

Fantasy World

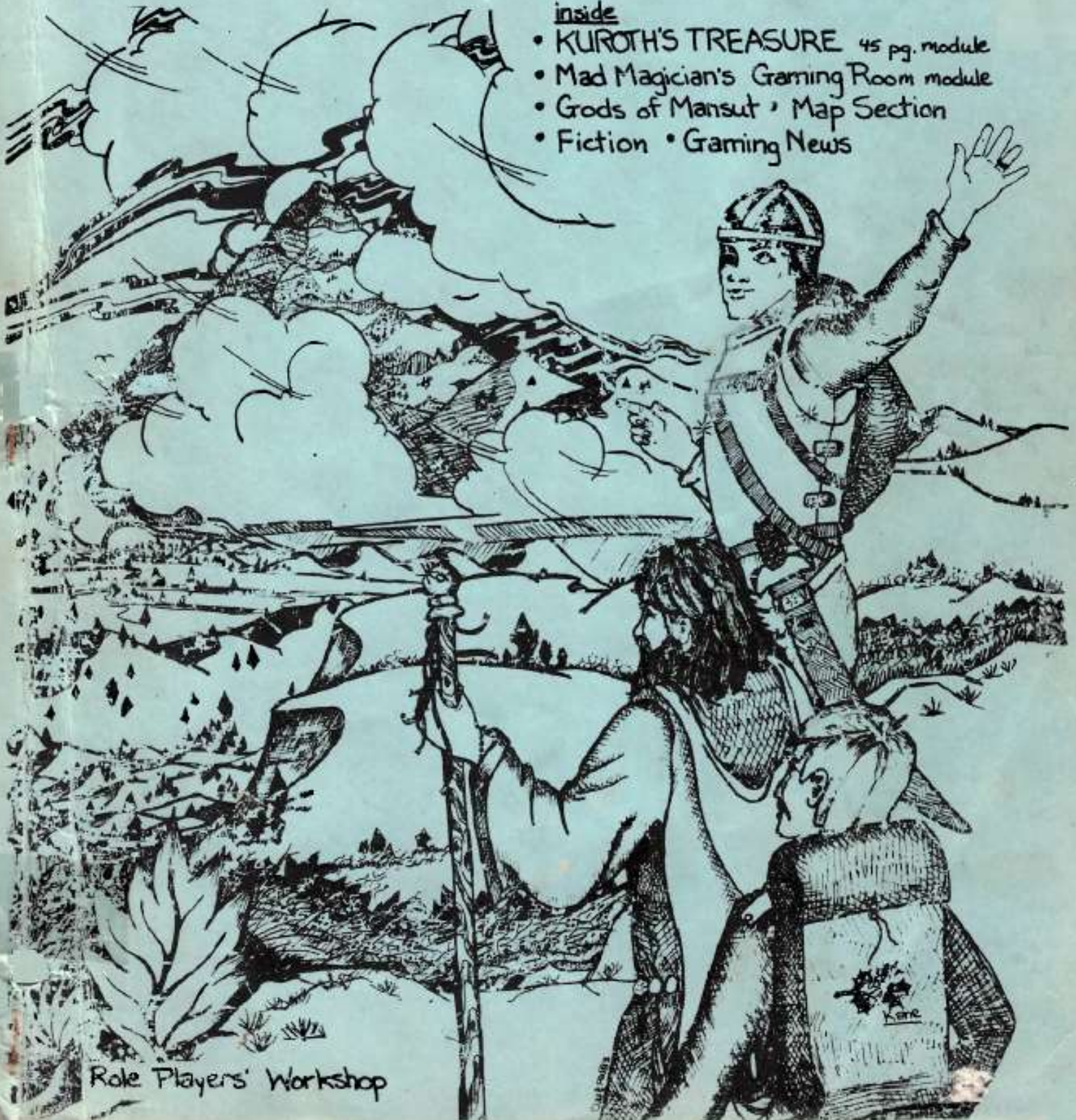
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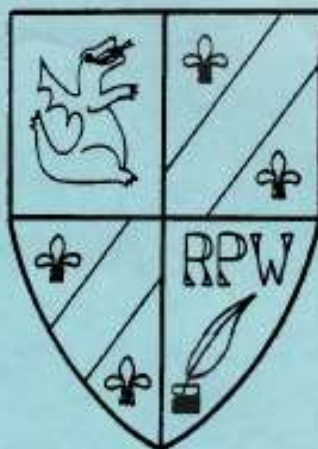
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- KUROTH'S TREASURE 45 pg. module
- Mad Magician's Gaming Room module
- Gods of Mansut, Map Section
- Fiction • Gaming News



Role Players' Workshop

Fantasy World



a publication of Role Players' Workshop

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Fantasy World

Magazine of Fantasy and Fantasy Role-Playing Gaming

Issue #1

December 1983

Special Feature:

- p. 41 **KUROTH'S TREASURE**
An AddVenture™ Module by Rob Washburn

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cover illustration by Rob and Candy Washburn



A Letter from the Editors

Well, here it is! The first issue of FANTASY WORLD. The magazine is a bit different than we had originally expected. We had thought that we'd publish a magazine of sixty-four digest-sized pages. Then we decided to go with a full-size format. Then, as work progressed on this first issue, we realized that if we were going to have the mix of news, fiction, feature articles, modules and regular departments that we wanted, the magazine was going to have to be much, much longer than we had planned. The increase in price from the anticipated \$3 to \$5 per issue is necessitated by the increased length of the magazine and by its limited circulation*. Finally, Rob decided to include in this premier issue a full Adventure module, the First in the World of Mansut Earthwound Campaign series. We hope you'll enjoy Kuroth's Treasure! In each future issue of FANTASY WORLD you can expect to see two or more modules, totalling at least 24 pages in length.

We're excited about working with you on the development of the World of Mansut and hope that those of you who haven't joined in yet will do so. We can already see a richness of detail beginning to develop with the intertwining of information on the World of Mansut and some of the characters who populate it in the stories, articles, maps and modules that appear in this issue. It should be fun for players in gaming groups to (for instance) meet up with a non-player character they've read about in a story. There are all sorts of possibilities for interaction between gaming groups when they're playing in different parts of the same world. We're looking forward to receiving more submissions that will contribute to the development of this campaign world.

Check out our departments. We hope you'll enjoy reading about yourselves and your fellow gamers in our news articles and "gamer profiles." We particularly invite those of you who live in

areas other than Batesville to fill us in on your local gaming news so we can include these reports in future issues.

In addition to the Gaming News department, we have Reviews, humor, Dungeon Masters' Forum (for articles and advice on how to be a better DM) and Treasure Chest, where new monsters, artifacts, places of mystery and the like are described.

Be sure to read our revised submission requirements on the inside back cover. We've tried to make it easy for you to make submissions to FW. We realized when we launched this magazine that we were giving very little notice to anyone who might want to write something for us, so I guess no one will be too surprised that most of the work here is our own. We know that a number of people are preparing things for publication though, so we expect to see more of your work in future issues.

Lastly, while we're waiting to acquire a computer/printer/word processor and in the absence of a decent typewriter or typist, we've decided to hand print the magazine. We hope that you'll bear with us and think of this as lending a medieval fantasy flavor to the publication.

If you want to know more about anything you read about in FANTASY WORLD or if you'd just like to talk to us, please feel free to write or call.

Candy and Rob Washburn



*We will be honoring all coupons for purchase of FANTASY WORLD at the price of \$3.99 per issue for issues #1 and #2, so if you have a coupon, you'll want to use it. Please send coupon with payment by Dec. 31st 1983.



Gaming News

Batcon

Batcon, Batesville's first fantasy role-playing gaming convention, was held August 20th at Batesville Middle School. The tournament was co-sponsored by Role Players' Workshop and Batesville D&D Club (now Batesville Fantasy Guild). Thirty-seven players on nine teams competed in playing through The Megalith, a module set in the World of Mansut, developed especially for Batcon by Rob Washburn. Illustrations for the module were drawn by Brett Jennings. D.G. and Jennifer Gieser provided refreshments for sale and, through special arrangement with Chris Fairchild of the Bookshelf in Batesville, offered a large selection of TSR products at a 10% discount. Mr. Freeland, principal of the Middle School, was helpful in arranging the excellent facility. D.G. Gieser, Mark Stock, Scott Moore, Mike Mosier, Brett Jennings and Nic Wonnell formed a work crew that handled miscellaneous jobs from assembling the DM's copies of the module to cleaning up after the convention. A total of about fifty people attended the convention.

The winning team at Batcon was the Purple Team, DMed by Troy Ilderton and consisting of D.G. Gieser, Mark Stock, Tom Mack and Steve Wickens. These players were excellent strategists and scored best all around. Members of the winning team were awarded copies of The Megalith, "I mastered Batcon" T-shirt iron-ons and certificates of Mastery. All Batcon DMs

were awarded copies of the module and Certificates of Mastery. Players on the other teams were awarded Certificates of Valour. Each Batcon participant received a coupon for \$1 off on Batcon II (be sure to use them!).

The Gold Team and the Orange Team were runners up. Players on the Gold Team were Matt Groenewald, Chris Groenewald, Chris Huntington and Chris Blum. They were experienced and well-prepared and showed great ability as role-playing gamers. They used time well and were first to finish the module. Their DM was Garrie Scott.

The Orange Team was made up of Mike Watkins, Curt Johnson, Don Barnhorst, and John Moorman. They were DMed by Eric Johnson. They creatively accomplished the tournament objective, consistently making time-saving and wise decisions.

The Dark Blue Team, DMed by Mike Mosier, was very inventive and demonstrated their creativity by resurrecting the NPC who appeared to them as a shadowy form. Players on this team were Steve Walke, Jim Walke, Chris Walke, and Don Davis.

Chris Stroebel DMed the Brown Team, consisting of Kevin McGree, Chris Minniear, Kevin Alford, John Randolph and Brent Williams. This group distinguished themselves by performing very well in the battle with the Dire Bat and in the orcs' last stand.

Cliff Burnham, Aaron Snowden,

Jason Hales, Nathan Anderson, and Justin Rockwood made up the Green Team. This team was voted the most fearless in battle, challenging the Dire Bat hand to hand. Their DM was Nic Wonnell.

The Red Team was very calculating in the purchase of supplies. They bought the makings of Molotov cocktails and used these bombs to further their objectives in the adventure. Members of the Red Team were Danny Bultmann, Steve Schwipps, Scott Lindewald, and Gary Richter. They were DMed by Scott Moore.

George Moorman DMed the Light Blue Team. Team members were Chris Kieffer, Matt Tucker, Ron Schwipps, Mike Coffey and Sam Craft. This team showed a lot of team spirit, especially in their encounter with the giant snake.

Rob Washburn DMed a two-man team which played for one half of the tournament. John Hales and Fred Rockwood, fathers of two of the younger Batcon participants, proved to be excellent negotiators and wise explorers, and from all reports had fun.

RPW appreciates the feedback on Batcon we've received from many of the participants. We learned a lot from putting on Batcon and we're incorporating your suggestions and our insights in the planning of Batcon II, which will be held February 18th at the Batesville Middle School.



Gamer Profile - Ryan Volz

Ryan Volz, a 6th grader at Batesville Middle School, has been a fantasy role-player for about a year. His favorite player class is thieves -- though Ryan does not have a favorite among the thieves he plays, he does enjoy the special abilities of thieves, particularly "climbing walls" and "finding traps."

Ryan, a 4'10" brown-eyed, brown-haired, 12 year old, admits he has many interests besides adventure gaming. These include watching TV -- "Silverspoons," "Lottery" and the "Dungeons and Dragons" cartoon. Ryan also likes video games, especially Defender and Frogger. Ryan currently has no girlfriends, but says he has had "about half a dozen" in the past. Ryan didn't say whether he had these girlfriends all at once, or one at a time over a year or two.

Troy Ilderton, Ryan's cousin, is Ryan's favorite DM. Ryan's personal motto is "Be happy."

Gamer Profile - Scott Moore

Scott Moore, a Junior at Batesville High School, has been a fantasy gamer for about 1 1/2 years. His favorite player classes are monks and spell using classes. Scott's highest level PC is Sir Larben, whose early years are described in "My Life So Far," a feature in this magazine.

Scott is a ruling member (a guildsman) of the Batesville Fantasy Guild. Scott is also, in his own words "working on an action-packed adventure module for RPW, for an undisclosed amount."

Scott's favorite activities include music, computer programming, and dating. This guildsman's chosen rock groups include Pink Floyd, the Babys, David Bowie, and, on full moons, hard driving Heavy Metal.

Scott's motto is "Don't insult people who you know can beat the @*!+! out of you. Unless you can run faster than them."

DMs' Seminar

Ten gamers participated in a Dungeon Master's Seminar conducted by Rob Washburn and held over a six-week period in July and August. They learned the basics of how to be a good DM from quite extensive selected readings, discussions and formal presentations by Rob as well as through actual practice DMing for groups of experienced players. Rob's presentations featured his synthesis of the "four critical roles of the DM": (An article on one of these roles, that of a "rolemaster", appears in this issue of FW Watch for more in future issues)

For their practical DMing experience, seminar participants were given a choice of three alternatives: DMing a purchased module, DMing their own original adventure scenario from notes, or preparing a written module that could be handed to another DM and be playable without further verbal instruction. Those who chose the third option would also be participants in a module design competition. Two of the ten DM's in the seminar submitted modules for the competition and both were awarded prizes for their work. D.G. Gieser was declared the winner and was given a check for \$20. His module is scheduled to be played at Batcon II in February 1984 and will be published by Role Players Workshop. D.G. will receive additional payments as work progresses on the development of his module, totaling \$100 by the time his module is published. Scott Moore's module was also judged excellent and Scott was awarded \$20. Additional payments will bring the total to \$100 when his work is published. Both writers will receive

royalties based on sales of published modules.

Others who participated in the seminar but not the competition were Troy Ilderton, Garrie Scott, Mark Stock, Brett Jennings, Nic Wonnell, Mike Mosier, Chris Stroebel and Mark Westerfeld. Those who completed the seminar received _____ and some of them were DMs at Batcon I.

Beginner's DM Seminar

Beginning dungeon masters had a chance to learn the rock-bottom basics of how to be a DM at a one-night seminar conducted by Rob Washburn on November 17th. Instruction focused on how to run Combat encounters properly and how to use the Dungeon Master's Guide. Participants were David Reynolds, Ryan Volz, Clif Burnham, Aaron Snowden, Danny Fasbinder and Rob Klutts.

Design Masters' Seminar

A one-day seminar for experienced DMs who want to write professional quality publishable modules will be held Saturday January 14th from 1 to 5pm. at Rob Washburn's home. The seminar will be conducted by Rob Washburn. Seminar participants will receive instruction on how to design and write original adventure scenarios. During the following month Rob will consult with participants on an individual basis as they write their modules. Each graduate of the seminar will have the opportunity to sell his module for a total of \$100 plus royalties for publication by RPW as an Adventure or a Nightventure. Completion of the seminar will require an aptitude for design, writing skills, and lots of hard work. The cost is \$15, payable at the door. For more information call Rob (934-5609).

Players' Seminar

Suggestions for playing the various AD&D player classes, individual and team strategy for small-group combat and how to organize and run successful teams were some of the topics covered in the Players Seminar held on each of the four Thursday nights in October. Sessions directed toward Combat Masters, Spell Masters and Shadow Masters took place during the first three weeks. On the fourth Thursday, seminar participants competed in the Mad Magician's Tournament.

George Moorman DMed the winning tournament team. The winning players were Chris Stroebel, Steve Wickens and Gary Patton. They solved the "tuning fork trap" in record time, and in very close final standings were declared the all-around winners. Each of the players received a painted metal miniature representing the tournament character he had played.

A tie was declared for second place and players on the two teams each received a coupon for \$1 off on any RPW product, tournament or seminar.

Bob Copeland, Troy Ashcraft, Kevin Alford and Cliff Burnham were DMed by Don Davis. They proved themselves to be good riddlers, solving more (and more difficult) riddles than other teams.

Carroll Scudder was DM for David Reynolds, Marc Wenning, Danny Buttman, Garrie Scott and Scott Lindewald. This team won the Amber Maze section of the tournament, getting all team members safely through in the shortest time.

Others who participated in one or more sessions of the seminar but not in the tournament were Mike Mosier, Bucky Nobbe, John Randolph, Justin Rockwood, Kevin McGee, Todd Gardener, Chris Minniear, Scott Moore, Aaron Snowden, Troy Elderton, Danny Fasbinder, Ryan Volz and Nathan Anderson.



Gamer Profile - Mark Stock

Mark Stock, a Junior at Batesville High School, has been a fantasy gamer for about a year. Mark prefers fighter-types, especially barbarians. Mark's most-played barbarian is Lupus. Lupus gives some good advice to up & coming PC's in Laughing Dragon. If you haven't already read "Warrior's Wisdom" give it a look.

Mark is one of the ruling members of Batesville Fantasy Guild, and is busy planning parties for the Club.

Mark has many interests and hobbies. He is offensive tackle for the world renowned Batesville Bulldogs. Mark is also the ranking Civil Air Patrol officer in the area - a Lt. Colonel. He plans to attend West Point and is something of an expert on commando tactics. (This knowledge is of great help in Mark's role-playing hobby.)

Mark has many personal mottos, but one memorable one is: "Death to the 'Go Gos', & all 'Go Go' mongers."



Q. How can you keep a shrieker from screaming on Wednesday?

A. Kill it on Tuesday!

Mini-Tournament

On November 29th an FRP mini-tournament, The Mists of the Wight Mound, was held at D.G. Gieser's house in Batesville. The mini-tournament was sponsored by Role Players Workshop in co-operation with Batesville Fantasy Guild. Two teams participated in this event for characters of 3rd level. George Moorman DMed the winning team, which consisted of John Randolph, Carroll Scudder, Chris Minniear and D.G. Gieser. Winning players were each awarded a painted metal miniature of the character they played (valued at \$3). The runners up, DMed by Don Davis, were Clif Burnham, Kevin McGee and Aaron Snowden. Batesville Fantasy Guild awarded special prizes for Guild members. Kevin McGee was named most valuable player and received a 1984 TSR "Realms of Wonder" calendar (valued at \$7.95). Second and third place winners in the individual player competition were Clif Burnham and Aaron Snowden. Each received a gem die (valued at \$1.25).

A second mini-tournament, Seven Keys of Dhurimar, for 9th level player characters, is scheduled for December 13th.



Clubs

D.G. Gieser and Mark Stock are spearheading a reorganization and revival of the Batesville D&D Club under the new name, Batesville Fantasy Guild. The Guild will be sponsoring parties, mini-tournaments, miniatures painting sessions and other events of interest to gamers. On November 11th the Guild held a pizza party to introduce potential members to the club. Everyone seemed to have fun and a lot of free pizza was consumed. The Guild has also co-operated with Role Players Workshop in putting on the Batcon tournament and the Wight Mound mini-tournament. The Guild has negotiated an agreement with Chris Fairchild of The Bookshelf in Batesville and with Role Players Workshop to give all Guild members a 10% discount on all TSR and RPW products. Guild memberships are \$5 per year. Contact D.G. Gieser (934-4053) or Mark Stock (934-4739) if you're interested.

The Batesville Middle School FRP Club was organized in September with the following officers: Kevin McGee, president, Clif Burnham, vice president, Aaron Snowden, treasurer, Danny Fasbinder, secretary. The club's adult adviser is Rob Washburn. Club membership is free. The club holds weekly meetings. Contact Kevin McGee (934-5365) if you're interested.

Matt Groenewald and Kevin Hinson are organizing an FRP club in Columbus Indiana. We don't have a lot of information on this one yet, so if you're interested, contact Matt (379-2827) or Kevin (372-7363).

We invite area gamers to submit news of their FRP clubs to be published in future issues of FW.



Your heart is pounding, your breath is short, and your legs are sinking under the weight of your armor, but you fight on.

Your enemy in his ghostly shape seems unhurt and continues to move as he did when you first confronted him.

You feel yourself starting to fail...

... As you push yourself to continue, step right, turn, swing left to right, punch, kick, side step, block... Your opponent has landed three more blows and you know the next will be your last. You know that you will die, but you will die valiantly.

The next thing you realize is that your opponent has risen into the air just out of your reach. He smiles upon you and says, "You are good man!" "Come with me," he says, as he turns and walks to the end. You are bewildered and ask, "Where do you lead me, to my death?" "No fool!" He says with a laugh. The fire...

BATESVILLE

Fantasy Guild

IN PROGRESS . . .

The following lists "projects under way." We hope to see some or all of these published in Fantasy World. If we missed anyone, or if you have a new project starting, let us know and we'll print it in the next issue of FW.

D.G. Gieser: Working on BATCON II module & on a piece of fiction about his Master Thief, Schrock.

Mike Mosier: Starting a module that features a massive battle with lizardmen.

Eric Johnson: Working on an adventure module on a fiction piece about his PC, Neptune the Slayer.

Garnie Scott: Writing a fantasy novel.

Iris Washburn: Illustrating Megalith.
(Batcon I module).

Matt Groenewald: Designing a module.

Brent Williams: Designing a module.

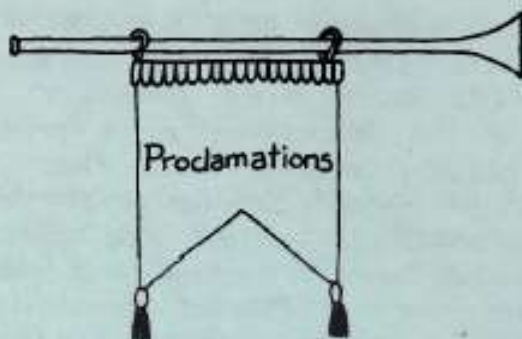
Scott Moore: Designing a module for RPW.

Troy Ashcroft: Designing a new player class, the Avenger.

Carroll Scudder: Designing a module.

Brett Jennings: Occasional illustrations for RPW.
Scott Lindewald: illustrations for RPW.
Gary Ricker:

Rob Washburn: "Quest for the Earthtrees" Module.
"Mad Magician's Tournament" Module.
"Grey Isle Adventure." (fantasy fiction.)
Designmasters Seminar preparation.

**Coming Events**Dec. 1983

13th (Tuesday) 6-9:30 pm. "Seven Keys of Dhurimar" mini-tournament for 9th level characters. D.G. Gieser's home, Batesville. \$2 in advance (\$1 for BFG members) \$3 at the door.

28th (Wednesday) 7-10 pm. Party for Batesville Fantasy Guild members and those interested in joining. Refreshments, games. Rob Washburn's home, Batesville.

Jan. 1984

14th (Saturday) 1-5 pm. Design Masters' seminar conducted by Rob Washburn at his home, Batesville. \$15 at the door.

Feb. 1984

15th (Wednesday) FANTASY WORLD, issue #2 scheduled for publication (get your submissions in!).

18th (Saturday) 8 am.-5 pm. Batcon II, FRP convention and tournament. Batesville Middle School Commons. \$5 in advance (use your coupons!) \$7 at the door. (Be there!)



Call us (934-5609) if you need more information on coming events or to let us know of coming events you'd like us to include in this column in a future issue. Publication is free of charge.



World of Mansut Update

In September 1983 Rob Washburn and Role Players' Workshop issued an invitation to area gamers to help in the development of a fantasy role-playing campaign world, the World of Mansut. Interested parties were asked to contact Rob to receive an "area franchise" - a piece of the World of Mansut to develop by basing fantasy role-playing (FRP) adventures there. Franchise holders could also write modules and stories set in their areas and articles about their areas which could be published by Fantasy World Magazine. Excellent modules would also be purchased for separate publication by RPW.

We've had a good response to the invitation. Ten franchises have been awarded to FRP groups. Each group has received or will receive a map, drawn by Rob, of their area of the World of Mansut. Some of the maps are reproduced in this magazine, either in the special map section which follows or with stories and articles to which they are related.

Several of you have also talked to us about modules and stories, set in the World of Mansut, that you are working on. A couple of these stories appear in this issue of Fantasy World and we'll be publishing others in future issues.

The following is a list of the World of Mansut franchises awarded thus far. There are still other areas available if you're interested in joining with us on this project. If you want more information, call or write us at RPW.

<u>group leader(s)</u>	<u>area franchise</u>
Rob Washburn	Valian & Montome in Mansut, misc. areas
Scott Moore Troy Ilderton	Fangdeep
Scott Lindewald Danny Bultman	Clearwood
Kevin McGree (Batesville Middle School Club)	Elevor
D.G. Gieser	Overwood & surrounding wilderness
Chris Stroebel	Miral Penninsula
George Moorman	Grey Isle
Eric Johnson	Dwarnor
John Randolph	Glide
Kevin Hinson Matt Groenewald	Haldor
Don Davis Mike Mosier	Quetan



Q. What makes more noise than an orc caught in a pit trap?

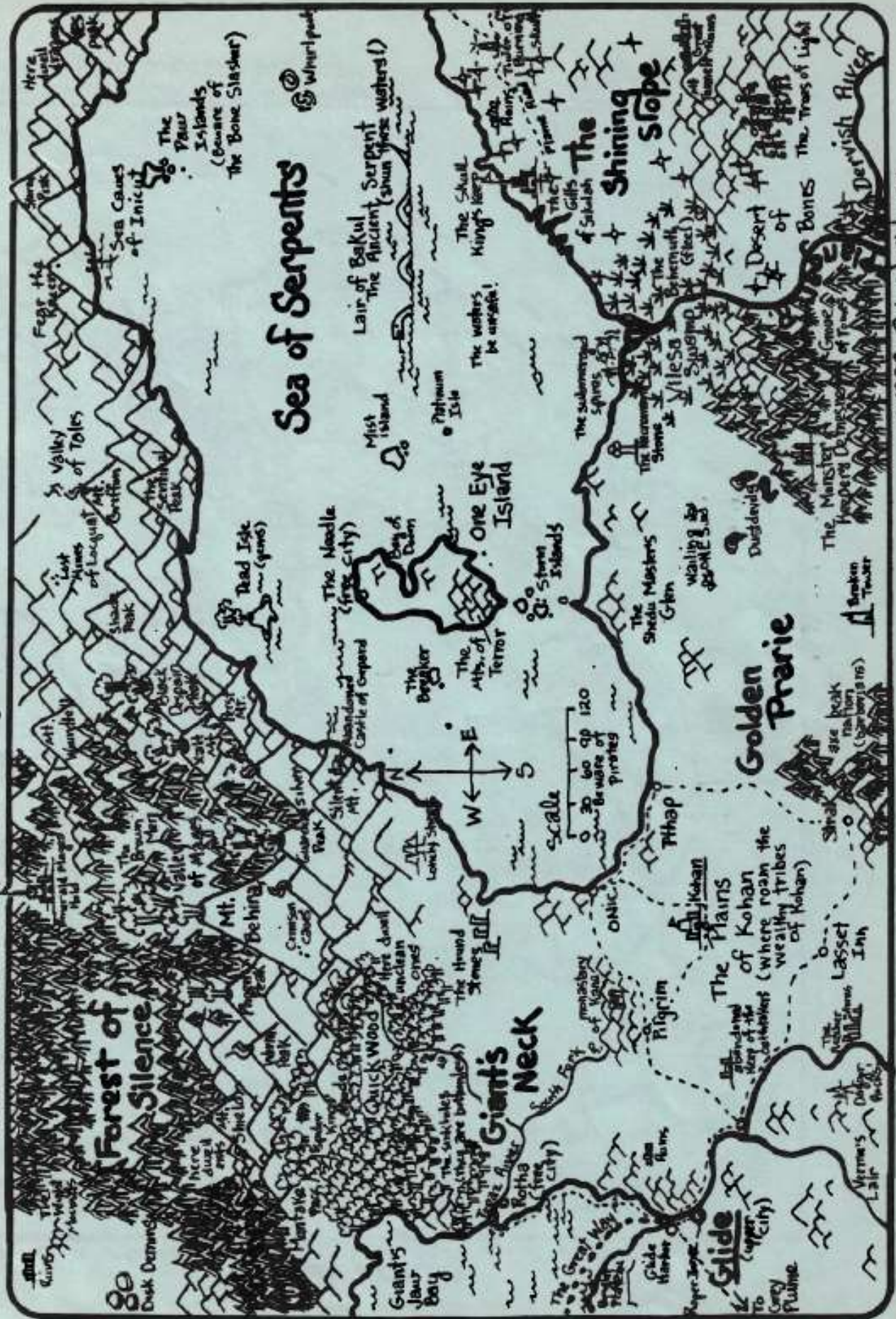
A. Two orcs caught in a pit trap.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

World of Mansut Maps

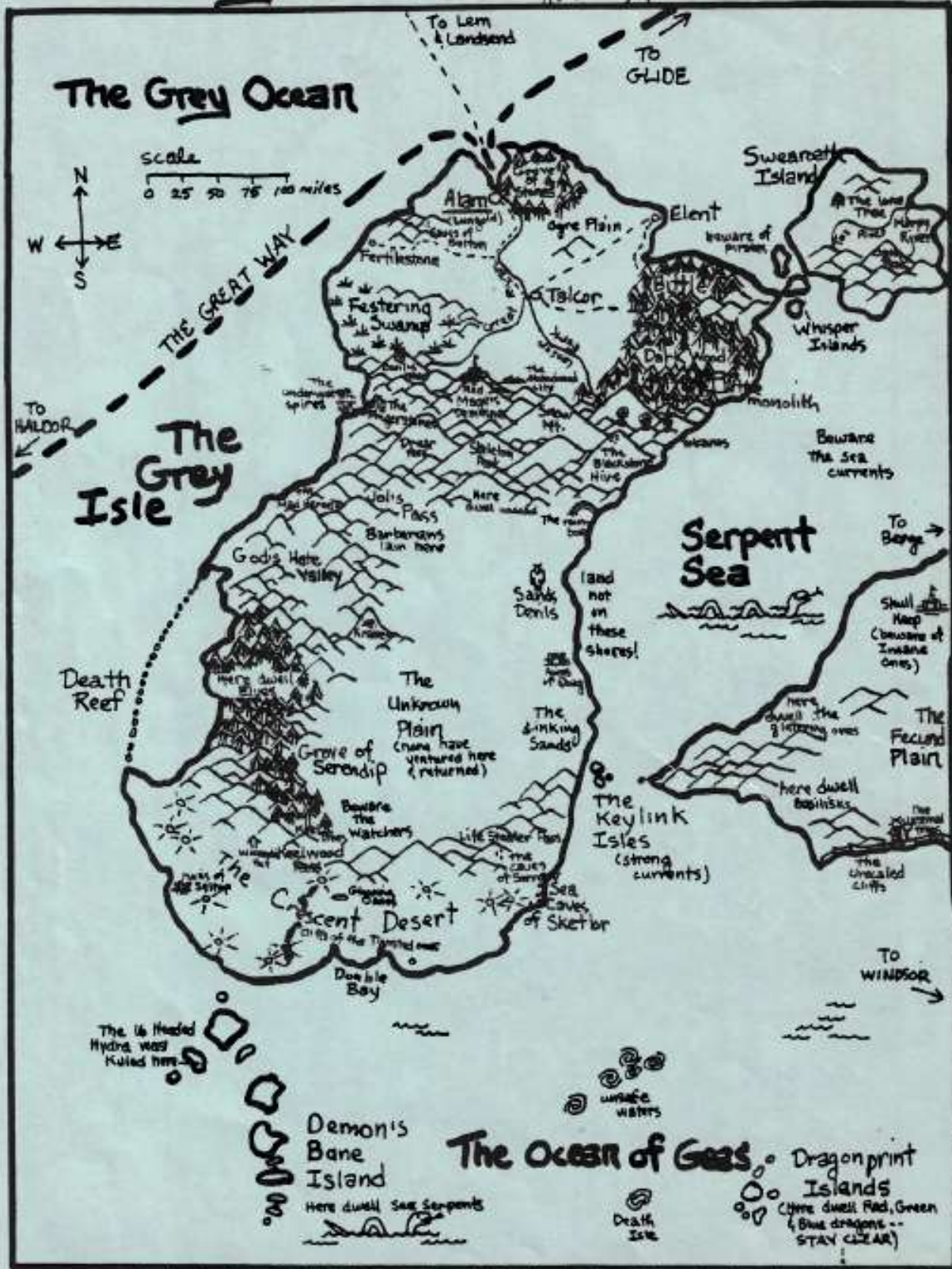


The Kingdom of Glide & the Wilderness to the North & East.
 as prepared by Snipe Longstride, master Cartographer of Montome

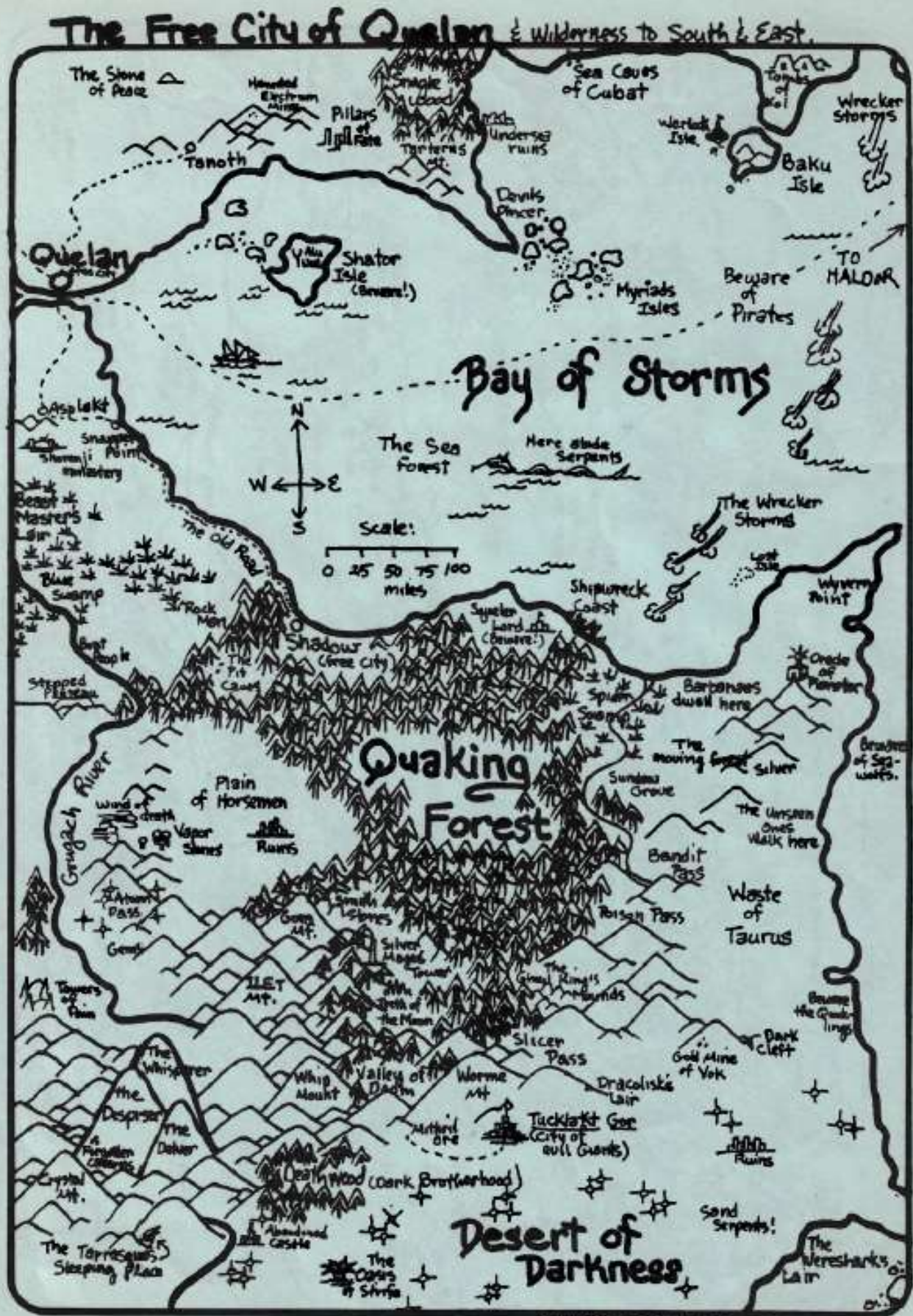


© 1983, Rob Washburn

The Grey Isle -- displaying the Kingdom of Lungold (formerly Alam) & the vast southern wilderness.

