

THE BEHOLDER

ISSUE no 25



50p

FINAL ISSUE BEFORE TAKE-OVER

EDITORIAL

Well, it's taken quite a while but at long last we have achieved one of our great aims. With the appearance of this, TBH25, we have produced more copies of a British D&D 'zine than anyone else. Even the giants of the field, White Dwarf and Trollcrusher, have now been superceded, even though they started production years before us. Recently we have had delays with issues but even so it seems fair to say that no other British D&D 'zine comes close to the regularity/frequency of TBH. Still no-one else publishes monthly. Yet just two short years ago TBH had just started out and we had no idea how things would go for us. Now, thanks to all of you, we are leaving the "zine scene" with the knowledge of a job well done. Winning the "best fanzine" award must have been our proudest moment, but it only happened because of you, all of you loyal readers out there, and of course special thanks go out to all subscribers and contributors. There are just too many people to mention for the help they have given TBH but we are sure they know who they are, our heartfelt thanks to all of you.

So there you have it. As promised last issue it was a fairly over-the-top intro to the Editorial this time, but everyone's entitled to a bit of an ego-trip once in a while aren't they? However we now have to come to "the boring bit". After putting it into all 24 previous issues we're not about to leave it out this time! So....

"The Beholder" is a British D&D fanzine. D&D (Dungeons and Dragons) is produced by T.S.R. Hobbies Inc, P.O.Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, AMERICA. Their British subsidiary is TSR(UK) at The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD. TBH is run by-

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Despite this being the last issue of TBH that we will be running the name lives on! As you probably know "The Beholder" is changing management and more details of the new TBH can be found later on in this issue. Meanwhile we will not be sitting back and relaxing. Plans are definitely afoot for many reprints (watch WD for adverts or see us at the conventions for more details), and more supplements on the lines of the popular "Glossary of Magic" are likely. To avoid confusion with the new TBH any new material that we may write and publish will be under the name of VALHALLA. So if you see a booklet called "The Valhalla Monster Tome", you'll know that it's written by us.

So, we come to the end of the old TBH. It's been a lot of hard work, but a lot of fun too and we hope that you've enjoyed reading this mag as much as we've enjoyed writing it. All the best!

TBH25: C O N T E N T S

Mike and Guy

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SMs' CORNER

As has been said before Space Opera is about the only game around to actively encourage the SM to "interfere" with the game to make it more interesting, fun and heroic. It is a truly enjoyable game if played in the intended "action and excitement" mould rather than spending hours arguing over what combat system to use, etc as happens with some other RPGs. A marvellous side-effect of this is to allow the SM much more of a chance to participate and keep the game fun and full of tension. Let me give an example. If an area of a building is being patrolled by a guard it would be necessary in some games to work out exactly the time players arrive at his area and therefore be able to calculate where the guard will be at that time. In S.O. it is quite acceptable for the SM to choose where the guard will. If the players are having too easy a time of it he could be just close to a radio or similar device to call for help. However if they are doing badly he could have just walked past them or perhaps have wandered off for a sneaky cup of synthi-caf or whatever.

It must be admitted that S.O. does have some faults. In a few places it contradicts itself and a few rules are omitted altogether. A prime example of this is the "flamer" family of weapons. They are mentioned once in a while and appear on the weapons charts but there are no details about them: size, mass, cost, tech level, etc. However on reflection perhaps all of this was intentional on the part of FGU. It must be remembered that the original D&D was very incomplete and people had to work on it to make their games really work. This was the most important fact that started up the big "D&D family" as various gamers worked together/argued over what new systems should be introduced and used. Perhaps, having seen the partial fall from grace of the AD&D system (no work needed, easily accessible to anyone), FGU realise that their style of more complex and challenging games need a more select audience. Then again perhaps they've just got lousy proof-readers!

Designing a S.O. adventure can be tough work. However they can be divided into two basic types: combat and thought. The combat scenario is just what it says: there may be a few frills but the basic idea is that sooner or later the players will get into a big shoot-up. This is easily the simplest type to devise, and it is still a lot of fun despite that fact. The problem comes after a few adventures when players will inevitably be building up quite a formidable armoury. There is no fun in wholesale slaughter and even the hardened "shoot first..." adventurers will get bored of blowing away hundreds of "no hoper" enemies. When it comes to this it is time for the other type of scenario: the thoughtful type. Examples are espionage, infiltrating underworld organisations, fraud, bribery, etc. These can all involve combat to a small extent but will largely rely on the players wit and ingenuity. However the main problem here is that the SM must be just as quickwitted as all of his players put together. Not an easy task by any means! If you think you can cope though give it a try, a successful expedition of this type can be a great experience for all concerned.

Rock music can provide quite an interesting source of inspiration for D&D. Here are a few monsters derived from songs or logos of groups:-

KILLERS

(With thanks to
IRON MAIDEN!)

THE PURPLE LADY

Frequency: Very Rare
No. Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 6
Movement: 18"
Hit Dice: 6d8
% in lair: 0%
Treasure Type: Q
No of Attacks: Special
Damage/Attack: Special
Magic Resistance: Unaffected
by fire spells
Intelligence: High
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Size: M
Psionic Ability: Some

From the classic Deep Purple track "Burn" this "monster" is a powerful and very specialised witch-like woman. She will usually wander the wilderness in search of small towns or villages where she will generally cause trouble. However when the locals try to throw her out they will discover her unique powers: an advanced form of "Molecular Agitation". Once aroused to anger she can cause an area upto half a mile around here to fall into near darkness and then start fires within this area. Every segment she can cause one person/creature to be hit by the equivalent of an "Ignite" spell and every round she can cause any one building made from wood or similar material to catch

light. However the victim or building must be within sight distance. Once per day she can also cause an "Earthquake" (as 20th level cleric).

EDDIE

Frequency: Very Rare
No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 7
Movement: 15"
Hit Dice: 5d8
% in lair: 10%
Treasure Type: None
No of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 2-16
Magic Resistance: As undead
Intelligence: Average
Alignment: LE
Size: M
Psionic Ability: None

Eddie is the "Iron Maiden" logo as featured on both of their album covers. He is a member of the undead (turns as a vampire) and could be mistaken for a wight if only seen briefly.

He doesn't live naturally on the prime material plane but "fades in" to attack. Once a night, during darkness only, he will appear and stay on this plane for 10 rounds before vanishing again. He attacks with a razor-sharp axe. If he is killed before the 10 rounds are up his body will vanish, but he will only be permanently killed if all the wounds he suffered were from magical weapons.

Eddie is not able to appear just anywhere. He must either appear within 20' of the body of a previous victim or just behind a victim he only managed to wound, or who has been resurrection following an attack. If he chooses the latter Eddie gets an automatic free attack, with +4 on his "to hit" chance and double damage.

If used with care and thought this can be a most interesting monster. If the first time a group encounter Eddie he manages to wound several of them they will probably be quite relieved when he vanishes before having a chance to kill anyone. However when they start getting murdered one by one over the next few nights worries will understandably spring up!

NEON KNIGHTS

Frequency: Very Rare
No Appearing: 4
Armour Class: 1
Movement: 12"
Hit Dice: 4d8+4
% in lair: 0%
Treasure Type: None
No of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 3-18
Magic Resistance: 40%
Intelligence: High
Alignment: LG
Size: M
Psionic Ability: None

These are the agents of some of the LG gods who show a reasonable interest in worldly affairs. If a LG temple or sanctum has a good and pure history the keeper of the place will be given a large bell to place within it. He will also be told not to strike it unless the building is under attack. If the bell is struck when there is no emergency it will vanish, and the displeasure of the appropriate god will be aroused. However if there is an emergency when the bell is rung 4 glowing armoured men will appear, these being the "Neon Knights", (from the Black Sabbath single/album track). They will fight to protect the temple or whatever, using bright, glowing 2-handed swords. These

not only cause damage but will work as a "Convert" spell on the victim unless they save vs spells. The effect will be to move alignment one place towards "good" for 1d4+1 rounds.

