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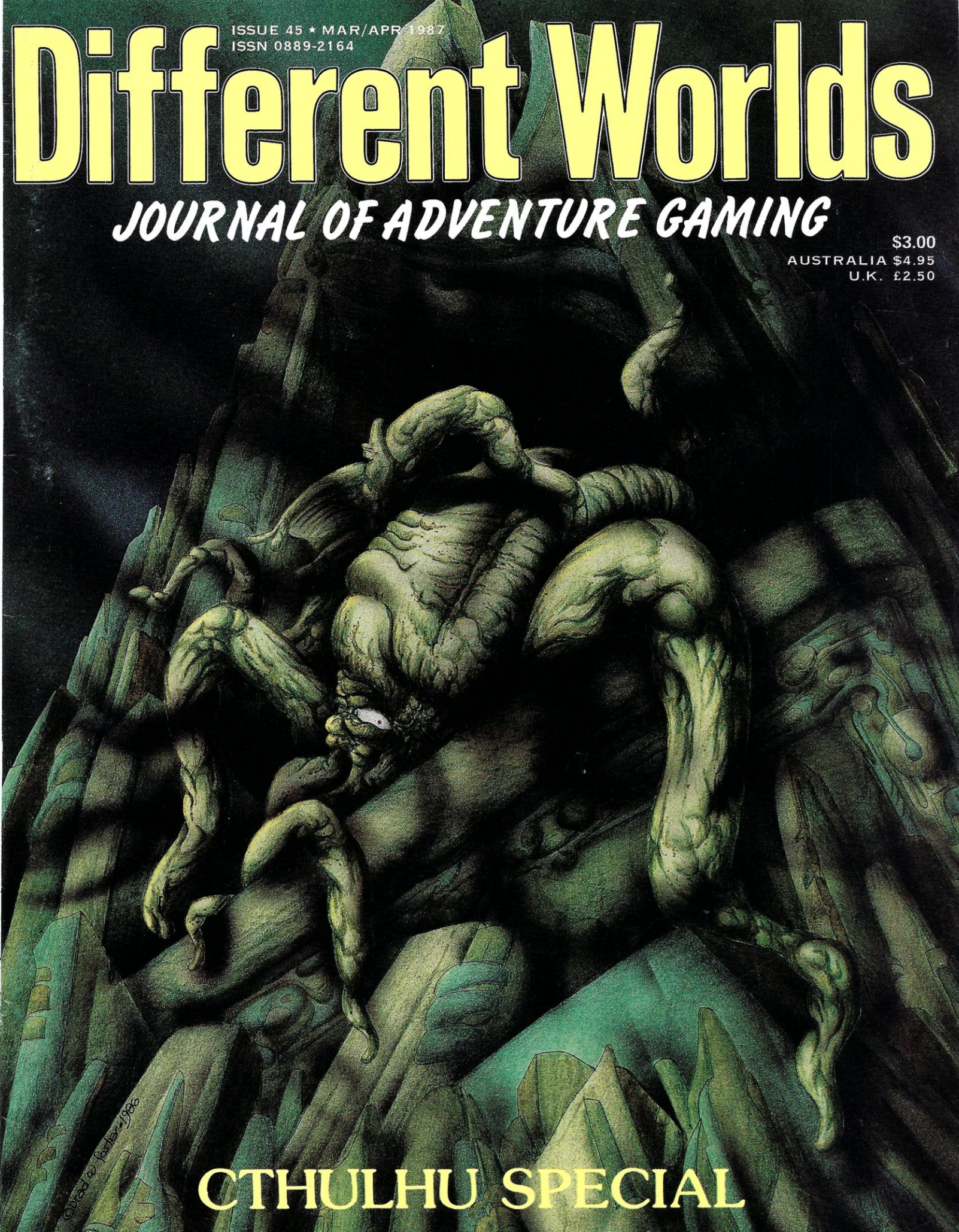
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Editorial

The Adventurer

GAMELORDS, LTD.

AFTER LENGTHY negotiations in the fall of 1986, we have acquired the line of games published by Gamelords, Ltd. And on December 1, 10,000 pounds of material in 344 carton arrived. It took us all afternoon to unload the truck and the rest of the month to inventory the shipment. The entire Gamelords line is now available thru Sleuth.

The Gamelords line consists of three major series. Its premier series is the *Thieves' Guild* line, providing more ways than ever for players to experience the danger-filled life of a medieval brigand, burglar, or cutpurse. It consists of a major boxed set of rules and nine supplements. *Thieves' Guild*, the basic set, first appeared in June 1980 as a loose-leaf set of rules and has since sold almost 10,000 copies in its two editions. The nine supplements, numbered 2 through 10, have collectively sold well over 25,000 units.

The Gamelords' next major line is the *Haven* series. This series has won plaudits as the most extensive city description and urban adventure supplement ever created for fantasy role-playing. The first in the series, *Haven: The Free City*, made its debut in June 1981 and has since sold over 7000 copies in its loose-leaf and boxed editions. It was followed by *Haven 2*—further descriptions of the city—and three campaign supplements describing other cities; the four modules together have sold over 7500 units.

The last major line is the *Traveller* series consisting of three environment books (undersea, mountain, and desert), their res-

pective adventure books, and four other modules. The ten books collectively have sold over 15,000 copies.

A more detailed description of the three series appear in ads on pages 24, 25, and 37 in this issue.

The other miscellaneous items published by Gamelords include *The Compleat Tavern* (a guide to creating random taverns), a *Fantasy Trip* adventure, an arm-chair baseball managing game, and three dungeon adventures. A complete list is available upon request. Dealer inquiries are also welcome.

What are our plans for the line? To publish *Haven 3*, which completes the city description. To publish *Paths Of Sorcery*, which provides magic and spells for *Thieves' Guild*. To publish *Naked Sword*, which adds warrior and fighter classes to *Thieves' Guild*. To further improve the *Thieves' Guild* and *Haven* material. To publish support material in future issues of *Different Worlds*. To publish other games and materials for the enjoyment of gamers. And to put the fun back into role-playing that we seem to have lost in the last few years.

If this all sounds overly ambitious, just wait. I'm sure you'll be pleasantly surprised. Just hang in there and be on the lookout for quality role-playing material. The best is yet to come.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ebara □

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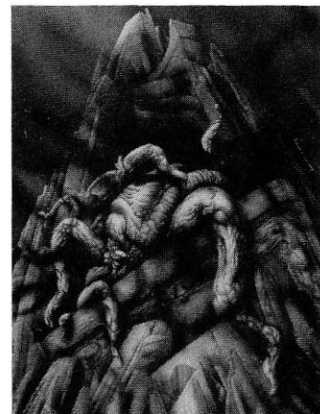
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"CTHULHU"

By Brad W. Foster



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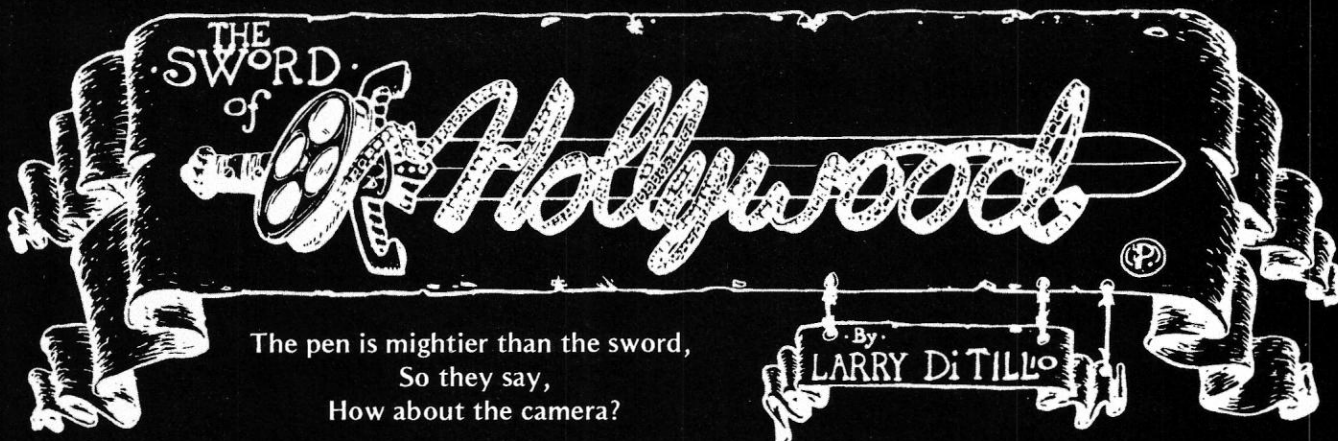
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The pen is mightier than the sword,
So they say,
How about the camera?

*Felicitations you fevered followers of the flowing frame! Hope you had a happy holiday season and best wishes for a bang-up 1987. There's some interesting input kicking around *Lost Angels* and as usual *Ye Ol' Sword* has got a weather eye cocked for any item of interest to the game world.*

STAR TREK RETURNS TO THE TUBE? Could be! Gene Roddenberry, the driving force behind the original *Star Trek*, is planning to bring a brand new version of that beloved series to television. *Star Trek—The New Generation* takes place a century after the *Enterprise's* first five-year mission and involves a whole new crew of Federation heroes. It will begin with a two-hour TV-movie to be followed by 24 one-hour episodes, but don't look for it on network station, it's going to be sold to syndicated stations who now carry the original *Star Trek*. Of course, if you're a die-hard fan of the old *Enterprise* gang, don't despair. Paramount is still intent on making more *Star Trek* movies so we'll still get Kirk and company on the big screen while thrilling to the new Trekkers on the small screen. *Star Trek—The New Generation* is set to launch in September of this year.

FILMS, BOOKS, AND COMICS TO TELEVISION. Orion Pictures is developing both *Remo Williams* and *DNAgents* for television. The former is based on the tongue-in-cheek adventure film starring Fred Ward and Joel Grey, the latter on Mark Evanier's dynamite superhero comic book. Both are slated as live action episodics. Meanwhile, in the animation field, TMS (the company responsible for *Mighty Orbots*, *Jayce and the Wheeled Warriors*, and *Galaxy High School*) is busily trying to secure rights to both *Judge Dredd* and Anne MacCaffrey's *Dragonriders Of Pern* series. Also Harmony Gold, the people who bring you *Robotech*, is pitching an *Elf-Quest* series around town and rumor has it that the material

being used for this pitch is the script and bible written by none other than Ye Ol' Sword and pal J. Michael Straczynski for CBS last year. Hmmmm?

ANNOUNCING YE LITTLE SWORD. It has nothing to do with film or games, but Ye Ol' Sword simply has to trumpet the birth of his first child, daughter Jessica Morgana on July 8, 1986. Right after LA ORIGINS! How's that for good timing? Needless to say, Ye Ol' Sword made ORIGINS but kept close to a phone at all times.

LECTURE TIME. And now enough fiddle-lee-dee and falderol—it's time for another uplifting discussion about games and film. Out topic this time out is how to convert your favorite films into game scenarios.

Let's begin the discussion with the concept of character focus. Most films concentrate on a single hero, a hero who may or may not be backed up by a band of supporting characters. Thus in a *Conan* film the story focuses on what happens to Conan, while in a *Star Wars* film it's Luke Skywalker that drives the tale. Other characters may contribute to the story, but these characters are expendable. The hero isn't. Han Solo may be a nifty character but if Luke doesn't survive to blast Death Star, it's goodbye Rebellion!

In games it is exactly the opposite. Each player-character is a hero in his or her own right and the story must include all of them. Moreover, each character is expendable for it is assumed that any character can complete the mission, quest, etc. In practical application, this means providing motivation for all the characters instead of just the hero. Here's an example . . .

Suppose you want to adapt *Conan The Destroyer* into a game. The prime focus in that movie is Conan's attempt to get a mystic jewel for Queen Taramis so the evil Queen will resurrect his beloved Valeria. What he doesn't

know is that the jewel is the key to a ritual which will bring the dark god Dagoth to life once more. The friends who accompany him (thief, warrior, and magic-user) have no stake in the adventure themselves. They undertake it because Conan asks them to go.

Now your normal role-playing game character doesn't undertake dangerous quests just because another character asks him to. So in adapting the film to game form, you have to supply motivation to all the characters involved. A thief might want to steal the gem, a warrior might be more concerned with using it against some enemy, a magic-user might want it because it is a vital component in some spell or ritual, a cleric might want to destroy it to keep Dagoth from being summoned. Queen Taramis can then hire them all to get the gem and presto you're playing the film. Except, of course, your version has even more possible plot twists, since each character has their own goal. And that brings us to adapting the plot.

You can't be too literal in adapting a film plot to a game scenario for the obvious reason—any player who's seen the film knows what happens. The good part about this is the perfect opportunity it creates to use the player's knowledge against them. Recreating a film plot to the letter, then throwing in your own variation is bound to cause some delicious trouble for players. Here's another example . . .

You're adapting *Clash of the Titans* and you get to the big scene involving the battle with the Medusa. The players trot through a chamber filled with life-like stone statues. They're all grinning at you. They'll wipe up this Medusa, you can't fool them, they're ready for her. Except you have replaced the Medusa with another monster that turns people to stone. A much tougher, stronger monster, say a basilisk. While they're looking in their mirrored shields for a woman with a reptile

hairdo, this thing rolls over them like a tank. Fun? You bet!

Another point to keep in mind when making film into a game is film reality vs. game reality. Lets face it my friends, you're not likely to see Indiana Jones get crunched in a movie. In a game scenario, a few bad dice rolls can make even the biggest brick history. Make sure you plan for this eventuality in your scenarios. Don't lay all the necessary information and gear on a single character. Spread it out amongst the entire party. Likewise, don't tie a solution to a single character. Every character should have the chance to be a hero. Let's go back to our adaption of *Conan The Destroyer* for an example.

Conan and his buddies get to a temple where they must make their way into a chamber where the jewel is hidden. Conan and Bombatta use their great strength to lift the massive door of this chamber slightly. In your game, characters with sufficient strength to perform this task may not exist or may have been killed in a previous encounter. Keeping this in mind, you can offer alternate solutions that other types of characters can use, e.g., a hidden spring a thief could find.

Where gamemaster-characters are concerned, be careful when applying game mechanics and stats to film villains. You want the villain to be as tough as he or she was in the film, but make 'em too tough and your players wind up pushing up daisies. Vice versa, it's easy to make a film villain too wimpy in a game scenario creating disappointment when a well-known baddie bites the dust from a single punch. A good rule of thumb is to speculate beyond the villain's capabilities as shown in the film, adding logical offenses and defenses as applicable.

A final thought on converting films into games concerns "props," i.e., items which figure significantly in the film story. A movie is a very "now-oriented" experience. One does not question what happens to props after

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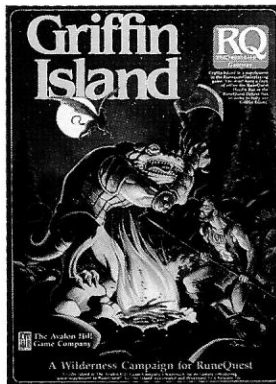
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HORROR!



Curse of the Demon (1956)

SCARY MONSTER HORROR PICTURE SHOW ROLE- PLAYING GAME

By Brian J. Underhill

HORROR MOVIE fans have always been disappointed with the feeble attempts to produce a role-playing game in the horror genre. Oh sure, there's *Call Of Cthulhu*, but they expect the characters to be intelligent. Yeah, I know about *Chill*, and that's a little better, but they don't have the right character classes or adventures.

Don't despair any longer! For the first time in print, here is a complete set of rules designed to capture the feeling of low-budget script, bad acting, and unnecessarily gory special effects.

One or more players and a Director (gamemaster) are necessary. Read on and enjoy!

CHARACTER GENERATION

Creating a player-character in *Horror Picture Show* is simple. Each character has a set of stats which include Strength, Unintelligence, and Curiosity. Each is rolled on 3D6. (Note that a character with a 14 Unintelligence is not as smart as one with a 12.) Once a player has rolled up stats, he must choose a class.

Teenager. By far the most common of all classes, an Unintelligence of 15 or better is required. The main drawback is a high mortality rate. Female characters should be aware that in most cases only one of them will be alive at the end of the adventure.

Policeman. Any player who wishes to enter this character class cannot have a Curiosity score greater than 8. He must not be interested in stories about

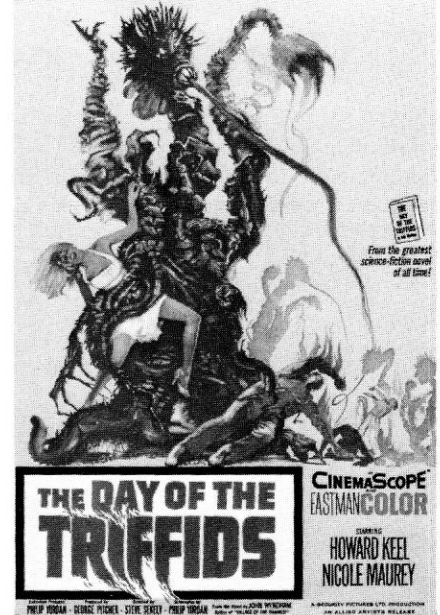
the boogie man, ghosts, legends, or anything similar.

Reporter. A reporter must have a Curiosity score of 15 or better. He should work for a top-notch investigative magazine such as the *Inquiring People's Star Globe*.

Scientist. An Unintelligence of less than 10 is required. This class covers many facets of science. The character may be a psychiatrist from a mental institution, a physicist that creates mutant monsters, or a biochemical physical anthropologist studying the reaction of primordial slime bombarded with neutron rays while soaking in recombinant DNA solutions. Note that all experiments he performs will go awry and threaten to destroy the world (or at least a small portion of it).

Hero. This is a special class of character. It is a subclass of any of the above classes. The Director should allow only one or two hero characters in any adventure. The hero may waive all requirements for any class. He may be a scientist who can control his experiments, a curious policeman, a reporter with class, or (in extreme circumstances) an intelligent teenager!

BEWARE THE TRIFFIDS... they grow
...know...walk...stalk...and KILL!



Day of the Triffids (1963)

SKILL ROLLS

Characters will wish to perform actions throughout the game. It is the duty of the Director to determine success or failure. A character's chance of success is $STAT \times 5\%$ where STAT represents the player's appropriate score. For example: A character hears a strange chanting noise coming from the basement warning him to leave the house. The Director rules that the player has an $Unintelligence \times 5\%$ chance of a mandatory investigation of the noise. The character has an Unintelligence score of 16 and will go into the basement (unarmed, of course) on a roll of $(16 \times 5\%)$ 80% or less.

DIRECTING THE GAME

The most difficult of jobs is that of the Director. He is in charge of creating a scenario for the characters to play. He generates characters for the players to interact with (called extras and bad guys), areas to adventure in (called sets), and even entire cities or worlds to explore (called locations). Here are some guidelines for running a successful *Horror Picture Show* campaign.

EXTRAS

Create a few extras to run around and make things difficult for the players. Note that if the characters begin to talk about ghosts, monsters, or psychotic killers, most of your extras will

not believe them. You may allow one or two extras to side with the characters, but these should be unreliable or untrustworthy. For example, a mentally retarded janitor on welfare, a five-year-old boy with invisible friends, or a politician. Nobody will believe them.

BAD GUYS

Wandering Wierdo. A wierdo is a psychotic killer. Someone who kills people so reporters have a story, police have someone to chase, and movie goers have something to scream about. He usually escapes from an asylum and wanders throughout a city or wilderness area unnoticed. His favorite weapons are butcher knife, axe or hatchet, electric drill, chain saw, garrote, scalpel, and portable diesel-powered meat grinder. Note: A wandering wierdo will never use a gun.

There is a base 20% chance per day of encountering a wandering wierdo. See Table 1 for appropriate modifiers.

Spirit. This is a generic term for any kind of spirit, ghost, lost soul, specter, poltergeist, or other similar undead. Most have telekinesis, teleportation, invisibility, strange-noise-in-the-night-making, nightmare-sending, wall-bleeding, and other similar powers. They often cannot leave a particular area and are usually very ticked-off about something. Often a seance is necessary to communicate with them. At times this can lead to confusing cryptic messages. Some messages which seem straightforward to the Director and others will often confuse characters in *Horror Picture Show*. For example, the message "Leave this house or die," will often send characters scrambling for a linguist to look for the "real meaning."

Aliens. This term encompasses all extra-terrestrial beings. There are primarily two forms.

The human alien form is indistinguishable from a real human except for some relatively unnoticeable feature such as glowing red eyes or three arms. These features will be discovered only by the most adept character and only after days of study and research (or a lucky guess). The human form will often attempt to infiltrate our society to divide and conquer. They usually eat something really gross.

The other form is the disgusting alien. This is the opposite of the human alien in that it is repulsive and disgusting to look at and usually smells

TABLE 1
Wandering Wierdo Modifiers

Base Chance 30%

Naked female character present	+30%
Before, during, or after sex	+25%
Nighttime	+15%
Teenager present	+15%
In shower	+10%
Holiday	+10%
Character is babysitting	+5%
Power outage	+5%
Character has firearm	-25%
Police present	-50%

like the sewers of Los Angeles. They are slimy, sticky, reptilian, and other disgusting adjectives, so they are easy to spot (except perhaps in Brooklyn) but often travel at night to avoid detection.

Demons. These are the nastiest and scariest of the Bad Guys. They can take physical form, or possess someone else. They are extremely difficult to get rid of since they are nearly indestructible. If someone is possessed, the demon must be exorcised. This can be accomplished with the *Jane Fonda Twenty Minute Workout* but requires the cooperation of the demon. Not likely. The preferred method is to have a young Catholic priest allow the demon to inhabit him. The priest then throws himself out of a second-story window. There are less violent means as well.

Mutated Monsters. These are born with huge canine teeth and claws, or climb out of the chemical-waste dumpsites at night. Most of them eat people for a living. No one is sure where they got this voracious appetite for human beings, but different strokes. . .

Many of these monsters live in various sewers around the world and are the result of too many experiments washed down the drain. This particular breed often keeps alligators as pets.

Killer Animals. Self-explanatory. No animal is sacred. Take your pick: sharks, dogs, cats, piranhas, rats, birds, snakes, alligators, panthers, and even insects. Gorillas are very popular for a campaign set in the 1950's. Note that plants and vegetables also fit this category, such as tomatoes.

Giant Things. This category consists of any bad guy over thirty-feet tall. Examples include 40-feet tall tarantulas, 80-feet long lizards, 70-feet grasshoppers, towering men and

women, Godzilla, King Kong, and 120-foot long amoeboid slime monsters from the planet Meepsor. (The latter of these also fits into the disgusting alien category, but the giant things category takes precedence.)

SETS AND LOCATIONS

Creating a set for *Horror Picture Show* is essential. Your characters must have somewhere to adventure. A couple of sample sets are listed below:

Cabin. This can be a simple summer cabin or a complete camp. Be certain the cabin is located miles from civilization. Disregard the fact that wandering wierdos will have a long walk to get there. It won't bother them.

Haunted House. Usually this has been vacant for years because of mass murders, suicides, strange lights, and noises. Someone will undoubtedly decide it is the perfect place to settle down. Haunted houses should also be out of the city limits to assure peace and quiet away from civilization.

Creating a location can often be more difficult. This usually involves an entire city. It will be necessary if you plan to run a full-scale alien invasion or have swarms of pustulating mutants emerge from the local nuclear dump. Note: Cities in New England are terrific for spirit encounters.

CONCLUSION

These rules are provided as guidelines and should not be followed to the letter. An effort has been made to recreate the bad horror movie genre, but the rest is up to the Director and players. Here are some tips to keep you on the bad horror movie track:

[1] Don't concentrate on character development. It is unnecessary and will inhibit the game.

[2] Describe every injury and wound in gory detail.

[3] Make your wandering wierdos bullet-proof.

[4] Design predictable scenarios.

[5] Be repetitive. If your players liked a particular scenario, create a sequel. If the bad guy was killed, simply bring him back to life.

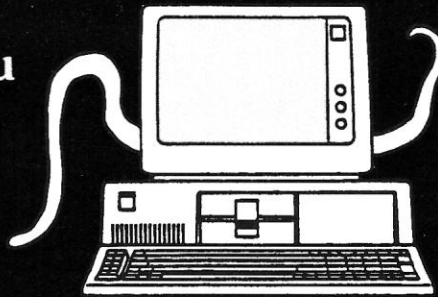
[6] Use as many cheap props as you can. Bring lots of ketchup for the fight scenes.

[7] Have fun. Don't worry about film critics. They already have their hands full.

□

Call Of Cthulhu in the EIGHTIES

By Michael Szymanski



IT IS the 1980's, and the nightmare battle rages on; humanity is still locked in mortal struggle against the dark forces of the Cthulhu Mythos, but several important changes have taken place which are bound to add some new spices to the flavor of the game. Mankind has grown more knowledgeable, more inventive and powerful in its own right, and these factors will obviously affect any scenario played out in the present day.

Let's begin with simple brute force. In the 1920's, going up against a Hunting Horror with a handgun or even a shotgun would be a terrifying and danger-fraught undertaking, yet that same confrontation can hardly seem as frightening if one is armed with an M16 firing ten shots a round and causing about 1D10+6 points of damage per shot. Fire seems to be the favorite weapon of any era, so imagine what havoc investigators would wreak with napalm, incendiary grenades, or even a flame thrower.

This sort of firepower seriously reduces the effectiveness of such lower order Mythos creatures as zombies, ghouls, Nightgaunts, and Byakhee, and puts a sizable crimp in the style of many of the independent races. Sure, the Mi-Go are fundamentally more advanced than humankind in all areas of science, but how well can they hold up against a stiff spray of fungicide?

Basically, humanity of the eighties has attained a level of advancement at which it can challenge the Outer Gods themselves with an even chance of success. The weapons are at hand, yet not all of them were designed for destruction.

By far the most invaluable of such weapons is technology. We have split the atom and looked in on other galaxies, learning more with each passing day. In more recent Mythos tales (*The Burrowers Beneath* and *The Transition of Titus Crow* by Brian Lumley, DAW Books) it was shown that Shudde M'ell and the Cthonians are susceptible to low-level doses of radiation, and can be dissolved by large quantities of water. In these same stories it was also shown that such creatures could, when small, be captured and placed under

scientific observation, the better to seek out their weaknesses. What new discoveries would be forthcoming if the same techniques were applied to Shoggoths, Dholes, or Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath?

For such discoveries to come about there must be some sort of organization dedicated to the downfall of the Outer Gods. Again, literature provides us an example. As early as the fifties the Wilmarth Foundation was already making great strides in its study of the Mythos, challenging the minions of Cthulhu and his ilk in every corner of the world, and winning. Modern investigators would gravitate to such an organization, whose greatest attraction would be protection through knowledge. And where better to store such knowledge than in the tool of the eighties—the computer.

A centralized storehouse of data including reports on past encounters, a continuous updating of suspected Mythos-related occurrences and, most importantly, what would amount to a 99% Mythos Knowledge stored safely away in a memory bank. Specific data could be instantly retrieved, and spells could be learned while preserving Sanity for more direct confrontations. New theories could be tested without risk to the researcher, and there is a chance that new and more powerful spells might be developed as well.

All of this will tend to make the modern investigator more technology-oriented, so the standard professions of such a scenario would most likely be Professor, Scientist, or Parapsychologist. The other character types would be represented in a smaller way, for anyone may have the misfortune of stumbling upon the Mythos, and

even a Hobo could be a psychic, one of the most valuable of weapons against the Outer Gods.

Government involvement would add Politician and Military Officer to that list. By the eighties it's certain that a handful of governments would be taking active measures against the Outer Gods; as early as the 1920's the U.S. government was instrumental in putting an end to certain nefarious goings-on in the town of Innsmouth, so they can hardly be unaware of the situation.

So, modern investigators could have the resources of the American armed forces at their disposal; with all this, they would seem to be just about invincible. But there is another side to the coin.

Though the Outer Gods need not adapt to our modern world, their servants must surely do so if their darksome plottings are to continue. In fact, the greatest danger will come, ironically enough, from those Mythos beings most closely resembling the human race. It was fairly easy to recognize the enemy in the 1920's—it was usually black, slimy, and had a lot of tentacles. But now that enemy isn't going to be so obligingly easy to identify, especially if they look like you or me—and I'm not so sure about you. . . .

The Deep Ones are the best example of this, and will probably prove to be the most dangerous of these races. In human form they are able to move about freely in normal society, using their knowledge, power, and tainted gold to attain positions of authority and influence. Estates could be created and passed along as each successor completes that final transformation. By such means the Mythos minions could worm their way into the very heart of humanity's defenses without the slightest fear of detection.

Knowledge, unfortunately, is in this case a double-edged weapon; what works for us will also work for them. In game terms this is good, for it puts the odds into a more proper balance; for the world at large, though, this is a very nasty development indeed.

The servants of the evil ones can be—and have been—very well organized; just ask any member of the Starry Wisdom Cult or the Order of Dagon. They are perfectly capable of gaining access to human technology when necessary and as to weaponry, it is perfectly logical to assume they will be

armed with the best and most deadly of modern munitions. But how will these new generation minions conduct their foul operations?

With the greatest of subtlety, rest assured. No more unaccountably missing persons, no strange phenomenon to be seen and commented upon, no damning letters to be left behind to reveal the plot, and a carefully staged 'accident' for those who venture too near the truth. Secrecy rules supreme in the modern day, with ceremonies taking place deep underground, using sacrifices abducted from other towns, or even other states.

Boats and ships lost at sea, plane crashes in inaccessible locations; these may be the clues to Mythos activity in the eighties. Supposedly natural disasters can be generated to cover a multitude of sins; who can say what horrors the eruption of Mount St. Helens was meant to conceal? A killer tornado strikes in Texas; was there an investigator down there who was about to uncover a plot by worshipers of Ithaqua? A nuclear power plant nearly goes into meltdown; could someone have been attempting to use the incident to mask a summoning of Aza-

thoth? The Keeper of a present-day adventure must be constantly on the lookout for just these sort of disasters for use as possible plotlines—in the world of Cthulhu, even the most mundane occurrence can take on a darkly sinister aspect.

The ultimate goal of the Mythos minions is the downfall of humanity and the destruction of all its relics, for mankind itself is the only true barrier to the dreadful success of the Outer Gods. Those beings will sabotage vital research, and even incite world wars to achieve their goals. Who knows how much of the senseless violence and terrorism plaguing our world today has been generated by the dream sendings of Great Cthulhu? Did Einstein invent the atomic bomb on his own, or was the nuclear seed planted in his mind by the servants of Azathoth?

