

THE DUNGEONEER

THE NUMBER ONE GM FANZINE

January/February 1980

15

Prod. # 125 \$2.80



INITIATES OF
THE WHITE GOD
By Steve Marsh

LORDS AND DEVICES
OF DRAGONKIND
By James M. Ward

Judges Guild



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Judges Guild

1165 N. University JG 18
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the Lab' Oratory

Our magazines are among the most inexpensive in the fantasy role-playing hobby.

All right, put down those bricks; let me explain. *The Dungeoneer* and *The Judges Guild Journal* have sixty-four page issues, with four pages of cover. The covers are very heavy stock, designed to hold up a long time in briefcases and loose-leaf binders. Aside from the Amateur Press Association, who have an editorial and financing structure that is uniquely their own and so are able to put out larger issues, sixty-eight pages is the largest in the hobby.

We charge \$2.80 for an issue. The next step down is forty-eight pages with cover, usually priced at \$2.00 by other publishers. A little math will reveal that the price per page is about the same.

Also, consider that there is very little advertising in our publications compared with others. The reader gets sixty-eight pages of magazine. By comparison a prozine, which is supported by more ads at higher advertising rates and by a larger circulation, puts out fewer pages with a cover on less durable stock, at about the same price per page. Despite our lack of advertising revenue we are priced competitively with the prozines. And we're only a fanzine (although some people like to call us a prozine).

Recently, there have been a few complaints by writers of the APA, concerning our apparently "high" cover prices. At the \$2.80 rate, the Guild's magazines have one of the highest price tags (taken at face value) in the hobby; the APA seems to have a valid point.

Perhaps I'm overreacting here, for there were only two or three such complaints, and it would be a gross exaggeration to say that even 5% of our mail is of a critical nature (most of it is embarrassingly complimentary). We try to print all criticisms

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(continued from preceding page)

(as opposed to a cross section of all the rest), and reply with fairness, honesty and restraint... as I will attempt to do here.

Compare things for yourself. Pick up a copy of a prozine and one of our magazines. Delete from both, all advertising, editorials, soap-box soloists (like myself), "banal chatter" and such running gear as ad rates, subscription rates, and reimbursement rates for contributed copy and art. If you don't like reviews, cartoons, fiction and/or art, take those out too. Leave only what you personally like to see in a magazine, what you think is worth the money. Leave the hard-copy game variants, rules clarifications, mini-dungeons and scenarios, convention listings and such that apply directly to the play of the game.

Those who may wish to complain about the differences in typeface sizes, margin widths, and numbers of typographical errors are invited to count the words, leaving out **a**, **an**, **and**, **the**, and any words spelled or used incorrectly. If you'd like to figure in such mathematical intangibles as caliber of writing, journalistic standards, and printing quality, by all means do so, and please let me know of your methods and formulae for evaluating them.

Divide the cover price of each magazine by the number of pages or words. You'll find that our prices are very reasonable. You may also wish to compare our reimbursement rates for contributed copy and art. While at midrange for prozines, among fanzines we are perched on the most generous end of that spectrum. (Those of you who are trying to decide who to send your pen-and-inks and manuscripts to, take note.)

When we set a price on an item we stick with that price; we burn our bridges by printing the price right on the cover. When they reprint a product in a different format, most other companies raise the price through the roof. But our only "enlarged, completely revised edition" effort to date,

Characters appearing in this magazine are fictional and are not intended to resemble any actual persons, living or dead.

Upon publication of any advertisement, sole responsibility for any and all contracts and agreements, expressed or implied, rests with the advertiser. Judges Guild is not responsible for any losses or unfulfilled agreements of any kind.

The following games are trademarked by their respective companies: *Runequest!* by The CHAOSium; *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Starships & Spacemen*, and *Bunnies & Burrows* by Fantasy Games Unlimited; *Traveller* and *En Garde!* by Game Designers' Workshop; and *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, and *Metamorphosis Alpha* by Tactical Studies Rules.

City State Of the Invincible Overlord, is actually priced significantly lower than the original! In these days of runaway inflation, paper shortages and skyrocketing production costs, that's something you don't hear of very often... and something to be very proud of. We have not raised prices, as so many companies have done, since opening our doors in 1976: something else to crow about.

For that matter, you may wish to compare per-page or per-word prices of all our products and playing aids with those of other companies. I encourage wholeheartedly the publication of per-page or per-word price lists by anyone whose standpoint is obviously unbiased. (I'm prejudiced in favor of us, so that's why I'm not doing it here.) Therefore the APA is the ideal forum for this. By all means, include writing caliber and printing quality in your reckoning. I don't want anybody, including us, to have any excuse for coming in second best in our attempts to give you the best value for the money.

You might also wish to figure in the fact that, of all wargames companies in the world, only Judges Guild pays percentage royalties out of the cover price. We have a contract with TSR to produce playing aids for **D&D** and **AD&D**. We have a contract with The CHAOSium to do playing aids for **Runequest!** We have a contract with Fantasy Games Unlimited to do playing aids for **Chivalry & Sorcery** and the other FGU rules systems. We have a contract with Game Designers' Workshop to produce playing aids for **Traveller** and **En Garde!** We have a contract with Lou Zocchi to produce playing aids for **Superhero 2044**.

Should any other company produce playing aids for any of these games without first contracting with its manufacturer, and then call them (or insinuate that they are) official or approved (as all of ours are by contract), that company is breaking the law, to speak with perfect candor, as well as raising a few ethical issues. For example, there are several companies now producing playing aids which specifically cite **D&D** to use them with, or obviously designing them around the **D&D** rules system. But only Judges Guild has bothered to go about seeking and signing a contract first with TSR. And we pay for the privilege with large royalties, so our resentment for gate-crashers is (we hope) understandable, although we welcome the competition.

We were also the very first to come out with playing aids. When our president, Bob Bledsaw, originated the concept of playing aids, the sages of the industry laughed and said we would fail. (Back then FRP itself was a ridiculously upstart notion.)

(Continued on page 4)

WORDS & WHIPS

Lo and behold, the letters column is again being done on the typesetter. And here it's going to stay. Will wonders never cease.

Herein we have two letters from our own staff members who live across the wilderness, who felt their views should be aired in this forum. But keep those cards and letters coming in, folks, because this is a one-time-only affair.

Dear Editor,

There have been some letters in the latest batches of mail that Chuck has published in "Words and Whips" which have been most derogatory about using fiction in a magazine of this type. Aside from not having any suggestions about what to replace it with, these people don't even try to write something as good or better, article, fiction or comic!

Even so, I would still appreciate a balance of articles and fiction. I often find that the fiction improves my game more than the articles would, for the fiction is more an example of the use of traps, monsters, and puzzles, rather than a dry description of damage or mechanics.

Some of the most important lessons of morality have been taught, not by cookbook plans, but by parable and fictional story. Fictional example was used by Jesus in the New Testament, the Jewish rabbis in the Talmud, and Aesop and his fables. The reason they taught in this manner is that it is easier to learn with your imagination, for you are using your mind more fully.

On the other hand, I would chide Chuck a bit, in that he is giving us fiction mostly by only a handful of authors. Come now, let's see more variety than the same three serials, Chicky! If not, I'll address the next letter to Mr. Anshell. The more points of view, the better this can be as a method of information. This isn't a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth. Aside from that, keep up the good work!

Bob Pryor
Little Diomedes, AK

I was hoping someone would take the time to defend fiction in this manner. By the way, we have published work by someone other than Hendricks, Paley and myself: "Dragonplace" by Thomas McCloud, in tD #13. Paley's serial ends with this issue and my own is being shelved for awhile, in order to make room for more authors.

Another reason that my serial has been shelved is that it could be construed that I'm keeping out other writers to print my own — even though mine usually has the shortest installments, and even though Isaac Asimov, as editor, prints his own work and even names the magazine after himself, and puts his own photo on the cover with first billing in the cover promotions. (Not saying he doesn't deserve it...) — Ed.

Dear Editor,

While I enjoy seeing my items in print in your (our) magazines, I must say that I am distressed that I see so few letters commenting on my work in the letters page. Am I so omnipotent that I know all the right answers? Doesn't anyone disagree with me? Certainly someone must feel that something I choose to discuss could be improved upon. Where are their letters?

I know that the Guild enjoys receiving new ideas and items for future publication, but it would be nice to see a little controversy stir up in print over what we do and don't use. How about the Judges out there letting the Guild know what they need or want in their campaigns?

Finally, a question... I've been preparing the characters of my campaign for a major war between the City State of the Invincible Overlord and that of the World Emperor. When is the City State of the World Emperor going to be ready? Yours, with a pacifier for Hinnen,

Bill Paley
Chicago, IL

All right, Paley, you asked for it.

Too bad we can't print phone calls, for one thing; most of them concerning your work would be unprintable anyway. The Decatur PD's Bomb Disposal Squad has had to set up a branch office in our basement to handle your mail, for another; most of the mail concerning your articles blows up before we can print it. And as for the characters of your campaign, what characters?

All kidding aside, we try to print a cross section of our mail. (See "The Lab'Oratory" for more on this.) Each letter you see is representative of far more, except for the critical ones, which we print

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all of, and therefore represent none but themselves. As for controversy, Woodward and Bernstein may thrive on it, but just the thought of it gives me ulcers. Do you want this to become something like an APazine, in which a fair-sized chunk of every issue is devoted to every writer reacting to everybody else's last work? For the APA that's all well and good, but I don't think The Dungeoneer should work that way.

The City State Of the World Emperor (also known as Viridistan, The Immortal City, and The City Of Vines) has been written and rewritten. Every time

it gets delayed, though, Bob Bledsaw is burning more midnight oil and it keeps getting bigger and bigger. And bigger, and bigger... and by the time it gets printed it should be a blockbuster.

And I hear scandalous rumors to the effect that you are the perpetrator of my appearance in "Edge Of the Galaxy" in swaddling clothes. The fact that I am at seventeen the youngest staff member here does not, I feel, impede my performance as editor. But I can take a joke as well as the next guy. Yours, with a cane and a rocking chair for Old Man Paley,

— Ed.

The Lab'Oratory

(continued from page 2)

The original *City State of the Invincible Overlord* was a landmark in the industry: the very first playing aid for a game. The fact that Judges Guild survived and grew, solely on the basis of its playing aids, led others to think that there is money in them. I may get a few bricks thrown at me by the APA for invoking his name, but E. Gary Gyax has a point: once it has been proven that an idea is profitable, the opportunistic seekers of the fast buck scurry into the new market to hawk their wares. There is a lot of garbage out there, including some "playing aids" that actually hinder rather than aid play. And some of the garbage is gift-wrapped with glossy covers and impressive names.

All of our work on a playing aid is sent first to the game's manufacturer, so that they may check it to see that it is faithful to the game's concepts, mechanics and design philosophies; but first it undergoes extensive playtesting. If corrections are called for, it's sent back and we have the author rewrite it and send it back (again and again if necessary). Only when everybody has given final approval does it go to press. Some of these manufacturers are pretty hard to please, but the most stringent, demanding son of a... uh, lady in the whole approval process is Bob Bledsaw.

Some questions have also been raised in the APazines concerning our relationship with TSR and other companies we do playing aids for. Are we a puppet company? Are we merely a cog in the gears of some gigantic profiteering conglomerate? Is our destiny programmed by another company?

St%&S* NO! We are nobody's slaves! Even the analogy of hired engineers or skilled laborers is inappropriate, for no other company pays us a dime; in fact, the money flows in the other direction, for we pay very respectable royalties.

Rather, we cooperate with other companies on an equal basis. We offer to do a playing aid, it

goes through the approval process, and it gets published. All of this costs money. Then we ship it to the distributors and retailers such as Lou Zocchi, Midwest Hobby, and small hobby stores all across the country, giving a discount of anywhere from forty to seventy-five percent. This brings money back in.

What comes back is carved up: a hefty chunk goes to the manufacturer of the rules set and, if the text was written by an out-of-house designer (such as Dave Arneson, Mike Mayeau, Rudy Kraft, Tom McCloud, Dave Emigh, Paul Karczag, and others), he or she gets a generous slice as well. Out of what's left, we must pay the earlier costs of preparation and printing.

Judges Guild, the writer, and the cooperating company are all equal partners in this agreement, and the agreement only affects that particular product. We do have continuing contracts with these companies, but they are only to allow us to keep sending manuscripts; we aren't held to a certain number of them, and may decide not to do any more at all. The writer is freelance, and works for us at his or her own convenience. Nobody is going to force a decision on the writer or on us. Judges Guild is owned by Bob and Norma Bledsaw, and is completely independent.

The writer gets a royalty for the design, the cooperating company gets a royalty for building on its chassis, and everybody makes a living... usually. Being completely independent has its drawbacks. The royalties are skimmed right off the top, because everybody else is paid first. We're left with the dregs, with which to pay printers, shippers, lights, heating, rent, phone bills, taxes, advertising, payroll... Whether we make a profit, break even, or take a pounding is our problem and nobody else's. There's no parent corporation that's going to bail us out of trouble, and there are a lot of competitors out there peddling their wares who would enjoy watching us go under.

Hmmm. I hope I haven't sounded like I'm

talking down from Mount Olympus to the mere mortals below, or something else equally out of line. Please allow me to state that I have not intended to insult the APA, its talented writers and editors, or anybody else for that matter, in the preceding tirade. Nor have I tried to get anyone to stop buying any of the fine magazines I'm comparing us with; they are fairly priced and excellent values. All I'm saying is, "don't let our prices scare you away." Page for page our prices are the same. I have merely tried to defend our pricing structure and our integrity as a company.

And, please, don't let this mute any other complaints you may have about us or anybody else... freedom of speech and all that. I don't believe there is such a thing as criticism that is not constructive.

* * * * *

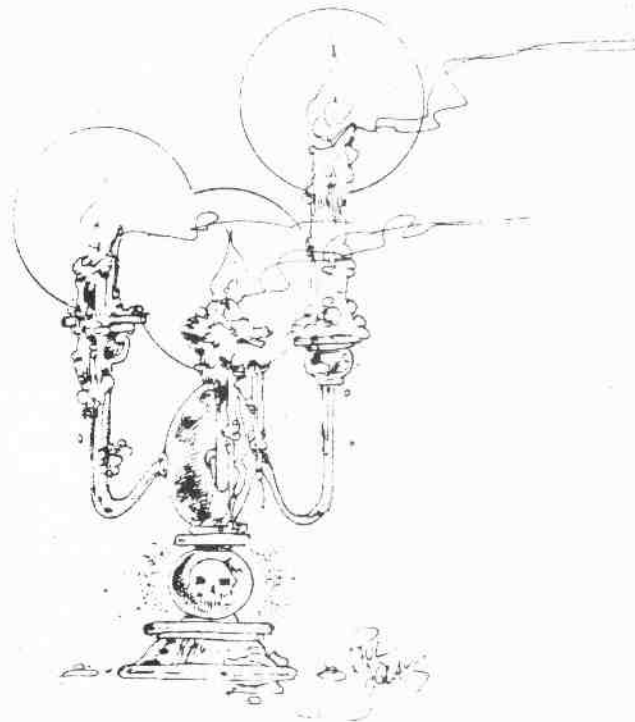
End of sermon. I've rambled long enough. Bob Bingham looked at a rough draft of this and said it read like "a song for the common man, played on a kazoo." Well, I tried not to make it read like a song for the elite played on a machine gun, and that's how it came out...

Oops, we made a boo-boo. The Rune Sword

on p. 50 of *The Dungeoneer* #12 and the Sword of Cleaving on p. 57 of tD #13, part of "The Booty Bag" for those issues, were not written by Kevin Slimak, as those issues stated. They were done by Steve Marsh. Also the "Dwarven Ripple" items on p. 46, tD #14, were not credited to their author, Ree Moorhead Pruehs. Our apologies to these writers for the errors.

Readers may have noticed the fact that we have cut back the color again to no color at all. Hmmm. Well, we're trying a few new things in the color processing, and it should return soon. The contents more than make up for the cutback in glitter and gloss, however. All five serials are here, but one ("Under Skyking's Light") finishes in this issue, and another ("A Private Hell") is being interrupted to make room for new writers. Bill Seligman's series of articles on his new FRP system presents its third installment, covering armor and weapons in great detail. Scott Fordyce gives us some views of the magic systems currently in use in FRP, and Steve Marsh has created a mini-dungeon for "Dungeoneer Depths." We're welcoming a very talented new artist to our fold: a Canadian, Patrick Jenkins. And, of course, there's much more. See you there.

Byron Stone



Initiates Of The White God

By Steve Marsh

Level One	Niavette	Level Six	Mysteries Three
Level Two	Membership	Level Seven	Questing
Level Three	Fellowship	Level Eight	Mysteries Four
Level Four	Mysteries One	Level Nine	Mysteries Five
Level Five	Mysteries Two	—	Mysteries Six

Level One - Requires that the initiate abstain from a variety of foods (including pork, wine and other alcoholic beverages, and natural equivalent of same). In return, one is considered for membership in the group. Also +1 vs. poison.

Level Two - Requires that the initiate sacrifice 10% of all present (and future) wealth directly to the god (money just disappears) and that one do charitable works with the rest (may only keep half of remaining). In return one gains membership.

Level Three - Requires that one aid any lawful or neutral good in need. One's alignment becomes "good" and the initiate is +1 vs. Charms or Suggestions to be ungood.

Level Four - Is the step to the first mystery. This mystery is that there is no mystery but that all mysteries are but common knowledge in the proper context. The Nach Lan is preformed (similar to the Mythran baptism of blood only with water) and one gains the responsibility to aid those in distress (if aid is requested honestly and in a good and lawful cause by a good, it must be given without charge if it can be so given without slighting a greater cause currently in). One becomes +1 vs. all evil creatures (both to offense and defense).

Level Five - The second secret is given, namely that the legends that all believe are true. One is now fully named an initiate of the first circle. He thereby forfeits the right to tax when/if he builds a castle. More of note, he gains a -10% Experience Points penalty to progression. He becomes +4 against unnatural creatures (undead), gaining that ability in stages of +1 per 10 levels of undead slain after this level.

Level Six - The third secret and the second level of the mysteries. The initiate is given a secret name—his normal one, thus gaining another secret that is not a secret. At this level he has gone as far as most go. He is limited to a maximum of 10 magic items (including twit items) and must give his retainers (if any) full shares of all gained, as well as splitting evenly with even hirelings. Surrenders an additional four days a month in meditation. His wisdom goes up by one over a period of a year of such, and his save vs. Charm and Suggestion goes up to +3 over the same time.