If any of the Neon Knights is killed they will vanish in a flash of blinding light (creatures within 30' blinded for 1d4 rounds).

When the emergency is over the Neon Knights will all disappear again, but they can be called any number of times in the future in the same way. However any that have been killed will have one less hit dice the next time they are called. Therefore after four deaths they will be permanently killed.

IRON BOAR

Frequency: Very Rare
No Appearing: 1-4
Armour Class: 0
Movement: 12"
Hit Dice: 7d8
% in lair: 0%
Treasure Type: Special
No of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: Varies
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Average
Alignment: Neutral
Size: M
Psionic Ability: None

This ferocious and dangerous creature is basically an extrapolation of the Motorhead logo. It takes the form of a large, armour plated (as an armadillo) boar with a slightly over-sized head (the logo itself). Usually it is fairly peaceful, often spending its time underground wandering around, spitting and snarling. However if approached too close or attacked it will be roused to full fury. First it will emit a tremendous growl, loud enough to deafen everyone within 60' for 3d4 rounds and of such intensity that ~~items~~ within 20' must make a save vs normal blows or be shattered. Then it will charge to the attack. The first

time it does this it will gouge with two long, wicked tusks, doing 3-24 damage. Then on it will bite with its 4" long teeth, doing 2-16 damage, and with a 20% chance of severing a limb if 4 above the to hit number is rolled.

When within 10' of an opponent the Iron Boar may choose to growl rather than attack. If so the victim will suffer as if hit by a Power Word, Stun spell due to the intense noise level around him.

For rather obvious reasons all Iron Boars are totally deaf!

I A F O

CONVENTIONS

DRAGONMEET IV will be held at Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Road, London SW3 on Saturday, August 8th. This is a specialist event for science fiction and fantasy gamers.

GAMES DAY '81 will be a two day event for the first time this year. It is being held on the 26th and 27th September at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycourt Street, London SW1. People wishing to receive details of specially reduced hotel and rail travel rates for Games Day attendees should send an SAE to Games Day '81, Games Workshop Ltd, 17/18 Hythe Road, London NW10.

It is good to see that home-grown game designing talent is appreciated, with the success of GW's first four products: Apocalypse, Doctor Who, Valley of the Four Winds and Warlock. Now more games are in the works and should be released at Games Day. By all accounts they should be well worth getting hold of, especially the marvellous-sounding "Deathcars" which takes Demolition Derbys to their logical (if rather murderous) 21st century extreme. However "Star Hunters" could be in for rather a fight, as there are already plenty of tactical space combat games about, and topping the excellent (and now rather established) Starfleet Battles will be tough.

3010-UM
THE
MAGIC - USER

"SAY - THAT'S QUITE A
TRICK YOU'VE GOT THERE!"



(6)

- ALEX SELF -

DMS' CORNER

Okay all you DMs out there, stand by for a barrage of little thoughts, ideas, hints, etc on our gentle art! Hope some of them are or use/interest.

- 1) Players will be able to use their skills (if they have any!) much more in the living dungeon situation. If an adventure makes sense it can be a lot more reasonable than a "zoo", and more acceptable too. However the zoo is still good for a laugh once in a while.
- 2) Beware of material that is non-official, i.e. printed in fanzines, etc (even TBH!). It may well unbalance or ruin your campaign. What works well for one group may not for others. Be sure to playtest character classes, etc before making them permitted in your games.
- 3) Magical items must be limited and valuable. If players want to sell some of their items then they have got too many! Magic shops are definitely OUT.
- 4) If you want more than the hack and slash of dungeon adventures start a full campaign. If you've never done this before try to get a look at one being run successfully by someone else and get hints from them on how to do it. A campaign is too much work to be done all out, only to find some basic flaw which makes your days of work useless.
- 5) Characters must die once in a while. If they are able to buy resurrections, etc too easily they will never be worried of anything. "So what if it kills me, it'll only knock one off my constitution".
- 6) Hit players back with their own tricks once or twice. If they use some nasty tactic repeatedly get the local monsters to adopt it too. Also if the players make a habit of killing prisoners or whatever do the same to them if the tables get reversed. Rather tough maybe but it's the only way to get through to them. One dead character has a hundred times more impact than a lot of words.
- 7) Use dungeon floorplans or similar material to aid running combats. However do not forget that D&D is an RPG, don't turn it into a little board game with figures moving a set number of squares each go. Be flexible.
- 8) Possibly most important of all is that you ENJOY YOURSELF, (and make sure the players do too). If you find D&D getting boring then do something else. Only play for the enjoyment of the game, everything else is secondary to that.
HAVE FUN!!!



JUN '80

NEW SPELLS

CONVERT (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: 2
Range: Special
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: 1 creature

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 6 segments
Saving Throw: Negates
(Spell Type: Clerical)

Explanation/Description: This conjuration is only usable when the target creature is able to clearly see and hear the cleric casting it. When the casting time is over the creature must save vs spells or will suffer a temporary alignment change for the duration of the spell. At the cleric's choice the alignment can be changed one place on the good - neutral - evil spectrum (lawful - neutral - chaotic cannot be effected). As the change is unintentional on the part of the victim they will not be "punished by the gods" as with intentional changes but their feelings to people and attitudes will obviously be altered. The only exception to this is the (anti-)paladin. These chaps, if failing their save, drop into a light coma for the spell's duration rather than actually have their alignment altered at all.

CONFESSION (Divination/Charm)

Level: 1
Range: 5"
Duration: Varies
Area of Effect: 1 creature

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 2 segments
Saving Throw: Negates
(Spell Type: Clerical)

Explanation/Description: When the cleric starts to cast this spell the victim must make a save vs spells. If he fails when the spell is fully cast he will reveal one guilty secret (of his choice). This could be anything from not paying for a round in the pub last night to pushing a fellow dungeoneer down a pit "accidentally". If he makes his save he either has the choice of ignoring the spell or lying, which could be to his advantage in certain situations. Note that this spell encourages a bit more role playing because if characters don't have interesting and involved lives outside the basic "hack and slash" area any confession will have to be something serious concerning the dungeoneering. A good role played character will have all sorts of little guilty secrets that can be revealed without these worries.

IGNITE (Alteration)

Level: 4
Range: 30"
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special

Components: V
Casting Time: 1 segment
Saving Throw: None
(Spell Type: Druidic)

Explanation/Description: This spell affects one creature for every three levels of the casting druid. It basically ignites all inanimate objects within three feet of these creatures, which will obviously include clothes, scrolls in backpacks, etc. The spell keeps them burning for one round, after that they will burn naturally, or go out if suitably smothered. Damage to the creature is very much upto the DM, considering the wide range of possibilities that could occur.

WALDO'S WONDEROUS ARROW (Alteration)

Level: 2
Range: Touch
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 arrow/2 levels

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 segment/arrow
Saving Throw: None
(Spell Type: Magic-User)

Explanation/Description: The material component of this spell is the arrow (or arrows) on which it is cast. When this is being done each arrow must be given a specific target, i.e. the actual name of some person or creature (not "the hobgoblin chief over there" but "Golroth Morlin" or "Cranok the Blue Dragon"). When the arrow is fired it will home in on its named target, automatically hitting if it is within range, and doing double damage. If the named target is not in range, the name given was incorrect or the target is totally protected from arrows (e.g. inside a castle with all doors and windows, etc barred shut) then the arrow will snap when fired, becoming useless. Although this spell's duration is given as permanent the chance of hitting drops from automatic by 5% per day after the spell was cast. Therefore it will only have a 65% chance to hit after one week. However the chance never drops below 5% more than the normal "to hit" chance. It must be remembered that due to the limitations given above an arrow with this spell cast upon it cannot be used against any target but that intended for it. If the target was in range the arrow would go for him and if not it would snap.