It could very well be that the beings of the Mythos are feeding us our technology of destruction, while at the same time nudging us subtly nearer the brink of a cataclysmic war. Wouldn't it be ironic if after all these years of resistance, we ourselves did the Outer Gods' dirty work for them?

At first glance, then, it seems as though a modern Cthulhu adventure

will resemble something out of an espionage role-playing game, and in essence, that is correct—it's the price we have to pay for progress. This situation will call for far more imagination and resourcefulness on the part of the Keeper, but the stretch shouldn't be that difficult.

If handled correctly, and in strict accordance with the rules, that lone Hunting Horror mentioned earlier can still be a formidable opponent. Indirect attacks can be most effective; how can one respond to a Shriveling spell if the caster doesn't reveal him/her/itself? And it doesn't really matter how many M16 slugs you pump into a Dark Young—they're still only going to take minimum damage. An ambush, by either man or monster, can prove very deadly to at least one investigator, and many Mythos minions are known for their stealth.

Be assured then that the nature of *Call Of Cthulhu* will remain unaltered in the eighties, and scenarios played out in the present should be just as exciting in their own way as those of the twenties. After all, that Hunting Horror can still bite a man in half, and investigators with guns have been known to miss. . . . □



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"He was one of the many men of his time of whom it might be said that it would have been better for their country and humanity if they had never been born." —Will Durant

The Life and Legacy of

IVAN THE TERRIBLE

By E.S. Erkes



IN THE original Russian, he is given the appellation *Groznyi*, which is mistranslated in every other European language: In German it is either *Die Grausame* (The Cruel) or *Die Schreckliche* (The Terrifying); in Turkish *Korkunc* (The Frightening); in French and English, of course, it is *Terrible*. The Russian word *groznyi* more properly translates to "awe-inspiring," and Ivan himself welcomed the name. He was the first ruler of Russia to take the name Czar. And he was, in addition, probably the most purely psychopathic personality ever to play a significant role in history. The trend among modern historians, both Western and Soviet, has been to look past Ivan's blood-thirsty reputation and to appreciate his major role in reforming and modernizing Russia. But Ivan the national leader cannot be separated from Ivan the sadistic killer; each activity was always intertwined with the other.

Ivan was born in 1533, the son of Vasili III, Prince of Moscow. His mother became regent at Vasili's death when Ivan was three. As a child, Ivan distinguished himself by his extreme sadism. He liked to torture animals, always the first and worst sign of incipient psychopathy: Killing birds slowly with a knife, or throwing dogs off the Kremlin wall (he later used both of these methods on humans). His youth was filled with cruelty: His companions were the sons of Moscow's *boyars* (nobles) who spent their playtime in vicious fights full of eye gouges and genital kicks, where the losers were often carried away half-dead. And, it is said, he grew up with a

constant fear of assassination, a fear he certainly carried with him the rest of his life when he always employed a taster for his food.

The other hallmark of Ivan's childhood was an intensive but selective study of religion. His constant Bible study was limited to the Revelations of St. John, which he invariably called the Apocalypse. Ivan relished the book's mysticism and strange symbolism. Almost as favored as reading material was *The Lives of the Saints*, with its detailed descriptions of painful martyrdoms. From his readings, he gradually conceived the idea of Moscow as the so-called Third Rome, after the original Rome and Constantinople, and the concept colored his future

political outlook. One historian says that Ivan's foreign policy was simply to have Russia connect the Baltic with the Caspian; but there was always a strong religious motivation in every expansion of Russia's borders under Ivan.

As Ivan grew older, his amusements progressed. He went on hunting trips into the countryside with his boyar companions. Invariably, these excursions led to attacks on whatever small villages they happened to find, with much rape and drunken looting. When still thirteen, he had a boyar rival named Andrei Shuiski thrown alive to the dogs, and took total command of the Russian state. All the while, he continued his religious readings, and the conflict between his atrocities and the dictates of Christianity never seemed to bother him.

So it was with Ivan's siege of the city of Kazan in 1552. The Czar had led an army of 150,000 men against a Tatar garrison of 30,000. Kazan had long been the Tatar base for raiding and slaving sorties into the Russian heartland, and even as late as 1550 the Tatar chieftains were still demanding tribute—although Ivan refused to pay it. The entire population of the city had been concentrated inside the walls of Kazan's own *kremlin* (of course,

every old Russian town had its own *kremlin*). The first few days of the siege were disastrous for the Russians. Sudden Tatar attacks stung Ivan's cavalry, while violent storms swelled the Volga, carrying off a significant amount of the Russians' supplies. Ivan had the few Tatar prisoners in Russian hands tied to stakes before the Kazan fortress so that their cries might demoralize the remaining Tatars. However, the only Tatar response was to feather the captives with arrows—so that they died at the hands of Muslims and not infidels.

Eventually Ivan had a German engineer tunnel under the *kremlin* to blow up the city's water supply. Several casks of gunpowder were detonated under the main well after a ten-day dig. The explosion did enormous damage to the city, hurling hundreds of pounds of mortar, wood, and animal and human body parts into the air—but still the city held, still the Tatars refused to surrender. According to many Russian soldiers, Mongolian witches appeared on the ramparts of the fortress, making obscene gestures and casting spells, conjuring up the foul weather.

Ivan had the priests bless the camp, sprinkling holy water every few feet; a reputedly miraculous cross was produced to bless the falling rain. Almost immediately the sky cleared. The Russian soldiers took heart, a huge mine exploded below the fortress door; the attackers surged in by the thousands. The entire Tatar population was slaughtered or enslaved. Ivan, for his part, spent the entire battle kneeling before a series of icons imported from Moscow. Only after a number of prominent *boyars* beseeched him to make an appearance did Ivan tear himself away: He kissed one of the icons, drank some holy water, and swallowed a portion of the host before mounting his horse and attending to the battle scene. Kazan was now indisputably Russian, and two years later Ivan's forces took Astrakhan on the Caspian, placing the entire Volga under Russian control.

Ivan next turned to Poland and Livonia (the area of the present Baltic states) in an unsuccessful attempt to reach and control the Baltic sea, a Russian goal that would remain unfulfilled until the time of Peter the Great, more than 150 years in the future. During his campaign in the West, Ivan

had the Jews he encountered killed or baptized by force; according to him, "They turn my subjects away from Christianity and in addition they commit murders with poisonous herbs." Similarly, he made Catholics convert to Orthodox Christianity.

The later military failures engendered some dissent back in Moscow. Some of his closest advisers were making agreements with prominent *boyars*; others made plans to depose Ivan's heirs after the Czar's death. Still other *boyars* actually defected to Poland, and fought openly against Ivan; this number included a leading general whom Ivan regarded as a close friend.

The combined impact of the various conspiracies and betrayals had a great effect on Ivan. They inspired him to set in motion the events that would, more than any others, earn him the nickname "The Terrible." On December 13, 1564, Ivan announced his retirement, and fled with his family to his summer residence in Aleksandrovsk. This dramatic act had the anticipated results: There was a huge public outcry from the suddenly leaderless Russian nation, and national sentiment turned decisively against the *boyars*. By the time Ivan returned to the Kremlin in February of 1565, he was able to rule by decree. A significant portion of Russia was declared to be *oprichnina*, that is, under the direct *fiat* of Ivan; all property in it was now Ivan's; and a new personal militia, the *oprichniki*, would administer this territory in Ivan's name.

The *oprichniki* were drawn from the cruelest criminal elements of Russian society. They dressed in black and had symbolic inscriptions of dogs' heads and brooms on their saddles. They raped, tortured, and burned forests at will, and levied taxes whenever they wanted. In many respects they resembled the various secret government police forces of this century in their earliest and crudest incarnations, such as the Nazi SA and the Soviet Cheka.

With the 6000 *oprichniki* pacifying the countryside, Ivan began his lengthy retributions against the *boyars*. The first executions began on the first day of the *oprichnina* decree. Ivan had most of the victims on that day beheaded in public except for one particularly unlucky *boyar* who was impaled after the fashion of the Romanian aristocrat Vlad Dracul and

took twenty-four hours to die. In a short time Ivan would acquire an encyclopaedic knowledge of torture methods. The witnessing of torture became an everyday occurrence for Ivan, who would only depart from his dungeons or public-execution places with reluctance. He had men fed alive to bears. Others were alternately burned with boiling and freezing water until their skin came off. A son was forced to murder his father. Once, Ivan and his son went to the home of the widow of one of his victims immediately after the man's execution; he raped the widow while his son raped the woman's daughter. Often Ivan could not resist joining in at a torture session with his own steel-pointed staff; to facilitate things, victims were hung on meathooks, often to be finally sliced to death like meat animals. Ivan liked to have public executions, though he eventually had to command his subjects to attend.

Ivan soon settled into a grotesque routine. He woke at three in the morning and went with his sons to a church service that lasted three to four hours, after which they attended mass for another two hours. Ivan had eventually declared that the *oprichniki* were all monks of a new religious order, of which he was the leading abbot.

After the religious observances and meals and a short nap, he entered upon his favorite part of the day: Watching the torture of prisoners. This requirement always took hours, and put him in a cheerful mood for the rest of the day. After the torture, the Czar attended evening vespers and then had his largest meal of the day, a dinner enlivened by live entertainment on the order of tumblers, trained bears, and the public rape of serf girls. Afterwards, Ivan went to bed, where three blind elders read stories to him until he fell asleep. At midnight, he rose again to go pray in church.

Of course, opposition grew in response to Ivan's atrocious rule. But when it did appear openly—and often when it didn't—Ivan's response was speedy and invariably brutal. In 1570, Ivan sacked the monasteries of the city of Novgorod, one of the oldest Russian cities, and had the monks robbed or whipped to death; shortly thereafter Ivan's wrath struck the general population of the city, and between 1500 (Ivan's own total) and 2800 (most other reports) were

slaughtered. Townspeople were roasted alive one hundred at a time. Many others were drowned in the Volchov river, with children physically tied to their mothers to insure that they would die. Here and in many other instances we are forced to admit that history knows no other ruler—not Hitler, not Idi Amin, not Stalin (who certainly admired and emulated Ivan)—who took such delight in the torture and murder of children. Here the *oprichniki*, wearing dogs' head masks, had a new task to perform: Cutting up the bodies of the dead to facilitate their disposal.

As Ivan grew older, he grew still more conscious of his image. He became something of an Anglophile, and proposed all sorts of joint ventures, including, allegedly, a proposal of marriage to Queen Elizabeth I. A dark side to this image-consciousness appeared when he had virtually everyone who knew him as a youth tracked down and killed—as Hitler and Stalin would later do. Of course, when someone was killed, Ivan also required that his entire family, including serfs, also be killed.

Ultimately, Ivan's absolutism extended to his own family. In 1580, he angrily objected to his daughter-in-law's improper attire and struck her, causing her to miscarry. When his son, who would have been Czar Ivan V, angrily confronted him, Ivan the Terrible struck him with his imperial staff, killing him. Ivan was nearly driven mad, if that was possible, by grief; he was certainly changed by it.

Ivan began to give huge monetary

gifts to various monasteries, entreating them to pray for his forgiveness. He accumulated long lists of his victims and sent them also to the monasteries so that their souls could be saved. He tried to justify his murderous past, blaming the *boyars* for "forcing him" to be more brutal than his natural inclination; Stalin could not have missed such a rationalization.

Towards the end of his life, Ivan began to suffer from a strange and somehow fitting disease, probably a rare form of cancer. His skin began to peel off in layers, as if he were one of his pitiful torture victims; his testicles swelled as if they had been unmercifully beaten; and he began to emit a loathsome and unbearable stench which reminded everyone who smelled it of the exact odor of a rotting corpse. On March 18, 1584, Ivan died. In any other situation he would have been an ordinary serial killer; instead he was able to turn psychopathy into a foreign and domestic policy. The real historical problem with Ivan is that many observers—even to the present day—find a workable model in the rule of a madman.

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The literature on Ivan the Terrible is enormous, even in English. Most of it tends to be sectarian, that is, written with a sort of present-day political axe to grind; the four volumes I've used here serve as examples. Henri Troyat, *Ivan the Terrible* (New York: Dutton, 1984) was translated from the original French and is a good, unflinching study, with a post-Holocaust, post-Khmer Rouge horror at Ivan's atroci-

ties. It is opposed by volumes like K. Waliszewski, *Ivan the Terrible* (Hamden CT: Archon Books, 1966). This biography was also written in French, but in 1904, at the height of the Dreyfus controversy; it finds reformism—so much in the minds of the Dreyfusards—in the slaughters of the *oprichniki*. Hans van Eckardt, *Ivan the Terrible* (New York: Knopf, 1949) is genuinely bizarre. Written and published in Nazi Germany in 1941, this strikingly racist document is full of the usual Nazi jargon: Phrases like "admixture of blood" and "Mongol traits of character" are common, and its quite positive view of Ivan tells you all you need to know about those who have to find an acceptable model in Ivan's Russia. There are, however, some general biographies, such as Stephen Graham: *Ivan the Terrible: The Life of Ivan IV of Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), which is a good popular study. □



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Theosophy (Gr., the wisdom of God). The name adopted by the Theosophical Society to define their religious or philosophical system, which aims at the knowledge of God by means of intuition and contemplative illumination, or by direct communion. *Esoteric Buddhism* is another name for it; and its adherents claim that the doctrines of the great world religions are merely the *exoteric* expressions of their own *esoteric* traditions.

—*Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable*

OCCULT ORGANIZATIONS of the 1920's



By Richard Kaczynski

CHAOSIUM'S *CALL Of Cthulhu* role-playing game, based on H.P. Lovecraft's macabre fiction, is set in the 1920's, the heyday of occult organizations in Europe and America. These groups were so popular that many of them exist to the present day. Since rules and play in *Call Of Cthulhu* are based in fact, and since the game often involves encounters with various secret societies, it behooves the Keeper to be aware of the history of the many real 1920's movements. Familiarity with such organizations and their more illustrious members offers the Keeper great potential. He may incorporate them into a 20th-century campaign, either as centers of Mythos worship, a source of sages, or assistance against the minions of Cthulhu. One of these societies may be included as background information, possibly the parent body of some renegade cult, or even just a wild goose chase. The Keeper may permit a player-character to become a member of one such organization. At the very least, the groups described in this article may serve as a model for the creation of a fictitious occult organization.

THE ROSICRUCIAN SOCIETY

Legend has it that Christian Rosenkreuz (ca. 1373-1479), during his life-long travels in Europe, Arabia, and Egypt, learned great secrets of mathematics, science, philosophy, and magic and, based upon this, founded the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. The exact date of Rosenkreuz's death at age 106 is unknown, but the fraternity continued to flourish for generations.

One day, a member of the fraternity, Frater N., decided to make alterations in the architecture of the Rosicrucian Sanctus Spiritus. In the course of this work he uncovered a bronze tablet inscribed with the names of the eldest members in the order. Behind this was a door inscribed with the words "Post

Centum Viginti Annos Patebo" ("After 120 years I will reappear"), followed by a date . . . 120 years earlier. The door opened into a self-illuminated seven-sided vault with a circular altar in the center. Concealed within each wall was a chest containing rare objects, such as copies of the order's books, the diary of Christian Rosenkreuz, magical mirrors, bells, and lamps. Beneath the altar was a bronze plate which covered the body of Christian Rosenkreuz, perfectly preserved after 120 years.

Interest in Rosicrucianism dropped off around 1620, but a German society calling itself the Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross regenerated interest in the Christian Rosenkreuz legend and

his secret teachings in 1710. Much of Rosicrucianism was integrated into Freemasonry in the 1770's, including an initiation rite which re-enacted the discovery of Rosenkreuz's body. Rosicrucianism also continued to exist as an independent organization, with branches appearing worldwide—the Societas Rosicruciana in England, the Ancient and Mystic Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) in America, and as a society within the Golden Dawn (q.v.). (See also the article "The Rosicrucians" in *Different Worlds* 38.)

FREEMASONRY

The largest and most common secret society in the west is Freemasonry. Today one can see Masonic temples in most cities, Masonic decals on occasional automobiles, and even Masonic tie-clips on respectable gentlemen. In fact, the United States was founded by Freemasons. Many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons, as was Thomas Jefferson himself. Benjamin Franklin was a member since 1731, and George Washington, when he became America's first president in 1789, was Grand Master of his lodge.

Freemasonry as we know it today was developed in 16th-century London, although the tradition traces back to ancient Egypt. The organization consists of various grades or degrees (typically 33, but variations exist; the Rites of Memphis have 95 degrees, and the Rites of Misraim have 90 degrees), and everything is surrounded by the utmost secrecy. There are passwords, secret handshakes, and signs to weed out imposters, and this tradition has passed into many other secret societies. The various districts of Masonry are presided over by a Grand Lodge. Because of the size of the United States, each state has its own Grand Lodge, and its subsidiary temples may have memberships ranging from a couple hundred to several thousand. In Europe, jurisdiction is wider and lodges have smaller, more intimate membership (about 50-70).

Masonry is not a religion, but a conception of God as a Divine Architect who created the earth on certain geometric principles. *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry* details in 32 chapters (one for each degree, with the 33rd being honorary) the beliefs taught to the initiates. Theirs is an eclectic mix

of Qaballah, Greek philosophy, Egyptian religion, and other beliefs combined into a single doctrine. Its meetings are conducted by various officers with such colorful titles as Recording Secretary, Guardian, Warden, and Noble Grand.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Helena Petrova Blavatsky, in conjunction with Henry S. Olcott and W.Q. Judge, founded the Theosophical Society on 17 November 1875 upon the philosophy later expounded in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). This book comments on *The Stanzas of Dzyan*, an esoteric tome the original copy of which she claimed to possess on "a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process." These stanzas were written in some hitherto unknown language (supposed by some to be Atlantean), and represented the oldest known religious tradition which underlies every belief system in the world. It discusses the evolution of the cosmos, and speaks of a time before the dawn of man when the world was inhabited by monstrous primeval races.

Theosophy is an ancient belief system embracing the highest ideas of the godhead known to man, and the goals of the Theosophical Society are:

- [1] To form the nucleus of a brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.
- [2] To study comparative religion, philosophy, and science.
- [3] To investigate the unexplained laws of nature, and man's latent powers.

Theosophy was a popular movement around the turn of the century, and it counted Rudolph Steiner, William Butler Yeats, and Thomas Edison among its members. In addition, theosophy greatly influenced the thoughts of Lord Tennyson and Mahatma Gandhi. The society has branches in Britain, America, and India.

Blavatsky died in 1891, and was succeeded by Annie Besant, a trailblazing woman who advocated birth control, preached atheism, and fought for women's emancipation. In 1908, she and C.W. Leadbeater (another Theosophist) discovered a Brahmin youth Jeddu Krishnamurti who they believed to be an avatar (incarnation) of the Hindu god Vishnu; suspecting him to

be the new messiah, they adopted the boy and, much to the chagrin of his father, trained him in spiritual leadership. This move outraged many members, including Steiner who left in 1912 to form his Anthroposophical Society. Ultimately, in 1929, the boy renounced his messiahship and all claims of spiritual leadership. Besant died in 1933, but the society has been succeeded by other presidents, and still operates widely today.

THE GOLDEN DAWN

In 1887, a cipher manuscript came into the possession of three London Rosicrucians: Dr. William Wynn Westcott, Dr. W.R. Woodman, and Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers. It was supposedly discovered in a London bookstall. This manuscript, once decoded, contained the outlines of five pseudo-Masonic rituals and the German address of Fraulein Sprengel, an eminent Rosicrucian Adept. A brief correspondence ensued, with Sprengel instructing the London occultists to expand the rituals for performance, and authorizing them to found "Die

came the *Argentium Astrum* of three grades. In addition, there was a probationary period preceding neophyte initiation. The members were admitted into each grade by an elaborate ceremonial ritual, at which point the initiate would choose a code-name (typically in Latin) to represent his/her aspirations in this grade. Advancement to the higher grades was permitted only after passing examinations on erudite magical lore and displaying mastery of various spiritual disciplines.

Although the Golden Dawn contained eleven grades, nobody ever reached the *Argentium Astrum*; this sub-order consisted of the Secret Chiefs, powerful disembodied adepts who oversaw not only the order, but the spiritual direction of mankind itself. Nobody ever saw these Secret Chiefs, but Mathers claimed to have contacted them and to have received from them command of the Golden Dawn.

Since its inception, the Golden Dawn attained notoriety as the most prestigious secret society in its time, attracting members such as William Butler Yeats (the great mystic poet), Sax Rohmer (author of the immensely popular Fu Manchu novels), Annie Horniman (the post-Freudian psychoanalyst), Algernon Blackwood (one of Lovecraft's correspondents), Arthur Machen (another of Lovecraft's friends), Bram Stoker (author of *Dracula*), as well as the occult authorities Edward Arthur Waite, Dion Fortune, and Israel Regardie. Some authors have even suggested Robert Louis Stevenson (creator of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) was tangentially associated with the order.

Not the least of its members was the infamous and flamboyant Aleister Crowley, who joined the order in 1898 and, within two years, advanced to the grade of Adeptus Minor under Mathers's own tutelage. This was a time of great political turmoil within the organization, and Crowley was more than willing to contribute to the confusion. He claimed to have contacted the Secret Chiefs and learned that Mathers no longer had any authority over the Golden Dawn; in fact, the Secret Chiefs had given authority over to Crowley himself! Naturally, Mathers was less than pleased, and a much-publicized (and probably over-exaggerated) magical battle ensued between the two.

Despite the best efforts to keep the

The Hierarchy of the Golden Dawn

From lowest to highest

Golden Dawn in the Outer

Neophyte
Zealater
Theoricus
Practicus
Philosophus

Rosea Rubiae et Aurea Crucis

Adeptus Minor
Adeptus Major
Adeptus Exemptus

Argentium Astrum

Magister Templi
Magus
Ipsissimus

Goldene Dammerung." In 1888, these men founded the Isis-Urania branch of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a semi-secret society teaching the "magic of Hermes" and claiming direct lineal descent from the oldest Rosicrucian society of all.

The Golden Dawn was a strange mix of Freemasonry, hermeticism, and Qaballah. It consisted of eleven grades, divided into three sub-societies. First, there was the Golden Dawn in the Outer, consisting of five grades; next came the *Rosea Rubiae et Aurea Crucis* of three grades; and finally

order intact, the Golden Dawn eventually splintered apart in the 1900's, with its more ambitious members founding organizations of their own. Most of these were short-lived. For instance, Waite took the rituals and rewrote them along more Christian lines. These he used to found the Stella Matuinta, one of the more hearty successors of the Golden Dawn. In 1922, Dion Fortune founded the Society of the Inner Light, a type of correspondence-course equivalent to a mystical society, which claimed no physical headquarters but a substantial organization in the astral realm. And Aleister Crowley went on to leave a legacy unparalleled in the history of magic. Regardless, various temples of the Golden Dawn were always (and doubtlessly will continue to be) around.

ALEISTER CROWLEY'S GROUPS

Claiming that the old Golden Dawn had been abandoned by the Secret Chiefs (and, hence, was powerless) and that he himself had been entrusted with reorganizing the order along a new form of "magick" delivered to him, Crowley proceeded to publish all the secrets of the Golden Dawn in a series of ten lavishly bound periodicals entitled *The Equinox* (1909-14). His intent was to disseminate this obsolete knowledge and advertise his new organization (known variously as the AA and Great White Brotherhood). *The Equinox* also contained the basic instructions of his society, and among them is a very excellent description of its hierarchy, entitled "One Star in Sight" (reprinted in his *Magick in Theory and Practice*). The organization's grades are virtually identical to that of the Golden Dawn, including title and general curriculum.

This "new" Golden Dawn did not attract the prestigious bunch of people the way its predecessor had, but it did include individuals who would prove to have a profound impact on the occult. These members included Charles Stansfield Jones, Austin Osman Spare, and Victor Neuburg.

During his publication spree (Crowley's corpus of material—though partly pirated from Golden Dawn manuscripts—is one of the largest contributions in the occult), Crowley was approached by Theodore Reuss, a German adept who accused Crowley of publishing the secrets of his Society,

Ordo Templi Orientis. (The OTO claims descent from the Christian Knights Templar, whose members, in 1303, were forced to confess under inhuman torture to spitting on the cross, indulging in obscene orgies, and worshiping a horned idol named Baphomet. This organization also claims to be able to bestow all the grades of Freemasonry in nine grades, and teaches a potent system of magic which uses sex as its impetus). Crowley pleaded ignorance to the charge, and the confrontation ended amicably, with Crowley being appointed head of the English OTO. In 1922, Reuss resigned from the OTO shortly following a stroke, and, in 1925, Crowley was named his successor. He claimed that the OTO's lineage traced not only to the Rosicrucians, but was so ancient

"ONE STAR IN SIGHT"

The Order of the S. S.

Ipsissimus	10° =	1□
Magus	9° =	2□
Magister Templi	8° =	3□

The Order of the R. C.

(Babe of the Abyss — the link)

Adeptus Exemptus	7° =	4□
Adeptus Major	6° =	5□
Adeptus Minor	5° =	6□

The Order of the G. D.

(Dominus Liminis — the link)

Philosophus	4° =	7□
Practicus	3° =	8□
Zelator	2° =	9□
Neophyte	1° =	10□
Probationer	0° =	0□

as to count among its members, Merlin, Hercules, Odysseus, Dionysus, Osiris, and Pan!

All of Crowley's organizations have endured into the present day, although they are divided as to who is Crowley's true successor and which OTO and AA is the real McCoy.

CONCLUSION

After reading about these groups, several striking points should be noted: These societies, while calling themselves secret, were quite ubiquitous. Adding to this their seeming interconnection, their famous members, and their political involvement, a conspiracy useful for campaign design is easy to invent. In fact, many people believe they have uncovered true conspiracies. For examples, consult Robert Anton Wilson's books *Cosmic Trigger* and

The Illuminatus Trilogy, Neal Wilgus's *The Illuminoids*, *Light Bearers of Darkness* (anonymous), and anything by Constance Cumbey. However, it is seriously recommended all these books be taken with a grain of salt.

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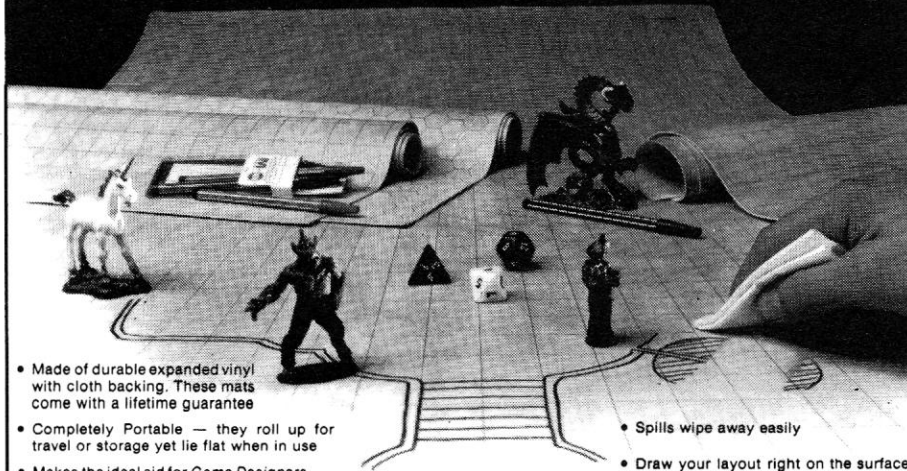


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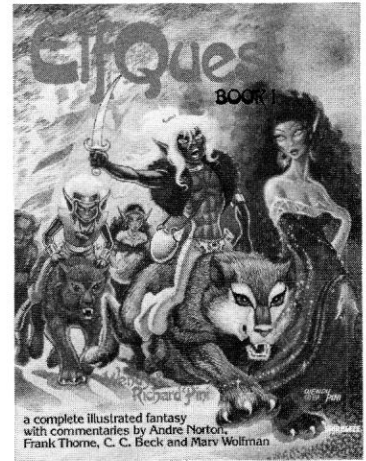
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Adventuring in the World of ELFQUEST

THE WORLD OF TWO MOONS

By Michael Szymanski



THE WORLD of Two Moons is a primitive one, slowly pulling itself free of an ice age whose effects are still felt in the chilly but not overly hostile temperatures which have been slowly on the rise for the past several thousand years. The native humans, like their world, are primitive, a tribal race capable of only minor metalworking and nearly completely at the mercy of the beasts of the wilderness. But this world is most unique, for it is home to another race—that of elves.

They came when the ice age was young, appearing in a massive citadel of turrets and spires which descended from a storm of swirling colors, settling roughly to earth as bands of semi-intelligent humans looked on in awe and fear.

The elves were taller, then, and much slimmer. How strange they must have looked with their large eyes, pointed ears, and three-fingered hands—even stranger still must have seemed the other two types that were ancestors of the trolls and the mysterious preservers. Wishing only to communicate with the natives, the elves reached out with their minds—and triggered disaster.

Fear overcame awe and the humans attacked, slaughtering the shocked and nearly defenseless visitors or driving them from their home into the hostile realms of the forest. Small groups of fugitive elves struck out in several directions, seeking places where they would be safe from the evil humans who hunted them like animals. The trolls took shelter underground and set themselves apart from elves and humans alike, while the small, winged preservers—more or less free spirits—were tricked and confined to a small forest which came to be known as the Forbidden Grove. There they remained, all but forgotten—but the hatred between elf and human could never be erased.

One of the most unique of the newly formed elven tribes was the Wolfriders.

Desperate to ensure the survival of her charges, the leader Timmain shapechanged into a wolf, the better to hunt for food. As time passed, Timmain remained more and more in her wolf form, until a time came when she was more wolf than elf.

Yet the birth of her first cub proved her elven heritage, for Timmorn Yellow-Eyes was a cross of elf and wolf, and it was he who came to be first chief of the Wolfriders. It was only natural then that a close kinship between elf and wolf would be formed, to continue down through the centuries until the story of Timmain and Timmorn grew into legend.

A second group of frightened elves fled across the sun-blasted southern desert, there to be free of the human threat in a small foothill village they called Sorrow's End. A second generation was born, but the passing of time has spared but one from that era, one called Savah, who is known as the Mother of Memory. They became farmers, for the most part, depending on a single hunter for their supply of meat. This tribe learned limited metalworking and developed advanced skills as builders.