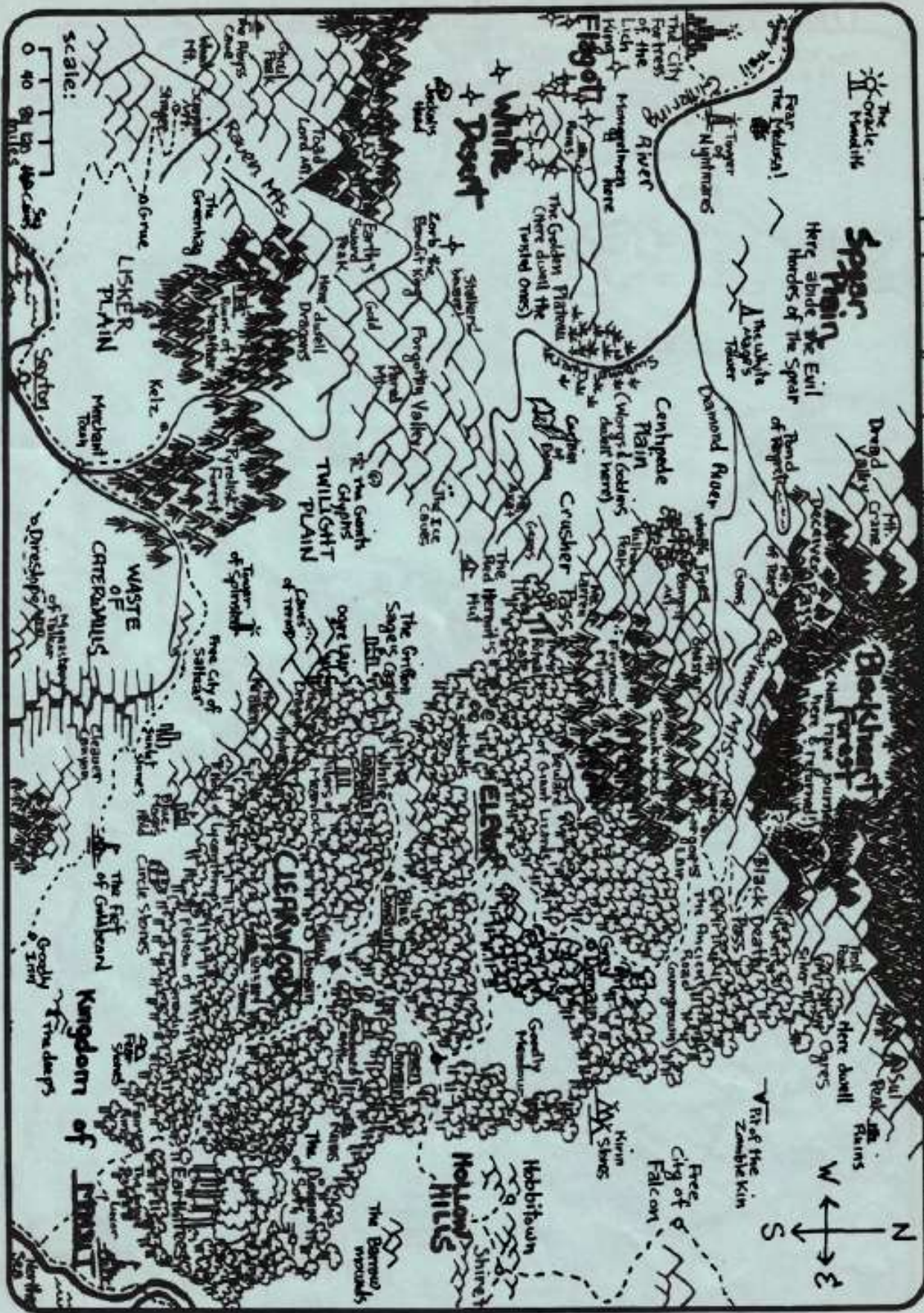


prepared by Snipe, Master Cartographer of Montome (in the Kingdom of Mansat).
 © 1983, Rob Washburn.



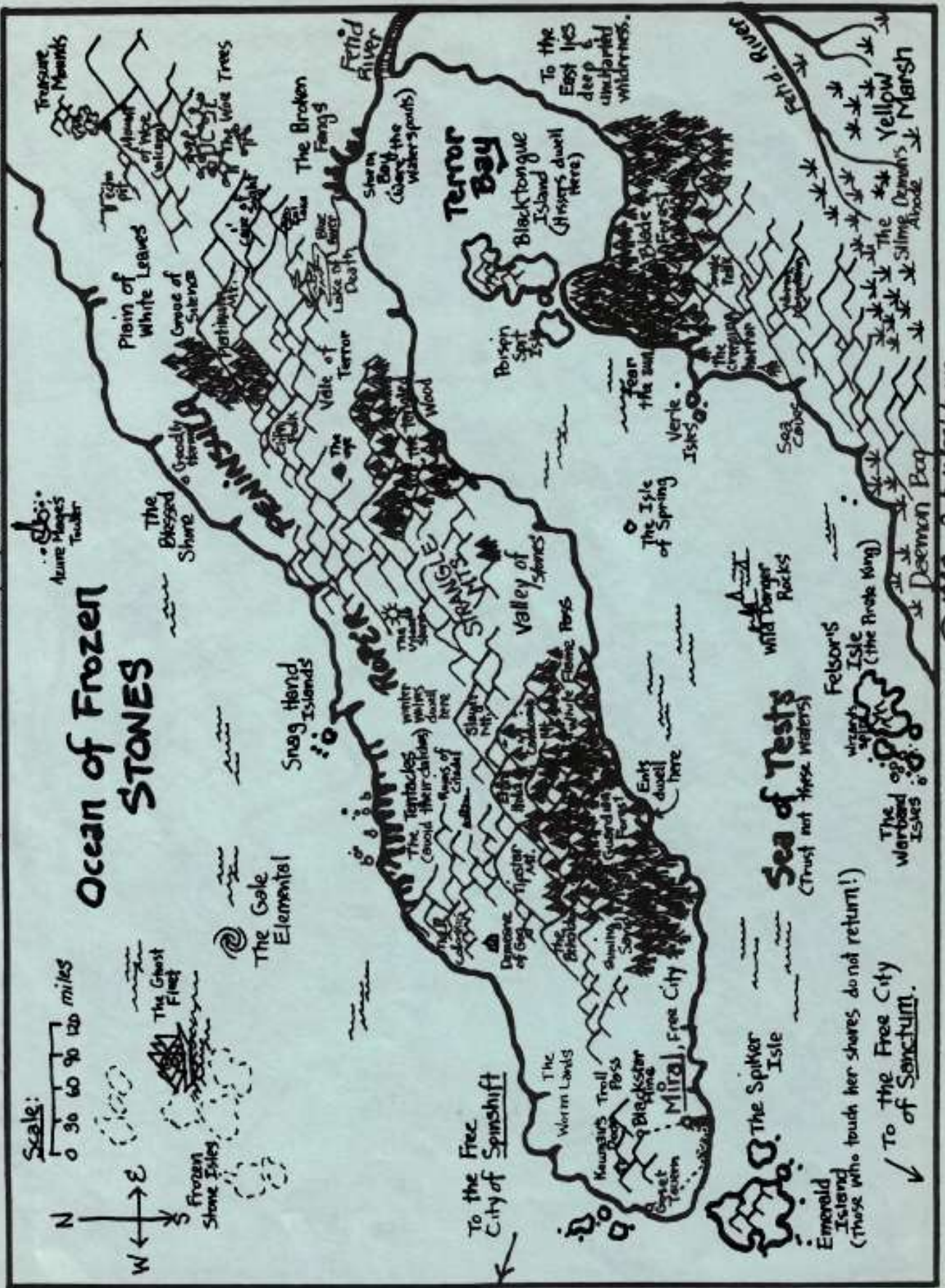
ELEVOR, The Five Domains & The Wilderness that surrounds

as prepared by Snipe Longstride, Master Cartographer of Mensut. ©1983, Rob Washburn

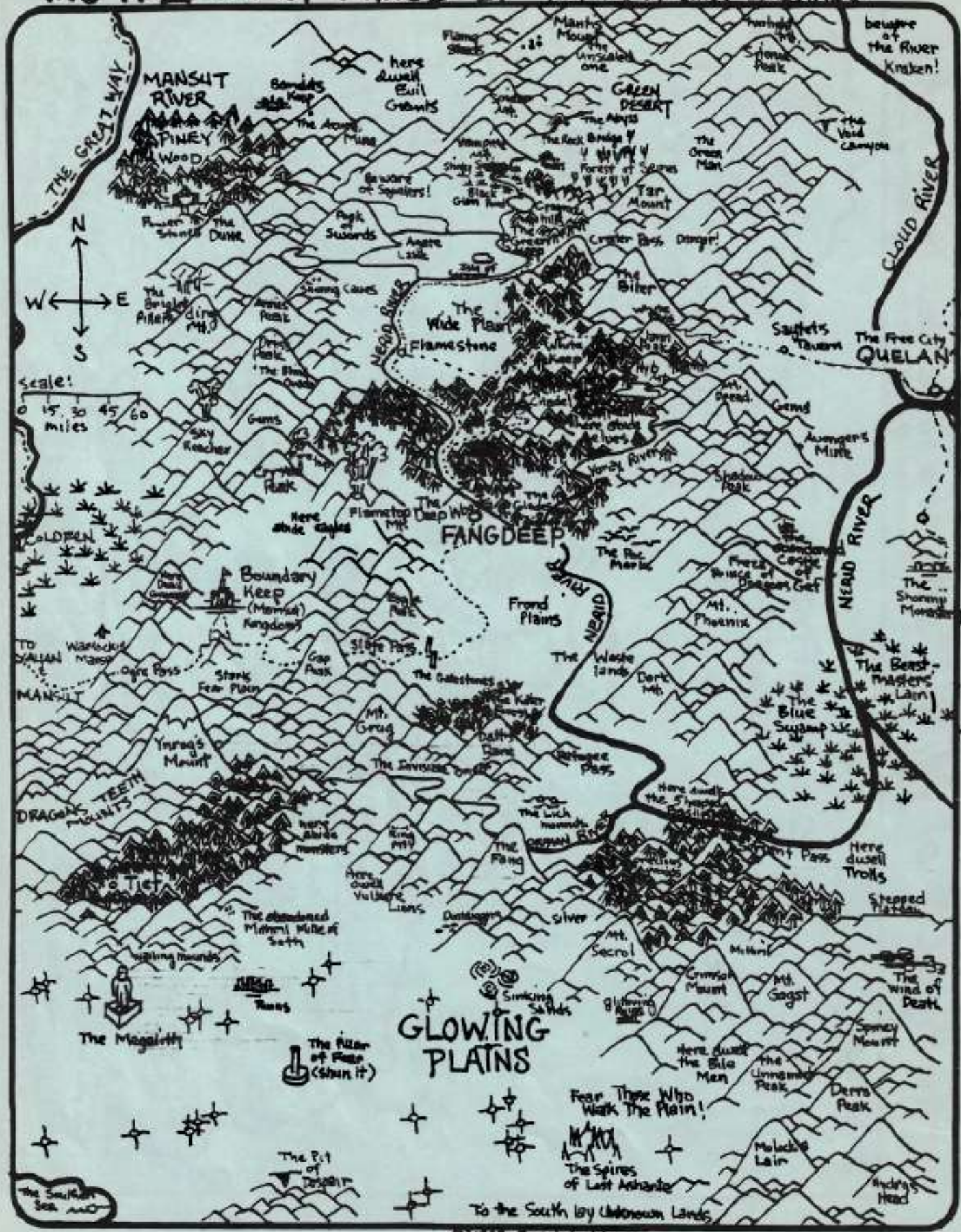


The Free City of MIRAL & the Deep Wilderness to the East.

(as prepared by Saip, Master Cartographer of Munsaut.)



The Kingdom of FANGDEEP & the surrounding Wilderness, as prepared by SNIP Longstride.



The Beastmaster

by Troy Ilderton

illustrated by Rob Washburn

Ramos the holy man sat staring at the embers in the dying campfire while the halfling thief Mincer puffed on his pipe. The other two members of their group, Lucian the ranger and Turrin the mage, were scouting ahead for the next mile.

It had been a long day for the group. They had travelled northeast from Mt. Secrol through the Precious Woods and forded the Nerid River. The travel through the outlying hills below the Blue Swamp had proved to be the hardest part of their journey thus far.

They now camped just west of the swamp and the sound of things both known and unknown filled the air.

Ramos' thoughts were mostly of the long journey ahead. It was still some fifty miles to the city of Quelan. His musing was interrupted when his two companions, back from their scouting expedition, stepped into the firelight.

"Nothing unusual for the next mile or so," said Turrin as he sat down by the fire.

"Nothing unusual?" asked Mincer incredulously. "How can you say that with all those bizarre noises coming out of there?" He nodded toward the swamp.

"Don't worry, Mincer," Lucian reassured him. "The creatures won't come near the fire."

The words had barely left Lucian's mouth when they heard a horrible scream. A ragged figure lunged through the hip-high grass at the swamp's edge. He ran madly toward the adventurers' campfire, speaking in a barely understandable language.

Lucian's sword rang as it cleared its scabbard. "Look out," he cautioned, "this could be a trap."

The group watched as a middle-aged man in ragged clothes fell on his face at the edge of the fire. He continued to babble in his strange language and it took some time before he calmed down enough to be understood clearly. He spoke in the language of the nomads of the Stepped Plateau.

He told an incredible tale of a man he had met in the great swamp after being separated from his party. It had been three days before when a storm had scattered his group in all directions. He had wandered for several hours and given himself up for hopelessly lost.

It was then that a figure clad entirely in furs approached him out of the swamp. The man was immediately followed by four small yellow humanoid forms.

"He said something softly in a language I didn't understand," said the stranger, "and those creepy little yellow men started chasing me!"

"Are they still chasing you?" asked Ramos.

"Yes," gasped the stranger, falling back to the ground, "but now that you're all here I don't have to worry."

A low chuckle was heard coming from near the fire and everyone turned to see Turrin the mage sitting at the edge of the fire looking toward the swamp.

"We'll not be able to save you," stated Turrin matter-of-factly.

"What do you mean?" asked the man nervously.

"The creatures that were chasing you are called Bile Men. The man in furs is known simply as the Beastmaster. He controls the Bile Men and they will do anything he tells them to do. In this case it seems that he has ordered them to capture you and they will let nothing stand in the way of accomplishing that goal."

"But you will let me travel with you, won't you?"

"Of course," said Ramos, "we won't turn you out on your own."

Turrin rose to his feet and walked to the edge of the firelight. Staring into the swamp, he continued in a hushed voice:

"And he shall walk the Earth and for good or evil he shall be one with the beasts of the forests and swamps. In the end, his own civility shall be his downfall."

"Did you say something, Turrin?" asked Mincer, sheathing his short sword.

"Nothing important," sighed Turrin.

"I never did get your name, stranger," said Lucian.

"It's Johannes," said the man.

"Well if these Bile Men or whatever they're called are in the area, we'd better move on tonight," said Ramos shaking his head.

"I hate adventuring; I never get a decent night's sleep!" said Mincer.

In about ten minutes the group had gathered their supplies and extinguished the fire.

Lucian led the way and the rest of the group followed, with Johannes staying protected in the center.

No one noticed the four pairs of yellow eyes that watched them with great interest from the swamp.



Several minutes after the group had left, a figure clad only in furs stepped out of the swamp and peered in the direction the party travelled. Then he threw back his head and a cold, evil laugh filled the air.

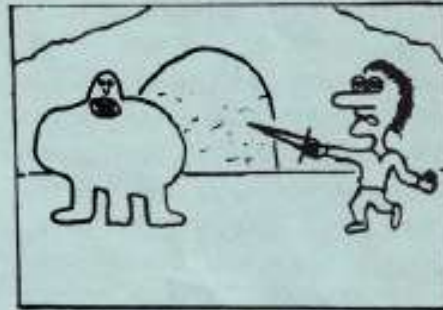
The Beastmaster's plans, so intricately laid, had finally begun to come together.

- to be continued -

Troy Iderton is a junior at Batesville High School and was recently voted "student of the month" but he's not sure which month! He says his sister is an orc so he suspects he's a half-orc. (Can you figure that one out?) Troy is usually a player and his favorite DM is George "The All-Knowing One" Moorman. Troy is working with Scott Moore to develop the Kingdom of Fangdeep in the World of

Mansut, where the story of the Beastmaster takes place. Troy is an avid reader and particularly likes the Sanctuary series, edited by Robert Lynn Asprin. Troy collects comic books and claims to have about \$3000 worth, including one single issue worth \$85. He favors "The X-Men" comic books. He's also an amateur cartoonist himself and reportedly has a stack of original "Icky the Brave" cartoons. We hear some of them are even funny.

ICKY the BRAVE



Icky the Brave, great adventurer and all-around nice guy, leaps forth to battle a dreaded Neo-Otyugh!



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- Earthwound #2, Quest for Earthtrees
- Earthwound #3, Mad Magicians Tournament (*Available January)

Gods of Mansut

The Testimony of Shadrack the Strong,
Fighting Cleric of Terasu.

by Rob Washburn illustrated by Rob and Candy Washburn

Some say that the world is contained in a golden bowl carried by a monstrous turtle. Others say that this life is the dream of a God and that when He awakes our universe will perish. Of course all true believers know these religions to be false. We know that this earth was created by the Kisetu, who vanquished the Whine of Despair, out of the Void. These righteous Kisetu are pure spirits and became the **PANTHEON OF TRUE GODS**. Let all worship Them for theirs is the True Way!

KROM (Greater God)

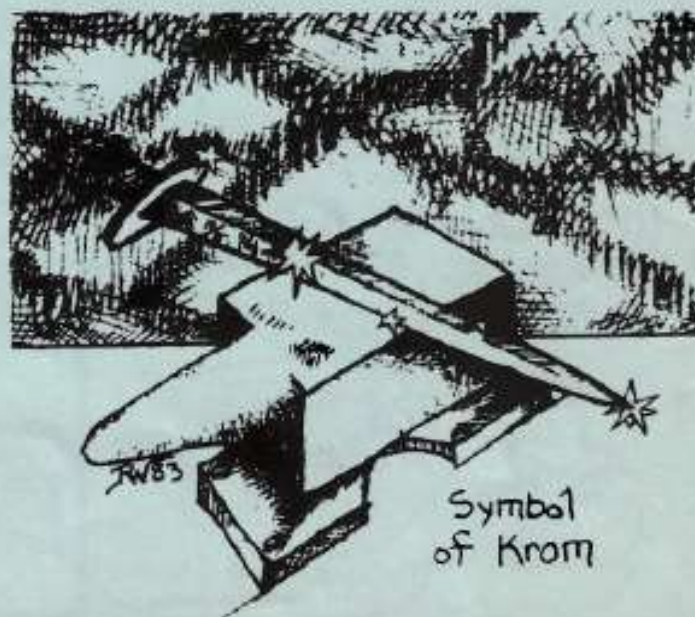
Krom is the God of Warriors. His is the way of honor, progress and earthly might. No God exceeds Him in battle strength or craftiness. Krom is rash to act but seldom makes mistakes.

Beware His vengeance. The followers of Krom are fighters of all classes and some adventuring clerics, thieves and monks. Temples of Krom have, as a focus of worship, an altar made from the swords of local heroes and a statue of Krom. The statue often shows Krom defeating the Enemies of Life - demons, giant class, and the like. Warriors going into battle often place their weapons on the Altar of Steel to be blessed by priests of the temple. It is said that Krom Himself will sometimes animate His statue to bless the weapons of great heroes. I, Shadrack, know of eight men and one woman who have been so blessed by the Master of Battle.

In each temple of Krom is found an Arena of Testing. This is a

straw or sand-filled pit or clearing, usually about fifty feet in diameter. In the Arena the followers of Krom join in two sorts of testing:

1. Battle of Might - These are friendly contests where combatants test their skill and agility. Because the followers of Krom wish to continually improve their techniques, these mock battles are common. Padded weapons cause little worse than bruises for those who participate.
2. Battle of Honor - Honor is a life and death matter to those who serve Krom. When a Battle of Honor is joined only one man may exit the Arena alive. Those who call Honor's battle unjustly are cast from the sight of Krom. A priest of Krom must be present at all such contests. He who calls an Honor Battle and renigs must renounce all possessions to the one he accused.



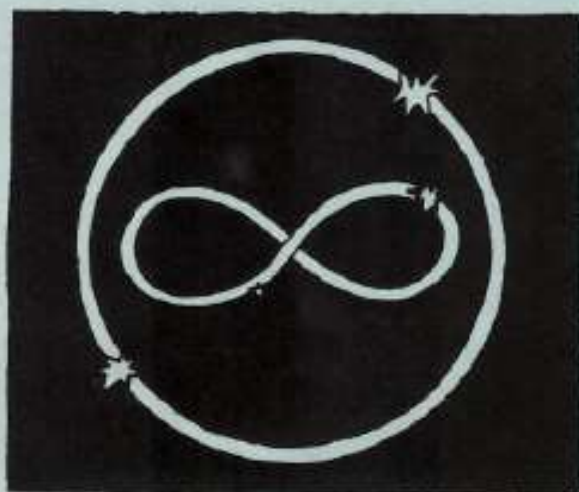
Krom's symbol is a glowing sword on an anvil. His followers take this to represent the Riddle of Steel in all its interpretations.

All hail to Krom. Great is His might. Great are his works to protect the Flesh of the Earth.

KULKAN (Greater God)

Kulkan is the God of Deepest Silence. It is He who guards the secrets of the True Gods at the earth's core. He is sorcerous and oldest of the True Gods. Kulkan's magic is that of alchemists, illusionists, sages and magic users. Clerics who serve Kulkan are said to have special spells to control fire and metal.

Kulkan delights in information and is said to have a copy of every useful scroll and history in his Diamond Castle, located near the center of the earth. The temples of Kulkan often contain large libraries where those interested in the arcane may do research. Each temple also contains an altar. The altar stands before an infinity symbol surrounded by a ring. This holy symbol is made of platinum and affixed to a sheet of blackened lead.



CW 83

Kulkan's Symbol

I, Shadrack, warn those with more greed than wits - attempting to circumvent the magical guards that protect the altar and holy symbols of Kulkan has caused the death of many thieves.

All hail to Kulkan. Great is His wisdom. Hard to fathom are His thoughts. Mighty are His deeds to protect the Bones of the Earth.

KANE (Greater God)

Kane is the God of the Green Earth. The verdant forests, deserts and swamps and all that dwell therein are His.

The followers of Kane include clerics, bards, monks, some fighters, all druids and goodly forest dwellers. Temples to Kane are most often found in natural surroundings where hermit priests and pilgrims worship health and life.

The most powerful of Kane's followers are called Stewards. These Stewards wander the wilderness healing the earth where her skin has been damaged by carelessness or evil. Do not arouse the ire of a Steward! Stewards can cause the earth to quake, the seas to rage, the forests to move and the desert sands to swallow evil armies. Stewards are sometimes also called Fevered Ones, Forestalls and Wild Emperors by those who recognise them.

Stewards and all true followers of Kane wear this symbol sealed in fire on their wrists - a simple holly leaf. For true initiates of Kane the symbol is said to invoke special powers.



-KANE'S SYMBOL-

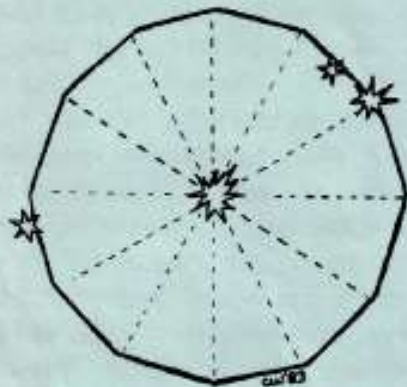
RW 83

All hail to Kane. Great is His understanding. Quick are His actions. Mighty are His deeds to preserve the Life of the Earth.

TERASU (Greater Goddess)

Terasu is the pure golden Goddess of the Sun. She is most powerful, good and gentle. She is the Goddess of royalty and warriors of all sorts.

The symbol of Terasu is a twelve-sided golden shield. The huge holy symbols of Terasu found in the altar rooms of Her temples are also lined with blue and black diamonds. When Terasu speaks with her priests the shields glow with the light of the sun.



Terasu's Symbol

The very presence of Terasu or Her godly minions is said to inflict severe damage on the forces of evil. For when evil views good of such pristine clarity, it finds itself to be naught but filth.

I, Shadrack, am a fighting priest of Terasu. I say to you that Her ways and teachings are filled with glory. Come speak with me in Valion if you would know more of the Goddess Terasu. She accepts the service of all goodly adventurers.

All hail to Terasu. It is Her light that warms the earth. She is the Goddess of the Sun and gave life to the earth. Let all be warned. Terasu protects the earth still.

SELENE (Greater Goddess)

Selene is the Goddess of the Azure Moon, where the righteous dead are said to stop on their voyage to the netherworld. The symbol of the Azure Goddess is a large crescent moon.



Selene's Symbol

The abode of Selene is three times as large as that of Arcana, for great is the space needed to house and instruct the dead. Carefully are the dead taught so that they do not go astray on their voyage to the next sphere. Those who raise fallen comrades from the dead or who "speak with dead" may only do so as long as the soul remains with Selene. Great is the sorrow of those who are called back from Her gentle land, though the memory quickly fades.

Followers of Selene include all adventuring classes, though clerics and thieves tend to owe special allegiance to the Azure Goddess.

All hail to Selene. By Her soft light is the night of the earth beautified. Calm and certain is Her countenance. Great are Her works to preserve the Life Forces of the Earth.

ARCANA (Greater Goddess)

Arcana is the Goddess of the Violet Moon. She is keeper of destiny and balance and the judge of all living.



Arcana's Symbol

The Violet Goddess' symbol is a small full moon, colored purple on a black background. Traditionally the constellation of the Dagger is also represented as part of her symbol. From this constellation the Kisetu are said to have entered this plain from the Void. When the Insane Gods finally gain entrance to this world, legend says that all stars save those of the Dagger will flee the heavens and that Arcana will grasp the Dagger. The Violet Goddess will then either use the Dagger to burst asunder the earth, thus keeping the earth pure from Evil Beyond Evil, or the Violet Goddess will slay the Insane Gods. None know what decision Arcana will make in that final battle but it is known that Her judgment is always correct.

Oracles, illusionists, magicians and many noble families serve Arcana. She frequently gives her trusted servants glimpses of the future, though such visions are often hard to interpret.

Arcana guards the Arch of Time and the Throne of Fate, which are said to lie somewhere within Her labyrinth in the Violet Moon. She sometimes grants audience and special boons to great heroes who travel to the Violet Moon, thread her labyrinth, and riddle with her about the Fate of the Earth.

All hail to Arcana. Great is Her vision. Perfect is Her judgment. Mighty is her resolve. Well does the Violet Goddess preserve the earth in troubled times.

These six are the True Gods and are the Kisetu who organized all matter. It was They who begot the goodly Titans and Giant Lords who ruled the First Age. It was They who rained the Flood of Tears upon the earth when some of the Giants corrupted themselves and began to call upon the Whisperer from the Void. These corrupt Giants conspired with six hundred sixty-six demons created by the Despiser. War was joined and the Flood of Tears ended it. Thus was the First Age completed.