TELEPORTER (Divination)

Level: 2
Range: 1"
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 teleport

Components: V
Casting Time: 2 segments
Saving Throw: None
(Spell Type: Magic-User)

Explanation/Description: With the increased use of teleports/transporters in dungeons MUs have been putting a lot of effort into spells to help protect against them, with this being the most widely used example. No-one has yet managed to perfect a "detect teleport" spell but this one enables the MU to see through it. When the spell is cast the MU will be able to see any teleports within range, with them having the appearance of holes in space, with the other end of the teleport journey visible. The MU will also discover any special aspects of the teleport (e.g. only works for certain alignments, etc) if he manages to make a save vs spells. If he fails this save the DM will give him some piece of false info on the teleports.

MULTIPLY (Conjuration/Alteration)

Level: 4
Range: 0
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: The MU

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 5 segments
Saving Throw: None
(Spell Type: Druidic)

Explanation/Description: When this spell has been cast the druid so doing immediately splits into two, perfectly duplicating himself. All normal items carried will also duplicate, but only the real druid will have any magical equipment. The two druids can act totally independantly but when the spell duration is up the copy will vanish, with all its equipment. While the spell is working neither druid can use spells and if either is killed both die. The copy is identical to the original, but has only half its hit points (round up).

Q2Q2

Well, as we've come to the end of the old TBH, it seems good to be airing your views on our performance over the last two years or so. We are only able to do this thanks to your response to Q&A2 that we put in TBH23, more people replied to this questionnaire than the last one so it should be more representative. So here we go, taking each question in turn:-

- 1) As we will be doing reprints in the Summer it is obviously of interest to us to know which issues most people have got. Those that few people have (roughly the TBH6-12 area) will get priority.
- 2) There was a lot of competition for best issue, but in the end TBH18 managed to shade out the winner of our last Q&A, TBH11. In third place was TBH19, followed by a whole gaggle of issues from the 14-18 area.
- 3) Worst issue was another close fight, with TBH22 finally getting the biggest thumbs down. Obviously not too many Space Opera fans replied to this questionnaire! Next came TBH2 and then TBH13. Oh well, you can't please people all the time.
- 4) a) Monster Summoning : 6.55
b) Magic Jar : 7.23
c) Thoughts on... : 7.71
d) Reviews : 7.18
e) Chronicle : 6.59
f) Fali-Ur : 5.36
g) Cover Artwork : 6.92
h) Interior Artwork : 6.64

So "Thoughts on..." would seem to be our most popular regular feature. Not too suprising, although the high mark for reviews is. Quite a change from coming last in Q&A1. Fali-Ur fared worst overall, but it was nice to see the number of people saying that it was one of the best cartoons they'd seen, and they'd just marked it low as they disliked cartoons on principle.

- 5) 81% of people thought the scenario was usually the best article in each issue. Slightly lower than last time.
- 6) The best scenario turned out to be "Ring of Fire", followed closely by "Devil's Quagmire" and then "Dragon Isle".
- 7) Easily voted the worst scenario was "Shipwreck!". It seems that the mixing of a bit of SF into D&D just isn't appreciated by most people. After it came Death Test and then the Pyrus Complex. It would therefore be safe to say that in general scenarios on the lines of big outdoor adventures tend to be most popular, and straying too far from the tried-and-trusted formula is frowned upon.
- 8) a) Runequest : 7.1
Dragonquest : 6.6
In the L'rinth: 6.3
Space Opera : 6.2
Superhero '44 : 5.6
C&S : 5.4
Traveller : 5.3

Other games which did quite well were Villains & Vigilantes, Gangster and Top Secret. However it is doubtful whether they have enough "group appeal" to gain much of a showing in mags. It was good to see Space Opera walk all over Traveller, seeming to vindicate our view that S.C. is easily the best SFRPG around at the moment (although there are some challengers in the works apparently).

9) It was interesting to note that none of the highly rated articles in Q&A1 did so well this time. The surprising winner was Developing Campaign: Peoples (TBH20) with Kicking the Bucket second and DM's Corner (TBH9) third. Others doing well were Ultimate Monster, T&T Playtest and Variations on a Theme.

10) Worst article came out very similar to before. Life after Death was a clear "winner", with most people mentioning that it wasn't so much the writing style or whatever but just the basic idea that they objected to. After LaD came the Comp Prog (most people had no use for it, and a couple of mistakes didn't help either!) and then the Archer. As we have come to expect most character classes got a good doing over, which makes it seem all the more strange that WD has been featuring lots of them recently. The message from our readership is pretty clear: if there's one thing we don't need it's yet more character classes.

11) The variety of article people would like to see in TBH is quite large, and it seems that for every person who wants to see articles on something there is another who says just the opposite. The (very) occasional article on RQ, DQ or C&S might be an idea, though. There were also a lot of requests for discussions, letters pages and more hobby info. A bit more "chat" and a bit less "hardware" would seem to sum it up.

12) The majority of people found out about TBH by seeing it in their local games shop, although conventions also provided quite a lot of new readers.

13) Our service (posting issues, helping with problems, etc) was rated 7.05 out of ten. Quick response to orders and monthly appearance were good points, while replying to questions and recent regularity were a bit naff. We just haven't been able to catch up the 3 weeks we lost over Christmas so though each issue has been coming out a month after the previous one, the whole schedule has moved 3 weeks forwards.

14) 1st: The Beholder	8.81	Well, combined with the "Best Games Fanzine" award at Games Day we are extremely pleased to see that our work and effort over the past two years has been worthwhile. TBH scores even higher than in Q&A1 while the large drop for WD suggests a strong lack of favour there. There is a certain satisfaction in seeing that us amateurs can show the pros a thing or two once in a while!
2nd: Dragonlords	6.55	
3rd: The Wanderer	6.28	
4th: Trollcrusher	6.27	
5th: The Aerial Servant	6.21	
6th: White Dwarf	6.13	
7th: Stormlord	5.64	
8th: The Dragon	4.18	
9th: The Dungeoneer	4.07	
10th: Wyrms Claw	3.98	

THE FUTURE...

By NICHOLAS SCALES

As you must realise by now this is the last issue of "The Beholder" being produced by Mike Stoner and Guy Duke, and that from May of this year it is going to be taken over by some unknown organisation called Scale Designs.

Well, I am Nicholas Scales, and I own Scale Designs, and from May of this year I will be publishing The "new" Beholder.

However, the new magazine will not be quite the same format as you are used to, so I think I had better explain what I am going to do and why.

The major difference will be the size and quality of the magazine. It is increasing in size to A4, and the whole will be typeset and double-columned. (Those of you who don't know what typesetting is; buy the new magazine and find out!) The cover price will be put at 75p but if any of you want to subscribe, please wait for the first issue of the magazine to appear or for the advertising blurb to come through your door.

At this point I think I had better correct a few wrong assumptions that have been "floating around" since we started publishing the magazine. Firstly, the new magazine will not be glossy, I personally think this is an unwarranted cost, and secondly it will not (unfortunately) have a full colour cover. I would hope that eventually the magazine will have a full colour cover, once the circulation is great enough to warrant the cost.

The magazine is being amalgamated with another popular magazine, "The Aerial Servant". The "new" Beholder will contain a mixture of features from both magazines, and several new ideas we have lined up, including lots more brilliant artwork.

To help counteract the increased cost, and as a compromise between the two magazines (TAS used to be published bi-monthly), the new magazine will be published 6-weekly, with the first issue, No. 26, being released in June of this year.