Level Seven - At this level one undertakes a "quest". It will last for 7d4 months. In this period of time one serves "good" without pay or compensation, seeking a breakthrough. When the time period ends (and note that it is measured in terms of active time that is spent, and no compensation **includes no experience**) one gains a vision, so to speak. In this the initiate gains the stigmata of the White God. This grants the initiate a quantum (in Aleph Numbers) of energy against the prime (or first level) forces of hell (thus against demons or undead but not an evil wizard). In melee with same one is immune to them, inasmuch as one gains not a thing from treasure and uses no weapons. They must save at their worst save or be dispersed back to the darkness from which they came. All benefits are lost if the lair is looted by the initiate or he receives material from it.* He gains no experience from such melee (but the -10% experience points is lifted). May receive gratitude/shelter. (*Willingly/knowingly.)

Level Eight - The next level up in the mysteries. This level teaches the secret that good is good. They gain the ability to discern the hearts of men (that is, determine their good/evil and intent). However, they are discerned as they discern (thus one can always tell an initiate of the White God, even thru cloaks of Blending).

Level Nine - At this level one learns that ownership is bondage, that that which you control also controls you. Initiates at this level may own but one ring, one weapon and one suit of clothing (which can be either magical or not). In return their clothing is always clean and they always will find a place to sleep and food to eat as they need.

— Mysteries Level Six: The mystery of successful marriage. Here one is told that there is no mystery to such, we don't know what it takes save everything. This level of the mystery is required to fulfill the mystery and gives one the benefit of a union between the two (i.e. there is an empathic bond formed), in return they must give up outside attachments. This level gain be reached any time two initiates marry.

Anyway, a mystery of sorts: the lawful mystery religion that I use in my campaign. Initiates tend to be quite rare; I really don't understand why. Perhaps it's that it should simulate the equivalent of what would have happened in "real" life.

Read the mason and smith rules in the **Quick Quincy Gazette**. They are excellent for Dwarves after they have up and topped out. As a Dwarf goes up each level past his topping out point, he gains a level as a smith, a mason or a songsmith. Of course it takes a little bit longer than the **Quick Quincy Gazette** way to get to a level, but it is smoother in play balance. Also, for magic weapons and artifacts, add a cost factor and give spell points by the week instead of by the day and it is neatly play balanced. It also explains why Dwarves (which under the D&D rules cannot make magic items) have so many in their hoards.

Level Nine: an initiate may choose to have nothing magical at this level but merely a simple sword and a wedding band. If so (no magic) he gains the following advantages: His sword always hits (still 1d8 so it is barely equal to a magic one); Traps never spring on him; He is never surprised unless surprise is mutual (such initiates are often respected by those with good sense and often sought for advice, they also direct the efforts of those below them for short periods of time); Any weapon that hits does at most one point of damage (plus one point for each plus it has or for special abilities such as vorpelling or sharpness)/mana level. Same for magic.

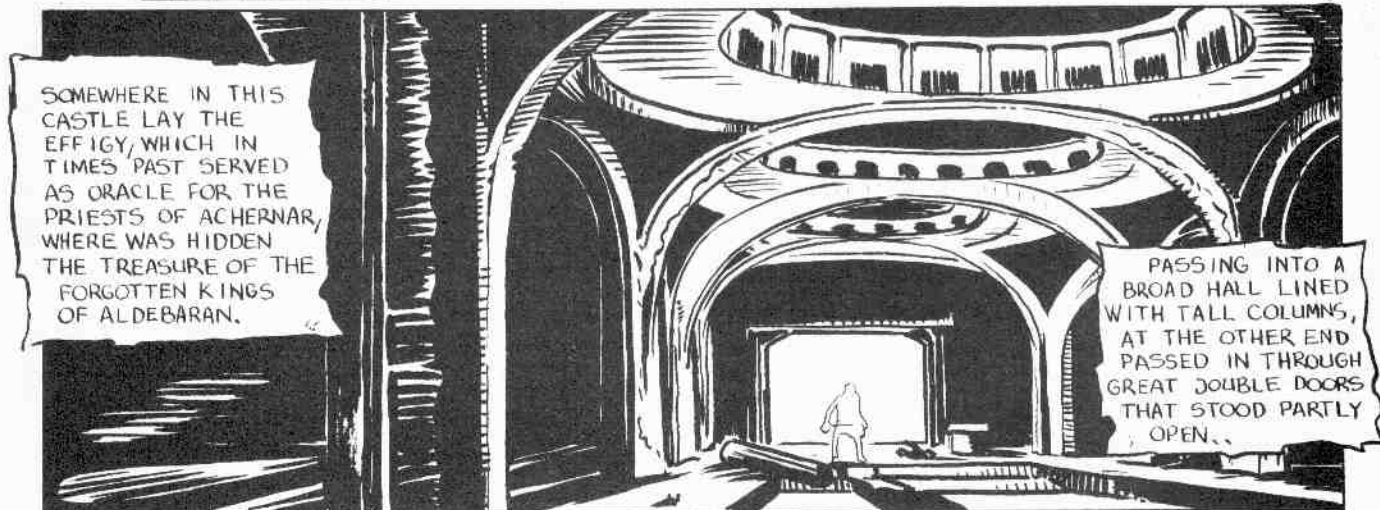


QUESTING

A-1128 79



AARON AROCHO



HE EMERGED INTO A VAST CHAMBER WHICH MUST HAVE SERVED AS A SANCTUARY FOR THE DEAD PRIESTS...



HOLD INTERLOPER, YOUR DEATH IS NIGH THEE!



... IT STILL SERVES AS SANCTUM FOR THE PRIESTS.



THE SAURIAN COILED ITS MASS ABOUT ITS PREY, AS GRINNING JAWS BARED ROWS OF DRIPPING TUSKS...



TIME FOR DINNER!

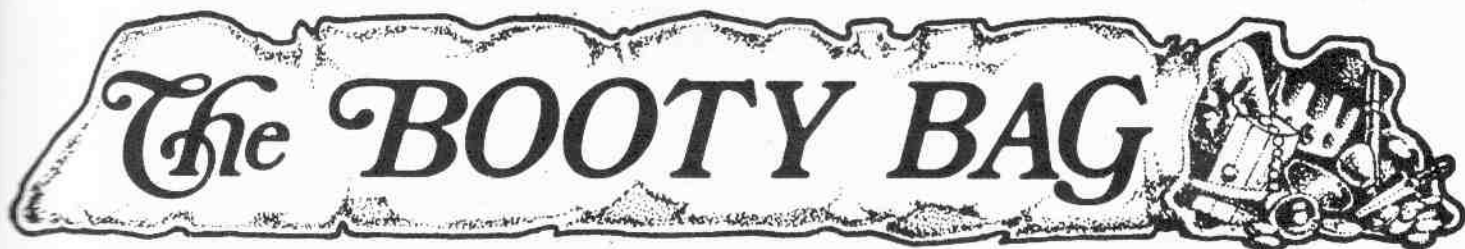
AAWWWH MOM!





19/ PATRICK
/79 JENKINS

The **BOOTY BAG**



The Lords and Devices of Dragonkind

By James M. Ward

The evil Lords of the city of Dragonkind had always been impressed with magic and all of its forms. These Lords were able to use the vast hoards of gold they collected to pay for magical devices especially tailored towards their needs. These devices were handed down from ruler to ruler, increasing the power of every Lord from generation to generation.

Dragon Trumpet

This magical device with many different types of dragons engraved in gold all over the brass horn simulates perfectly the enraged cry of a charging dragon. This sound has the effect of a fear spell on everyone in a 100 feet radius about the user even if those hearing it know it is the horn. The device is very fragile and will not function after being subjected to hard blows of any kind.

Dragon Engraving

A magical piece of artwork made out of Orichalcum in the form of a 12 inch by 8 inch piece of metal with a dragon type depicted on it. When a dimension door spell is used on this artifact the dragon shown appears and fights for the being casting the spell until the dragon dies or the fight ends. The dragon then disappears into the engraving. It serves only 3 times in this manner and will then come out with the spell and kill the caller. There is no way to tell how many times the dragon has been called.

Dragon Wand

This device appears to be a wand the color of the dragon type depicted at the top of the wand in the form of a dragon head. It has the ability to project the breath of an adult dragon from its tip when the user speaks an order in the dragon tongue of the

depicted dragon. There is a variable amount of charges averaging from 20-75.

Dragon Gland

This device appears to be a small hand sized bulb with 2 prongs coming from it. When this object is squeezed the prongs shoot forth the breathpower of the dragon it was taken from. This mummified gland is able to shoot 3 times and then must be recharged simply by using spells similar to the gland's power. These glands will not be harmed by their own powers, but are destroyed by the slightest touch from the other glands. The falling into a pit or striking accidentally of the gland by a weapon or arrow can set it off.

Dragon Belt of Change

This small belt has a figure one inch tall of every dragon type. When the wearer pulls one of these figures off the wearer instantly becomes that type of dragon. If the being is killed in this changed state when he returns in 20 melee turns he is in his normal form and will not show any damage sustained in the dragon form. While the being is in his dragon state he will not have any of his human abilities including the power of speech.

Dragon Shield of Defense

This 30 inch circular shield with the head of a black dragon emblazoned on its front behaves in much the same manner as a dancing sword except on the defense. The wearer uses it for 2 melee turns, and then throws it into the air, and it gives the owner an armor class of -3 for three melee turns, then returning to his or her hand for 2 more melee turns. (It would seem handy with a bastard sword. -Ed.)

* DUNGEON MASTER/REFEREE SIGN-UP SHEET *

If you would like to be a part of the operation of the 1980 PACIFICON CONVENTION by running an "Official" Fantasy Role-Playing game at the convention, please fill out the form below, and mail it to:

PACIFICON - P.O. Box 5833 - San Jose, California 95150

Persons running "Official" games will receive **Free Admission** to the **1980 PACIFICON Convention**, and may, if they wish, submit their Dungeon (*Campaign, Scenerio, etc.*) to the Fantasy Chairman (*in manuscript form*). These submitted manuscripts will be forwarded to **JUDGES GUILD**, where they will be inspected, edited, & approved for publication by **JUDGES GUILD** in a "Collector's Edition" series of the **1980 PACIFICON Convention**. The Fantasy Chairman has had several manuscripts published already, and will work with those persons who request it, to insure that their manuscripts are in the proper format to be submitted for approval & publication. It should be noted that most copywrite holders (*TSR, Flying Buffalo, GDW, etc.*) have a required format which they request manuscripts to be in. They also have the **final say** on approving publications which use their copywrite material.

NAME _____ Phone () _____

ADDRESS _____ Age _____

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Games you can D.M. (*Referee*) _____

Game(s) you would like to D.M. (*Referee*) at PACIFICON _____

Fill out the information requested below:

- 1) Levels of characters to be used in your game (if applicable). _____
- 2) Number of players. _____ Number of characters per player. _____
- 3) Hours of running time (*most should be between 4 - 8 hours*). _____
- 4) Approximate "expected" player character kill ratio (*as a percentage*). _____
- 5) Circle the type of game you will be running: a) D. & D. b) A. D. & D. c) Runequest
d) Tunnels & Trolls e) Fantasy Trip (Melee/Wizard) f) Traveller g) Starships & Spacemen
h) Empire of the Petal Throne i) Bunnies & Burroughs j) Gamma World k) Boot Hill
l) Other (*describe*) _____

Circle the appropriate:

P = Pure game, follows the publishers rules to a 90%+ accuracy.

V = Variant, personal variations (accuracy 75%+).

B = Base, personal modificarions, generally uses the rules as a starting base only (accuracy 50%+).

G = General, a personally developed game that generally follows the format of an existing game system.

O = Original, a personally developed game that follows no existing game system.

In a few words, describe your game and how you D.M. it. _____

If possible, I would like to participate in one of your games prior to the convention. This will enable me to give a more accurate description of you and your game for the fliers we will be printing up. Please put down when you usually run your games, so I can try to schedule this, if possible.

---Thank You

Michael Mayeau - Fantasy Tournament Chairman



The Arcane Elders



BY J. MARK HENDRICKS



n the way up to his study, Rohcyl passed by the cleric, Tar-ran.

"How are the men?" asked the mage.

"Resting, m'lord," replied Tar-ran in a voice tinged with disfavor, yet shrouded in a slight smile. Still, Rohcyl was quick to catch it.

"Thank you. Let me know if there is anything you need," he returned and swiftly strode on up the stairs. *'I must be careful of him'*, he thought as he crossed the threshold to his study. Quickly gathering up his writing utensils and paper, he returned to his already waiting friends.

"Let's go," he said, heading for the door. Both nodded, but said nothing and fell in behind him. Back out in the courtyard, Rohcyl asked for three volunteers to go and hold the torches for them. Nobody responded at first; every one was too busy feeding their faces and drinking Rohcyl's good ale. Finally, Melkor assigned some men to accompany them down into the crypts for the last time. The entire project took only three hours or so and Rohcyl was most pleased with the results.

"Excellent, excellent work," he said, almost to himself as he looked over Ralph and Lute's copies. "These will do just fine. Thank you very much."

Once back at the keep, Rohcyl gave each of the three men five gold pieces.

"For your trouble," he added with a smile as they headed out to show off their newly acquired coins to those not so fortunate as to have been volunteered.

"At that price, you'll have no trouble getting help when you need it," chirped the halfling.

"Ha!" scoffed the bard. "No need to worry about them stealing this boy's treasure, he's going to give it away!"

"Not really, friend Lute," replied Rohcyl. "Let's just say I'm insuring the men's good will. Eventually it will sink through to them that they

are being held here. . . .at my command. Food and ale alone will not win them over, you must steal their very heart," and so saying he patted the gold purse at his side. Lute and Ralph laughed.

"Indeed," replied Lute with a courtly bow. "I stand corrected."

"Again gentlemen, my thanks. And now, if there is nothing else, I must retire. It has been a long day."

"I believe I, too, shall go to bed," added the halfling.

"And I," yawned the bard.

The next day broke over the hills sunny and warm. Melkor, once aroused by Rohcyl, set about organizing a grave digging crew. The burial detail the day before had only time to gather the bodies and prepare them for entombment. Again, in the midst of his coming and going, Rohcyl encountered the cleric.

"How are the men today, Tar-ran?" he asked politely.

"Well, m'lord."

"Good!" he replied. "Let me know if you need anything," Rohcyl started to go.

"M'lord. When do you wish me to offer sacrifice for your victory, so graciously given to you by the gods, and for the souls of the dead?"

"Sacrifice?!" shouted Rohcyl, turning to Tar-ran in anger, his mind racing across scenes of horror, agony, bloodshed and death. Memories of the Druid, Theoran and his captive people, the dark Elves and their captain flooded his mind in an instant, bringing with them their deep-seated emotions. "No sacrifices!" he repeated sternly, struggling to retain control of his passions.

Tar-ran's eyes grew wide in astonishment. "Blasphemer!" he cried in open contempt. "You would deprive the gods of their rightful due? Unrighteous fool, do you not know that is the gods who grant you your power?" His voice began to grow wild with rage.

Rohcyl mastered himself and faced Tar-ran calmly. "What was done yesterday was done by the might of men, not your gods. And as for my powers, I owe allegiance to no one for them except their **rightful** givers. . . .the Arcane Elders! But perhaps you are right, if the men so desire, make a sacrifice **outside** the keep for your fallen comrades, but make no sacrifices for me. I need not the favor of your gods." And so saying he turned again and walked away.

"They shall strike you down for your insolence," Tar-ran shouted after him, but Rohcyl paid him no heed. *He must die,* thought the cleric.

By noon everything had been prepared for sealing the crypts off and burying the dead fighters. Rohcyl, again clothed in robe and bright tunic, and carrying his staff, took Ralph, Lute and Melkor down into the keep entrance to the crypts. Three-fourths of the way to the bottom, Rohcyl had the others stand back with the torches. He aimed his staff at the tunnel ceiling twenty yards farther down. CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! Three lightning bolts shot out of the end of the staff in quick succession, collapsing the ceiling over a long stretch of the tunnel. Choking and gasping from the dust and smoke, but definitely impressed by Rohcyl's abilities, they all headed back up to the surface. Halfway between the closed-off shaft and the entrance, Rohcyl had Ralph mark an 'X' on the wall with his torch.

"This is where the new shaft will start."

Once back in the courtyard, all the men were gathered together and, with Rohcyl and Lute at the head, led towards the forest entrance of the crypts. Going three abreast down the stairs, all the men went into the crypts to see the bodies of their enemies destroyed. Rohcyl, Lute, Ralph and Melkor stood at the head of the group. Once again Rohcyl leveled his staff at its target. Whoosh-Boom! Whoosh - Boom! Whoosh - Boom! In seconds the heaped pile of Orc bodies in the corner of the main hallway began crackling and popping as the flames licked their way up the mountain of corpses.

The heat given off from the fireballs would soon make the area unbearably hot. Rohcyl turned his back on the burning mass behind him and motioned everyone up the stairs to the first landing. This entrance to the crypts, unlike the other, had two landing between the surface and the tombs marking the one-third and two-thirds of the distance points. Once everyone had gathered at the first landing up from the crypt entrance, for it was a large landing, he spoke to his men.

"After I seal off these crypts we will attend to our dead. The cleric will hold religious services for them for all who wish to attend. Now heed this

warning. . . .Thus shall it be to my enemies!" And with one, swift, deft movement Rohcyl turned and lowered the staff down towards the crypts. Everyone threw their hands to their eyes as the searing light from a lone lightning bolt sprang forth from the staff and exploded down in the darkness. Small wafts of smoke and dust slowly began to roll up from the depths beneath them.

"But so you will not think me a child in need of this staff in order to stand up. . . ." He handed it to Lute. "All of you, ascend to the next landing, you who value your lives." Melkor, Ralph and Lute led the men up the stairs. Rohcyl remained alone to work his spell. The men all remained silent once they had gained the landing, each wondering what the youth would do. Suddenly the entire floor began to quiver and rumble, the walls began to crack from the top down in patterns like lightning bolts splitting the night sky. Suddenly a great explosion rocked the entire room. Many of the men began to charge for the stairs.