In the Second Age the Gods chose elves to be guardians over the earth. These elves were, at first, clean of mind and upright in deed but some delved too deeply into dark arts. These elves were darkened by voyages where no sane soul should travel. The Dark Elves tried to open the forbidden gates and consorted with alien Gods who twisted their minds. Thus, battle was joined again and the Rain of Fire was the fruit of it. Is it not true that even now many desolate places glow with the Fire that Rots?

Now it is the Third Age and humans are appointed guardians of the living earth. Even now, in the noon of this age, the forces of evil muster their ranks and eat the Blood and Bones of the Earth in secret places. The three Profane Gods connive with their spirit children and most humans are blind to their plots. These are the three **UNNAMED ONES**:

THE WHISPERER (Greater God)

The Whisperer was the first of the Insane Gods to enter the earth. It is He who teaches the magic and mystique of the Impossible through His disciples. His true name is not spoken.

THE DESPISER (Greater God)

The Despiser came to the earth from the Outer Realm. He commands the legions of Evil Giants and their lesser brethren who seek only oblivion after their fall. The Despiser's true name is not spoken.

THE DELVER (Greater Goddess)

The Delves was once a Kisetu but distained true doctrine. She wages war with Kulkan. It was She who drove the ancient elves insane before the Rain of Fire could stop their sacrilege. Her true name is no longer known.

Many lesser gods exist, both good and evil, lawful and chaotic. Some serve the Pantheon of True Gods. Others are vassals to the Unnamed Ones. Some other gods, especially those from other planes, owe no allegiance.

I, Shadrack, thus conclude a brief history of the Living Earth and the Gods Who battle for her future.

Many are the heroes who champion the struggle of Good and Evil. The noble Giants, the skillful elves and the brave humans of former days deserve the tribute of our lips and minds. Much more also may be learned of the Pantheon of True Gods and their servants. We will speak of these things again. Until then consider well the things I have told you, for you must choose in the final battle that has already begun.



Rulers of Mansut

- Special Feature coming in Issue #2 of FANTASY WORLD
- Politics & Economics of Mansut
- All gamers working on the World of Mansut should submit articles & fiction by Jan. 14th to insure inclusion in this special section.

Rulers of Mansut bonus module!

- Castle Avonel module-- coming in Issue #2.

Dragonshead Gale

by Rob Washburn illustrated by Candy and Rob Washburn

The halfling adventurer Shrock looked over his ale tankard at his drinking companions. "You ask me about this scar?" The young hobbit turned his hand over so they could clearly see the seven large puncture wounds on his palm and back of hand. There was a hint of something old in his eyes as he said "I got these in a Dragonshead gale."

"I suppose you wouldn't be far wrong to call us both crazy—my brother and I—going out into a storm like that. Yet that's the way of a Galesman. It's a risky life. Most say all Galesmen are crazy. Hard to say otherwise. But those who wish to net the needlefish have to work in vile weather. The needlefish, you see, only come near the surface when the gods of sea and air do battle.

"So there you have it. When I saw that winter gale start to blow into Dragonshead I went to fetch my brother, Elgard. We were a team, you see. And while all the normal fishermen were tying their craft up safe and heading for a tavern, we, like the other Galesmen, were casting off. Dark as a devils belly was the night we headed into. Makes me shiver still.

"We were the first Galesmen to enter the wild sea and as I'll tell you, we were the first to return. "You ought to know that we were the best. None of the other hunters could spot or capture needlefish like we could. And wealthy too. Each needlefish was worth a gold piece; their fang teeth can be made into needles much prized by the tailors."

guild. And when we'd find an Ancient One, a needler so old it was over four feet long, we'd sometimes get as much as five hundred gold pieces - a year's wealth! The Ancient Ones had to be captured alive and kept that way in a special leaden tub we had. The mages' guild bought them on sight. Paid on sight too! There's a magical oil in an ancient needlefish's brain - glows like the sun. It's used in healing potions and in other brews best left unnamed. Up 'til the time I quit the Galesman's trade, Elgard and I had captured four Ancient Ones. That's more than any other Galesman in Dragonshead or even in the whole of Mansut. Yes, and both of us half-lings too.

"I'm telling you we were the best. When we left the safe harbor and bore into that heart of darkness it wasn't our race or our inexperience that brought misfortune. It was deviltry and bad luck.



Needlefish

"We headed out of Dragonshead harbor into that raging gale. We skittered past the Tumult Stones and around Crusher Point, where six evil giants and 109 men were slain during the Siege of Bones. The sky was all mottled purple and black and the sea was dark and endless when we lost sight of land. We went out about two miles to a secret spot we knew right over top of an underwater mountain.

"We cast the anchor just as the sleet and lightning began. Ppzzott! A lightning bolt hit the water not a quarter of a mile away.

"That'll bring 'em!" Elgard yelled above the storm. We grinned at each other like fools. We thought it was a lucky day. Elgard had a small harpoon in each hand to hook the small needlefish. I had a net at the ready. I was after a live Ancient One. You can see we were expecting the best. It had been almost a year since we'd caught a big one.

"Call it secretive if you like, but I can't tell you the things we said and did to bring the needlefish to us. Every trade keeps things hidden from non-members. Galesmen are the same. You don't want to know.

"Elgard had speared and landed six small needlers when I saw them - big and blue they were, mouths snaggletoothed like a troll's, scales covered with barnacles. There was one five feet long and another close to seven. Krom help me, it's true! I'd never seen or heard of an Ancient one larger. I called them and the five-foot one came. The other turned away, as if what I offered were not enough.

"Elgard dropped his harpoons at the side of the boat and rushed to my aid when he saw I'd lured an Ancient One. 'Look at the size of her!' he shouted as grabbed one side of the net. The fish was a female and must have been a great-great grandmother to the other needlers

in those parts. It took thirty minutes to net her and another five minutes to get her alive into the leaden tub. The gale continued to blow, the waves reached ten foot swells and lightning lit up the raging night. Perfect weather - if you're a Galesman.

"That's why I was so optimistic. I was ready to try for the seven-foot grandfather needler. As I untangled and readied my net Elgard went back to his harpoons. When I looked up he was trying to pull some seaweed from them. It didn't surprise me. The seaweed seemed to be growing from the top of the underwater mountain below us and it was a lot thicker on Elgard's side of the galeboat than on mine. Elgard didn't seem to be able to get his harpoon free. He struggled with it but, if anything, the harpoon seemed to get more fastly entangled. Elgard knelt down and started to exert his strength to break the tendrils of green ropey growth.

"Just then a wave hit us and I had to look away briefly to steady myself. When I looked back, I swear this is what I saw: several tendrils of slimy weed had wrapped around Elgard's hand and one was slithering around his neck.

"In a flash I was at his side. I had dropped the net and pulled the long dagger that I always wear at my belt. Quick as thought I slashed twice in the manner I had been taught to cut the rope of an ascending enemy. It worked. One thin green tentacle was severed. Again I cut, practiced and calm. The tendril around my brother's neck was cleanly sliced but enough remaining tendrils were pulling at my brother that I had to immediately grab him lest he be pulled overboard. Then a fearsome tug of war began.

"Believe me if I tell you it was like a nightmare. All was confusion.

The deck and rail were made slippery by the sleet. The seaweed arms were hellishly strong. In the rolling thunder, this is all I could hear. Elgard said: 'Sea witch... don't look into her eyes.' We grappled with this weed thing for some time; I don't know exactly how long. Both my brother and I are strong - much stronger than we look. It wasn't enough.

"I was out of strength. So was Elgard. And more 'arms' were finding their way on deck. I yelled for Elgard to brace himself. I let go. Cut to kill, that's how I'd been taught. Two more tentacles gone. By a lightning flash I saw them twitch before they died.

"Elgard was too tired. By that same brilliant flash of light I saw him go overboard. His frightened face being swallowed in black water is what I'm telling you I saw. I was stunned. 'Couldn't have happened' is what I thought. But Elgard was gone. I jumped.

"Above water was a tempest, a dark hurricane and cold, but as I entered the water all that changed. Cold. It was still cold, but much calmer. I could see several types of fish and some leafy plants, all lit up by a soft purple glow. I could see seaweed, but none of the ropey 'arms' that had grabbed my brother. Down. Somewhere below was the 'mountain top'. Frantically I followed the anchor line from our galeboat into the depths. That was lucky. It led me very near to what I wanted - Elgard.

"Twenty feet down in the cold water I swam, hand over hand on the anchor line, pushing harmless seaweed aside. Stripped to little more than my dagger and belt, I reached a boulder and vegetation-choked plain. This had to be the underwater mountain top. The dim purple glow wasn't much light

but I didn't need much. Ahead and to the left of me was a gradual slope down. To my right was a slope up, a fuzzy area of darkness and a hint of movement.

"I didn't even stop to think. Off to the right I plunged. Immediately I saw what the movement was. It was the seven-foot needlefish. He fled at my approach. Needlefish are scavengers; they come to the surface to eat the dead during a storm. They don't try to tackle anything living even though they could, with those devil mouths of theirs.

"A dark thought came into my mind. Elgard would soon seem dead. How many needlefish were in the area? If I didn't find Elgard soon, seaweed monster or no, I'd not find enough to catch in a net.

"I pushed on through the purple light, over the boulders and past the plants. The needlefish fled before me. As the darkish area began to grow I slowed down and edged off to the left. That was wise. I saw the needler startle what was in that underwater clearing.

"Near one edge of a thirty-foot diameter open space was a small circle of curiously shaped stones. Low and squat they were, with weird runes carved into their edges. Floating over the stones was a mass of seaweed that wrapped the weakly struggling form of Elgard. The seaweed looked like a beautiful woman, giant-ess size. 'Sea witch,' I thought, called kelpie queen by some.

"Elgard looked like his air was almost gone. I had used about a minute and a half of air since I'd jumped in the water and I had about as much left. I didn't stop to think. I just moved through the dark shadows to where the witch's back would be to me.

"From closer up the giant sea witch didn't look beautiful anymore.

Green skin squeaked and had bubbles filled with ocean vermin. Shapely arms and flowing hair tapered to a mass of ropey tentacles squeezing the life out of my brother.

"Silent and quick, I attacked. The dagger went in two inches from the green and white spine, one inch below the shoulder blade. That's how it's done. The blow would have killed most humans, most monsters too. This was a tough opponent. It was hurt but it whirled to attack. Tentacles writhed around me. There was something bad about its eyes. I turned my head away and struck blindly at its face. I felt my attack hit. Good damage. But it got me too. Seven holes through my right hand. I don't know how the witch did it. The wound had a firey feel, like a scratch from a sea urchin's spine.

"I switched blade hands. Believe me if I tell you I fight as well with my left hand as with my right, I attacked again and again. Six times I struck; four times I hit. All the while the ropey arms of the witch were trying to catch me. They didn't. All the while I was running out of air. I kept going for past how long I had ever held my breath before. With the sixth attack the kelpie queen went all saggy. Briefly, I tried to get Elgard untangled. Nogo. Elgard wasn't moving but I had to go up for air.

"My head broke the surface and I began to gasp and gulp the spray of the storm. There was no way to help it. I noticed the galeboat twenty yards away. Thirty seconds later I headed back down. I thought I had won. I wasn't too worried about Elgard. There are ways to get water out of a man's lungs and make a man who looks dead come alive.

"I came back to the clearing from straight above. What I saw there wasn't what I'd left. A mass of limp seaweed still floated above the



Kelpie Queen

runestones, but now there were two Elgards there! Both of them entangled. Both of them still. Entering the side of the clearing I saw the seven-foot Ancient One. I have a good eye for trajectory. That needlefish was headed for the Elgard on my right.

"Usually I operate a lot by intuition. This time I didn't need to guess. I knew which of those two was my brother and which was the witch pretending. There was no time to waste. I attacked - fast. The witch had no time to react or

entangle me. She must have been expecting me to hesitate or look at the eyes. I'm no fool. One slashing blow did for her.

"Less than a minute later I had my brother free. The tough strands of weed were rapidly losing their sheen. As I pulled my brother to the surface I saw the huge needler moving in to eat the remains of the witch.

"Back in the galeboat I began to frantically press the water out of Elgard's lungs. I tried to breathe the life back into him. Nothing worked. He was covered with purple bruises. I tried again. Again, I didn't, I couldn't give up.

"It was no good. He was dead.


"Then I tried something wild. I pulled the five-foot needlefish out of the tub. A quick flick of her tail and she flopped into the bottom of the galeboat. I was on her. I cut her skull open and a liquid, shining like the sun, began to ooze out. I poured some of the oil on Elgard. I put some in his mouth.

"Maybe I was crazy for a while. Lightning flashed off my blade. The wind whipped my hair. And that needler oil lit up the scene like fire.

"But Elgard was dead. The needler oil could have worked. I just didn't know how. When I got control of myself I pulled a tarpaulin over Elgard's body.

"I watched the Ancient One, the seven-foot needler, follow me as I fought my way through the storm. 'We both lost tonight, didn't we?' I said to the Ancient One. Then I pulled into Dragonshead Harbor and brought my brother home.

Shrock stared intently at his hand. He twitched it, rippling the scars on palm and back of hand. "In a Dragonshead gale. In the dark waters. If you look a sea witch in the eyes - this." Shrock displayed his scar. "This is lucky. There's worse, much worse. Believe me if I tell you."

 Shrock is a halfling thief player character created by D.G. Grieser. The name Shrock means "Quiet Stone" and was given to him by the elves of Clearwood for whom Shrock performed a great and dangerous service, but that's a story in and of itself. As a point of interest, Shrock embarked on that quest as a means of raising money to resurrect his dead brother, Elgard. Perhaps we will read more of Shrock in later issues of FANTASY WORLD. (ed.)



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Larben - My Life So Far

as told to Scott Moore illustrated by Scott Moore and Candy Washburn

My name is Larben and I have a story to tell. It's not a big story, nor a very important story, but young Scott here coaxed me into telling it. So if you'll just bear with me, I'll tell you the story of my life, so far.

I was born in a small mountain village near the city of Dragonshead. The village was never formally named but travelers passing through there called it the Lonely Dale because it was so isolated. As a child I had few friends but no enemies. That's because I was usually in some secluded corner reading one of the books I had borrowed, found, or (and these were few) bought. We had a simple comfortable life in my village but I liked to explore in the forest just east of town.

On one of my expeditions into the woods I came across a huge old hollowed-out oak tree. Whenever I wanted to get away and I didn't have any work to do, I took a book or two to the tree and read.

Once, when I was seventeen I decided to go north one day and see what there was to see in the barren rocks north of my village. I walked over the rocks for a few miles and came upon a tiny valley with a small hut at the northern end. I went to investigate and found that a hermit lived there. He had a small garden that he apparently got all his food from. He invited me in and we talked. His name was Jernith. From our talk I found out that he was a sage. He knew a lot about plants, especially herbs, grasses, grains and weeds. He

admitted that once in a while he could see the future. We almost immediately became friends and from then on I visited Jernith whenever I could.

It was during one of these visits that the sage told me that he had been serying into the near future of my village and that he'd seen danger would soon come upon the village.

When I returned to the village to warn the people of the impending doom, they laughed and said that my friend was no sage, just a senile old fool who had been in the wild-



erness too long. No one believed me.

After a week or so I decided that maybe Jernith had just been wrong. I went to my tree and read. The story I read was about the fabled City Castle of Dwarkin. I was entranced by the wealth and splendor of the long-dead city, and I stayed in my tree over-late. When I returned to the village that evening I found it utterly destroyed. All the buildings were gutted with fire and bodies were strewn haphazardly about. The village had been caught unawares by a band of brigands. No one was left alive and nothing valuable remained.

What hurt me most was that I hadn't been there to help my people and hadn't tried hard enough to convince them of the sage's warning. I spent the next day burning the bodies of the villagers and burying the ashes in the once-bountiful fields. I vowed that all brigands would pay for this but as I grew older and wiser I knew that they would pay for their evils in the afterlife.

I knew I couldn't stay in the village so I went to Jernith the sage and told him what had happened. He said that his old bones were wearying and he needed one such as me to take over the work of his garden and keep his house standing.

After almost a year, the ancient man died. I was working in the garden one day and when I came into the hut I found his body hunched over the table with a look of dismay on his face. On a small scrap of paper on the table was hastily scrawled the single word, "Earthwound".

The word sounded familiar but I couldn't quite place it. So I went to Dragonshead in hopes of finding out what Earthwound was. I had to find out what had alarmed my old friend enough to kill him.

After hanging around some of

the more unsavory taverns in town and listening in on many conversations, I heard a group of adventurers mention Earthwound. They spoke vaguely of some strange things going on up there. I heard them mention a town near there - Valian. "Valian, isn't that the city at the northern end of the Northern Sea, just west of the Dragon's Teeth mountains?" I asked.

"Aye," replied the barkeeper. I was out the door in a blink.

I ran to the municipal docks and asked the dockmaster if any of the ships there were headed for Valian. "That would be the Fram-bird," answered the ruddy stocky man.

I hurried down the docks to the graceful sailing ship. There I was met by two ferocious-looking guards, who found something else to do when I "accidentally" dropped my last two pieces of silver at their feet. I ran up the gangplank, glanced around, then headed for what I figured to be the captain's cabin. I knocked, and before the captain could answer, I opened the door and entered the room, closing the door behind me.

The captain was a great stout man with a full beard. I later learned that he was known as "Sam the Stout." His appearance was somewhat intimidating.

"Do you need a new addition to your crew?" I asked.

"No, I don't. Now get out of here before I call the guards!" answered the quickly reddening captain. Then a smile grew on his face. "No, wait. Can you cook?"

I feigned surprise and excitedly replied, "Well, yes! Actually I sort of fancy myself a gourmet." The truth of the matter was, I knew very little about cooking but I did know of some spices from my days with the sage.

"Wonderful!" cried the bearded mountain. "I haven't had a decent meal in

weeks!"

"Well, you shall have one tonight, mark me. What do you pay?"

"I'll give you one silver a night, plus meals and a place to sleep. That is if I like your cooking. Elsewise, well, let's not consider that possibility," he said with a blustery laugh.

"And what might the gracious captain request for his first decent meal in weeks?" I asked humbly.

"Surprise me," replied my new boss. "By the way, we cast off for Valian tomorrow." Then he called for his cabin boy to show me the galley.

So there I was, nineteen years old and making my debut as a cook. During the trip I managed to keep everyone content with my "unique" (as one man termed it) style of cooking and with some stories I told them of things I had read.

In Valian I took my leave of the Foambird and went in search of a job. I encountered a building called Slategrey's Armory and went inside to see if they needed a new worker. It would be the perfect place to learn about Earthwound because adventurers would be coming in for armor and weapons.

As it turned out, they did need someone to keep the place in order. I got the job. I picked up the skills of being an armorer during my time there. Another thing I picked up was magic. I was fascinated by it, so I started studying it. I hired a magician to train me and became a magician myself.

While I worked at the armory I collected bits and pieces of information about Earthwound. I met up with some adventurers - Sedoc, a gnome fighting illusionist, Lightfoot, a human ranger, Shrock, a halfling thief, and Bolor Backslap, a human thief. We formed an adventuring party and went

to explore Earthwound.

Later we met a barbarian named Lupus, and he joined our party. Around that time I became a fighting cleric of Terasu, the Goddess of the Sun.

We stopped exploring Earthwound for a few days and competed in the Mad Magician's Tournament. We made it to the final round. Our opponents in the final round tried to kill the Mad Magician. We helped to defeat them and were awarded the victory.

In Earthwound we met some leaders among men. They gave us a quest. The nature of the quest and how we accomplished it is a story in itself. Suffice it to say that with the help of these leaders and the grace of the Gods we fulfilled the quest and were thereafter made Knights by His Majesty King Gregory IV, High King of Mansut, and given a fief in Dragonspaw to develop in the name of the King.

That ends my story up to now. Farewell, and may the good Gods keep you safe and prosperous.



Scott Moore played the character Larben in Rob Washburn's Earthwound campaign last year. Scott is a junior at Batesville High School and an excellent student, if Honor Rolls are to be trusted. He enjoys reading science fiction and fantasy, playing The Game of the Unknown Navel, and watching Late Night With David Letterman. He's writing a module for Role Players Workshop and, with Troy Ilderton, developing the Kingdom of Fangdeep in the World of Mansut.



We think writing character histories like the one above, is an excellent idea. It aids in role-playing and enables player characters to be known and used as NPC's by other gamers.



Treasure Chest

Good Ideas from Gamers

Needlefish

-by Rob Washburn

Players Information

The long sharp teeth of needlefish, when extracted, can be used without alteration as sewing needles. In addition to their shape, the teeth are very hard and have naturally-occurring holes in the root ends which become the eyes of the needles. Very large old needlefish are also prized for a special oil in their brains that is used in magical healing and other potions. An adventurous type of fisherman specializes in catching needlefish and capturing the large ones (those over four feet long) alive. The magicians, alchemists and clerics who purchase the large needlefish insist on having them alive.

Those who fish for needlefish are called galesmen because of their practice of seeking the needlefish mostly during severe storms. Needlefish live deep in the sea. They are scavengers that eat only recently dead flesh. They come to the surface only at night or when a storm darkens the surface of the water. Some say the needlefish are attracted by electrical discharges, others say the fish smell the death caused by gales and hurricanes.

The very large old needlefish are sometimes called ancient ones. They are shy and usually flee from living creatures not of their own kind. However, an ancient one will attack if cornered, using its dagger-long teeth.

DM's Information

NEEDLEFISH

frequency: rare

number appearing: 1-4

armor class: 6

move: //12"

hit dice: 3

% in lair: 90%

treasure type: no treasure but the fish themselves are valued at 1 GP each, 50-500 GP for each "ancient one" (over 4' long) delivered alive.

number of attacks: 1

damage/attack: 3-12

special attacks: none

special defences: none

magic resistance: none

intelligence: animal

alignment: neutral

size: 1' - 7' (though 98% are less than 4' long)

psionics: none

experience point value: 100 + 3/hp



Needlefish

Kelpie Queen

-by Rob Washburn

Player's Information

Go to any coastal town and you will hear sea captains telling fearsome tales of kelpies, the seaweed monsters that lure sailors and adventurers to watery graves, but among the kelpies there are a few that are most terrible. These are called kelpie queens, and so desirable and lovely do they appear that few males are proof to their wiles. Only the most powerful or the luckiest adventurers could expect to survive an encounter with a kelpie queen.

Kelpie queens can make themselves appear utterly beautiful even at close range. Heroes who get within reach will find themselves tightly wrapped in powerful tentacles as strong as those of a giant octopus. The kelpie queen can then attack with several fang-toothed jaws that lie hidden behind her fair countenance. Folk wisdom says that anyone confronting a kelpie queen should avoid looking into her eyes or he will become hopelessly entranced and be unable to escape.

Kelpie queens are very rare but when they are found it always seems to be near underwater ruins or other watery places of power. None knows why this should be.



Kelpie queens are sometimes called sea witches.

DM's InformationKELPIE QUEENfrequency: very rarenumber appearing: 1-2armor class: 1move: 12" // 15"hit dice: 7% in lair: 50%treasure type: Dnumber of attacks: 9damage per attack: 1x6 (tentacles)/2d4x3 (jaws)special attacks: (see below)special defences: (see below)magic resistance: noneintelligence: highalignment: neutral evilsize: largepsionics: noneexperience point value: 550 + 7/hp

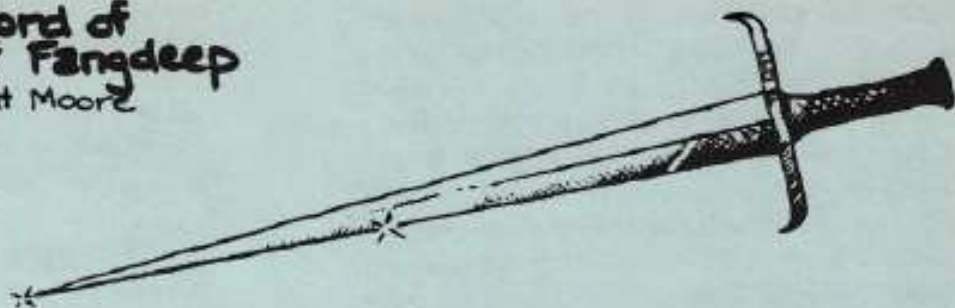
A kelpie queen can cast two powerful charm spells per day. Player character must save at -2 (-4 if he looks into the kelpie queen's eyes) or jump into water and breathe water eagerly for 2-20 points of damage per round. Females are immune to this charm effect. A kelpie queen will grasp a victim in her tentacles watching happily as the male victim swallows water and dies. Kelpie queens prefer to leave their "lovers" blemishless so they can offer them up to Sekolah, the shark goddess of Hades, but reluctant sacrifices will be subdued with all nine attacks if necessary.

A kelpie queen can also call lightning (refer to page 57 of the Players Handbook) as the third level Druid spell. This spell manifests itself as a ball of bluish light that flows from the Altar of Sekolah. The kelpie queen must be within 500 yards of her altar. This spell takes one turn to cast and it is effective only under water. The ball of bluish light may be summoned once each turn and will do 8d8 damage to anyone within twenty feet of the detonation point (which will usually be an opponent).

Kelpie queens sometimes lair with were sharks and can walk dry land for up to two days in the guises of beautiful females.

Verdeflamme, Sword of King Rannack of Fangdeep

- by Scott Moore



Verdeflamme is a longsword of mithril. It has a cross-type tang and a leather wrapped hilt. There are no visible markings on either blade or hilt, but on the tang is engraved "1349TA" which is when the sword was forged.

Verdeflamme is intelligent. As a matter of fact, it is more intelligent than many men. It cannot speak, but it communicates with the king by empathy. The sword has the same alignment as King Rannack himself. It is lawful, but neither good nor evil. Verdeflamme can hit even a prince of Hell, though barely so. When used against giants and other monsters of the class of giants it hits with nearly twice the bonus it has against other creatures. At these times, Verdeflamme glows with a green fire. When it hits any chaotically-aligned giant or giant-class monster it makes the opponent slip and fall, losing a round. I have been told that the King sometimes uses it to knock away boulders hurled by giants. Many other rumors circulate about the powers of Verdeflamme.

History of the sword

Verdeflamme was forged in 1349TA by Marnock, the great smith King of Fangdeep, in the green fire created by his wife, Atri, magess of eights. Marnock dedicated the sword to Krom, who was so well pleased with its fineness that he put his blessing on it. The blessing gave Verdeflamme its special powers versus giants and

their ilk. In return for his blessing Krom requested Marnock's son, Ilnan, to take the sword and an army to State Pass and defeat the orc outpost there so the pass would be safe for human use.

Ilnan accomplished his quest, but Trantith, one of Ilnan's captains, stole the sword and replaced it with one whose appearance was identical to that of Verdeflamme. When Ilnan returned home, Marnock discovered that the sword his son carried was an impostor. He sent out troops all over the Kingdom to look for the true sword. While Marnock's defenses were down, Trantith snuck into the palace to try to assassinate the King and usurp the throne. Some of the King's other enemies had the same idea and hired a cutthroat to accomplish the murder. When the assassin saw Trantith in the palace, he figured the captain to be a palace guard and slew him. When he tried to take Verdeflamme from the corpse, it hurt him to touch the sword. He knew that he could never use the sword, but any sword that hurt someone who touched it had to have an ego. Any sword with an ego had to be powerful - and valuable. He decided to sell it and make some easy money. That was in 1353.

Nothing is known of what happened to the sword after that until 1448, exactly fifty years ago. Verdeflamme was found by Borg-

nur, Ilran's grandson, who was King that time. Although he was seventy years old, he was leading an army against an army of orcs to the north, near the Green Keep. The King's army won the battle and looted the city of the orcs. Part of the booty was Verdeflamme. King Borgnur ruled for two more years, until he died of old age. Then his son, Rannack, succeeded to the throne and has ruled since then.

Notes for the DM.

RANNACK

CLASS: fighter
LEVEL: 12
AGE: 86
HEIGHT: 6'2"
WEIGHT: 193 lb.
RACE: human
ALIGNMENT: Lawful neutral

<u>Rannack as a boy</u>	<u>now</u>
strength: 17	15
intelligence: 13	14
wisdom: 11	13
dexterity: 12	10
constitution: 15	14
charisma: 15	15

VERDEFLAMME

ALIGNMENT: Lawful neutral

intelligence: 13

communication: empathy

ego: 15

special powers: +3, +5 vs. giants and giant class. Burns with a green flame when +5. Makes chaotic giants and giant class opponents it hits slip and fall unless they save vs. rod, staff, wand. It can be used to knock away hurled boulders twice a day if its holder saves vs. paralyzation.

Bile Men

by Rob Washburn

Players Information

The bile men inhabit the foothills and mountains that border the Glowing Plain to the north and east. They have also been seen in many of the kingdoms of the world of Mansut, appearing at odd locations and seemingly intent on indecipherable deeds. No one has ever discovered a village or large lair of these humanoids, nor has a female ever been sighted by one who would or could tell of it.

Some say that the minds of the bile men have been warped by the strange radiance of the lands in which they dwell. In any case, the random acts and unusual thought patterns of these beast-men have resulted in several brief but bloody battles with troops from the Kingdom of Fangdeep. All attempts to trade with bile men have failed. Very few know how to speak their language, and those who do tend to adopt the

bile men's viewpoints and chaotic actions. These individuals refuse to discuss details about the culture, beliefs, or language of the bile men and become violent if closely questioned.

If travelers meet bile men singly or in groups it is best to move away from them quickly but without showing fear. Bile men stand four feet tall and have sickly greenish-yellow skin. Their eyes are bloated and greyish. It is wise to fear their taloned claws and drugged bite, which seems to lessen the attack abilities of their opponents. Some few bile men of the most terrible sort use a strong magic which closely resembles that of illusionists. Some say that bile men worship the Whisperer through ceremonies and by acts of sacrilege too terrible to mention.

Bile men (cont.)

DM's Information

The race of bile men are insane evil worshipers of the Whisperer, a God intent on the destruction of all law and good. Bile men hone their fighting and magical abilities in temples of the Whisperer exceptionally deep in the wilderness. There they bring the spoils of their hunting expeditions - pelts from strange animals, elixirs, bits of string, clods of dirt from special locations, gems, scrolls, and things best left unnamed - and use them in powerful magic to further the work of their insane God.

From time to time bile men will initiate humans, humanoids and demihumans into their secrets. Those unfortunate creatures who survive the initiation ordeal then become obsessed with helping the bile men accomplish bizarre and seemingly random quests. Some of these recruits attain high level within the ranks of the bile men.

Females of the species of bile men are very rare and take the form of bloated, twelve foot-long wormlike monsters. They are revered and kept safe in temples of the Whisperer, where they give birth to a bile man about four times a year (and rarely a female). Fully grown childbearing females are high (9th - 18th) level clerics.

The training bile men receive in their temples resembles that of monks

at low and medium levels and that of illusionists at high levels.

BILE MEN

frequency: rare

number appearing: 1-20

armor class: by level, ranging from 7 to -1.

move: 12"

hit dice: by level, 1-18.