In those early times after the arrival of the elves on the World of Two Moons, Lord Voll established a haven within Blue Mountains where his people could thrive, safe from the processes of evolution which made the other tribes shorter and more muscular, thus removing them all the farther

from kinship with the High Ones, the original inhabitants of the citadel. Though they were able to improve their skills and abilities until they nearly matched those of the long-gone elven settlers, the Blue Mountain Folk are without children, and so have become something of a stagnant culture, despite all their many advances.

They are also known as the Glider Folk, for they have bred a race of giant hawks that are strong enough to bear two or more riders, though the Gliders seldom venture too far from the Mountain. This is the only tribe to have established a relationship with the humans, who worship the elves and act as their servants. In trade for gifts, the humans provide the Glider Folk with food and small manufactured items; though this relationship works, it is far from a healthy one, made no better by the arrogance of the self-proclaimed 'superior' species of Blue Mountain.

Far to the north, in those snowy regions where the elven citadel first came to rest, there dwells another tribe; these a gruff, hardy breed of elk riders who live for today, driven by a deep-seated urge to return to the Palace of the High Ones, which has been calling for its long-gone inhabitants to return ever since it was freed from the glacier's frozen grasp. These are the Go Backs, and they are involved in what amounts to a war with the trolls who have taken possession of the Palace of the High Ones.

All the elven tribes know nothing about their fellows far, separated as they are by great distance and numerous dangers, each has come to believe that they are the last of their race. Legends of other tribes still persist, but most consider them to be merely

well-spun tales told purely for amusement.

DAY TO DAY LIFE

Life on the World of Two Moons revolves around the tribe. There are no cities, towns, roads, or even—with a few minor exceptions—farms. The level of civilization and culture is most similar to that of a tribe of non-nomadic American Indians. Money is an unknown concept, since each member of the tribe contributes his or her abilities to the community, and is simply given whatever he or she needs whenever it is needed. Treasure is another matter, though each of the tribes has a different notion about it.

For the Wolfriders and the Go Backs, treasure is considered to be a sharper knife or a more finely balanced spear. Being hunter-gatherers, the Wolfriders depend on good weapons with which to swiftly bring down their prey. For the combative Go Backs, the prey is trolls. In the battle for possession of the Palace, any weapon that can more efficiently dispatch the hated enemy is a treasure indeed.

To the Blue Mountain Folk, knowledge and the purity of their bloodlines are prized above all else, for they are determined to remain as close to their image of the High Ones as possible—no matter what it may cost them. Unquestionably, it is the Mother of Memory who is the treasure of the Sun Folk, for the entire history of the tribe comes to life through this tall and beautiful—though incredibly ancient—elf.

For the most part, life for the elves and humans alike consists mainly of survival—which is more often than not enough to occupy even the hardest of souls. The World of Two Moons still has one foot in the age of the dinosaurs, and besides the common wilderness beasts such as bears, boars, and rhinoceros, the elves must contend with saber-toothed tigers, woolly mammoths, and assorted medium-sized lizards. And then there are the giant-sized species of such mundane creatures as leeches, snakes, spiders, scorpions, and hawks. Yet, above all, the greatest threat to elvenkind still remains the humans.

HUMAN VS. ELF

The hatred between these two races is roughly equal on both sides. The elves will never forget the slaughter and persecution of their ancient ancestors,

and the humans see the elves as demons, unholy invaders who looked upon the World of Two Moons from beyond the clouds and came to steal it for themselves.

The humans blame the elves for all that is bad in their lives, a sentiment that is not soothed by the nasty pranks the elves pull whenever the opportunity presents itself. So great is this racial prejudice that any chance meeting of elf and human will usually result in the death of one or the other.

This ill will is further intensified by the fact that human shamans ritually sacrifice any elf unfortunate enough to be taken alive by the humans. Only one tribe has attained a level of civilization where such a practice is considered barbaric; unfortunately, this is the tribe which serves the Glider Folk, whom they have come to think of as god-like beings. These humans would never attack an elf, and would be more likely to fall to their knees should one appear before them.

RECOGNITION AND BONDING

Recognition is a genetic instinct triggered when two elves who are quite literally made for each other meet; this instinct is irresistible, and more often than not comes as a complete surprise to both parties. As part of this process, the couple telepathically reveal their secret soul names to each other, and this forms a greater bond than any ceremony of marriage. This sharing also takes place on an instinctive level, and can occur between members of any of the elven tribes—with two possible exceptions.

The Go Backs have managed to suppress recognition, for the war with the trolls has made them the most short-lived of elves, and repression of this ancient instinct allows them to reproduce in greater numbers to offset the mortality rate. Being completely isolated, the Blue Mountain elves have no recognition amongst themselves, and therefore they have no offspring. But recognition is still possible for the Glider Folk, whereas the Go Backs have reached a point where recognition is experienced only as a heightening of desire.

Bonding is a similar function, except that it takes place between an elf and one compatible animal, forming an empathic bond of friendship and limited communication. The Wolfriders obviously bond with wolves, while the

Go Backs bond with elk and the Glider Folk with their hawks.

Not all of the elven tribes have this exclusive bond with a specific animal. While they have managed to domesticate a few useful animals, the Sun Folk are ignorant of bonding, and some may even look upon such a thing as being uncivilized.

So, though the elves have remained elves, time, isolation, and evolution have wrought changes upon all the diverse tribes, making each one unique and specially adapted to its own environment. What, then, would transpire should these tribes meet, and what momentous chain of events would cause such meeting to take place?

ELFQUEST

These questions were eloquently answered in the *Elfquest* series by Wendy and Richard Pini. First published in magazine format beginning in 1977, the series met with instant success, and was later reprinted in a four-volume color edition by Warp Graphics.

The tale begins when the Wolfriders, led by Cutter, are forced from their home by a great forest fire set by vengeful humans. Crossing the southern desert, the Wolfriders encounter the Sun Folk, and for the first time realize that other tribes may exist on the World of Two Moons.

The desire to find and unite these far-flung elven tribes takes Cutter, his tribe, and his Sun Folk mate Leetah the healer, on a long and dangerous trek which takes them to the Go Backs, the Blue Mountain Folk, and a greater knowledge of their past. And time and again they encounter the trolls, who refuse to relinquish their hold on the Palace of the High Ones, slaying any elf who dares to venture too near this prized citadel.

After a string of deceptions, betrayals, and a great battle with the trolls, the elves regain possession of the Palace, and the Wolfriders learn the full truth about Timmain and their nature. The story ends here—for a time—but it is clear that much has been left unresolved on the World of Two Moons; there are many questions left unanswered, and it does not seem that the quest is truly completed.

This situation provides fertile ground for the imagination, and the possibilities for adventure on this young and primitive world are endless. And such

is the stuff of which role-playing games are made.

THE GAME

Elfquest, the official role-playing game, was produced by Chaosium to accurately depict the World of Two Moons and all who dwell there, and to provide a viable, intriguing setting for role-playing adventures. The game allows for the creation of characters from any of the elven tribes, and generation is so simple that players will be ready for their first adventure in less than an hour.

Chaosium has expanded upon the information provided by the *Elfquest* series, both in the rulebook and in their *Elfquest Companion* booklet. Most useful is the inclusion of a number of tribes not introduced in the series, such as the Plains Elves, the Desert Elves, and—most interesting—the Sea Elves. They are Wave Dancers who bond with dolphins.

Although the players may choose any tribe for their characters, it is readily apparent that the entire group must be from the same tribe, at least for the beginning of the campaign. Since each tribe knows nothing of the others, a multi-tribal party is possible only after two or more tribes have come into contact with one another. This tends to limit the spice of variety in the group, but in the beginning it will prove a good thing, allowing the players to pick up the game mechanics more easily.

Since *Elfquest* is a game of discovery, a new tribe must be encountered from time to time, or the campaign will surely stagnate. Then, as old characters are killed off or retired, replacements from newly discovered tribes can be generated.

But the key to *Elfquest* is the adventure. Players of *Dungeons & Dragons* and other similar fantasy games will find no dragons or other such mythical creatures to slay, no castles to storm, and no treasures of gold and gems waiting to reward their efforts. The trolls have their underground fortresses and the Glider Folk their caverns within Blue Mountain, but beyond that there is nothing in the way of strongholds on the World of Two Moons. Seemingly deprived of the bread and butter of fantasy gaming, how can the gamemaster hope to maintain player interest? To answer that, we must first take a look at what *Elfquest* does have.

THE ADVENTURE

First of all, *Elfquest* has a point. Not to cast slurs at other role-playing games, but the single goal of many of them seems to be the acquisition of treasure and experience; this is perfectly fine for those who prefer beer & pretzels adventures, but for those who want something with a little meat to it, the World of Two Moons is it.

The point and object of *Elfquest* is discovery. No matter what else occurs in a campaign, events will almost always lead to an encounter with another tribe, which in turn makes the elves stronger as a race, and more capable of survival in a hostile world. Knowledge is the treasure here, and a return to the days of elven glory is the primary goal; any *Elfquest* campaign should contain these important ingredients, since they will give the players an important and logical reason for setting out on an adventure.

There is magic in *Elfquest*, and these spells also contribute to variety in a group, for most are exclusive to two or three tribes, and no single tribe knows all the spells. For example, Levitation is commonly found among the Glider Folk, the High Ones, and the Sun Folk, while the Wolfriders have no knowledge of that spell at all. This means that with each new tribe encountered there is the possibility of new spells, which in turn means that players can be taken off-guard and will not be able to develop a pat defensive strategy, a frustrating occurrence for gamemasters.

While these spells are not as numerous as in other games, they do cover a wide range of effects, from Healing and Rock Shaping to Astral Projection and Mind Stun. Sufficient spells have been provided to make for an interesting arcane battle—should the need arise—while assuring that the players must still rely on their own resources. Some tribes, like the Go Backs, have forsaken magic altogether, fearing that it might weaken them, which they cannot afford if they are to win out against the trolls.

Then there are a number of interesting skills at which any elf may become proficient. Healing Lore is equivalent of First Aid, while Mechanical Lore allows for the fashioning of bows, arrows, nets, and the like. Plant Lore is handy when searching for edible roots and such, but can also be used to identify plants with healing properties.

These three skills are vital to any elf who dwells in the wild and, unlike magic, they can be taught to another elf.

Other skills include Language Lore, Mineral Lore, Troll Lore, Animal Lore, and Elf and Human Lore. Such common skills as Climb, Ride, and Swim have also been provided, as well as the basic weapons skills. All the common melee weapons are available in *Elfquest*, as well as a wide variety of missile weapons, including whips and combat nets.

A major advantage here is that, because of the tremendous lifespan of the elves, these skills can be advanced beyond the 100% level. This represents the major gain the characters receive from their adventuring, at a rate of one to six points per skill successfully used in each adventure. However, a roll of 00 still indicates failure by even the greatest experts.

EVERYDAY ADVENTURES

In *Elfquest*, even a simple hunting expedition can turn into a harrowing adventure. Not only must the characters use their skills to hunt their prey, but they must also be ever on the alert to keep from becoming prey themselves—a saber-toothed tiger does not care if its next meal is a bristle boar or an inattentive elf!

Then, of course, there are the humans. The priests of the human god Gotara are the most blood-thirsty of the lot; a captured elf will be sacrificed at dawn in the hopes of gaining heavenly favor for ridding the world of another pointed-ear demon. For the most part, elves and humans stay out of one another's way, but if they think they can get away with it, the humans will not hesitate to attack a small band of unsuspecting elves out for a nightly hunt.

In many ways, an *Elfquest* adventure is very similar to one that would be run in a post-holocaust role-playing game. The players are pitted against a hostile world, hemmed in by enemies on all sides. The only oasis of civilization that exists lies in the elven tribal villages, which are themselves at the mercy of barbaric invaders. The only way the elves can ensure their safety is to expand their realm and ally with others of their kind to present a united front against their enemies. There is no way back, no returning to the past, so if the players hope for a continued

existence, it will have to be in the world into which Fate has thrust them. All adventures flow from these circumstances and are limited only by the gamemaster's imagination.

SURPRISES

There still remain a few surprises on the World of Two Moons, and the Pinis have shown us two creative examples. The first was brought into this world by the elves and forgotten over the long stretch of the centuries; these are the preservers, whose original purpose was to spin what was known as 'wrapstuff' around perishable foodstuffs, keeping them fresh and unspoiled for their masters, the High Ones. But they were betrayed by the Blue Mountain sorceress Winnowill, a conniving elf who confined the preservers to the Forbidden Grove, where she hoped they would never be heard from again.

In this Winnowill was successful. Obeying their orders to the letter, the energetic preservers spun wrapstuff around everything in sight. Over the years, anything and anyone who ventured into the Forbidden Grove

wound up 'preserved' for what might have been forever had it not been for the arrival of Cutter and the Wolf-riders. Anyone preserved in such a manner are placed in a state of suspended animation, aging not at all no matter how many years—or centuries—they pass in their silken cocoons. But not all of these surprises are of a benign nature.

The strangest of all creatures to appear in *Elfquest* is a malevolent blood-lusting thing known as madcoil. In some forgotten time, a saber-toothed tiger and a giant snake were locked in mortal combat while above them raged a terrible storm. This lightning-lit struggle took place on a site where elven magic had once been attempted—and where that magic went seriously wrong. At the height of the battle, this writhing mass of fur and scales was struck by a bolt of lightning, which acted as a trigger for the dormant elven magic.

The result was a hideous mingling of saber-toothed tiger and snake, a mindless, ravaging horror that kills for no other reason but the killing itself. Its

foul mind spews forth mental sendings of unbearable horror which can cripple any hapless elf who chances upon this thing of great evil. The madcoil proved a formidable opponent for Cutter and his people, and nearly a quarter of the Wolf-riders tribe was wiped out before this monster was itself slain.

Thus, the madcoil sets a precedent for the inclusion of mutated and unnatural creatures in *Elfquest* adventures. However, it should be noted that madcoil was a freak of nature and elven magic, created by a long string of coincidences; an entire race of madcoils is absolutely impossible—and this condition should apply to any such similar creatures created by the gamemaster to plague his or her players.

Adventuring in the World of Two Moons, then, can be a truly rewarding experience both for fans of *Elfquest* and role-players seeking a new slant on fantasy games. An entire world awaits the players, and who knows what marvels and dangers are to be found by an intrepid band of resourceful elves who are in search of their past—and their future? □

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PAVIS QUEST

A Practice Run HeroQuest

By Anthony Gresham

PEOPLE WISHING to attempt this quest will be trying to achieve a deeper understanding of the Pavis faith, and to obtain special benefits not normally available through the cult.

The quest is open to any initiate of Pavis and to anyone in the Flintnail or Aldrya cults who is also a lay follower of Pavis.

THE MYTH

Stage 1: As a young man, Pavis left Adari for Dragon Pass.

Stage 2: There he studied the magic of the dragons.

Stage 3: When he felt himself ready, he and his companions sneaked into Dagori Inkarth in search of the faceless statue.

Stage 4: Pavis animated and made friends with the statue then he and his companions traveled with the statue to Dragon Pass. In Dragon Pass he befriended the leader of a group of horse nomads.

Stage 5: Together with his allies Pavis marched against a force of giants and nomads.

Stage 6: After the battle Pavis journeyed to the Paps and used his magic to heal Waha.

Stage 7: From there he went to the sight of the present-day ruins of Pavis and began to build his city.

OBJECT OF THE QUEST

Broosta, Bendrath, and Fleeter Nemm thought up the quest. They hope that the quest will provide the Pavis cult with a new Runelord and perhaps a few more gnomes as well.

Adventurers who survive this quest will obtain a small gnome, or Jolanti;

these beings will be superior members of their kind with the following advantages:

1. The gnomes will have 1D6 INT, 2D6 POW, 2-point armor, and 1D6+12 hit points. It will know a 2-point Glue spell usable once a week and can learn spirit magic up the limit of its intelligence. After the player-character dies the gnome will become available to the Pavis cult. These gnomes may take on the shape of a humanoid mound of earth and walk around the streets of Pavis. This latter ability is restricted to New Pavis, the Rubble, and to any town or fort on the River of Cradles that maintains a shrine to Pavis.

2. Jolanti come in two forms: rough and finished. The rough Jolanti have lumpy humanoid bodies of living stone, their hands are like mittens and they have a single eye over their single mouths. The finished Jolanti looks like a polished statue of a nude dwarf.

3. Both types of Jolanti will have 1D6+12 STR, 1D6+3 INT, 1D6+6 DEX, 8-point armor (skin), 2D6+24 hit points, and a 2-point Glue spell in addition to the normal 1-point Iron Hand.

4. Finished Jolanti have a sense of smell and the dwarven earth sense ability.

5. Jolanti will serve a character's family as guardian/servant after the character dies for as long as they continue to worship Pavis. If the character has no family when he dies, or his family

dies off or abandons the worship of Pavis, the Jolanti will leave to settle in a dwarf town or the Rubble. Jolanti will serve in the Pavis cult and advance as far as their POW and DEX will allow them.

These companions cannot be used to house allied or bound spirits, nor do they count against the character's total for bound spirits as the relationship is a voluntary one on their part.

Quest survivors can keep any treasure they pick up along the way and there are small rewards from the dragonewts, see the Dragonewt Gift Table. There are also social and prestige benefits.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE QUEST

Each HeroQuester should be sure that he is devout follower of Pavis; those trying to cheat the cult will be plagued by annoying difficulties and unusually nasty foes.

The quest begins in the Old Temple of Pavis. From there the party goes to the Dragonewt City in Dragon Pass. From there they go to Dagori Inkarth. From there they return to Dragon Pass then head to Pavis. Before returning home they will make a side trip to the Paps. After the Paps they will return to the Old Temple in Pavis.

A priest of Pavis must perform the proper rituals in the Old Temple. This ceremony will last thirteen hours. Stage 1 will be finished after the end of this ritual.

An Aldrya worshiper representing Pavis must be present to lead the party. This person should be half-elven but any worshiper of Aldrya who also worships Pavis will do. There must also be at least one Flintnail cultist present to represent the dwarf Flintnail.

THE PATH OF THE QUEST

There are seven stages to this quest. They will occur in the order as shown.

Stage 1: The Old Temple. Although essential to the quest, this stage is used by the gamemaster primarily to establish an atmosphere. Remember that there is no record of this quest ever having been performed before, so it will attract the interest of spirit forces in Pavis. Pavis himself will certainly be there in spirit and some of the spirits of the seventeen foes of Waha will also be present.

Stage 2: Dragonewt City. The questers

must travel from Pavis to the city of Dragon's Eye in Dragon Pass. They will have encounters in Pavis, Prax, Sartar, and Dragon Pass as people normally will. However encounters with animal nomads other than Pol Joni or Zebra Riders and encounters with chaos creatures will be at +10% on the response table. All other encounters will be at -5% on the response table.

Near Dragon's Eye the questers will be met by a dragonewt and its three beaked dragonewt servants. The characters will be offered a drink. This will give them the ability to understand Draconic for three days as though it were the characters' native tongue. As a side effect, the drinker gains +3% to his Speak/Understand Old Pavic ability permanently.

The dragonewt will then tell the questers the story of Pavis then have his servants present each character with a gift. Afterwards the dragonewt will instruct the characters to turn their gifts over the dragonewt priest of the Sun Dragon Temple in Pavis. The dragonewt will explain the power of each item.

If a quester is disrespectful toward the dragonewt, or asks if he can have something else, he will be plagued with petty annoyances until stage 4 is reached. Once every six hours something unfortunate will happen; i.e., he will trip and land face down in the mud, get stung by a wasp, or bitten by a horsefly, meet the wrong end of a skunk, his pack will be robbed by a raccoon, etc.

Stage 3: Bargaining with earth spirits. After leaving the dragonewt city, the questers travel into Dagori Inkarth. Any encounter here will be at +10% on the response table except for earth spirit encounters. The earth spirits will be traveling in groups of 1D4, 01-30% small gnome, 31-70% small rough Jolanti, 71-00% small finished Jolanti. The gnomes will be humanoid mounds of rocky soil. All of these creatures will know Earth Tongue at 30% and Trade Talk at 5%. Each quester must make his Oratory or Bargain skill in order to convince an earth creature to become his companion, and is at +10% to do so by virtue of the quest. The speaker is also at +2% per earth creature that has already joined the party. If an earth being refuses, it refuses all the questers as well. If it agrees, it agrees for life. The questers will keep meeting parties of earth creatures until

they have each acquired an earth-friend companion. Encounters with earth creatures will occur once per every ordinary Dagori Inkarth encounters. Note that these creatures are attracted by the ritual magic of the quest and would not normally be encountered.

Stage 4: Horse riders. After they have acquired their earth companions, the questers head back to Dragon Pass. Shortly after entering Dragon Pass they will meet a group of friendly horse riders: 01-40% Lunar troops,

41-70% Pol Joni, 71-90% Grazelanders, 91-00% Zebra tribesmen. There will be one shaman or priest and three warriors per quester. The Lunar troops were sent out by the governor of Prax in the hopes that Lunar-Pavis ties will thus be strengthened. The Lunar troops are predominantly Lunar cultists, but Yelmalio allies and Light-bringers are also represented.

Stage 5: Under the wall. Under the walls of Pavis the questers and their horse-riding allies will be met by a force of Praxian animal riders and

DRAGONEWT GIFT TABLE

D20

Gift

- | | |
|----|---|
| 01 | Klanth: Obsidian-edged wooden bastard sword which does 1D10+1 damage. All Klanth can take 20 points of damage. Adds +50% to attacks versus giants and trolls. |
| 02 | Klanth: As above but adds +50% to attacks versus Praxian animal nomads. |
| 03 | Klanth: As normal bastard sword but does 2D8+2 damage. |
| 04 | Obsidian knife: Does 3D4 to all foes but can be used only once. |
| 05 | Obsidian knife: Does 2D4 damage and adds +20% to throwing ability. |
| 06 | Ball of tails: POW 30, magic points usable by quester. |
| 07 | Korfe: Dragonbone bastard sword which can take 30 points of damage. |
| 08 | Korfe: Same as above. |
| 09 | Utoma: Dragonbone dagger which does 1D6 damage per magic point used on it. Announce POW as with spell usage in statement of intent. Good against all foes. May be used only once. Can take 12 points of damage. |
| 10 | Utoma: Does normal dagger damage but has Fireblade matrix in it. Can take 12 points of damage. |
| 11 | Seven-skin shield: Dark troll, elf, and dwarf skins sandwiched between four human skins. POW 21, magic points usable by quester. Has 21-point armor value. |
| 12 | Samarin: Dragonbone shuriken, +30% to hit trolls and giants. |
| 13 | Samarin: Does 3D4 damage to any target, may be used only once. |
| 14 | Stone cube: +50% to Earth Tongue ability. |
| 15 | Chokin: Dragonbone throwing dart, does 1D6 points of damage per magic point used on it, +20% to hit, usable only once. |
| 16 | Chokin: Does 2D6 points of damage to Praxian animal nomads, +15% to hit. |
| 17 | Three pieces of dragon ginger root: Each piece when eaten gives one use of dragon magic Firebreath. |
| 18 | Gami: Dragonbone sai, has an 80% parry ability. |
| 19 | Dragonbone longbow: Does 1D4 Multi-missile when a magic point is used with it (only one magic point per attack). |
| 20 | One jar of healing ointment: Heals 1D4+2 hit points per application. May be used in addition to other healing, even in same round. May not be used by the person who receives it. Enough for four applications. |

their too-tall allies. There will be five nomad warriors per HeroQuester. These warriors will be from the Morokanth, Impala, Sable, Bison, Llama, or Rhino tribes, they may be a mixed force from several tribes. These warriors will be led by a Shaman-Khan of Waha who will represent his god in the battle. The nomads' too-tall allies will be:

D20	<i>Too-Tall Ally</i>
1	Giant troll
2-3	Mistress race troll
4-6	Great troll
7-10	Dark troll
11-14	Three-meter giant
15-17	Four-meter giant
18-19	Five-meter giant
20	Six-meter giant

There will be one too-tall ally per HeroQuester.

The Praxian animal nomads will fight until their leader takes half his hit points in damage, then they will retreat to the Paps. The too-tall allies will fight until half their number is unconscious or dead and the other half is reduced to half their hit points, then they will retreat.

Stage 6: The Paps. After defeating the Praxians and their allies the questers will go to the Paps where they will use their magic to heal the Shaman-Khan. The Shaman-Khan will then swear vows of friendship with the HeroQuesters. Hereafter the questers will be able to cast the Aldrya Rune spell Heal Body on the seasonal high holy days of Aldrya and on the high holy day of Pavis.

Stage 7: Return to Pavis. After leaving the Paps the HeroQuesters return to the Old Temple in the Rubble. Here they will be met by the head priest of the Sun Dragon Temple. If a HeroQuester hands over the gift given to him by the dragonewt intact and unused, the quester will be given a reward in goods, money, and magic worth 500L. If the gifts were damaged but not used and all the pieces are returned, the quester will receive a reward worth 200L. If any of the pieces are missing or the gift is not handed over, he gets no reward. If the gift was used and is returned, then, regardless of condition, the quester will receive a reward worth 1000L. □

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DIFFERENT WORLDS SPECIAL MODULE

THE LIGHTS OF MADNESS

*When strange lights glow in the night sky above Baker's Mountain,
madness and death are unleashed upon the residents of
Bloomfield, Pennsylvania.*

Written and illustrated by Richard Launius



INVESTIGATORS' INFORMATION

The investigators' attention will be drawn to a small obscure article in the *Bloomfield Herald*. If any of the investigators are Reporters or Photographers for a newspaper, this article will be shown to them by their editor as an assignment.

The article reports of strange lights radiating from the top of Baker's Mountain around midnight, Saturday, May 22, 1920.

This is the second weekend that such lights have been reported.

As with the first report, there were additional reports of the lights being produced by flying saucers from Mars.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

In 1917, a new organization was founded in Bloomfield PA. This new organization was known as the Order of Merlin and was interested in magic and the occult. Basil Gilbert, a professor from the local college, was the founder of the organization. Many of the local townfolk are members of the club which caters to both male and females that are interested in the study of magic or occult history. They are not aware that Basil is a wizard and a worshiper of Yog-Sothoth. Basil has been utilizing the Power of the group in worship to Yog-Sothoth to learn new spells and to obtain enchanted items.

The lodge of the order is located on the west side of Baker's Mountain. Near the top of the mountain is a fifteen-yard-high tower used for the order's rituals that take place weekly from March through September.

During the winter months, the rituals take place monthly.

Many of the rituals are nothing more than simple magic tricks, but at least six times each year, Basil calls Yog-Sothoth to appear. Upon these rituals the city has produced some strange murder or disappearance. However, it has had little effect on the order since Yog-Sothoth has appeared to the group in the form of Tawil at'Umr, covered with the Mystic Cloth. That has changed with the last two meetings in which Yog-Sothoth has appeared in the iridescent-spears form which has produced the lights seen by the city and caused insanity in some of the members of the order.

RESEARCH & RUMORS

THE LIBRARY

All of the following articles are from the *Bloomfield Herald*, and may be found with successful Library Use rolls.

Oct. 15, 1917—Baker's Mountain, which is located to the west of the city, has recently been purchased by the organization known as the Order of Merlin. Professor Basil Gilbert of Bloomfield County College is the president and founder of the new organization which will enlighten the members to the historical study of magic, myths, and the occult. The group has already expanded its membership to 55 men and women. Dr. Gilbert unveiled plans to build a lodge on the base of the west side of the mountain and an astronomy tower at the top of the mountain. Construction should be completed by March of 1918.

March 18, 1918—John Mullen of the Smithsonian Institute will be the speaker at the consecration of the Order of Merlin Lodge this Saturday night.

John Mullen will be talking on his newly released book *Kings And Magic*. The order, now numbering over 150 members, is eagerly awaiting the event.

Oct. 21, 1918—Dr. Basil Gilbert announced the completion of the astronomy tower atop Baker's Mountain. The towers primary use will be for the members of the Order of Merlin, but any organization or individual in the city may reserve the tower. The doctor went on to state that the lodge would continue to provide services to the community of Bloomfield in hopes of making the city a better place to live.

April 5, 1919—Police are baffled by a bizarre murder of Andre Dugan at the rail yard west of town. The body was found near the tracks and the remains were distorted as if scorched by lightning.

Cause of death: Unknown.

May 4, 1920—The seventh of the strange murders that have plagued the city over the past year was discovered early this morning by the caretaker of the Quiet Garden Cemetery. The body was burned beyond recognition with the limbs withered to a dry crust.

The coroner still has no explanation.

May 16, 1920—Strange lights appeared in the sky late last night. Several reports of flying saucers were received at the police station from panicked residents.

Clifton Ward, an accountant for Matthews & Son, was placed in the Bloomfield County Asylum by the police in a related incident. It seems that Ward had been hunting and became insane at the sight of the lights. He was apprehended by the police while firing an empty shotgun at passers-by.

Mr. Ward was unable to give any statement.

BLOOMFIELD

Bloomfield is a decent-sized city of around 15,000 people. Almost any need that the investigators may have should be able to be filled there. Bloomfield is located in the northwest corner of Pennsylvania.

The city's main source of income is coal, but almost any profession may be found within the city.

Bloomfield has always been a quiet city, the type in which parents would choose to raise their children.

COMMENTS FROM LOCALS

A successful Oratory roll will produce the following response from many of the townsfolk:

—If asked about the lights: “They appeared around midnight. First, they seemed to be up on the top of Baker’s Mountain. They were there for a short time and then streaked across the city at an enormous speed and disappeared into space.”

—If asked about the Order of Merlin, the townsfolk will only say positive things about this organization.

—If asked about Basil Gilbert, most see him as a real asset to the community through his work at the college and the order of Merlin.

A successful Luck roll will produce the following statement on Basil Gilbert: “Nothing strange ever happened in this town before he started that damned magic stuff.”

A successful Psychology roll will reveal that the people are somewhat afraid of Basil and his order.

If asked about the strange murders, no one will have any ideas as to who or what is doing the killings.

POLICE STATION

A successful Fast Talk or Law roll will produce the following information:

Over the past year and a half, there have been seven hideous murders and several Missing Persons Reports. The connections between the murders are very strong with all of the corpses showing signs of being struck by lightning. The skin was dry as dust and crumbled when touched. Certain parts of each body was withered as if touched by evil.

All of the bodies were found on Sunday mornings.

As for the strange lights seen in the sky the last two weekends, the officers credit it to some type of college prank.

BLOOMFIELD COUNTY ASYLUM

If the investigators want to visit Clifton Ward, they must first get past the head nurse at the front desk. To do so they will need to make a successful Law or Diagnose Disease roll.