"Hold! Cowards and vermin. Hold I say!" the voice of Melkor roared over the noise from below. Ingrained fear held the men in suspension. The rumblings ceased. The noise abated. Once again dust and smoke drifted up into the room. None dare say the thought on everyone's mind. *'Where was the young wizard? Had he died in the explosion? Perhaps he had over extended himself.'* They waited for a moment, two, then they heard a noise from the tunnel. Steps upon stone. It was Rohcyl ascending to the landing. Silently he mounted the landing and faced the men. Lute approached him with his staff. He returned it to the mage.

"For those that doubt my strength," he said as his eyes searched the crowd, "go down and see for yourselves," he found who he looked for, "what I and the Elders Arcane have wrought." His face grew stern, The cleric looked away. "Let us bury our dead. Tomorrow we must begin a new thing."

The burial was simple and quick. Melkor said a few words of remembrance for the fallen and the sod was piled in upon them. Tar-ran made a sacrifice, but only three joined with him. After the day's exhibition, it was no longer the gods which Melkor's men revered, though they had revered them precious little before. Now their allegiance, if not at least their respect, was wholly turned to the young Wizard and his Arcane Elders. That night at dinner, Rohcyl talked with Melkor and his two friends of the coming days.

"Then you will stay with me, my friends?" asked the youth.

"Though the woods and fields are our home,

and adventures our bread and meat, I do not see how I can refuse, and I'm sure I speak for the halfling." answered Lute.

"Good!" said Rohcyl heartily. "I believe that though we shall be at home, we shall have adventures enough."

They all laughed. Rohcyl was pleased. With Ralph and Lute as his right hand men, it would be much easier to accomplish the tasks he had set for himself and the men. For a while he had thought they would soon be going. Indeed, they were no longer bound by their oath to stick with the young mage until he come into his inheritance, for he had. Now, it was the bond of friendship which held them there. For, though he had led them into some tight spots, they had always managed to get out of them, and now they were anxious to see how things would go with Melkor and his men there. He was glad that they had accepted his offer. After dinner, Rohcyl had Melkor bring forth the men he had requested to see: the two-blood, Mongo, and the three Dwarves. Lute, Melkor and Ralph remained in the room with them. First he approached Mongo.

"Mongo, would you rather dig or cut trees?" asked Rohcyl.

"Rather cut Orcs..." he said with a broad grin.

"But if you couldn't cut Orcs...." began Rohcyl.

"Cut Hobgoblins!" he interrupted with glee.

"I told you sir," whispered Melkor, "he's a bit dense!"

"Ah, yes! I remember now, must have been thinking of something else." Lute and Ralph stared at each other in puzzlement. "Thank you, Mongo, that will be all. Your uncle will tell you what to do tomorrow morning. You may go."

"Wonder what that was about?" whispered Lute.

"I'd like to know that myself," replied the halfling in a muffled tone.

Next Rohcyl faced the three Dwarves.

"What are your names?"

"Dolin, Dalin and Bolin," replied the stockiest of the three. "Dolin and Dalin are cousins of mine. We are exiles from the domain of King Balan in the Moonstorm Mountains."

"I see," said Rohcyl thoughtfully. "I assume your trained in forgeworks." They nodded. "Good. I have tasks for you all. Special tasks that require your special talents. I will reward you for your work, but see that you tell not a soul, or you shall forfeit all." They each bowed low.

"Tomorrow we will start to build a fair-

sized two-level dungeon beneath this keep, using the two entrances already in existence. You will head up that task, with Ralph to guide you in my wishes. Also, we will set up a new and better forge from the one in the stable so that we can make necessary items not only for the dungeon, but for the men. We can, however, discuss that later. Thank you. You may go now also." Again they bowed low and took their departure. Finally, he faced the two-blood.

"Let me see, you're Elebor, are you not?"

"Yes, m'lord," he replied with a nod.

"Mother a half-Elven I believe..." Again he nodded. "Profession?"

"Hurmphh...er...ah...thief, sir," he finally managed to get out. Melkor scoffed.

"Didn't learn it from me, sir," said Melkor defiantly. "I've me honor to uphold, y'know." Elebor blushed. Ralph and Lute began to chuckle.

"I always thought that there was no honor among thieves," replied Rohcyl with a grin. "As I was saying...your profession, or attempted profession is that of thief. How would you like to change professions?" The thief's eyes grew wide.

"To what sir?" he inquired anxiously.

"What he means, my good man, is, 'Can you sing?'" interrupted the bard.

"Some..." answered Elebor, unsure of the conversation's direction.

"And play an instrument?" continued Lute.

"Why yes, my mother taught me. She was very good." Slowly the light began to dawn upon him.

"Read and write, also, do you?" asked the bard.

"Yes! And musical notation too!" he added in a frenzied rush.

"Done!" cried Lute. "Tomorrow you start as my apprentice. Bright and early. I only pray you were taught a good many Elven songs in your day and that you haven't forgotten them!"

"I haven't..." he sputtered. "I mean I have, but I haven't. I mean I was, but I didn't. I mean..."

"Nevermind," said Lute cutting him off. "Tomorrow we shall see."

Elebor joyfully strode back out to the courtyard to tell his companions the good news.

"Now if only I had an apprentice for myself, we'd be all set," lamented Rohcyl in the dining hall. Suddenly Melkor slapped his forehead.

"Strike me for a forgetful old dolt. One of my men has a younger brother who studied with a wizard in the city of Var-Tanon for four years, but the old man died, so the boy came home. Scarcely fifteen summers, but sharp as a whip.

Brother is his only family, so he's been with us for the last two months."

"Excellent!" replied Rohcyl jubilantly. "Send him to me the first thing in the morning. Now, I fear I must retire. It was no small spell I used to seal off the crypts today. It has wearied me beyond belief. Good night."

"Good night, m'lord. I shall send the boy to you after breakfast," said Melkor as he left.

"Wait for us," said Lute as he and Ralph followed after young Rohcyl. "For once I would like to retire early myself."

"Me too," chirped the halfling.

Once on the second floor, they checked on the wounded men. They were all healing nicely. In fact, five of them would be up and around in

a day or two, or so Tar-ran said. Seeing his friends to their room, Rohcyl headed up the stairs to his own rooms. Having given his name to insure his safety, he stopped by the golem to gaze at the slumbering sentinel. Sensing a presence he suddenly turned to face Tar-ran, eyes wild with rage and hate.

"Blasphemer!" he cried, revealing a hitherto concealed dagger which he proceeded to plunge between Rohcyl's ribs. The young mage collapsed and fell unconscious. Thus he did not hear Tar-ran offer his sacrifice to the gods as he raised his hand for the final, fatal strike. Nor did he see the blind eyes that guided the stone hands around Tar-ran's frail, mortal body in defiance of the gods.

—To be continued



PRESS RELEASE

ORLANDO, FL: Randall C. Reed has announced his resignation as Vice-President of Research and Design for the Avalon Hill Game Company, effective October 29, 1979. He leaves Avalon Hill after a seven-year tenure to pursue a career as a private simulations consultant. As one of his first clients, Reed has been retained as a consultant to the U.S. Marine Corps to develop a family of manual simulation games that will become the foundation of future Marine Corps wargame training.

Citing the changing structure of the industry and the uncertainty of long-term employment, Reed leaves the ranks of the professional staff designers because "there has been an abrupt and irreversible trend away from full-time design staffs. The wave of the future belongs to the free-lance designers. Recent events have witnessed the total neutralization of one of the big staffs and the same fate may be just around the corner for the other one." Additionally, he points to the basic conflict of interest between "quality-oriented designers and profit-oriented publishers. Both are vital to the hobby, but incompatible under the same roof. Only an independent designer can guarantee the eventual quality of his design."

Randy's past design and development credits for Avalon Hill have included *Richthofen's War* (1973), *Chancellorsville* (1974), *Panzer Leader* (1974), *Tobruk* (1975), *Starship Troopers* (1976), *Arab-Israeli Wars* (1977), and *Air Assault On Crete* (1978). Reed will continue as a simulations consultant and free-lance designer after his three-to-four-year contract with the Marine Corps in Orlando. He is currently finishing his *The Longest Day* design under contract to Avalon Hill. He also continues as president of the Game Designers' Guild, the professional association for designers, developers, editors and reviewers. Tentative plans call for an announcement this coming spring, outlining plans for a game design editing/marketing service for freelance designers attempting to sell their designs. More specific announcements will be forthcoming.



Under the Current: Happenings

As part of our function as a national convention clearing house for the Game Manufacturers' Association, and as a service to our readers, we provide current convention listings in all our magazines. Due to space limitations we list only name, type and date of the con, and an address to write to for more information. Convention planners are asked to send this information to us at least eight months in advance of their planned date; we will be happy to print notice of any SF & F convention anywhere in the world. If changes come up please notify us as soon as possible. Dealers and convention organizers are also welcome to call Chuck Anshell here for more information on these events. Abbreviations for types of conventions are: G=Gaming; SF=Science Fiction; F=Fantasy; ST=Star Trek; C=Comics.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CHATTACON 5 (SF) Jan 4-6
Chattacon
PO Box 21173
Chattanooga, TN 37421 | BOSKLONE (SF) Feb 15-17
NESFA
Box G, MIT Branch PO
Cambridge, MA 02139 | WISCON 4 (SF) Mar 7-9
SF3
Box 1624
Madison, WI 53701 |
| HEXACON II Jan 11-13
Bruce & Flo Newrock
Box 270-A RD 2
Flemington, NJ 08822 | STONE HILL LAUNCH 1 Feb 16
Ann Morris
1522 Lovers' Lane
Riverview, FL 33569 | HALCON 3 (SF) Mar 7-9
The Halcon SF Society
PO Box 3174 South
Halifax, NS, Canada B3J 3H5 |
| WINTER WAR VII (G) Jan 18-20
Alan B. Conrad
2215 S. First, No. 103
Champaign, IL 61820 | EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY PARTY CON (G) Feb 16
Holiday Inn
R. Haggerty
525 Middlebury
Elkhart, IN 46514
219-293-4398 | LUNACON '80 (SF) Mar 14-16
Lunacon '80
c/o Walter R. Cole
1171 E. 8th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11230 |
| CONFUSION (SF) Jan 18-20
Ann Arbor SF Association
Karen Persello
1115 Granger
Ann Arbor, MI 48104 | DUNDRACON V (SF & F) Feb 16-18
DunDraCon V
386 Alcatraz
Oakland, CA 94618 | MIDWESTERCON 1 (SF) Mar 14-16
Frank Russell
50 Capri Dr.
Florissant, MO 63033 |
| ORCON (G) Jan 18-20
University Activities Center
The Armchair Strategists' Club
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634 | PENULTICON 3 (SF) Feb 22-24
Penulticon 3
Box 11545
Denver, CO 80211 | UPPERSOUTHCLAVE 10 (SF) Mar 14-16
Upper South Clave 10
PO Box 8423
Louisville, KY 40208 |
| WARCON '80 (G) Feb 8-10
GROMETS
Student Programs Office
PO Box 5718
College Station, TX 77844 | HOOSIER CON I (SF) Feb 29-Mar 1
Lenny Kush
c/o Michiana SF Society
PO Box 354
Mishawaka, IN 46544 | MON CON IV Mar 14-16
Mon Con IV
Mountainlair Student
Organization Wing
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26505 |
| GENCON SOUTH (G) Feb 15-17
Cowford Dragons
Northeast Florida Wargaming Assn.
5333 Santa Monica Blvd. N.
Jacksonville, FL 32207 | 2nd ANNUAL TEXAS OPEN (G) Feb 29-Mar 2
Veterans of Simulated Wars
Dept. of Military Science
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78712 | COAST CON 80 (SF) Mar 14-16
Coast Con 80
Box 6025
Biloxi, MS 39532 |

*** OOPS! ***

The information on these conventions came in too late to be put in chronological order.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| URCON II (SF) Apr 5
URCon II
PO Box 6647
Rochester, NY 14627 | PHRINGECON (G, SF, C) Jul 11-13
PhringeCon
PO Box 1072
Phoenix, AZ 85001 | AQUACON (SF) Feb 12-15, '81
Aquacon
PO Box 815
Brea, CA 92691 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

SIMCON II (G) Mar 22-23 SimCon II Box 5142 River Station Rochester, NY 14627	LEPRECON VI May 2-4 Leprecon IV 3112 N. 26th Pl. Phoenix, AZ 85016	ORIGINS '80 (G) Jun 27-29 Origins 293 Walchaerts Ct. Newtown Square, PA 19073
NOVACON 5 (SF & G) March (write for exact date) Ree Moorhead Prueks 2823 Patrick Henry Dr., Apt. 110 Pontiac, MI 48057	CANGAMES '80 (G) May 16-19 CanGames '80 201-360 Dundas St. Vanier, ON, Canada K1L 7W7 613-745-2073	ARCHON 4 (SF) Jul 11-13 Archon 4 Box 15852 Overland, MO 63114
TRISTATE 2 Mar 28-30 Wanna Play? 5923 Hamilton Cincinnati, OH 45224	GENGHIS CON II (G) May 23-25 Denver Gamers' Association 2527 Gaylord St. Denver, CO 80205	OKON '80 (SF) Jul 19-20 Okon PO Box 4229 Tulsa, OK 74104
SPRING REVEL (G) Mar 29-30 TSR Hobbies, Inc. PO Box 756 Lake Geneva, WI 53147	WHATCON II (SF) May 23-25 Whatcon PO Box 2802 Station A Champaign, IL 61820	CWA CON Aug 1-3 CWA Con 3605 Bobolink Dr. Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
GAMEFAIR V (G) April (write for exact date) SimGameClub Student Activities Office Illinois Central College East Peoria, IL 61615	MICHICON IX (G) Jun 6-8 includes DipCon '80 Metro Detroit Gamers PO Box 787 Troy, MI 48099	GEN CON XIII (G) Aug 21-24 Joe Orłowski TSR Hobbies PO Box 756 Lake Geneva, WI 53147
WERECON II (G) Apr 11-12 Werecon II Box 69, Student Center Bldg. Wayne State University Detroit, MI 48202	X-CON 4 (SF) Jun 6-8 X-Con 6107 W. Lisbon Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53210 414-351-0991	NOREASTCON TWO (Worldcon 38) Aug 29-Sep 1 NorEastCon Two Box 46 MIT Branch Post Office Cambridge, MA 02139
MARCON XV (SF) May 2-4 MarCon PO Box 2583 Columbus, OH 43216	MACC COMPUTERFEST '80 Jun 20-22 Jim Crowley 4008 Rickenbacker Ave. Columbus, OH 43213 614-239-9931	WINDYCON VII (SF) Oct 10-12 Windycon PO Box 2572 Chicago, IL 60690
KUBLAI KHANATE (SF) May 2-4 K. Moore 647 Devon Dr. Nashville, TN 37220		CONCLAVE 5 Oct 31-Nov 2 Waldo and Magic, Inc. PO Box 444 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

CONVENTION CLEARING HOUSE BEING SET UP

In conjunction with Metro Detroit Gamers and Michigan Gamers' Association, Chuck Anshell is in the process of setting up a convention clearing house. This clearing house will serve several functions and in order to work smoothly, it is necessary to have the cooperation of fans, dealers and convention promoters. If you are putting on or planning a convention for wargamers, Star Trek, science-fiction & fantasy fandom, or a computer con of interest to SF&F fans and/or gamers, please send information on the con to Chuck Anshell c/o Judges Guild. Required information includes dates, con name and type, hotel (if applicable, with rates, address and phone), guests-of-honor, registration fees, whom to contact for more info (general), dealer costs and contact, art show costs and contact, etc. Any promoter, dealer or fan may send in this info. If you are planning a con, you may call Chuck at (217) 422-1930 (days) or 423-5698 (night) and he will be able to tell you what other cons are already scheduled and help you in other ways, too. Dealers may also call Chuck to find out about cons they are interested in. Listings of cons for dealers, magazine editors and fans will be available once he gets the system up on computer (hopefully in January) at a small fee. Fans are requested to NOT phone in info (please mail it in) and NOT call requesting con listings. This would take up too much time from my work. Dealers and promoters should feel free to use the call-up privilege.

— Chuck Anshell

A Magic Compendium

By Scott Fordyce



Scott Fordyce sent four articles to us a long time ago (before March 1979). Three of them concern role-playing magic; the fourth is on adjusted dexterity and is printed elsewhere in this issue, but the magic articles seem to work out best when read together, so we've printed them together.

The first, "A Gripe Letter On Magic-Users," concerns the campaign background of magic-users. "Some Comments On a Spell System" presents a spell-point system, and "The Common Man's Magic" involves the use of runes, or "symbols" when casting magic spells.

A Gripe Letter On Magic-Users

I'm getting sick and tired of people saying Magic Users are too powerful. Of course Magic Users are powerful; they should be.

The trouble with D&D is that everything is designed for a campaign type situation where you start just out of puberty with your family's life savings and your father's old war heirlooms and head out to the nearest town in search of treasure and adventure. The thing most people forget about is that you just don't all of the sudden form a party and, zap you are at a dungeon knocking at the gates. How did you get there? Where did you come from? Where did you get your training? Those are the questions no one seems to consider, especially the last one.

Now for some statistics: In a normal large campaign, one out of every 1000 people will see some type of military service. Most of these will be a one-time affair or being in the local militia. One out of every 500,000 people would qualify to be a player character. Out of these, one out of 1000 will be able to use a higher form of magic than normal people. Of those player characters, maybe

one out of 5000 will be of a non-human race, if the campaign is based on human dominance rather than some other race.

Now for some particulars, most Magic Users will spend three quarters of their life researching and keeping the public favorable to themselves and not adventuring around. Also how and where did they get their training? And unless they had a rich family, where did the money come from for their training? Did they sign a pact of servitude or did they agree to donate a certain percentage of their future earnings to their teacher or what?

Clerics are a slightly different story but they still have the problem of what religion they are, what do they do to people of another religion, and where did they receive their teachings. The dream of every Cleric is to have their own church and most should be able to do that at the third level.

May these questions start some Judges thinking of how to control their games rather than complain about the way they do things according to other people.

Some Comments On A Spell System

Another point of interest is spells. One method is that you can only memorize so many spells that can only be used once, and then there is the manna system that allows you to memorize so many spells but you can use them until you run out of manna points.

Of these two systems I prefer the manna system for a couple of reasons:

- 1) The manna system gives magic using types a little more power at lower levels and a little less at higher levels. Example: A Magic User under the memorize system gets only one spell at first level and when he uses it up, he's in trouble until he can sit down and memorize a new one, but, under the manna system, the Magic User only has to memorize the spell once and he can use it for as long as he has manna points to throw it. At higher levels, say the 16th, the manna system is at a little disadvantage because the Magic User who uses the memorize system would be able to use all of his 33 memorized spells but the Magic User using the manna system might be able to throw only five before his manna points were used up if he wasn't careful.