% in lair: 30%

treasure type: (individuals) Q, X.

number of attacks: (claw/claw/bite) 1-3/1-3/1-2 plus poison and damage bonus (see below).

special attacks: (see below)

special defenses: (see below)

magic resistance: standard

intelligence: high, but often insane.

alignment: neutral (insane) evil

size: S (4' tall)

psionics: nil

HD	AC	DAMAGE BONUS (ea. of 3 attacks)	SPECIAL ABILITIES	XP VALUE
1	7	+1	A	40+1/hp
2	7	+2		73+2/hp
3	6	+2	B	125+3/hp
4	6	+3	C	175+4/hp
5	5	+3	D	275+5/hp
6	5	+4	E	405+6/hp
7	4	+4		500+7/hp
8	4	+5	F	750+ /hp
9	3	+5	G	975+9/hp
10	3	+6	H	1400+10/hp
11	2	+6	I	1750+12/hp
12	2	+6	J	2050+13/hp
13	1	+7	K	2575+15/hp
14	1	+7	L	3050+16/hp
15	0	+7	M	3700+17/hp
16	0	+7	N	4500+18/hp
17	-1	+8	O	6200+19/hp
18	-1	+8	P	10,000+20/hp

explanation of special abilities:

- A. Bite pinches nerves of opponent slowing him (as spell) unless save vs. paralyzation is made.
- B. stun. If bite scores 5 higher (on d20) than that needed to hit, opponent is stunned for d6 rounds (no save).

Treasure Chest (Bile Men - cont.)

- C. *3 to save vs. all mind-based attacks.
- D. *3 to save vs. magical attacks that one can dodge and save for no damage.
- E. Movement rate increases to 15"
- F. Opponent paralyzed for 2-8 rounds if bite scores 5 or more higher (and 20) than that needed to hit (supercedes stun ability).
- G. Ability to speak common and 2 other languages. Illusionist spell change self useable 2/day.
- H. Phantasmal force spell useable 2/day.
- I. Invisibility spell useable 1/day.
- J. Hypnotic pattern spell useable 1/day.
- K. Teleport self and 3 others (no error) 1/day, spectral force 1/day.
- L. Suggestion spell useable 2/day.
- M. Phantasmal killer spell useable 1/day.
- N. Power word stun useable 1/day.

- O. Mass suggestion, maze, disintegrate, programmed illusion spells each 1/day.
- P. Alter reality, prismatic spray, and vision spells each 1/day.

Bile men use monster attack tables. There are only three bile men (excluding females) of levels 10-14. There is only one bile man (excluding females) at levels 15-18. High level groups of bile men travel to all parts of the world (using teleport spell) on special quests for the Whisperer. These high level groups will have a special objective in mind and will go about achieving it in a single-minded and eccentric manner.



Amatin, A Barbarian warlord in the Kingdom of Mansut, warns all readers of this ad!

Rob Westburn invites you to...

"HELP ME Create a Fantasy Campaign

- Motivated Gamers should contact me to get more information about the World of Mansut. I'm looking for creative Role-Players who can help with an existing "area franchise", or who could develop a Kingdom or city from scratch!

- If your application is accepted you & your group of players will receive a map drawn by Rob (like the ones in this magazine).
- Write fiction, modules, gaming aids for Mansut. RFW™ will buy them!

Rob, I'm interested...

send me info or give me a call.

name: _____

address: _____

Telephone: _____ age: _____

*1 in the World of Mansut Earthwound Campaign

Kuroth's Treasure

by Rob Washburn

An AddVenture™ Module for levels 2-3



KUROTH'S TREASURE

by Rob Washburn

Illustrated by Rob Washburn, Candy Washburn, and Gary Richter.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. General Information

This is an AddVenture™ module for second and third level characters, and is designed to be used with the AD&D™ fantasy role-playing game rules. An AddVenture is an adventure module designed for trouble-free DMing. The dungeon master is provided with player handouts, annotated encounter maps, tournament-style room descriptions, and a richly detailed player information sheet. This added material helps to make the adventure come alive. Players who like challenges will enjoy these handouts. The handouts contain clues that a clever gamer can solve and act upon to greatly improve his chances of success.

Kuroth's Treasure is a combined wilderness and dungeon module, suitable for a balanced party of from three to eight players. This module can be completed in three to four nights of play. It is the first of the Earthbound Campaign series. Healing, fighting and creative problem solving

skills are absolutely essential for success in this module. Thieving and magical skills are also useful in some specific encounter situations.

Kuroth's Treasure has been used to test players' ability to cooperate in pursuing an objective during the course of Role Players' Workshop's Players' Seminar. The dungeon master will find that successful adventuring groups stick together, use their player abilities judiciously and avoid dangerous but unnecessary encounters. The reward for this wise play will be the magical treasure at the end of the quest - Kuroth's artifact!

If you intend to be a player in this adventure, stop reading now! The module will be more fun for you and your fellow players if the twists of plot and puzzles encountered are seen for the first time as you search for Kuroth's Treasure.

*AD&D is a trademark of TSR Hobbies, Inc. Role Players' Workshop is not affiliated with TSR.

A Notes for the DM

This Adventure is designed to be easily inserted into your current campaign. If you are playing in the World of Mansut use the map provided with this module (handout #1). Your players will want to acquaint themselves with the material on the players information sheet, travel to Four Sisters Castle, equip themselves for the two-weeks' journey to Titan's Skull, and trek into the wilderness.

If your campaign is inaccessible to the Kingdom of Mansut, pick a desolate spot one to three weeks travel into the wilderness. Adapt the players information sheet as necessary. Have your players equip themselves and set off into the unknown. The Trek into the Wilderness of Despair section of this Adventure may need to be modified to fit your campaign world's terrain.

It is assumed that the player team has already found the Treasure Riddle Scrolls has researched Kuroth and decided that the ancient scrolls are authentic as this adventure begins. The Players' Information Sheets gives characters full knowledge of this background.

If the DM wishes to play through the background action outlined in the Players' Information Sheets, he should take the players through the following sequence of events:

¹The player characters should discover the old scrolls (handout #2) in a magic shop, as part of a treasure in a previous dungeon, as a gift from a mysterious man who makes the group promise to use the wealth wisely and then disappears, or in any other way that pleases the DM.

²The scrolls are obviously ancient. The words inscribed there are written with gold ink. The message will be indecipherable to members of the group, even if a read magic spell is used.

³The players should take the scrolls to an expert in ancient magic and languages. A high-level magician, cleric, or sage will do. This person will not work cheaply. It is up to the DM to decide what to charge, but the basic rule is

"all that the customer will bear." This learned person will study the scrolls for a week, ask for a meeting with the group, then offer to buy the scrolls from them. He will offer twice the fee paid him to decipher and will go as high as ten times his fee. If the party refuses to sell the scrolls, he will tell them some portion of the information given in the Players' Information Sheets. Among the things this expert will tell is that the scrolls were written by Kuroth.

⁴The players should realize that they don't have enough information yet (the scrolls will not be fully translated and/or the location of the dungeon will not be known). They should then go to another sage or two. They should research Kuroth as well as the scrolls. Eventually they will have all the information they need. Ham it up! The translation should be hard to obtain. It should take a lot of money and effort to get all the needed data collected!

⁵Now the party should journey to Four Sisters Castle (or whatever point of departure they have chosen). This could be an adventure in itself!

Note that the information obtain in the above sequence of events should roughly duplicate the information which would otherwise be provided through use of the Players' Information Sheets.

If the DM wishes to use the Players' Information Sheets and start the adventure with the Trek into the Wilderness of Despair he should make a copy or two of the pages that follow so that players can follow along as he reads. You may even want to make several copies of the Players' Information Sheets and pass them out a day or two ahead of time. This would give players a chance to get fully familiar with this material. Needless to say, there are several clues in the Players' Information Sheets. In general, they describe how the group came to decipher what was on the ancient scrolls, (illustration #3) and where the treasure might be hidden.

I. PLAYERS' INFORMATION SHEETS

It seems ages since you discovered the old scrolls in the treasure hoard. At that time they seemed nothing more than stray bits of debris, but the more you looked at them, the more the scrolls appeared to be something special. A close inspection showed that they were lettered in gold, and when your magician cast a read magic spell he was not able to decipher a single syllable of the strange documents. You knew then that you were on to something. The read magic spell is always supposed to work! When your magic user detected magic on the scrolls, your group vowed to find out what was written on them.

As soon as you got back to the city of Valian you swore Gred the Mage to secrecy and paid him to decipher the scrolls. He charged 1000 gold pieces - a very high fee - and set to work. A week later he came back to the group and offered to buy the scrolls from you for 2000 gold pieces. When you asked what was written on the parchments that made them so valuable, Gred upped his offer to 5000 gold pieces.

You refused this bid as well and reminded Gred that he had to tell you what was on the scrolls. He had accepted a commission and if he did not perform as he claimed he would, his reputation as a member of the magicians' guild would be ruined. Reluctantly at first, then with increasing excitement, Gred told you what he had learned.

He searched your faces as if gauging how the words he was about to say would affect you. "Even using the most powerful of knowledge spells," Gred began, "I was unable to decipher these things." He indicated the ancient scrolls.

"I had to turn instead to ancient reference books from the Second Age, thousands of years ago." Gred paused and puckered his lips in thought. "Even these books were of little use since they

contain only fragments of the Language of Power.

"The best source was this Grimoire." Gred indicated a much-worn book seemingly bound with a greenish serpent's scaly skin. "This Grimoire is a genealogy of kings and heroes of the Second Age. A Lord Hero is described that..." Gred opened the Grimoire and pointed to a strangely shaped symbol. Then he pointed to other symbols scattered throughout the scrolls you had found.

"See here!" Gred cried in an agitated voice. "Here and here and here is his sign. There can be little doubt that Kuroth authored your scrolls!" Your group looked with interest at the symbol in Gred's Grimoire. It did match the signature symbols on your scrolls.

You asked Gred who this Kuroth was. Gred replied that Kuroth was a "stealthy fighter" whose deeds of cunning and mischief are sometimes still told as legends. "Rotha the Swift" is what Kuroth has come to be called," Gred concluded. "Rotha the Swift!" you exclaimed. The fables of Rotha were bedtime stories and lessons often told to children. You remembered them well from your own childhood. "If Kuroth was Rotha and he really accomplished even half of the great deeds attributed to him, he must have been nearly a God!" you told Gred.

"Beloved of the Gods, anyway," Gred replied. "It says in my Grimoire that Kuroth was gifted with a favor from the Gods. Now look," Gred continued with bright eyes, "the symbol that stands for 'gift from the Gods' is on your scrolls in several places, and especially on this page." [DM - SHOW PLAYERS Illustration*F. The page Gred points to is the one shown on the top of illustration*1.]

"Gift of the Gods' could also be translated 'artifact' or 'hero's treasure'," Gred continued with a hushed voice. "I think these weird scrolls of yours could tell where Kuroth's legendary treasure may lie!"

The members of your adventuring party looked at each other in amazement



This was far better than you had hoped. The legends you remembered of Rotha the Swift described his treasure severally as a staff of great power, a crown of might, a mechanical giant, and even as a blessed feather. The legends didn't agree on the appearance of the artifact but did agree on the powers. Rotha's artifact was said to lead the possessor to treasure, make him immune to attacks, and give him psychic powers.

"What else did you find out?" you asked.

"Very little, I'm afraid. This source book on heroes was translated into High Elven and few of the original symbols of power remain. I was able to get a couple of other phrases but they were just gibberish: 'Face half south from where the sun sets on Firstling's script so bold. There, but myriad giants strides stands Firstling's top so cold.'

"Here's another scrap: Ged translated haltingly from the ancient scrolls: 'Be you judged as I was judged, my

hero's luck to obtain. Face the fear and grief and might of death's own nurtured pain. When all seems done and conquered, then First Test will you ordain.'"

"Sounds like you almost have it completed," you said encouragingly to Ged.

Ged gave a tired sigh. "Not really. I've translated as much as I can with this Grimoire or any other book I know. The phrases I read you are the only ones I could get. The rest is unknown. It's ninety percent untranslated. And this page here, the one that has the artifact word on it, I can't get anything on that." Ged rested his head on his arms and looked at your group. "I'll pay you 7000 gold pieces for these scrolls. Just take the money and forget you ever saw them."

"Why do you want them so badly if you think it's hopeless?" you asked pointedly.

Reluctantly Ged replied. "I know someone who might be able to carry the translation further."

"Who?" you demanded.

"You're not going to sell, are you?"

Ged's mouth was a wry grin.

"No," your group said as one.

"I thought not," Ged sighed again. "Oh, well. I'll tell you if ..."

"No ifs! We paid you 1000 gold pieces for secrecy and information. Now give us the information!"

Slowly a wide smile spread over Ged's face. "You're right. I do owe you my best effort. The man you want is Snipe Longstride. He is a master Sage in Montome, a hundred and forty miles from here along the King's Highway."

"We've heard of him," you replied.

One week later you found yourselves in Snipe Longstride's library. A cozy fire was in the hearth. Aged books lined one wall. Snipe, a balding, slightly paunchy middle-aged man was bent over a piece of vellum. He was painstakingly drawing a map.

"Come in," Snipe called to you without looking up. "So you're the ones who've been waiting to see me this last day and a half?" Without waiting for a reply the sage continued. "So now you see me. What do you think?"

You explained that you had an ancient manuscript that defied knowledge and magic. You didn't mention Ged's partial translation. Snipe's head jerked up.

"Well, let's see it then," Snipe demanded. You handed him a sample scroll. Snipe held it very carefully.

"Can you translate it?" you asked.

"Maybe," Snipe replied laconically.

"Cost you 2000 gold pieces."

"There are these as well," you said handing him another half dozen scrolls.

"That's more like it," Snipe said happily. "I'll do these for 1000 gold pieces."

"500."

"Done," said Snipe, stoney-faced. "Come back in six months." He turned back to his map, where he was drawing a large mountain with caves at its base.

"Six months!" You shouted in outrage.

"What makes you think we have six months? Tomorrow! We'll come back tomorrow," you said knowing this to be unreasonable.

Snipe looked up again, blinking perplexedly. "Tomorrow, eh?" He clucked his tongue appraisingly. "Done. Come back tomorrow." Snipe went back to his work.

You shrugged as you and your companions left the room. "Crazy old man," you muttered.

On the evening of the next day you returned to the sage's small castle on the outskirts of Montome. Snipe met you at the door.

"Got bad news for you," he began. "I couldn't decipher those scrolls."

Immediate disappointment showed on your faces. "Nope," Snipe continued, "I don't know where you got them but they are Words of Power from High Giantish of the Second Age." He shook his head. "It's a lost language. I was only able to translate about fifty percent. Sorry."

Excitedly you questioned Snipe about what he had found. He read you large portions of the Scrolls of Kuroth. They opened up a whole new world of adventure and daring. Kuroth was Rotha! You recognized references to his fabled adventures, but what you were really listening for were references to Kuroth's treasure - and they were there! These are the phrases that stuck in your mind. The first gave another clue about where Kuroth's artifact might be located.

Due south from sun's upright spears into Despair's Deep Heart

Look for the Firstling's cold bone lost in the clouds, alone.

The next part gave a more perplexing message.

"Heroes' number are the ways that fate's justice and vengeance may be wrought. The Gift of the Gods swells

tears of rage in the eyes of the Insane Ones.
Seven steps of testing prepare for heroes' strife
Who battle for the Blood and Bones and for Earth's sacred life."

Best of all, Snipe had been able to translate the page that Gred had said might be the key to finding Kuroth's treasure. [DM- SHOW ILLUSTRATION *1, THEN ILLUSTRATION *2, which is the translation of *1]

You took on a measured, assured air. "I know where Kuroth's treasure is," you whispered to one of your companions. Then you spoke aloud to Snipe. "Do you have more to show us?"

"No; as I said, I had only partial success," Snipe replied regretfully.

You noted that many of the passages that Snipe Longstride had not been able to decipher had been translated by Gred. "We owe you 500 gold pieces," you began.

"Don't speak of gold to me!" Snipe interrupted. "I don't want your gold." Snipe smiled at you and your companions. "I smell a story here. You are going to have an adventure. Come tell me the tale when you're done. That's my price," Snipe said firmly, "and don't try to haggle for less!"

Back at your inn, behind locked doors, you told your group that you had discovered the secret location of Kuroth's artifact.

"Look," you said in a voice made rapid by excitement, "we've got all the clues." You pointed to the group's map of Mansut and the Wilderness to the South and West [ILLUSTRATION *3]. "Here are the Sunlet Stones. They must be the 'sun's upright spears' and the Peninsula of Despair is south of them, just as the scrolls said! [DM- Point to the Sunlet Stones and draw a line south so that it passes through Titan's Skull and off the map.] We know that the 'Gift of the Gods' - Kuroth's artifact - is due south of these stones.

"Remember that Gred translated a section different from the ones Snipe did? It seemed to tell where the artifact is too!" You stopped briefly to see if anyone else recalled the passage. "Face half south from where the sun sets on Firstling's Script so bold! I think the Firstling's Script is The Glyphs. A sunset is in the west so half south of the sunset must be southwest. [DM- Draw a line southwest from The Glyphs so that the line passes through Titan's Skull.] Titan's Skull. That's it! And the other clues fit too! 'Look for the Firstling's bone, lost in the clouds alone,' and 'There but myriad Giants' strides stands Firstling's top so cold.' A Firstling is a Titan, since Titans were the guardians of the First Age. A Titan's top is his skull and the skull is a bone. The mountain peak, Titan's Skull, would also be cold and lost in the clouds."

"Or it was lost," a member of the group crowed, "now we're going to find it."

"And that weird last page - [ILLUSTRATION *2] I think that tells us what to do once we get to the top of Titan's Skull Mountain!"

You and your group talked far into the night, trying to further interpret the Scrolls of Kuroth and planning your trip to Four Sisters Castle where you will set off into the dangerous wilderness.

"Now the adventure begins!" You said.



Read this wierd, Oh, start of heart
that Kuroth's Treasure wish.

Find Skull Mt. in Deep Despair
make full offering in Sacred Dish.

Then enter 4weert crooked teeth, below deep
darkling eyes. Descend ever downward til
Door before you liès.

Open door, stand to guard. Fight warrior of Earthly
Fate. Silence the anguished battle cry.
Of one who knows no hate.

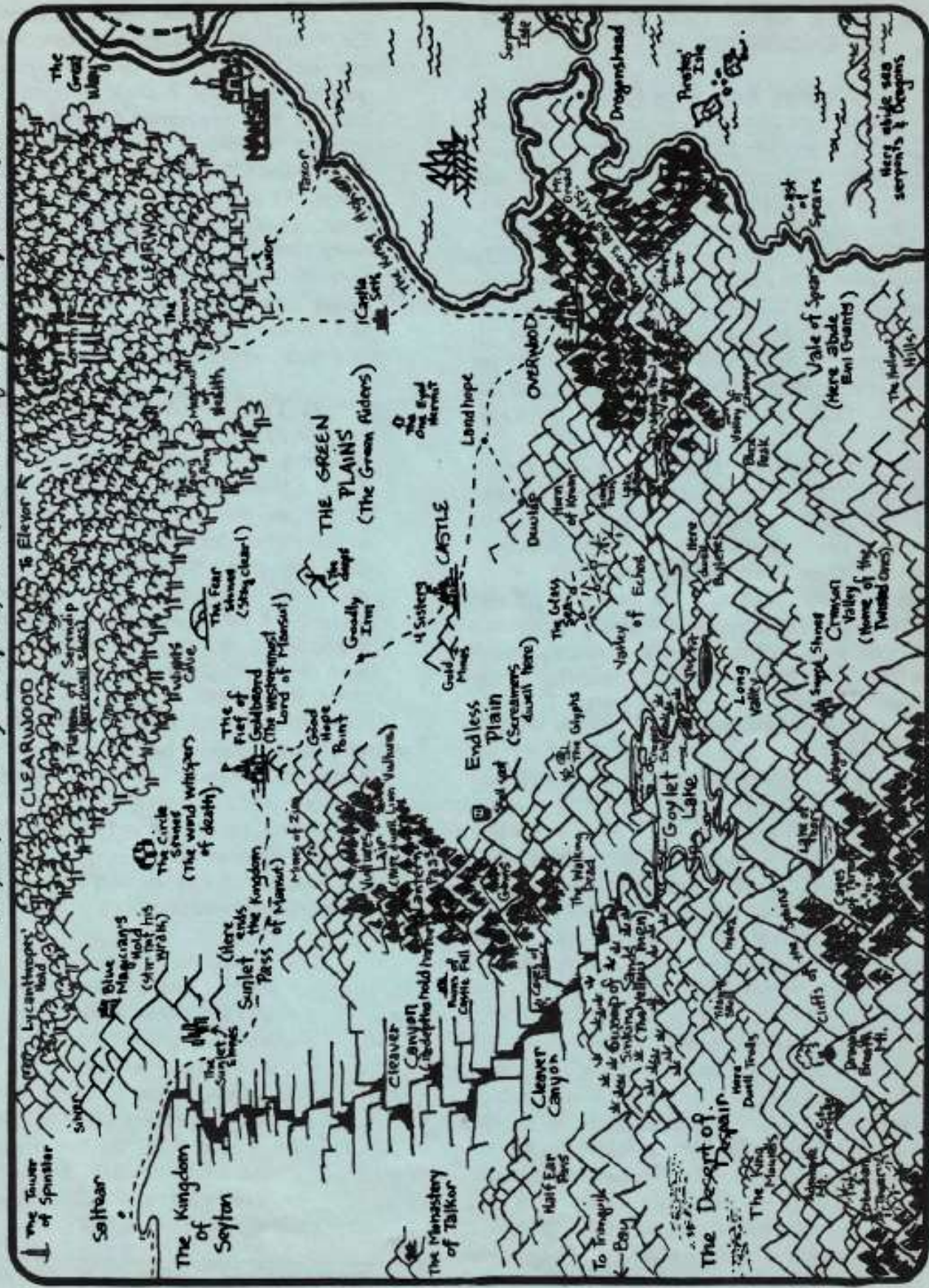
Flee past the mouldering bones, and fire that quickly
grows. Flee past the Winged One, mind then
Wakes and Knows.

Say Quagmulen, stay & wait. Flinch not, move not
nor flee. When rumble sounds, forward then,
Push Red, then Blue, then three of three.

Arrive in Azure Cavern, travel always to sure
right. Fight fire, ice, death & pain. Push
Blue then Red then threes
again.

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Mansut & the Wilderness to the South & West.
 - as prepared by Snipe, master cartographer of Montome.



To the south lies the unknown vastness of the Peninsula of Dorsaur.

Scale: 0 20 40 60 80 100 miles

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III. TREK INTO THE WILDERNESS OF DESPAIR

A. Notes for the DM

The DM should provide the players with a copy of Illustration #1, #2 and #3 so that they can be studied at leisure. The players will want to use Illustration #3 in planning their route to Titan's Skull. They should begin studying Illustration #2, Kuroth's Riddle, now because mastering it is the key to success in the Dungeon Below the Titan's Maw. The DM should not tell them this, however. The fact that this riddle is handed out should be hint enough that it is important.

If the DM wishes, he can play through the trip from Montome (where Snipe lives) to Four Sisters Castle, some 500 miles away. This journey could take up to three or four weeks and would probably be along the King's Highway. Encounters might include bandits or con men met along the highway, bards, fellow adventurers with interesting stories and rumors, etc.

Throughout this Adventure module, boxed-in sections indicate prose that can be read to players word for word to describe encounters, situations, areas or items of interest, etc.* All information outside the boxed-in descriptions are the DM's "secret" information. This information is not obvious to players as they enter the situation and should not be revealed to them unless they do something to learn it.

B. Equipping the Party

This Adventure involves a deep and dangerous journey into the Peninsula of Despair to the south and west of the Kingdom of Mausut. The DM should help the players realize what this involves. The group needs to provision itself carefully with normal and magical items. This provisioning should occur at Four Sisters Castle, a small city of about 1000 people. Four Sisters will have merchants selling most of the items the group might want to purchase.

The group also needs to develop a plan for travel - how can dangerous encounters be minimized? Will the group set guards at night? Light a fire? How will guards be prepared? What will be the group's marching order? Its resting formation? Does the group have healing magic? Poison antidotes? Etc. The DM need not necessarily ask the group these questions, but should teach them prudence through advice given by experienced non-player characters at the departure point and through use of the wilderness encounters described below.

C. The Wilderness Encounters

Explained below are a number of encounters for the wilderness trip to Titan's Skull. These encounters could be random or set, as the DM wishes. For random encounters the DM should roll d10 twice per day, when the group is traveling, and once each night, when the group is sleeping. A roll of 1 would indicate an encounter. Since the trek takes fourteen days, this would indicate two or three encounters.

Be sure to get a schedule of who will be on guard so you can determine under whose guard a night encounter occurs. Get a marching order so you will know how characters are arranged for day encounters.

The following is a table for randomly determining encounters.

DAY ENCOUNTERS - ROLL d6

- 1 - W1: The Hermit Troll
 - 2 - W2: The Elven Armor
 - 3 - W3: Mushy the Great
 - 4 - W4: The Scorpion Hill
 - 5 - Dungeon Master's Option (DMO)
 - 6 - Dungeon Master's Option (DMO)
- On a 5 or a 6, the DM should choose one of the Day Encounters or construct a special encounter of his own. Have fun!

*If the DM prefers not to read boxed-in sections word for word, he should give the same information in his own words

NIGHT ENCOUNTERS - Roll d6

- 1 - W5: The Invisible Menace
- 2 - W6: The Screamers
- 3 - W7: Encounter with a Bear
- 4 - W8: The Walking Dead
- 5 - DMO*
- 6 - DMO*

*Dungeon Master's Option - choose one of the above or construct your own encounter.

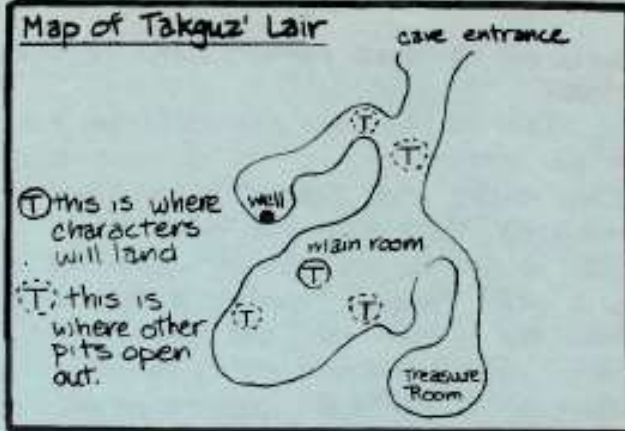
Some DMs may want to choose which encounters the players have. If you do this you may still want to roll a die as if the encounters were random. The group should have about three or four encounters on the way to Titan's Skull and two or three on the trip back to civilization.

W1: The Hermit Troll

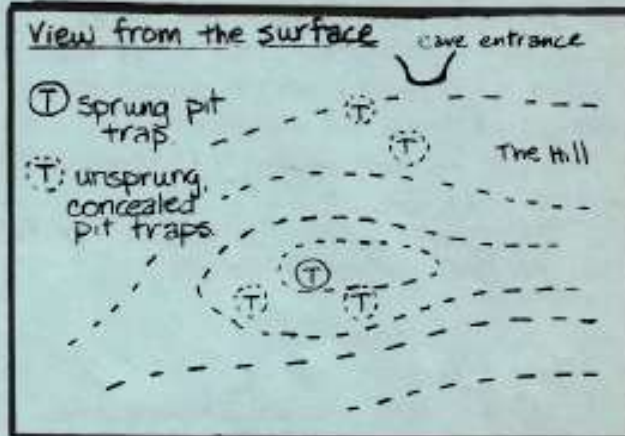
Day after day of trekking through the endless plains and hills south and west of Four Sisters Castle has made this quest seem little more than drudgery. Dust rises to clog your lungs and the sun beats mercilessly down on your group. You take a drink of water and start up yet another hill. Just as you are getting to the top bad luck strikes. The ground seems to be crumbling underneath the members of your party. A pit has opened beneath you! At the bottom of the pit, some 25 feet below, you see a hunch-backed troll grinning evilly up at you. "Sul Takguz slurkblut-zo!" the troll yells in triumph.

The party has unluckily stepped on one of five rough earthen pit traps set by a hermit troll, Takguz. Each member of the group must roll his dexterity or be low or fall into a 25 foot pit (roll d20). All those who fall take d6 damage. (The fall is somewhat cushioned by the earth, sticks, and leaves that were used by Takguz to construct the pit trap.) Takguz' words mean "Ha ha! Meat has come to Takguz!" If someone in the group speaks troll you should tell them what Takguz has said and anything he may say later.

Map of Takguz' Lair



View from the surface



Takguz is somewhat crippled by his hunchback deformity, though he is quite quick of wit. His statistics follow.

TAKGUZ THE HERMIT TROLL

HP = 31

when insane:

AC = 6

+2 to hit -2 on AC

Move = 9"

HD = 6+6

Damage: claw/claw/bite = 1-3/1-3/2d4+2

Takguz regenerates 3hp/round

Takguz will immediately attack anyone who falls into the pit (the main room of his lair). As with normal trolls, he can divide his attacks between opponents if he wishes. If Takguz gets down to one half hit points (15 hp or less) he will throw himself at the feet of the players and beg for mercy, saying "Takguz spink spink!" ("I lick your feet!") Even those who don't speak troll will realize that Takguz is surrendering. Takguz is sincere about giving up and will speak with the group in a friendly manner, telling them all

sorts of worthless rumors until he goes insane.

Takguz has been outcast from his tribe because of his fits of insanity. Each round that Takguz spends "surrendered" there is a one in six chance that he will fly into a fit of insanity. He will yell "Takguz Pechfuz alakol!" ("My feet are butterflies!") and leap at the throat of the nearest party member. Takguz is +2 to hit and -2 on AC while insane. He will continue to attack the same person until he hits or until he reaches -10hp (dead until he regenerates). If he hits, he bites each round (automatic hit) and cannot be untangled from his victim. He will scream "Flukzat, op pod op op!" ("Pebbles, those green ones, oh, oh, oh.")

In Takguz's lair is a well ten feet deep to leech-infested waters.

LEECHES

HP = 5 each HD = 1
AC = 9 Damage = blood drain
MOVE = 3"

Damage begins the round after a successful attack. There is only a one percent chance that the victim will notice the attack, unless he is looking directly at the leech. The leech may crawl under clothing or armor.

Also in Takguz's lair is a treasure room. Takguz is a discriminating collector of whole dried feces. Among the prizes of his collection are the dried "do-dos" of a giant roc, a blue dragon, a tiger beetle, an ogre, a giant goat, etc. Players who search through this treasure will find nothing of value. The real "treasure" is to be found on Takguz himself - a wish ring of reverse wishes and about 150 gold pieces' worth of assorted coins. There is one reverse wish left on the ring. When a player puts the ring on it will communicate that it is a ring of three wishes and will ask what the first wish is to be. The ring reverses any wish the player makes so that a negative (non-fatal) result will occur. This one can be a lot of fun. Use your imagination! Note that Takguz thinks the ring is real and will

fight to keep it.

W2: The Elven Armor

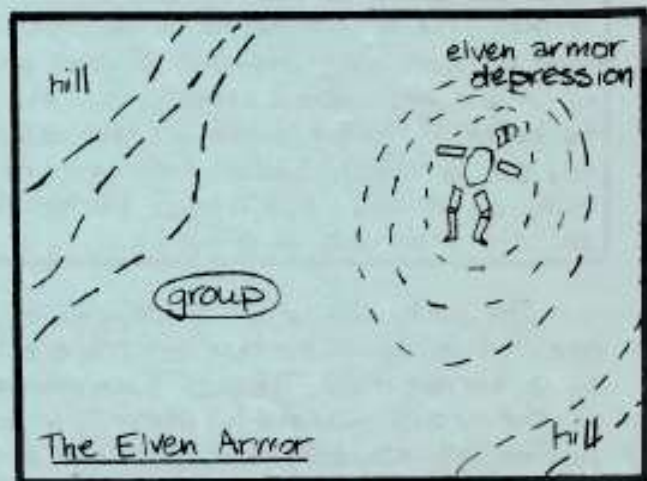
Your group is passing through a sandy spot of ground between hills. In a ten-foot deep dusty depression to your right you see what looks like an old suit of armor. "Looks elven-made," you think to yourself.

This dusty depression is actually the lair of a dustdigger.