The investigators will then be led down a long hall full of sounds of the insane. If any of the investigators have spent any time in an asylum, they must make a CONx3%

roll or become disturbed by the screams, sobs, laughter, and insane babbling and run out of the asylum before they can calm down.

Once in Clifton Ward’s cell, they will find a man in a straightjacket huddled in the corner mumbling.

If the investigators make a successful Psychoanalysis roll, they will receive the following statement from Ward:

“Lights, strange lights . . . they move so quickly . . . why do they stop? . . . the tower, the tower . . . the man on the tower is one . . . the Martians have taken over the order, must destroy them. . . .”

Clifton is insane from viewing Yog-Sothoth and should the investigators fail their Psychoanalysis roll, he will grow violent and attack them by biting and kicking while screaming “Martian! Martian!” over and over.

CLIFTON WARD

Clifton is an accountant for Matthews & Son. He is also a bit of a backwoodsman. He was on the eastern side of Baker’s Mountain hunting when Yog-Sothoth was summoned and revealed himself as iridescent spears which drove him insane and put him in the asylum.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 17 DEX 14
APP 10 EDU 17 SAN 0 POW 16 HP 14

SKILLS: Accounting 80%, Library Use 65%, Read/Write English 80%.

WEAPONS: Headbutt (1D6) 45%, Kick (1D6) 60%, Bite (1D8) 30%.

The Doctors will have no real information concerning Clifton or the lights.

They will be able to tell the investigators that quite a few reports of insane actions by people were reported to them over the past two weeks. If the investigators look into these reports, they will find that all of the people are either members of the Order of Merlin or lived near Baker’s Mountain.

BLOOMFIELD COUNTY COLLEGE

When the investigators visit this small college, they will be directed to the History wing to see Dr. Basil Gilbert. There they will be told by the secretary that Dr. Gilbert is off today and will be in tomorrow.

If the investigators sneak down the hall, they will see a door with the name Dr. Gilbert painted on the window. The door is locked and is STR 13.

A failure of the Sneak roll will result in the investigators being seen by the secretary. A successful Fast Talk roll will be needed to avoid her calling the police.

The door may be picked with a successful Mechanical Repair roll.

Inside Dr. Gilbert’s office, the investigators will find a desk covered with papers and books. There is a small closet on the back wall and two bookcases.

The closet is full of more books and boxes. All of the books in the closet are basic history books. A successful Spot Hidden roll while looking through the boxes will reveal an old book with no name on the cover.

This book is written in Latin and contains the actual spells of Merlin. If read, the investigators will find two spells worth using if they roll INTx4%:

ENCHANT ITEM: For this spell the caster must expend 1 permanent POW point but no human sacrifice is needed. Costs 1D4 SAN points and increases the blades damage by 1D6.

CONTACT NODENS: See “Magic and Spells” chapter in the *Call Of Cthulhu* rulebook.

A successful Idea roll will let the investigators know that

the cave on the north side of Baker's Mountain will be a good location to Contact Nodens.

Cthulhu Mythos: +1D4.

SAN Loss: 1D3.

The condition of the book makes the rest of the spells unreadable.

A successful Spot Hidden while looking through the papers on his desk will reveal the following:

—The Order of Merlin Schedule: If looked at, this will identify that the group meets every Saturday night.

—A roster to the Order of Merlin: This will guide the investigators to the question the members if they wish.

Nothing of any use to the investigators can be found on the bookcases in his office.

The Keeper may wish to have the investigator with the highest Luck rating make a roll for each ten minutes in Gilbert's office to avoid being caught by the Campus Security Guard.

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF MERLIN

If the investigators wish to use the roster from Dr. Gilbert's office, they can question any number of the order they wish. They will receive the following information:

—The group has a ceremony every Saturday night.

—They all respect their leader very much.

A successful Oratory roll will reveal the following:

1D100

01-20: Member suffers from fear or insanity from last meeting.

21-70: Member has suffered from headaches and aging due to POW losses from meetings. The person notices a change after certain order ceremonies.

71-85: Member tells the investigators that they hold their ceremonies on the top of Baker's Mountain at the tower.

86-00: Member has committed suicide in some violent way due to insanity. (SAN loss is up to the Keeper.)

THE HOME OF DR. GILBERT

If the investigators visit the home of Dr. Gilbert, they will find that no one is home. The doctor lives in a small one-story, two-bedroom house. The house will be cluttered with books and covered with dust. There is nothing of interest within his house.

BAKER'S MOUNTAIN

Baker's Mountain lies to the eastern side of the city. It is more of a big hill than a mountain. It is very wooded with two clearings.

At the base of the mountain is the lodge for the Order of Merlin. There is a path that leads from the lodge up to the tower at the top of the mountain.

THE LODGE OF THE ORDER OF MERLIN

The lodge is located at the base of Baker's Mountain. It is closed during weekdays and opens every evening from 6 till 11. The lodge is open at 9 on Saturday mornings and remains open thru Sunday night until 11.

If the investigators visit the lodge while it is closed, they will have to figure out a way to get in since both doors are locked. Both doors have STR 18 and the locks are unpickable.

If the investigators visit the lodge while it is open, they will be allowed to browse around as guests. There will be

1D20 members in the lodge during the times it is open.

There is also a 60% chance that Dr. Gilbert is there during that time.

While guests of the order, the investigators are free to see everything except the Wizard's Loft. Also they will be told that no guests are allowed on the night of the ritual.

Talking to the cult members will only reveal the same information given in the "Members of the Order of Merlin" section.

Alcove: The alcove is just inside the double front doors. From it there are three doors. All have carved dragons with bright globes orbiting around them. There is nothing of interest in the alcove.

Closet: There are several crates in the closet. If opened, the investigators will find them full of yellow robes. These are the robes used during their weekly rituals.

Office: The investigators will only find the usual papers of an organization in the office: member list, schedule, financial records, etc.

The records are locked in a filing cabinet.

Meeting Hall: This is a large room with several rows of chairs. At the front of the room is a large stone with an old sword stuck into it. Behind the stone is a door to the outside that leads to the path up the mountain to the tower.

The members will tell the investigators that Dr. Gilbert had the sword in the stone built for mood purposes during meetings. This is not true, however, because this is the actual sword of Arthur. If is a gift from Yog-Sothoth and is enchanted. The sword will do 1D20 damage and ignores armor. A successful Occult roll will identify the sword.

To pull the sword from the stone, an investigator will have to match his POW against that of the sword's POW 20 on the Resistance Table. The sword increases the Magic Points of the person that pulls it from the stone by 1D20.

Sitting Room: The sitting room has two large bookshelves, a table, several plush chairs, and a large couch.

The books are occult related. If the investigators read the books they will increase their Occult skill by 1D10. The amount of books required to be read to obtain this increase is up to the Keeper. There is a small statue on the table of a dragon.

If the investigators study this statue, it will appear to come alive and move. This will produce a SAN loss of 1D4 points if the investigators fail their SAN rolls.

Library: At the top of the stairs is a large library. Each wall is covered with shelves full of books on a variety of topics.

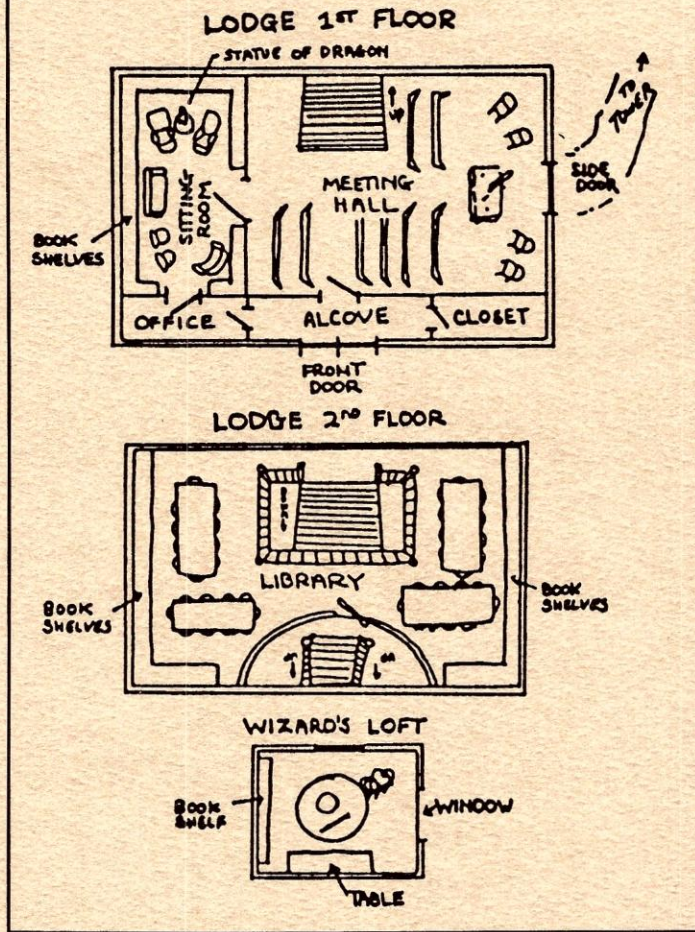
If the investigators wish to spend time studying some of the topics with the books in the library, they will advance 1D6 in that skill for each 3-hour period spent studying the books.

The following topics are found in the library's collection: Anthropology, Astronomy, Chemistry, History, Occult, Psychology.

Against the south wall, there is a circular rail fence that encloses a stairway up to what the members will say is the Wizard's Loft. Only those that obtain the rank of Wizard may enter this room. Dr. Gilbert is currently the only member that has obtained such a rank.

At the top of the stairs is a locked wooden door with STR 25. Carved into the door is a strange dragon. A successful Cthulhu roll will reveal this creature to be a Byakhee.

THE ORDER OF MERLIN LODGE



If the investigators attempt to pick the lock to this room, the sculpture will suddenly come alive and grow to full size.

The Byakhee will fight to the death to protect this room but will not pursue those that flee the lodge.

BYAKHEE

STR 19 CON 11 SIZ 19 INT 11 POW 10 DEX 14
HP 17 Move 5/20 flying

WEAPONS: Claw (1D6+1D6) 40%, Bite (1D6+1D6+blood drain) 35%. A Byakhee may attack twice with claws each turn or may attempt one bite attack per turn. Each turn that the bite attack is maintained, including the first, 1D6 STR is drained from the victim. When the STR reaches zero, the victim is dead.

Wizard's Loft: The Wizard's Loft is a small room with strange lighting from a colorful stained-glass window.

In the center of the room is a table with a crystal ball on top of it. Beside the ball is a wand. There is a chair by the table that has a red robe and white turban on top of the seat.

There is a bookshelf on the western wall and a table against the southern wall.

A successful Spot Hidden roll while looking at the bookshelf will reveal a copy of *True Magick* in English.

The investigators will also find a scroll on the bottom shelf of the bookshelf. The scroll is written in Latin and contains the spell Contact Yog-Sothoth.

The investigators may learn the spell by rolling their INT x2% but will suffer a SAN loss of 1D8.

TRUE MAGICK

CTHULHU MYTHOS KNOWLEDGE: +6%.

SPELL MULTIPLIER: x2.

SAN LOSS: 1D8.

SPELLS: Brew Space-Mead, Create Gate, Steal Life. (See rulebook for spell descriptions.)

THE ROBE AND TURBAN

The robe is red silk and a successful History roll will identify it to be thousands of years old.

The turban is white with a star sapphire in the center of it worth \$200.

They have no magical significance.

THE CRYSTAL BALL

This crystal ball is a gift from Yog-Sothoth. If any investigator studies the crystal ball for a few minutes, the Keeper should make a POW vs. the crystal ball's POW of 10 on the Resistance Table. If the investigator's POW roll is successful, he will view a vision from the past. The vision is left to the Keeper's discretion, but a suggestion would be to have the investigator view the Hounds of Tindalos. The reason for this is because whatever the investigators see will also see them. The Hounds will also now hunt the investigators through time according to the rulebook.

MAGIC WAND

The wand sitting on the table is also a magical gift from Yog-Sothoth. Each day the wand will grant the wielder 1D20 POW points to expend as they wish.

THE TABLE

The table is covered with bottles full of various herbs and chemicals. A successful Occult roll will reveal this to be an alchemical library.

A successful Spot Hidden roll will reveal two bottles of Space-Mead.

THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

The stained-glass window causes bizaare light to filter into the room. The symbols and designs on the window represent a form of Yog-Sothoth.

Viewing the stained-glass window will cause a SAN loss of 1D4 if the investigators fail their SAN rolls.

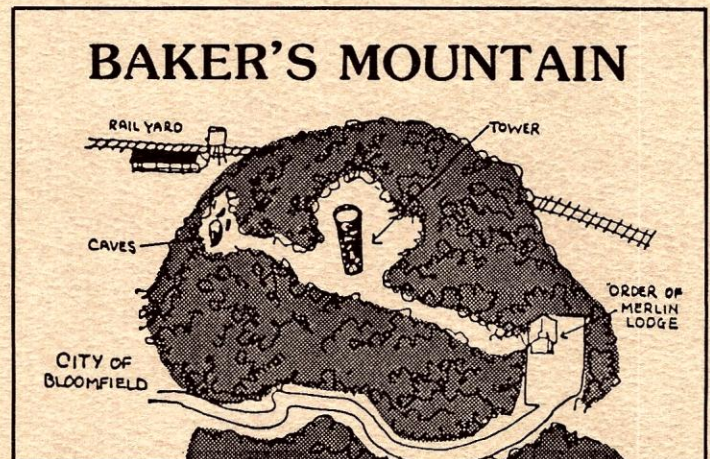
A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will identify the form in the stained glass as an appearance of Yog-Sothoth.

BAKER'S MOUNTAIN

Baker's Mountain is heavily wooded except for the path that leads from the lodge to the tower at the top of the hill.

If the investigators attempt to get to the top of the mountain any other way than by following the path, a successful Climb roll must be made or the investigator slips and takes 1D3 damage.

There is a 60% chance that the investigators will encounter a madman in the woods that has gone insane at the sight of Yog-Sothoth. Herman Wilson was hunting in the woods last Saturday night when Yog-Sothoth appeared. The sight was too much for Herman and he has gone totally and violently insane.



HERMAN WILSON

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 11 POW 11
DEX 12 EDU 9 SAN 0 HP 11

SKILLS: Knife 60%, Shotgun 40%, Zoology 40%, Throw 40%, History 75%.

Since the woods are so heavily overgrown the Keeper may request DEX x3% rolls to keep from tripping and suffering 1D3 damage.

THE CAVES

The caves are on the north side of the mountain and a successful Idea roll will reveal this to be a good location to Contact Nodens.

The caves have no other interest in this adventure, but the Keeper is encouraged to create and expand the adventure into the depths of the caves if he wishes.

CONTACTING NODENS

See the rulebook for the method of Contacting Nodens. If Nodens comes to the investigators the night of the ritual, the investigators must make a successful Oratory roll or the Nodens will take some type of action against the investigators.

Even if the Oratory roll is successful, the investigators must then roll 1D100 and consult the following:

1D100

01-60: Nodens will grant a request to the investigators.

61-70: Nodens summons Nightgaunts to attack the investigators.

71-00: Nodens attacks 1D3 investigators with his staff.

If the investigators ask Nodens to Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, match his POW against Yog-Sothoth's POW on the Resistance Table. If Nodens is successful, he will leave immediately.

If Nodens is unsuccessful, he will choose an investigator as a favored human to take with him back to the Abyss.

THE TOWER

At the top of the mountain in a small clearing is a tall tower. If any of the investigators follow the path from the lodge, it will exit into this clearing. The tower stands about fifteen-yards high and is a rather foreboding figure.

At a closer investigation, the stone of the tower will be very smooth with swirling shades of black in the texture. A successful Geology roll will reveal the substance to be of unknown origin to earth. The roll will also show the stone to have tremendous strength (STR 150).

At the base of the tower is a wooden door identical to the one that leads into the Wizard's Loft. Should the investigators try to pick the lock or break down the door, the Byakhee carved into the door will come to life just the same as in the lodge. This door has a STR 25, and is locked.

If the investigators enter the tower, they see a spiral stairway that curls its way to the top. At the top the investigators will find themselves on a platform about twenty feet in diameter. There is a telescope mounted to the three-foot stone wall that encircles the investigators.

A successful Spot Hidden roll while on the platform of the tower along with a successful Luck roll will produce a small solid black stone that almost radiates when touched.

A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will identify this stone as a dragon's eye. (For details, see "The Ritual.")

There is nothing else of interest on the tower.

THE RITUAL

The Order of Merlin meets every Saturday night at nine. Many of the meetings are nothing more than historical reports or exercises of simple magic or illusion. However there are those nights when Dr. Gilbert truly casts spells utilizing the POW of the group. The members are unaware of what is taking place but can recall having headaches and feeling ill after certain rituals of the order. This is, of course, due to the loss of their POW.

No matter what the ritual is to be (real or mere tricks), they always start in the lodge's meeting hall.

The rituals start promptly at ten and no outside visitors are allowed to observe. All of the members will be wearing yellow robes with hoods except for Dr. Gilbert who will be wearing his red robe and turban.

Dr. Gilbert will preside over the ceremony standing in front of the sword in the stone. If the investigators have taken the sword or caused other problems for Gilbert or the lodge, he will immediately lead the group out the door and up the path to the tower.

If there have been few or no problems, the ritual will start out with a few of the members reciting spells and casting minor magic in hopes of advancing in rank.

The ranks in the Order of Merlin are as follows:

1. Apprentice Magician
2. Magician
3. Sorcerer
4. Apprentice Wizard
5. Wizard
6. Grand Wizard

Dr. Gilbert is the only member that has rank above Magician. The members advance by studying different texts and tomes that are provided by Dr. Gilbert through the lodge's library. The members must then perform what they have learned during a ritual meeting to advance in rank. At the rank of Sorcerer, the member will begin to learn some basic Cthulhu spells.

After some preliminary readings and spells, the Grand Wizard will recite a spell and a gust of wind will streak through the room and the door will fly open. Anyone viewing this must make a successful SAN roll or they will lose 1D3 SAN points.

The group will then exit through the door and go up the path to the tower.

If the investigators have disguised themselves as members of the order, there is a 25% chance that they will be spotted as intruders as they travel up the path.

Once they have been spotted, the reaction of the order and Dr. Gilbert is left up to the Keeper.

At the top of the mountain, Dr. Gilbert will unlock the tower door and climb to the top of the tower as the rest of the members continue to chant. Anyone that makes a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will be able to identify a contact spell for Yog-Sothoth.

Once Dr. Gilbert has reached the top of the tower, he leads the chant and looks to the sky. He will also place a small black stone on the wall. This stone is known to Wizards as a Dragon's Eye.

DRAGON'S EYES

These stones got their names years ago because they were rumored by knights to be the eyes of the dragons that they had slain. These rumors just happen to be true.

Dragons just did not exist in the times of wizards but were summoned through Yog-Sothoth by the wizards. Because of this, the Dragon's Eyes have certain powers, especially when relating to Yog-Sothoth.

The holder of a Dragon's Eye will immediately receive a POW increase of 1D4 and will maintain this increase as long as he has the stone in his possession.

The stone, if smashed in a Contact Yog-Sothoth Spell, will produce a 100% chance of success, and Yog-Sothoth will always appear in 1D3 minutes from the time of destruction.

A side effect of owning the stone is the dreams that will begin to come to the possessor. There is an 80% chance that the owner will have at least one nightmare a week. If the nightmares occur, they are always related to dragons and wizards. Roll 1D3 for number of nightmares. A SAN roll is required for each nightmare. If the roll is successful, there is no SAN loss. If the roll is a failure, the investigator will lose 1D4 SAN points per dream.

After motioning a few various symbols with his hands, Gilbert will strike the stone with either the wand or sword, provided that the investigators have not taken them. If they have, he will use a staff he has brought from his home. At the moment the stone is struck, there will be a crash of thunder and strange lights will appear in the sky. These lights are Yog-Sothoth materializing in iridescent spheres. Anyone failing their SAN roll will lose 1D10 SAN points. If the roll is successful, they will still lose 1 SAN point.

Dr. Gilbert will converse with Yog-Sothoth in which he offers the city of Bloomfield as a feast of madness in return for a precious gift . . . the Staff of Merlin.

Dr. Gilbert must make a successful Oratory roll to strike a deal with this god. If the roll is successful, Yog-Sothoth will produce the staff and change shape to one of his other more hideous forms, and then he will swoop down on the unsuspecting city and reap total madness and destruction.

As he takes this new form (Keeper's choice), any investigator viewing this must make a SAN roll. Anyone that fails their SAN roll will lose 1D100 SAN points. Those that succeed will still lose 1D10 SAN points.

If his Oratory roll fails, the Keeper may decide the result that will take place from this. A suggestion would be to have Yog-Sothoth attack Dr. Gilbert and the order. No matter what decision the Keeper makes, on a failed Oratory, Yog-Sothoth will not grant Gilbert the Staff of Merlin.

DR. BASIL GILBERT

Dr. Basil Gilbert is a very powerful wizard that has been in league with Yog-Sothoth. Basil is about 400 years old but looks young because of his Steal Life spell which allows him to steal the life force of another to keep him young.

Dr. Gilbert has one piece of sorcery that he has sought through the ages but never obtained, the Staff of Merlin. He feels that this staff would make him the most powerful wizard in the world and is willing to offer the city of Bloomfield as a sacrifice to obtain it. Gilbert is, of course, insane. He is also very deadly through his spells and through the use of Arthur's sword.

The Keeper should play him as a cool, deadly master of sorcery. He would not think twice about using a spell to stop the investigators if they appear as a threat.

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 11 DEX 16 CHA 12
INT 18 POW 32 EDU 28 SAN 0 HP 15

SKILLS: Anthropology 60%, Astronomy 80%, Chemistry 90%, Climb 80%, Dodge 32%, Geology 72%, Jump 60%, Listen 60%, Occult 95%, Oratory 80%, Psychology 60%, History 98%, Read/Write English 99%, Read/Write Latin 80%, Read/Write Arabic 80%, Fast Talk 80%, Debate 90%, Spot Hidden 65%, Track 50%, Library Use 99%.

SPELLS: All summoning and binding spells in the rulebook. All contact Race spells in the rulebook. Call Yog-Sothoth, Steal Life, Brew Space-Mead, Enchant Item spells, Shriving Spell, Create Gate.

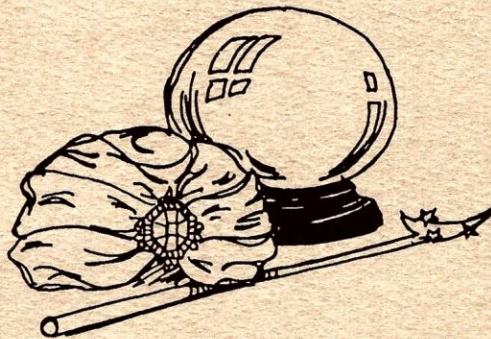
AVERAGE MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF MERLIN

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 12 DEX 13 CHA 11
INT 11 POW 14 EDU 12 SAN 44 HP 13

SKILLS: History 65%, Astronomy 60%, Chemistry 35%, Climb

60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Library Use 70%, Fist 50%, Knife 50%, Sword 35%, Shotgun 50%.

If the Keeper wishes, ceremonial swords may be part of the ritual at the tower and all members would be provided with one in the lodge. The sword would do 1D6 damage.



THE STAFF OF MERLIN

The holder of this staff has great power. The staff can expend 1D100 POW points each day. This will almost guarantee success on any spell that the holder casts.

The staff also allows the holder to read any languages with an 80% chance of understanding and a 70% chance of learning all spells.

The staff may strike any object or creature as a magic weapon doing D100 damage. This may only be done once per day and requires all the POW in the staff which leaves it useless until the next day.

The staff may act as a gate to any place. The holder must make a POWx3% roll for the gate to activate. The staff will only transport the holder.

The staff supposedly disappeared with Merlin centuries ago, but was actually taken back by Yog-Sothoth.

REWARDS

If the investigators were successful in stopping the plan of Dr. Gilbert and saving the town from destruction, they deserve 2D10 SAN points.

If they did so without the help of Nodens, they deserve 2D20 SAN points and 1D10 increase to their Cthulhu Mythos skill.



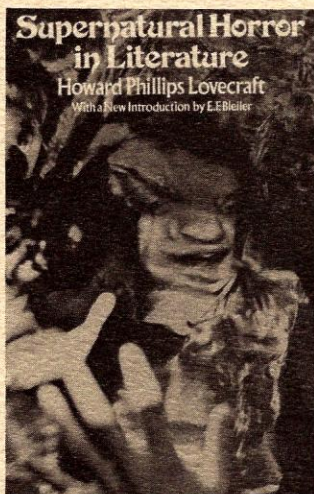
If they saved the town but allowed Gilbert to escape, they will still receive 1D10 SAN points and 1D6 increase in Cthulhu Mythos Knowledge.

If the investigators failed, they probably did not live. If somehow they did manage to live and remain sane, the Keeper should have each member make a successful Luck roll with a -20% modifier to get out of the city without being attacked and killed by the insane mob of the city. If they are still fortunate enough to escape, they should suffer severe SAN loss when they hear the news or read the paper about the bizarre madness that destroyed the city of Bloomfield and how the people of the city simply massacred each other.

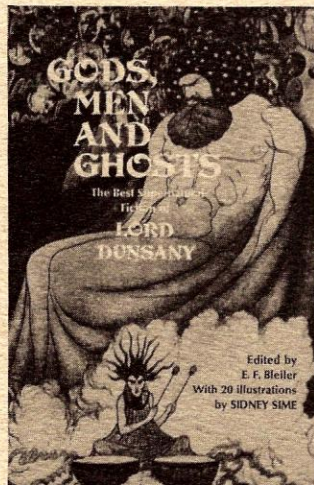
This is a very difficult adventure so expect lots of SAN loss and investigator deaths.

—The End—

HORROR & THE SUPERNATURAL

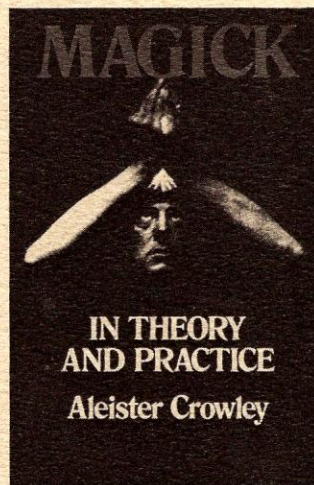


Supernatural Horror in Literature by H.P. Lovecraft. The greatest American supernaturalist of this century brilliantly surveys the genre into the 1920's with discussions and evaluations of scores of books and such authors as Poe, M.R. James, Bierce, Lord Dunsany, and Arthur Machen. By charting so completely the background of his own concepts of horror and literary techniques, Lovecraft throws light on his own fiction as well as on the horror-literature which has followed in his influential wake. For this reason this book will be especially intriguing to those who have read and enjoyed Lovecraft's fiction as an isolated phenomenon. Those and other readers, searching for a guide through the inadequately marked regions of literary horror, need search no longer. (DO-20105-8 softcover 111pp \$2.95)

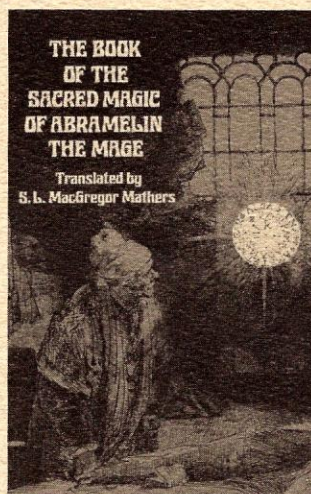


Gods, Men and Ghosts by Lord Dunsany. Among the great masters of supernatural and science fiction of the 20th century is the Irish writer Edward J.M.D. Plunkett, 18th Baron

Dunsany. An outstanding dramatist whose supernatural plays anticipated the theatre of the absurd, a virtuoso writer of short stories and essays, he was one of the most original talents in English literature. In addition to being one of the great formative influences in the development of the supernatural genre, he was also the author of many of the best fantastic tales in the language. Here are the finest of Lord Dunsany's works gathered from sources long out of print—"Three Sailors' Gambit," the remarkable trilogy about Nuth and the Gnoles, "The Gods Of Pagana," and other masterpieces. (DO-22808-8 softcover 260pp illustrated \$4.95)



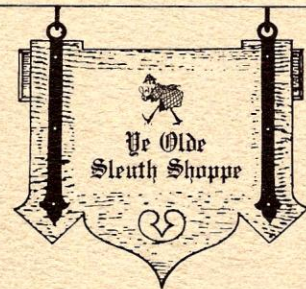
Magick: In Theory and Practice by Aleister Crowley. This is the foremost book on ceremonial magic written in the 20th century, the summation of the thought and life practice of the century's most famous necromancer and one of its most infamous figures. It was prepared by Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) specially for neophytes. Written at the height of his involvement, it is probably Crowley's best book. The magical theory of the universe, ritual, elemental weapons, the Holy Graal, Abrahadabra, the gestures, Our Lady Babalon and The Beast, bloody sacrifice, purifications, the oath, charge to the spirit, clairvoyance, divination, dramatic rituals, black magic, and alchemy are among the many topics covered. An extensive system of appendices provides many rituals, consecrations, correspondences, readings, and other accessory material. Crowley's graphs and charts illustrate the text. (DO-23295-6 softcover 436pp \$6.50)



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The ARKHAM LOVECRAFT

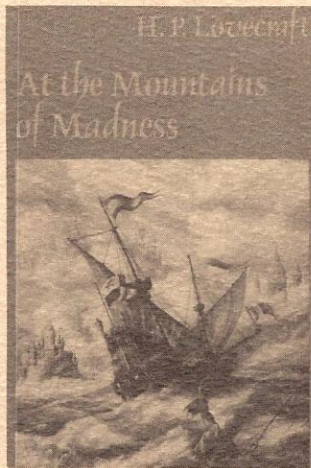
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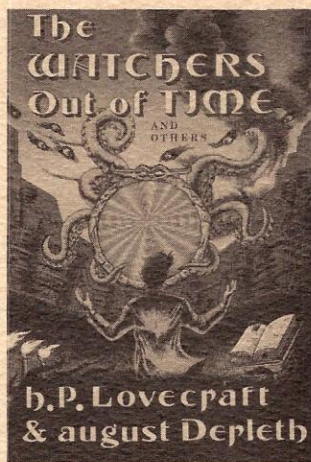
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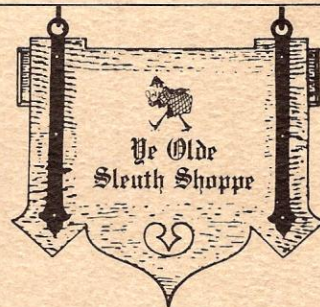
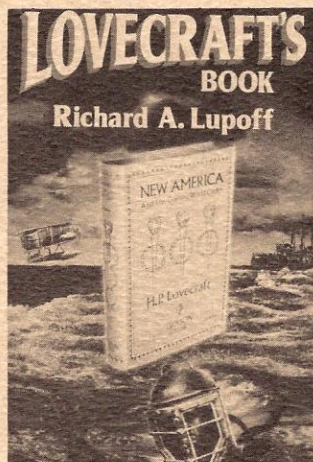
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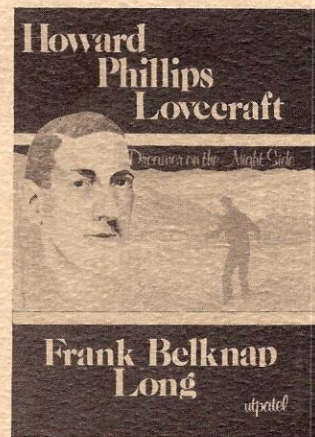
Lovecraft's Book by Richard A. Lupoff. In December 1926, the German-American propagandist George Sylvester Viereck sent a letter to Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Viereck's proposal was a simple one: if Lovecraft would write a political tract, a sort of American *Mein Kampf*, Viereck would assure the publication of a volume of Lovecraft's stories as well. Through Viereck's maneuvering, Lovecraft was drawn into a web of intrigue involving Benito Mussolini's overseas agents, the Friends of New Germany, and such nativist radical groups as the Ku Klux Klan and Father Charles



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Conventions

Conventions are the best places to meet new gamers. Organizers should send details of their 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, the number of attendees expected, and the number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service.