(The manna system I use is the one where to find out how many manna points you have is to add up your Strength, Constitution, and Prime Requisite and divide the total by three and then multiply it by your present level. Now you have your manna points. To determine how much a spell will cost you, take the level you are about to throw and square it (level x level), then add the level per: Hit Dice (as in fire ball or lightning bolt); body (as in contact higher plane). This last part seems to compensate for the additional power needed to up power spells above the initial conjuration.)

- 2) With the manna system you can under-power a spell if need be. Example: you only need a 3 dice fire ball to fry one lonely Kobold, but you memorized a 50 dice fire ball under the memorize system. You're stuck, and if you throw it, someone in your

party will get fried in the process. What do you do? Then again under the manna system, all you do is to allow only enough manna into the spell for a 3 dice fire ball.

- 3) Manna points are regeneratable. In my system manna points are regeneratable at the rate of: Strength + Constitution + Prime Requisite for the first six hour of sleep; Constitution + Prime Requisite per additional hour of sleep or meditation; Prime Requisite per hour of resting (Example: walking in a garden, gazing at the stars, and other non-strenuous work), one per hour strenuous work (being in a dungeon, wander in a wilderness, on an expedition), zero per hour if any magic was thrown in that hour.
- 4) The ability to channel manna points into an offensive weapon. This is done by a beam type spell that is learned when the magic using person goes through their training. This is not considered a spell that has to be chosen but is the ability by which the Magic User can control their manna flow into spells. The way this works is that the user alots so many manna into the beam and then the normal to hit number is found for the creature as if in Armor Class 9. If you get a hit then, the creature gets its saving throw. The beam can only effect one creature per turn. If the creature makes his saving throw, the beam has no effect. If it doesn't make its saving throw, the monster takes as many points as manna points allotted into the beam. The saving throws to this beam are altered if the person throwing it is of a higher level than the creature it is attacking. The monster has to make its saving throw at minus [Magic user's level minus monster's level (hit dice)/4] to his die roll. This is very useful to a first level Cleric or a Cleric who doesn't have a magical weapon, when a monster attacks that can only be attacked by magical weapons, or when you want to kill something without damaging the things around it.

The Common Man's Magic

In a society as D&D suggests, that magic is more or less common place, why doesn't everyone have a slight magic ability. I mean through legends, the church, schooling, or by the village elders, someone, somewhere, should have taught the commoner some type of primitive magic at some time.

To compensate for this oversight by most D&D authorities, I let all intelligent races use a system called lore magic. The system I use is based on an article I read in the *White Dwarf* #2 and is based on the astrological signs and uses spells from many sources.

My system:

When rolling the statistics for a character, I also roll for the character's lore potential, which is done by rolling six 6-sided dice. This total is the character's lore potential energy. This energy is replenished every 48 hours and can be spent at the rate equal to the character's Intelligence a day. The symbols used in my system are:

Aries	♈
Taurus	♉
Gemini	♊
Cancer	♋
Leo	♌
Virgo	♍
Libra	♎
Scorpio	♏
Sagittarius	♐
Capricorn	♑
Aquarius	♒
Pisces	♓
Sun	☉
Moon	☾

Mercury	☿
Venus	♀
Earth	♁
Mars	♂
Jupiter	♃
Saturn	♄
Uranus	♅
Comet	♁
Universe	∞
Ankh	☩
And	∧
By	*
Conjoins	♁
In	∩
Not	~
Of	♁
Opposition	♁
Or	✓
Over	/
Quadrature	□
To	♀
Trine	▽
Under	↓
With	+

In my system, everyone is capable of knowing 1 die 4 lore spells at their start. A lore spell

consists of a string of symbols. To use lore magic first the symbols of a certain spell have to be in clear sight and in large print. (There is always 10% chance that when the symbols are made that they are wrong somehow. If this is so, the spell will fail. And if the symbols are made in a hurry or trying to do it in a combat type situation, the chance of the symbols being made wrong is uped to 70% - (2 x Dexterity) % of failing and if a 20% or less is rolled then the spell backfires. (Most people keep their most often used spell engraved on something or pre-drawn on a cloak, cape, backpack, etc. so they don't have to draw it in the middle of combat!) After the symbols are drawn then they must be recited; this has a 5 x (Wisdom + Intelligence)/2 percent chance of working. the complexity of the procedure is a little complexed, but what do you expect for commoners to think of.

The original spells may never exceed three energies per turn or try. The reason for this is because spells of a higher nature would normally not be available to commoners. Lore magic should never have any direct attack potential and should never have less than three symbols.

Some optional Rules:

A person may increase their Lore Potential by studying under a Lore Master for one month and increase his potential by one die 10 + 3; a Scribe for one month and increase one die 8; Scholar: one die 6; or Bard: one die 4. To learn a spell costing more than three per turn/try may hire a Scribe to research it taking one month per level the spell is. A Scholar will take one month per two levels, and a Lore Master, one week per level. A character may double the effect of a spell at half the cost in lore points if the sign the character was born under is used in the spell and they are in the part of the year that the sign is.

So far I have collected 26 lore spells and here they are for an example:



Name of Spell	Cost
1) Dancing Lights	1 energy/3 turns ∩∩↓σ
2) Detect Magic	1/try ∩∩∩∩
3) Hold Portal	1/try ≈∞∞
4) Shield	1/turn ∩~∩∩∩∩
5) Ventriloquism	1/try ∩∩∩∩∩∩
6) Detect Evil	1/try ∩∩∩∩∩∩
7) Bow Break	1/try ∩*~↓∩
8) Heat Metal	1/G.S. with turn ∩∩∩+∩
9) Light	2/3 turns ∩∩∩∩∩
10) Cure Light Wounds	2/try ∩∩∩/∩∩∩∩∩
11) Detect Invisible	2/try ∩∩∩∩∩∩∩
12) Knock	2/try ∩∩∩∩∩
13) Anti-Web Aura	2/turn ∩~∩∩∩∩
14) Faerie Fire	2/Mansize/turn ∩∩∩∩∩∩∩
15) Warp Wood	2/Arrowsize ∩∩∩∩∩∩
16) Tenser's Floating Disk	2/turn ∩/∩+∩
17) Pyrotechnics	3/try ~∩∩∩∩∩
18) Infravision	3/turn ∩∩∩∩∩
19) Find Traps	3/try ∩/∩
20) Web	4/try ∩∩∩∩∩∩
21) Rope Petrification	4/turn/100 feet ∩∩∩∩∩
22) Darkness	5/2 turns ∩~∩∩∩∩
23) Levitate	5/turn/20 feet ∩/∩
24) Resist Cold	5/turn ∩∩∩∩∩
25) Rope Trick	10/turn ∩∩∩
26) Rythons Release	30/try *∩∩∩/∩



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A New And Radically Different Combat System

By Bill Seligman

This is the third in a series of articles on an FRP gaming system different from any other offered thus far. The chief characteristic of this system is the amount of creativity that a player is now able to put into the creation and development of his or her character, a degree of originality not usually possible with fixed character classes, spell lists, and whatnot. The first article, "A New and Radically Different Magic System", appeared in *The Dungeoneer* #7, and the second, "A New and Radically Different Skills System", appeared in *The Dungeoneer* #10.

In this article, a combat system that will fit into the new modes of development introduced by the new magic and skills system will be given. There will be a description of character generation and advancement under this new system. Finally, I'm going to correct some of the errors, both grammatical and typographical, of the previous two articles. (I have a funny feeling that after this series is finished I'll have to write one more article containing nothing but corrections to all the previous articles and *their* corrections.)

Combat - How It's Done, And With What

In this system each weapon has a certain Attack Value, and each armor classification has a Defense Value. From now on, the Attack Value will be abbreviated AV, and the Defense Value will be abbreviated DV. The key point of this system is that, given any weapon of any design, an AV may be assigned to it, or given any armor of any type a DV may be assigned to it. This allows players to use either a standard set of weapons and

armor, or to design their own.

To understand all the ramifications of combat equipment design, the combat system must be understood first, so let's get to it. For the moment, let's just assume we have a player holding a weapon with a certain AV and wearing armor with a certain DV, the actual values being unimportant.

The total combat AV of the player is:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{AV of weapon} + \text{the value of player's Strength} \\ & \quad + \text{the player's Dexterity} \\ & \quad + \text{the player's Hit Points} \\ & \qquad \qquad \qquad = \text{Combat AV} \end{aligned}$$

The total combat DV of the player is:

$$\text{DV of armor} + \text{the player's Dexterity} = \text{Combat DV}$$

It may be that the set of characteristics you have your players roll for does not include Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. If so, use the characteristics your players use that are closest to those characteristics as described in the Skills article.

The exception to the above AV formula is when the weapon being used is a bow, crossbow, or similar type of missile weapon. Then one does not add the player's Strength into figuring out the total combat AV.

The characteristics of a player amplify or restrict aspects of combat and outfitting as well. For example, a player can only carry so much. All weights are figured in kilograms (I prefer to operate a metric dungeon, in anticipation of our nation's metricization).

You can carry, in kgs., up to:

- 2 * Strength
- 2.5 * Strength
- 3 * Strength
- 3.5 * Strength
- 4 * Strength
- 4.5 * Strength

and still move at:

- Full speed (36 meters per ten minutes)
- Half speed (18 meters per ten minutes)
- Quarter speed (9 meters per ten minutes)
- Slow Pace (3 meters per ten minutes)
- Standstill
- Standstill

and fight at:

- Normally
- Normally
- Normally
- 5 AV
- 10 AV
- 15 AV

The most one can move, in emergency situations, is 8 * Strength in kilograms, and after that one is incapacitated for the rest of the day.

Designing Weapons

There is also a Dexterity limit, which can be further modified if you are using exotic weapons. All weapons have a certain AV, but some exotic ones may also have Dexterity points associated with them. The Dexterity points are usually equal to the extra AV the weapon has that is caused by its exotic nature. The Dexterity limit is therefore defined in this manner:

Twice the player's Dexterity must be greater than or equal to AV of his/her weapon + DV of his/her armor $\times 2$ + Dexterity points of the weapon, if any.

Now, if this requirement is not met, the player cannot use any skills (except combat skills) or any spells. Naturally, if the player has no skills or spells, this restriction does not affect him or her. But, in addition, if the weapon they are using has Dexterity points associated with it, and the player does not meet the above restriction, then the player cannot use that weapon.

How is combat done? Nothing could be simpler. The DV of the defender is subtracted from the AV of the attacker. The result is taken as a percentage, and the Judge attempts to roll that percentage or less on percentile dice in order for the person to hit. If he/she does hit, the dice associated with the amount of damage the weapon does are rolled to see how many hit points the defender loses. Otherwise it is considered a miss.

For example, Fred the Fighter has an AV of 70. He is attacking an Orc with a DV of 30. $70 - 30 = 40$, so Fred has a 40% chance of hitting the Orc. (The AVs and DVs are, of course, the total combat AVs and DVs.)

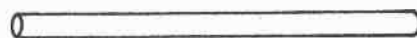
A Pause While We Define Our Terms

Before we proceed any further, let us make sure that we are both discussing the same type of system. In my system, the player's characteristics are rolled on 3D10. If you use 3D6 (= three six-sided dice) to roll your player's characteristics, you'll want to modify the AV and DV figures given below by .6. The hit dice are D10s as well.

The reason why I use 3D10 is that this system, by itself, used nothing but icosahedral or twenty-sided dice, used as five-sided, ten-sided, twenty-sided, or percentile dice. This makes it all the more cheaper to use this system, rather than the multi-sided multi-dice system that traditional D&D uses.

Normally, the players will not be designing their own weapons. But there will always be those individualists who'll want their own special type of sword or mace. In addition, if you want a certain type of weapon to be among the standard weapons available at the local blacksmith's shop, but it isn't in some other game's combat system, you will be able to design it yourself.

How do we start? Well, first we decide what we are making our weapon out of. In the system charts at the end of this article, there is a list of materials and their densities. Let's start off with a cylinder of steel. It says in the chart that a 10 centimeter in length by 5 centimeter in diameter cylinder of steel weighs 1.5 kilograms. I want a meter-long cylinder to start out with, and since a meter is 100 centimeters, a meter-long cylinder of steel 5 cm. in diameter would weigh 15 kilograms. It would look something like this:



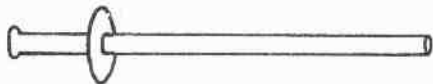
What is the cost of this cylinder? The rule I use for wood and steel, two common materials in my world, is that one kilogram of either substance costs one Silver Piece. (Important note: the main medium of exchange in my universe is the Silver Piece. It is equivalent to the Gold Piece in most other games. Since all the charts at the end of this article use Silver Pieces, so will I for now. But remember, if you adapt this system for your game that when I say Silver Piece it may very well mean Gold Piece for your system. Remember to give the players three dice of Silver Pieces, rather than three dice of Gold Pieces, when you generate characters if you decide to use everything from my system.)

So this cylinder costs 15 SP. What is the AV of the cylinder, as is? The formula is this—for every three kilograms of material, add 1 AV point for the weight of that item. (For system using 3D6 to generate characters, 5 kg to 1 AV point might be better.) Since the cylinder weighs 15 kg, the AV due to its weight, or its WAV (for Weight Attack Value) is 5 AV. If I went no further, the player would have a metal cylinder for a weapon, which would cost him/her 15 SP, would weigh 15 kg, and which would have 5 AV.

Now, I want to add edges to this cylinder. The first thing I do is add a hilt. For the purposes of this system, all hilts will be considered alike—a device to keep the opponents weapons from sliding down along your weapon and slicing at your hand.

A hilt costs 5 SP. Any weapon which is sharpened to more than $\frac{1}{4}$ its total length with the edge leading down to where the hand grasps the weapon requires a hilt, or the player must subtract 5 from his/her total combat DV.

With a hilt, what we've got looks like this:

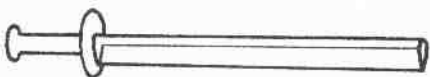


Now the thing costs 20 SP. The weight of the hilt is negligible, so it still weighs 15 kg. The AV is still 5 AV.

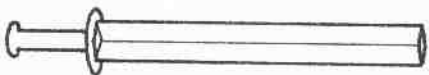
I'm going to tell the blacksmith to add an edge to one side of the cylinder. How does this affect the AV? It adds the WAV of the weapon on to the final AV of the weapon, in proportion to the amount of the weapon sharpened. This means that if I sharpen all of one side of the cylinder, I add 5 AV to the final AV of the weapon, which already includes the WAV, so the total AV of the weapon would be 10 AV. If I sharpened only $\frac{1}{2}$ the side, the AV added would be only 2.5, which would be rounded up to 3 AV + 5 WAV = 8 final AV.

How much does sharpening cost? One SP for every AV point added on to the final AV of the weapon. Since I am deciding to sharpen the entire side of the cylinder, and this adds 5 AV to the final AV, this also adds 5 SP to the cost, which is now 25 SP.

So our cylinder is sharpened on one side. Its cost is 25 SP, its AV is 10, and the weight lost by sharpening is negligible, so its weight is still 15 kg. If I were to take the weapon now, that would be its characteristics, and it would look like this:



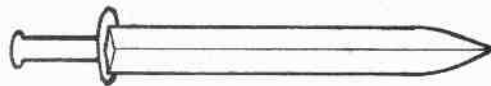
Let's add another edge on the other side of the cylinder. Like the first edge, it adds 5 to the final AV, and 5 SP to the cost, giving us a weapon costing 30 SP, having an AV of 15, and a weight of 15 kgs, looking like this:



To top things off, let's add a point to the tip of the weapon. A point adds $\frac{1}{2}$ the WAV of the portion of the weapon being pointed, but in this case we can consider the entire weapon "taking advantage" of the point. (In the case of weapons shaped like tridents, for example, the entire weapon does not "take advantage" of the existence

of any one point.) Like an edge, a point costs in SP the AV added onto the final AV by the existence of the point. Since the WAV of the weapon is 5, a point adds 2.5 AV, rounded up to 3, and costs 2.5 SP, again rounded up to 3 SP.

So the final cost, because I'm not adding any more to the weapon, is 33 SP, the final weight is 15 kgs, and the final AV is 18, and the weapon looks like this:



A player can and will name his/her weapon anything he/she wants to, but since I'm sort of weird I'm going to call this hilted, double-edged, pointed cylinder of steel a "sword". Now, that wasn't too complicated, was it?

Now, it is obvious that you can take the above method and apply it to an entire class of weapon—daggers, dirks, cutlasses, sabers, broadswords, falchions, rapiers, and the like. But it is not exhaustive. Let us now take a look at the class of weapon which is mace-like, or club-like.

First of all, with a club-like weapon we obviously do not need any sort of hilt. (We shall assume the cost of a minor handgrip, if desired, to be negligible.) Let's design a nice, steel mace. We start with the handle—a cylinder of steel 60 centimeters long. It weighs 9 kgs, (since it consists of 6 of those 10 cm by 5 cm diameter cylinders from the materials chart), so by itself, we have a cylinder-club that costs 9 SP, has an AV of 3, and weighs 9 kg. It looks like this:



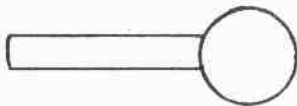
Now, let's stick a ball of steel on the end of this cylinder. Somewhat arbitrarily, I decide I want a weight of 5 kilograms, and I want it to be spherical—personal preference. Now, in the materials chart, it says steel is 7.5 grams/cubic centimeters. (It also says this in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which is where I got the metal and wood densities from.) For a 5 kg or a 5000 gram weight, this implies the sphere has a volume of 667 cubic centimeters.

I'll spare you the calculation, since it simply depends on knowing that the volume of a sphere is $\frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$ (and if you are going to be designing weapons, you'd better know your junior high school geometry formulae) but the radius of the sphere is about 5.45 centimeters.

Well, since the sphere is 5 kgs in weight, its own Weight Attack Value is 1.6, rounded up to

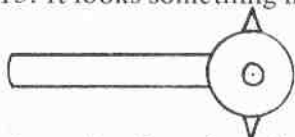
2. Its cost is 5 SP. But how does the leverage factor work in with the cylinder behind it? The Leverage effect is as follows: multiply the AV of the weight, before it has been modified by spikes and edges and such, by the length of the weapon behind the weight, in centimeters, divided by 20.

