

# \*\*\*\*\*RACK & RUNE\*\*\*\*\*

## RACK & RUNE #2: BECALMED IN THE HORSE LATITUDES W/O A PADDLE

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**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER!**




**NOTICE:** Due to a sudden realization that not everyone enjoys the convenience of a nearsighted eye, the use of condensed type within these pages has been discontinued.

### COMPU-DISSERVICE:

Having saved, scrimped, and shopped for about a year, I finally purchased a computer about a month ago. The buying of it was a story in itself, but suffice it to say that I now possess a genuine 286

 12 mghz IBM clone, with 1 mb RAM and both 3.5" and 5.25" high density disk drives. And a 44 mb hard drive. And VGA color. It's not state of the art, of course; but then, neither am I. Now here's the joke:


I brought it in, set it up, loaded in all my software . . . and found myself totally blocked. Here I am, with a computer right beside my bed 24 hours a day for the first time of my life, and all I can think to do with it is play Hack! This despite the fact that I have about eight projects to work on. Thus the title of this edition. Fortuna, thou false jade! \*Sigh\*



By the way, if anyone knows how to win Hack, let me know. Please.

### RUNEQUEST REDUX:

As one of the Runequest fans mentioned in #165, I might as well dig up some old material and stick it in here.



### DRAGONEWTS

The Chaosium claims that non-rebel dragonewts are unmanageable as PCs. I believe otherwise; at least three different players that I know of have successfully played dragonewts, and every time it's been a hell of a lot of fun. Though styles of play did vary somewhat, there were certain things all players had in common:

A) A sense of quirkiness. Dragonewts have a totally alien logic of existence. While players, being human, may not be able to understand dragonewt philosophy, a penchant for bizarre and (in human terms) insane practices can make a convincing simulation. Needless to say, they should not behave so all of the time; that in itself would

be predictability, which is the antithesis of the Dragon Way.

B) Roleplaying above powergaming. Dragonewts possess a far greater potential for power than an ordinary character. They are, in fact, unbalanced as PCs; after all, they may die any number of times, and be reincarnated as long as they remain on the Dragon Path (though there are occasional exceptions). This imbalance must be corrected by good roleplaying (refusal to accept human magic, for example), combined with GM supervision. In crude terms, a player must be willing to screw himself and the party for the sake of the character. If immortality/rebirth is being used as an unfair advantage by the player, then the dragonewt is off the Dragon Path-and will no longer be reborn. Q.E.D.

C) Gamemaster supervision. This is perhaps a more controversial idea: I believe that in GMing for dragonewts, the GM's gut feeling is a better controller than any mechanical system (in fact, that may apply to many areas of gaming). While there are certain obvious indicators of deviance from the Dragon Way (such

as overuse of dragon effects and/or frequent human-logical behavior), the GM should rely chiefly on his/her own judgement as to the dragonewt's Dragon Path status, including advancement from scout to warrior stage, etc. Needless to say, a dragonewt should not be advanced to Warrior status until all other players are at high Initiate standing. The dragonewt section of the RQII book also gives some useful skill & POW minimums for advancement in stage.

Below is a table which was used for dragonewt PCs. Keep in mind that Warrior dragonewts generally have a POW of 12 - 14, and that use of these effects can cause deviation from the Dragon Path. Death may often be preferable.

### **DRACONIC EFFECTS TABLE: WARRIOR STAGE**



- 1) **Dragon Armor.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 2) **Dragon Claw.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 3) **Dragon Strength.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 4) **Firebreath.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 5) **Growth.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 6) **Sprout Wings.** See RQIII Glorantha book.
- 7) **Alertness.** Stay awake/alert for 1MP/hour cost. Each MP expended increases all Perception abilities by 5%.
- 8) **Dragon Dread.** The dragonewt's eyes seem to glow and whirl. Costs 1MP/rd, and must be maintained for 10 rounds. While in effect, newt gains ability to cause Befuddle effect at a glance. Can gaze at one victim + attack & defend, or can replace either action with additional gaze (up to 3 per round).
- 9) **Dragon Roar.** A deafening, terrifying sound, causing a Demoralize effect in all with the area of a sphere centered on the dragonewt with a radius equal in meters to the number of MPs spent by the newt. A 5 MP Roar would cause all within 5 meters of the dragonewt to resist a POW vs. POW attack or be Demoralized for 20 - INT minutes. The minimum duration is 1 round.
- 10) **Dragon Tail.** At will, dragonewt's tail becomes 2x larger. The Tails hit points are doubled, and the dragonewt gains a sweep attack vs. rear foes. 10% base + attack bonus, SR 0 + DEX for first attacker, 1 + DEX for second, etc.. Damage is 1D6 + Damage bonus. This attack is in addition to normal front attack and parry, but newt's Dodge is halved for duration of effect. Skill may be gained in Tail attack as per normal.
- 11) **Sharing Dream.** The dragonewt performs a bizarre ritual upon another individual. On completion, the dragonewt must overcome the targets MP with his own--the target cannot help but resist. If successful, both immediately enter a deep coma. In that time, one-half of all damage received by the target will be transferred to the newt. Armor does not protect against this damage, but the Dragon Armor effect may be used by the newt on himself. The coma lasts for as many hours as points of damage are transferred. Violent stimulation (damage) may

