on its own level just fine. It is not to be found in the depths of *Raiders* (which is somewhat shallow to begin with), but it is a picture which works just fine for what it is. It won't do the massive repeat business

Raiders did, nor does it deserve to—but it does deserve to be seen by everyone who enjoyed the first.

There is nothing in *Temple* that should keep people away, or even from going back once or twice. Those who were disappointed at *Jedi* had a right to be—only the most childlike in their unshakable faith could enjoy Lucas' flagrant pandering for dollars throughout that film. But this time, those disappointed have only themselves to blame. The fault finders in *Temple* have been disappointed by their own expectations. Spielberg, for better or worse, has gone past the parameters of the first film, doing more with the period he is recreating and the type of film and story he is honoring.

Whether or not he will follow either movie's example the next time around, or do something totally different again (if indeed he chooses to direct the next one) is yet to be seen. The only thing that we can be sure of is that *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* is good enough for another sequel. As stated earlier, it isn't what a lot of people hoped for or expected, but it is good, and after all, that should be all that matters. □



Arriving at India's Mayapore village, Harrison Ford and Kate Capshaw are surrounded by curious villagers. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.



Kate Capshaw saves Ke Huy Quan from falling through a rope bridge during a spectacular escape from the evil Palace of Pankot. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.

A Letter from Gigi

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

Dear Tadashi,

How did IAN LIVINGSTONE, editor of *White Dwarf* magazine, lose his glasses in a Tijuana night club? And why has he been to a hospital lately?

Did Chaosium's GREG STAFFORD try to defect last summer to TSR? Or is the person spreading that rumor just trying to cause trouble?

GDW and England's Games Workshop are in a snit. Seems that GW released a book called *Starship Traveller*, and the men at GDW feel it damages their chances to monopolize the misspelling.

What magazine editor has been heard to mumble "Going to GEN CON is fate worse than death"? One initial of the magazine is a "D."

Who sent me that picture of Morley the Wizard wearing a GAMA button? Is it true that he isn't trademarked? And why doesn't DAVE ARNESON know anything about this?

Speaking of Dave, I heard he honeymooned in the Grand Cayman but could not find TSR International. I feel like getting married again, just to go on another honeymoon.

At last! After a year of drought, a new *Tunnels & Trolls* solo appears with the release of number 18, *Beyond the Wall of Tears*. Blade will follow it by two more which are almost, but not quite, ready for release.

Rumour reports Judges Guild is not doing well these days. It's not surprising considering I haven't heard much from them recently.

There is a new fanzine called *The Chronicles of Chaos* devoted to Chaosium's *Stormbringer* game and MICHAEL MOORCOCK's works. See this issue's "What's

New" column (page 42) for further details on its premier issue.

Is the *X-Rated Supplement* project back on? People will provocative ideas should submit them to Chaosium for their entertainment.

MARC MILLER reports that the Smithsonian Institute is planning to have a games exhibit in about a year and a half which will prominently feature *Traveller*.

In TOM MOLDVAY's *Lords Of Creation* fantasy role-playing game from Avalon Hill, the object of the game is to become powerful enough to create your own world. Marketing-wise, this means every player has the potential of becoming a gamemaster, running his own campaign, with a complement of his own players, who in turn will buy more games. Someone was using his noggin.

Among the nominations for this year's Academy of Adventure Gaming's ORIGINS Awards are:
For Best Fantasy/Science-Fiction Figure Series 1983

25mm *Call Of Cthulhu* (Grenadier)
25mm *Elfquest* (Ral Partha)
25mm *Reptiliads* (RAFM)
25mm *Traveller* (Grenadier)
25mm *Star Trek II* (FASA)

For Best Vehicular Series 1983

Autoduel (Grenadier)
25mm *Dwarf Steam Cannon* (Ral Partha)
1/285 *WWII Micro Armor* (GHQ)

1/3900 *Star Trek Starships* (FASA)

1/2200 *Starline 2200* (Task Force)

For Best Role-Playing Rules 1983

James Bond 007 (Victory)
Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes (Blade)

Star Trek (FASA)
Superworld (Chaosium)



To Challenge Tomorrow (Ragnarok)

For Best Role-Playing Adventure

The Asylum (Chaosium)
Goldfinger (Victory)
The Keep (Mayfair)
Octopussy (Victory)
Stormhaven (Blade)
Tarsus (GDW)

For Best Role-Playing Magazine

Different Worlds (Chaosium)
Dragon (TSR)
Fantasy Gamer (SJK)
Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society (GDW)
The Space Gamer (SJK)

Awards will be presented to the winners at ORIGINS 84 in Dallas TX. Interesting that *White Dwarf* wasn't nominated. Does this mean these awards are really for Americans only?

The Saint Paul Pioneer Press newspaper reports that DIETER STURM, corporate public relations director of TSR, said more than three million people in the U.S. play *Dungeons & Dragons* "because it's fun," not because they are involved in witchcraft, demonism, or the occult. He made the remark to dispute the claim of the Rev. LARRY FORSBERG, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bemidji MN,

that the game "encourages suicides."

TOME reports that their LARRY FLOURNOY is working on a *Stormbringer* module tentatively titled *Bane of the Black Wolf*.

Chaosium's *Elfquest* role-playing game is out but is Mayfair going to have a game with the same title too, albeit a board-game? Only a company that would put out modules labeled "Suitable for use with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*" without obtaining permission from TSR would do such a thing. Spoil-sports DARWIN BROMLEY and company.