In our case, the length of the cylinder behind the weight is 60 cm, so the multiplier is $60/20 = 3$. The WAV of the weight is 2, so $2 \times 3 = 6$. The AV of the cylinder itself is then added in, so 3 for the cylinder plus 6 for the sphere is 9 AV total. The cost is 14 SP, and the weight is 14 kg as well. The weapon looks like this:

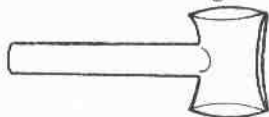


This weapon is OK as is, but it can be modified further in two ways—first, one could add spikes to the sphere, making it a traditional mace instead of a metal club. Or, one could add edges to the sphere, making it a metal axe. Let's look at the former alternative first.

A dull spike costs 1 SP per spike, and it adds .25 AV per spike to the WAV of the weight. A sharp spike costs 3 SP per spike and adds 1 AV to the WAV of the weight. I'm adding four sharp spikes (no particular reason, just my preference) which adds 4 AV to the weapon, and 12 SP to the cost. So the weapon now costs 26 SP, the weight of the spikes are negligible so it still weighs 14 kg, and the AV is 13. It looks something like this:



Now, let's go for the other alternative. The 5 kg steel sphere is being re-shaped into two sharp edges, to form a double-bladed axe-like weapon. The WAV of the sphere is 2, so each edge will add 2 to the final AV of the weapon, and thus cost an extra 2 SP each as well. As a nice touch, let us put a point at the tip of each side of the blade. Four points, costing a total 4 SP and adding 4 AV to the final AV. So the final AV of our axe-like weapon is 17, its cost is 22 SP, and it still weighs 14 kilograms. It looks something like this:



So we've tackled sword-like weapons, and club-like weapons. Now how about pole arms and spears? After what we've been through so far, they are comparatively simple. Let's give ourselves a really decent spear—150 centimeters long, about

five feet. A spear has to be light, so let's make it out of wood. Looking at our materials chart and doing the figuring, a 150 cm long by 5 cm diameter cylinder of wood weighs 1.5 kg. (Yep, wood is pretty light.) Its WAV is .5 AV, which is rounded up to 1 AV. A wooden rod is not the greatest weapon in the world, by itself. I'll omit the picture this time—I assume you can all visualize a long stick of wood.

Next we put on the spearhead. I'm making one out of one of those 10 cm long by 5 cm diameter cylinders—a fairly big head for a spear. It weighs 1.5 kg. Now, the wooden rod cost 1.5 SP, rounded up to 2 SP. The spearhead cost 1.5 SP itself, round up to 2 SP, so thus far our spear costs 4 SP.

Now, let's take the Leverage effect into account. The WAV of the spearhead, right now only a short cylinder, is .5 AV rounded up to 1 AV. The length of the wooden rod is 150 cm, which when divided by 20 is 8, and $8 \times 1 = 8$ for the levered spearhead, plus 1 for the spear shaft is 9 AV for the spear thus far.

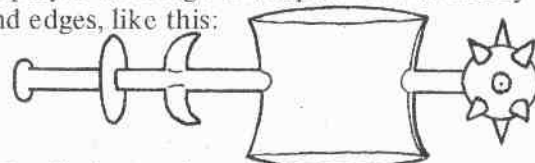
Now we sharpen and edge our spearhead. Let's make it triangular, with two edges and a point. Since the WAV of the spearhead is 1, each edge adds 1 AV to both the cost and the final AV, and the point adds .5, which is rounded up to 1 SP and 1 AV. The total cost: 7 SP; total AV: 12; total weight: 3 kg. The spear looks like this:



That's it! Anything not covered here can be derived from the rules of weapon design thus far presented, and from the charts below (for example, if a player wants an edge to be a highly curve, use the Curving Weapons Chart to modify his/her weapon's characteristics).

What about bows and crossbows? By now, you have been going back and forth from this article to the charts after it. A section on bow and crossbow design is included, and unlike the weapon design description included with those charts there is nothing for me to add in this article.

What about Dexterity points? Dexterity points are the balancer for this system. It is possible for a player to design a weapon that is mostly points and edges, like this:



With all these points and edges, this weapon will have a very high AV for its weight. (The aver-

age AV for a weapon should be approximately equal to its weight in kilograms, within about 25%). The balancing effect? A player is not normally trained to use extra points and spikes sticking out at odd angles, so then if the extra points and edges add 15 AV to the weapon, the weapon might (in the Judge's judgement) require 15 Dexterity points to use. The Dexterity point value of a weapon is assigned by the Judge, and I advise the Judge to use his/her discretionary powers to the fullest.

How much damage does a designed weapon do? In the charts at the end of the article, there are two tables. One lists the possible features of a weapon. The other, the damage done based on those features. There are instructions on how to use it located there, so herein I'll just give a few examples.

The sword we designed above has one point, two edges, and weighs 15 kilograms. By the first column on the first table, when the sword is used normally its dice average is 1 (for all weapons) plus 2 (for the point) plus 4 (for the two edges) plus 3 (for the 15 kgs of weight) which adds up to 10. Looking at the second table, we see that the highest number listed less than or equal to 10 is 8.5. Therefore, our sword does 1D10+1D5 points of damage when it hits, i.e. roll a D10, then roll a D5 (rolling a D10 then subtracting 5 if the number rolled is greater than 5), add the results, and that's the amount of damage done to the defender.

The spiked mace we designed has four sharp spikes, weighs 14 kg, and has no other redeeming features. So we add 1 (for all weapons) plus 2 (for the weight) plus 2 (for the four sharp spikes), equaling 5. The highest number less than or equal to 5 on the second table is 3, so the damage done by the mace is 1D5.

The double-bladed axe had four points, two edges, and weighs 14 kg. So we add 1 (for all weapons) plus 8 (for the four points) plus 4 (for the two edges) plus 2 (for the weight) equals 15, implying a damage of 2D10+1D5. A wicked weapon—actually, since those blades stick out from the normal flow of lines of the weapon, and they add 8 AV to the weapon, I'd say this weapon would need 8 Dexterity points to use.

The spear gets 1 (for all weapons) plus 2 (for the point of the spearhead) plus 4 (two edges on the spearhead) equals 7, for 1D10 of damage. Now, using the thrown column, we get 1 (for all weapons) plus 3 (for the point of the spearhead) plus 2 (for the edges on the spearhead) equals 7, for 1D10 of damage when thrown. (I didn't do the thrown values for the other weapons, since it is

obvious they are not meant to be thrown.)

If, when calculating the damage done when thrown, you find that the weapon gets a negative number for its dice average, you cannot throw the weapon even to get the one point of damage lighter weapons could get. That is what it means when it says, "If your weapon cannot be used by the above table, Balancing will not help." See the table to find out what Balancing is.

Armor Design

I designed the weapon designing system because so many players desired their own special weapons. However, there were very few who showed interest in designing their own special armor. On the Armor Table in those charts, you see a list of part of armor and their weights and DVs, which are added together when wearing more than one segment of armor.

If someone wishes to design their own armor, the thicknesses and densities and surface areas of parts of the full-size human being are included in the charts. While the cost of the armor is essentially materials + workmanship + tailoring, which a player can figure out, the DV of any special armor must be determined by the Judge, by comparing whatever kind of armor the player has designed with the types of armor given in the chart.

I admit it is not as elegant a system as weapons design, but so far in my campaign the question of complete armor design has never come up.

Corrections, Explanations, and Amendments

Before I conclude, let me clarify some points on the Skills article.

Replacement - This is supposed to be a way to improve the spells one has, rather than researching a new spell (or skill, for that matter). With Replacement, rather than adding on one new 10-die Fireball when you already have five 9-die Fireballs, you can change all your 9-die Fireballs spells with 10-die Fireballs by replacing your knowledge of the old ability with the new one. You simply pay 25% of the cost of the ability you are researching—if it is very, very close to the old ability. You cannot Replace your knowledge of Detecting Traps with Climbing Sheer Walls.

Instantaneous Research - for some reason, a couple of lines in the paragraph were lost in describing the situation of when someone would want to use this option. This led to Mark Swanson's belief that one could really trade Hit Points for an ability. COST is always figured in thousands—to perform Instantaneous Research, one needs to give

up thousands of Experience Points, thousands of Hit Points, thousands of centimeters in height, or thousands of years to live. The last three items mentioned were meant as humorous examples of what one could give up if one were desperate enough. (It also illustrates why Gods and god-like beings are so magical—if they have millions of Hit Points, they can perform Instantaneous Research whenever they please.)

The situation being described was this—say a player was thinking of researching a spell called Mass Destruction of Gnolls, but did not have the time or money to invest in it. Suddenly, while the player is desecrating an altar dedicated to Okeefenokee, God of Gnolls, the player is attacked by 1000 Gnolls. If the player has a justification for the spell, he/she can use Instantaneous Research to get the spell using the parameters mentioned in the Skills article.

The Examples: Like an idiot, I forgot to include the cost and time of researching the skills and spells I described in the article. All the spells were 1st level, they cost 1000 SP to research, and two weeks to get, since they were all researched by 1st levelers. The skill, Cliffhanger, which later became a TV series which was cancelled, was researched by a 1st leveler as well, at the cost of 2000 SP and three weeks.

The paragraph on Weapons Expertise was not terribly clear. Rather than detail the process out now, the next article will be about combining all three systems: Magic, Skills, and Combat, into one cohesive system. Weapons expertise, Magic expertise, and Skills expertise will be defined, as well as how characters move up in Rank (= levels in the old D&D system), to gain higher Orders of spells (= levels in the old D&D system) and they go down Floors of the dungeon (= levels in the old D&D system).

In addition, you shall see the method of character generation fully described (there is a brief description in the enclosed charts), plus the description of a few exotic races that I allow as characters.

In the more distant future, I shall be describing how to allocate non-player characters and monsters and money in your dungeon, wilderness, or whatever using this new system. There are a whole range of magic items not previously possible in the old D&D system that can be created for this new one, and I shall not neglect to pass on the tables, and chairs, and other furniture of my system via *The Dungeoneer*.



The Introductory Charts

The next few pages contain the charts, tables, and descriptions that I give to my players at the start of the campaign. I include them because some who have written to me have expressed disbelief that someone who knows nothing of D&D or any other form of FRP gaming could possibly understand this system. Well, I have not had any troubles with newcomers, and perhaps the following material will explain why.

It should be noted that while all the other material in this article is mine, the *Laws and Colors of Magic* are derived from material contained in P. E. I. Bonewits' book, *Real Magic*, a tome which I recommend as an adjunct to my magic system.

Welcome to the world of Argothald! These pages are meant as an introduction to both the history and the system that I use in playing the campaign you are about to enter. In this universe, I think you'll find a wider range of options in developing your character than I think you can find in any other campaign. My world is designed so that you can take your character and spend years exploring the world and still not find out all of its deep, dark secrets. I hope you enjoy yourself! Let's get right to it.

The first thing you must do is generate your character. For starters, I like to assume that your character is the same sex as you are, and has the same handedness—this avoids disputes about how the average person is right-handed or whatever. Secondly, you should generate your character's characteristics. In my system, there are six:

Strength: Moving heavy objects, hit probability, damage done when hit.

Wisdom: Interpreting signs or events, strategic skill, inductive reasoning.

Constitution: Vim, vigor, body condition, ability to take damage or resist magic.

Intelligence: Noticing and detecting details, tactical skills, deductive reasoning.

Dexterity: Speed, movement, tactil detection and manipulation, aiming missiles.

Charisma: Personal looks, ego, leadership, seductiveness, diplomacy, adaptation.

For each of these six characteristics, roll three ten-sided dice, and add the numbers that you roll (a '0' is a 10). That is the value for that particular characteristic. At this time, you may not transfer points from one characteristic to another.

Now you have your character. You must decide what sort of abilities you would like for

that character—if that character has good Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, your character would be a good fighter. If your character has good Intelligence, Wisdom, and Dexterity, that character would be good at casting magical spells. If your character has some other high characteristics, your character might be best at researching a skill relating to what that characteristic can do for you (see the notes next to the names of the characteristics).

Your character starts out with money. Roll three ten-sided dice again (this is abbreviated 3D10, or three dee ten, for three ten-sided dice). Multiply the total by ten. This is the number of Silver Pieces (SP) you start out with. Your character also starts out with a free ability. You see, I am assuming that your character had some previous experience before becoming an adventurer—perhaps he/she was in the army, or he/she was taught some family or tribal secrets, or he/she taught him/herself some abilities by going to the local library. For whatever reason, your character has a choice as to what you may get for him/her—a skill, a spell, or extra fighting ability.

Extra Fighting Ability: This will come to you if you do not choose either a skill or spell, that is, it is being assumed that because you do not choose a skill or a spell that you have been practicing your fighting ability instead. This may not be the best decision for your character, but it cannot be the wrong decision. If you have too much difficulty in choosing what would be best for your character, perhaps getting extra fighting ability would be best. Essentially, it means that 1D5 (= 1 five-sided die, or roll 1D10 and if the roll is greater than 5, subtract 5 from it) is added onto your Hit Points (Hit Points are described below).

Spells: in the future, you will be expected to justify your spells by the laws of magic. But since you are just starting out, this will not be necessary for your first spell. If you choose to get a spell, you will get for five times a week, all of which can be used up in one day.

There is a danger in trying to research a spell. The more powerful a spell is, the less likely it is that you will get it. If you do not get the spell, you will lose Hit Points. In fact, you could get killed, which is a poor way to start out a campaign. Therefore, I suggest that for your first spell you pick something reasonable. For a first level character (see below), a reasonable spell would be something that does no more than 1D5 damage to something else, can affect no more than five dice of creatures (again, see below), and has a range of no more than three “hexes”. (I’ll define this now: by wargaming tradition, any space you can move

to is called a hex, no matter what its actual shape. Each square on the sheet of graph paper you will be mapping on is a “hex”, which is three meters on a side. Most of the corridors in the dungeon are one hex wide, which means they are three meters wide.)

Once you have thought of a spell you’d like to have, discuss it with me. I’ll tell you whether it is reasonable or not, and if it is what the chances of your getting the spell are. The purpose of this discussion is to make sure that both of us know exactly what the spell can and cannot do, so tell me everything you think the spell can do, because once we decide and you get the spell, that is it! I suggest that, if you get the spell, you write down, with all the information you’ll need to know about it later. The chances that you’ll get the spell depends on your Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, and the level of the spell you want. I’ll tell you what the chances of getting that spell are (the level of a spell is the level of the player I feel should be able to use that spell, that is, for a first level character one should research first level spells, and so on) and, if you want to, you roll to see if you get the spell.

Skills: Skills work a lot like spells. The more complicated the skill, the less likely the chances are that you’ll get it, and if you do not get the skill you will be damaged, possibly killed. Again, try to think up any skill that might be useful while adventuring in a magical world. I’ll be around to discuss your skill with you, and to tell you whether it is unreasonable or not. The chances your getting the skill depend on how many characteristics are used to perform the skill. Again, like in spells, you’ll get a chance to roll to see if you get the skill, and if you don’t get it, you’ll be damaged.

There is one very big difference between skills and spells. For spells, you can use them a certain number of times per day, and they always work. For skills, you can use them an infinite number of times per day, but they won’t always work. When you start out a skill, there is a 10% chance it will work each time you try it. This chance of success will increase as you go up in levels (see below). This does not mean you can try to pick a lock an infinite number of times, but if there were an infinite number of locks you could try to pick each one, with a 10% chance of success for each lock you tried to unlock.

Now, if you kill your character researching a spell, you may roll up a new one, but this new character can only research a skill or go for extra fighting ability. If you kill the second one through research, the third must go for extra fighting ability. In other words, if you kill a character by

exercising an option, you cannot exercise that option again.

Now that your head is buzzing with all this about spells and skills and fighting, let me discuss what race you can be. First, roll the percentile dice, using the red die as the tens digit and the white die as the units digit. Then use the following table to see what race you can be.

Die Roll	Race you Can Choose
01 - 50	Human only
51 - 90	Human, Elf, Dwarf, or Fairie
91 - 00	Human, Elf, Dwarf, Fairie, Spirit, or Dragon

Here is a description of those races:

Human: Since you are one, I won't go into detail. Humans have no innate abilities except what they gain for themselves.

Elf: Elves are a tall, mysterious group of people. They do not need to sleep, and they do not get tired. Elves also have the ability to "sense" things like danger, treasure, poison, and such. They cannot "sense" magic. If you are an Elf, add 250 Experience Points to what you need to reach 2nd level.

Dwarf: Dwarves are short and stocky. They are master builders, and can detect things like secret doors, hidden traps, and other items of dungeon construction better than most people can. If you are a Dwarf, add 250 Experience Points (EP) to what you need to get to 2nd level.

Fairie: Fairies are a highly magical race. They have wings and can fly, and can shrink or enlarge in height or change in shape according to certain rules—you will have to speak with me to learn all the rules about being a Fairie. If you are a Fairie, add 500 EP to what you need to reach 2nd level.

Spirit: Spirits are friendly ghosts who start out the campaign already dead. Spirits are affected normally by weapons and spells, but they cannot carry **anything**—they must materialize all they own out of ectoplasm. Again, you must speak with me to learn all the abilities of being a Spirit. If you are a Spirit, add 750 EP to what you need to reach 2nd level.

Dragon: Dragons are a powerful race, who know a great deal about magic. They have tough skins which make them more difficult to hit with weapons. They also have breath weapons of extraordinarily magical power. Speak with me if you wish to become a Dragon. If you are a Dragon, add 1000 EP to what you need to reach 2nd level.

What do Experience Points and levels mean? Here we go—as you adventure, you gain power and abilities. You can use these powers by going up in levels of ability, and you go up levels by collecting Experience Points. In other words, the more you experience, the more powerful you get. Every time you use a skill well, or you kill a horrible creature, you get Experience Points. I keep a running tally of how many points you get, and at the end of each expedition I'll tell you how many points you get. You need a certain number of Experience Points to go from first level to second level.

The base number of points to get to second level is 2000 points. If you choose to be non-Human, you need additional points to reach 2nd level. Also, for every new skill or spell you research, you need 500 additional points to reach the next level. To get from one level to the next, you need twice as many Experience Points as you need to get to the level you currently are at, plus 500 for every new skill or spell you research while going from one level to the next. If you do not research or do any skill or spell related investment in time, you automatically get an extra 1D5 in addition to the normal 1D10 you get for going up a level added on to your Hit Points.