awaken either party before the effect is complete, in which case the newt takes damage equal to the damage of the target, without curing the target at all.

12) **Forced Rapport.** The dragonewt touches a spell-afflicted object or person, and resists the MP of the caster at the time he/she cast the spell. If successful, the spell is negated. If not the dragonewt is affected by the spell himself, probably in some adverse way (GM's choice).

13) **Dragon Heart.** For as long as desired, the dragonewt's CON is 1.5 x original.

14) **Swallow.** The dragonewt may swallow any object up to 1/2 his own SIZ, without taking damage. This includes living things, sharp objects, etc.. The material may be disgorged later. A living thing will continue to breathe, but extra food must be Swallowed for its consumption. If the dragonewt is killed, any living creature inside will suffer drowning effects as per World Book until released (cut out).

15) **Destruction.** This effect destroys enchantments. The dragonewt sacrifices a number of Power points. The enchantment then makes a resistance roll, using the points used in its creation vs. the point sacrificed by the dragonewt. If it fails the enchantment is destroyed. If it succeeds, the enchantment survives and the dragonewt suffers a Backfire effect from the Sorcery table. Note: overuse of this effect is a known cause of the extremely rare dragonewt de-evolution, in which the dragonewt is reincarnated at the next lowest stage!

16) **Dragon Sleep.** By paying a cost of 1MP/hour/day/season, the dragonewt may suspend its animation. During this time, it need not eat nor breathe, and indeed cannot. It can endure any temperature or condition that does not destroy its body.

17) **Death.** The dragonewt dies at will, and may be reborn normally.

18) **Dragon Jaws.** Gain Bite attack, damage 1D10 + 1 + Damage bonus. Base attack chance = 20%. The SR is 2. May be increased by experience and training (from who?).


19) **Dragon's Mark.** By expending a permanent point of POW, the dragonewt may place an invisible mark that will enable it to locate the object desired, even after it has died and been reincarnated. The object marked may be a person, spirit, place, or thing. If the dragonewt is able to touch and freely handle the object/person/item in question for its POW in minutes, it will be able to locate the object to within 1 - 100 meters. Every minute or fraction thereof less which the dragonewt spends increases uncertainty by a further 1 - 20 meters. If the dragonewt cannot touch the item, but can see it, it may mark it nonetheless. In this case, however, the accuracy drops to 1 - 1000 meters. If the dragonewt is marking its' own skin, it is automatically successful at the 1 - 100 range. No extra time need be spent. Within the range of uncertainty, the dragonewt can only sense that the item is within range.

Note: overuse of this effect is a known cause of the extremely rare dragonewt de-evolution, in which the dragonewt is reincarnated at the next lowest stage!

20) **Elemental Shield.** When invoked, all elementals must overcome the dragonewts' POW to attack it in any way. The dragonewt may also survive in hostile environments by spending 1 MP per 10 points of damage it would normally take.

**GAINING A NEW EFFECT:** Upon first attaining Warrior status, a dragonewt possesses none of these effects. Once each week, the dragonewt may attempt to roll percentiles equal to or beneath its POW. If the number is below, it gains a randomly rolled Effect. This Effect is permanent; it may be used over and over again. In the case of duplication, there may be no increase, a reroll, or an increase in the effectiveness of the Effect in question, at the GM's whim. If the number rolled by the dragonewt is equal to its POW, it may experience a conversation with a True Dragon, summon a Dream Dragon, or experience some other bizarre manifestation.

Finally, the easiest way to keep a dragonewt with a party is to simply have a Noble order it to observe the group for a while.

**WARNING:**   
**OFFENSIVE**  
**MATERIAL BELOW**  
**AD&D as National**  
**Socialism?**

***The ethics of AD&D***

***IF*** the following is true:

1) There exists in the world a class of person who is naturally superior to the majority of humankind. [PCs]

2) Some races are naturally morally inferior. [Orcs, etc.]

3) Races which are morally inferior do not produce superior-type persons.

4) Superiors benefit by killing inferior types.

5) Superiors possess superior tools of destruction.