Magnum Opus Con 2 March 27-29, 1987

At the Columbus Iron Works and Convention Ctr, Columbus GA. Science fiction. Contact: Roland Castle, 4315 Pio Nono Ave, Macon GA 31206.

Tri-State Con '87 March 27-29, 1987

At the Tangeman Student Ctr, Univ of Cincinnati, Cincinnati OH. Gaming. Contact: Lonnie Barnett, 5661 McCarthy Ct, W Chester OH 45069, (513) 777-4419.

WIZARDCON and APRICON March 28, 1987

At Columbia Univ, New York NY. Gaming/science fiction. Contact: Columbia Univ Games

Club, c/o James Schmidtberger, 6C13 Hartley Hall, Columbia Univ, New York NY 10027.

Alascon VIII March 28-29, 1987

At the Univ of Alaska, Fairbanks AK. Gaming. Contact: Alascon VIII, Box 80925, Fairbanks AK 99708.

CoastCon X March 28-30, 1987

At the Coast Coliseum and Convention Ctr, Biloxi MS. Gaming. Contact: CoastCon, Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

Little Wars April 24-26, 1987

At the Triton College Student Bldg, River Grv IL. Miniatures gaming. Contact (send SASE): Todd Fisher, 6010 N Marmora Ave, Chicago IL 60646.

Miscon II May 15-17, 1987

At the Quality Inn, Missoula MT. Science fiction/fantasy/gaming. Contact: Miscon II, c/o WMSFC, Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807.

BAYCON '87 May 22-25, 1987

At the Red Lion Inn, San Jose CA. Science fiction/fantasy. Contact (send SASE): BAYCON '87, Box 70393, Sunnyvale CA 94086.

GamesCaucus May 22-25, 1987

At the Airport Hilton, Oakland CA. Gaming. Contact: GamesCaucus, 1550 Benton St (C), Alameda CA 94501, (415) 865-3668.

GAMEX 1987 May 22-25, 1987

At the Pasadena Hilton Hotel, Pasadena CA. Gaming. Contact: GAMEX 1987, DTI, PO Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

Neo-Vention VI June 5-7, 1987

At the Student Union, Kent State Univ, Kent OH. Gaming. Contact: NEO-GS, Box 412, Cuyahoga Fls OH 44222-0412.

Received at last minute +++++

ORIGINS '87 July 2-5, 1987

At the Baltimore Convention Ctr and the Hyatt Regency Baltimore, Baltimore MD. Gaming. Contact: ORIGINS '87, Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220.

GATEWAY 1987 September 4-7, 1987

At the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: GATEWAY 1987, DTI, Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

DRAGON CON '87 October 2-4, 1987

At Lanier Plaza and Convention Ctr, Atlanta GA. Science fiction/fantasy/gaming. Contact (send SASE): DRAGON CON '87, Box 148, Clarkston GA 30021.

For further information contact the convention organizers directly.

GAMES PLUS DAY Apr 4, 1987

At Holiday Inn, Mt Prospect IL. Gaming. Contact: Games Plus, 20 W Busse Ave, Mt Prospect IL 60056, (312) 577-9656.

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TG10: Bandit Gangs and Caravans. Rules for setting up bandit gangs to prey on the wealthy merchant caravans, and for designing cargo and passengers to plunder. Players can teach a lesson to a defiant merchant who has refused to make his "protection" payments to the Thieves' Guild. (GL-1910 36pp \$5.95)

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Game Reviews

Jorune/The Valley of the Pharaohs/Conan/Gods Of Glorantha/
Batman Sourcebook/Wheel Of Destruction/Thieves'
Guild 7-10/Merchant Prince/Stealer Of Souls/Black Sword/
From the Deeps of Space/Battletech/Citytech



JORUNE

Role-Playing Game

By Andrew Leker
(SkyRealms \$25)

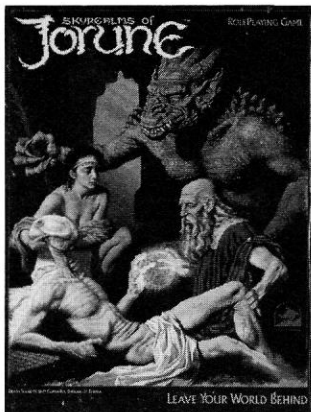
Reviewed by Edwin King

SO YOU say you're in the mood for something completely different? You want a change from your basic pseudo-European fantasy role-playing? Well step right up folks, there's something here you just might enjoy.

I must confess that when I took my first quick look at *Jorune*, my initial reaction was "What's going on here?" I opened a book to a picture of a man being attacked by three two-legged, long-tailed, reptilian-looking things the size of rats, topped by the caption: "Scragger: They were on him before he could say 'Quivering Trid-Nodes.'" Another illustration showed a squat, unhappy-looking creature that carried its eyes on the end of a pair of plumbers' helpers being menaced by an oversized insect. "Now you die, Thriddle fool!" said this caption. "What have I gotten myself into?" said I.

An hour of reading had me in love with the concept of *Jorune*. Considerable effort has been made to create an alien world that is both believable and entertaining without being so much of a personal creation that no one but its designer can play it. *Jorune's* world invites comparison with *Tekumel*, the planet of Empire of the Petal Throne. Like *Tekumel*, *Jorune* is a workable blend of fantasy and technology, and is peopled with bizarre creatures far removed from "mainstream" fantasy. Also like *Tekumel*, *Jorune* has been designed with intelligence and love, and has a pleasant "otherworldly" feel.

The game is set in the distant future on the planet *Jorune* shared by three distinct species of humans, various indigenous races possessed of dispositions ranging from chatty to malignantly anti-



social, and a number of intelligent races that were created from Terran animal stock. In addition, there is an assortment of fauna that will give the hardest adventurer pause for thought before wading into combat.

The humans are the descendants of colonists stranded on *Jorune* after a catastrophic war on Earth. War with the native races caused the severing of communication and the collapse of technological civilization. Thirty-five hundred years have caused the evolution of two human sub-species, each with its own special abilities. A few pieces of old-Earth weaponry and technology are still in existence, lending a science-fiction seasoning to the fantasy environment.

The game consists of four books: a players' guide; a Sholari (gamemaster) guide; a Tauther (literally, an application for citizenship) guide giving a player overview of *Jorune*; and the *Sky-Realm of Kolovisondra*, a campaign based on a particular *Sky-Realm* (floating land mass).

Players design a character based on one of the three human types: standard human; *Boccard*, larger and stronger than the human norm; or *Muadra*, smaller than the norm, but able to manipulate the innate energies of *Jorune*. There is no provision given for players to choose any of the other fourteen intelligent races, although a reasonably enterprising gamemaster could quickly modify the system to allow for this. Characteristics include the familiar strength and constitution, as well as concepts such as color, which represents the ability to comprehend *Jorune* energy, and *Isho*, which is the amount of such energy each character can absorb (and therefore have available for use) in a single day.

Players have a variable number of education points available to select skills. These are chosen from a comprehensive list divided into related groups such as combat, entertainment, etiquette, wilderness survival, languages, thieving, etc. *Muadra* can also select *Dysha* (energy abilities). Humans and *Boccard* have limited choices regarding *Dysha*. Since it is the *Jorune* equivalent of magic, players who are fond of magic users are essentially restricted to choosing *Muadra* characters.

The rules for using *Dysha* are generally cogent and well-organized. The only problem I had with them is the designer's love of constantly using his own coined words. Although frequent use of the system gradually gives some familiarity with the meaning of words like "caji," "hishtin," "copra," and "shal," it takes a while to get over flipping to the glossary at the back of the book to help struggling through a paragraph. I presume the intention was to make the alien nature of *Jorune* more obvious, but the effect is initially somewhat painful. On the other hand, there is a lot of interesting detail about *Jorune* culture in the *Dysha* section which is invaluable to players and gamemasters.

Dysha are divided into seven related groups. Although some of the names are different, the effects of using *Dysha* will be familiar to any veteran fantasy role-player. *Dysha* can be used by expending *Isho* points, which are restored either by sleep or by gathering energy from the environment.

I really don't like the *Jorune* combat system very much. The combat rules are organized into a basic system with grey shaded boxes indicating optional rules. The system works better and is more fun, with the option, which may explain why almost all the examples of combat given in the rules make extensive use of them. The basic system leaves out a lot (mounted combat, for example) and is not even particularly effective as a quick and dirty resolution of combat. Using all of the optional rules does not add a great deal of time to combat, and makes the system only slightly harder to master.

The section of the combat system which grated on me most was the Advantage rule. At the beginning of each round of combat,

characters roll a twenty-sided die to determine who has the advantage. This single roll, modified by weapon skill and some optional rules, determines what actions a character can take in the upcoming round. It is entirely possible for a character to be unable to take any action to attack or defend themselves in a combat round. I am not arguing against limiting a character's actions, but this seems overly harsh.

There are several internal contradictions in the combat rules. One example is the optional rules section titled *Special Attacks*. It is stated in one paragraph that lunging attacks to the arm and overhead swings to the legs are not allowed because they do not make sense. I don't understand why they don't make sense, but in any event, the table immediately following lists these same "disallowed" attacks with all the legitimate tactics, and in fact penalizes them less harshly than some "allowed" attacks.

While I'm talking about what I don't like, I should mention the abundance of typographical errors. *Jorune* cries out for better proofreading. In some cases the results are amusing; one rather nasty rat-like carnivore is described as being "more a nuisance than a treat (sic)." I don't doubt it. Unfortunately, the overall result is at best annoying, and at worst utterly confusing.

On to better things: the art in *Jorune* is excellent and goes a long way towards creating the appropriate atmosphere. The illustrations of monsters and intelligent species are particularly well done, and the captions are often intriguing. The only weakness as far as graphics are concerned are the occasional lapses in quality typesetting (typefaces periodically change in the middle of a page for no apparent reason). The occasional maps are adequate, but pale in comparison to the rest of the art.

The biological and cultural descriptions of intelligent races and other creatures given in the gamemaster guide are very well thought out. The Tauther guide, which is a players' handbook to the beings and cultures of *Jorune*, is a great idea. It's well worth handing it to new players with an offhand "This is where you are" comment just to watch their faces as they flip through the book.

The *SkyRealm Kolovisondra*

GAME RATINGS

- ☆☆☆☆☆ Superb
- ☆☆☆☆ Mighty Fine
- ☆☆☆ Good
- ☆☆ Flop

adventure campaign deals with one of the most peculiar aspects of *Jorune*. SkyRealms are flying land masses created by unique geographical action. The Kolovisondra adventure is an effective beginning to an ongoing *Jorune* campaign, and gives players a

chance to encounter many of the unique features of the game.

Since the release of *Jorune*, the publishers have released a companion module detailing Burdoth, the most powerful human realm on the planet. I have only had the opportunity to take the briefest

of looks at it, but it seems to complement *Jorune* very well.

Overall, I really like *Jorune*. It is pleasant to see someone daring to have a personal vision and break the traditional patterns of fantasy role-playing worlds. I think that more care could have been taken

with elements of the rules, but the joy of *Jorune* is in the conception of its environment, rather than the elegance of its system. I highly recommend *Jorune* to anyone who wants to step into a really different fantasy world. □



THE VALLEY OF THE PHARAOHS

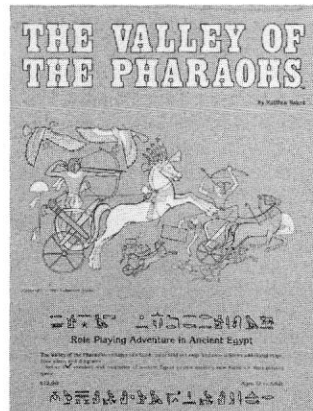
Role Playing Adventure in Ancient Egypt

By Matthew Balent
(Palladium \$12)

Reviewed by Jonathan Tweet

THE VALLEY of the Pharaohs portrays life and adventure in the New Kingdom of ancient Egypt. The 50-page rulebook comes boxed with a large color map of Egypt in 1450 B.C., many other maps and diagrams, and a character sheet for photocopying. The game has thorough historical background and copious illustrations to bring the players into the land of Egypt with game rules that do not box down play, but the brief rules leave too much up to the gamemaster, even to the point of providing few viable ideas for adventures or an engaging campaign. Because the game left me uninspired as to what players could do in their adventures, the clean mechanics and interesting background information are wasted.

Twenty pages of the rules are historical background. The synthesis of relevant information from disparate sources impressed me more than it might impress others because I had done my own research into ancient Egypt for a campaign of my own. *Valley of the Pharaohs* provides important historical information that many hours of library research wouldn't uncover. Better yet, artists Mary Walsh and Kevin Siembieda provide illustrations and diagrams of Egyptians in various styles of dress and their weapons, forts, temples, houses, boats, and other parts of the Egyptian world. With the help of this artwork, players can more easily acquire a feel for the world, which is so important for a historical game. Still, all this background could have doubled in value with slight additions, such as scales for more of the maps and information on nearby lands. Even more important would be rules and suggestions for incorporating the historical background into the play of the game, background that now has little direct representation in the rules. The section on clergy and the gods,



for instance, offers few ideas on how religion, such an important part of Egyptian civilization, affects characters, even priests. The god Set is a mortal enemy of the Osiris family, but the rules make no mention of how this antipathy affects the relations between members of these cults.

The attribute, skill, and combat rules are simple and as realistic as they need to be. I was delighted to find them without needless complication. A historical game should excite players by recre-

ating the historical setting. All that is required of the rules is that they not get in the way, and these rules, which seem to be an elegant combination of ideas from *RuneQuest* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, fulfil their rules nicely in the game.

The magic rules, however, suffer from the game's brevity. All characters learn the same magic system regardless of religious affiliation, and the rules lack means by which to limit the creation of magical items. Also, no attempt is made to explore how magic, the only non-historical part of the game, might affect the civilization. For instance, the spell to detect truth is far too easy to learn and use, potentially making spying and other criminal activity easily detected and making traditional courts obsolete.

Valley of the Pharaohs suffers from some minor problems, such as occasionally laborious English and a hit point system skewed heavily toward humans. (The average character has more hit points than most lions.) The rules even fail to explain how to make a skill roll, but an experienced

gamemaster can rise above all these difficulties easily. The biggest obstacle to running a *Valley of the Pharaohs* campaign is the lack of motives for adventuring. The rules sanely remind gamemasters that armed adventurers free-lancing as monster exterminators do not belong in the civilized, orderly land of Egypt but do not offer alternatives to the kinds of adventures players usually enjoy. If the game was designed so that the scholar, merchant, and soldier characters could have exciting adventures in a civilized country like Egypt using all the non-combat skills described, *Valley of the Pharaohs* would have been given a better rating, but the game left me with no excitement as to the possibilities for scenarios.

The Valley of the Pharaohs, then, would be a worthwhile game for those with deep interest in ancient Egypt and for those gamemasters with enough energy and imagination to synthesize historical background and basic game mechanics into an original and exciting campaign. Good luck to those of you who try. □



CONAN

Role-Playing Game

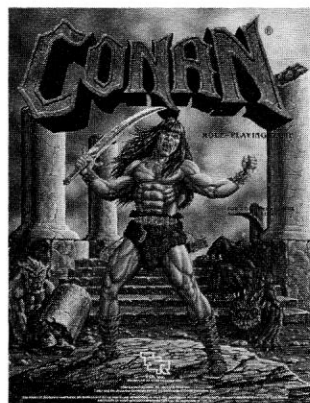
By David Cook (TSR \$13)

Reviewed by Edwin King

IF YOU've ever had the desire (after overdosing on pulp fiction or Arnold Schwarzenegger movies) to slip on a set of mighty bronze-thewed pectorals, leap pantherishly through hapless guardsmen, and generally act the part of a freebooting Hyborian adventurer, TSR has something you'll love. The *Conan Role-Playing Game* is a great piece of hack & slash fun that can reawaken the enthusiasm of the most jaded role-player.

The game consists of a brief 32-page Rule Book, a Reference Guide describing skills (called talents) and containing the game charts and tables, a notebook of background information about Hyboria, a large full-color map of Hyboria, and the requisite dice.

The rules are simple and easy to master. Unfortunately, they are not particularly well-organized,



and there are occasional references to things which are either poorly explained or not covered at all. Generally, however, the simplicity of the system makes it easy for gamemasters to amend or clarify the rules to suit their taste.

The designer has the refreshing habit of assuming the consumer is not an idiot, and doesn't encumber the game with dozens of "what if" tables. Most possibilities, such as dangers, use of skills, combat, etc., are resolved on a single Resolution Table. The Resolution Table is a color-coded,

five-level scale of success, cross-indexed against columns indicative of skill levels or combat abilities. In most cases the exact outcome of the event is left to the gamemaster's ability to describe the situation.

The character generation system lets players design their own adventurer, allowing them to choose their birthplace, their parents, and their initial talents from a basic list of 43. Players begin with 35 points to spend on talents, and with minimal restrictions, are allowed a free hand in design. Players can increase their number of talent points by voluntarily choosing "weaknesses" from a list of 16 flaws, including fear of heights, gambling, and weakness for drink. Each weakness chosen adds 5 talent points, may restrict the choice of certain talents, and requires that the character be role-played accordingly.

Combat in *Conan* is based on a differential system. Characters subtract their opponent's movement or General Prowess Talent from their own Fighting Talent rating. This number refers them to an appropriate column on the

Resolution Table; a dice roll determines whether or not the opponent was hit, and if so, how many points of damage were inflicted. There is the possibility of inflicting a Specific Wound, which is always serious unless a saving throw is made.

Compared to many other role-playing combat systems, *Conan* can best be described as crude. This is not to say ill-conceived, but rather that it does not bog gamemasters and players down with infinite, time-consuming detail. Thus, I suspect that it will not appeal to persons who wish to know exactly which rib was fractured by the last blow of their 7.35-pound mace. Frankly, the designer has captured the spirit of the Conan books quite well. Like the fights in the novels, the emphasis is placed on effect rather than ultra-realism.

However, having said that, the combat rules are probably the least coherent part of the system. Several rereadings may be necessary to determine exactly what is intended, and in a few places players may have to use their own judgment as to how the rules should be applied.

The *Conan* magic system is somewhat loose, allowing plenty of room for adaptation. People who are looking for a complex, "comprehensive" magic system loaded with pseudo-technical, heavy-weapons spells are out of luck. Characters who choose to play magic users are required to acquire various prerequisite skills and spend time in study of their chosen talent. The cost of being a magic user is three-fold. The character will be shunned or avoided by most of normal society, he will gain Obsession points that may force him to act in a manner opposed to his wishes or best interests, and finally he will accrue one or more Magical Weaknesses from a list of six. When a magic user gains his talent, he is not presented with a list of spells, but is expected to research and invent his own. A brief list of suggestions is provided with each Magical Talent description, but no specific game mechanics. In game terms this means that the player and the gamemaster create each individual spell, and likely an adventure to go with it. While this may not appeal to those who don't have the time or inclination to put that much creative effort into the game, I found that it added a lot of pleasure to an ongoing campaign.

Characters may improve their abilities by gathering Fame, Expertise, and Luck points. Fame is treated as another talent and is primarily used to improve the character's employment opportu-

nities. Expertise points can be used by the character to add new talents or improve existing ones. Luck points can be spent by characters to reroll unfavorable die rolls, reduce the level of damage taken in combat, or perform "impossible" deeds.

The starting adventure provided with *Conan* is, in my opinion, the weakest part of the package. It gives the appearance of having been tacked on at the last minute. The adventure duplicates the Robert E. Howard story "The Tower of the Elephant," even to having the same name. This necessitates a major revision if it is to be used with players who are familiar with the short story. Additionally, it is very restrictive; there is only one possible set of choices that the player-character can make to succeed. Almost all others leave him dead or with an

extremely powerful, implacable enemy that cannot be defeated. A less well-known plot, or failing that, a better adaptation would have been a better choice, and made for a more interesting introduction to the game.

The World of Hyboria background book provides capsule comments on kingdoms and cultures as well as notes and stats on specific creatures, gods, ruins, legends, personalities, cults, and magical items. Interestingly, it is presented in the form of a notebook, with additional data scribbled in the margins, coffee rings in the corners, and hand-corrected typos. It purports to be the recently discovered work of the mythical Professor Ervin Howard Roberts, long-time scholar of the Hyborian age. The concept is quite effective and sets the right tone for role-playing in

Hyboria.

Essentially, it is worth the effort to overlook the organizational problems and occasional lapses in clarity in the rules. If you can enjoy the freedom of using an easily-learned rules set that leaves plenty of options, *Conan* is great. It makes a pleasant break from more detailed fantasy campaigning and it is certain to have its players rereading the Conan stories in search of inspiration.

In addition to the role-playing game, there are three *Conan* adventure modules available from TSR. I am informed that due to various factors, there are no plans for future *Conan* adventures, and the game will not be reprinted when present stocks are sold out. That seems unfortunate, for aside from a few bearable flaws, the game is lots of fun, and well worth the money. □



GODS OF GLORANTHA

60 Religions for RuneQuest

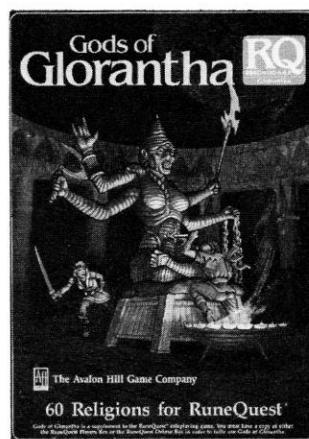
By Sandy Petersen, et al
(The Avalon Hill Game Company \$18)

Reviewed by Steve List

RUNEQUEST, in its original incarnation, was explicitly and intimately tied to the fantasy world of Glorantha. The most powerful characters in Glorantha were those able to use Rune magic, which was derived from the deities of the world. Moreover, the deities adhered to by a character colored that character's interactions with others and approach to life in general. This made knowledge of the gods vital to character development, and so the supplements *Cults Of Prax* and *Cults Of Terror*, which provided detailed expositions of key deities, became essential.

The third edition of *RQ*, published by Avalon Hill, disestablished Glorantha, and the rules were written for play in virtually any environment, with a generic medieval "Fantasy Europe" as the default setting. The new rules, especially regarding magic, made it impossible to use the previously published material on Gloranthan deities without modification, and the slim "Introduction to Glorantha" book provided with the game was of little use as a guide in this regard. The great throng of hardy *RQ* players needed to have the cults books rewritten to conform to the new game system. Instead, they got *Gods Of Glorantha*.

As its title implies, *Gods Of Glorantha* covers the gods of the



world. The previously published literature was with little exception confined to that small portion of the continent Genertela centered on Dragon Pass. This encompassed the Lunar Empire, the Kingdom of Sartar, the barbarian nomads of Prax and Balar, and the nonhumans indigenous to the area, particularly elves, trolls, and creatures of chaos. The deities of these peoples were treated in splendid detail, but the rest of Glorantha was unknown. Now, with *Gods*, all the nations and their pantheons are covered, but at a cost of considerable detail.

Gods is a boxed set of four components. One is a calendar for the Gloranthan year, nicely illustrated and suitable for hanging on the wall. Another bears the legend "Read Me First" and contains the inventory of components. It also disassembles into nine two- or three-page write ups of some of the major religions and contains for each the basic knowledge that a new adherent would have learned in the process of joining. The Prosopaedia is a 20-page book

with brief entries on nearly three-hundred deities, labeled as a "Who's Who." The chief document is the Cults Book, 84 pages long. The first 22 pages include a long chapter on the myths and religions of Glorantha and an attempt to relate the various mythologies to history. Also provided is a map of the world, a description of the 13 most significant pantheons complete with geographical distribution maps, and a write-up of the format used to describe the cults. Also listed are the cults which may employ allied spirits, the status needed in the cult to obtain such a spirit, and the type of object the spirit must reside in (for instance, Humakt spirits must reside in a sword while those of Storm Bull must be in a horned helmet). The old cult compatibility chart would break down on this scale, and so has been replaced with a chart showing the relationships between pantheons. This loses details that used to be brought out, such as the relative friendship of Storm Bull and Zorak Zoran cultists as chaos fighters, now submerged in the general hostility of the Orlanth and Troll pantheons for each other. Adding slight complications is the presence of some deities in more than one pantheon. But the bulk of the book is taken up with descriptions of sixty specific cults. Most are of a single god, though some are generic (e.g., Grain Goddesses) or multiple (e.g., the Seven Mothers).

While inconsistencies between *Gods* and 2nd edition *RQ* are to be expected, there surprisingly are changes from the 3rd edition as well. These consist in the addition of a new divine magic spell, Command Cult Spirit, which must

be stacked with an appropriate Summers spell (i.e., summoning something may not be a good idea if you can't control it), and a considerable rearrangement, renaming and augmentation of the pantheons listed in the Introduction to Glorantha. Most of the augmentation comes from adding pantheons that are worldwide but limited racially (e.g., elf, troll, or merfolk), or are geographically limited.

The departures from the 2nd edition of *RQ* are of course more extensive. Some seem trivial: for instance, there is no longer the status of "lay member." Others may be due to typos; the Prosoepia listing for Malia places her in both the Chaos and Troll pan-

theons. Cults no longer have "subservient cults" and Spirits of Reprisal associated with them. This, along with the absence of a formal lay member status, makes it appear that characters are far more free to change their religious affiliation than before.

Lunar cultists have a gain and a loss. The loss is the elimination of the Cult of the Crimson Bat, a hell demon and chaos spawn that did much to make the Lunar Empire unpalatable to Light-bringers, trolls, and probably game players. The gain is the existence of "Lunar magic," a mix of sorcery and spirit magic unique to initiates of the Red Goddess. The upshot is to make Lunars more attractive as characters to role-

play. They may still be politically nasty, but they no longer go around feeding people to that monster Bat.

The major change seems to be in the approach to religion as history. The previous published material presented Gloranthan religion as historically factual, with all deities having their existence acknowledged by non-worshippers as well as adherents, and the events of the various periods, such as the God Time and the Lesser and Greater Darknasses codified. The approach in *Gods* is to present all religions as myths, not always consistent with each other, and with doubt and denial about certain events and religions. Religion has been made

subjective.

Gods Of Glorantha is what the title implies. It is a broad survey of all the religions of an entire world, and includes as a part of the exposition of those religions a fair amount of social and geographical information. It falls far short of the detailed treatment lavished on the restricted area that previously published Gloranthan material covered, but opens up vast new areas for gaming. Those hoping for an update of *Cults Of Prax/Terror* may be disappointed, but those interested in learning about the rest of a fascinating fantasy world will be rewarded.

For DC Heroes



BATMAN SOURCEBOOK

By Mike Stackpole



WHEEL OF DESTRUCTION

By Matthew J. Costello

(Mayfair, \$10 and \$6 resp.)

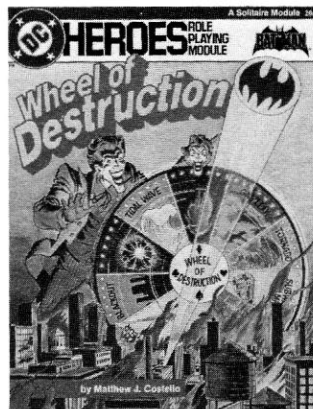
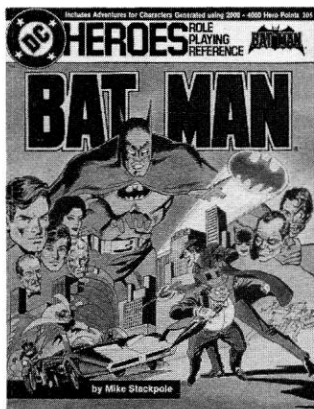
Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

"CRIMINALS ARE a superstitious, cowardly lot, so my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts. I must be a creature of the night, black, terrible . . . a . . . a . . . A bat! That's it! It's an omen . . . I shall become a bat!"

And with these words, Bruce Wayne became a figure of legend. Almost fifty years later, his adventures still appear in both *Detective Comics* and the series that bears his name. Until recently, he also co-starred in *World's Finest* and had a long-running team-up series in *The Brave and the Bold*, as well as appearances with the Justice League and the Outsiders. He is the Batman.

Recently, the Batman has become popular again, thanks to a highly publicized mini-series by Frank Miller, and a new movie (wherein the Batman will be played much straighter than on the old TV show) is being planned. So perhaps it is appropriate that the first sourcebook for the *DC Heroes Role Playing Game* features the second oldest superhero still active (especially since Superman, the oldest superhero still around, is currently being revamped and is therefore unavailable for now).