DUSTDIGGER

HP = 23 Damage : dB+AC of victim
AC = 4
Move = 3"
HD = 4

The dustdigger is about 20 feet across and has burried itself in the bottom of the depression. If someone tries to recover the armor or gets within ten feet of it, the dustdigger will wrap its arms around its victim and swallow him when he is dead. Individuals so trapped cannot attack, but receive automatic damage (dB+AC of victim).



The armor is well-made but corroded and useless. The real treasure is inside the dustdigger - a blessed sword that will flame on the command "Kane Estro!" (this means "Kane's Wrath!" in Elven) for an extra point of damage. The sword also has a green gem in its hilt that looks quite valuable. It is an emerald

worth 500 gold pieces. To find this treasure the players must cut the dust-digger open.

The armor and sword belonged to an unlucky Elven lord, Speltam, who met his death in the dust digger's jaws.

W3: Mushy the Great

Your group comes around a bend in a game trail to find yourselves facing a small mushroom man. His large eyes narrowed to slits as he watches your approach. His large mouth writhes as he begins to talk.

"I am Mushy the Great. What I want to know is where you're going? So tell me already!" Mushy looks at the group expectantly.

Mushy will continue to question the group, asking them about their travel plans and asking pointed questions about them and any items they are carrying that look like they might be magical. Mushy also likes riddles and "orc jokes". Here are a couple he might try out on the group (betting money with them about their ability to answer if he can).

riddle: "I know a word of letters three; add two and fewer there will be. what is it?"

answer: the word "few"

joke: What makes more noise than an orc in a pit trap?

answer: Two orcs in a pit trap.

Mushy is actually Gred the mage in an illusory disguise. If a party member disbelieves in Mushy, give the party member a -6 to save. If he does save he sees Gred in his true form.

Gred is interested in seeing that the group succeeds. He has seen prophecies that the recoverers of Kuroth's Treasure are destined for great and good things. Gred simply wants to know more about the personal histories of the members of the group. He would also like to know where they

are going, since he doesn't know yet.

Gred is a double-class 13th level illusionist / 11th level thief. If the group is civil with him in this disguise he will trade them useful information about the area for any information they are willing to give about themselves. If any member of the group is violently obnoxious, Mushy will pick his pocket (95% chance of success), taking some valuable item and leaving a note in its place:

"You should be more polite to those who wish you well. - a Friend"

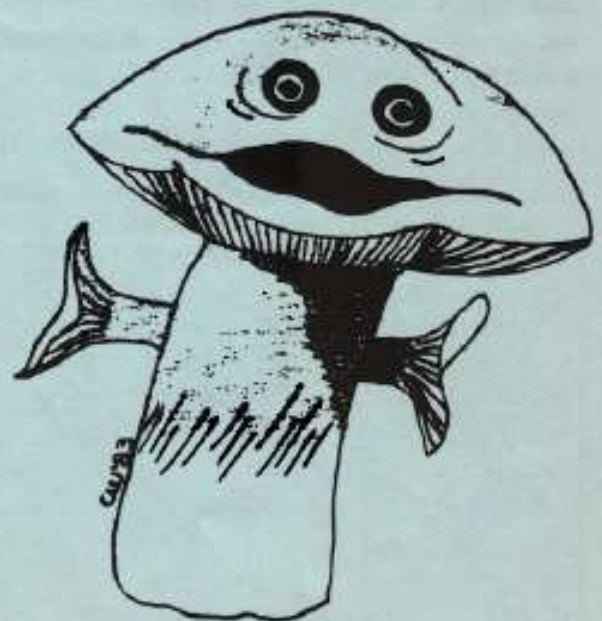
Mushy will then dimension door away.

Mushy will complete these actions even if attacked and hit.

MUSHY THE GREAT (GRED)

HP = 53 AC = -1

This is supposed to be an amusing encounter. Try to have Mushy make friends with the group.



Mushy the Great

W4: The Scorpion Hill

You are trudging through a hilly region when you notice a small blur of movement in front of you. You squint your eyes to get a better look. It seems to be a large scorpion about a foot long. One of your companions calls out in surprise. He is pointing to something your rear. You quickly scan the area. Another foot-long scorpion. Then your eyes sweep the terrain all around you. You are surrounded by scorpions! It looks like no matter what direction you go you'll run into one or more of them. Most of the scorpions don't seem especially interested in you. Where did they all come from?

The group has blundered into a scorpion hill. Ahead of them is a slight mound which they will recognize as the source of the scorpions if they ever get a chance to see the other side, where the entrances are.

These scorpions share a low level telepathic communication and have organized themselves into a hive. The hive does not yet recognize the group as a threat, though two scorpions (marked with (X)) have "smelt" their passage and consider the group a possible food source.



The party members can choose to

- stand and attack. The result would be disastrous since eventually the

whole hive will join in the counter-attack.

- stand and try to be inconspicuous. This will work at first, but the two alerted scorpions will come to investigate the group. These two scorpions will attempt to sting a party member after a round or two of investigation. Meanwhile, more scorpions will enter the area.
- run. This is still dangerous, but is the best option. The group must flee past a minimum of three scorpions no matter which way they run. The scorpions will be attracted by the rapid movement and fear smell. If the group moves generally forward nearer the scorpion hill, the minimum number of scorpions will be five. Note that anyone running past a scorpion allows it a "backstab" at +2 to hit +2 damage.

SCORPION

HP = 6 each HD = 1+1 move = 9"
AC = 6 attack: claw/claw/sting = 1-3/1-3/1

If the scorpion's sting hits, the victim must save vs. poison or be paralyzed. The paralyzation wears off after three turns. The scorpions do not have death poison in their stings; the poison paralyzes only.

The scorpions have no treasure.

W5: The Invisible Menace

It is the dead of the night and you are on guard. It's hard to keep your eyes open. In the distance you hear a soft booming sound. "Must be a thunderstorm approaching," you mumble to yourself.

You shift your weight and crane your neck to look off to the right, where you think you saw a hint of movement. "Boom." A little closer this time. A slight wind ruffles your hair. You pull your cloak tighter about you. Just your luck if a rain spoils your sleep time.

"Boom. Boom. The earth shakes hard. You look in the direction it came from, off to the south, but clouds cover

both the Azure and Violet Moons. You can't make out anything - just shades of darkness in the distance.

The members of your group are getting groggily to their feet. "Earthquake?" one asks. "I don't know," you reply. You look off to the south, your head tilted. There is something about the booming sounds. They seem to be regularly spaced apart. If only it weren't night and moonless so you could see better.

"BOOM!" The roar of it fills your ears. The earth throws you five feet into the air. You land bouncing. Dust surrounds you like a thick fog. You hear a huge crunching and clatter. You pick yourself up and pull out a weapon.

A minute goes by, then you hear a thundering boom again, this time to the north. Another minute and you hear the boom again, this time barely audible. The dust and grit gradually settle to the ground. "What was that?" you ask.

If the group examines the area that night or the next day, they will see a shallow trench five feet deep, fifteen feet wide and fifty feet long. This huge foot- or paw-print is about fifty yards from the group's campsite. It is impossible to tell what made the track from only one print. If a ranger or barbarian looks at three or more of them he will be able to tell they are boot prints. They are spaced a mile apart running from south to north. Was it a God walking the earth or something stranger yet? If the group follows the footprints north or south they will continue for hundreds of miles, finally stopping at a huge Stonehenge-like circle of standing stones.

W6: The Screamers

The attack comes one hour before dawn. The rest of the party are asleep; only you are awake. The

first sign of trouble is a long wavering scream. Other eerie screams quickly follow. You've heard these before, at a distance, on the endless plain. "Screamers," you think, "the dreaded aborigine men of the plains. Headhunters, if rumors are correct." You grimly ready yourself for battle.

SCREAMERS

HP = 15 each HD = 3
AC = 7 Damage = 1-8 (spears)
Move = 12"

There will be one screamer for each member of the party. In addition there will be a shaman who will lurk in the shadows and cast the following spells in succession: light (to blind opposing spell-caster), light (to blind opposing fighter) He will then shoot his blow darts, 2 shots per round, 1-2 points damage plus save or be slowed. The shaman has eight poison darts. The shaman will cast two command spells at anyone who attempts to melee with him. He will also sound a retreat if more than half of his warriors are killed. He may return to attack the next night with more troops if he and some warriors survive.

The intent of this encounter is to challenge, not wipe out, the party. If things start going badly you may want to consider "calming down" the opposition or having the shaman stun, rather than kill, members of the group and take them as prisoners. The DM can then engineer some sort of daring escape.

W7: Encounter with a Bear

On the edges of your camp you hear a snuffling sound out of the dark. It's something big. Quickly you wake the other members of the group.

From out of the darkness comes

a huge grizzly bear. It is standing on its hind feet - tall and menacing. It stops thirty feet from you. It sniffs curiously at your group.

The bear will not provoke attack, merely blinking at the party and shambling off into the night. But if the group attacks, they are in for a surprise. This is a werebear and a Steward (a high level follower of the Greater God Kane). This Steward is called Dillio, and in addition to having the powers of a werebear, he is an 11th level cleric. If attacked in his bear form he will flee at full speed and return ten minutes later in human form, full of vengeance.

DILLIO

HP = 63

HD = 11

AC = 0

Move = 12"

Damage as bear (claw/claw/bite)

= $d3+1/d3+1/2d4+1$, plus an additional 2-16 if both claws hit.

Damage as a human (+3 staff of stunning)

= $1-1.6+4$ and a save at -2 or stunned for $d10+1$ rounds.

Dillio is traveling with four brown bears and a Treant who will aid him if need be, but otherwise will stay out of sight. If Dillio is pushed to it he will utter a holy word that will affect the party members (see holy word spell). Before he does this though, he will utter up to six command spells to stop the party.

If Dillio is not attacked he will return to the campsite as a human and speak genially with whoever is on guard and whoever wakes up. He will heal wounds and raise dead party members as need be.

Group members will notice a small burn scar in the shape of a holly leaf on each of Dillio's wrists. Dillio will try to encourage the members of the group and tell them stories of nature at its healthiest. He will leave before dawn.

Dillio is the Steward over the earth for the northern portion of the Peninsula of Despair. His power is that of a demigod and party members would do well to treat him with deference and kindness.

WG: The Walking Dead

It is the witching hour and both moons are near full. The soft azure and violet light gives an unearthly cast to the surrounding terrain. It is very still, almost too quiet. Shouldn't there be a rustling of animals and a call of birds in the night? You begin to get uneasy. That is when you first see them.

Silent as thieves, quiet as still water they come. A terrible collection of exposed bones and rotting flesh recognizable as humans begin to come toward you from the west. Somehow they are held together in a group, stumbling mindlessly up the slope toward your party. About a dozen skeletons there are, and half as many zombies. You estimate that it will be five minutes before they reach your campsite. Quickly you wake up your companions. You must decide your strategy.

Coming up the slight slope toward the adventurers are eleven skeletons and seven zombies.

SKELETONS

HP = 5 each

HD = 1

AC = 7

Damage (sword) = 1-6

Move = 12"

HP = 9 each
AC = 8
move = 6"

ZOMBIES

HD = 2
Damage (claws) = 1-8

Skeletons suffer only half damage from edged weapons. As with zombies, skeletons are immune to sleep, hold, charm, and cold-based spells. Zombies always attack last. If a cleric is with the group he will be able to turn some portion of these creatures (diz undead).

The party must decide their strategy versus these undead. If they choose to run they must do so within four minutes of the time the DM finishes reading the boxed section above. The DM should tell the group that they are in "real time." This means that one minute on the DM's watch is equal to one round of play. If everyone gets awake, packed and away before four minutes have passed, then the group has escaped from these undead. The undead are slow-moving and will not be able to catch up with the group. At the DM's option, however, the undead may attack later that night or on some following night.

If the group chooses to stay and fight (fleeing may never occur to them) the DM should go through the same routine of watching "real time" to determine when battle with the undead begins. The undead will attack from all sides, silent and stinking. Behind the crush of undead is an evil magician, Tranth, who is 90% likely to be mistaken for a seventh zombie at least until he attacks. Any characters who say they are carefully looking at the group of undead to see if one of them is a cleric or magic user animator will immediately notice Tranth. Tranth has animated the undead with the help of a high level scroll which he purchased. With the might of his undead horde he feels himself to be virtually unde-

featable and has been terrorizing the local countryside.

Tranth will watch the battle until four or more of his "pets" are either slain or turned. When this happens he will yell in rage, "Take this you gravy-sucking pigs!" and cast the following spells: magic missile (at an opposing spell caster; 2d4 + 2 damage), sleep (at the party in general; this spell will cause 1-4 3rd level characters or 2-8 2nd level characters to sleep comatosely). He will then pause for one segment and if any party members are "still kicking" he will cast a stinking cloud (save vs. spell or retch uncontrollably). The entire attack sequence takes only five segments - half a round. If Tranth is still attacked after this flurry of spells he will cast a magic missile (2d4 + 2 damage), then an invisibility on himself so that he can escape. The zombies and skeletons will, at Tranth's command, interpose themselves between Tranth and any who threaten him, so any physical combat with Tranth is unlikely.

TRANTH

HP = 13 Damage (dagger) 2 attacks,
AC = 8 d4 each.
move = 12"

Tranth is a 4th level magic user and is chaotic evil in alignment. If he defeats the party he will have the undead attack until 0-2 hit points remain for each player character, strip them of all their possessions including clothing, and leave them a note which reads, "Spread wide the horror of He who Dwells in the Canyon, and henceforth shun you the Fief of Tranth."

If the group defeats Tranth and captures or kills him (very unlikely, given his invisibility spell) they will find a scroll with the following spells: animate dead, fly, and shield. Other items of interest include a small black stone that contains multi-colored swirling

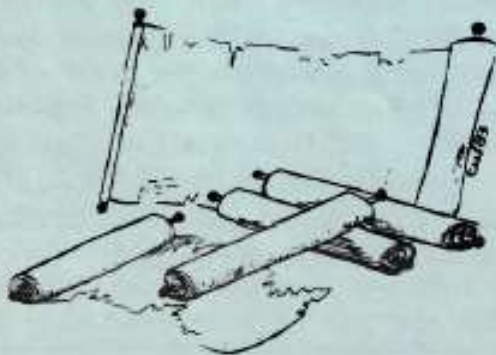
depths. This stone will drive anyone insane who peers into its depths for too long (save at -2). Tranth also has assorted paraphernalia for spell components, a long greyish robe, two blue gems worth 500 gold pieces each and three bits of mithril formed into small cubes worth 100 gold pieces each.

At some point in the encounter the players will get a look at Tranth. When they do, read them the following.

An evil-visaged human stares at you out of the gloom. He has large yellow eyes and a nose hooked and cruel. His body seems slightly mis-shapen but he seems to move lithely enough under his ankle-length grey robe.

There are two aspects of his appearance that immediately mark him apart from normal men. One is his stark white hair that floats in the moonlight. Another is the two crescent-shaped bits of silvery metal embedded in his forehead. This is a face you'll never forget.

The DM should keep Tranth alive since, as you may have already guessed, this is a lead-in to another module, Lord of the Canyon Depths. The above encounter is the only one that directly must occur during the course of the wilderness journey. It is recommended that players meet Tranth on the way back from Titan's Skull Mountain.



IV. THE DUNGEON BELOW THE TITAN'S MAW

A. Ascending to Titan's Skull

It has been more than two weeks since you left the safety of Four Sisters Castle. You feel the weight of those miles as you look at the huge mountain looming up before you. If your map is correct this is Titan's Skull Peak. It is a massive mountain but somewhere on its flanks or near its top lies a clue as to the exact location of Kuroth's Treasure!

Despite all you've been through to get here, you eagerly set foot on the lower slopes of the mountain. Your eyes are straining ever upward to the summit which lies nested in clouds.

Tell the group that it takes them one half day's march to get through the foothills, and they now face some tough climbing. Ask them for commitments on how they will ascend the mountain from here on. There are brief areas of vertical cliffs (none more than 100 feet high), loose rockfall slopes and flatter wooded areas.

If a group wants to scout, tell them that they have discovered a relatively easy path to the top. They will need to pass over only one rockfall slope and one cliff area (80 feet tall). If the group does not ask to scout for easy paths they will have to go over two rockfall slopes and two cliffs (80 feet and 100 feet tall). Each time the group passes over either a rockfall slope or a cliff, have each member of the group roll d8. Characters with a dexterity of 16 or above get to add 1 to their rolls. Don't tell the group this, but if they are not using ropes to connect party members and make climbing safer, you should subtract one from each of

their die rolls.

CLIFF ASCENSION

- 0 = bad fall (5d6 damage)
- 1 = short fall (1d6 damage)
- 2 = slip (1 pt. damage)
- 3 = knock rock on one person below you (if applicable) (1 pt. damage)
- 4-8 = no effect

ROCK SLOPE ASCENSION

- 0 = bad fall (3d6 damage)
- 1 = twist ankle (1d6 damage and -1 on AC for 2 days)
- 2 = slip (1 pt. damage)
- 3 = knock small rockslide on all people below you (1 pt. damage each)
- 4-8 = no effect.

After the group's first passage through one of the steep or dangerous areas above, read them the following description.

B. The Vision

The mountain view is gorgeous around you. Far off to the north you can see a swamp and what must be the haunted depths of Cleaver Canyon. To the west is the shimmering Desert of Despair. Something about it makes you nervous. To the east you glimpse the coolness of Graylet Lake. It is a beautiful day. Then you look upward at the peak of Titan's Skull. As before, the summit is enshrouded in mist. Just now a fierce wind begins to twist these clouds more rapidly than you could have thought was natural. Then grandly, majestically the thick mist rolls back from Titan's Peak. In that instant you stand awe struck. The mountain seems to have turned into the gigantic body of a God! Above you is the God's hoary head - hair a whipping white mist, fire in eyes and cavernous mouth.

You stand somewhere near the God's shoulders, clinging desperately to the grass tufts nearby. "If he moves we'll be flung like water from a shaking dog's body," you think in shock. Then it is over. There is a different feel to the air around you. Some Presence has departed.

"Krom," one of your companions whispers, his eyes wide in disbelief.

You see that most of the members of your group are on their knees. Your knees are shaking. "A vision..." you begin, your voice trailing off. "Why would He give us a vision?" It is many minutes before the party is ready to move upward to where clouds once again hide the mountain peak.

The above vision should leave the group awed and shaken. They will begin to glimpse that there is some interest being taken in them by the Gods. If they believe this they are right, as will be made abundantly clear near the conclusion of this adventure.

When the group has ascended through any remaining cliffs and rockslides, they will enter the mists that hide the peak of Titan's Skull. The mists appear as a thin fog, with visibility of about 100 feet. After about a half hour of climbing the group will come to the peak.

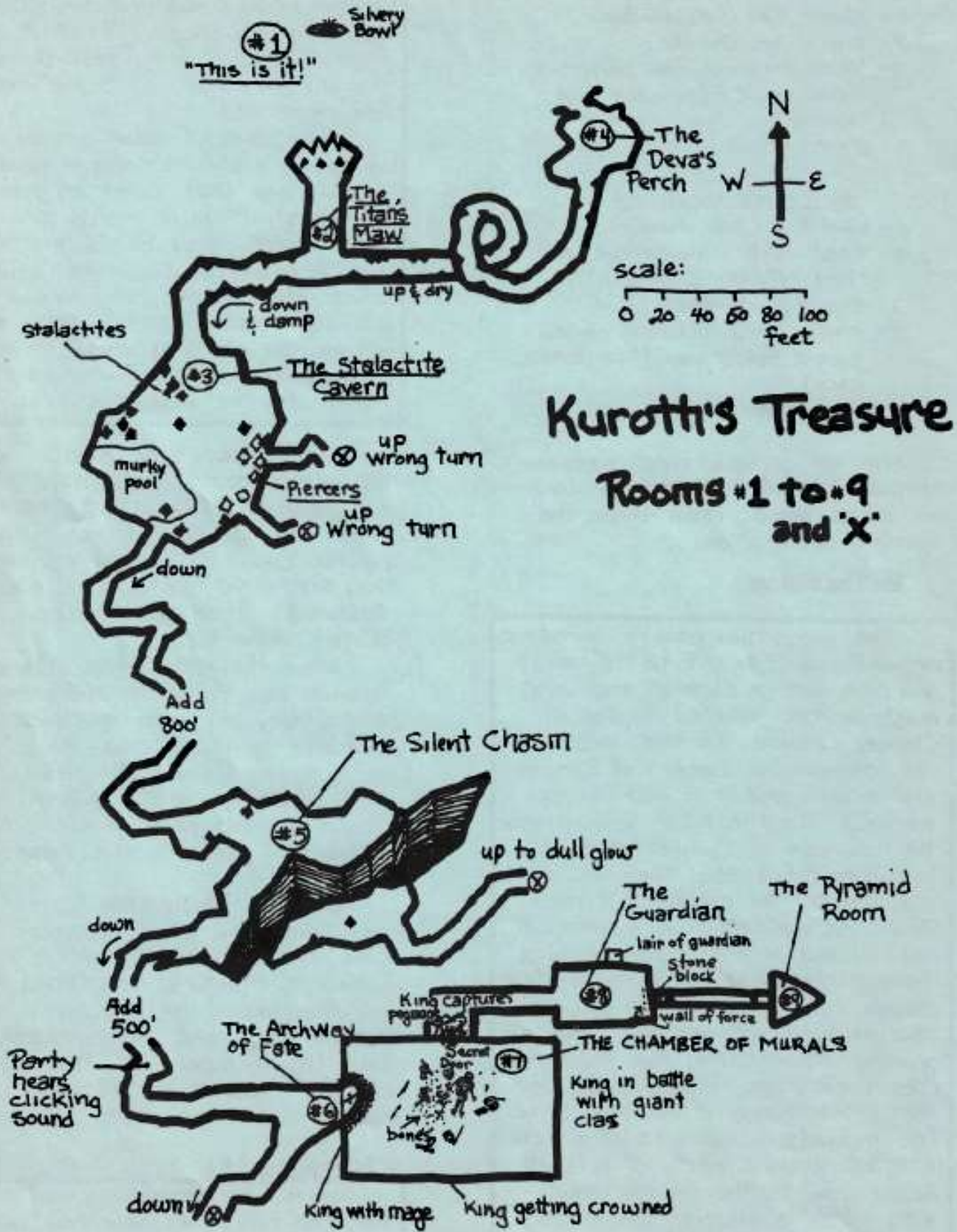
C. The Dungeon

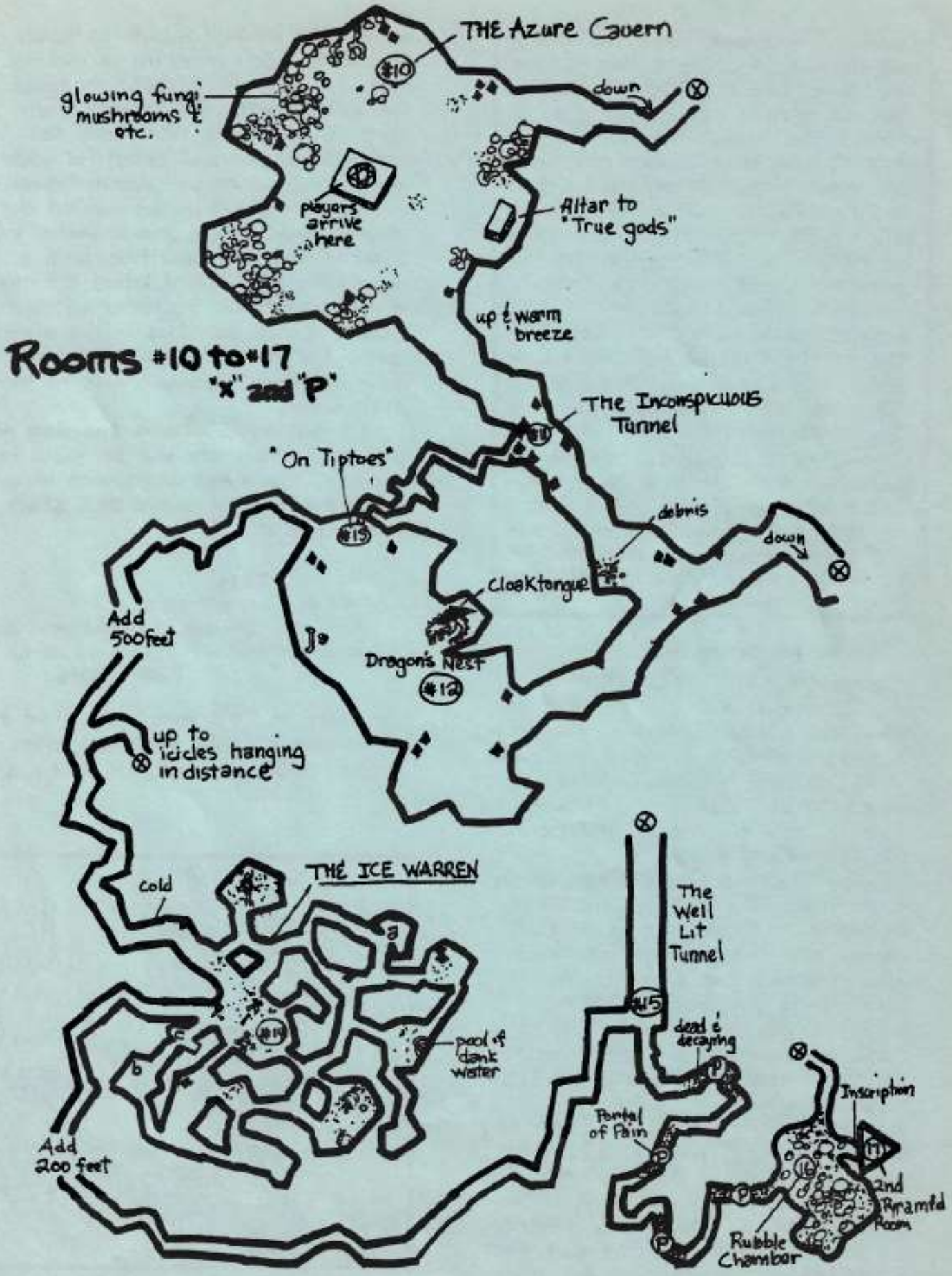
Throughout this dungeon adventure, the DM should refer to the Dungeon Master's Annotated Map for the layout of the peak, the Titan's Maw, and the dungeon below. The numbers in this section of the module correspond to the numbers on the map.

***1: This is it!**

You've been struggling up through the fog for a half hour now, but it seems to be thinning out. Then, quite

The DM's Annotated Map





suddenly, you are above the mist and Titan's Skull Peak lies before you! The Peak itself is impressive. Greyish granite rises up to a domed top, and in the domed top is a rather large cavern entrance. You can glimpse some stalactites and stalagmites within the cavern. With a little imagination these could be seen as teeth within the cave "mouth". Above the large cavern, the play of shadows on the granite could give the illusion of the empty eye sockets and nose hole of a skull. Titan's Skull! It was well named. "This is it!" you think excitedly.

In front of you about a hundred feet lies a large shallow silvery bowl about six feet in diameter. Something glitters in the bowl. About one hundred fifty feet beyond the bowl is the cavern entrance.

When the party gets nearer they will observe that the glittering object in the huge bowl is a 1000-gold-piece diamond. Also in the bowl is an assortment of coins and small gems, including gold and platinum pieces (total value 1600 GP). Carved into the base of the silvery bowl are weather-worn runes.

If the group reads magic on the runes they will find this message: "All praise to Krom, who is God of heroes and the just. Let all those who reverence Him sacrifice that their souls may be pure." Even if the group does not have a read magic spell, they will recognize Krom's symbol if they examine the runes carefully.

What the group is being told here and in the first verse of Illustration #2, Kuroth's Riddle is that they too should make a "full offering" in the "sacred dish". If the group desecrates the bowl by stealing the treasure that it contains, or defiles it in any other way, or if the group attempts to

enter the cavern mouth without making a "full" offering, a挪vanic deva will rapidly descend to block the entrance to the cavern. This deva is six and a half feet tall with golden skin and beautiful white wings. This deva will demand recompense if the group has defiled the "sacred dish". This should involve substantial treasure sacrifice and a quest (to be fulfilled later). If the group has tried to enter without leaving a full sacrifice in the silvery bowl the deva will say "make full your sacrifice" and will give no further clues.

If the group attacks the deva, he will warn them off but be slow to anger. If combat continues he will draw his flaming sword and attack, lightning quick.

DEVA

HP=70 HD=7+28

AC=-5 Damage (3 attacks with sword,
move=12"/30" +3 to hit d8+6/
d8+6/d8+6

The deva is 55% magic resistant and is immune to cold, electrical, magic missile, poison, normal fire and gas-based attacks.





#2: The Titan's Maw

Stepping into the cavern behind the silvery bowl is an eerie experience. The stalactites and stalagmites give you the feeling of stepping into a huge mouth with exposed teeth. This effect is heightened by water from a mountain spring dripping down the walls of the cavern.

The cavern passageway is thirty feet wide and extends ahead of you, south, into the mountain. At the edge of your vision, eighty feet away, you can see that the passageway dead-ends into a natural tunnel passageway running east and west.

There are no encounters or significant items of interest in this area. The group may be nervous though. Keep them guessing. Is the toothed "mouth" going to close on them? Of course not. But the players won't know that. When the players walk down to the intersection, read them the following.

The passageway to the east slopes up rapidly, is dry, and only ten feet wide. The passageway to the west is twenty feet wide, damp, and slopes down noticeably curving to the south as it does so.

If the group is paying attention to the clues in Kuroth's Riddle (Illustration #3), they will know that they should go downward at this and all other intersections until "the door before [them] lies."

#3: The Stalactite Cavern

You have entered a large cavern, about 100 feet in diameter, with a ceiling covered thickly on its entire

surface with stalactites. The cavern is dimly illuminated by a soft glow from fungus along the walls. The stalactites are in all sizes, up to thirty feet in length. From many of these stalactites drips clear water. The flow of water is especially strong in the southwestern quarter of the room where a murky pool stands. The pool has cloudy depths that seem to shift about slightly.

There are three ten-foot-wide cavern passageways that exit from the southern section of the large cavern room— one to the southwest, one to the southeast, and one to the east.

There are six piercers clustered on the eastern ceiling. They will drop on any players who get within ten feet of either the east or southeast cavern passageways.

PIERCERS

HP=12 each HD=2

AC=3 Damage (1 attack)=2d6

Move=fall rapidly or 1"

The piercers' attacks are non-repeatable. When the group reaches the middle of the room (before the piercers can attack) the group will notice that the passageways to the east and southeast slope upward slightly while the southwest passage slopes downward.

As before, the group should "descend ever downward," which means they should go through the cavern passageway to the southwest. This will take the players past the murky pool. This pool contains no threat, but the DM should find it easy to make the group think themselves lucky to make it past unscathed. (You could make everyone in the group roll d_6 as they walk past.)

#4: The Deva's Perch

You walk up a man-made spiral tunnel. You'd guess you've ascended about three hundred feet when the tunnel levels off and opens into a sunlit cavern room. The room is thirty feet in diameter with a ten-foot-wide

opening in the north wall. The opening overlooks the level area where the silvery bowl glitters far below. Standing in the center of the room is a six-and-a-half-foot-tall golden-skinned human with white feathered wings. This imposing personage says to your group "You have strayed from your true course. Time is short. Neither tarry nor avoid your fate."

The deva has statistics and generally behaves as described in #1. This is it! If the deva is questioned he will repeat his message, stating that destiny's law allows him to say no more.

X: A Wrong Turn

At many points in this dungeon adventure it is possible for the players to take a wrong turn. This occurs if (and only if) they ignore or misunderstand the directions given in Illustration #3, Kuroth's Riddle. In general, if the group strays from the "true course" they will get into trouble quickly. Describe to them a short journey, fifty to two hundred feet, to one of the encounters listed below (DM).