What do I mean by Hit Points? You have a certain number of Hit Points associated with your character. They represent how many hits, or how much damage, your character can take before dying. When you start out your character, you roll 1D10, plus 1D5 if you decide to get extra fighting ability, and that is the number of Hit Points your character starts out with.

Weapons and spells can do damage to other creatures, and the weapons of other creatures can do damage to you. When I tell you that a monster has hit you and has done a certain number of points of damage to you, you subtract that from the number of Hit Points you have left. When you go down to zero or below, you are dead. You can only be revived if you are not too badly hurt, the party has the ability to Heal, and someone gets to in time. If you get killed, I'll tell you how this works.

Don't forget to erase the total number of Hit Points you have, however. If you survive the expedition, it is assumed that you've healed and you'll go on the next expedition with your full Hit Point total once again.

When I speak of the number of dice of a creature, I'm talking about the number of dice I rolled to get the Hit Points of a creature. A one-die creature is one for which I rolled one ten-sided die to see how many Hit Points it had. A five-dice

creature has five dice of Hit Points. All Hit Point dice are ten-sided; if I use a D5 I'll speak of the creature as having "an extra half die" or something like that.

Now, before you decide whether to get a skill, spell, or extra fighting ability, there is the question of money. You know you have some, but what can you buy with it?

The answer—armor, weapons, and equipment. Since armor and weapons come in here, this is as good a place as any to mention combat. You, with a weapon, have a certain Attack Value, or AV. A creature, with its armor, has a certain Defense Value, or DV. To tell whether you hit the creature, I subtract its DV from your AV, to get a percentage. This is the chance you will hit the creature. The same system is used when the creature is trying to hit you. On the average, a character who expect to be an active fighter should at least have a DV of 25 and an AV of 60, with 30 and 70, respectively, being safer values. Here is how to figure your AV and DV:

AV = Strength + Dexterity + Hit Points + AV of your weapon.

DV = Dexterity + DV of your armor

The exception is when you are using a bow. Then:
AV = Dexterity + Hit Points + AV of the bow.

There is also the matter of weight. You can carry, and still move at full speed (36 meters/ten minutes) up to twice the value of your Strength in kilograms. You can carry up to 2.5 times your Strength and move at ½ speed, and up to 3 times your Strength and move at ¼ speed. After that, you cannot move. At most, in extreme emergencies, you can lift 8 times your Strength in kilograms, but you can't do anything else for the rest of that day.

There is also an encumbrance limit. If you do not have any skills or spells, this does not apply to you unless you are using a special weapon. The limit is this:

Twice your Dexterity must be greater than or equal AV of your weapon + (2 x DV of your armor) + Dexterity points of the weapon, if any.

If you are over this limit and you do not have a weapon that has Dexterity points, you cannot use any skills or spells. If you are over this limit and you have a weapon that has Dexterity points, you cannot use any skills or spells, and you cannot use that weapon either.



What are Dexterity points? You have been trained to use certain kinds of weapons. If you choose to use a weapon that you have not been trained for, it may have Dexterity points associated with it—that is, the amount of extra Dexterity you need to use the weapon. (Using skills' research, you can reduce the number of Dexterity points you need to use a weapon.) For the most part, this should not bother you unless you want to design a weapon.

Design a weapon? Yes, and you can design armor too. But like magic, you have to know the laws and rules for that sort of design. Since this is the start of the campaign and you'll have enough trouble just getting your character started, leave that aside for now. You'll have your chance to be a famous weapon's designer later.

On the next couple of pages you'll find a list of weapons and sections of different kinds of armor. For each weapon, you'll find its weight, its cost in Silver Pieces, the damage it does if it hits a creature, and the AV of the weapon. For the armor you'll find its weight, its cost, and the DV of the armor.

There are a couple of rules you must use while putting together your suit of armor. You must have both Front and Back, or the full Body, before you may add on Arms or legs to the armor. You may have Shortsleeve or Longsleeve for the Arms, but not both. (If you're weird, you may have a Shortsleeve on one Arm and a Longsleeve on the other, something like Marie Osmond or Cher.) The Front and Back of the armor must be of the same type. The Arms and Legs must be of a type less than or the same as the type of armor making up the Body, or the Front and Back. (The quality of the armor goes up as you go to the right along the Armor Table.) If you have a Small Shield, both hands are free. If you have a Medium or a Large Shield, only one hand is free and you cannot use a two-handed weapon. If you have a Tower Shield, both hands must be used to carry the shield and you cannot use any weapons at all!

If you've rolled your characteristics, chosen your race, chosen your ability, spent your money on weapons and armor, have rolled your Hit Points, and have figured out your AV and DV for this expedition, you are ready to play! Hope you didn't have to work too hard, but I also hope that the fun will be worth the effort. Good Luck!

Bill Seligman

Weapon Table

Weapon	Attack Value	Damage Done	Cost	Weight
Dagger	7 (7 thrown)	1D5	10	7
Throwing Dagger	7 (17 thrown)	1D5	14	7
Light Sword	13 (13 thrown)	1D10 (1D5)	27	14
Sword	18	1D10 + 1D5	32	14
Rapier	2	1D5	8	2
Saber	7	1D10	31	10
Two-Handed Sword	21	1D10 + 1D5	38	18
Broadsword (large Two-Handed Sword)	25	2D10	43	20
Club	6	1D5	12	12
Mace	14	1D5	26	14
Morningstar (needs 18 Dexterity Points)	48	2D10	60	20
One-Handed, One-Bladed Axe	2	1D5	5	4
Two-Bladed, One-Handed Axe	6	1D5	10	7

Weapon	Attack Value	Damage Done	Cost	Weight
Two-Handed, One-Bladed Axe	9	1D5	13	10
Two-Handed, Two-Bladed Axe	18	1D10 + 1D5	30	20
Spear	11 (21 thrown)	1D10	9	3
Dart	1 (11 thrown)	1	1	1
Pike (needs 8 Dexterity Points)	28	1D10	7	6

Armor Table

Section		Cloth	Leather	Laquer	Banded	Chain	Plate	Wood
				or Boiled Leather	or Scale or Ring or Plate Mail			
Body	Weight	2.5	10	16	60	16	90	
	Cost	5	25	40	100	180	135	
	DV	3	10	15	25	30	45	
Front	Weight	1	4	7	27	7	40	
	Cost	2	10	15	40	80	60	
	DV	1	5	8	15	18	28	
Back	Weight	1	4	7	27	7	40	
	Cost	2	10	15	40	80	60	
	DV	1	3	4	8	8	12	
Leg (per Leg, not for both)	Weight	.8	3.5	6	21	6	32	
	Cost	2	9	12	30	70	50	
	DV	.5	4	6	8	10	15	
Boot (per foot, not both)	Weight	.5	2	3		3	16	
	Cost	1	5	8		40	25	
	DV	.5	3	4		5	10	
Arm - Shortsleeve (per Arm)	Weight	.1	.5	.75	2.5	.75	4	
	Cost	1	1	2	5	10	6	
	DV	.25	1	1	1	1	2	
Arm - Longsleeve (per Arm)	Weight	.3	1.5	2.5	9	2.5	12	
	Cost	1	4	6	18	30	18	
	DV	.5	2	3	4	5	10	
Small Shield	Weight						24	2
	Cost						25	5
	DV						10	3
Medium Shield	Weight						90	6
	Cost						100	10
	DV						20	5

Section		Cloth	Leather	Laquer or Boiled Leather	Banded or Scale or Ring or Plate Mail	Chain	Plate	Wood
Large Shield	Weight						165	11
	Cost						180	15
	DV						30	10
Tower Shield	Weight						240	16
	Cost						250	20
	DV						40	15
Helmet	Weight		.5	.8		.8	6	.3
	Cost		1	2		10	10	1
	DV		1	2		2	4	2
Helmet with Visor or Noseguard	Weight		.75	1		1	8	4
	Cost		2	3		12	15	3
	DV		2	3		3	6	3
Glove (per hand)	Weight	.1	.5			.75		
	Cost	1	1			10		
	DV	.25	1			1		

Hit Points Modification Table

Look up your Constitution on this table, and multiply by the value listed. Note both the modified and unmodified hit points—add all new hit points to the unmodified and modify the total.

3)	.7	17)	1
4)	.75	18)	1.05
5)	.75	19)	1.05
6)	.8	20)	1.1
7)	.8	21)	1.1
8)	.85	22)	1.15
9)	.85	23)	1.15
10)	.9	24)	1.2
11)	.9	25)	1.2
12)	.95	26)	1.25
13)	.95	27)	1.25
14)	1	28)	1.3
15)	1	29)	1.3
16)	1	30)	1.35

Miscellaneous Item List

Item	Cost (in SP)	Weight (in kgs)
Quiver + 12 Arrows	20	2
1 Arrow	1	.1
Backpack (500 coins)	10	.5
Sack (250 coins)	5	.3
20 m Rope	5	.5
6 torches - 3 hour duration	10	1
Lantern - 12 hour duration	40	1
10 Spikes	10	3

Item	Cost (in SP)	Weight (in kgs)
1 Copper Piece	.01	.2
1 Silver Piece	1	.02
1 Gold Piece	100	.06
1 Platinum Piece	1000	.5

1000 CP	10	200
1000 SP	1000	20
1000 GP	100000	60
1000 PP	1000000	500

Magic And Skill Research Formulae

Danger Factor = The chance that you will not get what you are researching for = DF.

DF = The maximum possible characteristic value rolled (= 30 on 3D10) divided by The average of all the characteristics involved times K.

For Skills, the final DF = DF above x TIME for that skill

For Spells, the final DF = DF above x (S - M, or 1/2, whichever is greater) where S = level of the spell, and M = number of levels the researcher has researched spells

For Skills:

COST, in Silver Pieces, is = (number of characteristics used) x 1000

TIME, in weeks, is = 1 + (number of charac-

teristics used) - (number of characteristics used in one other skill that are used in the same way as the skill being researched)

For Spells:

COST = (S - M, or 1, whichever is greater) x 1000 SP

TIME = (S - M, or 1, whichever is greater) x 2 weeks

To research a spell for the 2nd time, it costs 75% of COST; To research a spell for the 3rd time, it costs 50% of COST; To research a spell for each time thereafter, it costs 25% of COST; To research a spell for the second and all subsequent times, it takes one week.

The Major Classifications of Magic

Infra-Red: Dead, Undead, Half-Dead, Resurrection, Incarnations, Re-Animations, and the Soul.

Red: Life, Health, Healing, the Body (human and animal), Killing, the Medical and Military Sciences, Strength, Zoological Sciences, Curses and Blessings.

Orange: Ego, Charisma, Materialism, Pride, Self-confidence, Courage, Security, the Psychological, Physical, and Economic Sciences.

Yellow: Mind, Nervous System, and the Mental Sciences like Mathematics, Logic, Philosophy, Learning, Theorizing, Organization, and Technology.

Green: Fertility, Creativity, Beauty, Art and Fine Arts, and the Botanical and Geographical Sciences.

Blue: Emotions, Religion, Psychic Powers, Spiritualism, Fortune-telling, Theology and the Social Sciences.

Indigo: Weather Control, Meteorology, Astronomy, Astrophysics, Space Travel, and Time Travel.

Purple: Violence, Physical Passions, Love, Lust, Hate, Fear, Anger, Ecstasy, Political Power, and the Political Sciences.

Ultra-Violet: Extremely Intense and Powerful Emotions, and Powerful Psychic Energies.

Brown: Sensuality, Primitive and Animalistic

Powers, Woods, Glens, Wilderness, Animals, Hunting, and the Ecological Sciences.

Earth: The Ground, Soil, Rock, Stone, Earthquakes, Earth Elementals, Transmutation.

Air: Lightning, Clouds, Winds, Fog, Air Elementals.

Water: Ice, Storms, Ice Storms, Water Elementals, Parting Water.

Fire: Lights, Fireballs, Fire Elementals, Flames.

Lore: Detection Spells, Reading Languages and Magic, Discovers Secrets, Communing and Consulting with the Gods, Researching.

Shape-Shifting: Polymorphing, Enlarging or Shrinking, Transmutation, Animation, Lycanthropy.

Illusion: Images, Illusion, Phantasms, Hallucinations, Blurs, and Prestidigitation.

Alchemy: Poisons, Chemicals, Analysing and Preparing Potions.

The Laws of Magic

Law of Knowledge and Self-Knowledge: The more you know about something, the more you can control it. The most important knowledge you can have is about yourself. Total and absolute knowledge brings total and absolute control.

Law of Names and Words of Power: Knowing the complete, full, and true name of something gives you control over it. There are words which can disturb the inner and outer reality of the speaker. Absolute knowing is knowing the true name.

Law of Association, Similarity, and Contagion: If two things have something in common, it can be used to control both of them, and each influences the other through this connection. Anything that partakes of anything else can be used to control it. Things that were once in contact continue to interact after their separation.

Law of Identification: If you look at reality from the point of view of something else, you can become that thing and use its power.

Law of Synthesis and Polarity: The union of two opposing ideas will generate a new and higher truth. Anything can be split into two opposing

Instantaneous Research

entities with each containing the essence of the other.

Law of Infinite Data, Finite Senses, and Infinite Universes: There is an infinite amount of knowledge, and there will never be an end to things to learn. There are an infinite number of ways to perceive reality.

Law of Personification: Anything can be considered to have a personality, and be invoked into one's own reality, conjured into another's.

Law of Pragmatism and True Falsehoods: If it is convenient to assume something, it is permissible to do so until it becomes inconvenient. If there are two truths which are contradictory, they can be noted and held without fuss until a decision can be made—there is nothing unusual about paradoxes.

And of course, the Law of Cause and Effect.

The Danger Constant

K, in the Danger Factor Formula, represents the Danger Constant. The larger the value of K is, the more dangerous the research. To determine the value of K:

For Spells:

K = 5 when researching a spell for the first time.

K is reduced by One: For every time the spell is researched, starting from the third time (each time a spell is re-researched, it may be used an additional time each week). For every five spells that the character has that relate significantly to the current spells being researched (and whatever similarity a spell lends to this relationship is the only relationship it may use in comparing it with other spells in the future), also reduce K by one.

K = 6 when researching a spell for Replacement.

K = 100 when attempting Instantaneous Research

For Skills:

K=4, unless it is for Replacement.

K=6 when researching a skill for Replacement.

K=100 for Instantaneous Research.

COST and TIME above are figured normally but COST is in Experience Points, and TIME is in melee rounds (one melee round = 10 seconds). The spell is justified using materials on hand. K = 100, and the rest of the DF is figured normally. If the player survives, and is not sent down to below first level, the player gets the spell or skill, and the length of time they may use it is their new level in hours.

For Spells, the Instantly Researched Spell may be used any number of times while it lasts. For Skills, the chance of success for the Instantly Researched Skill is the player's level times 10%.

Damage Taken From Research

All such damage is permanent. Only a powerful Wish-type spell can restore it. If a person is killed by research and resurrected, they start off with only one Hit Die. Damage done is TIME—one in 10-sided dice. Damage is taken whenever, due to research, the player does not get a skill or the spell they were after.



Weapons and Armor Design

The following material data should be noted:

Material	Density (g/cc)	A 10 cm x 5 cm diameter would weigh, in kgs.	A one kg. cube would be ___ cm on a side
Wood	.5	.1	12
Steel	7.5	1.5	5
Copper	9	1.75	4.8
Stone	9.5	1.85	4.7
Silver	10	1.95	4.6
Gold	19	3.7	3.7
Platinum	21.5	4.2	3.6

Material	Density (g/cc)	Thickness (cm)
Cloth	.3	1
Leather	.6	2
Laquer or Boiled Leather	1	2
Scale, Banded, Ring, or Plate Mail	5	1.5
Chain	2	1
Plate	7.5	1.5

Weapon Design

Start out with the basic shape you wish to design. Each kilogram of wood or stone or steel costs 1 SP, and every three kilograms of material adds one to the WAV, or Weight Attack Value. Should you have an extra weight on the end of your weapon, multiply it's natural WAV by the WAV of that portion of the weapon before the weight, then add the two weights together to get the total WAV of the weapon. But first, multiply the "before the weight" WAV by (length in cm/20).

A hilt is necessary on all weapons which are sharpened to more than ¼ of their total length, and costs 5 SP, with negligible weight. If your weapon has large edges and no hilt, subtract 5 from your DV.

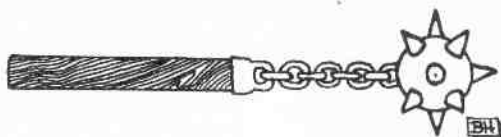
Adding an edge to a portion of the length of your weapon adds the WAV of the portion sharpened. Two edges (one on each side) adds twice the WAV of the portion sharpened to itself. Adding a point to a weapon adds ½ of the WAV of the portion of the weapon that is being pointed (if all the lines of the weapon lead up to the point, then the entire WAV of the weapon is considered). The cost of an edge or a point is, in SP the AV added onto the WAV of the weapon.

A dull spike added onto a weapon costs 1 SP per spike and adds .25 per spike to the WAV of the portion of the weapon being modified. A sharp spike costs 3 GP per spike and adds 1 to the portion of the weapon being modified.

Portion of Armor

Surface Area (sq. cm)

Body	8200
Front	3600
Back	3600
Leg (per Leg)	2900
Boot (per Boot)	1500
Shortsleeve (per Arm)	375
Longsleeve (per Arm)	1200
Small Shield	1600
Medium Shield	6000
Large Shield	11000
Tower Shield	16000
Helmet	400
Glove (per Glove)	375



Curving Weapons

Degree of Curvature	If Single-edged	If Double-edged	Cost to Curve (in SPs)
	Subtract	Subtract	
Slight (10 - 20°)	1/8 AV	1/4 AV	15 SP
Moderate (20 - 40°)	1/4 AV	3/8 AV	20 SP
Large (40 - 60°)	1/2 AV	5/8 AV	25 SP
Enormous (60 - 90°)	3/4 AV	7/8 AV	30 SP

For example, a cylinder 75 cm long by 5 cm in diameter would weigh 11.25 kg. Already, that's 11.25 SP and 3.75 AV. Add a hilt, that adds 5 SP = 16.25 SP so far. Add one edge, adding 3.75 to both the AV and the cost, then add another edge, again adding 3.75 to both the AV and the cost. Add a point to the end of the double-edged cylinder, adding 1.875 to both the cost and the AV. So:

The Total Cost is:

11.25
5.00
3.75
3.75
1.825
25.625 = 26 SP

And the AV is:

3.75
3.75
3.75
1.825
13.125 = 13 AV

And we have ourselves a short, double-edged and pointed cylinder with a hilt, in other words, a sword. Using the leverage rule, this can be applied to club-like and spear-like weapons, plus, with a bit of improvisation, any other weapon desired.