Any lover of the Darknight Detective will find plenty of



material in this sourcebook, even if he uses a different game system or doesn't play role-playing games. There are lengthy profiles of both the Batman and Bruce Wayne (including an incomplete list of who knows his secret identity; the biggest omission that I noted is that the old Justice League told each other their secret identities), complete game stats and descriptions of his major friends and foes from his solo series, and a listing of his common equipment and vehicles in game terms. There is also a set of 21" x 16" maps of Wayne Manor, the Wayne Foundation Penthouse, both Batcaves, and a miskeyed diagram of the rest of Wayne Foundation Building. The book concludes with a couple of full adventures and some suggestions for more.

There is also a section giving game stats and descriptions of the Outsiders, the group that the Batman formed after he quit the Justice League of America. However, he recently split from them (and shortly afterward he joined the new JLA). It is pretty clear that this book was in production when this plot development was announced and they simply added a paragraph about it instead of pulling out the entire section as

they should have (one of the adventures is for the Batman and the Outsiders, so they would have had to replace or rewrite eighteen pages altogether). However, these pages are useless for the person interested purely in the Batman, especially as he currently appears in the comics, and since none of the Outsiders' supporting characters (such as Dr. Jace or Sapphire Stagg Mason) or foes (such as the Masters of Disaster) are detailed, the gamemaster interested purely in the Outsiders won't find enough for him here. It would have been much better to have pulled this section, rewritten the one adventure, and saved the info on the Outsiders for an Outsiders sourcebook.

The adventure featuring the Outsiders is prefaced with a two-page article on designing supervillains and their headquarters, using this adventure as an example. It's very helpful to anyone running a superhero campaign in any system (although I'd have preferred to have a sketch of the new villain created for this scenario instead of just a description). Similarly, the second adventure is prefaced with an article on designing a scenario, with particular emphasis on the type suitable for the Batman and other heroes

of his type, who cannot rely on their muscles or other powers to get them through, but instead must use their brains. These two articles more than make up for the problem with the Outsiders.

The first adventure is a rather minor one; with a little work, it could be adapted to any other group of heroes, or even just the Batman and Robin alone. The second one is quite good: it features Ra's al Ghul and his daughter Talia. The third adventure referred to on the cover is simply a series of suggestions about how to use the maps provided to spark adventures; I found this to be mostly a waste of space since these ideas are too vague to be of much use without a great deal of work (besides, who needs to be told how to use the Batcave anyway?).

Wheel Of Destruction is a Batman solo module featuring the Joker. Commissioner Gordon has been kidnaped and is forced to play the TV game show that lends its name to this adventure. Each night of the game, the player, as Gordon, guesses letters in a clue pointing toward which of six Gotham City landmarks the Joker plans to destroy unless he's paid a million dollars. Then, as the Batman, he has one hour in which to solve the clue and stop the Joker's plan. If he fails, or if he succeeds but the Joker escapes, then the whole thing starts over again the following night.

The module uses the standard numbered paragraphs that most solo modules use, plus a number of adaptations for other aspects. For example, the letter guessing is done by assigning each letter a three digit code; after the requisite number of letters have been chosen and their codes copied down, the player looks at a chart in the back to determine where, if at all, the letters chosen go in the phrase. Unlike the TV show that

inspired this adventure, vowels don't cast any extra, so that anyone armed with a knowledge of letter frequencies will do pretty well at this part, and even those who don't will probably choose well enough to solve the clues. I tried playing a friend through a variant of this module in which vowels cost double and he solved two of the three puzzles with no problem (and the third he got with a little thought).

A problem with this type of solo module is that it is possible to accidentally see things from later in the adventure, especially if something is kept in a specially shaded box, thus drawing the eye. For something intended to be a

surprise, it would have been better to have buried it in the midst of a paragraph.

It is very possible to solve the case on the first night with the correct deductions and a few lucky rolls. However, if the player does things in the wrong order, he may catch the Joker but not save the landmark, since there is no provision for back-tracking the Joker once you've caught him (and the module then tells you that you've got to find the Joker's hideout to save Commissioner Gordon, but since you don't have any clues, it tells you to wait until after the next broadcast, which never comes with the Joker back in Arkham).

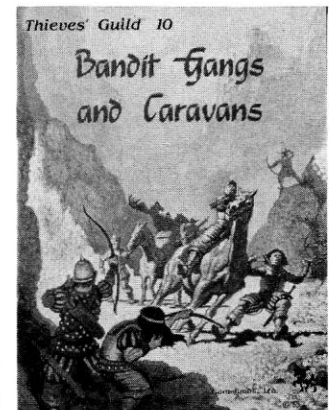
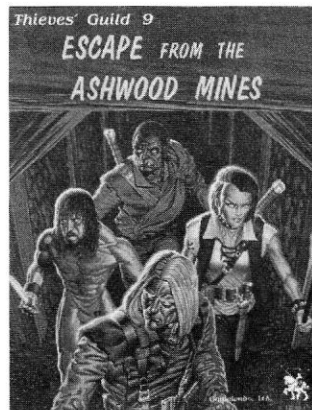
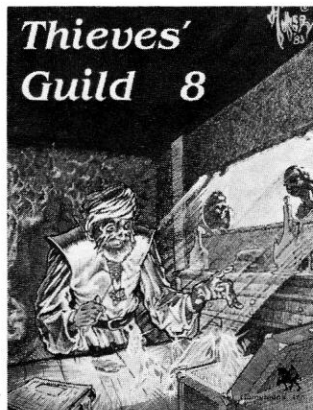
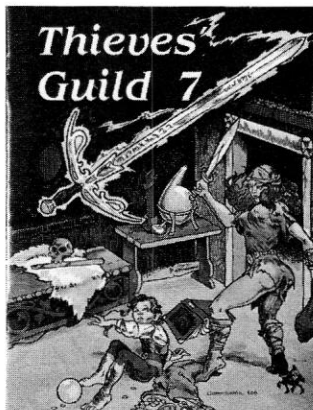
In the extremely unlikely event that the Batman is killed or incapacitated or the more likely event that the player chooses not to play the Batman for some reason, the module is designed to allow the player to use either Robin, Nightwing, or, oddly enough, Hawkman. This is nice, but I'm still uncertain why Hawkman was chosen, aside from the fact that his reputation is also that of a detective (but then why not Elongated Man?).

The endgame paragraph seems to have been misprinted, because every single possibility listed is given the same positive value, even if it's something like "The Batman is killed" as opposed to

"The Joker is captured."

Due to some of these problems, this module actually works better as an adventure to run for someone else. It helps to read through it and prepare a list of what's happening at each location on each night to cut down on the page flipping (needless to say, knowing each puzzle phrase saves a lot of time as well).

In conclusion, I'd have to say that I like the *Batman Sourcebook*, but I found a lot left to be desired in *Wheel Of Destruction*. Pick up the former, but skip the latter unless you're really desperate for a Batman module and are willing to do a little work before running it. □



**THIEVES' GUILD 7
THIEVES' GUILD 8
THIEVES' GUILD 9
THIEVES' GUILD 10**

By Kerry Lloyd, et al
(Gamelords, \$5.95 to \$6.50)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

THE *THIEVES' Guild* line is a series of books to be unbound, hole-punched, and kept in a binder. The pages grow into a full fantasy role-playing game called *The Fantasy System*. Each pack contains a set of rules additions to the game system, plus scenarios for use in play.

What you get in these 32-page booklets is a mixture. To get your full money's worth you must either use the Gamelord's game mechanics or adapt their rules supplements that appear in each booklet to the game mechanics you are accustomed to using. How much adaption that would require depends on what you use, since the general flavor of the *Thieves' Guild* rules is closer to *Dungeons & Dragons* than other commercial games. The Gamelords system will be published in at least three parts. Character creation and thieving rules are available in a boxed set, second edi-

tion *Thieves' Guild*. The combat rules, *Naked Sword*, and the magic rules, *Paths Of Sorcery*, are to be issued later as separate sets. But as far as the *Thieves' Guild* booklets series goes, remember that they specialize in needs of people playing various types of thieves, based in the City of Haven and the territory around it. And the scenarios for playing thieves are readily adaptable to any game system. The scenarios are the heart of each booklet.

Thieves' Guild 7 contains as its rules supplement a highly-detailed set of rules covering inborn talents for a character that could be used with any game system. The talents include skill with crafts, animals, weapons, or classes of magic, damage resistance types, and psi powers. Even if you don't want your players possessing these talents, the table is an excellent source of ideas for magic items for any gamemaster, and some of the entries could be handy additions to scenarios as curious powers of gamemaster-characters.

The rules also contain an expansion of knowledge on that subject so interesting to thieves, locks and the kinds of traps one is likely to find associated with locks. This should be a good source of ideas for use by the gamemaster,

whether or not you use the Gamelords' character system that the text is keyed to.

Most of this book is devoted to two scenarios. The first is to burglarize the smithy of a famous dwarf smith and take a specific enchanted sword from there to a customer. First the players must devise a way of getting in, for which the text offers a number of possibilities. Then they must deal with the apprentices and the smith's pets who will be inside, find the correct sword, and escape. If they succeed, they must still make the contracted delivery, which is a second for which *TG7* gives the gamemaster hints but not as fully-detailed a setup as for the burglary itself.

The second scenario involves two organizations trying to acquire a magic item someone is trying to smuggle out of Haven. Both the Thieves' Guild and its archrival, the Black Hand, want the device. Unfortunately for the players, they must find not only the identity of the possessor but also of the item itself, for they do not know precisely what it looks like or what it does, only that it has major arcane powers. This will require wit and imagination, even with the various hints that are made available to the players during the course of the events

laid out in the scenario description. You must also get yourselves hired into the caravan and get out without being identified, yourselves. Gamelords uses a clever way of moving things along by giving the gamemaster a timetable of significant events that will interfere with the players' plans but also give them hints via events of who is what in the scenario. It is up to the players to sort the wheat from the chaff in this information, of course. Each major gamemaster-character is described in detail, both physically and in terms of their motivations and personality. This means that after running a particular scenario, you have a set of gamemaster-characters to reuse in later scenarios of your own creation.

Thieves' Guild 8 begins with a rules supplement on ranged weapons: bows and crossbows get the most attention, but there are rules for other missile throwers and thrown weapons. This subject has been the cause of endless fights in the hobby, so the reader should take Gamelords' assertions on the range and effectiveness of different missile weapons with a bit of salt. Still, these rules address points that most gamers ignore, such as the details of matching bow pull to the character's strength. This is worth add-

ing to a library of weapons lore.

The middle of the book is devoted to short scenarios on the highway, supplementing earlier such scenarios in *TG1* and *TG2*. Each begins with a verbal description of what the players see as they wait in ambush for something worth robbing to come along. For the gamemaster there is a detailed description of the nature and personality of each person in the wagon or group that comes down the road, including their possessions and cargo and chances of someone offering a ransom for their safe release. A number of these contain jokes on the player greedy enough to attack anything that moves, but there are real treasures to be found—also relatives willing to hunt down the attackers. Each of these has possibilities for adding characters to the gamemaster's character collection for later use in the campaign, so they are valuable even if the thieves turn up their noses at them the first time they show up in the game.

The last half of the book contains two scenarios. One is a rescue scenario, requiring the players to figure how to safely extract several young women from the cave to which the trolls have taken them. You must hurry, for there is no way of knowing when the trolls will sacrifice the girls in their savage religious ceremonies, and eat them. Part of your problem is that little is really known about the nature and vulnerabilities of trolls. Good luck.

The other scenario is the first part of two (the second is in *TG9*). A complex quest scenario, this requires the players to get their guide back to the Crystal Mountains and help him obtain more of the magical crystals obtainable only there, and get out again without being caught by the guardians or betrayed to them by their guide. To get there you must pass through the territory of several savage tribes. Each of three tribes is described, with its attitude towards strangers. The purpose of this first half of the scenario is simply to pass through the tribes to the base of the Crystal Mountains despite the hostility of some of the nomads and the increasingly odd behavior of the players' guide.

Thieves' Guild 9 continues your adventures in the Crystal Mountains, which takes up half the book. The players must figure out how to safely penetrate the forest that guards the entrance to the valley. This won't be easy. Entering the valley successfully presents you with a wide range of troubles, for the valley is dominated by a group of wizards and

their private army. The players will have to figure out how to avoid simply being thrown in prison (or if that happens, how to escape again), and then how to get a hold of the precious crystals and make their way out of the valley again. Clever players will take the time to find out about the internal politics among the wizards and turn that to their advantage. Others will have to rely on burglary and luck, and may consider themselves fortunate to get away at all!

The second half of this book is a different scenario that also requires thinking for success. Your assignment is to rescue a high-ranking lieutenant of the local thieves guild from imprisonment that the guild hasn't been able to buy him out of. The problem is that he isn't just in a prison, he's a slave in the silver mines, guarded by a century of army troops. You have to scout the town to get information on ways of getting yourselves into the mines and out again. Can you get help from the people in the town? In the army? You have four days to succeed, for which Gamelords supplies the gamemaster with a timetable of events that the players can react to or turn to their benefit. There is also a group of random encounters to distract the players.

Thieves' Guild 10 is devoted to the fine art of robbing caravans. The first half of the book is a rules supplement on how to assemble and run a caravan—and how to assemble and run a bandit gang that preys on caravans. These include a sample bandit gang, and a sample caravan (to make life simpler for the poor gamemaster). Finally, these rules include mass combat rules keyed to the Gamelords combat rules. To adapt these to a different game will require extensive study and tinkering. But since most other game systems don't include rules to handle mass combat at all, these rules are worth a look by any gamemaster with the urge to run battles with more than a dozen on each side. There are several well-established miniatures wargaming rules sets that are specifically designed for this function, but I am not familiar with them, and I have not playtested the Gamelords rules, so I express no opinion on the *TG10* mass combat system other than to call it to your attention.

The rest of the book is a burglary scenario. The players must obtain for the guild a valuable ruby owned by a merchant who has refused to pay protection money to the guild. The guild intends to teach the merchant a lesson by forcing him to ransom

back the ruby by paying his back "taxes" to the guild. The players must figure how to penetrate the house's defenses, including the hulking guard, and then figure out where the ruby has been hidden. The scenario offers a wide selection of sources for rumors about the merchant, his mistress, his apprentice, his guard, and the visitor currently staying in the house. Can you turn any of these to help you, or at least be neutral? As in all Gamelords' scenarios, cleverness rather than force is generally the key to success.

These four volumes illustrate the quality of Gamelords' products. They concentrate on



Traveller Book 7

MERCHANT PRINCE

By Marc W. Miller (GDW \$6)

Reviewed by Terry McInnes

THIS VOLUME gives players an expanded character generation system for the Merchant Service, as well as new rules for trade and speculation among the stars.

THE MERCHANT SERVICE
Merchant Prince opens with an explanation of the multi-layered Merchant Service found in the *Traveller* universe, ranging from the empire-spanning lines of the megacorporations to the humble Free Traders.

In addition to the megacorporation lines and the Free Traders (examples of which are included in this shipping guide), major sector lines, sub-sector feeder lines, special interface lines, and fledgling lines are listed and described.

The special interface lines and the fledgling lines are new types which seem to offer the most opportunity for adventure by individual characters.

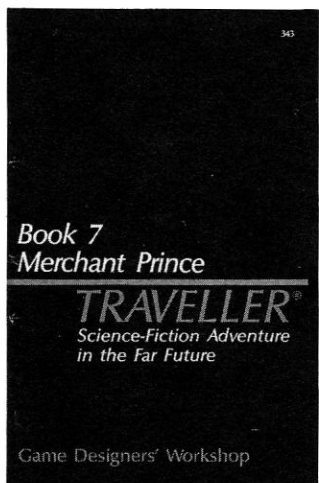
The interface lines specialize in transborder trade between different races and/or political entities. Fledgling lines consist of a handful of ships just getting into regular interstellar trade.

CHARACTER GENERATION

The enhanced Merchant character generation system takes up the middle third of the 48-page booklet. Four-year terms of service are broken into one-year assignments, similar to *High Guard*. Except for Free Traders, all shipping lines are broken into several departments: Deck, Engineering, Purser, Administration, and Sales.

All except Free Trader characters roll on the department assignment tables to determine which department they join. They then resolve their yearly assignments on the appropriate assignment

personality and variety to supply the gamemaster with role-playing tools to enrich a campaign, whether or not that campaign uses the Gamelords' world of Haven and whether or not that campaign emphasizes thieving for most of its activity. Most of the scenario ideas do not depend on the existence of a thieves guild—and indeed any party of adventurers could undertake many of the offered outdoor scenarios, although the burglary scenarios do require specialized thieving skills to succeed. The *Thieves' Guild* series is worth using as an aid in any fantasy campaign. □



resolution tables. Characters who enter the Merchant Service as Free Traders are part of the homogeneous Free Trader department, and resolve their assignments on the Free Trader tables.

Duty assignments include service on routes, on chartered vessels, on exploratory cruises, and on speculative trade missions. Free Traders can also smuggle, turn pirate, or endure No Business.

Promotions are handled differently in *Merchant Prince* than elsewhere in *Traveller*. Candidates must first have prerequisite skills and/or assignments, and then pass a promotion exam by throwing a required number on 2D. If they pass, a promotion is still not guaranteed. A position for a person of that rank must be available in his or her shipping line.

Three new skills—Broker, Legal, and Trader—are also described and made available in *Merchant Prince*.

"Broker" enables a character to act as a cargo broker with his or her skill used as a DM on the actual value tables in the trade and commerce rules.

"Legal" enables characters to deal more easily with customs and safety inspections, allowing a

favorable DM when throwing to be found in compliance with local laws and regulations.

"Trader" skill enables a character to partially determine the future sale price of a cargo which has been purchased on speculation.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Merchant Prince's new trade and commerce rules make up the final third of the book. When a cargo is purchased by a ship captain, its value is determined by adding a price modifier for each world type, a tech level difference modifier, and a starport classification effect modifier to the basic Cr4000 per ton cargo purchase price.

Approximate market prices on the destination world can also be determined with a table that uses

the trade classifications of the originating and destination world to produce modifiers that are added to or subtracted from a Cr5000 per ton basic cargo sale price. Tech level modifiers are also added to this calculation. Trading with aliens, as well as various races of humaniti, can also affect the estimated sale price.

The profits and losses of a speculative trade deal are not determined, however, until the final roll on the Actual Value Table, which yields a percentage multiplier of the modified per ton estimated price.

TRADE GOODS

A three-page essay on the various types of trade goods that move between worlds follows the trade and commerce rules. In many ways, it makes up for a major lack

in the rules. The revised trade rules do not mention specific contents of the speculation cargos. There is no table to tell a ship captain if he or she is buying a cargo of noble meat or a load of vacc suits. Instead, the cargo is an abstract lot identified by starport type, tech level, and the trade classification of the originating world—a lot less exciting than knowing the cargo is ten tons of goatle hair or a ton of tree squids.

Without an imaginative game-master, trade and commerce may easily become just another book-keeping exercise.

CONCLUSIONS

Merchant Prince is an excellent addition to the *Traveller* line. The book does an excellent job of showing by colorful examples just

how the complex *Merchant Prince* systems work, a major plus. This book is for the many *Traveller* players who find much of their enjoyment as merchant characters pursuing the Almighty Credit through voyaging and speculation aboard their Free Traders.

The trading system is not for beginners, however. It is complex and requires that many factors be calculated to determine a character's profit and loss. And, as noted above, it needs to be used by players with active imaginations. Otherwise, they are in danger of being bogged down in bookkeeping, and would be better off using the original system found elsewhere in *Traveller*. Cargo supplement, where are you?

□



For Stormbringer STEALER OF SOULS BLACK SWORD

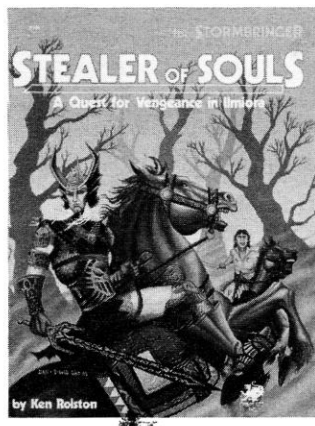
By Ken Rolston
(Chaosium, \$6 and \$8 resp.)

Reviewed by Scott A. Dollinger

STORMBRINGER FANS take heart, Chaosium has released two interconnecting campaign packages, *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword*, that will go far in filling the rather noticeable lack of modules for this fine game. Previous *Stormbringer* supplements have contained a few solo adventures and some scenarios but overall there have not been many modules written for *Stormbringer*. *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword* provide at least six full-length scenarios and ample material for gamemasters to create more.

Both *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword* were written by one of my favorite game designers, Ken Rolston. It is unusual that I mention a designer by name but Mr. Rolston has become, at least for me, a catch word for originality and quality design. I have yet to find any product designed by Mr. Rolston, for any game system, to be lacking in creativity, internal logic, or enjoyability and *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword* are happily not exceptions.

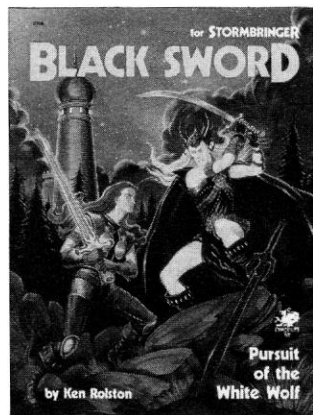
The events of *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword* occur after Michael Moorcock's *The Bane of the Black Sword* wherein Elric was hired to assault the stronghold of a powerful and clever merchant, Nikorn, by rival merchants that would profit by his death. Elric would have normally disdained such a mundane commission but it afforded him an



opportunity to confront his arch-enemy, the wizard Theleb K'aarna, who was in Nikorn's service. During the assault Elric was overpowered but was allowed to live and leave by Nikorn after swearing not to bother him again. Nikorn kept Stormbringer as insurance. Moonglum managed to have the blade returned and Elric returned to slay Theleb K'aarna. During the battle Elric was confronted by Nikorn and is forced, albeit unwillingly, to slay him. The scenarios are concerned with Nikorn's daughter, Freyda, who swears vengeance on Elric and the merchants that hired him.

Stealers Of Souls concerns itself with Freyda's vengeance on the merchants that hired Elric. The setting for most of the scenario is the city-state of Bakshaan. The players are recruited by Freyda to aid her in her quest. Freyda, herself, may be played by a player or as a gamemaster-character. Ample motivational cues and probable actions for Freyda are given whenever such actions are important to the scenario but enough leeway is allowed to make Freyda fun to play.

Bakshaan itself is thoroughly



laid out for the players. Social and legal codes and customs are sufficiently detailed on handout sheets so that players have a very good idea what they can and cannot get away with. An overall map of the city and a description of its various sectors and the people who live there is provided along with detailed maps of important encounter areas such as the merchants' homes.

There are two main scenarios in *Stealer Of Souls*, an assassination attempt on the players and a caravan raid. As many as four smaller scenarios are given (raids on the merchants' homes) and even a mediocre gamemaster can generate numerous others from the wealth of materials given.

The gamemaster-characters such as the merchants and all the other supporting characters are colorful and richly described so that their reactions and motivations are easy to discern and role-playing them is easy.

After dealing with the merchants and surviving the assault against the caravan (an epic battle) the players begin to pick up the trail of Elric himself. It is at this point that *Black Sword*

begins.

Freyda and company trail Elric to the Beggar City of Nadsokor. The version of Nadsokor that Mr. Rolston presents is, in my opinion, superior to that originally described by Michael Moorcock. Rolston's Nadsokor is a nightmarish vision where people have chosen the hell of filth, degradation, and boredom rather than expend the meagerest effort to care for themselves. The citizens of Nadsokor are self-enslaved to the chaos lord Narjhan who keeps them as pets and supplies them with only their most basic need in exchange for their worship.

The players stumble through Nadsokor until they meet the king and Narjhan himself. They find that Elric has left. Narjhan has a score to settle with Elric himself and sees an opportunity to Freyda either with or without her knowledge.

After the characters leave Nadsokor they travel through the mysterious Forest of Troos and encounter the ferocious beastman and then they travel on to Org, just in time to be caught up in the destruction of that civilization when conflicting cults and supernatural agencies vie for control. After Org they travel across the wastes to Karlaak and their final confrontation with Elric.

Players should be encouraged to start new characters for these adventures, as gamemasters may have a bit of trouble incorporating a campaign that has Elric directly involved into their own campaign. If this is not a problem the characters should be fairly powerful if they intend on fighting their way through. Less powerful characters can survive if they are very cautious. Role-

playing should be stressed at all times because sufficient information exists for gamemasters to handle nearly any situation and enough subplots so that several more playing sessions may be generated from character inter-

action.

Although the graphics, maps, and artwork are all first-rate, it would seem that Chaosium needs a better proofreader as several (too many) typos exist in both volumes. They do not impede

play but they do detract from an otherwise excellent product. Both *Stealer Of Souls* and *Black Sword* are excellent values especially when one considers the number of playing sessions they offer. Keep up the good work Ken. □

ground descriptions of the areas, participants and victims of the invasion, and the Capellan Empire—might prove a bit difficult for inexperienced gamemasters to run. Experienced gamemasters and players, however, should have little trouble—and quite a bit of fun—making things happen, either on Earth or in the heavens.

Overall, *From the Deeps of Space* is a well-conceived idea for outer-space superhero action and, except for the minor flaws noted, is competently executed as well. The ideas here can be converted relatively painlessly to most other superhero role-playing games in addition to *V&V*. I can easily see a group of *Heroes Unlimited*, *Superworld*, or *Champions* characters taking on the Capellans—though aficionados of the *Marvel Super Hero* system might experience problems in converting *Deeps* to that game. Thus this scenario would be a good buy for almost anyone interested in superheroic role-playing with a more traditional science-fiction setting than is usually the case. □



Villains & Vigilantes Adventure

FROM THE DEEPS OF SPACE

By Stefan Jones (FGU \$5)

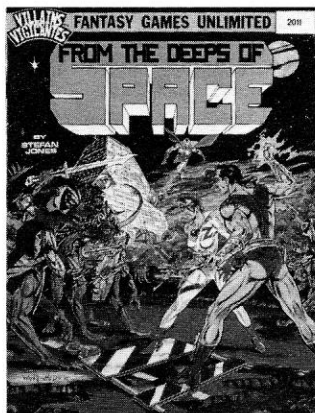
Reviewed by William A. Barton

EARTH HAS been invaded by the evil Capellan Empire and their supervillain allies! And only Earth's superheroes stand a chance of repelling the invaders in FGU's latest scenario for *Villains & Vigilantes*—*From the Deeps of Space*. Designed by frequent FGU contributor Stefan Jones, the scenario is a two-parter that covers both the Capellan invasion and a potential counterattack on the Capellan Empire itself by Earth's super-powered defenders in an effort to end the Capellan threat for all time.

Part 1 of the adventure includes maps of the invasion site (a typical Smalltown, U.S.A.), deck plans of the massive Capellan baseships and smaller scoutships, and game stats for Capellan soldiers, their hovercycle craft, and the three supervillains assisting them—one of which is a renegade Terran. Part 2 adds rules for *V&V* space travel, an interesting and potentially useful supplement to the game, especially for those who enjoy out-of-this-world heroics. Along with encounter tables for interstellar and hyperspace, stats and descriptions are included of the worlds that are a part of, conquered by, or allied with the Empire, plus the several alien races that inhabit them. Plans for three important Capellan installations further enhance the scenario. And a number of gamemaster notes suggest various ways play may proceed in both parts of the adventure.

As an added bonus, FGU has included a cardstock insert in the book, as with other recent *V&V* scenarios, providing counters of the various aliens, supervillains, minions, and smaller vehicles in the adventure. This is a nice visual touch, although perhaps of limited use as a play aid (most gamers I know prefer to use miniatures or cardboard heroes rather than counters, if anything at all).

While most *V&V* scenarios provide different challenges each time around, *From the Deeps of*



Space is particularly notable in that it is the first *V&V* adventure with an outer-space theme. Its rules and encounter tables could easily be used in any spacefaring

V&V adventure, regardless of whether or not the gamemaster runs this particular invasion scenario—as could the description and plans of the alien spaceships, worlds, and races. Also worth mentioning are the comic illustrations throughout the book, which are excellent, as is usually the case in *V&V* adventures.

Few problems are evident in this scenario. There are a couple of unfortunate omissions—the base-ship symbol on the beachhead key with the invasion map, and descriptions of area H and half of area I on the Capellan Assembly Hall map key, for example, seem to have disappeared down a black hole somewhere. The relatively freewheeling nature of the scenario—being mostly back-



BATTLETECH

By Jordan K. Weisman, et al

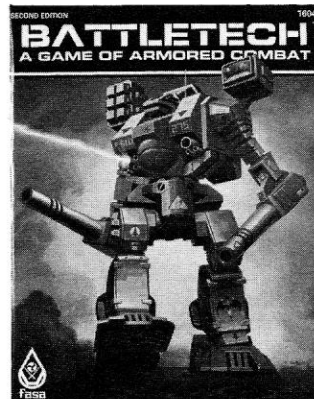
CITYTECH

By L. Ross Babcock III, et al (FASA, \$20 each)

Reviewed by Dale L. Kemper

SINCE THE first edition of *Battletech* came out (entitled *Battledroids* at that time) it has received quite a bit of praise in the gaming world. FASA has wisely decided to support this system with a wide variety of supplements and games set in the same universe. In addition, the role-playing game *Mechwarrior* has recently been released to compete with other science-fiction role-playing games. Set in the Successor States which grew from the old noble houses of the old Star League, *Battletech* goes into the minutest details of unit organization, mercenary regiments, bandit kings, and on and on.

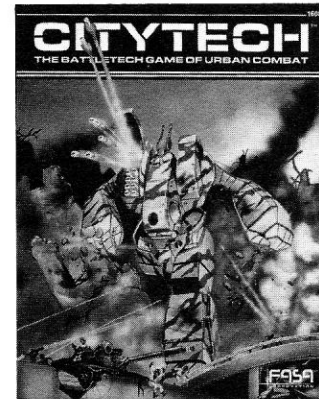
Battletech surpasses other "Japanese robot"-type games on the market for the simple reason that its universe makes sense. The Battlemech vehicles in the game (many which resemble those from such Japanimation shows as *Macross* and its *Robotec* U.S. variant) are piloted military units with strengths and weaknesses. They resemble walking tanks a lot more than they resemble the shape-changing robots popular-



ized in the latest cartoons. Certain tactics will aid Mechwarriors in various situations and others will not. Practice and skill outweigh luck in this game.

Battletech comes boxed with a 40-page rulebook, some 48 die-cut Battlemech counters and their plastic stands, smoke, fire, and Successor House counters, two open-terrain maps, and a pair of dice.