***THEN***

Call it Nazism or AD&D, the most likely result is death camps. I'm not suggesting that AD&Ders are Nazis, nor am I a Nazi myself. I'm simply pointing out that some of the basic assumptions of the D&D/AD&D system have a lot in common with National Socialism. Dachau und Dragons . . . I've known quite a few players whose characters wouldn't have hesitated to commit genocide, and yet would be horrified by the same thing in the real world. Which leads me rather naturally to the next topic...

**GAMING HORROR**  
**STORIES:** 

In 1981(?) I joined a college game of AD&D. After rolling up stats, I chose to play a lawful good half-orc cleric of the lawful good Goddess of the Forest. Among my companions was a lawful good elven prince in hiding. Before the game began, the chaotic evil orc king (GM) commanded me to slay


the elf. When I remarked to the GM that the orc king must be mad to think that I'd perform such a deed, he informed me that if I did not, I would lose a point from each characteristic per day til death. "Why would my Goddess allow this?" I asked. "Because he's your king, and you are Lawfully bound to obey him." the GM replied. Any other horror stories out there?

**NEXTISH:**

Gaming defensively, more Runequest material, a (short) writeup of my Nereyon campaign, & other stuff...-->PM

**Rack & Rune: FILLER**

**COMPU-CHRONICLES**

For those who care, this was generated using PC-Write 2.5 (a fine old program), and formatted for desk-top publication with Publish-It. It was printed on---OK, I'm lying. As of this date (5:04 PM Saturday August 25, 1991) I have no printer. I had a printer on order (an Epson LQ-570) , but the store failed to receive it Thursday. And then Friday. Having decided that two strikes is two too many, I tried another store--and to my surprise, they had the same model for \$285, \$50 less! Barring further mishap, I'll pick it up on Tues-

day, and print out immediately. How does it look? Incidentally, my inexperience with Publish-It is the cause of this half issue. 4 pages in PC-Write = 3 in Publish-It.

### **SIL-LY RAGE**

Although it is somewhat late, I should perhaps comment on the Foundation & Destiny SIL game at Arisia '91, as I did play in it. On second thought . . .

### **A PRIVATE VIDEO HELL (ARISIA STYLE)**

In 1990, a friend of mine decided to enter the first Arisia Amateur Video Contest. With much time, effort, and aggravation (including an inept co-star--me), she finished it and sent it in. Arisia's handling of the Contest, however, was less than gratifying; having received "only" three videos, they apparently decided to cancel it without telling anyone. As anyone who has ever gone through the hell of making a video will understand, we objected. Relenting, the Arisia people kindly agreed to show the videos late Sunday afternoon... and there turned out to be five or six videos to show. So as not to overwhelm us, they decided to show only five minutes from each video (they averaged ten to fifteen minutes in length). This despite the fact that there had been hours and hours shown of really decrepit "B" movies, such as at least 3 showings of

Captain Kronos--Vampire Hunter. To make a long story short, my friend won Grand Prize--a membership for Arisia '91.

### **CUT TO NEXT YEAR:**

Cheered by her success (and despite Arisia's lackadaisical attitude), my friend and I and another friend decided to produce another video. With the expenditure of what can only be described as blood, sweat, and tears (and a minor nervous breakdown on my part) we finished it in time and sent it in. When the Contest was finally shown... well, I could spin this sarcastic tale out for pages, but let me keep it short (I know, it's too late).

1) On arrival, the video presenter announced that only two videos had arrived in time, and a third ineligible one would be shown, having been brought straight to the con (way past the due date). We therefore would each win in a separate category.

2) After the showing of video #1 (not ours) he announced that he had other things to do and left. His assistant was prevailed upon to show the full fifteen minutes of our video, rather than the ten prescribed. However, she didn't know what our prize was.

3) When we finally tracked down the presenter, he told us we'd get "a ribbon or something". He'd mail it to us. Yup.

Uh-huh. Well, I know the US Postal service is slow, but guess what? We still haven't seen a damn thing. Don't get me wrong. I don't really care about a ribbon (what would we do, cut it into three pieces?). It's just that, well... Arisia is a fine convention, but they have some serious problems with organization. I will say this: it will be an extremely chilly day in the Abyss before we do another video for Arisia.

What the hell:

**CREDITS FOR "THE PROBABILITY SHIP", WINNER OF ONE OF THE CATEGORIES OF THE ARISIA AMATEUR VIDEO CONTEST:**

**Lois Folstein**

**Scott Ferrier**

**Peter Maranci**

**and thanks to**

**Virgil Greene,**

**John Mitzman,**

**PhyllisMitzman,**

**& Rhonda Allen.**

If I didn't thank them, nobody would.

August 26, 1991--->PM