The content of the magazine is also going to change, (we think for the better), with longer more-detailed articles, that can be allowed with the increase in quality, and with the emphasis changing from being 99% D&D. We feel that there are minority game systems out there that are just as important as D&D, and on the whole get a raw deal from the fantasy press. This does not mean, however, that D&D will be deliberately omitted, it is still the most popular game yet released, and so will receive prime space within the magazine.

Please write to me, at the below address, and tell me what you want to see in your magazine, or even better still get your pens out and write it! Any articles submitted should preferably be typed, but neat hand-written copies will be accepted.

Typing need not be neat, as the whole will be typeset from the original copy. Any material that you may wish returned must be accompanied by an SSAE. Copyright on any material will be Scale Designs.

All of you who have current subscriptions, just sit back and wait, you will receive your magazine as usual, at no extra cost.

If you have any ideas, comments or queries please write to me at:-

"The Beholder",
c/o Scale Designs,
Petworth Road,
Witley,
Godalming,
Surrey

PUBS

Pubs are traditional meeting places and as such are quite common in D&D games not restricted to the "zoo dungeon" type. The barroom brawl situation was made popular by the White Dwarf magazine a while ago and now is a fairly frequently played out D&D scenario. One of its attractions is that the aim is not really to just kill things but rather to "satisfy honour" or, in some cases, get revenge on a crooked barman by "accidentally" causing a fight in his pub. In most barroom brawls very little of the pub is left at the end!

DMs should be careful not to let players take advantage of the pub set-up. It is far too easy for them to kill people when they are drunk and more vulnerable than usual. It will also be very rare for a player, unless he is a true role-player, to let his character get drunk. The only likely except to this will be the LG person who gets his characters drunk to give him an excuse to have them act out of alignment. Come down on this hard. Few DMs would allow an LG character to drink alcohol anyway.

Unless the law is very "loose" in a city people will be prevented from taking obvious weapons into pubs. The risk of fights is well known and sure to be acted against in this way at least. This is quite interesting gamewise as it makes the actual (inevitable) fight more of a challenge. Weapons must be improvised or small enough to be hidden under clothes. The problem the DM now faces is to determine hit probability and damage caused by such unlikely implements as chair legs, beer mugs, etc. Ideas can be gained from such games as Yaquinto's "Swashbuckler" but most experienced DMs should be able to "wing it" OK. One important point to remember though is that in a barroom brawl most "damage" should be on the lines of knocking people out rather than killing them.

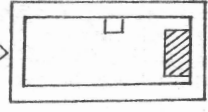
Good drinking!

OF ODIN

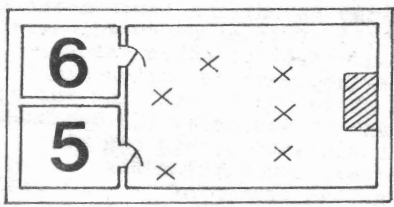
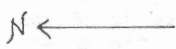
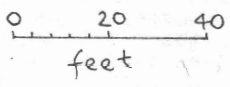
TEMPLE

third floor

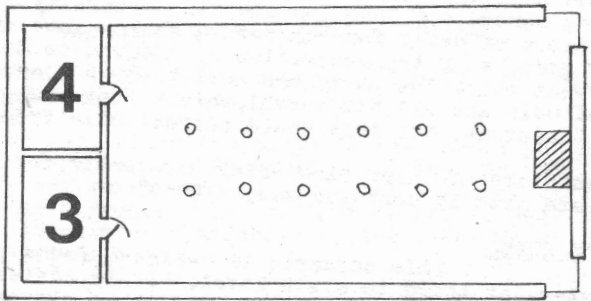
touching the end wall teleports back to 2



second floor



first floor



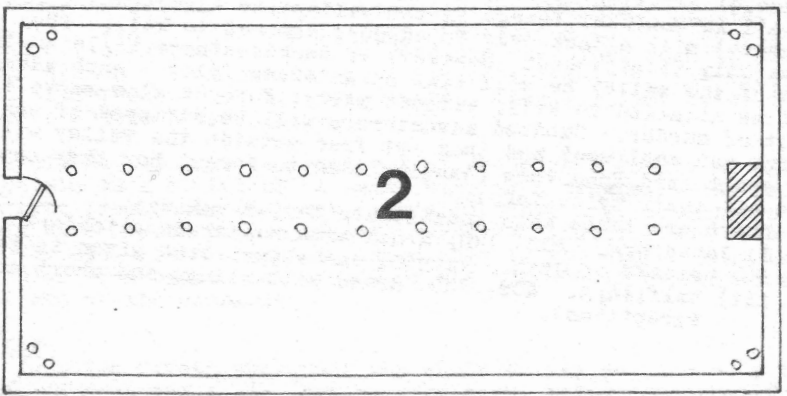
- o = statue
- |> = door
- ▨ = altar
- x = blink dog

ground floor

(ii)

1 (i)

(iii)



(This scenario was sent in, but we haven't got the contributor's name. We apologise to the designer. Additions and adjustments by G. Duke.)

TEMPLE of ODIN

BACKGROUND

The Temple of Odin is set in a fertile valley, not far from a large city (perhaps the City State). The valley is very green and very pleasant, with fast running streams and a sunny aspect. In the centre of the valley is built a large stone temple, the Temple of Odin. It has been built of local stone and carefully decorated to fit in with the pleasant natural surroundings.

According to a legend, many centuries ago the temple was the earthly dwelling of Odin. This god brought law and goodliness to the whole surrounding country and it was named (by lawful goods) 'Heaven on Earth'. But Odin was banished to his own plane by a chaotic evil fighter of immense power, the fighter himself being destroyed in the conflict. Since then, the region of law and goodliness has dwindled and now only the valley remains of the 'Heaven on Earth'. The power of the valley is derived from the Goodstone, placed within the Temple of Odin by the god before he was banished.

The legend says that after one thousand and one years, Odin will return, having served his long banishment. Naturally this has disturbed the powers of evil, for his return would cause an upsurge in the power of good, with the recreation of 'Heaven on Earth'. In order to prevent this, the party has assembled to plunder and destroy the Temple of Odin and all his worshippers. Their main aim is to destroy the Goodstone, for this would prevent Odin from returning to earth.

The adventurers are also plundering the temple for another reason; they have heard that it contains many riches!

GAME-MASTER'S NOTES

This scenario is designed for a party of six to eight characters of third to sixth level. It is advised that none of the characters are of good alignment - for those players who've never had an evil character before, here's a chance to try running one.

The altars in the Temple of Odin cause teleportation; there is no chance of arriving high or low.

All INTELLIGENT beings in the valley (ie 'Average' intelligence or above) will attack only to subdue, and not to kill. They will attack only if provoked. However, if an adventurer kills an inhabitant of the valley he will take on an orange glow - such adventurers will be attacked to kill, without mercy, for the glow marks their guilt of murder. Subdued adventurers will be stripped of weapons, armour and equipment and then set free outside the valley with a forget spell laid upon them (causing them to forget how they came to lose all their belongings).

There are three main inhabitants in the valley;

- i) labourers. AC8, 1HD, armed with hoe/spade/pitchfork (d6 damage)
- ii) priests of Odin. Varying characteristics given in text
- iii) halflings. AC8, 1HD, armed with slings and short swords (some exceptions).