Speaking of Mayfair, Rumour reports that they are in the process of acquiring the DC Comics superhero game rights from Parker Bros. who is apparently getting cold feet. Mayfair's tentative title for the game is *Superheroes*.

Avalon Hill's publication of Chaosium's *RuneQuest 3* has been delayed until GEN CON due to lateness. Their *Heroes* magazine is already out though, and it features articles on *Lords Of Creation*, *Powers & Perils*, *James Bond 007*, and the delayed *RuneQuest 3*. I have been requested by an old gentlemen who tells dirty jokes to report that it's a great magazine even though I don't feel it's quite as good as *Different Worlds* yet.

Commercial on TV: "A young girl goes to Fantasy Island and she thinks she sees god." They probably meant star-struck.

Love,

Gigi

FAMOUS MOMENTS in FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING by Robin Hood



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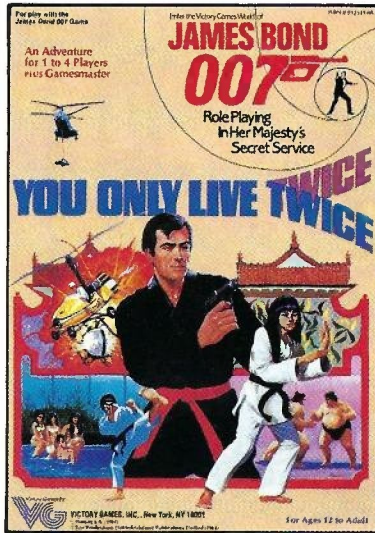
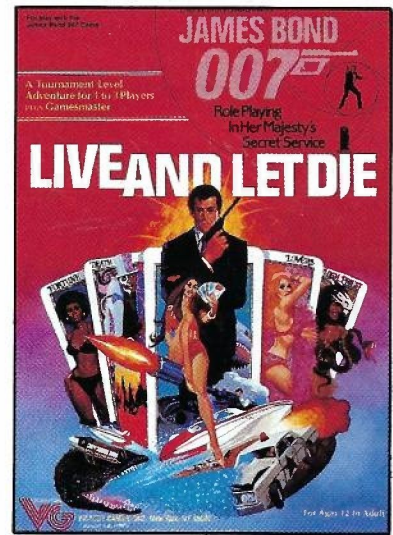
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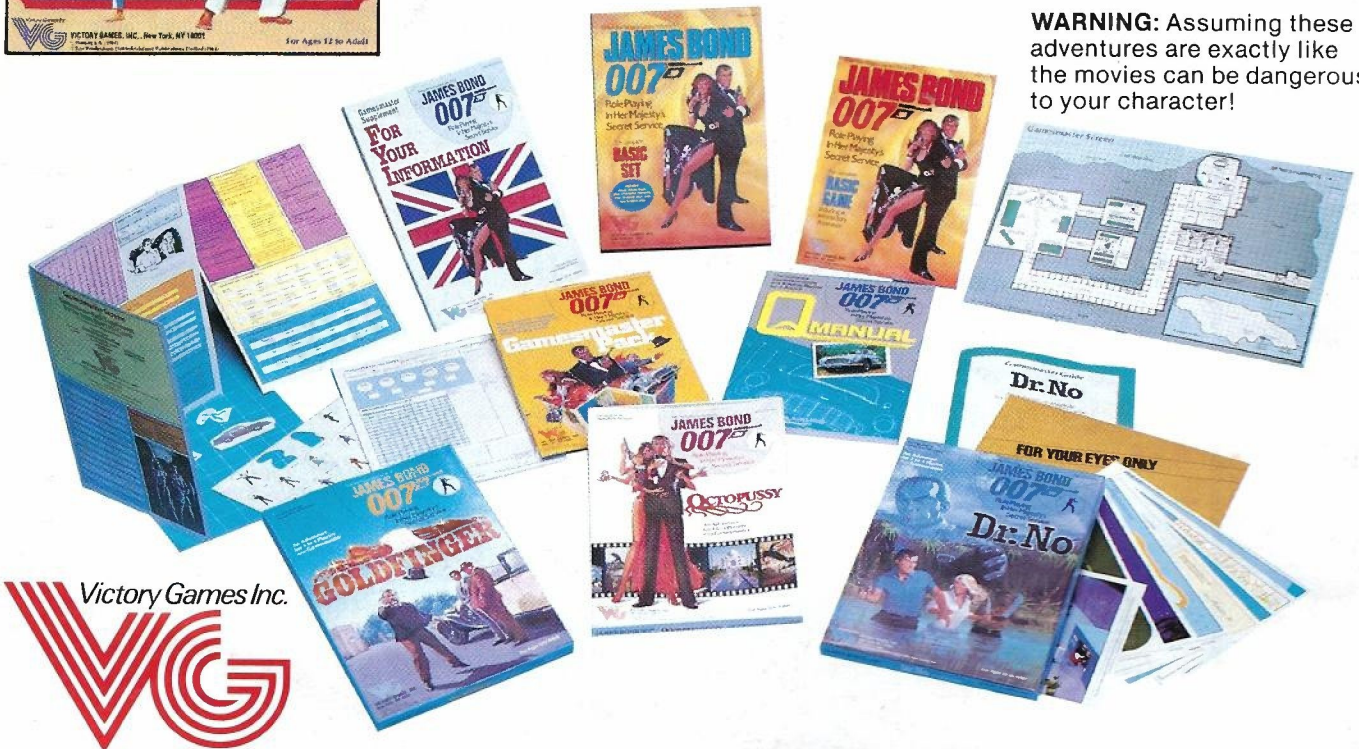
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