X*1: The Mongrel Men. Two crab-armed bugbears jump up to attack the group as they enter a 20' x 20' cavern.

MONGREL MEN

HP=20 each HD=4
AC=5 Damage (2 claws)=1-6/1-6
Move=9"

The mongrel men surprise on a 1-4 on d6.

X*2 The Giant Snake. A large constrictor snake suddenly appears from around a corner in the 20' wide passageway ahead.

GIANT SNAKE

HP=31 HD=6
AC=5 Damage (bite/constrict)=1-4/2-8
Move=9

X*3: The Giant Skunk

You've entered a four-way intersection. At the edge of your vision, sixty feet away, is a giant skunk-like creature heading toward you from the east.

GIANT SKUNK

HP=26 HD=5
AC=7 Attack (bite)=1-6
Move=9"

The giant skunk has a special attack (You guessed it!). It sprays a cloud of musk 20' high 20' wide and 60' long. Players must ^{a)}save vs. poison or be blinded 1-8 hours ^{b)}lose 50% of strength and dexterity for 2-8 hours because of the terrible stink! (No save).

If the group continues to stray off the "true path" (the one shown on the DM's Annotated Map) they will continue to have wandering monster encounters like the ones above. The DM should construct these encounters. Each should be difficult and have no treasure. These encounters are "punishment" for ignoring the good advice given in Kuroth's Riddle (Illustration #3). Staying out in the "netherlands" and having random encounters is one way to fail in this module. Allow the players to kill themselves if they want, though you might hint that following Kuroth's clues instead of blindly exploring would yield best results.

X*5: The Silent Chasm

You have twisted and turned along a ten-foot-wide tunnel passageway for almost a quarter of a mile when you come to an irregularly shaped cavern room. It has a high vaulted ceiling and a huge slash of a pit that bisects the room. The pit is silent and black, extending beyond your vision into the depths of Titan's Skull Mountain.

A tunnel slopes down from the

southwest corner of the cavern. Another tunnel slopes upward, across the chasm from you, through the eastern wall of the cavern. A dull glow can be seen in the distance in the eastern passageway. The large cavern smells slightly of sulfur and a light breeze pushes at your face.

Both the breeze and the sulfur smell come from the pit. If the group descends into the pit they will go down (a vertical) 500 feet and notice a much stronger smell of sulfur and a rapidly increasing heat. Another 300 feet down brings the group within visual sighting of a dully glowing bed of magma two hundred feet below. There are no exits from the pit along the walls or at the bottom. If the group gets close enough to see the bottom, six magmen who dwell there will have seen them. The magmen will immediately start crawling up toward the group, intent upon touching them. A magman's touch will set all possessions, including ropes, aflame. The magmen think this is an innocent prank. Anyone set aflame may fall to the bottom of the pit, taking falling damage plus 3-24 hp damage each round that he remains in contact with the crusty lava pit floor. A magman will flee if hit by an adventurer, but if pursued he will turn and attack.

MAGMEN

HP=11 HD=2
AC=7 Damage (1 blow of magma fist)=3-24
Move="9"

Any metal objects that touch the magmen are 50% likely to melt. It takes a +1 weapon or magic to harm a magman and make him retreat.

If the party sees the magmen start climbing toward them they should retreat to the top of the chasm and stay well clear of these dangerous creatures. Party members who climb at full speed will be able

to stay clear of the magmen.

Regardless of whether or not the group has descended into the "Silent Chasm", the magmen will be seen climbing up the edge of the pit as the party is preparing to leave the cavern. The magmen will come sooner if someone drops something into the pit. Read the following description to players when the magmen appear.

Climbing up the edge of the pit you see several dully-glowing humanoid figures. They are as small as children, have tiny puffs of flame dancing on their skins, and are glancing expectantly at the group. They have happy smiles on their faces. Soon they will reach the top of the pit. "Blurrz! Blurrz Elops!" the flame-children chant gladly.

The magmen want to touch all party members and set them aflame. A translation of their chant is "Burn! Burn so well!" The magmen will pursue the group up to 300 feet from the chasm, then return slightly saddened if they didn't get to play their prank.

As in previous cavern rooms, the group should travel downward. If they have gone down far enough into the chasm they will know it is a dead end. The downward-sloping southwest passageway is the one that will lead to the door the group has been looking for.

#6: The Archway of Fate

You have traveled about 500 feet since you left the room with the huge chasm and the flame children. Much of this distance has been a very steep downward slope. Suddenly you hear a clicking sound ahead of you to the east. The party stops dead still to listen. The sound does not repeat.

If the group moves forward

fifty feet or more they will come around two corners to find themselves facing a large arched set of double doors.

Directly in front of you is a twenty-foot-tall, thirty-foot-wide set of metal-reinforced double doors. An archway of stone frames the doors, carved with almost-familiar ancient runes and covered with glowing cave lichens. At the top of the archway you see a bas-relief of Arcana, the Goddess of the Violet Moon. Here you see her seated on a throne, sitting in judgment. As you move about in front of the door her eyes seem to follow you.

The steeply sloping tunnel you've been following curves in front of the double doors and descends into the darkness to the southwest. "Quiet!" you hush your companions. Out of the darkness you hear the clicking sound again. "What is that sound?" you ask.

This is the door the group should be looking for if they are following the clues in Kuroth's Riddle. The clicking sound is associated with one of the encounters described in X: Wrong Turn (above). The mongrel men may be particularly appropriate here. If the group investigates the clicking sound they should have a difficult treasureless encounter after traveling about 100 feet.

The double doors are reinforced timbers. They are unlocked but very heavy, so it will take the combined strength of two or more party members to swing the door open.

The runes can be deciphered if a read magic spell is cast or if the group takes the time to puzzle them out (80% chance of success if ten rounds or more are taken). They say "Arcana sits in judgment of those whom the Gods wish to favor. None unclean, none who are cowards, none witless will she judge worthy. Reverence Her Whose decisions

are always correct." The bas-relief of Arcana seems to watch the group wherever they move but this is only a sign of the sculptor's craft. The visage of Arcana is not animated or magical.

When the group opens one of the double doors they are ready to begin #7, below.

#7: The Chamber of Murals

The huge door swings inward to reveal a scene of wonder. Before you is a room seventy feet wide and one hundred twenty feet long, brilliantly illuminated by four light stones that have been affixed to the ceiling forty feet above your heads.

Each of the four walls has a mural covering its surface. The north wall shows a bearded kingly-looking human who has just tamed a pegasus. The pegasus stands with wings outstretched near the floor in the middle of the painting. On the eastern wall the same human is shown leading an army of elves, humans, gnomes, dwarves and halflings into battle against a numberless army of evil giant-class creatures. The bearded human wears diamond armor and carries a flaming sword.

On the southern wall the same human is shown being crowned with a simple circlet of bluish-white metal. Also shown in this picture are lords of the elvish, human and other goodly races. It is impossible for you to see what might be painted on the western wall since the door you are looking through opens through this wall.

The floor of the mural room is covered with bits of rock, wooden debris and a large quantity of bones. The bones are heaped deeply near the center of the room and seem to come from many different creatures. The bones of human-types as well as those of monsters seem to be mingled indiscriminately. The bones are all bare white and gleaming

Allow the players a moment to discuss what they will do in this room and to ask you questions. If they ask to see what is painted on the western wall, they can peek in through the door and see that it shows the kingly figure signing a document in the presence of a white bearded mage-like figure. There are no apparent exits from the mural room. The characters will feel a noticeable cold radiating from the room. Have everyone roll a d6 and give this information to the player who rolls lowest. When the group is ready to enter the room, read them the description of the Warrior of Earthly Fate below.

Just as you are about to enter the mural room you notice a slight stirring among the debris. The bones are beginning to whirl about like flotsam on the surface of a whirlpool! Faster and faster the debris moves. Suddenly a huge figure unfolds from this maelstrom. It stands twenty feet tall - a golem made entirely from the motley collection of bones that had been lying on the floor.

A coal-black fire begins to glow in the empty eye sockets. The creature wails wretchedly and ponderously advances toward your group. The earth shakes at each footfall. This monstrous bone golem's left fist is gripping a stubby black wand.

BONE GOLEM

HP=42 HD=7
AC=7
move=12"

The bone golem has a special attack. He hits with the fist holding the wand, doing 1-6 hp damage plus a negative energy flash causing 8hp damage (or save vs. spell for 4hp damage). The bone golem will battle with the group with complete dis-

passion until he reaches negative hit points. Then the bones that comprise the golem will lose their cohesion and clatter to the floor, spreading over a large area. After two rounds (DM should time this in "real time") the bones will begin to glow with a black cold fire. After one more round any players still in the room will begin to take cold damage (d4 per round, no save).

In Kuroth's Riddle the players are told they must defeat this creature. Then they are told to "flee past the mouldering bones, and fire that quickly grows. Flee past the winged one..." The winged one is the pegasus located on the center of the northern wall. What the players must do is recognise the reference to the "winged one" when the DM describes this wall and get suspicious. When the bone golem is defeated (or perhaps while others are battling it) players should investigate the area of the pegasus for a secret door. Characters examining the picture of the pegasus will always find the secret door and be able to open it. The secret door will never be discovered accidentally. The party should move through this door before they take damage from the black fire in the room.

Recognizing the "winged one" may not be easy for some groups, especially if they have been ignoring Kuroth's Riddle. The DM should not be surprised if the group exits the room when the black fire begins. All is not lost, though. The fire will die down after three turns and the room will appear as it first did. If the characters re-enter the room, the bone golem will quickly form and attack, completely regenerated. Probably the group will have figured out by then what the "winged one" is and will immediately move to find the secret door during or after the second battle. The black fire will glow from the bones again. It is possible that the group could fight the golem over and over again without discovering

how to move closer to Kuroth's Treasure. The DM could gently remind the group of Kuroth's Riddle. Ask them what different ways the third and fourth verses might be interpreted. You may even want to have Musky come and help. Remember, though, that you should always allow the group the freedom to fail. This is a very important module in the Mansut campaign. Don't hand the players victory on a silver platter. That sort of success is meaningless.

*8: The Guardian

This room is lined with a greyish metal, probably lead, and is thirty feet wide and sixty feet long. The room is perfectly bare with no dust or debris and no exits visible.

As soon as the secret door at the pegasus is opened, the Guardian becomes aware and will begin to scan the lead-lined room. The Guardian was set here by the Gods to protect the entrance to the pyramid room.

The word "Quagmulen" spoken aloud by someone inside the room will cause the Guardian to venture forth from its waiting place - a concealed and featureless alcove in the middle of the south wall. The Guardian will then attempt a retinal scan of each person within this lead-lined chamber. When a person says "Quagmulen" while in the room read the following.

As soon as the word "Quagmulen" leaves your lips a panel in the middle of the south wall slides quietly up. From out of a small alcove there a round floating ball, three inches in diameter, moves into the room. The ball is made of smoothly-polished metal of several different types. The workmanship is phenomenal! The strange creature begins to float toward you.

The Guardian will attempt to take a retinal scan (pause immediately before

a character's eyes). The character must hold still for about thirty seconds in order for this to work. The Guardian will take scans of all those in the room who will allow it to do so. It will then gently pursue any who remain unscanned. As soon as everyone in the room has been scanned, the Guardian will raise the great metal-covered stone blocks that lead to the Pyramid Room. Only those who have been scanned can pass through the corridor. For all others an impenetrable barrier will exist, identical to the magic user's spell wall of force. When those who remain in the room are all scanned, read the following.

The grating sound of metal on metal fills the air. A ten-foot block section of the eastern wall has moved up to reveal a corridor leading to a small well-lit room. The walls of the room are covered with colors and runic shapes. It is impossible, from where you stand, to tell exactly what these shapes might be.

If the characters attack the Guardian they will find that this was a mistake. The guardian will attempt to herd any belligerent adventurers out of the lead-lined chamber, using his attacks if necessary.

THE GUARDIAN

HP = 120 HD = 20
AC = 2
move = up to 30"

The Guardian's attack is to discharge a bolt of electricity for 12 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for 6hp damage) or to shoot two darts per round for d10 damage each. The Guardian is programmed to be patient and gentle toward humans, but its first priority is to protect the lead chamber from hostile creatures. The Guardian will also act as a backup to insure that no unscanned creatures enter the corridor to the Pyramid Room. Against characters of the appropriate level for this adven-

ture the wall of force should be virtually impregnable, but the Guardian will assist if need be.

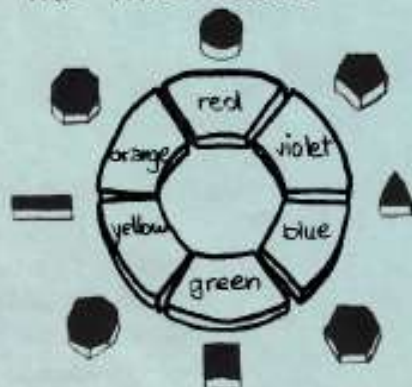
When all characters have left the lead-lined room, the Guardian will lower the metal-covered block to its original position, return to its alcove and wait. It will exit the alcove again if "Quagmule" is said by someone in the lead-lined room. Lowering the block traps characters in the Pyramid Room, but this is as planned.

#9: The Pyramid Room

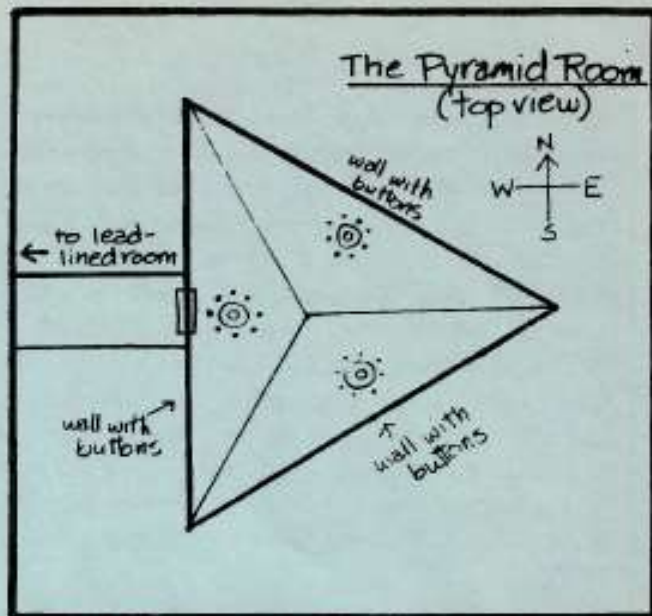
This is a strangely-shaped room indeed! The chamber is like the hollow inside of a pyramid. There are three walls, forty feet long each along the floor, sloping sharply together and meeting in a point above the exact center of the room. Near the center of each of the three walls are identical sets of buttons. Some of the buttons are colored while others are differing shapes and uniformly colored black.

Show the players the illustration below. Remember that the pattern of buttons shown can be found on each of the three walls.

The buttons that appear on each of the three walls



Actually there are no labels on the central buttons. They are colored the colors indicated



The buttons work in the following way: When they are pushed, they click slightly and stay depressed. If they are pushed again they will click and rise to their original positions.

This is a teleport room. If the players can decipher the clues in Kuroth's Riddle they will be able to teleport themselves to the next room, which will bring them closer to Kuroth's Treasure.

The riddle says "push red, then blue, then three of three". What the players must do is push a red button, then a blue button, then all three of the triangular buttons (there is one triangular button on each wall). The buttons must be pushed in order and they must be the only buttons in the "down" position. (It does not matter in what order the three triangular buttons are pushed, since they are identical.)

When the third triangular button is depressed the characters inside the Pyramid Room will disappear, being teleported to #10: The Azure Cavern. The buttons in the Pyramid Room will then return to the "up" position.

#10: The Azure Cavern

One instant you are in the Pyramid Room, the next you find yourself in a strange blue-lit underground gar-

den. You are in a huge natural cavern, roughly circular and about two hundred feet in diameter. You are standing on a low stone platform engraved with a six-pointed star inside a circle. Straight ahead of you, against the eastern wall, is an altar to the True Gods. The altar is a stone block, four feet high, four feet wide and eight feet long. Carved into the edges of the altar are the six symbols of the Greater Gods native to the World of Mansut - Krom, Kane, Kulkan, Terasu, Selene, and Arcana.

This room is lit by a strange and beautiful collection of mushrooms, fungi, and lichens. These growths are glowing softly in several shades of blue and are clustered mostly against the walls of the cavern.

There appear to be two exits from this room. One passageway leads to the left and northeast. This twenty-foot-wide passageway slopes downward and seems to be quite damp. The other passageway leads to the right and southeast. This passageway slopes upward and from it a faint warm breeze blows.

This room is sacred to the Gods. The altar against the eastern wall will heal 10 points of damage for each player who touches it (the effect will occur only once per character). In addition, any deceased members of the party can be raised from the dead if their bodies are laid on the altar and some other group members pray that they be made whole. The altar restores formerly dead characters to 0 hit points. The members of the group will know that if they can heal the raised one even a little, life will be returned to him.

As Kuroth's Riddle says, the group should travel always to sure right. That means the group should travel to the southeast.

#11: The Inconspicuous Tunnel

The tunnel described below will only be discovered by the group if they indicate to the DM that they are looking for right-hand passageways and travel at normal rate or lower (12" movement rate or lower).

This tunnel will save the group a lot of grief, as it lets them bypass a very difficult encounter with a young red dragon.

You have traveled perhaps eighty feet down the southeast passageway when you notice a small alcove off to the right. Not wanting to leave anything to chance, you investigate for any small tunnels that might branch off. You find one! It is about seven feet high and four feet wide, and it completely concealed from the main passageway.

The characters will have to move in single file through this narrow and twisty tunnel. The DM should ask for a single-file marching order if he does not already have one.

#12: The Dragon's Nest

You walk into a large cavern room. You turn to the right to examine an alcove as you pass it. You are face to face with a red dragon!

This red dragon is young (2hp per hit die) and surprises on 1-3, d6.

CLOAKTONGUE THE

RED DRAGON

HP = 20	HD = 10
AC = -1	Attack (claw/claw/bite) =
Move = 9"/24"	1-4/1-4/4-16 or
	breathe fire (up to
	3 times) = 20hp
	damage (save for 10
	hp damage)

Cloaktongue may be willing to spare the lives of the adventurers if they will surrender and agree to be his minions. Of course it could be that the group will defeat Cloaktongue (though this is doubtful).

*13: On Tiptoes

You've traveled about one hundred fifty feet through this barely passable, cramped tunnel. Now it seems to dead end. But no, this is the back side of a secret door. The mechanism to open the door, a simple latch, is easy to see and operate from this side.

The secret door opens into the northernmost section of the huge cavern where Cloaktongue lies in wait. Cloaktongue is lying down peering off to the south. It is unlikely he will notice the characters if they slip quietly into the narrow tunnel only twenty feet from the secret door. As each character moves across the open space, have the player roll $d6$. On a 1 or a 2 Cloaktongue will hear or smell them. Thieves are noticed only on a 1 (and never if they move silently). This die rolling adds drama to the scene but no real danger is present. Even if Cloaktongue does notice the group all party members will be able to run across the twenty-foot open space before he can get to the scene and attack or breathe fire.

If the dragon does notice the group, play it for all it's worth. Have Cloaktongue charge up and breath fire into the twisty tunnel where the group has fled, perhaps doing 1 point of damage to the rear-most member of the party. This encounter is a fun one for the DM.

If the group decides to stand and fight the dragon they'll get what they deserve - a pointless encounter with major damage to the group and very little treasure.

*14: The Ice Warren

You've traveled about an eighth of a mile beyond the red dragon's cavern when you come to the next cavern room. This chamber is roughly U-shaped, about fifty feet wide, and has six openings extending into the darkness. These tunnel openings are about ten feet wide and

fifteen feet high.

A musky scent fills the air and the floor is littered with rocks, dirt, rags, scraps of fur, gnawed bones, and bits of wood. The room is as cold as a snowbank. It's so cold it hurts. You listen carefully but hear no sounds.

This complex of tunnels and small caverns is the warren of Frostspear, a huge winterwolf. Frostspear is currently out on a hunt with the most vigorous members of his winterwolf tribe. Only three wolves remain in the den. Their locations are marked on the DM's Annotated Map with the letters (a,b,orc) that precede their names below.

(a) ICETONGUE

HP=8 HD=6
AC=9 (dexterity loss)
Move=1" Attack (bite)=2-8 or
(frost breath)6-24

Ice tongue is a warrior wolf with broken front and back legs. He will not move from his location for he is severely wounded, but he can still bite and breathe frost on anyone who comes too close. His frost breath will affect anyone within ten feet of his muzzle and is useable only once per ten rounds. Ice tongue's pelt is worth only 500 GP.

(b) SNOWTOP

HP=18 HD=3
AC=4 Attack (bite)=1-6 hp damage
Move=18"

This young wolf has not yet attained the ability to breathe frost but is unusually agile and fierce and will coordinate its attack with that of Doe Fang. Snowtop's pelt is worth 3000 GP.

(c) DOEFANG

HP=34 HD=6
AC=5 Attack (1 bite)=2-8 hp
Move=18" damage or
(breathe frost)=6-24

DoeFang is an adult female winter-wolf. She will attack the group viciously with Snowtop yapping at her heels. DoeFang will attack with her bite until she is down to 12 hp or less. She will then breathe frost (6-24 hp damage) and retreat into the warren yelping for Snowtop to follow her, if he is still alive. DoeFang's pelt is worth 5000 GP.

There is no treasure in this warren except the pelts of the winter wolves. When the group first sees the wolves, describe them as "huge wolf-like creatures, five feet at the shoulder, with fowl, fang-filled mouths, silvery eyes, and beautiful shining white fur."

DoeFang and Snowtop will attack before the group can exit the area. They will immediately jump out to block the rightmost passageway if the group moves to exit swiftly out of the U-shaped chamber. If the group investigates the warren, DoeFang and Snowtop will pad silently behind, waiting for a good opportunity to strike. Of course, as



with any encounter, it is possible for the monsters to be surprised by the party.

As this encounter is ending, have the group hear the sound of winter-wolves howling from the distant north. Any winterwolves still alive in the warren, including Ice tongue, will bay loudly in reply.

#15: The Well-Lit Tunnel

The tunnel you have been following dead ends into a corridor that runs north and south. To the north (and left) the corridor is thirty feet wide and lit with brightly glowing stones. This corridor has the feel of being well-used. In the distance you think you may glimpse sunlight!

To the south (and right) the corridor is only ten feet wide, has a floor covered with fallen rock, and seems little-used. This southern corridor smells of rotting flesh and blood.

As before, the correct route is to the right. This means the group should travel down the small, seemingly little-used corridor. It will not be long until the group comes to the first of the Portals of Pain (marked "P" on the DM's Annotated Map).

If the group travels to the left they will find that they were wrong about the sunlight; what they will find is a dangerous random encounter - one from X: Wrong Turn or one of the DM's construction.

P: Portals of Pain

As the group travels down the narrow, foul-smelling southern corridor they will four times come to a rune-inscribed portal. Each time they come to a portal (a "P" on the DM's Annotated Map), read or paraphrase the description below.

In front of you stands an archway carved of one piece from the rock that surrounds you in the tunnel. This archway or portal is old and very solid.

Its apex is inscribed with a symbol that seems almost familiar. The portal is about twelve feet wide and fifteen feet high.

Sprawled on either side of the portal are the dead and decaying bodies of vermin that inhabit most dungeons. Dead centipedes, giant and normal rats, spiders, and even a cave cricket or two lie rotting on the ground.

Each of the portals is inscribed with a special symbol of pain (see the seventh level magic user's spell of the same name). The symbol can be deciphered by using a read magic spell or by studying it for thirty minutes or more. This symbol causes 2 hit points of damage (save vs. spell for half damage) to the first group member to walk through. In addition, the affected group member will be +2 on AC, -2 to hit because of wracking pain. The other group members will be unscathed unless they wait more than one round before they pass through the portal. If the next person in line does wait more than one round, he, as the first person in this delayed group, will take effects identical to those described for the first person in the group. These portals "zap" one creature then take one minute to "recharge." Thus, the other group members could walk through a portal unharmed if they did so quickly enough.

This pain damage is cumulative. It is what killed the dungeon vermin in the area. Needless to say, the carcasses have attracted scavengers. Any live creature will be "zapped" while passing through the portal from either direction, except when the portal is "recharging" itself. If the group manages to catch a live creature and throw or herd it through the portal, then pass through the portal themselves before one minute has elapsed, the group could pass through the portal unharmed. A dead creature or inanimate object will not trigger the portal.

The special symbols on the Portals can be erased or negated in the following ways: wish spell, alter reality spell, rod of cancellation, two successful dispel magic spells in a row (the symbols were cast by an 18th level magician), or chisel away the symbol (this takes one turn and will inflict four separate sonic blasts of d4 damage each to the chiseler).

At some point while the party is passing through each portal area, have a representative of the group roll d8 to determine which of the following things occurs (or the DM could choose from the options below). If the group has been having an easy time of it, you may want to beef up these potential encounters. If the group already has some dead player characters or is otherwise weak, you may want to soften the encounters.

PORTAL AREA ENCOUNTERS -

ROLL d8

- 1- P*1: The Carrion Crawler
- 2- P*2: Three Fire Beetles
- 3- P*3: An Otyugh
- 4-5- P*4: A Wave of Despair
- 6-7- P*5: A Quiet Voice
- 8- Dungeon Master's Option

P*1: The Carrion Crawler.

CARRION CRAWLER

HP=10 HD=3+1

AC=5 (head) 9 (body)

Move=12"

The carrion crawler attacks with eight tentacles that do no damage but each person hit must save or be paralyzed. The carrion crawler is -2 to hit.

P*2: Three Fire Beetles

FIRE BEETLES

HP=5 each HD=1+2

AC=6

Move=12"

Attack (1 pincer)=2-8 hp damage

These creatures are -2 to hit. Their eyes and a spot on their

abdomens glows.

P*3: An Otyugh

OTYUGH
HP=30 HD=7
AC=7 Attacks (2 tentacles/bite)=
move=6" 1-8/1-8/2-5

This creature is never surprised, but it attacks at -4 to hit.

The above encounters reflect a -2 on armor class and -2 to hit for all monsters who have walked through a Portal of Pain.

P*4: A Wave of Despair. Take a randomly selected player aside and read to him the boxed section below.

How long will these Portals of Pain continue? You feel a wave of despair wash over you. Maybe it would be best to simply turn around and leave before too many portals stand between the group and escape. Surely your group can find its way to the surface and leave this wretched dungeon behind. You resolve to discuss this idea with the rest of the group.

P*5: A Quiet Voice. Take a randomly selected player aside and read to him the boxed section below.

A quiet voice resonates inside your mind, "Fear most who you know most. A great and fateful choice lies ahead. Turn back now or surely you will face the demons within."

For many adventurers the passage through the Portals of Pain will be a time of doubting and fear. Let it be so. Don't tell them whether they should continue toward Kuroth's Treasure or retreat. The group must decide.

The Gods are testing the resolve of the group to complete a task once undertaken. For this reason, the DM must carefully engineer this section, changing and modifying if need be, so that the group is fully challenged. The issue should not be framed as: "The party is down to zero strength. One more encounter will kill all survivors. Should we turn back?" In such a situation the party ought to turn back. Rather the dilemma the group should face is: "We have set ourselves to a bold task. The going is getting tedious and difficult. Shouldn't we just move on to better pickings?"

The DM should not be afraid to make this section long and tedious, perhaps with more Portals and more encounters than have been indicated here. Whatever it takes, do not allow the group to reach #16: The Rubble Chamber until you feel the Gods would be completely satisfied that the team of adventurers will stick to an objective even in the face of uncertainty and doubt.

#16: The Rubble Chamber

Out of the stench and gore of the tunnel you emerge into an eighty-foot-diameter rubble-filled cavern. The rubble is mostly rocks of up to boulder size that seem to have fallen from the ceiling. Charred timbers are also tangled into the rockfall. The footing throughout the room looks very treacherous. Near the entrance to the room you see a message written hastily in now-dry blood. "Fear the demons within," the message warns.

This room was the site of a battle between Shamp'ta (from V. The Sanctuary) and some minions of evil who were attempting to break into the Pyramid Room at #17. If the group spends at least three hours investigating they will find crushed skeletons, broken potion bottles, swords, and burned and useless magical scrolls. A feeling of evil comes from the skeletons.

As the group begins to explore

the room, have each player roll d6.

- 1-Bad fall, leg trapped under sliding bolder. It takes 3 rounds to extricate yourself. d8 damage.
- 2-Misstep. 2hp damage (roll dexterity or below for half damage).
- 3-6-Treacherous footing has been avoided.

There are no monsters in the room. The only danger is from the shifting rubble. When the group reaches the middle of the room, read the following.

At the easternmost section of the chamber you see a steel-covered door with this inscription above it:

"Say that which once
you said before
To enter the guarded
pyramid's door."

If a party member says "Quagmullen", the door will open to reveal a Pyramid Room identical to the one the group has already encountered. This door is also openable using a knock spell. The door cannot be opened in any other way short of a wish. Picking the lock and forcing the door will both be unsuccessful.

*17: The Second Pyramid Room

The chamber appears to be identical to the Pyramid Room you entered earlier. The same colored and shaped buttons are located on each of the three sloping walls.

The players need to push a blue, a red, then three triangular buttons. As before, the buttons must be pushed in proper sequence and must be the only buttons depressed. When the last triangular button clicks down, everyone in the room, including dead bodies, is transported to V. The Sanctuary.

D. Notes for the DM

The following section (V. The Sanctuary) is the second and final

player information handout. This handout, like the previous one, should be copied and given to the players so they can read along with the DM. The handout contains some crucial information that the players will want to take home and study afterwards. It is here, in the Sanctuary, that the players will come to realize that they have somehow won the favor of the Gods, and it is in the Sanctuary that the players will complete the first qualifying test by "solving" the Alignment Riddle.

This handout also acts as a tie-in to the other crucial AddVentures in the Earthbound Campaign. Kurok's Treasure is the first of a six-part series that involves the group as Chosen Heroes and saviors of the earth. Watch for more AddVentures and NightVentures set in Mansut's Earthbound Campaign.

Following the player handout, V. The Sanctuary, the DM will find VI. Notes for the DM on the Sanctuary. This contains comments on how to help the players role-play through the Alignment Riddle and other events that occur in the Sanctuary.



V. THE SANCTUARY (Player Handout)

A. Sanctuary

You've been teleported again. You find yourself standing on a six-pointed star within a circle. This symbol is about twice as large as the one in the Azure Cavern. The chamber you are now in is about ninety feet wide and roughly oval in shape. The chamber is a natural cavern, its walls shot through with veins of silvery fire which illuminate the area well. You walk over to a wall. "Beautiful!" you exclaim, "What metal is this?" No one answers you. When you notice that no heat radiates from the veins of light, you touch one. A soothing calm and well feeling courses through your body. You straighten your shoulders, much invigorated and feeling positively happy despite the gruesome encounters of the past hours.

Now you notice the double doors on the northeast corner of the room. "Kuroth's Treasure!" one of your companions cries. "We must be close to it now." With those words you and your companions push open the double doors.

In front of you is a wondrous sight. A huge cavern, eight hundred feet in diameter, is lit by a small sun near the vaulted ceiling three hundred feet above. This sun shines its golden light on a healthy green forest. Birds sing merrily in the trees. You glimpse small furry creatures—squirrels, chipmunks and rabbits as they scamper here and there in the shadows of pine and oak trees. As the sunlight warms you, lines of worry begin to disappear from your face. Your wounds feel clean and a slight prickly feeling of healing begins to grow. "This place is wholesome and good," you say in a hushed voice. "There is something sacred about it."