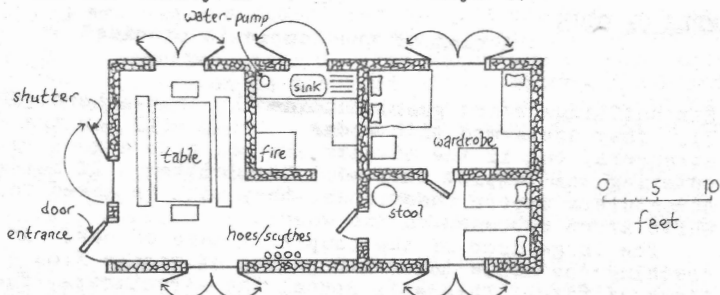


THE VALLEY

A map of the valley is provided on the centre pages. The circle represents the area of effect of the Goodstone. The valley is cultivated with wheat and pasture grazed by cattle and sheep (the animals will be disturbed by intruders in their fields, giving away their position to the villagers). The fields are bounded by hawthorn hedges 4' high (too high to jump and very uncomfortable to climb). A footpath runs round every field and each is accessible by one or more gates.

- a The village - a small collection of thatched cottages and timber barns. Each cottage is occupied by a labourer's family (1-2 fighting men, 1-2 women, 2-4 children) and contains a kitchen, a dining/sitting room and 2 bedrooms. The farmhouses dotted around the valley are similar in layout.

eg:



There is a bell in the centre of the village which is rung in times of fire or attack.

- b The burrows - halving dwellings in the mounds in the centre of the valley. Each has a circular door, leading into an entrance passageway off which are four rooms; a kitchen, sitting/dining room and two bedrooms. The ceiling height is just 5'. Each burrow is inhabited by a family of 1-2 fighting men, 1-2 women and 2-6 children.
- c A small copse on a narrow peninsula (the river meanders around three sides of it) inhabited by brownies. The brownies do not venture forth save at night. There are twelve of them (3/1-3 + spells/-; $\frac{1}{2}$) and they help to guard the valley against evil. The G/M should use these to keep the adventurers from over-running the valley; they can perform mischievous deeds like stealing weapons, or spying on them to find out what they mean to do. They are on friendly terms with the inhabitants of the valley, and will report back all they learn. They will not enter into open combat unless cornered.
- d A small ox-bow lake, at each end of which is a fountain. Each fountain is a statue of an angel blowing a trumpet - the water emerges from these trumpets. This is where the worshippers of Odin have hidden their greater treasures, awaiting the return of the god. This secret is known only to the High Priest in the temple. The exact whereabouts of the treasure is described at the end of the scenario.

THE FOREST

The forest surrounds the whole valley and the only road of access is from the south. It is very dark, being dense coniferous forest, and is inhabited by many evil creatures, including black bears, wolves, worgs, mountain lions, giant ticks, orcs, giant spiders, ogres,

ghouls and shadows. These are kept out of the valley by the Goodstone (only evil creatures of 'very' or higher intelligence can enter the circle of its influence) but will converge on any creature that enters the forest.

When the Goodstone has been destroyed, the evil creatures of the forest will invade the valley, killing and plundering. This may cause the adventurers some problems because they can only find the treasure at the end of the scenario, when they've most likely destroyed the Goodstone. This means that they will be hampered in their search by marauding beasts. The G/M should draw up a list of creatures and plot their movement in the valley as the adventurers search for the treasure.

Note that any surviving villagers will be very hostile to the adventurers once the Goodstone has been destroyed.

THE TEMPLE OF ODIN

A plan of the temple is provided on the centre pages.

- 1 (i) Six halflings stand guard outside the temple here (HP 4,3,6,3,5, 1). They are armed with spears. They will bar the way to strangers, but if the adventurers can give a good reason for entering the temple, they will be admitted. If however the adventurers appear suspicious, they will be asked to touch the white arrow embossed on the door.

The large door of the temple is made of oak. An evil being touching the arrow takes 1-8 points of damage from a sudden flash of fire. This will reveal the adventurers true identity to the guards and they will demand that the adventurers leave the valley. If they refuse, the guards will attack, calling for help.

Help comes from above and from (ii) and (iii). Two giant eagles soar above, mere dots in the sky. If called, they will dive down, arriving at the start of the second melee round. The eagles are (7/1-6,1-6,2-12 or dive for 2-12,2-12 @ +4 hit prob/18,25;4).

The temple door requires 35 strength to be opened from the outside, but swings easily open from the inside. If they hear fighting outside, the guards at 2 will lock the door.

- (ii) A small cottage before the temple, in which sleep three priests. They will be awoken by fighting outside the temple. They are (7/1-8 + spells/12,13,16/2). Spells (as 2nd level cleric); Command, Cause Fear; Command, Prot. vs Evil; Bless, Command.
- (iii) A small cottage before the temple, in which is the guard captain, a halfling (5th level fighter; 5/1-8 +2 (+2 sword)/36;5). The cottage contains a few chairs and a bed, a barrel of wine and a chest in which are 6 short swords.

- 2 This is the main chamber of the temple, of plain stone save for a large number of statues; a double row runs up the centre from the entrance to the marble altar, and there are two statues in each corner. The statues depict pleasant woodland beasts; centaurs, dryads, brownies, deer, squirrels and owls. The eight corner statues are of human-headed snakes.

Three priests stand guard at the door. They will open it if commanded to by the halflings outside. One possesses a key with which he can lock the door.

If these three are killed, the corner statues come alive. They are young guardian nagas (4/1-4,1-6 + spells/15,16,19,21, 25,25,32,35;5). Spells (as 3rd level cleric); G/M should choose.

The altar is embossed with a white arrow - the adventurers may be hesitant in touching it, but it is not damaging like the one on the door. Instead it teleports the adventurer on to the first floor.

First Floor

The adventurers arrive 3' away from the altar, facing it. By now, most of them are likely to be glowing orange (see G/M's notes) and the only way of stopping this is by Remove Curse, Dispel Magic or by destroying the Goodstone.

Statues again run down the centre of the room as on the ground floor, but there are no corner statues. In the southern corners are open windows looking south down the valley. Built on the two window ledges are eagle's nests, one old and disused, the eastern one with two chicks in it (can be tamed). This is the nest of the two eagles described under 1. The adventurers could enter the temple by climbing on to the roof of the ground floor and in through these windows. However, during the day they will be spotted from above by the eagles, and at night they will be on the eastern nest.

- 3 This chamber is full of tapestries that are being preserved for the return of Odin. There are 15 tapestries, each worth 500 to 1000gp (d6+4); however, they are very large, heavy and awkward to carry.
- 4 This chamber is occupied by 3 priests (7/1-8 + spells/14,15,23;3), spells (as 3rd level clerics); Detect Evil, Darkness, Chant; Bless, Command, Silence 15' r.; Prot vs evil, Cure Lt Wnds, Hold Person. They are meditating on a rug on the floor (the only furniture), but will be disturbed by voices in the main chamber.

The altar in the main chamber is embossed with a white arrow; touching the arrow causes teleportation to the second floor.

Second Floor

The adventurers arrive 3' away from the altar, facing it. At the points marked by X's on the map, lie blink dogs. They have been trained to attack anything that glows (ie orange-glowing people, people carrying torches etc.). There is no light in the room. There are 6 blink dogs (4/1-6/15,13,11,17,25,26;4).

- 5 This small chamber contains numerous small articles, stored for the return of Odin. They include brass bells, bronze candlesticks, altar cloths, gongs, small silver idols (6 @ 1000-6000sp), torch brackets, incense burners, pews, mats, wooden scrolls, white robes and bronze urns.
- 6 The chamber of 3 priests. However, all are absent, visiting the High Priest on the third floor. The room contains a rug, a chest containing 1500gp, a bag of pearls (6 x 450gp, Pearl of Wisdom) and a suit of Plate Mail of Vulnerability.

The altar in the main chamber is embossed with a white arrow; touching the arrow causes teleportation to the third floor.

Third Floor

The adventurers arrive 3' away from the altar, facing it. The High Priest sits on a throne against the east wall, with the three priests from the second floor before him, and a guardian naga (3/1-6,1-8 + poison and spells/43;11) curled around him.