The game plays well. Each individual Battlemech vehicle has a sheet filled out with all its capabilities (weapons, heat sinks, armor, internal structure, speed, ammunition, jump jets, and pilot skill) listed. Game size is usually one or two Lances on each side (a Lance is a Battlemech squadron of four individual 'Mechs). With these units, players fire at each other until one side or the other is disabled or withdraws. In *Battletech*, the most important thing to consider is heat retention. The



more weapons or movement is used, the faster the internal heat of the Battlemech builds, finally forcing a power shutdown or maybe even an ammunition explosion. Each 'Mech has a number of heat sinks to lose the heat built up in combat. There are never enough of them to do everything you want to do. Only rarely are you able to fire all of your weapons in one turn. Many battles rage about the two lakes on the mapsheet (since immersing your heat sinks in water allows you to cool off faster). One drawback to playing the game is that *Battletech* does not come with any inherent scenarios. Any situation players wish to fight must be worked out among themselves. This seems to be quite an oversight considering the large amount of background information provided plus rules on how to design your own Battlemechs. Room should have been found for

some simple introductory scenarios. However, there are two scenario books available at present: *The Foxes Teeth* and *The Black Widow Company*, if you wish to spend additional money for them.

A number of optional rules allow further enjoyment into the game. Such rules as punching, kicking, charging, setting fires, smoke, using severed limbs as clubs, and so on certainly keep the game interesting. All in all *Battletech* is a good introduction to the universe of the Succession Wars. It should whet your appetite for more and FASA plans on giving it to you. With all the add-on games and rules, *Battletech* will be around for some time to come.

Citytech is the first major rules expansion for *Battletech*. Concentrating on the tactical problems of inner-city street battles with forty-foot-tall fighting machines, the game continues where *Battle-*

tech leaves off.

The game comes in a standard-size box (with excellent artwork) and contains a 44-page rulebook, two dice, two cardstock hex maps depicting urban areas and the outlying countryside, counters and plastic stands for some new Battlemech types, and other counters representing various types of buildings, rubble, infantry platoons, and standard armored vehicles. The game components are colorful and well done.

Citytech is a stand-alone game. While still an expansion of *Battletech*, that game is not needed to play *Citytech*. All the rules that are contained in *Battletech* are also in *Citytech*. What is missing is the background on the Succession States that is found in *Battletech*. This lack is somewhat alleviated by some interesting fiction on urban 'Mech combat found in the *Citytech* rulebook.

There are a number of rules additions in *Citytech*. Many of

these concern the specifics of urban combat, of course. New rules cover building construction, demolition and rubble, skyscrapers, ground troops, and armored vehicles (tracked, wheeled, and hover) as well as things like firing arc rotation for Battlemechs and side hits. Record sheets are provided for Battlemechs, armored vehicles, and infantry platoons (Jump, Rifle, Machine Gun, Flamer, Laser, or Short Range Rocket types). There are also extensive rules for designing your own military vehicles (the rules for designing your own Battlemechs are in the *Battletech* game only). Six pre-designed armored vehicles are provided as well as stats for six new Battlemechs (along with stats for six others that are also found in the *Battletech* game).

Citytech is certainly a good game to complement *Battletech*. It expands the possible scenarios that can be played and offers a

number of additional rules to keep things interesting. Once again, however, no introductory scenarios are provided so players will have to come up with their own or buy the scenario supplements mentioned above. For those interested in plausible futuristic combat using a variation on the popular monster robot craze, these two games might be for you. And with the release of *Aerotech* (orbital combat around the Battlemech Dropships), *Mechwarrior* (the role-playing game), *Battleforce* (company- and regimental-size Battlemech combat), *The Succession Wars* (the strategic game encompassing most of the galaxy), and other upcoming supplements, the detail and interest in this gaming universe might possibly begin to compete with *Star Trek* or *Traveller*. There are even *Battletech* novels coming out!

HOLLYWOOD

Continued from page 4

the movie's over. Games on the other hand are an evolving and on-going experience. If one of your players gets his hands on the Lost Ark he's going to want to try and use it on another adventure. In other words, be careful what your players wind up with. If some prop is so powerful that it will unbalance your scenario, either downgrade it or cut it out totally. For instance, I dropped a helm of invisibility from my adaption of *Clash of the Titans* because in game terms it would have made the character who got it too invulnerable. In the film itself, the hero accidentally loses

the helm, solving the problem. Since I couldn't count on that (or make it happen without being unfair) I cut it out.

Now lets review—character motivation, variation in the storyline, group involvement, careful statting, and attention to props. Keeping these in mind you can break down any film into a game scenario, either as part of an on-going campaign or as one off-session. Try it next time you're watching one of your favorite adventure films. Just say to yourself, "How would my players handle that situation?" and you are on your way.

End of column. See ya next time dicehounds! □

FILM

Continued from page 45

science's ability to damn us all to inescapable doom, with never a nod of the hat to such creations as gods and devils and other similar bulk. He wrote above the doors of people's brains and their capacity for acceptance was blown off its hinges.

Lovecraft was an innovator of the first caliber, a giant among all the horror writers who ever lived, and a main figure in the field of American letters. He created an entire genre and devised all the rules for working within it without trying hard or even consciously being aware of what he was about. In adapting Lovecraft's work, Yuzna, Paoli, and

Gordon are working much the same kind of magic with the B-movie field. As Gordon put it:

"When I came west, I must admit that I had a preconceived notion about the world of B movies. I thought I would see a bunch of sleazy, bald, money-grabbing guys chewing on cigars. Instead, I found a bunch of bright, talented young people, who were making these films as their entry into the industry and giving their life's blood as a result. I am happy to be part of that group."

As long as Stuart Gordon and his companions keep turning out high-quality work like *From Beyond*, the rest of us should be just as happy that he is a part of that group as well. □

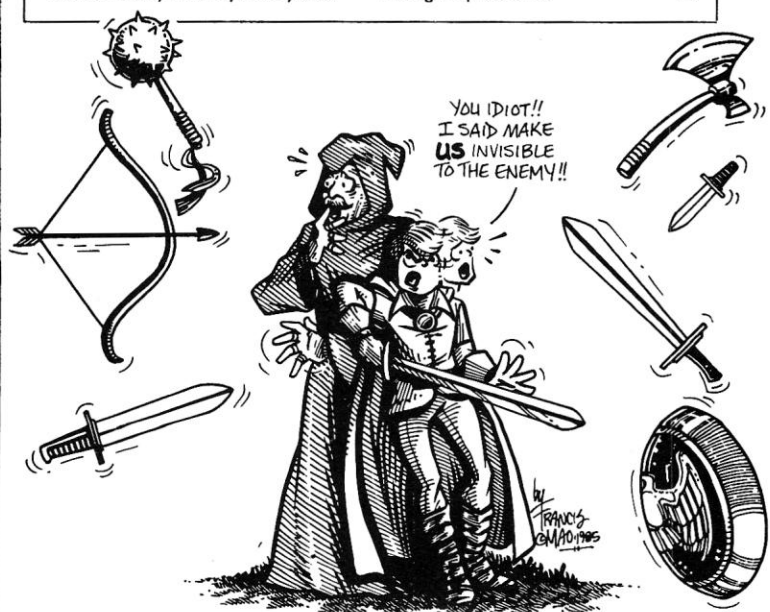
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(ig-zot'ik), adj. foreign, hence, having the charm or fascination of the unfamiliar; strangely beautiful, enticing, etc.



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Tales of OLD PAVIS

Featuring GRISELDA in “GOOD ADVICE”

By Oliver Dickinson
Illustrated by Walter Moore

THERE MAY be those who are so sick of hearing about Griselda that they are tempted to visit Pavis for the express purpose of making an end of her. The following monologue, overheard in one of Pavis's toughest bars, might be of interest to them.

"So, my friends, you figure on maybe going after Griselda? Tch, tch, tch. I can certainly understand that. People, they go around, and they do all right, and they make good moves, and all of a sudden, blooey! They flip.

"What you have to understand, my friends, is that this is a very serious proposition here. Dragons and giants and vampires, maybe you will concede that these are serious? Well, there you have it. Griselda is definitely not for amateurs. You heard how she made out, hunting up the guys involved in her brother's decease? That doesn't scare you, you figure to do better? Look, the word is all over town. The Fangs won't touch her; the Trolls won't touch her. You know something they don't?

"So, well, of course, you can get lucky. No matter, she's harder to kill than a Walktapus, you, someone up there loves you. You think that's the end of it? Lemme tell you, my friends, when you collect that reward you'd better hit the ground running. Whole lot of people gonna start taking an interest in you.

"First off, there's Wolfhead, always assuming you haven't encountered him already, because he and Griselda are

generally like that, and they are reported to be hiding out together. He thinks very highly of Griselda: she stubs her toe, he'll be out looking, who left the stone there? And he is one very hard guy, and has some friends who are nearly as hard—like Snakefang, down to Rowdy Djoh Lo's; he has some time for Griselda himself.

"So all right, you're some kind of wonder heroes, you can handle Wolfhead and them. It doesn't end there. Next, there's her relatives. You heard how they started turning up after her dumb brother went under? They'll be here in spades for Griselda. And another thing. The straight female toughies around here, initiates and Rune lords and such, they can't admit to approving of Griselda, not after she took their cults for a couple of K apiece, but that aint't much, for god's sake, and some of them got a sense of humour. They won't lift a finger to help her, but plenty of them have her interests at heart, and you'd better believe it! Nothing pleases them better, see her make some big tough man walk very wide around her. They, I guess they feels it adds to the general respect for the female sex around Pavis, and, you listen to them, there's always scope for that. Haw. haw. Of

course, you want, you can believe none of them are gonna get excited, she gets bumped; you can believe anything you like.

"You aren't discouraged yet, I can add some more. The word is that Griselda knows some very important Trolls here and there; I'd purely hate to find out it's true. Even that Churchak and his gang of trollkin in Riverside, who are friends of hers, could give you plenty of trouble. And they say Griselda's liked by some clan of sables, even pally with the Queen; could be exciting, having a whole bunch of nomads on your tail. There's even a whisper, the Governor has some interest in her welfare. Oh, you'll get your reward all right, but he might start into ruminating about you.

"Sure enough, Griselda's got enemies. Maybe, they'll buy you drinks if you succeed; I wouldn't count on anything more than that. You want to go look for trouble, that's all right with me. It's a free city, or so the Governor keeps saying. Me, I'd find a less lively way to spend the rest of my life."

For the interested, Griselda was first presented to the public in White Dwarf issues 29-30; her relatives figure largely in a story in issue 51; her connection with the Trolls is further explained in issue 41; and stories concerning involvements with Sweet-Talking Shamus and Hanufa (who first appear in "The Great Chart Caper," published in Pavis) appear in issues 42 and 43. □

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make public announcements. Private messages to other lords may be transmitted directly to the player or through the Campaign Master. The identity of the player playing the role of the Shogun, however, is kept secret and all messages to him will have to be transmitted through the Campaign Master.

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The Mountain Environment by J. Andrew Keith. Travel and survival in rugged terrain. New rule systems simulate mountaineering and other activities and hazards found on mountainous terrain. Explains the use of mountaineering equipment and includes a guide for the construction of specific mountain situations: special events, encounters, and adventures. (GL-1986 48pp \$5.95)

Ascent To Anekthor by J. Andrew Keith. Lady Sandra Lockhart was rich, famous . . . and bored. A thrill-seeker and daredevil, she was always on the lookout for new horizons to conquer. Now she has set her sights on the triple peaks of Anekthor where an old love and an old hatred await Lady Sandra's challenge. Makes use of rules and information presented in *The Mountain Environment*. (GL-1987 56pp \$5.95)

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The Desert Environment by William H. Keith, Jr. Travel and survival in a desert climate. New rule systems simulate all aspects of desert survival, explains the use of desert equipment, and gives guidelines for setting up specific desert situations: special events, encounters, and adventures. (GL-1988 56pp \$6.95)

Duneraiders by William H. Keith, Jr. Riches, danger, and mystery lie within the arid wastes of Tash-rakaar, a desert world peopled by the savage and enigmatic Duneraiders. The adventurers soon learn that desert nomads and desert heat aren't the only enemies they face. Makes use of rules and information presented in *The Desert Environment*. (GL-1989 64pp \$6.95)

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A Pilot's Guide to the Drexilthar Subsector by J. Andrew Keith. From the navigational computer files of the Imperium comes a detailed explanation of a subsector on Reaver's Deep, in the Imperial frontiers. Presents background information on the Deep and on the Drexilthar subsector (setting for the adventures *The Drenslaar Quest* and *Duneraiders*). Each world in the subsector is explored to sufficient depths to be the setting for one or more adventures. (GL-2980 48pp \$5.95)

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Lee's Guide to Interstellar Adventure: Volume 1 by Gregory P. Lee. The journals of the noted galactic wanderer Aramais P. Lee have now been converted into a referee's aid. *Lee's Guide* provides complete planetary specifications and detailed plot outlines for 10 worlds in which the situations taking place on the planet form the basis for a varied range of adventure opportunities, suitable for both small parties and large groups. (GL-1980 48pp \$5.95)

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GAMES IN PRINT

Continued from page 43

of businesses and professions are noted; in all, about 450 buildings and four major complexes have been populated and discussed."

Grimtooth's Traps Fore (Task Force, 80pp, \$9.95) edited by Elizabeth T. Danforth and Michael A. Stackpole. "An anthology of agonies compiled with fiendish glee and tender care to accelerate the execrably lethargic extinction of the miserable creatures who, in their temeritous fits of egotism, have the audacity to style themselves Heroes."

Handbook of Traps and Tricks (Dragon Tree, 99pp booklet, \$9.95) edited by Ben Ezzell. Fifth printing.

The Delian Book of the Dead: An Adventurer's Compendium of The Worlds Beyond The Pale (Dragon Tree, 99pp booklet, \$9.95) by Ben R. Ezzell & Mary M. Ezzell. Examines departed spirits as player-characters, funeral rites, spirit magiks, the nature of the After Life and the Planes of the Abyss, and other matters of importance to the futures of the deceased.

The Dragon Tree Spell Book (Dragon Tree, 81pp booklet, \$7.50) edited by Ben Ezzell. Contains over 200 spells including two new types: Dragon Magick Spells and Zero Level Spells.

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Book Of Plots: Volume One (Dragon Tree, 31pp, \$7.50) by Mary Ezzell. Provides plot outlines for 30 dungeons.

Monster File Number One (Dragon Tree, 23pp, \$6) by Dana & Rhonda Schaefer. Forty-eight new monsters, illustrated. May be cut into "monster cards."

OTHER GAMES

Kings & Things: A Fantasy Board-game with Everything (West End, boxed, \$19.95) by Tom Wham with Doug Kaufman. A strategic game for 2-4 players each vying to grab the kingdom, build towers, keeps, castles, and citadels, and become the sole king. Contains a rulebook (16pp) with a pull-out quick reference section (4pp), 48 hex tiles, 351 counters, 8 plastic racks, and four 6-sided dice.

Jack The Ripper: The Mystery Game of the Whitechapel Murders of 1888 (Sleuth, boxed, \$20) by Tom Loback, et al. Third edition. For 2 players.

BattleTech: A Game of Armored Combat (FASA, boxed, \$20) by Jordan K. Weisman. Second edi-

tion of *Battledroids*. For 2 or more players. Contains a 40pp rulebook, two 22"x17" maps, 48 counters, 120 color unit insignias, and two dice.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine Game (Mayfair, boxed, \$17) by Darwin P. Bromley, Laird A. Brownlee. For 1-6 players. Comes with Basic Rules (4pp), Advanced Rules (8pp), 6 character cards, Casebook (32pp) containing 5 mysteries, New York Detectives' Guide (64pp booklet), Chamber of Commerce Guild to Bromlee Station (32pp booklet), 6 pawns, 24"x19" mounted two-sided map, and playaids.

Barbarossa: Game of the Russo-German War 1941-45 (TSR, boxed, \$30) by David James Ritchie. For 2 players. Corps level. Playing time: 4-25 hours. Comes with a 44"x33" map, 800 counters, 32pp rulebook, two 6-sided dice, and a counter tray.

Terrible Swift Sword: Battle of Gettysburg Game (TSR, boxed, \$35) by Richard Berg. Second edition. Includes rules (48pp), three 34"x22" maps, 2000 counters, two counter storage trays, and two 6-sided dice. For 2-6 players. Playing time 7-70 hours.

Sniper: Game of Man-to-Man Combat, 1941-90 (TSR, boxed, \$20) by Steve Winter. Second edition. Comes with rules (32pp), two 34"x22" two-sided maps, 600 counters, a sheet of vehicles, playaids, a counter tray, and two 6-sided dice. For 2 players. Playing time 1-4 hours.

The Emperor Returns: The Last Campaign (Clash Of Arms, boxed, \$24) by Kevin Zucker. For 2-3 players. The Waterloo Campaign, June 9 thru July 3, 1815, in two miles per hex and one day per turn scale. Contains 240 counters, a 34"x22" map, Standard Rules (20pp), Special Rules (24pp), playaids, and a 6-sided die.

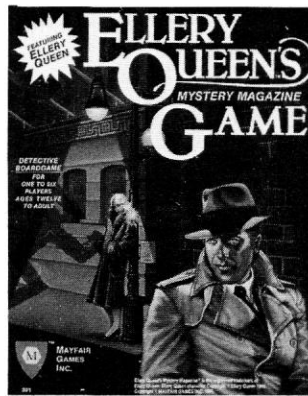
Mike Farrell Presents the Broadway Game (TSR, boxed, \$22) by Ernie Parmentier. For 2 or more players. "Find Fame and Fortune on the Great White Way!" Each player plays the role of a producer engaged in show business finance.

FOR BATTLETECH

CityTech: The BattleTech Game of Urban Combat (FASA, boxed, \$20) by Jordan K. Weisman, et al. For 2 or more players. Contains a 48pp rulebook, 256 counters, two 22"x17" maps, and two dice.

FOR STAR FIRE

The Gorm-Khanate War (Task Force, folder, \$7.95) by David M. Weber. Requires both the boxed set and *New Empires*. "Invasion! A new race invades to challenge Orion supremacy!" Included are



Rules of Play (40pp), 108 counters, The Khanate of Orion Racial Booklet (24pp), and The Empire of Gormus Racial Booklet (16pp). Includes two campaigns, one of which is made up of 14 scenarios.

GAMEBOOKS

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Adventure 9: The Sorcerer's Crown (TSR, 190pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Morris Simon. Volume 2 in the Kingdom of Sorcery trilogy. "... continuing Carr Delling's quest for his magical heritage as his arch-rival Arno's corrupt paladins spread their evil influence across the land."

Adventure 10: Lords Of Doom (TSR, 190pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Douglas Niles. A DragonLance adventure. "... you, the elf Gilthanas, must somehow seek out the eggs of the good dragon so the powerful creatures will be free to combat the wicked Queen of Darkness herself!"

CAR WARS

1: Battle Road (TSR, 189pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Steve Jackson. You and your luxury-sized combat car have been hired for \$100,000 in gold to go to Oklahoma and rescue the daughter of the President of Louisiana.

2: Fuel's Gold (TSR, 191pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Steve Jackson. An easy delivery job to a truck stop outside Boston turns into a battle against anarchists and biker-gang members.

ENDLESS QUEST

Book 33: Knight Of Illusion (TSR, 159pp pocketbook, \$2.25) by Mary Kirchoff. Based on *Dungeons & Dragons*. "Treachery is afoot in the land, and your mother and father have been kidnapped by the traitors to keep them quiet. Somehow you, Rolif, son of the king's cavalier, must fight your way past the nightmare illusions that confront you if you are to save the kingdom!"

Book 34: Claw of the Dragon (TSR, 159pp pocketbook, \$2.25)

by Bruce Algozin. Based on *Dungeons & Dragons*. "No one knows why the fearsome dragons are launching nightly raids on your helpless village—no one, that is, until you witness a battle to the death between two of the awesome creatures and discover the secret that will either save—or doom!—your home town!"

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

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2: Rocket's Red Glare (TSR, 190pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Kate Novak. "You are Captain America, defender of liberty, confronting one of your most deadly adversaries, as you try to keep your country from destruction."

1 ON 1

Warlords (TSR, two 160pp booklets, \$5.95) by David "Zeb" Cook. Based on *AD&D Oriental Adventures*. "One of you will take the part of Prince Matabei, dispossessed of his kingdom by his uncle, Lord Kenshin, who will be played by the other player."

MAGAZINES

Chroniques D'Outre-Monde 1 (Les Tentacules Associes, 68pp, 28 francs). A new monthly French role-playing game magazine featuring adult art and comics. Includes articles on *Call of Cthulhu*, *Judge Dredd*, and *AD&D*.

Scavenger's Newsletter 34 (12pp booklet, 70 cents) edited by Janet Fox. "A marketing co-operative for the sf/fantasy/horror writer or artist with an interest in the small press."

Gamers Alliance Report (H.M. Levy, 12pp) edited by H.M. Levy. News and reviews of general board and computer games. Quarterly.

NOVELS

FANTASY

DragonLance Legends Volume 3: Test of the Twins (TSR, 343pp pocketbook, \$3.95) by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. Conclusion of the epic that began with the *DragonLance Chronicles*.

MYSTERY

Back in the Real World (Fawcett, 231pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Marvin Albert. A Stone Angel novel. Pete Sawyer finds two dead bodies at his friend's otherwise vacant home—one of a rival private eye and the other of a gorgeous fashion designer.

White Meat (Fawcett, 213pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Peter Corris. P.I. Cliff Hardy of Australia makes for seedy La Perouse to search for the missing beautiful, spoiled daughter of a very rich bookie.

The Marvelous Boy (Fawcett, 215pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Peter Corris. Cliff Hardy is hired to find a missing grandson whose only lead came two years earlier from an aging drunk.

New, Improved Murder (Ballantine, 182pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Edward Gorman. A Jack Dwyer mystery. An ex-cop turned actor returns to investigate a case in which his ex-girlfriend is accused of murdering her present lover, one of the hottest young advertising execs in town.

The Fourth Stage of Gainsborough Brown (Ballantine, 208pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Clarissa Watson. Socialite and painter Persis Willum inquires into the mysterious goings-on following the drowning death of a critically-acclaimed artist.

Killing Orders (Ballantine, 277pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Sara Paretsky. "V.I. Warshawski, Chicago's unbeatable female private eye, takes on friars and financiers to bust open a sinister case."

Vida (Ballantine, 183pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by Delacorta. The fifth in the series featuring Gorodish and Alba, the Parisian pair from *Diva*. This book finds them in L.A. Translated from the French.

Follow The Sharks (Ballantine, 214pp pocketbook, \$2.95) by William G. Tapply. Ten-year-old E.J. Donagan is kidnaped while on his paper route one Saturday morning. His mother contacts Brady Coyne, her wealthy father's attorney and E.J.'s surrogate father since her divorce.

Midtown South (Fawcett, 295pp pocketbook, \$3.50) by Christopher Newman. Two New York cops take on a case involving brutal, terrifying murders of Times Square prostitutes who bear an uncanny resemblance to one another.

SCIENCE FICTION

Amazing Stories: Visions of Other Worlds (TSR, 253pp booklet, \$7.95) edited by Martin H. Greenberg. A collection of stories from six decades of *Amazing Stories* including those by Harlan Ellison, Arthur C. Clarke, Piers Anthony, Robert Bloch, Jack Vance, Poul Anderson, etc.

COMIC BOOKS

Flesh & Bones (Upshot, 32pp, \$2) by Jan Strnad & Dennis Fujitake. Part 1 of a 4-part color science-fiction series featuring Dalgoda.

Particle Dreams 1 (Fantagraphics, 32pp, \$2.25) by Matt Howarth. Recommended for mature readers. Black & white science fiction.

Children of the Night Tide (Fantagraphics, 55pp, \$4.95) by Jan Strnad, et al. Two black & white tales of fantasy: "Sea Dragon" and "Goblin Child."

Ninja 1 (Eternity, 32pp, \$1.80) by C.J. Henderson, et al. "When one of the Suiciders gets captured

by the Russians, Frank (Code-Name SARGE) and Kate (Code-Name NINJA) go in to rescue him!" Black & white.

EarthLore: The Reign of the Dragon Lord 1 (Eternity, 32pp, \$1.80) by C.J. Henderson and Kevin Farrell. "Lanhar, half human, half reptilian Gargor, fights for humanity in a clash of swords and mystic forces." Black & white.

The Mighty Mites 1 (Eternity, 32pp, \$1.80) by John Nubbin, et al. "After an absence of thirty years (Honest!) it's the return of the world famous Mighty Mites. Gee ain't it A-mazing?!" Black & white.



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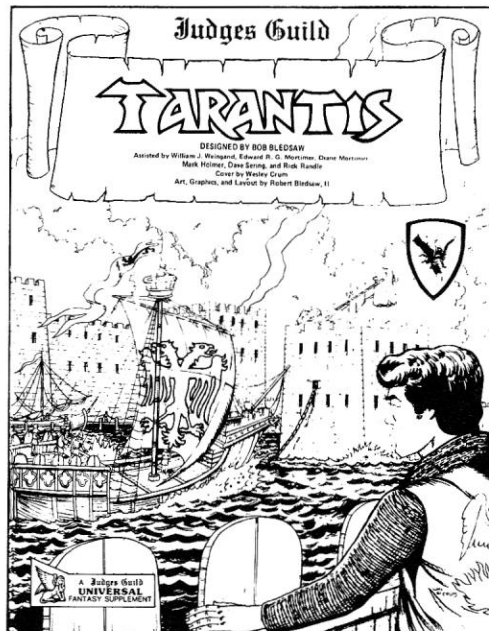
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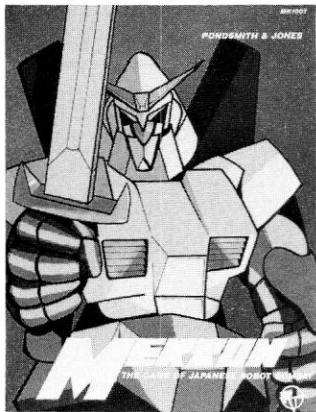
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New Games In Print

New products of general and ungeneral interest.

Publishers are encouraged to send samples of their latest releases for announcement in this column.



ROLE-PLAYING

Call Of Cthulhu: Fantasy Role-Playing in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft (Chaosium, 191pp hardcover, \$24.95) by Sandy Petersen. Third edition.

Harnmaster (Columbia, 144pp+playaids, \$19.95) by N. Robin Crossby. Covers character generation, skills, combat, religion, magic, price lists, campaigning, encounters, bestiary, treasure, etc.

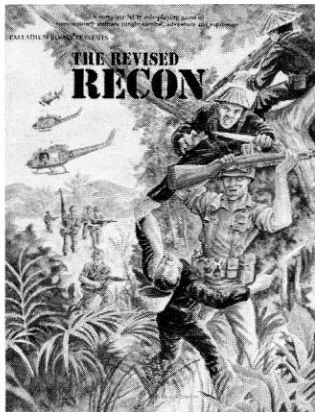
Hidden Kingdom: A Fantasy-Adventure Game (New Rules, slipcased binder, \$30) by Jon McClenahan. Set in the age of King Arthur, combines fantasy role-playing, historical simulation, and strategic conflict. Comes with 337 loose-leaf pages, 9 polyhedral dice, two 18"x26" maps, a basic charts folder, and character sheets.

Mekton: The Game of Japanese Robot Combat (R. Talsorian, 100pp+playaids, \$14) by Ponds-Smith & Jones. Includes rules on construction, combat, role-playing, history & background, and a scenario.

The Revised RECON (Palladium, 150pp, \$14.95) by Erick Wujcik. "A complete new role-playing game of contemporary military jungle combat, adventure and espionage."

FOR THE ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GAME

Dungeoneer's Survival Guide (TSR, 128pp hardcover, \$15) by Douglas Niles. "For beginners, advanced players, and DMs, this book opens up grand new vistas in the realms of the underdark, that little-known region of dungeons and caverns far beneath the sunlit world of everyday existence. The worlds of subterranean adventure await!"



DL13: Dragons Of Truth (TSR, 40pp+map, \$8) by Tracy Hickman. For character levels 10-13. Continuing the Final Book of the DragonLance Saga.

DL14: Dragons Of Triumph (TSR, 40pp+32pp+24pp+map, \$10) by Douglas Niles. For character levels 10-14. The Final Adventure in the DragonLance Saga.

I9: Day Of Al'Akbar (TSR, 40pp+map, \$8) by Allen Hammack. For 6-8 characters of levels 8-10. "A deadly plague sweeps your land. The holy men say that if only they had the Talisman, they could create cures for this dread disease. Many adventurers have tried and failed to find the Cup and Talisman. Now it is your turn. Find these treasures, and save your people!"

GDQ 1-7: Queen of the Spiders (TSR, 128pp+24pp booklet, \$15) by Gary Gyax. Campaign adventure for character levels 8-14. Contains revised material that originally appeared in modules G1-G3, D1-D3, and Q1, as well as new material for further adventures. "The adventure began in the *Temple of Elemental Evil*, and continued with *Scourge of the Slavelords*. It now comes to a climax as the dark forces begin to move against all mankind."

REF3: The Book Of Lairs (TSR, 96pp, \$12) by James M. Ward and Mike Breault. Contains over sixty fully-developed mini-adventures which can be inserted into ongoing campaigns at any time. Presents familiar monsters in unique settings.

OA2: Night of the Seven Swords (TSR, 48pp, \$8) by Jon Pickens, et al. "The plan is laid before you. You are to leave immediately under secrecy for the castle of the Ito clan, also known as the Seven

Swords clan. Find the relics, and return them to the renowned inn Doi no Fugu. Extreme caution is needed here, for your warlord's rival must not hear of this!"

I10: Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill (TSR, 48pp+map+playaids, \$8) by Tracy and Laura Hickman. For 4-6 characters of levels 8-10. Sequel to *I6: Ravenloft* which can be run independently. "The object of the game is to find and destroy the vampire Strahd and to rescue those who have fallen under the control of evil."

Wilderness Survival Guide (TSR, 128pp hardcover, \$15) by Kim Mohan. "This all-new book of rules, for players and Dungeon Masters, covers the great outdoors from frozen wastes to tropical forests. Topics covered include the effects of the wilderness on characters, how to design a campaign map, a system for weather, and more!"

FOR THE ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GAME (NOT APPROVED BY TSR)

Pinnacle (Mayfair, 32pp, \$7) by Dan Greenberg. For 4-6 characters of levels 4-5. "A gentleman's adventuring society has organized a tournament open to adventurers everywhere. Their challenge: To scale the Pinnacle, the towering, unsurmountable mountain of legend."