Dexterity points may be added at the Judge's discretion. If the weapon has some feature which is unusual (an unusual amount arrangement of edges and points, or an unusually flexible section) the amount of AV added to the weapon by this feature is the number of Dexterity Points it requires.

The Damage of a Designed Weapon

Add the following numbers if they apply to your designed weapon. Then compare them to the dice average. Whichever dice average is less than or equal to the total number assigned to weapon by the table is the amount of damage it does.

	Used Normally	When Thrown, or Held Fast While the Enemy Charges	Dice	Average
For all Weapons	1	1	1	1
Point (per usable)	2	3	1D5	3
Edge (per usable)	2/full edge	1/full edge	1D10	5.5
Weight	1/five kg of weight	-1/five kg of weight	1D10 + 1D5	8.5
Spike	.5 per sharp spike; .125 per dull spike	.25 per sharp spike; .08 per dull spike	2D10	11
Stabilizing Fin	Nothing	1	2D10 + 1D5 3D10	14 15.5

Any weapon may be Balanced for Throwing. This costs 1 SP/kg of weapon, and adds 10 AV when thrown. Of course, if your weapon cannot be used by the above table, Balancing will not help.



Missile Weapons

Range of any Weapon not thrown by a Bow or Crossbow is the Strength of the user in meters. When the Weapon is unbalanced, this range is halved. The range of any missile weapon is divided into three equal sections—short range, medium range, and long range. When firing at medium range subtract 5 from the AV of the weapon. When firing at long range subtract 10 AV from the Weapon.

A Bow costs 3 x AV of the bow. The weight needed to pull is $\frac{1}{2}$ x AV in kgs, that is, to fire the bow, at the instant you fire it you need that many points of strength available unencumbered. The actual weight of the bow is its AV/20 in kgs, and the length of the bow is again its AV/20 in meters. It requires the AV/5 of Dexterity points to wield the bow.

A Crossbow costs 5 x its AV, but weighs

only $\frac{1}{4}$ x AV (this is its actual weight, the weight to pull a crossbow is negligible). It requires its AV/2 Dexterity points to use. Its length is its AV/40. It requires one combat round x AV/20 to load and wind up for firing.

Missile weapons may use Arrows or Quarrels. Arrows do 1D5 damage, cost 1 SP, and weigh .1 kg. Quarrels (balanced Arrows with stabilizing fins) cost 4 SP each, do 1D10 damage, and weigh 1/3rd kg each. Arrows are meant for Bows, Quarrels are meant for Crossbows.

Armor Design

The thickness, and material if the player wishes to compute densities, of sections of Armor may be varied. The cost, which should include materials and tailoring, must be estimated by the Judge.

EDITOR'S REFLEXIVE REACTION

This will cover both the Fordyce and Seligman articles. While I haven't had a chance to play-test any of their propositions, these are my first impressions upon studying their works.

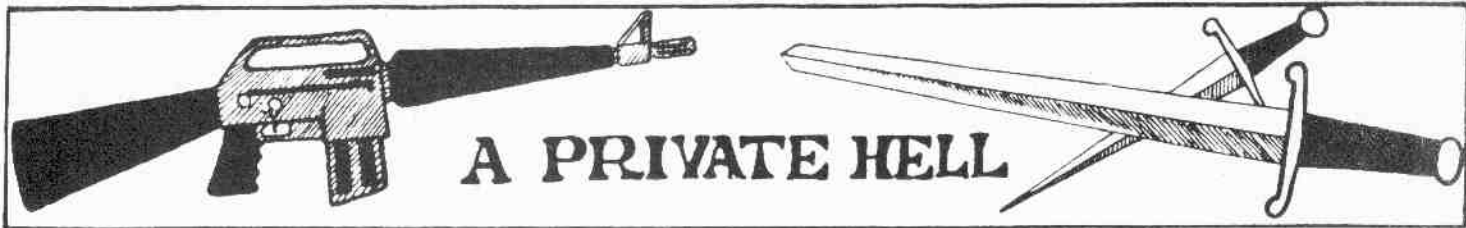
Fordyce states that only one out of every 1000 people will have served in the military. In research I have found that in medieval times about 25% of the entire population would be males of suitable physical condition and age to serve in the military. The more advanced the culture is, the more candidates will be deemed too young or too old, or will be able to bribe their way out of it. Thus we find 25% of the population of a Mongol tribe as soldiers, 20% of the average holding of northern and western Europe, and 18% of the Late Roman or Byzantine Empire. Of these, about half will be regulars and half peasant levy types; of the regulars, one-half to one-third might qualify as superior warriors of the player-character caliber. Remember, there are provisions in the dice-rolling for weaklings and half-wits, so requirements aren't strict.

Who needs a Fireball at all to fry a lowly Kobold? If there are any fighters in the party at all a standard D&D Kobold would be dead meat. But I'm picking nits...

On to Seligman: the use of an asterisk (*) as a multiplication symbol, as Bill has done, is from basic computer lingo and the average reader probably was a bit confused by it, so I thought I'd point this out. The movement rates adjacent to this usage are incredibly slow. Ten times the distance per ten minutes would seem more accurate. (Full speed would then be 360 meters per ten minutes, or 36 meters per minute, or six meters every ten seconds... still a little slow but believable, at a little over two kilometers per hour. Personally, with a backpack on rough country at high altitude [and therefore in very thin air] I was able to make a little better than three miles/hr or four km/hr, and I was "encumbered" — and I read and am told that this was not very speedy. Some people are able to do six km/hr under those conditions.)

Your system of armor and weapon design and combat is very intriguing, to say the least. I'll have to try it. But your statement concerning the negligibility of the weight of hilts and spikes bears some scrutiny. The hilt balances the sword and makes it easier to use; it also has to have some substance, to protect the hand rather than shearing off at the first blow; and each of those spikes should weigh about a half-pound, making four of them total about one kg. Also, the weaponsmith puts the hilt on last, not first. And those bare-metal handles will corrode and tarnish upon exposure to the heat, dirt and sweat of the hand. Better to wrap the sword grip in leather or something and make the mace and axe handles wood, as a weaponsmith would do. Also, what about a Morning Star specially designed to have so many spikes that it looks like a sea urchin? It wouldn't affect the handling of the weapon except by making the ball heavier, so the needed Dexterity rule you suggest wouldn't apply, and it would still have +1 AV for every two spikes.

But, again, I'm fussing about trivialities. Perhaps I should quit griping about other people's systems and prepare my own for printing as Seligman has done.



BY BRYAN HINNEN

Benyon and Chambers each took a bow as Willis had, and all took arrows in abundance from the heaped bodies around them. Of all three, only Big Ben had the strength to draw his bow fully, but he was ironically the only one who did not have the skill to fire it accurately. "Awl 'ey taught me in sahlint weapons wuz thuh crawssbow," he mourned. "Y'all goan' haftuh teach me."

"Maybe we ought to use stuff like this more often in 'Nam," Chambers thought out loud. "The gooks don't hear a sound all night, then they wake up and go out and find one of their sentries killed with one of these. Nobody wants to do sentry duty, and morale goes down."

"Ah sho' wish t'hell we'd see some gooks," Big Ben admitted. "Then Ah'd know whut t'do fo' sho'. Awl 'is pussy-footin' aroun' with freaks is gettin' mah morale down."

The three Green Berets resumed their march, but fatigue and wounds were starting to have their affect. Willis had had very little sleep, and his sliced arm was beginning to bother him, but it did not affect his line of march. Of course, all Big Ben's multitude of nicks and cuts did to him was make him even uglier.

The one who was really hurting was Chambers. Having had an arrow impale his leg and a rusty scimitar bite deep into one shoulder in the past twenty-four hours had cost him more blood than he could really afford to lose. But he was a stubborn little guy and, to prove he could keep up, he limped and staggered his way ahead of the other two by several paces.

Big Ben looked ahead at his partner in arms with bemusement. "He so tough," he said, shaking his head, "evuh since Ah knowed 'im he slep' bare-ass. Even at the Frozen Chosen an' Hamburger Hill in Korea. Got so col' an' windy, tears'd run out yo' eyes an' make li'l curved icicles on yo' poncho.

Curved, from th' wind. No bull, Willeh, he slep' in 'is puptent wit' no clothes on. Monsoon season in d'Nam, col' 'n' rainy, same thang. He sho' one tough li'l dude. Y'all doan' haftuh worry 'bout 'im, no suh."

As the miles crept past the terrain began to change again to the wierd talus, karst-gullies and mesas that they had fought the orcs in the night before. The rock formations here were even taller, able to conceal more — or larger — enemies. Each man thought he could vaguely sense movement, and they peered around warily; without a word being spoken, they all adopted a very cautious attitude as they picked their way forward.

Around corners, behind talus, in twisting little side gullies, they could hear miniature avalanches as stones were dislodged, seemingly just out of their lines of sight.

The three were soon following a fairly wide and even passage in the stone, with broken walls of talus rising up on either side. They could detect a very, very gradual slope down as they walked.

Chambers was still leading by several yards, so when a huge stone column began to tremble on his right Willis saw it and shouted a warning. The limping man looked around frantically, to see which way to jump, and saw it as it started to topple. Hampered by his injuries, he tried to scramble out of the way by staggering forward, as his comrades sensed an imminent fight and leaped for the nearest cover on both sides of the passage.

The column thundered down, its shock throwing Willis and Big Ben down and shaking them. As they recovered and the trembling of the earth subsided, they definitely heard something very large moving, in the hollow in the right wall where the stone column had been.

The two of them, separated by the width of the corridor, had trains of thought that were almost identical. Seeing no movement in the rising

dust clouds ahead, Willis and Benyon knew that the wounded man had finally been killed.

The dust slowly settled, and they could hear loud, slow, heavy breathing issuing from the wall's hollow. Suddenly, a creature walked out of the gap and looked about.

It was ten feet tall and a grotesque mockery of the human form. The legs were stumpy and bowed, the torso and arms long, almost like a chimpanzee that had all its hair shaved off. The hide was an elephant's gray, wrinkled and thick. Three horns sprouted from the hairless head. Its features were grossly exaggerated: a thick lower lip, a jutting jaw that sent long, curved orange tusks curling up across the hollow cheeks, a bulbous, hooked nose, huge bowl-like pointed ears that twitched and cocked like a mule's, and bulging yellow eyes. It wore a thick surcoat scaled with small bones, a fur breechcloth, and a necklace of human and orc skulls. The clawed fingers grasped a six-foot wooden club spiked with iron.

Benyon and Willis, peering out from behind mounds of fallen scree, both saw the thing and mentally labeled it an ogre.

It peered around, grunting, and did not see them. The dim brain assumed that all three little people had been smashed by the falling rock, so it was safe to eat them. The two men saw it lick its chops and look down at the boulder lying across the corridor. Willis looked over at Big Ben, who held a finger to his lips, then held a flat palm over the muzzle of his M-16. He wanted the ogre to enjoy its meal and go away peacefully. Willis nodded.

Gobbets of drool dangling from its rolled lip, the ogre swung its club down to imbed the spikes in the ground. The club now stood of its own accord; the lazy beast would not have to bend over to pick it up, but merely reach over and uproot it again.

The ogre then squatted and wrapped its arms around one end of the long boulder. Grunting with the effort, it straightened its legs, thereby lifting that end. It stretched and craned around to look under the boulder. Chambers wasn't there.

It dropped the column and threw its head back to roar frustration and anger. The club was torn up and brandished at the scarlet sky as the enraged ogre bellowed again.

The calls were answered from off to the right, and Benyon and Willis glanced at each other again. They looked back at the ogre, which was now awkwardly searching the little crevices in the rock walls, beating the ground furiously with its

club and venting ominous growls. Big Ben started to raise his M-16 to shoot.

But a small, black object arced silently from one of the crevices far ahead, and landed at the feet of the ogre. It stepped on the thing, and gave out a surprised squeal as it looked down. At that instant the grenade exploded.

The blast actually lifted the thousand-pound beast off its feet and sent it sailing backwards, to strike the far wall head-first. Its great bulk tumbled to the ground and it bellowed again, even louder, with pain and fear. The leg flailing in the air was blown off almost halfway to the knee, with ragged ropes of muscle whipping back and forth, splattering blood far and wide.

From the shadows of Chambers' crevice the 40mm grenade launcher fired: *bloopWHAM*. The nylon flechette round spent its vicious force in the throat and upper chest of the monster, blasting away shreds of gray skin as the dozens of sharp, wicked nylon spindles tore into its vitals. It howled its death throes, and the clawed talons dug deep into the ground in agony.

In quick succession three more of the beasts waddled out of the passage that the column had left. Seeing their comrade thrashing on the ground with most of its face and leg gone, they quickly fell to searching the cracks and caves in the rock.

All three Green Berets opened up with their M-16s at once, firing single shots at the chests of the ogres. The bone scaling, sewn onto their vests and coats, chipped and splintered but their fire only served to announce their positions, for it had no effect.

"*Aim fo' thuh eyes, Willeh!*" Big Ben shouted, and in a moment two of the ogres were blind. The third had its back turned and was reaching for Chambers, who had not yet thought of this weak spot in their thick hides.

Big Ben scrambled to his feet and again demonstrated his surprising agility, as he expertly dodged the flailing clubs and feet of the two blind ogres. Sprinting past them, he didn't even slow down when he reached the five-foot-tall felled boulder; he gave a mighty leap and ran right up its curved side, yelling a rebel war cry.

The uninjured enemy looked up just in time to see John Benyon flying towards him like a derailed freight train. Added to his own inertia was the speed of his powerful snap-kick as Big Ben's heel drove deep into where the abdominal nerve center, the solar plexus, would be on a man.

A blow like that would be enough to kill any man, but the ogre only gave forth a great volume

of air and fell: the wind had been knocked out of it, and the blow had been close enough to the nerve web to stun it.

Benyon landed, cat-like, and raised his M-16 to blast its eyes out, but the hammer *clicked* on an empty chamber. He deftly shucked his pack and pulled out the battleaxe, dropping the useless gun, and charged as the ogre started to recover.

Willis wove his way through the staggering ogres before him, crawled over the boulder, and saw Big Ben sink the bit into the ogre's belly, all the way up to the handle. The monster screamed with pain and swung its spear around, desperately stabbing at its assailant.

Big Ben saw the spear coming at him, and time seemed to stand still. The spear was twelve feet long and as thick as the trunk of a young tree; the head was crudely forged and worked iron, two feet long, with a bent tip and ragged edges. It was blunt and rusted, but the force behind it assured that, if it hit him, it would drive right through him as surely as a blunt artillery shell.

The spear-thrust missed, but as Big Ben gave a violent jerk to pull the axe out of the ogre, the axe swung back to collide with the spear and was knocked out of his hands. A clawed hand grabbed him and threw him across the passage.

The first ogre was by now a still carcass, and this was what Big Ben landed on. The opponent gave a mighty thrust with its legs to leap for Big Ben, but as it flew out of its crouch Willis got off a clear shot at its eyes. Blinded, it still found its foe and grappled with its claws. Great rents were torn out of the man's clothing, and deep gouges appeared in his flesh. But as it lifted him to its gaping jaws and bared its cruel rows of yellow teeth, Big Ben whipped his knife from its boot sheath and sank it to the hilt in the ogre's throat.

The beast gave a gurgling scream and blood welled out of its mouth. The victor quickened the kill by savagely ripping the knife out sideways, severing the windpipe and an artery. It dropped him and fell, quarts of blood pumping out of the wound in awful gouts.

Benyon, still little worse for wear, grabbed his pack and rifle as Chambers emerged to pick up the axe. The last two ogres, following the sounds of the melee, were now staggering towards them. They fell over the boulder and clumsily groped forward on their bellies, unguided claws reaching, grasping. "Less beat feet," the giant warrior whispered, and they did.

A half-hour later they again emerged from the karst-gullies, the screams of rage of the blinded ogres still ringing in their ears. Chambers broke the silence: "Man, I wouldn't've believed it if I hadn't

seen it myself. Ol' Big Ben takin' on a ten-foot ogre, one-on-one, hand to hand. You sure are one bad ass."

"Yassuh, thass raght. An' doan y'all fo'git it neithuh. Yea, though Ah walks through thuh valleh o' thuh shadow o' Death of' Big Ben will fear *no* evil, fo' Ah am thuh meanest sumbitch in thuh valleh! Fo' *sho'!*" He waved the battleaxe, now stained with two different types of impossible blood, over his head and gave another rebel yell, long and loud, that was met with grins from the other two.

"Snake eaters are ba-a-aad mothers," Chambers chimed in, referring to the Green Beret survival training in the desert where trainees have to catch their own food; rattlesnakes are the easiest things to catch. "A mercenary kills for money..." he began, and the others joined in the chant: "a sadist kills for pleasure, but a Green Beret kills for *both*." And they all laughed together, for the first time in an eternity.

They were now entering an area of strange twisted pine trees, with utter lack of symmetry in the patterns of their limbs. A tree trunk would split into two limbs, and these would tie knots around each other before growing back together twenty or thirty feet higher up. They grew in a chaotic scattering of small copses, separated by broad expanses of grass. The three men kept to the clearings, weaving their way between the small groups of trees.

They had fallen into a watchful silence once more. Chambers was obviously tiring, but had reloaded the M-203* grenade launcher with a flechette round, and alertly held it leveled at each copse of trees as they passed. Benyon had reloaded his rifle and was covering the other flank, but he too was at last showing the effects of his many wounds. Willis, too, was wounded, but only slightly and only once; he brought up the rear.

About an hour after coming out of the karst Willis found himself thinking about the summer of his graduation. Santa Monica High School. Rich kids, the young elite. Football stars, surfers and cheerleaders. '62 Corvette convertibles, beach buggies, Beach Boys. A trip up the coast to San Francisco to dig the cool cats, the jazz artists and beatniks, harbingers of a new era that he had left behind before it had really started.

Joan.