The High Priest is ancient and cannot move from his throne. He has no spell use and is only LHTK. His death is close and he is speaking to the three priests to choose his successor. In one hand he holds the Goodstone, in the other a scroll.

The Goodstone is a large, clear crystal radiating a faint blue light. Evil creatures cannot approach within 10' of it because of its aura of good. Good creatures fight at +2 within 20' of it, evil creatures at -2. The crystal is fragile; if broken, it creates an explosion causing 6d6 damage to all within 10', 2d6 to all within 20'.

The scroll shows the hiding place of the treasure of the worshippers of Odin. On it is a map showing the valley and the ox-bow lake. This is encircled and a plan of it is drawn below, showing the fountains at either end. Written beside the north fountain are the words;

"Lower the trumpet;
the key shall be revealed."

and written beside the south fountain are the words;

"Lower the trumpet, and with the key,
Open the chest revealed."

If the adventurers carry out these instructions, they will find that lowering the trumpet of the north fountain will cause a key to fall from the angels clenched left hand. (NB It is likely to fall into the lake and they'll have to search for it). Lowering the trumpet of the south fountain will cause the statue to fall from its pedestal, revealing a chest in the cavity below. The chest can be opened with the key from the north fountain.

It contains the following treasure;

21,000sp, 21,000ep, 5,000gp, Potion of Flying, Potion of Treasure Finding, Scroll of Protection from Elementals, Scroll of Protection from Lycanthropes, a suit of +2 elven-sized chain mail, 7 Loun Stones (4 dull grey (burned out), 1 deep red (+1 dexterity), 1 clear (sustains without food or water), and 1 pearly white one (regenerates 1 h.p. of damage/turn)), 4 gold candlesticks (150gp each), emerald clasp (1500gp), amber crown (1200gp), ermine ruff (960gp), sword +1, cursed.

The three priests (6/1-8 + spells/24,31,27;5) will attack intruders whether they glow or not because it is sacrilege to enter this chamber. Two of them are 5th level clerics, spells; Cause Lt Wnds, Cure Lt Wnds, Darkness, Know Alignment, Hold Person, Silence 15' r, Cause Blindness; Detect Evil, Command x 2, Chant, Hold Person x 2, Dispel Magic. The other is a 5th level MU/Fighter, spells;Enlarge, Hold Portal, Sleep, Spider Climb, Invisibility, Stinking Cloud, Haste.

The guardian naga will defend the High Priest to the death, and has the following spells (as 6th level cleric); Cause Fear, Sanctuary, Prot. vs Evil, Chant x 2, Hold Person, Cause Blindness, Dispel Magic.


Note to the G/M

It is important that the Temple of Odin is not played with the adventurers just going through the temple and not bothering about the valley. The game should start with them just entering the valley, and it is up to them whether to bluff their way through, fight or creep around under cover of dark. The villagers are intelligent and will be suspicious of outsiders.

CHRONICLE : END OF THE ORCS...

by G. Duke

being the seventh and last part of the chronicle
featuring: Aresthusa (alias Wily Wilma) elven thief
Tuffnik human fighter
Peebinga human M/U
Stroller human ranger
Malmo human cleric

Three windows sleeplessly scanned the enclosure, piercing the dark of the night like the eyes of a dragon. Stroller stood quailing beneath their gaze, for a silent voice spoke to him from those windows - "You are watched, you can go no further. You are not wanted here. Turn away and do not return, or you shall face the wrath of Yrhold." But as his gaze was held on the windows, their light wavered, dimmed and died; a sudden thick fog had descended over the enclosure, clinging to the three adventurers. Stroller started, thinking himself blinded, but then Aresthusa spoke and her bedraggled face appeared before him out of the gloom.

"This fog is to our advantage. Now is our chance to find our captured friends."

"But where do we start?" asked Peebinga looking around at the hopeless walls of darkness. "Stroller, you lead us, whither shall we go?"

For a while, Stroller did not reply. He stood like one petrified, a living statue. His mind quailed at the memory of the windows in the tower, his heart yearned for his ensnared companions and thus he stood heart battling with mind.

"We shall go on," Stroller said at last, wiping the damp from his forehead. "Let us find an orc and force from him the whereabouts of Tuffnik and Malmo." He silently prayed that the fog should last.

The adventurers moved on, keeping the noise of the penned cattle on their left, though they were now out of sight. Their feet ploughed through piles of muck and offal spread over the bare rock of the enclosure, steaming and repulsive. Almost immediately, a wooden hut loomed before them, a sturdy structure of thick logs, plastered in places by mud. Passing around it, a door gaped on their left, a light glowing within. As the adventurers prepared to storm in, a child wandered out. The ugly orcling became suddenly aware of the adventurers and stood still, gaping. Aresthusa swept forward, drew it up and placed her knife on its black throat. The child's evil face uttered a stifled cry.

+ + +

The three adventurers stood coiled for action inside the doorway of the hut. Peebinga pulled the door shut, rebuffing the clammy night. Aresthusa held the orcling in her arms and Stroller drew his sword. Bowls went flying and there were several orcling yelps as three orcs leapt to their feet, snarling, staring at the intruders in the flickering lamplight.

"Lie down, yrch, or the child dies," hissed Aresthusa. She spoke the harsh language of the orcs, and the three beasts listened as she spoke. As she finished, they moved with one purpose as if there was no decision to make; each drew a long dagger and flew at the disbelieving adventurers. Cursing, Aresthusa threw the child down in the path of the orcs and drew her sword. Peebinga drew his dagger, at the same time dodging a flying bowl. For a split second his gaze caught the anguished face of the orcling as it was stabbed and pushed aside by one of the orcs - and in that same second he

realised the three were female orcs. He shuddered to think of the ferocity of the males if the females could be this callous. Then the orcs were upon him. The fight was fierce, but the three females armed only with daggers were no match for the three hardened adventurers, even in the dark of the hut. Within a couple of minutes two were dead and the other pinned to the floor, Peebinga's knife at her throat.

"Speak or die," said Aresthusa, in no mood for waiting around - the noise of the fight might have been heard in other parts of the enclosure. "Where are the prisoners kept?"

"Grimnarrc " growled the orc through her rotten teeth, "Cavernn of Grimnarrc."

"Where, where is it yrch?" urged Aresthusa, and Peebinga pressed the knife down.

"Tower, ... entrance..."

The orc was cut short by a cry from Stroller. Peebinga jumped, his dagger slicing through the orcs throat, as Aresthusa span round to see Stroller with a knife in his side and the beheaded body of an orcling flopping to the ground. The other orclings screamed, their ugly faces further contorted. Stroller plucked the knife from his side. The three adventurers looked back at the dying orc; an orcling was pasting the throat wound with some substance from a bowl.

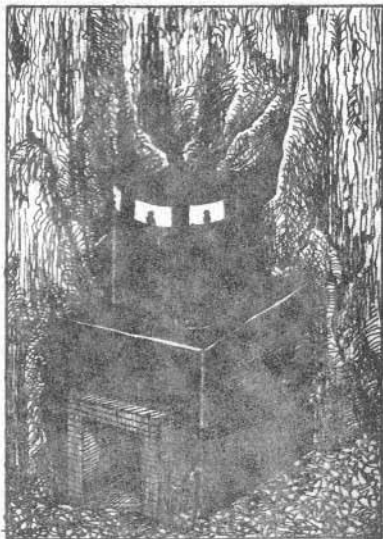
"Its too late to save her, ugly one," said Aresthusa, snatching the bowl. "Let's see what this paste does for you, Stroller," she said, administering the stuff to his wound. Immediately it relieved him of the pain. Aresthusa glanced round the room and spied another two bowls on the floor. One was empty but Aresthusa stuffed the contents of the other into her pouch.