Amazon Mutual Wants You! Volume One (Dragon Tree, 29pp, \$6) by Ben Ezzell, et al. Four short, low-level adventures. Revised second edition.

Desert Plots: Amazon Mutual 2 (Dragon Tree, 33pp, \$7.50) by Mary Ezzell. Two complete dungeons, 5 plot outlines, 13 new monsters, 18 new magic items, 18 new traps and tricks.

Monstrum 1 (Role-Players, 100pp, \$5) by Graves-Felder-Boudoin. Descriptions of 100 monsters.

Dragons (Role-Players, 100pp, \$5) by Dave Graves. Descriptions of 50 dragons, ranging from the Air Dragon to the Zen Dragon.

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Spawn Of Azathoth: Herald of the End of Time (Chaosium, boxed, \$19.95) by Keith Herber. Consists of *From Beyond the Grave* (32pp) containing the Keeper introduction and the first

adventure, *The Spawn Approach* (64pp) containing six other adventures, and *The Azathoth Papers* (32pp) consisting of more than 60 player handouts.

The Vanishing Conjuror/The Statue of the Sorcerer (Games Workshop, 60pp+handouts, \$10.95) by Mike Lewis, et al. Back-to-back scenario pack, one taking place in London and the other in San Francisco.

FOR CHAMPIONS

Supplement Number 1: Gadgets! (Hero, 40pp, \$8) by Andrew M. Robinson. "Includes personal weapons, protective gear, movement aids, squad-level weapons and gear, and security equipment!"

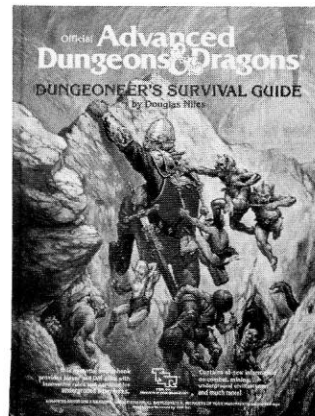
FOR CHAMPIONS & DANGER INTERNATIONAL

Super-Agents (Hero, 104pp, \$12) by Aaron Allston. Covers super-agent character creation, skills, equipment, combat, vehicles, weapons, gadgets, campaigning, agencies, rank, decorations, scenarios, etc.

FOR DC HEROES

Wheel Of Destruction (Mayfair, 32pp, \$6) by Matthew J. Costello. A Batman solo module to rescue the Police Commissioner who has been kidnaped by the Joker.

Legion of Super-Heroes Volume I (Mayfair, 96pp, \$10) by Paul Levitz and Steve Crow. "Contained in this reference are in-depth, up-to-date articles on all 37 Legionnaires past and present. Other articles explain the Legionnaires' personal equipment, discuss their deadliest foes and staunchest allies, and give concise history of the group from its beginnings to the latest issue on the stands today!"



King Of Crime (Mayfair, 32pp, \$7) by Jeff O'Hare. For 4-6 characters of 250-500 Hero Points. "The Secret Society of Super-Villains has taken over Central City and has openings for new members . . . It's up to the players' heroes to follow the clues to where the next crime will occur—and stop it." Replayable: includes 6 crimes from which the game-master chooses 3.

Don't Ask (Mayfair, 40pp, \$7) by Scott Jenkins. For 4-6 characters of 500-1000 Hero Points. "Ambush Bug foils Lex Luthor's efforts to take control of time. He then sets out to 'correct' the DC Universe. The results are expectably chaotic, but far from predictable. What happens? Don't Ask!"

An Element of Danger (Mayfair, 32pp, \$7) by Steve Perrin. For Firestorm and 2-6 characters of 500-1000 Hero Points. "Matter Master and Mr. Element (a.k.a. Dr. Alchemy) have escaped from prison, and they have a plan. If they can locate the Philosopher's Stone and combine its powers with those of the Mentachem Wand, they can produce a mega-weapon mighty enough to conquer the world."

Pawns Of Time (Mayfair, 32pp, \$7) by Steve Crow & Chris Mortika. For 5-7 characters of 1000-2000 Hero Points. First of four Legion of Super-Heroes adventures. "Time Trapper has recovered 'dead' Legionnaires out of time and has brainwashed them to assist him in gaining control of the time-space continuum. Six current Legionnaires are summoned to track down the source of the trouble."

FOR DOCTOR WHO

The Cybermen (FASA, 48pp+16pp, \$11) by Ray Winninger. "Cybermen have been known to appear anytime and anywhere. Many CIA teams have been lost to these mechanical monsters—like humans, Gallifreyans make excellent Cybermen."

FOR THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GAME

X11: Saga of the Shadow Lord (TSR, 64pp, \$10) by Stephen Bourne. Expert Game Adventure for character levels 5-9. "You must evade the Shadow Lord's army, penetrate his fortress, recover the *Elvenstar*, and foil his heinous plan!"

DA1: Adventures In Blackmoor (TSR, 64pp, \$10) by Dave L. Arneson and David J. Ritchie. Expert Game Adventure for 5-8 characters of levels 10-14. First in a series of adventures taking place in a revision of the first campaign setting ever devised for use in a fantasy role-playing campaign.

Takes place 3000 years before other *D&D* material.

Set 5: Immortal Rules (TSR, boxed, \$15) by Frank Mentzer. Comes with a Players' Guide (32pp) and a DM's Guide (52pp). Features rules for creating new characters and their form, abilities, powers, and home plane. Also includes rules for creating new artifacts.

IM1: The Immortal Storm (TSR, 40pp, \$8) by Frank Mentzer. Immortal Game Adventure. "This first Immortal adventure pits your party against the multiverse in a desperate struggle to find the essence of life. This adventure is nothing like you've ever played before."

AC9: Creature Catalog (TSR, 96pp, \$12) compiled by Jim Bambra, et al. "Are you ready to face the horror of the Hivebrood, the gruesome Geonid or the dread Dusanu? These and many other baleful beasts lurk within the pages of this manual, waiting to challenge even the mightiest adventurers!"

FOR GAMMA WORLD

GW6: Alpha Factor (TSR, 48pp+map, \$8) by Kim Eastland. For beginning and intermediate players. "Your elite group of adventurers must find Mindkeep and learn its secret. Others have tried—and failed. The surrounding area is filled with mutations that are strange even for Gamma World. Could that be a clue as to Mindkeep's purpose? Or is it mere coincidence?"

FOR GHOSTBUSTERS

Hot Rods of the Gods (West End, 48pp, \$7.95) by Daniel Greenberg. "They're Back . . . and They Wanna Race!" For 2-6 players. "Juvenile delinquents from Outer Space! Green, four-armed, lobster-eyed aliens in leather jackets, bobby socks, and saddle shoes invade the Earth!"

FOR HARN

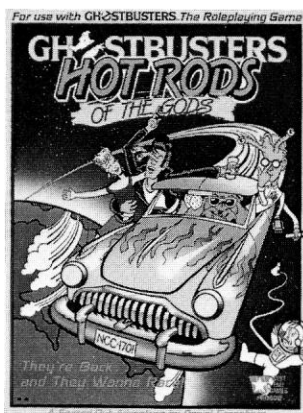
Evael: Kingdom of the Elves (Columbia, 44pp, \$10) by John Frazer, et al. Reprint of *Encyclopaedia Harnica 12*.

FOR THE HERO SYSTEM

Bestiary (Hero, 56pp, \$8) by Michael J. Susko Jr. Covers animal creation, real animals, prehistoric animals, mythical animals, movie monsters, and using the animals.

FOR MARVEL SUPER HEROES

MH-9: Gates of What If? (TSR, 40pp+map, \$8) by Roger Moore. "You have passed through the Gates of What If—into a divergent universe, where things are almost



the same, with a few changes. Victor Von Doom has plans—and you're invited."

Advanced Set (TSR, boxed, \$15) by Jeff Grubb. "New Heroes! New Powers! A New Character Creation System! New Combat Options! An Expanded Universal Table! More to build, fight, buy, and take apart!" Comes with Players' Book (96pp), Judge's Book (64pp), a 22½"x33" two-sided map, over 40 Character Cards, 80 Stand-Up Adventure Counters, and two 10-sided dice.

MA1: Children of the Atom: Advanced Game Official Guidebook to Mutants (TSR, 96pp+map, \$12) by Kim Eastland. "From Acanti to Wolverine, from the Alliance of Evil to the X-Men, every significant mutant and mutant group known is described in detail. A bonus short adventure, *Dreamchild*, is also included."

FOR MEKTON

Roadstriker (R. Talsorian, 36pp, \$8) by Pondsmith & Quintanar. Covers transformable vehicle robots including cars, armorbikes, astrofighters, hydrofoils, tanks, walkers, and other high tech combat vehicles.

FOR MIDDLE-EARTH

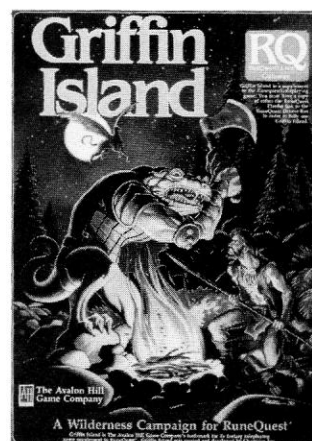
Phantom of the Northern Marches (ICE, 32pp, \$6) by Graham Staplehurst. Three low- to mid-level adventures.

Trolls of the Misty Mountains (ICE, 32pp, \$7) by John and Mike Cresswell. Three low- to mid-level adventures.

FOR PARANOIA

Orcbusters (West End, 32pp, \$6.95) by Ken Rolston. Dungeon crawl for 2-6 clones.

HIL Sector Blues (West End, 64pp, \$9.95) by Ken Rolston. Campaign pack. ". . . you get a fantastic compendium of facts, rumors, innuendos, and outright lies about HIL Sector. You also get a new transportation system, the latest in police equipment from R&D, and vatloads of useful



information on the ever-popular Internal Security." For 2-6 players.

FOR RUNEQUEST

Griffin Island (Avalon Hill, boxed, \$16) by Rudy Kraft, et al. A Gateway wilderness campaign based on *Griffin Mountain*. Comes with a 32"x22" map, Player Handouts (32pp), Game-master Book (32pp), and Scenario Book (52pp).

FOR SPACE MASTER

Lost Telepaths: The Secret of House Kashmere (ICE, 64pp, \$12) by Terry Kevin Amthor. A campaign module geopolitically analyzing an area of space populated by humans in a time period set a little over 9000 years in our future.

FOR STAR TREK

Star Trek IV Sourcebook Update (FASA, 80pp, \$12) by William A. Barton, et al. Includes illustrations and descriptions of 15 new aliens as well as notes on their civilization and history.

FOR SUPER SQUADRON

Super Science (Adventure Simulations, 56pp+map, \$?) by Joseph Italiano. Covers aliens, star systems, weapons & armor, skills, vehicle design, etc.

FOR TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Adventures! (Palladium, 48pp, \$6.95) by Erick Wujcik. Includes 5 adventures and a comic strip.

FOR ANY SYSTEM

Thieves' World Companion: Sanctuary Roleplaying Under the Bays (Chaosium, 48pp+map, \$7.95) by Anders Swenson, et al. Contains additional material from the Thieves' World anthology series vols. 3-6 and includes stats for *Standard RuneQuest* and *Middle-Earth/Rolmaster*.

Carse: A Fully-Populated and Indexed City (Chaosium, 56pp+map, \$8.95) by Stephen Abrams, et al. "Nearly one hundred kinds

Continued on page 38

FILM REVIEWS

THE NAME OF THE ROSE
THE FLY
FROM BEYOND

Reviewed by John Nubbin

THE NAME OF THE ROSE

Producer Bernd Eichinger
Director Jean-Jacques Annaud
Screenplay Andrew Birkin/
Gerard Brach/Howard
Franklin/Alain Godard
Music James Horner
Photography Tonino Delli Colli,
A.I.C.

CAST

William of Baskerville Sean
Connery
Bernardo Gui F. Murray
Abraham
Adso of Melk Christian Slater

THE YEAR is 1327. As representatives of the Franciscan order and delegates of the Papacy gather at a wealthy Italian abbey for a conference that will determine the future of the Church, their mission is suddenly overshadowed by a growing mystery, one that is spoken of only in whispers: five bizarre murders which are somehow linked to the secrets of the Abbey's celebrated library.

Solving the mystery becomes the problem of Sean Connery's William of Baskerville. Together with his young aide, the pair set about solving the puzzle, trying to piece together all the answers before William's old antagonist, inquisitor Bernardo Gui (F.

Murray Abraham) can add them to his list of those saved through torture and the stake.

Like many a movie based on a good book, the film doesn't match the novel on some levels, but unlike many adapting failures, it picks up nicely on others. It is a perfect vehicle for Connery (who fills William's shoes quite snugly) delivering the monk's humorous mysterious, and intelligent observations with his usual deceptive ease. Abraham, on the other hand, while doing a fine job, seems wasted in a part too small for him. Of course, to see a major talent sink everything he has into a relatively lesser role should be a lesson to those gamers who can brew up a vicious sulk whenever their characters aren't on the board as much as they would like.

The Name of the Rose is like a lot of Grade B campaigns: highly predictable and yet great fun to be involved in due to its logic, pacing, and understanding of the human condition. As director Annaud explained:

"I was convinced the book was written for only one person to direct and that person was me. One of my fascinations as a kid was medieval churches; my background is in Latin and Greek. *The Name of the Rose* is a terrific thriller, with a difference, and it's the difference that makes it so

fascinating. A good story should take you into another world, and this one does.

"The challenge was to make a two-hour film out of a 500-page book, with the complexity of having to entertain a mass audience, but also having to please an intelligent audience. I've always had the ambition to get the two together. This may be the only opportunity in my life to have both elements of what I think a film should contain: an entertainment and something else, something 'plus.'

"When I see a film, I love it when I'm entertained, when I care for the actors, when I share their emotions, when I'm scared, when I'm in love, but also if I learn a little something, if I have the feeling that I haven't seen something before, and that's what *The Name of the Rose* has."

Of course, Annaud is blowing his own horn here, but he is blowing it fairly, not really giving the film any more credit than it deserves. He has managed to cram enough of the novel and its excellent flavor into his film to be allowed a little boasting. *Name* is something a bit different, entertaining with a little extra, and worth anyone's time. And, if you missed it, cheer up, practically everyone missed *Highlander*, and it's been out on tape for months now. Your chance will come.

THE FLY

Producer Stuart Cornfeld
Director David Cronenberg
Screenplay C.E. Pogue &
David Cronenberg
From the story by George
Langelaan
Music Howard Shore
Photography Mark Irwin, C.S.C.

CAST

Seth Brundle Jeff Goldblum
Veronica Quaife Geena Davis
Stathis Borans John Getz

JUST IN case anyone needs the information, *The Fly* is a remake of the 1958 low-budget/horror classic/cult favorite which starred Vincent Price and Al (David) Hedison, with a script by James Clavell (*Shogun*, *Tai-Pan*, *King Rat*, etc.) based on a George Langelaan short story. Hedison played a scientist who accidentally switches his head and hand with those of a housefly in a botched teleportation experiment. The movie was successful enough to generate two sequels,



Jeff Goldblum (shown here before his terrifying transformation) plays a scientist whose atoms are scrambled with those of a common housefly during an experiment in matter transmission, in *The Fly*, directed by David Cronenberg.

Copyright © 1986 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

Return of the Fly (1960) and *Curse of the Fly* (1964), neither of which did much to dazzle their audiences.

And now, a remake. Hollywood has been trying to replay some old science-fiction scenarios for a while now, mostly with little to no success. Movies like Carpenter's *The Thing* or Dino's *King Kong* have made little in the way of improvements over their predecessors. The contemporary version of *The Fly*, however, is a complete reconceptualization of the original, and a fairly brilliant one at that. When screenwriter C.E. Pogue approached Stuart Cornfeld with the idea of remaking *The Fly* in 1984, Cornfeld decided that while the premise of a man getting integrated with an insect was an interesting one, he didn't want to repeat the earlier head-switching storyline.

"It would have been just like the original one, bad melodrama and camp horror," says Cornfeld. "So, we decided it would be a lot more disturbing and nightmarish if it was done as a metamorphosis."

The Fly tells the story of a scientist whose genes and molecules become fused with those of



Brother William of Baskerville (Sean Connery) and his young novice Adso of Melk (Christian Slater) attempt to unravel a medieval mystery in *The Name of the Rose*, a spellbinding tale of death and intrigue set within the confines of a 14th century cloister.

Copyright © 1986 Neue Constantin Film Produktion GMBH

a common housefly, his DNA interwoven with that of the insect to the point where all he can do is watch helplessly as he is transformed step by step into a grotesque mutant—incredibly agile, superstrong, and driven to insanity by appetites he cannot control.

"*The Fly* is a horror movie," says Cornfeld. "It's about a man who is beginning to change and can exercise no control over that change. And it's all change from within. What is most disturbing in the movies that scare me is the concept of somebody changing from inside out. To me that's just a horrifying concept. It's nightmarish.

"I want the audience to be scared."

Needless to say, Cornfeld got his wish. *The Fly* scared just about everyone, even though, due to the memory of the first film, everyone knew what was going to happen. Everyone knew he was going to get turned into a human fly, everyone knew there was no cure coming, and everyone knew for a fact that at the end of the film that the scientist was going to die, and by the hand of the woman he loved. Period. Why even bother going, right?

Well, people went, and encouraged their friends to go, for one main reason. In all the remakes of science-fiction classics we've endured as a national audience so far, the creators have made the vain mistake of taking a true classic, a really great movie, and trying to turn it into something that would interest us even more. What this team did was to take a cheap, second-rate movie with a really great premise, and start over from scratch, doing the movie the way it should have been done in the first place. A good gamemaster doesn't rerun games where everything came together, where every throw of the dice helped to create a scenario of lasting power which people keeping talking about every time they get together—he replays the games where bad choices and wrong tosses ruined a game with great potential.

Choosing to remake *The Fly* and clean up its mistakes was more than a wise move. It may have been the first step in pointing up the problem Hollywood has been having with its 're-creations.' Maybe, just maybe, if some others can profit from this lesson, the next remake will be of *Planet of Prehistoric Women*, which could use all the help it could get, and not *Forbidden Planet*, which is all right just the way it is.

FROM BEYOND

Producer Brian Yuzna
 Director Stuart Gordon
 Screenplay Dennis Paoli
 Adapted from the story by H.P. Lovecraft by Brian Yuzna/
 Dennis Paoli/Stuart Gordon
 Music Richard Band
 Photography Mac Ahlberg

CAST

Dr. Crawford Tillinghast . . . Jeffrey Combs
Dr. Katherine McMichaels . . . Barbara Crampton
Dr. Edward Pretorius . . . Ted Sorel
Bubba Brownlee . . . Ken Foree
Dr. Roberta Block . . . Carolyn Purdy-Gordon

DIRECTOR STUART Gordon is at it again. In 1985, he terrified audiences and delighted the majority of H.P. Lovecraft's fans with his so-far unforgettable *Herbert West: Re-Animator*. It was a splashingly big hit. It garnered not only great reviews for Empire Pictures, but some of the highest praise ever to be lavished on a horror film.

"I got such a kick out of the reviews for *Re-Animator*," said Gordon, "but then it won awards at the Cannes Film Festival and at Sitges, Spain's Festival of Fantastic Film . . . and it became the first horror film ever screened at the London Film Festival. Funny how things work out."

Funny, indeed. *Re-Animator* did such big-bucks business, both at the box office, and in the home video field, that Gordon was immediately set to adapting another tasty chunk of Lovecraft, another of his lesser short stories, *From Beyond*.

Like *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond* tells the story of another crazed but brilliant scientist. This one, Edward Pretorius, invents a machine that stimulates one of man's long dormant sensory organs, the pineal gland, which allows him (and anyone else unlucky enough to be around his machine at the time) to see into another dimension which constantly surrounds us, but of which we are unaware. Unfortunately, the creatures in this *Beyond* are also able to perceive our world, and the consequences are horrifying.

The real triumph of *From Beyond* lies in the horror, or more specifically, in the interpretation of its horror. Dozens of horror films lately have given us plenty of horror—slashings and hackings and mutilations and dismemberments and eye cuttings and stab-bings and guttings and hookings and their resultant rivers of blood, blood, blood, and then more blood. The big screen has given us death and torture and the sick, twisted, psychotic maniacs need-

ed to dish it out by the bushelful. But rarely, repeat, rarely, have they bothered to delve into what all the flowing red rivers were all about. No one has really tried to look into the meaning of the horror they have been splashing across the screen, the psychological damage being done to the victims and the perpetrators dancing in the silver light on the wall. No one, that is, until now.

From Beyond is a perfect companion to *Re-Animator*. It is a Lovecraft film in the truest sense of this newest of movie catch phrases. It contains no absolute heroes or villains; its characters are merely protagonists, thrown together by fate, and dealt with just as harshly. The just do not triumph. Indeed, the picture works from the purely Lovecraftian viewpoint that the 'just' as a race do not even exist, and that humanity is merely another body of grubbing life which deserves everything that happens to it, good or bad.

On all levels, the film works at maximum. The soundtrack backs up every scene perfectly, never intruding or announcing itself over the action. The special effects are top-notch—twisted, frightening, imaginative, disgusting, and within the framework of the story, acceptable as reality. The movie's pacing and the logic of some moments within it are a tad rocky, but these are small things, and not even noticeable until one's second or third viewing of the film.

The acting is more than good, it is involving. Combs and Crampton as the doomed scientists are stunning in their portrayals of the opposing forces of logic and desire. One hopes on one hand that these remarkably able young performers will soon get the chance to work in the big-budget films their stylish talents deserve, and yet, on the other, one can wish their lights to go unnoticed at MGM and Warner for just a bit longer, in the hopes of seeing them cast by Gordon again in another piece of Lovecraftian nightmare. It would be a crime to see Combs typecast forever as Anthony Perkins, Jr., the way some are already doing, but hopefully, such will not be the case.

Also, for gamers, *From Beyond* is invaluable as a guide for behavior as both director and participant in any of the Lovecraft scenarios available at present. The helplessness, the madness, the world-numbing doom present in the film should be present in the characters of any Lovecraft game played. The author did not deal in the standard pulp heroes, and anyone approaching the playing field with the idea of kicking



Trapped in the Beyond, Dr. Edward Pretorius (Ted Sorel) shows off his new inhuman abilities. Copyright © 1986 Empire Entertainment Co., Inc.



Dr. Crawford Tillinghast (Jeffrey Combs) succumbs to the call from the Beyond. Copyright © 1986 Empire Entertainment Co., Inc.

monster-ass in a Doc Savage-type style is missing the point and embracing the wrong attitude entirely.

Lovecraft wrote of horrors beyond reckoning, mind-blasting, eldritch nightmares enough to shake the spirit and destroy the soul of any man. He wrote of

Continued on page 34

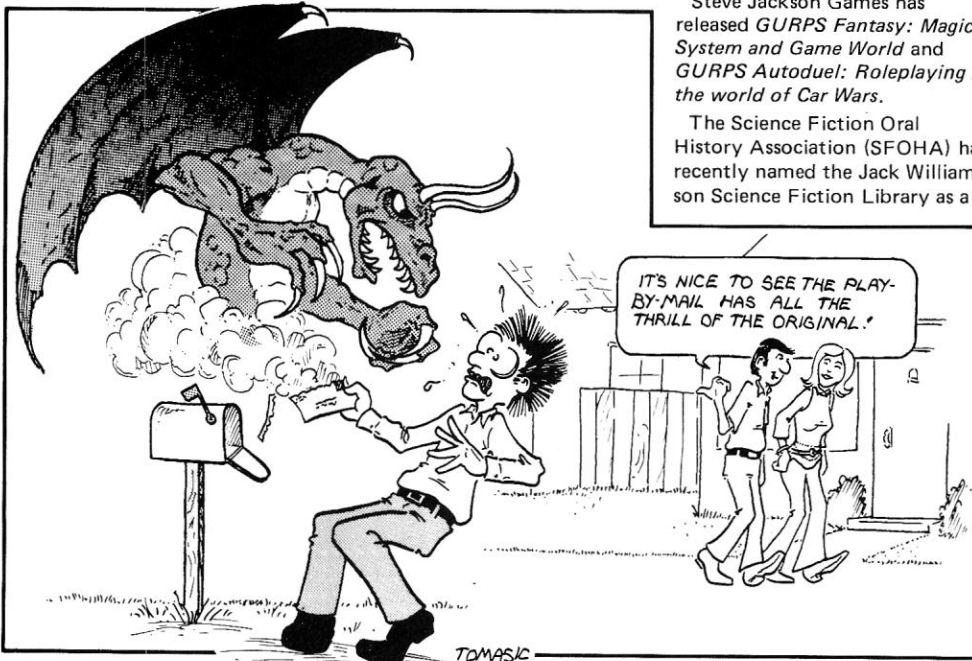
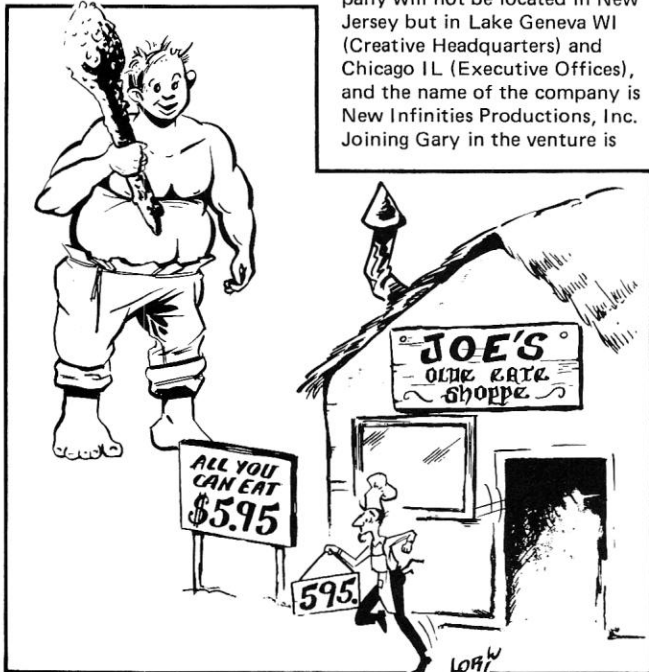


Dear Tadashi,

Congratulations! Sleuth Publications, Ltd., has acquired the lines of games published by Gamelords, Ltd., including the *Thieves' Guild* line, *Haven*, and the *Traveller* line.

When can we expect to see *Haven 3*, *Paths Of Sorcery* (magic and spells), and *Naked Sword* (fighter and warrior classes)?

A correction to my last report: GARY GYGAX's new game company will not be located in New Jersey but in Lake Geneva WI (Creative Headquarters) and Chicago IL (Executive Offices), and the name of the company is New Infinities Productions, Inc. Joining Gary in the venture is



FRANK MENTZER and former editor-in-chief of the *Dragon*, KIM MOHAN. The new company promises its first product no later than May 1987.

KEITH LAUMER's popular spacefaring rogue, *James Retief*, will appear in comic book form this spring, courtesy of science-fiction artist DENNIS FUJITAKE and Mad Dog Graphics. The first issue of the bi-monthly series is scheduled for release in March 1987.

Rumour reports that Chaosium is discontinuing its *Ringworld* line due to sluggish sales. The game itself will soon be off the store shelves and become a collector's item. Expected new releases from them in the first half of this year: *Shattered Isle*, an Eternal Champions module for *Stormbringer* or *Hawkmoon* set in future Ireland; *Elf War for Elfquest*; *Tournament Of Dreams* for *Pendragon*; and *Terror Australis*, a boxed module for *Call Of Cthulhu*.

TSR has lost a \$1,450,000 suit to one of its former employees who claimed that the game company breached its stock purchase option agreement. TSR reportedly will appeal.

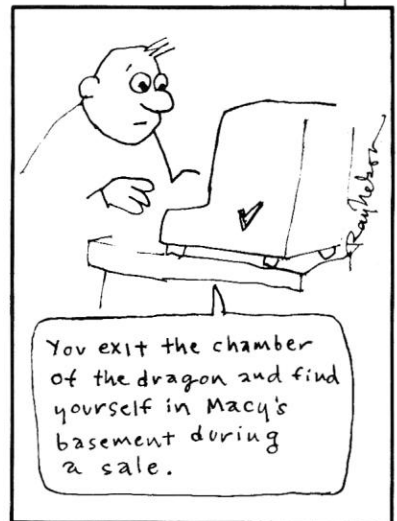
World Wide Wargamers is reportedly ready to sell. Interested are the people who run the *Grenadier* magazine, but the price may just be too high.

Rumour also reports that Sleuth is negotiating with M.A.R. BARKER to publish the third edition of his *Tekumel/Empire of the Petal Throne* role-playing game.

Among the many new computer game releases of Strategic Simulations, Inc., is *Roadwar 2000*, a science-fiction adventure set in the year 2000.

Steve Jackson Games has released *GURPS Fantasy: Magic System and Game World* and *GURPS Autoduel: Roleplaying in the world of Car Wars*.

The Science Fiction Oral History Association (SFOHA) has recently named the Jack Williamson Science Fiction Library as a



regional repository for its oral history archives. During the past decade, SFOHA has been actively involved in recording hundreds of interviews with science-fiction writers, editors, fans, and scholars, as well as in taping convention sessions and other programs. Cassette copies of the SFOHA tapes have been placed in the Williamson Library at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, available to interested persons according to fair use copyright guidelines.

Stardate is back. The former Star Trek gaming magazine has been acquired by Reluctant Publishing, Ltd., of Utica MI. They plan a monthly publication beginning in January 1987 with a much more diverse content.

Schubel & Son reports that the reducing of the overall turn cost for *Global Supremacy III* by 20% was so successful that they have dropped the cost of the computer-moderated *Arena Combat*, *Alien Conflict*, and *Computer Boxing* from \$3.50 to \$1 per turn.

Flying Buffalo Inc. and The Source Telecommunications Network have gotten together to provide a computer bulletin board for wargamers and role-players. Included is a convention list, a message board, a directory of gamers, on-line games (RICK LOOMIS is running a *Tunnels & Trolls* game), and press releases from various game companies.

The Warren Company of Lafayette IN reports they have sold more than 400,000 copies of *Murder She Wrote*, the game based on the popular TV show starring Angela Lansbury. Are we in the wrong business?

Love,

Gigi

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