"Glad to hear you think so!" a deep pleasant voice booms out. A white-robed elderly man seems to step from nowhere to stand before the group. "My name is Shompta, I am the Keeper of this garden. Welcome."

"Greetings," you reply, still somewhat taken aback by the kindly old man's sudden

appearance. Then you introduce yourself and your companions.

"Excellent!" Shompta exclaims, clearly pleased to hear your names. "It is for you that I have been waiting. Come. It must have been a tiring journey. Let me show you a place where you can rest." Shompta points down a forest path with his wooden staff.

"What is this place?" You ask Shompta, matching his long stride.

The white-haired man lifts an eyebrow. "This place is called 'Eddios' in the elder tongue. 'Sanctuary' you would say. It was built ages ago by Dwarven, the dwarven king, as a place of refuge. Now the Gods—Shompta indicates the small golden sun above you—"grace this place with their light and fortify it as a citadel against the Evil beyond Evil which now begins to stalk the Earth." A cloud passes over Shompta's countenance. He arrives at a junction in the forest path and hesitates, evidently lost in thought.

As you look at Shompta you have a brief thought of battle contingencies if this seemingly good and gentle man should turn and attack. Then you dismiss the thought. Not this man, not this place. Here, truly, you have nothing to fear. A quiet peace within you tells you this is true. It is a feeling you cannot doubt.

You start, remembering what has brought you here. "We come here searching for something," you begin.

"Of course you do." Shompta looks at you appraisingly. "You have come here searching for Kuroth's Treasure." Shompta pauses and the members of your group hang on his words. "Let me warn you though. Kuroth's Treasure is not easily given, nor should it be lightly accepted. Shompta begins to walk quickly to the south. "Let me show you something."

After a short time you come to a small glade. Near the southern part of the glade stands a pillar with a green and brown splotched sphere on top. From a small crack in the sphere shining silvery drops fall. "She bleeds" Shompta says.

"That sphere represents the Earth Herself. She is wounded. Can you stop the flow of blood? Can you banish those who seek Her death?" Shompta looks searchingly at the members of your party. "The holder of Kuroth's Treasure must do these deeds, and walk through death and horror to accomplish them, too."

"What do you mean?" you ask.

Shompta shakes his head. "Fate's purpose seals my tongue. Though I wish otherwise, I may not say more. The white-robed old man smiles suddenly at your group. "Come. This is a happy time. At last you have arrived. Let me show you more of my garden."

So saying, Shompta leads you away from the Pillar of Hours to a meadow where a blue and sparkling fountain and a serene pool are found. "This is the Fountain of Healing and the Pool of Meditation. Here may your bodies and souls be healed."

Shompta leads you again along a fragrant and peaceful path to a large meadow with striking trees growing near the western side. "These trees are the Trees of Vision, Knowledge, and Truth," Shompta begins. "The Gods may allow you to pick and eat a fruit of one of these trees if Kuroth's Treasure really is to be yours."

"And here are altars to the six True Gods," Shompta walks up a short path to a small cavern room. The room is hushed and holy. It contains altars to Krom, Kane, Kulkan, Terasu, Selene and Arcana.

This Sanctuary garden is not at all what you expected when you activated the last triangular button in the second Pyramid Room. You feel overcome and happy. With the health and wholeness of the golden sun lightening your soul you feel a sense of destiny and also of *déjà vu*. For a moment you step outside yourself and look at the group standing in reverence with the white-robed Shompta by the altars of the Gods. "This is the beginning of something big," you think, and you know it is true.

As the group follows Shompta out of the Altar Room you ask another question. "Shompta, you have said that the Gods may give us Kuroth's Treasure, but what is Kuroth's Treasure? And what must we do to obtain it?" The other members of your group nod and you all look expectantly at Shompta.

Shompta strides forward purposefully past the Trees of Vision, Knowledge and Truth. "Kuroth's Treasure may not be what you expect," Shompta replies, "but when you pass through the Gate of Testing, then you will know if it is to be yours." Then Shompta leads you to an area of the Sanctuary cavern that you have not seen before.

At the north end of a small meadow, seven steps lead up to an iridescent wall of fire. It casts no heat, but it does give the feeling of depth and eternity.

"On the morrow," Shompta intones, "when you have rested and healed the wounds of your bodies and souls, you will ascend to the First Step and answer the Alignment Riddle. If the Gods are pleased, They will give you that which Kuroth received."

For long moments you stare the cool fire at the top of the Steps of Testing. Finally you say "Show us where we may rest."

B. The Test

The next day you stand in the golden sun before the Gate of Testing. You are rested in body and spirit and ready for whatever might come.

"Long has it been prophesied. Now it shall be fulfilled," Shompta looks solemn as he continues. "What I say now has been foretold. These are not my own words. Yet if you are the Chosen Heroes you will understand, or rather you will come to understand. You have all shown skill in combat, wisdom and perseverance, else you would not have found this Sanctuary. Prove yourselves again as you take the First Test, The Alignment Riddle. I pray that you all will be found worthy."

THE FIRST TEST: THE ALIGNMENT

RIDDLE

Each creature, according to its nature
builds its vision of the world.
Each creature seeks freedom and
propriety in its own estimation, in
its own way.

There are many paths to the moun-
tain's top, many roads to a pur-
ified soul.

Let all who stand to test
consider well what is best.

Choose your vision.

Choose your path.

Temper your soul
as a forger refines
iron to steel,
dross to gold.

Imagine your soul as a cauldron
of molten ore
wherein is precious metal tried
by fire
to separate it from the common
dross.

With skillful eye and steady hand,
skim impurities from off pure
gold's top, and refine.

Again and again in heat's heart
will your soul be thrust.

Again and again must you act well
your part.

And as gold returned to furnace
for test,

let your deeds shine true
with dross burned pure away.

Let all who stand to test
consider well what is best.

Choose your vision.

Choose your path.

Temper your soul
as a forger refines
iron to steel
dross to gold.

This is the first test of eight,
this alignment's quest.

Answer the riddle as you would be,
not as you are.

For in forger's fire

pure gold you will become.

Now is the beginning of responsibility
Now is a decision with no second
chance.

Therefore, if you stand unprepared
take not the test - answer the
riddle 'no'!

What say ye?

The riddle or no?

Will you make known your alignment
and abide truly with this decision?

Shompta pauses. "Let all those
who wish to take this test step
with me up the first Step of
Testing."

Once again you are filled with
a sense of destiny and purpose.
You ascend to the first step.
As you do so you feel a force like
many invisible hands pick you up
and throw you at the curtain of
iridescent fire. In a starburst of
light and color you plunge through
the curtain. There is a moment
of blackness and disorientation. Then
you find yourself upright and in a
large chamber with four exits. In
the center of the room is a foun-
tain. The fountain has four hydra
heads, each shooting a different color
of liquid into a pillared receiving
bowl.

"Now begins the Test," Shompta
warns. "I will recite four choices.
Choose you the one that best repre-
sents how you would like to be."
The white-robed man nodded gravely.
"Think long and hard before you make
a choice. Weigh each word I say
carefully. I will recite the choices as
many times as you like." Shompta
looks to see if everyone is ready,
then he begins.

He who finds propriety in
his own well-being, according to his
own strength,
heedless of cost to others,
let him drink red and prosper.

He who finds propriety
in his own well being and that of
his friends,
if no great injustice occurs for
others,
let him drink grey and prosper.

He who finds propriety
in his own well being and in the
greatest life and happiness of
all others,
regardless of strength,
let him drink blue and prosper.

He who finds propriety
in misery for himself and for all
others,
heedless of cost, heedless of life,
heedless of happiness and weal,
let him drink black and prosper.

As the last person finishes drink-
ing from the liquid that matches
his soul's intention, Shompta ges-
tures arcanelly and the liquids com-

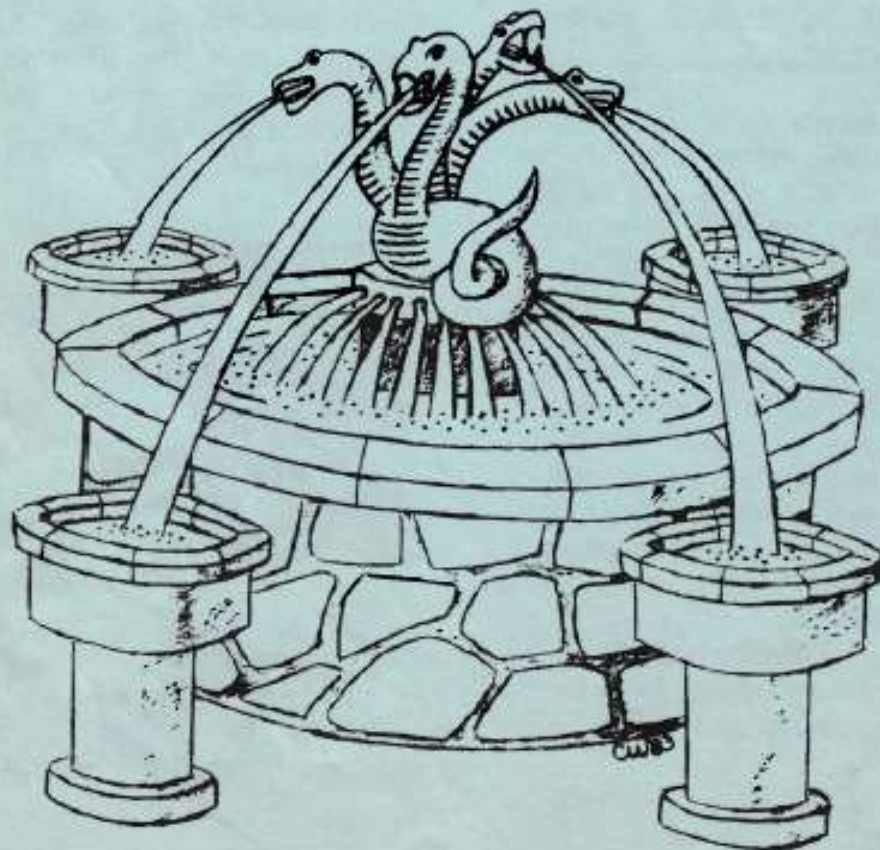
ing from the hydra's mouths change
color, with the exception of the black
liquid stream.

"Now comes the second aspect of
the Alignment Riddle," Shompta says.
"Let us begin."

He who finds freedom
in group order, society's discipline,
social cohesion and focused authority,
who sees central judgment as best
for all,
let him drink orange and prosper.

He who finds freedom
in individual spontaneity, personal dis-
cipline,
unselfconscious actions and self-
responsibility,
who sees individual judgment as
best for all,
let him drink yellow and prosper.

He who finds freedom
in both personal and society's dis-
cipline.



individual and social order,
who sees judgment as best for all
let him drink green and prosper.

He who finds freedom
in lack of discipline, lack of judgment,
lack of order,
in enslavement for all including
self,
he who seeks no freedom,
let him drink black and prosper.

You and your companions consider well, then you each drink your chosen color of liquid from the receiving bowls. When you have finished, Shompta speaks to each member of your group in turn. When he comes to you he says

Your soul combines _____ [first color chosen] and _____ [second color chosen].
This is the essence of _____ [a gem type].
Your soul is _____ [alignment implied].

Shompta presses into your hand a flat, seven-sided token, about the size of a gold piece. In the center of the token sparkles the gem which symbolizes your alignment. Aside from the gem the token is plain but expertly wrought in a silvery metal of such rich sheen that it can only be mithral. As you glance at your companions you see that each of them also holds a similar token in his hand.

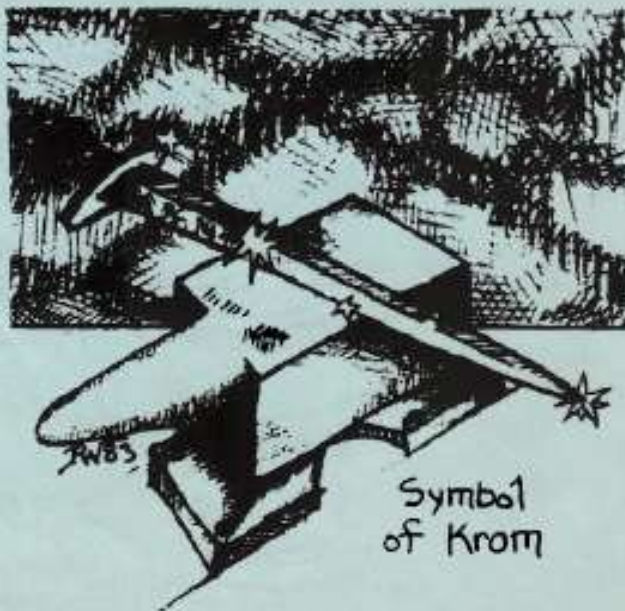
"Congratulations!" Shompta says addressing the group. "You have passed the first test of eight. These are your tokens. Guard them well. They have many powers that will not be obvious to you at first.



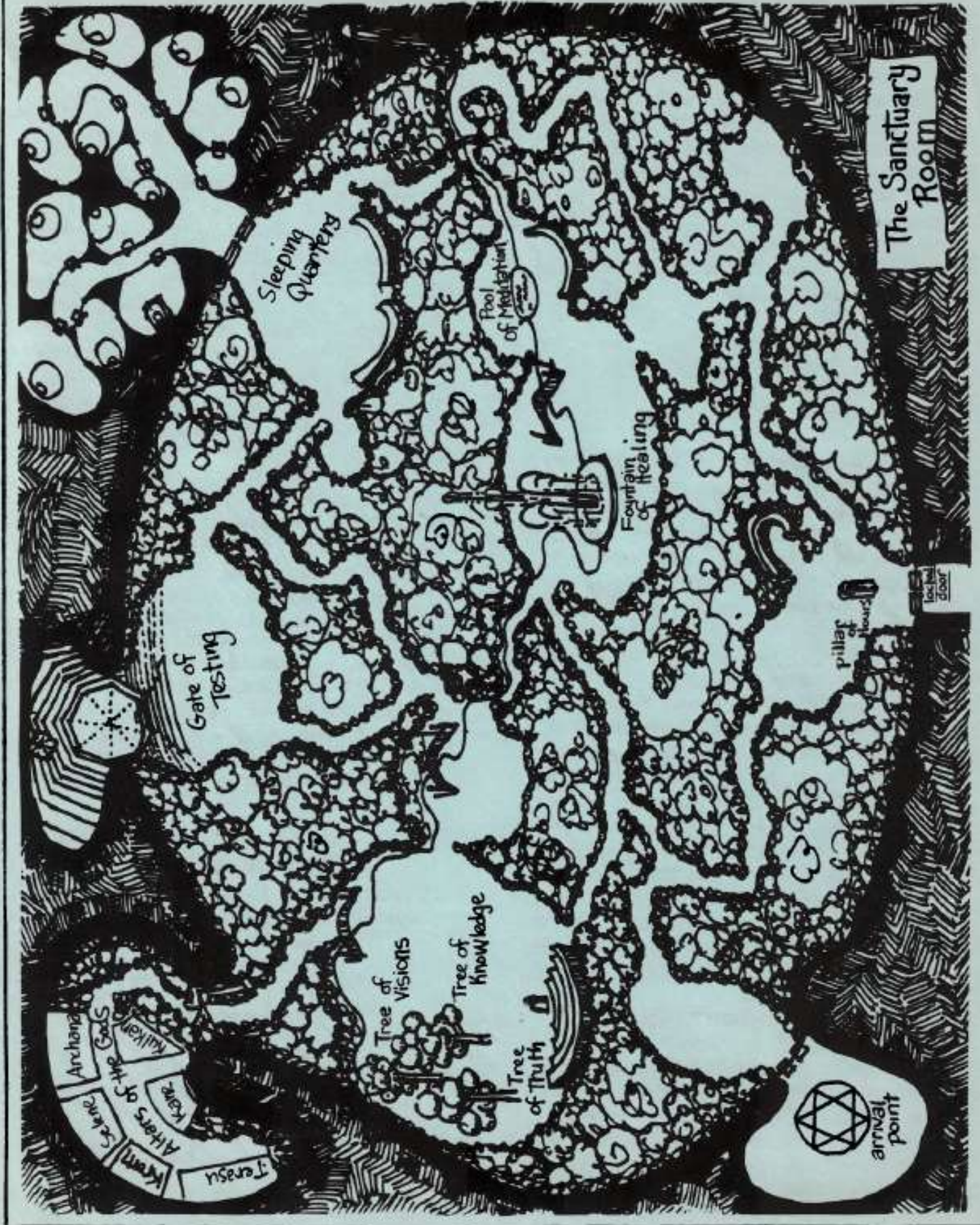
"But where is Kuroth's Treasure?" you ask expectantly.

Shompta begins to speak with a far-off look in his eyes. "Kuroth was of another Age in time, but your treasure is the same as his - you are Chosen Heroes of the Gods. Just as Kuroth received a token and forged it into a mighty weapon for good, so must you

"Let me explain all you can now understand of these tokens. First, they are unfinished. From time to time the Gods will call you back to Sanctuary to further your training and to take more tests. When this happens, your tokens may be strengthened when you and your tokens are ready, you will journey on a quest of great importance to the Living Earth. Your tokens begin with two powers. If the token is held in one hand and 'Aruka Shompta' is spoken, I or one of my minions will come to your aid. Once used in this fashion, a token may never be so used again. Each of your tokens has a special power individual to it. Come," Shompta smiles, "let us leave this testing place and go into one of the meadows of Sanctuary where we may talk more at leisure."



Symbol
of Krom



II. NOTES FOR THE DM ON THE SANCTUARY

A. Shompta

Shompta is an eighteenth level magician and a seventeenth level cleric in service to the Greater Goddess Terasu. He is also a demigod, whose special powers include command spells with no saving throw allowed to mortals, teleport with no error, quest with no saving throw, and all other powers associated with the stature of a demigod.

SHOMPTA

HP=156

AC=-3

move = 18*

If any members of the party arriving at the Sanctuary are dead or grievously wounded, Shompta will raise or heal them. The DM should, if necessary, add this information to the description of the group's meeting with Shompta as he reads V The Sanctuary to them. Characters with less serious wounds will heal themselves at the Fountain of Healing.

Shompta is concerned that the members of the party have a good experience in the Sanctuary and hopes that they will be of good (or at least of neutral) alignment because he believes them to be the Chosen Heroes of the Gods, whose coming was prophesied in the sacred Book of Hours. Players will get a copy of the Book of Hours as part of the second Adventure of the Earthwound Campaign, Quest for the Earthtrees.

B. The Alignment Riddle

During the course of choosing alignment, some players could make decisions that eliminate them from the ranks of the Chosen Heroes. This occurs if they pick black in either part of the Alignment Riddle. Black indicates insane evil and insane chaotic the alignment known as

"evil beyond evil." The Gods are trying to save the world from this type of "monster", so any character who drinks black is absolutely eliminated and must save at -6 or die. The black liquid is an extremely deadly poison.

Any player who chooses evil (red) should be told that his character cannot qualify for a token, nor can he continue on the quest with the Chosen Heroes. This player should start another character who would enjoy doing good for others. This new player character can take the Alignment Test when the group finds its way back to the Sanctuary in Quest for the Earthtrees. All other alignments are acceptable and characters are given tokens with the gem appropriate for their alignment. The DM should use the chart below to determine alignments and gems, according to the characters' choices of which colors of liquids to drink. The information on colors, gems, and alignments should be filled in by the DM for each individual player character as he reads the final lines of the Alignment Riddle.

THE ALIGNMENT GEMS

	ORANGE (lawful)	GREEN (neutral)	YELLOW (chaotic)	BLACK (insane chaotic)
BLUE (good)	fire opal	tur- quoise	emerald	
GREY (neutral)	tiger eye	jade	topaz	
RED (evil)				
BLACK (insane evil)				

C. The Tokens

The tokens act as amulets of proof vs. detection by anyone except Shompta, who will be keeping close tabs on the group from now on. The tokens each have one of the abilities listed below. The DM should choose an ability appropriate to the temperament and class of each character.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- 1) adds 1 point to possessor's main attribute as long as token is owned.
- 2) invisibility 1/day.
- 3) +2 on all saving throws.
- 4) paralyzation by touch (must score a hit on flesh) 1/day.
- 5) bless by touch 3/day (+1 to hit +1 to damage for 10 rounds)
- 6) fly 1/day, 60 rounds duration.
- 7) immunity to sleep and charm spells.
- 8) cure light wounds 3/day.
- 9) infravision 60' for possessor.
- 10) immunity to fear 1/day.

D. The Trees

The characters were told that if they managed to achieve Kuroth's Treasure, they might be given a chance to eat a fruit of from either the Tree of Visions, the Tree of Truth, or the Tree of Knowledge. The group should choose one member to represent them in eating a fruit from one of the Trees. Here is how Shompta will describe the effect of eating the fruit of each tree.

"The Tree of Visions allows the eater of its fruit to see an important vision of the future. The vision will come immediately and cannot be controlled. You will see in vision whatever the Gods think best.

"Eating of the fruit of the Tree of Truth entitles you to ask one question which will be unequivocally answered 'true' or 'false'. The answer may come immediately or after a day or two, but you will

know when the answer has been given.

If you eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, you may ask for information about a person, place, thing or event and have the information revealed to you. The more specific the question, the more specific and useful will be the information you receive. The information never comes immediately. It will come gradually, in a way that seems natural to you.

The DM should ask the group from which Tree they would like to eat. If they choose to eat of the Tree of Truth or Knowledge and ask a question that is not answered in this module, you may call or write to the creator of this module, Rob Washburn (address and phone are in the front of this magazine), for more information. (It may be too hard for you to judge how to answer a question without knowing the material contained in the other modules (*2-*6) in the Earthbound Campaign series, and those modules are not out yet as this magazine is printed.) The players should not be disappointed if they have to wait a while for the answers to their questions since Shompta has already told the characters that answers may not come immediately.

If the group chooses the fruit of the Tree of Visions, read to them the description below.

You seem to be flying through a gigantic underground space. Around and between columns of stone you fly near the ceiling of a cavern that must be tens of miles in diameter. Red as blood glows the floor of the cavern. It looks like a sea of fire. Off to one side you see a mist-covered land mass with what might be a harbor and a walled city there, but this does not interest you.

Faster and faster you fly, diving toward that blood-red sea. Soon you are skimming inches above the dancing inferno fast and deadly. Abruptly you pull up and over a stone ship with about a dozen deformed creatures on deck. They appear to be patched together from the several parts of many different humans, humanoids and demihumans. Each of the creatures has one or more silvery symbols imbedded into their foreheads. You pass over the group in a flash, but in that instant you see a double image imposed over that of the deformed monsters. It is your visage and those of the other Chosen Heroes! As you soar back to the heights of the cavern, you know you have seen yourself in disguise, already embarked upon the great and dangerous quest that Shompta hinted at earlier. Then the vision ends.

D. Leaving the Sanctuary

If the group wishes, they may stay in the Sanctuary, resting and talking to Shompta. Eventually it will be time for the party to leave, however. Shompta will inform them that he will transport them as far as Titan's Skull Peak, beside the sacred dish. From there the party must make its own way home. This is how Shompta will say his goodbyes to the group as he ushers them into the Gateway Room.

Shompta shakes hands in farewell to you and each of your companions. Then he clears his throat. "I cannot say for sure when next we will meet, but let me give you this advice: seek opportunities to hone your skills and abilities. Also remember to refine your souls to a purity that equals that of the gems you carry on your tokens. In seeking new adventures, remember that your lives are no longer your own. Do not allow needless or permanent death to find you. Be cautious. Hold the tokens sacred. Protect them with your lives. If ever you fear a

token will be taken, this is just cause to call me to your aid. The tokens must not be allowed to fall into the wrong hands. The tokens cannot be replaced.

"I have a parting gift for you," Shompta says handing each of you a small tin box. "In each of these boxes is a goodberry. Save it for a time of great need, for it will heal any damage you may have sustained and restore you to your full strength.

"Prepare well for the quest that lies ahead," Shompta concludes. You all say your goodbyes, then, in a twinkling, Shompta has disappeared and you are standing beside the silvery dish in front of Titan's Skull Peak.

From here the characters must climb down the mountain and trek back across the wilderness to Four Sisters Castle. On the way back, they should have about two encounters from III.C. The Wilderness Encounters.

Have fun! Watch for more Adventures and Night Ventures in the Mansut Campaign series. All of these are designed to further the knowledge and skills of the Chosen Heroes.



II. DM'S PLOT SUMMARY AND MISC. NOTES

A. Plot Summary

This section concisely describes how Kuroth's Treasure should be played through if the group of player characters make all the important decisions correctly.

The group should take the time and effort to get the ancient scrolls deciphered. In the course of this, they will find out the location of Kuroth's Treasure and study Kuroth's Riddle. The riddle contains detailed instructions for moving through the dungeon.

The group needs to travel from Montome to Four Sisters Castle, equip themselves, and set off into the wilderness. In the wilderness the party must successfully resolve several encounters. Once the group reaches the mountain peak they must make a "full offering" before entering Titan's Maw cavern.

Within the dungeon, the group should scrupulously follow the clues in Kuroth's Riddle. By doing so they will avoid many dangerous and pointless encounters.

When the group members reach the Sanctuary and take the Alignment Test, they should show themselves to be good or neutral alignment and interested in serving the will of the Gods.

Finally, the group must trek back to Four Sisters Castle, having about two wilderness encounters along the way.

B. How to Run Encounters

The following is an outline of how to run encounters in this module.

- 1) Roll surprise. Both DM and players roll d6. A 1 or 2 indicates the opponent was surprised.
- 2) Determine distance. If one or both parties are surprised distance is 10' to 30'. If neither is surprised, distance is 50' to 100'.
- 3) Resolve surprise actions or combat. If one group surprises ano-

ther, it can take a full attack routine with no retaliation.

- 4) Take commitments. As each normal round begins, take commitments as to what each player character will do that round.
- 5) Roll initiative. Roll d6. Highest score wins initiative (can act first for the number of segments equal to the difference in the rolls on the initiative die.)
- 6) Resolve magical and melee combat use the DM's commitments for monsters and NPC's and the players' commitments for their player characters. You'll need to use combat tables and saving throw tables often.

C. Abbreviations in this Module

DM - Dungeon Master

DMO - Dungeon Master's Option (the DM uses his own discretion to create an encounter.)

HP - Hit Points

AC - Armor Class

HD - Hit Dice

Move - Movement Rate (12" for example means 120' per turn while mapping and 12' per segment while in combat.)

Damage - Hit points of damage inflicted.
d6 (d8, etc) - a six-sided die (eight-sided, etc)





DMs' Forum

Some dungeon masters have more fun. You can recognize a DM like that easily. He's the one who can build a sense of drama, plot and personality in his campaign. The adventures he runs come to life. Players get wrapped up in the story and the experience is like that of reading an exceptional fantasy novel. The setting, the mystery, the awe, the magic and the personalities are all there.

The dungeon master has to be a combination actor and storyteller to achieve this effect. He has to master the personalities of the non-player characters and monsters that people his adventure. Only with this mastery of roles can the DM breathe life into encounters.

Contrast the dungeon mastering styles of Phil Flat and Ralph Rolemaster, below. Both are describing the same encounter.

Phil Flat's Encounter

DM: There's a door in front of you.

PC: We want to listen at the door.

DM (rolls dice): You hear a clinking sound.

PC: We'll cautiously open the door.

DM: When you open the door you see an evil 5th level magician. He's going to cast a spell at you! It sounds like a stinking cloud.

Ralph Rolemaster's Encounter

DM: The ten-foot-wide stone passageway dead-ends into a doorway. The door is made from metal-reinforced timbers and seems to be hinged to open toward you. There is a faint

tang to the air in this damp corridor, as of acid or gas.

PC: How strong is the smell? Can we tell where it is coming from?

DM (rolls dice): The smell is quite weak. It seems to pervade the area. Behind you, from somewhere down the long corridor that leads to this door, you think you hear a snapping sound. It could have been your imagination.

PC: We're going to stand still and listen.

DM (looking thoughtful): During the next minute you hear nothing. Do you want to keep listening?

PC (slightly nervous): No, but we will keep a special watch to the rear. I'll listen at the door.

DM (rolls dice): As you press your ear against the door, the tangy smell seems to get stronger. From behind the door you can hear faint brushing-type sounds then you hear four quick clinks. It sounds like metal tapping on glass or ceramics.

PC: Anything else?

DM: No.

PC: We'll open the door. Let's check to see if it's locked.

DM: The door opens using a pull latch. The pull latch is made of iron and shaped in the form of Isgatak, the god of skeletons. The door is not locked as far as you can tell.

PC: Let's open it.

DM: As the door opens the smell of acid gets stronger. In front of your group is a room forty feet wide and thirty feet deep. There is a door opposite the one you stand in. The room is lit with several torches. The torchlight reflects off

a large variety of bent glassware, test tubes and ceramic retorts. Against the lefthand wall is a shelf filled with jars of various sizes.

Near the center of the room is a table. There is a strange greenish flame burning atop a metal plate on the table. The greenish flame is causing a small black cauldron to boil fiercely. From the cauldron twists a whitish mist that burns your nostrils slightly with an acrid smell.

Behind the cauldron stands a middle-aged human wearing a greyish-blue robe. Around his neck he wears a golden chain from which a symbol of Isqatak dangles. Where the symbol hangs to his chest you see a large scar.

As he notices that your group stands in the doorway, the man starts slightly. Let's roll surprise dice.

PC: Okay. (rolls die)

DM (rolls die): Neither of you is surprised. The hook-nosed human motions for you to leave. "Can't you see I'm in the middle of an experiment?" He demands in a hushed voice (the DM assumes a hoarse, whispery voice quite different from his own). "I can't see you now. I'm busy. Come back in a half hour if you must." The blue-robed man turns back to stare at the cauldron. Peering into the whitish mist, he begins to mumble and move his hands.

PC: Who is this guy? What else do we notice about him or the room?



BAT CON II
is
coming!

FEBRUARY 18th, 1984

Be there!

DM: You want to take some time to look more closely?

PC: Yes... (the player turns a little pale) What is this robed guy muttering? What sort of motions is he making? (The player leans forward to hear what the DM will say.)

DM (nonchalantly): The members of your group listen carefully to what the blue-robed man is saying. Your magic user thinks he knows the spell.

PC: What is it?

DM: It's a stinking cloud spell. The human has halfway completed the incantation. He is now looking up through his grizzled eyebrows at your group.

PC: Shazbat!

DM: I need commitments from each member of the group. Then we'll roll initiative dice. (and so on)

As we contrast the DMing styles of Phil Flat and Ralph Rolemaster, there are five differences that stand out.

1) Ralph uses detail artistically. Instead of glossing over the "small things," Ralph uses them to add depth to his narrative. And Ralph doesn't make the mistake of telling the group only the important details. He tells them everything they would see, hear, smell and taste in as close to a realistic manner as he can. This requires considerable creativity on the DM's part, but it is worth it.

2) Ralph challenges the group to be creative. Because the group never knows which details are interesting but trivial and which are pivotally important, they must be very alert to everything the DM says. When players start combining seemingly unrelated incidents, bits of conversation and clues to "solve the dungeon" then the group is matching the DM's creativity. Fantasy role playing done in this manner is never run of the mill. Few experiences are as challenging or fun as a game that has come alive in this fashion.

3) Ralph is knowledgeable and prepared. In order to create an adventure with the desired plot and drama, Ralph has

to pay his dues. Each race, class, and monster type has some standard characteristics. Ralph has learned them. Ralph Rolemaster may not be familiar with all non-player character types and monsters, but he does thoroughly know the ones he places in encounters. He has focused on the personalities with whom the group will be interacting. It is far better to do an excellent job rolemastering a few races, classes, and monster species than to do a sloppy job on a lot.