"Let's get out of here," said Peebinga. "I think we make for a tower." Leaving the orclings whimpering in the hut, the adventurers hurried out and Stroller led them towards the three windows of the tower which they could now dimly see again - the fog was lifting though the night was still young.

+ + +

The enclosure of the orcs was well defended. On three sides rana rampart and palisade, dividing the enclosure from the swamp. To the east, the enclosure butted against a tall cliff, a broken toe of the White-Ridged Mountains that rose to their peaks some two leagues to the east. On this cliff the orcs had built a tower, black and menacing. The tower had three windows, bright, staring eyes overlooking the enclosure forty feet below, and below the windows was the entrance, the way to the Caverns of the Grimbnak.

The three companions stood beside this entrance, out of view of the eyes above as the fog thinned and disappeared as quickly as it had come. Not far within the open gateway they'd espied two guards, luckily without being seen themselves. Not keen to fight, Stroller had persuaded Peebinga to deal with them.



The ranger drew an arrow from his quiver and flung it to the far side of the gateway. As the guards looked round to see the source of the noise, Peebinga stepped forward and released his spell. Bothe guards flopped silently to the ground, unconscious. Aresthusa hurried forward and bound and gagged them with rope and cloth from her pack. The three adventurers now found themselves in a small, square chamber from which a spiral staircase led up and a dark passage led deeper into the rock.

"The staircase must lead up to the tower," said Stroller, "I'll not go that way."

"Then we have no choice but to take this dark corridor," said Aresthusa, "Let's hope our friends lie beyond it - alive!"

They dragged the bound guards into the darkness of the corridor then set off down it, Aresthusa guiding the two humans.

"Step quietly now," she suddenly urged, "We're nearing a door." The three rose on to their toes and edged slowly forward. Just beyond the door, someone was laughing - a deep, evil guffaw. "Hah! We shall burst in on them, we're bound to surprise them," said the thief. "We can chop them up before they've sheathed their swords." She tried the door knob - it clicked. With all his strength, Stroller thrust the door open, yelling madly, and swept around looking for the source of the laughter. His two companions jumped through almost on his heels. Then all three stopped dead.

+ + +

They stood at the end of a long hall, pillars running down either side. At the far end a large, black orc sat on a throne, a huge wolf curled at his feet. On either side stood a tall guard at the feet of each sat a wolf. Before the throne on the floor of the hall a naked jester pranced. By some trick of the stonework, the coarse laugh of the orc-lord sounded very near. The adventurers stood a full thirty feet from their enemies, surprise long since lost.

From the orc-lord radiated a fiery glow, a symbol of power. He waved the jester aside.

"Welcome, white ones," his tone was soft but malicious, all three adventurers heard it clearly. "How nice of you to visit me, I was tiring of my jester and your two friends were very boring!" The 'were' seeded hopelessness in their minds. They hesitated, listening to the soft speech.

"Come and sit by me, beautiful elf," said the voice. Momentarily Aresthusa resisted the call, then smiled and moved forward as if willingly. Stroller leapt forward to stop her.

"I suggest that you sit still," the voice said to Stroller. His mind struggled to withstand the power, but he too succumbed - he sat down and Aresthusa continued her walk. Peebinga stared hopelessly at his two companions, waiting for the orc-lord to turn his power towards him. Aresthusa reached the throne and sat at the feet of the orc-lord. Then the black beast turned his gaze to the magician.

"Why don't you go peacefully and stay with your two friends in the Cavern of the Grimbnak?" he suggested, and pointed to the exit on his right, the only other way out of the hall. The words span round in Peebinga's head; he fought against them, concentrating on hate, hate for that languid voice. Slowly he wrested the suggestion from his mind, but thinking quickly, he complied with it, moving as directed. As he left the hall, a guard joined him from the throne, torch in one hand, javelin in the other and a wolf at his heels.

+ + +

The corridor twisted to left and right, then came to a heavy door of solid stone. The guard moved past Peebinga, taking a key from his belt. The magician thought of acting now, but had no suitable spell, and the wolf stood glaring at him. The door creaked open and Peebinga moved forward into a dark cavern. The roof was of varying height (in places he had to stoop to pass through) and there were numerous pillars and arches formed by stalactites and stalagmites. Chained to many of these pillars were skeletons or disjunct bones, to others rotting or partly eaten corpses; the smell was repulsive. Turning this way and that, the guard at his back, Peebinga came eventually to a dead end. There, slumped on the floor in the flickering torchlight he could make out two bodies. As he approached, they moved and stood up. Both were clothed in rags and had bare feet and dirt-covered faces; both were shackled to the wall. Peebinga suppressed a cry of joy, for they were Tuffnik and Malmo.

"Hasn't Grimbnak eaten you yet, white ones? He can't be very hungry, or perhaps you smell too much, ha-ha-ha!" laughed the guard, and his wolf snarled in agreement. He chained Peebinga to the wall, removed his two daggers, then turned away, the torch light receding and quickly disappearing. The three captives heard a distant clang of stone on stone, then all was quiet.

+ + +

The darkness and silence and putrid smell were oppressive. But it was something else that made the captives uncomfortable; there was a distinct tension in the air.

Peebinga had briefly told his story to his two companions, and they in turn had told theirs. When Peebinga spoke of the orc-lord, Malmo spoke saying "He is Yrhold, lord of the orcs. His power comes from the Doomstone which he wears on his chest. It is that which gave him the power to charm Aresthusa and to overpower Stroller's mind with a suggestion. We are lucky that you could withstand it."

"Aye, and now I mean to get us out of here," said Peebinga, "for if this is the Cavern of the Grimbnak, the Grimbnak must be here somewhere, and I've no desire to meet him ... or it." Reaching for the hem of his cloak, he ripped it and out fell a serrated blade. "Be prepared, that's my motto," he said, and began to saw through his chain. The noise made the adventurers uncomfortable, but nothing appeared. Within a few minutes the chain snapped. Peebinga leapt free and started on Tuffnik's chain. Ten minutes later, all three stood free together. Peebinga, with light radiating from his fingertip led the way.

"But the door," Tuffnik protested, "It is far too strong to break down - we can't get out!"

"Perhaps," replied the magician, "and perhaps not. Let's find it first."

They wandered around for about ten minutes and eventually came to a narrow passage leading out of the cavern. In single file they passed along it and came out into a small square chamber. There before them, piled on the floor of the chamber was a glittering hoard of treasures.

Ten minutes later they were on their way out, most of the gold and silver left behind. But Tuffnik carried a gleaming sword, Peebinga wore an amulet, a bracelet and a pair of arm-guards, and Malmo carried two scrolls. As he left the chamber, he cast a spell from one of them and immediately his face went white. "There is great evil nearby," he said, "How long can your light last, Peebinga?"

"Half an hour at the most," he replied, "Let's hurry."

Tuffnik, his sword before him, led the adventurers back into the cavern to search for the way out. Malmo turned this way and that, trying to locate the evil and direct Tuffnik away from it, but it got ever closer and closer. Suddenly, they came upon the door. The three sighed with relief but as Peebinga extinguished the light to concentrate on opening the door a roar came from behind them. Malmo span round; here was the source of the evil. He shuddered.

Glowing red before the adventurers was a hideous beast; his lower torso was that of a lion, his upper torso that of a human. He was oppressively obese and his head bore great flat horns. His eyes and lips were black as coals, his overall appearance ugly to the point of nauseating. And all three adventurers reeled with the smell. This was the Grimbnak.

During the next few seconds, events moved with lightning speed. Darts shot from the devil's eyes, sending searing pain into Tuffnik. Malmo hurriedly read another spell from the scrolls and as the devil launched its mass towards him, it stopped and momentarily reeled back from the ring of protection around the cleric. Meanwhile, Peebinga had turned back to the door and bent his will on to it; with a small flash and a cloud of stone dust it sprang open.