4) Ralph creates "personalities" not just NPC's. Each monster or NPC may be a member of a "class" of such creatures, but each is also an individual. Not all manticores are the same, neither are orcs or magic users. The DM should not play them as though they were all the same. Give each creature that is important in your campaign a distinct personality. Their manners of dress, their voices, their thinking patterns and their motivations will vary widely. Let these differences be reflected in the details you describe to the group. And when you slip into the role of a "personality," do so enthusiastically. If the personality is glum and brooding, the DM should be enthusiastically glum and brooding. If the personality is kind and helpful the DM should enthusiastically play the role. It's great fun and well worth the effort.

5) Ralph builds longstanding friends and enemies for his players. A movie that lets you identify with the characters and feel deep emotion is a superior movie. A fantasy adventure must do the same. What emotions are felt by a group that meets and immediately kills a nameless magician? It's simply "hack and slay" to play this way. Contrast this with the feelings of challenge and victory of a group that has finally defeated an archenemy (the magician) that has been plaguing the group for six months. This DM once heard a group of players break into a five-minute sustained celebration when a gutsy but evil foe was finally outwitted.

In Ralph Rolemaster's encounter

we saw drama, detail, creativity, challenge, careful preparation and personality. Maybe we also saw the group's first encounter with a new archenemy. A DM who is also a rolemaster will see infinite possibilities here. Who knows what is going on inside the head of Isgatak's magician? The group is likely to see more of this ice-cold quick-thinking mage. And you can bet that since the DM is a rolemaster, it will be an experience to remember.



Fantasy World invites local dungeon masters to submit articles that discuss "good gamemastering" to this magazine department.



Have a good
idea?



Write it up!

Fantasy World wants submissions from you. (See inside back cover of this magazine).



Q. What did the big gas spore say to the little gas spore?

A. My pop is bigger than your pop!

The Mad Magician's Gaming Room

a mini module written and illustrated by Rob Washburn

I. INTRODUCTION

Each year the Amber Mage of Valian (some call him the Mad Magician) sponsors a tournament. This tournament is considered the supreme test of battle skill and shrewdness by all in the Kingdom of Mansut. Indeed, the Tournament is famous throughout the Known World. Many renowned warriors and mages travel thousands of miles to participate. But only one fated team rules Supreme at the end of the seven-test-long ordeal. These champions receive wealth untold and knowledge (it is whispered) known only to the Gods or their particular favorites.

It is to this tournament that the players must come if they wish to challenge The Mad Magician's Gaming Room. The Gaming Room is not one of the seven tournaments. It is a unique side attraction, and can stand alone as an elaborate and memorable encounter.

The Gaming Room is an AD&D* compatible mini-module, suitable for 1 to 8 players of any level. The module is suitable for any level because it self-adjusts for character skill levels, as the DM will see. The Gaming Room can be played any number of times since the events that occur within virtually never repeat themselves.

The players need not be participants in the Mad Magician's Tournament to play through the Gaming Room. The Gaming Room

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is open to all those in Castle Amber while the tournament is in session. Of course there is a "catch." It costs 1000 Gold Pieces admission to gain entrance to the Gaming Room. This price may seem steep, but many adventurous souls have left the room wealthy in gold, gems, magic and knowledge of new monsters and battle tactics.

The Gaming Room is a lot of fun! Try it out and see if you don't agree with me. I've even had some people say that the Gaming Room is better designed than the Mad Magician's Tournament. (This statement defines a left-handed compliment, in my view.)

II. THE GAMING ROOM

The Dungeon Master should help the characters role-play through the following sequence of events:

- A) The group's journey to Valian in the Kingdom of Mansut. Don't forget to throw in a bandit raid, zealous missionaries, females in distress, females (or males) with ulterior motives, bards, mercenaries or whatever strikes the DM's fancy. Overland journeys on more or less civilized roads are a "blast"!
- B) The party will need to ask directions to The Amber Mage's Castle once they reach Valian. The Castle itself is two miles outside of Valian to the Northwest. As the players arrive at the Castle they will

notice that quite a few people are about. But this should not surprise the group, since they know that the tournament is in progress. In all, over 500 participants, well-wishers, and spectators are gathered at the Castle.



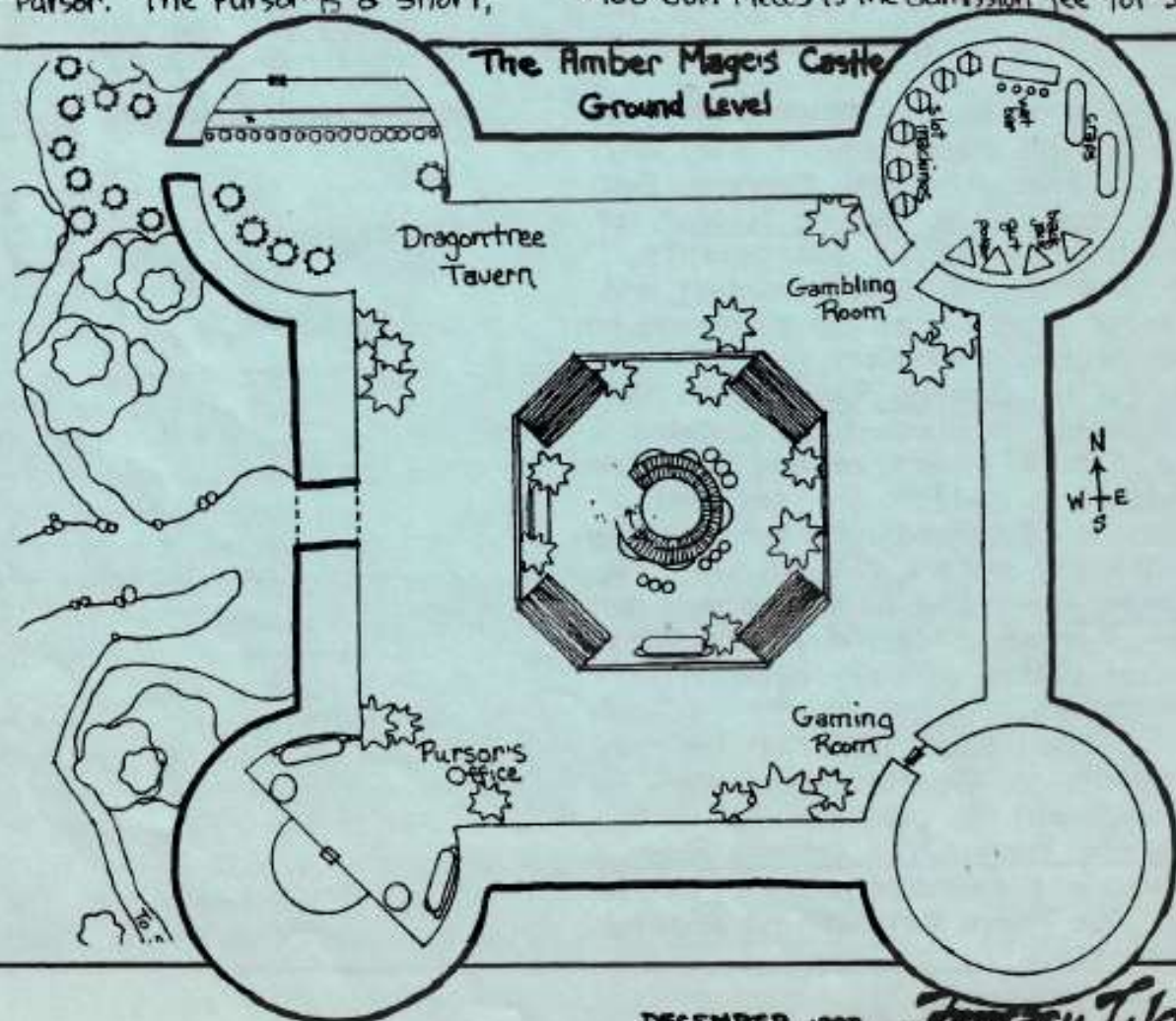
c) Once inside the Castle the group will be greeted by the Pursor. The Pursor is a short,

fat, balding man with a distracted and harried demeanor. The Pursor will collect 100 Gold Pieces from each player character and show the group briefly around the ground level of the Castle. The Tavern is well-kept, serves a wide variety of food and drinks, but has quite high prices. The gambling room includes craps, poker, and blackjack-like games & others. When the Pursor shows the players the Gaming Room he will describe it as follows:

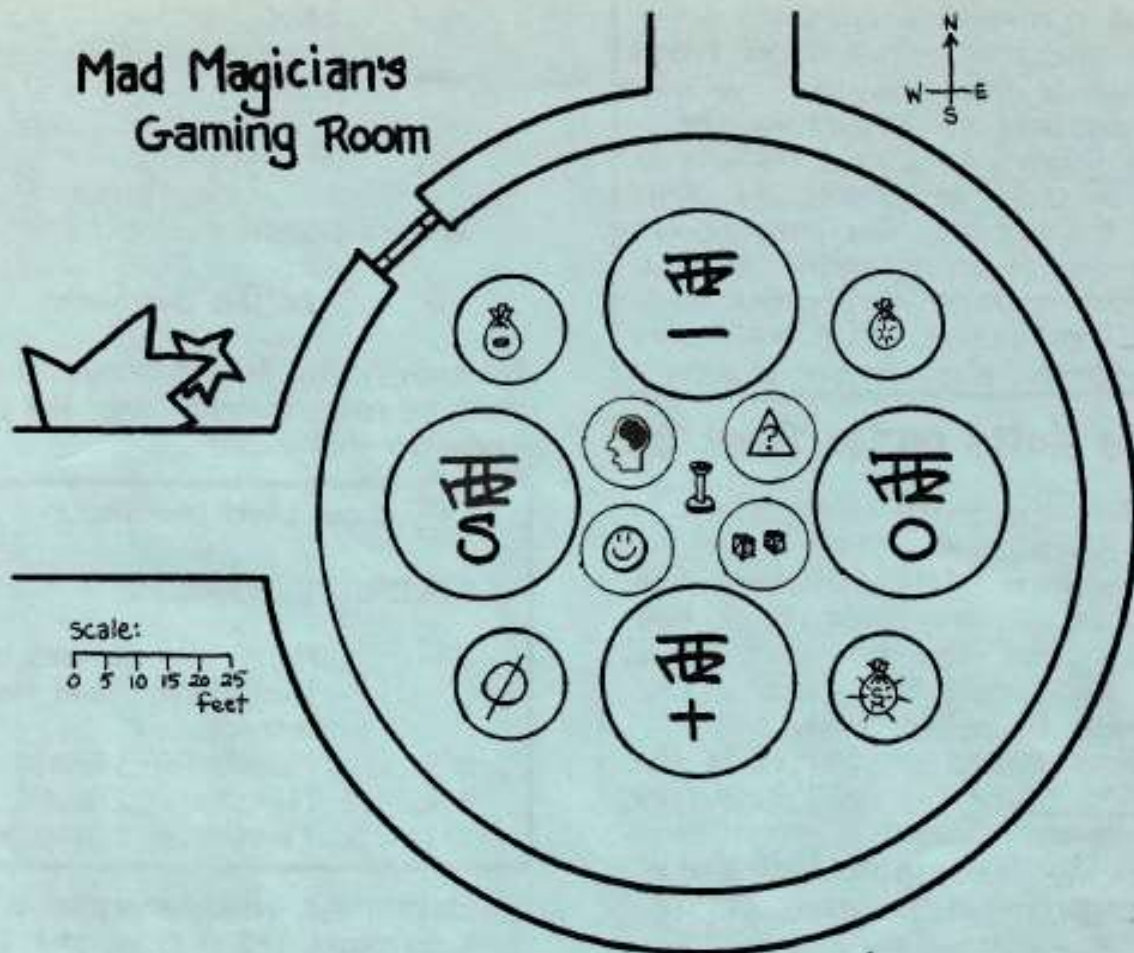
"I can't show you inside the Gaming Room now, as there is a team of players in the heat of combat even as we speak." The Pursor said in a self-satisfied tone. "But I can tell you the rules, if you like." You nodded assent, as did the other members of your group.

"The cost to enter the room is

* 100 Gold Pieces is the admission fee for spectators.



Mad Magician's Gaming Room



a flat fee of 1000 Gold Pieces. This fee is not decreased for low level characters, nor is the fee increased for high level creatures." The Pursor paused to clear his throat, as he did so you heard a basso roar from behind the door to the Gaming Room.

"Once a group," The Pursor continued, "enters the Gaming Room, they should position themselves as seems best. One member of the group, however, must stand near a central pillar & roll the gaming dice. These gaming dice each have twelve faces. One of these die is simply numbered from one to twelve, but the other is inscribed with strange runes." The Pursor chuckled as if remembering a joke. Inside the Gaming Room you heard shouts of surprise, muffled by the thick door.

"The runes from the special die are duplicated on the floor. It is on these runes that treasure, monsters, and ... other things appear, when they are called by a roll of the Rune die." The Pursor searched

your faces. "It's easier to play than to explain." The Pursor added. "But let me say that you may stay in the Gaming Room until the Rune die summons deactivation magic (a \emptyset symbol is rolled), until all members of the group are "dead", or until one of you opens this door." The Pursor indicated the door to the Gaming Room.

"We can die in there?" You asked incredulously.

"The death & wounds that occur in the Gaming Room somehow vanish as soon as the room deactivates." The Pursor reassured you.

At that instant the door to the Gaming Room burst open and a team of adventurers walked out, talking excitedly. "I've never even heard of a monster like that last one." A Fighter-type adventurer exclaimed. "Let's find out what this wand's powers are..." an adventurer wearing a red robe said.

After the adventuring team had left the area, the Pursor turned to

you and commented "A lucky group. It looks like they won a major magic item. Would you and your party like to try your hand at conquering the Gaming Room? As I said, there is a fee of 1000 GP each time the group enters the room. You may re-enter the Gaming Room as often as you like. But 1000 GP is payable each time." The Pursor had a small smile on his face. "Want to give it a try?"

- ☺ Jokes
- 🧠 Riddles
- ⚠ Whimsey
- 🎲 Games
- ∅ Rune Die deactivates

For each of the Runes above, a d12 must be rolled to determine the precise encounter that occurs.

III. DM's Notes on the "Rune Die"

When the group enters the Gaming Room, draw them a sketch or show them the illustration of the room. One player must have his character roll the two dice found in the bowl atop the pillar. The dice must be rolled "truly" (not placed in a desired position) into the bowl. The Rune Die will show one of the twelve Runes when it stops rolling. The encounter indicated will occur or begin in the area of the floor that matches the Rune rolled.

The second die is numbered from one to twelve, and indicates which type of encounter occurs within each Rune category. The tables below describe the twelve Runes.

The Rune Die (special d12)

(Key the twelve Runes below to the numbers on a d12, or cut & paste Runes onto d12.)

- ☰ Relatively low level monster appears.
- ☱ "Even" level monster appears
- ☲ Relatively high level monster appears.
- ☳ Unusual & tough monster appears.
- ☴ Treasure/money
- ☵ Treasure/minor magic
- ☶ Treasure/special

☲ "Low" Level Monster	
d12 roll	result
1.....	Monster(s) appears of 4 levels lower than the group average.
2-3.....	Monster(s) 3 levels lower...
4-6.....	Monster(s) 2 levels lower...
7-12.....	Monster(s) 1 level lower...

To determine which monster is summoned look on pages 175-179 of the Dungeon Masters Guide, find the right level of monster, given the d12 roll and the level of the players. Once you have found the right level of monsters, either roll randomly or chose a creature you'd like your group to meet. (You could also use the tables on pages 133-34 of Monster Manual II).

Once you've determined which monster is summoned, look up the creature in the appropriate monster manual so you'll have its statistics. All monsters encountered have 5 hit points per hit die, and tend to be average in other respects as well. These monsters:

- appear in the rune area on the floor that matches the die face that summoned them.
- The DM should take commitments & roll initiative.
- The monster usually attacks, though the DM can make exceptions as circumstances dictate.
- Monsters never have treasure.



"Even" Level Monster

d12 roll result

1-12 Monster(s) of level equal to the group's average level appears.



"High" Level Monster

d12 roll result

1-6 Monster(s) appears of 1 level higher than the group's average level.
7-9 Monster(s) 2 levels higher.
10-11 Monster(s) 3 levels higher.
12 Monster(s) 4 levels higher.

For the encounters that occur below, in the Special Monsters section, the DM will need to "think on his feet" since the statistics are not given. The DM should tailor the Armor Class, hit points, movement rate, attack number & damage, hit dice and etc. to the level of the group. But remember, these encounters (the special monsters) are intended to be difficult -- as a rule of thumb, the DM should design them to be one or two levels higher than the group.



"Special" Monsters

d12 roll result

1-4 Reverse Character Party. A group of adventurers appear with identical statistics and magic to that of party. They attack viciously. (Any treasures dissolves after fight.)
5-7 Phantasmal Killer cast at Rune Die roller. Roll Intelligence or below with 3d6 or die. (see spell of same name)
8-9 Animated Sword (high Ac).
10-11 Animated Arrow (very quick).
12 Fight Minor Deity (always hit)

The three treasure Rune Die rolls below result in a treasure item appearing in a sack (whether small or large). These treasures are real, and the party can keep them as they leave the room. These treasures are what the group has been waiting for. If the group is both lucky and skillful, they should be able to collect several treasures (most will be small) before the Rune Die deactivates or the group has been "killed" by monsters.



Treasure/Money

d12 roll result

1-4 1 Gold Piece
5-7 100 Gold Pieces
8-9 500 Gold Pieces
10 1000 Gold Pieces
11 Three diamonds of value 500 GP, 1000 GP, 700 GP.
12 500 Platinum pieces and a 2000 GP emerald.



Treasure/Small Magic

d12 roll result

1-7 Roll once on table III A. Potions on page 121 of the Dungeon Masters Guide or choose a potion for group.
8-9 Potion of Extra-healing.
10-11 Scroll: 1 spell of levels one through three.
12 Scroll: 3 spells of levels one through six.



Treasure/Special Magic

d12 roll result

1-5 Roll on table III. Magic Items* & subsequent tables.
6-7 Scroll: 4 spells of levels two through five.
8-9 Wand of Wonder.
10-11 Ring of Invisibility.
12 Ring of 3 wishes.

* Page 121 of Dungeon Masters Guide, upper right hand corner.

The four encounters below are intended to heighten the fun of this Gaming Room. Get into an impish mood as you run these bizarre encounters.



Jokes

d12 roll results

- 1-7..... A huge mouth appears above smiley face on floor and tells one of the stupid jokes from the Laughing Dragon Section of this magazine. This huge mouth thinks its own jokes are very funny.
- 8-9..... Boots appear and start to kick the nearest person in the pants (1 hp damage per kick; the boots are quick & medium difficult to kill.)
- 10..... A huge hand appears holding an electric-type fan. Another huge hand will throw something very unpleasant into the fan such that it sprays all over as many group members as possible.
- 11..... A huge hand appears throwing a pie. The pie will hit the person who rolled the Rune Die in the face.
- 12..... A huge mouth will appear, belch loudly, stick its tongue out at the group and disappear.



Riddles

d12 roll result

- 1-12..... Mushy the Great appears (see Kuroth's Treasure, encounter W3) and dares the group to riddle with him. He will want to bet 1000 GP. Use riddles from Laughing Dragon.



Whimsey

d12 roll result

- 1-4..... Random effect from Ward of Wonder (page 136, Dungeon Masters Guide) or DM choose a random spell to be cast at party
- 5-6..... 60%: gain one hit point permanently; 40%: lose 1 hp permanently.
- 7-8..... 60%: gain 1 point to non-prime attribute; 40%: lose 1 point on non-prime attribute permanently.
- 9-10..... 60%: gain 500 experience points; 40%: lose 500 experience points.
- 11-12..... 60%: gain a magic item of value 500 GP or more (see table III, page 121 of DM's Guide); 40%: lose a magic item of 500 GP or more value (if the player has no magic, take money or etc.).



Games

d12 roll result

- 1-12..... Mushy the Great appears (see Kuroth's Treasure, encounter W3) and challenges the group to one of the games below:
- darts
 - coin toss
 - blackjack
 - poker
 - Dungeon Master's Option.
- Of course, Mushy wants to wager money about the outcome of these games....



Rune Die Deactivates

The party is over. The group must pay another 1000 GP to get the Gaming Room going again.

Warning: This Mini-module can be habit-forming. Have fun!



Reviews

Monster Manual II

★★★ 1/2. Monster Manual II by Gary Gygax, TSR, Inc. 1983. Reviewed by Rob Washburn.

Monster Manual II is a collection of creatures fair and foul for AD&D gaming. This volume is highly recommended for all serious dungeon masters. Players who dislike being stumped may also want to pick up a copy. Monster Manual II is 160 pages long, over 300 monsters strong, and retails for \$12.00.

This volume of beasties features devas, planetars, solars and others who represent the forces of good. Also included is a healthy dose (almost an overdose) of new devils, demons and the new classes of their kindred, daemons and demodands. There is also a large section on modrons - freaky geometric monsters from Nirvana. Those gamers into Godzilla-type supermonsters should check out the Tarrasque on page 117. It is totally awesome. Read its stats and see if you agree.

One of the best features of Monster Manual II is the monster encounter tables. These tables integrate the creatures from Monster Manual, Fiend Folio and Monster Manual II and show in what settings each might be found.

Every collection of monsters has a few that seem more silly than scary. My list of laughable losers includes the gibbering mouther (gives massive hiccups), the squealer (it likes to imitate mating calls), the stench kow (its expression in the illustration says it all) and the varrdig. (The varrdig attacks by thrusting flexible hoses up its victim's nostrils. Gag me with a spoon!)

Overall this book rates 3 1/2 out of 4 stars - a high recommendation.

This illustration by Scott Lindewald features a cloud dragon, new in MMII.



Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks

★★★½ The Warlock of Firetop Mountain, by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, Dell, 1983. The Citadel of Chaos, by Steve Jackson, Dell, 1983. Reviewed by Rob Washburn

These self-play dungeons are highly recommended. Intermediate and experienced fantasy role players will find Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks to be clearly superior to TSR's Endless Quest series or to the Choose Your Own Adventure books. Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks allow the adventurer to use spells and combat with encountered monsters. The addition of combat takes Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks out of the realm of kiddie adventures. The books are well illustrated, have some nice plot twists, and sell for only \$1.95 each. If you've been avoiding paperback self-play modules because they're too juvenile, these will change your mind.

Classics: must reading for FRP gamers

★★★★ The Chronicles of Prydain, by Lloyd Alexander. This 5-volume series consists of The Book of Three (1964), The Black Cauldron (1965), The Castle Llyr (1966), Taran Wanderer (1967), and The High King (1968). Boxed paperback set published by Dell.

These books chronicle the adventures of Taran, a young boy who becomes a hero in a world patterned after Welsh mythology. Although the Prydain series is considered juvenile fiction (The High King is a Newberry medal winner,) they make absorbing reading for adults as well.

Watch this column for more "must reading" in future issues. We invite our readers to submit reviews of books, FRP games and playing aids, modules, movies, etc.

★★★★ = outstanding, "must reading." ★★★½ = highly recommended. ★★★ = good. ★★½ = fair. ★★ = has its moments. ★½ = don't bother. ★ = bad. ½ = terrible.

DESIGN MASTERS SEMINAR

- A one-day seminar on designing professional level campaign and adventure scenarios.
- One month's consulting with Rob Washburn, to perfect an original module designed and written by each seminar participant.
- Graduates of the seminar may sell their finished product for a total of \$100⁰⁰ plus royalties to RPW.

Cost: 15.⁰⁰ at door **When:** Saturday, January 14th, 1st 5 p.m.
Where: Rob Washburn's home, 1005 Locust Ave., Batesville IN 47006
 (TEL) 812-934-5609



Laughing Dragon

Warrior's Wisdom

Sir Lupus is a barbarian warrior from the Kingdom of Tief. He has traveled widely and is considered an expert in his field. He gained fame as one of the Heroes Six. It was for this that he was knighted by King Gregory. The following pearls of wisdom were belched forth while Lupus was in a drunken stupor at Danger's Den Tavern in Valian. Luckily one of our correspondents was present to record them for posterity. The following material may be unsuitable for young readers. Parental guidance is suggested.



(Lupus' Shield)

- "Better to attack than never."
- "Magic is for magicians."
- "Barbarians have more fun."
- "Pleasure is better than pain"
- "Death before dishonor. - Barbarian's Creed."
- "Life before death. - Lupus' Corollary"
- "When in doubt, attack."
- "I love the smell of blood and battle; flowers aren't bad either."
- "Live and learn from your mistakes or you won't live long."
- "A just war is better than an unjust peace."

- "Any fight you can walk away from is a good one."
- "A weapon wielded without wisdom is no weapon at all."
- "A ruffian kills for pleasure; a fool kills for hate."
- "Magicians bleed, I know from experience"
- "A feeble body is a feeble mind."
- "Old barbarians never die, they just belch stupid sayings."

X O P O A (Lupus)

-by Mark Stock

Stupid Jokes

- Q. What time is it when an ogre sits on a fence?
A. Time to get a new fence!
- Q. I tried to fight an ocher jelly but it just slithered away. Why?
A. It was yellow!
- Q. What is the most important use of a dragon's hide?
A. It holds the dragon together!
- Q. If a magician threw a stone into a lake, what would it become?
A. Wet!
- Q. Why did the roc go over the hill?
A. Because he couldn't go through it!
- Q. Why should you always remain calm when you encounter bugbears, ogres, or cannibals?
A. Its better not to get into a stew!

Mushy's Column

answers to riddles are on the next page.

Without a bridle or a saddle
Across a thing I ride astraddle
And those I ride, by help of me,
Though almost blind, are made to see.
What am I?

A thief was climbing up a
cliff when he fell. He had no magic to
help him nor any special skill, yet he
took no damage. Why?

A five letter word as hard as bone.
Take two away and leave only one.
What is it?

A goblin behind two goblins,
A goblin before two goblins,
A goblin in the middle.
How many goblins in all?

Two wings, but cannot fly,
Two legs, but cannot walk,
A beak, but cannot peck.
What is it?

Fighter, paladin, ranger or barbarian
Throw me with a powerful stroke-
Column of bugbear dead and broke.

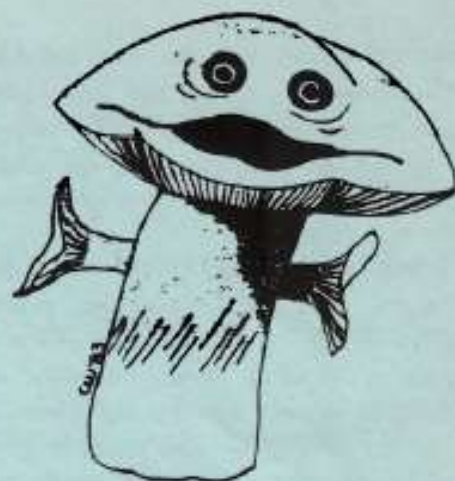
Five feet wide,
Thirty feet long
Tongue of death.

Flesh golem's food,
Black puddings birth,
Storm giant's breath.

After my life I won't be found.
I'm consumed in the thunder and
the sound.
I fair in lots of two to five
I'm a weapon for battle
And victory drive.

What am I?

-by Rob Washburn



Mushy the Great

Things Not To Smoke ...

Ragweed
Beech leaves
Beech trees
Any trees
Dog tails
Dragon tails
Dragon Scales
Dragons in general
Animals in general (except worms)
Anything pink
Anything drenched in oil
Anything that won't fit in your mouth
Anything Troy Ilderton says you should
smoke
Anything someone offers to sell you
for less than a copper piece.
Your fingers
My fingers
My hair
Me in general
This magazine (It cost you way too
much to waste it that way)
Anything with an electrical charge
(especially eels)
Any eels
Things that explode
Things that are sharp
Things that melt
Anything else.

-by Scott Moore

The Snuffling Noser

These creatures are so vile, so disgusting, so degenerate that they are never discussed by polite gentlefolk. Fortunately, the readers of Laughing Dragon are not gentlefolk and are seldom polite, so the gruesome details can be revealed.

Snuffling nosers are gelatinous blobs with bulging eyes and huge nose-like protuberances. The beast is a greyish-yellow color and leaves a trail of slime wherever it goes. The snuffling noser attacks by hawking mucus at its prey. The unfortunate (and thoroughly grossed out) victim must save versus poison or start retching uncontrollably. The snuffling noser then proceeds to feast upon (by snorting up) the fruits of its labor. There are rumors that some snuffling nosers live in symbiotic relationships with gibbering moutheres (see Monster Manual II), but not even here can we discuss the revolting specifics.



snuffling noser

SNUFFLING NOSER

armor class: 9
 move: 6"
 hit dice: 10
 treasure type: n-a-a
 damage: induces nausea (1hp)
 special defences: (believe me, you don't want to know)
 intelligence: supra genius
 alignment: chaotic stupid
 size: too big
 experience point value: -200

Answers to Riddles

Answers: eyeglasses/he fell after climbing only one foot/stone/three/a dead bird/javelin of lightning.



Merry Christmas from
 Role Players' Workshop!

? Tell us what you think! ?

As you have read through Issue #1 of Fantasy World you probably liked some features or departments better than others. We'd like your opinion! On a scale of "1" (worst) to "10" (best) rate the below:

FEATURES:

DEPARTMENTS:

COMMENTS:

- Kuroth's Treasure
- Mansut Maps
- Beastmaster
- Gods of Mansut
- Dragonshead Gale
- Larben
- Gaming Room

- Letter From Editors
- Gaming News
- Treasure Chest
- DM's Forum
- Reviews
- Laughing Dragon

OTHER: — Illustrations — Layout

name:

address:

Fantasy World

WANTS YOU!

We want to publish fantasy fiction stories and articles, fantasy role-playing modules, non-fiction articles related to FRP gaming, letters, announcements, reviews, riddles, jokes, cartoons, artwork, and anything else of interest to FRP gamers in southern Indiana. It looks like articles and stories about the fantasy world of Mearns are going to be popular but publication is not limited to these. Take a look through this issue of FANTASY WORLD and you'll probably get lots of ideas for submissions you could make. We want to publish what you want to read and write about!

The next issue of FANTASY WORLD is scheduled for publication in mid-February, so get your submissions in!

All submissions should be mailed or delivered to Rob and Candy Washburn, Role Players' Workshop, 1005 Locust Ave., Batesville, In. 47006 (ph. 812 934-5609).

Submission Requirements

- 1) All submissions to FW must be original material that does not infringe on anyone else's copyright. Writers may be asked to sign a statement to that effect. Writers retain rights to their material.
- 2) All submissions will be acknowledged and will be returned (with comments) if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
3. Legible handwritten drafts are acceptable.
4. Decisions on what will be accepted for publication will be made by

Candy and Rob Washburn, who will also be happy to help you to develop your promising ideas and drafts into polished, publishable work. We may give you a provisional acceptance and ask you to write another draft. You should not be discouraged. Most of the things you've read in FW have gone through two or three drafts.

- 5) Payments for submissions accepted for publication will be made within a week of acceptance. Rates are \$2.50 per magazine page, \$5.00 per magazine page for modules. Sorry, we do not pay for submissions which are shorter than 1/4 magazine page, but we will, of course, credit the authors of such short pieces if we print them. News and announcements of interest to gamers will be printed free as a public service. Just call or drop us a line with the information, or if you'd like to earn a little pocket money, write up the information as an article for our Gaming News department and send it to us as a regular submission.
- 6) RPW is interested in purchasing independent artwork (including rights to that artwork) for FW. Rates for artwork range from \$1.00 to \$20.00 depending upon the quality, complexity, size, and suitability for our needs. Since we are more likely to purchase artwork that is directly related to an article, story, or module we're publishing, artists may want to check with us to find out what we need. We'd also appreciate the opportunity to look at samples of your work. Writers should be aware that it takes time to provide illustrations, so if you think you'd like to see illustrations with your printed piece, be sure to get your submission in early.