"Hurry. Now!" he cried. His two companions sprang up through the doorway with him and as the devil recovered and leapt forward once more, the heavy stone portal clanged shut in his face. Echoing along the corridor, the clang receded and then all was quiet once more.

+ + +

In the hall of the throne, the orc-lord had sent away his bodyguards to keep watch outside while he was attended to by Aresthusa. One had disappeared via a secret door in the southern wall, the other had passed out of the western door through which the adventurers had come. As the girl pleased the foul orc, Stroller sat motionless at the entrance of the hall where he'd sat down almost an hour before. Only the grunting of the orc-lord and of the pet worg curled at his feet broke the silence...indeed the grunting of the orc-lord was very wolf-like itself. As Aresthusa carressed him, she became suddenly aware of his changing form, of his lank fur and snarling lips. Yrc-hold was a werewolf, and it was now midnight.

The thief jumped back, startled from her charm. Acting quickly, inspired by disgust, she drew her sword and jumped at her oppressor, cutting a great gash in his foreleg. He yelped in pain and the Doomstone in his chest glowed brightly. From the foot of the throne, the worg leapt up to defend his master.

At that moment there was a cry from the entrance to the Cavern of the Grimbnak. Out of the corner of her eye, Aresthusa spotted Peebinga, on either side of him a beggar-like character. There was a sudden flash and the worg and the werewolf exploded in fire. Aresthusa staggered back in the heat and fell momentarily unconscious. She arose to see the worg lying dead beside its master. Tuffnik was cutting the Doomstone from the chest of the werewolf, and Stroller was speaking with the two beggars, released from his spell. Dazed, the girl now realised who the two characters were.

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Following Aresthusa's directions, the five reunited adventurers found the secret door. The thief cautioned them - there was probably

a guard outside. Stroller pushed it open quickly but there was no need - there was no guard present. The door led into a dark winding passage. The ranger lit a torch and Tuffnik, armed with Yrchold's spear and the gleaming sword led the adventurers in single file towards escape. After about fifty yards, Tuffnik glimpsed moonlight, Stroller extinguished the torch and the party burst out into the fresh night air. As Peebinga, taking up the rear, emerged, the other adventurers heard a sickening thump as cold iron pierced warm flesh. Turning, they saw the magician slump to the ground, a javelin through his back, one of Yrchold's bodyguards standing over him. He leapt forward, another javelin in his hand and struck Malmo before the adventurers reacted. Unarmed, the orc quickly succumbed to the adventurers, and his wolf fled, tail between its legs. Malmo and Peebinga lay dead on the marshy ground.

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Arethusa, Stroller and Tuffnik trudged wearily along the marsh path as it wound among the pools and tussocks. Overhead, the moon peered weakly through a thin mist as it sank westward on its heavenly path. The path suddenly came to the edge of the ravine of the sluggish green river. The soupy waters gurgled seventy feet below. The adventurers turned with the path northwards along the cliff-top. After a couple of hundred yards, Stroller stopped suddenly in amazement. Down in the ravine there was a sudden wail, then two more.

From the stagnant waters a great beast had arisen, the same that had cursed Peebinga less than twelve hours ago - it seemed more like twelve days. Running along the riverside path, down in the ravine, were dozens of orcs, males, females and orclings, all wailing and recklessly rushing away from some source of terror. As they came upon the river monster, they threw themselves into the river or were ravaged by its terrible claws.

As the flood of orcs came on, the adventurers made out certain repeated cries; "Yrchold is dead"... "Gods have invaded the encampment"... "Grimbnak is loose"... "Death is upon us", all in the harsh tongue of the orcs.

"There you see the last of the Orcs of the Black Hand," said Stroller, and he smiled grimly. "Peebinga and Malmo died for a good cause."

The three adventurers continued on their way to the standing stones, crossed the bridge and descended into the ravine. Tuffnik held the glowing Doomstone before him as they proceeded slowly along above the gurgling waters.

"This is our only key to escape," he said, and clung the more tightly to it. Rounding a corner, they came suddenly upon the monster; from its mouth hung shreds of flesh and cloth, and strewn on the path were severed limbs and heads, all black and oozing purple blood. The monster lashed out sending Stroller reeling into the river. With one huge hand it pushed him beneath the surface and turned to meet the other two.

Arethusa leapt forward, seized the Doomstone from Tuffnik and abruptly swallowed it. The monster howled with rage and gripped the girl by the arm, lifting her clear of the ledge. As the monster clutched her, she hewed its neck almost in two, and girl and beast disappeared beneath the turbulent surface.

Tuffnik, horrified, turned just in time to see the Grimbnak falling upon him. The two fell, locked together and the sluggish waters of the river closed over their heads as the summer sun rose into the sky, heralding a new day.

THE END

UP AND DOWN

In the standard dungeon everything is set out on a number of nicely layered levels, with the occasional pit, slide or staircase connecting them. This is all very well but it ignores one aspect of dungeon design which can prove very interesting and challenging: the vertical. It is far too easy for dungeoneers to move along standard, nice straight corridors. What is needed is a more troublesome dungeon area, where just getting from one room to another is hard work. To achieve this take one of your old dungeons and look at its map. Rather than seeing it as a layout of rooms on one level imagine it as a vertical slice through the rooms, which will now be connected by a network of pits, chutes, shafts, etc. You now have a perfectly good vertical dungeon. However before putting it to use it is necessary to restock the various rooms with appropriate monsters. Obviously they must have climbing capability and preferably attack from above or below. Clean-up crew monsters can be quite useful and monsters such as the Brok (TBH18) are perfect for leaping onto dungeoneers passing under their room. It is also a good idea to invent a couple of your own monsters that players will not have encountered before, preferably ones with good "bounce" ability so that they can jump up pits and move around the vertical environment easily.

For some reason it is common to associate pits with giant spiders. Perhaps it is because of their web-making capability that is so useful in this setting. Just imagine the pleasure of a dungeoneer to find that his fall down a pit has been stopped by this nice, soft, bouncy "net", and then imagine how he'll feel when he finds himself stuck to it and a giant spider hurrying over to see what it's caught! More problems can be added if the web is roughly halfway down a deep pit. The dungeoneer can of course cut or burn the web to get free, but then what's going to stop him falling the rest of the way down the pit?

Other monsters frequently encountered in the vertical setting are burrowing types (e.g. Ankhhegs), Carrion Crawlers (with their ability to walk along walls and ceilings) and other scavenger races (e.g. Otyughs). It is also possible that dwarves will be around, as the history of many vertical dungeons can easily be explained as exhausted mine shafts. However if this reason is given it is advisable to make the layout reasonably feasible for a mine and to place a few coal-trucks and ladders about (with numerous rotting rungs, of course!).

Water becomes a major hazard in this sort of dungeon. A pit may only be fifteen feet deep, but if the last 10 of those are full of water and the person falling in is wearing plate armour they could be in considerable trouble! Even someone wearing magic armour (ruled as weightless by some DMs) would have quite a tough time staying afloat. However while the vertical design has considerable disadvantages for dungeoneers it can be used to their advantage, with spells such as Cloudkill really coming into their own. It is also advisable to watch for "firebomb freaks" who will just love roasting monsters living at the bottom of pits, which have no way out. Throwing in a few valuable, but very vulnerable to fire, magical items should stop this though. Imagine how dungeoneers will feel on finding the charred remains of a scroll with just the words "Meteor Swarm" still readable!

SO, THAT'S IT FROM US, MIKE AND GUY.
HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED THE LAST TWO YEARS
AS MUCH AS WE HAVE, AND WE HOPE TO SEE
YOU AT CONVENTIONS STILL. GOODBYE!