Uh-oh, better stop that right now. Thinking about Joan could be very dangerous at this point in time. Getting distracted like that from the busi-

* *Hey, Doc, I finally got it right! An M-203 by any other name...*

ness at hand, keeping one's own body and soul together, had been shown to extremely unhealthy.

But, once the thought of her had occurred to him, Willis couldn't shake it. He never had been able to, ever since he joined up; and it was for this reason that he was perhaps the weakest of the three survivors.

It wasn't as though the memory was unpleasant. Far from it. Almost all the girls at Santa Monica were mouth-watering, but Joan had been the pick of the crop. Surfer girl and cheerleading captain, a bushel of wavy blonde hair, and hypnotic beauty; long legs, flat belly, soft shoulders, and points of intersection between these areas that could put lustful thoughts into a priest. Being the cheerleading captain, she had to be a real acrobat, as Willis fondly remembered. Most girls who even approached her charisma were owned by their mirrors, but Joan... well, when you say that a girl has a wonderful personality it usually means that she's homely, but Joan didn't let the attentions of the guys go to her head. She wasn't any dummy, either; she was class valedictorian. What a catch.

Willis kept thinking about Joan as they went on, weaving among the scattered woods.

As they walked the grotesque trees began to straighten out from copse to copse, and their forms become more recognizable, until they were the slim, tall spruces of northern California. The two men in the lead marveled at this, but had learned to suspect everything and say nothing.

Willis, though, was exhilarated, possessed with wonder. Eventually he found himself drawn to a particularly handsome stand of trees, as if his entire life had been funneled towards it and hadn't ever really belonged to him. He drifted out of the line of march and sleep-walked on a tangent, into the trees. The other two didn't notice: normally they would walk with one man in front and two in the rear, so that any unusual occurrence to any of them would be seen by at least one other, but the strain of wounds and fatigue, and perhaps another element, had clouded their reason enough to make this one error.

In the middle of the wood he found a small clearing. The random beams of light that penetrated the green canopy were gold, not red, and they seemed to be coming from a point source like the sun, for they fanned out. But for some reason Willis didn't think this was unusual. As a matter of fact, he didn't really perceive any change.

At the center of the clearing stood a girl, in a red flannel shirt four sizes too big and a pair of blue jeans two sizes too small. Her skin was bronze and her hair golden, billowing in great waves to her waist; her eyes were blue and her teeth were white,

and they all smiled at him. Her stance was casual, thumbs hooked in pockets, one knee bent, head tilted, and the clothes were worn out long ago, but nothing could have seemed more elegant to him.

He stood there for a long moment, drinking her in with thirsty eyes, and they slowly walked into each other's arms. Joan was very tall but still had to look up at his face. Her smile radiated warmth, peace and well-being. For the first time in years he felt safe and secure. His rifle, forgotten, slid out of his hand and tumbled to the ground.

The slim fingers glided up his chest and stopped at his buttons, unfastening them. In a moment they were tearing feverishly at each other's clothing. Beneath Joan's shirt was only Joan.

She was in even better shape than he remembered. Her strong swimmer's arms locked at his neck and drew his lips to hers.

Kissing Joan, by itself, was a monumental experience, but this time Willis immediately knew that something was wrong. He was getting weak at the knees, but he perceived that it was for a different reason. Something inside him recognized it, but rather than explain it to his conscious mind, it screamed in terror and scrambled about in his mind, raving.

He felt his strength flowing out into her mouth. Now he realized that this wasn't really Joan, and his mind commanded escape, but his body did not respond; it pulled her in tighter. His mind quailed in a great spasm. Nothing like this had ever occurred to him. His mind and soul were howling to get out of the dying body.

His right hand hesitantly, shakily escaped her control. Releasing its grasp on her, it slid up her chest and found a tiny suede bag, laced shut with and hanging from a leather thong around her throat. The fingers seized it and snapped it off.

A grenade exploded in his head, and red lights flashed. She was on her knees at his feet, her arms wrapped around his waist, her face buried in his stomach. She sobbed and pleaded. "Give it to me! Give it back! I can make life a dream for you, I can do anything for you. All shall be at your command, I can give it all to you, give it back..."

The little pouch was clenched in his fist, its broken thong trailing out. In his tight grip he could feel something small inside it: tiny, fragile, squirming. Something else crouched in there with unspeakable evil: hideous, potent, waiting.

"Let me go!" he commanded, and the tiny fragile thing wriggled through the pouch and into his hand, tingling up into his brain. He was whole again, and the dark fanged thing questioned. She looked up at him, tears flowing, but the

odd glint of her teeth banished the memory of the girl. His eyes grew cold and hard, and his grip locked down and crushed the evil thing he held.

Her arms fell from him and she screamed, loud and long, the sound changing into the death-cry of a trapped animal. She writhed on the ground and black smoke flowed out of her skin to shroud her. The unearthly howl coming from the smoke cloud spoke of hell itself, and the stink of burning sulphur assaulted him.

First Benyon, then Chambers stumbled breathlessly into the clearing. They saw Willis, his shirt, pack and rifle lying at his feet. He was staring at the curling, dense cloud that issued the cries. Chambers instinctively leveled his elephant gun at the mysterious cloud. Benyon moved forward.

The screams rose and fell, and gained an awful echoing sound of something cold and lonely. A slight breeze came up, passing through the trees with a low moan, and began to blow away the smoke as the wails died away. The three of them detected something on the twilight zones of their perception: scurrying and cackling, hordes of little evils swarmed at the edges of their minds, and flew away with that smoke.

What was revealed was not Joan. It had the same well-endowed figure, but the skin was a mottled green; the fingers swelled at their tips and ended in cat's claws, and red cat's eyes stared out of their sockets. The hair was blood-red, still long but tangled, and sharp fangs were bared. The face was a study in horror, gaping wide in a silent scream. Ten-foot bat's wings, the same swirling green, were stretched out from the shoulders. A forked tongue sprang from the mouth and lay dangling past the chin. It looked like something John Milton created.

"It's a succubus," Chambers said. "A female demon. It has the power to suck the soul out of a man by appearing as a beautiful girl and kissing him, or so the legends say." As they watched, the body decayed, putrefied and crumbled to dust with amazing rapidity, dissipating on the breeze. In its place was a smoking black silhouette burned into the ground.

From Willis' clenched fingers there flowed a black thing: tiny, completely light-absorbent, but without substance like a flame. It was drawn into the ground as if by a vacuum, leaving a small burn smoking where it had vanished.

"Whutchy'all got in yo' han', Willeh?" Big Ben asked. Willis slowly opened his fist to reveal a white powder, blown away on the same breeze.

"Nothing," Willis said, and was silent.

* * * * *

After recovering his gear for him, Benyon and Chambers led their comrade out of the woods. As they left, the trees began to blur and shimmer, then came back into focus as the knotted, perverse forms that they had originally encountered.

Willis was in a stupor. He could walk if led, and he carried all his gear, but his glassy eyes stared blankly and his jaw hung slack and open. He could not respond to speech or any of the other stimuli that Chambers visited upon him, except by involuntary nervous reflex. Chambers was no doctor, but his Special Forces training had categorized him in medicine and he was the next best thing. He shook his head and said, "I'm not sure what's up, Ben. He's in a deep state of shock, but since he'll walk I think we can keep moving. Sure hope he snaps out of it soon."

They left the sparsely wooded area and came out on another grassy plain. The burning walls of the canyon were plainly visible, about a mile away on either side. Chambers and Benyon could detect a very, very gradual slope downwards as they went; Willis, mesmerized, plodded on.

After an hour they stopped to eat. Willis would, if food were pressed to his lips, take it and chew and swallow normally. Benyon and Chambers checked their supplies, and Benyon dug into the pack on Willis' shoulders to check his. They all had plenty of grenades, and Chambers had a good supply of demo gear and rounds for the M-203, but between them they had only eleven clips of M-16 ammunition. .45 pistol ammunition was never plentiful to begin with, its weapon being intended solely as an auxiliary arm and seldom used; they had a total of six clips, all this in addition to what they already had loaded. The rations would safely last them a full week, and they had water purification tablets in abundance, but they had to find the water to purify; each had only one canteen left that had any water out of the four he normally carried.

They grimly buried the cans and moved on. After another hour they saw a change on the horizon ahead; in another half hour they could see that the plain abruptly ended in a forest; in another few minutes they could see that it was a jungle.

They approached it cautiously, peering into the undergrowth at its edge for any sign of an enemy, but nothing attacked them as they moved in. Presently they found a game trail and followed it; but they stayed off it, walking parallel to it about thirty feet away in case an ambush, mine or trap had been set up.

Suddenly, wordlessly, Benyon and Chambers pulled Willis with them down to the ground. Big Ben, his skin blending in naturally with the jungle's

shadows, raised his head from their cover and peered towards the trail.

On the far side of the trail a dark shape lay. There were plenty of dark shapes lying around, but this particular one was a symmetrical cylinder of the approximate dimensions of a machine-gun barrel.

Big Ben closely examined the area around the object, and presently detected two hemispheric shapes behind it. They were of a green color and shrouded with leafy twigs, but they were vaguely akin to helmets. The faint outlines of sandbags became visible after further study.

Ten minutes later Big Ben and Chambers were wiping blood off their knives on the uniforms of two small Oriental soldiers with camouflaged helmets. They were in a machine-gun pit; one had had a flimsy little pistol and the other a 6.5mm Arisaka rifle. Neither operated with a particularly effective ammunition.

"These guys are Japanese soldiers, Ben," Chambers said after examining their personal gear. "They're decked out in uniforms and gear from World War II, so it looks like we're going to be getting into some action we've got some experience in for a change."

The machine gun, though, was a welcome prize. Benyon, the weapons expert, identified it as a Shiki Kikanju 1939 Type 97, weighing twenty-three pounds, firing an adequate 7.7mm cartridge at a rate of 500 rounds per minute. Its magazine was a thirty-round box, detachable and reloadable, and there were four extra magazines already loaded plus a dozenhundred-round boxes for reloading. Benyon gave his M-16 and ammunition to Chambers, and took the machine gun and all its ammunition. He had to strip off one of the Japanese packs and hang it from his belt to carry it all.

Willis had been left at their initial point of observation and was retrieved by Chambers before they continued following the trail.

They found another machine-gun nest and took care of it in the same manner. Big Ben wanted to give the new gun to Willis so that they would have a sufficient supply of ammunition, but Willis was still in a daze and Chambers worried that he would never even fire his own M-16.

Conveniently, a horse chose that moment to snort at them from its place of hiding about sixty feet farther into the jungle. It was a pack animal, rigged out as such by the machine-gun crew for the portage of their weapon, ammunition and other gear. Benyon loaded the second gun and all the ammunition on it, and they continued. Chambers moved ahead as a scout, while Benyon followed, leading both Willis and the horse.

Presently they came upon the head of a

little gully and the slope abruptly became steep. The gully turned into a ravine, and soon they saw more light filtering in ahead, so they knew they were approaching the edge of the jungle. After a careful stalk forward, Chambers was at the treeline.

The jungle had been cleared off and the hill continued, bare, for about a hundred yards. Then there was a clear area about two hundred yards wide, and beyond that a harbor with curved points of land embracing it. Past that was only open water to the horizon, with diminishing canyon walls vanishing into it.

It was a Japanese base: not a giant one like Rabaul or Truk, but not just an outpost. There was an airstrip, with a control tower and six single-engined planes lined up in revetments to protect them from strafing. Benyon and Chambers had both read enough illustrated history books to know that they were Mitsubishi Zeroes, in their day one of the most formidable aircraft around.

There were storehouses, rows of tents for troops, anti-aircraft emplacements, officers' quarters, headquarters, a radio shack, a shower house, and a long dock. Tied up at the dock were two little barges that Chambers called "daihatus."

But what really caught their eye was sitting out in the little harbor: a four-engined flying boat, which Chambers immediately began describing. "That's a Kawanishi Emily. It'll fly at 290 knots, and for a plane that size and that old, that is mighty fast. But its big point is that it can fly for 4,400 miles. Really a remarkable airplane."

As they watched the bustle of activity below a small party of white-uniformed officers emerged from the headquarters and proceeded towards one of the little barges. A party of soldiers presented arms as it left the dock, and salutes were exchanged. It proceeded to the flying boat and most of the officers climbed in.

"Ah got uh ba-ad feelin' 'bout this," Big Ben whispered. The plane's engines started, one by one, and the pilot spun it around until it pointed out to sea.

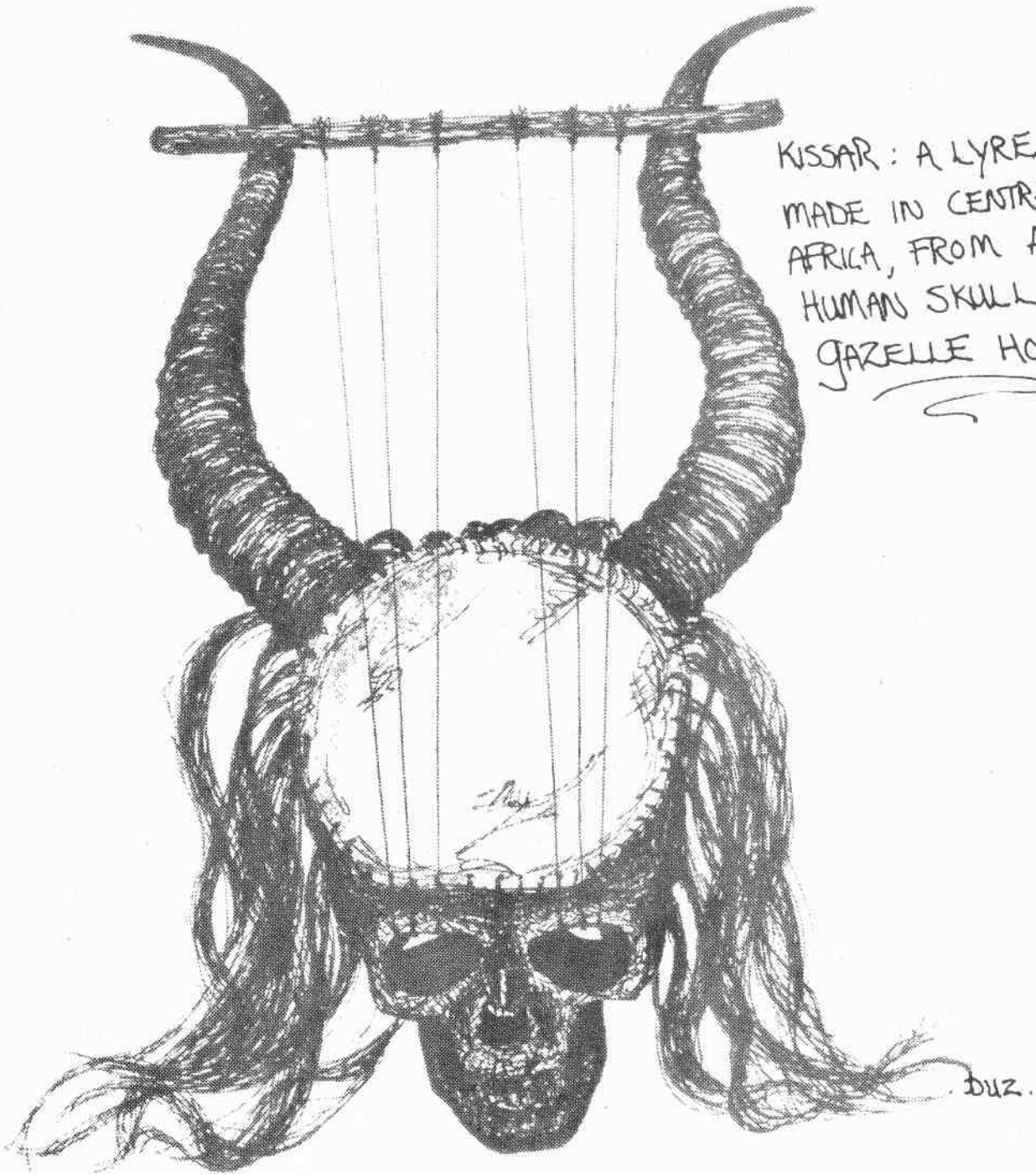
"What's wrong?" Chambers asked as it began to move.

"That wuz ouah ticket outtuh heah. Fo' showzin' mahles? We shoulda been on it."

A wave of despair rushed over Chambers as the Emily began to pick up speed. He looked at the barges, and considered stealing one of them, but then he took a good look at the water. Of all the denizens of his nightmares, the most awesome lived in the water.

Sickened, he watched the Emily lumber out of the water and fly towards the horizon.

-To be continued



KISSAR: A LYRE,
MADE IN CENTRAL
AFRICA, FROM A
HUMAN SKULL &
GAZELLE HORNS

DUNGEONEER

DEPTHS

This Issue's Specially Featured Adventure

TOWER OF THE SINGING DOOM
BY STEVE MARSH

To Adapt to a Runequest Center of Power

Bring everything up to date. . . that is, the tower is inhabited by some other. The Demon is bound to service/allied, and the Singing Doom is consulted and fed an occasional live sacrifice.

A new Smith and apprentices (this time of the 3rd Eye Cult) work here and the tower is rebuilt (including reopening the rooms in the walls—those walls are 15 feet thick and had rooms and arrow ports—those were filled with wet dust in a magic attack that slew all the men-at-arms garrisoned in the upper tower) to a full size of 40 feet tall with an audience area at the top. (Note, horses are assumed to be rare here.)

The Witches (four of them) have a new Coven leader and 20 Wolves (a Runelord/Priest with four Priestesses and 20 Werewolves). They lair in the open woods and run wild slaying.

No particularly useful for direct scenarios but good for background.

Or. . . .

The heir has returned with a Leman of Power who healed the heir upon the beach. Again restore, use a Human Smith this time, rebuild some of the upper tower (but no room to hold court in) with some Aldrya or Men for warriors. About 20 Men-at-arms and many stores. The Demon is $\frac{3}{4}$ ths dissolved into the Outer Darkness and the Singer is walled in (the flint cave is walled off). The Sandstone creature has been given life and broods over the tower top as a guardian (looking like a great crested creature of stone). It will actively move when the Demon is fully destroyed.

Or. . . .

It becomes a place for someone interested in getting involved.

You can also use it as is. It would be a messy place to move into (what with the neighbors and all) and dangerous to steal from.

For C&S it can be some player's sole inheritance (through a mother's cousin) who is a member of the high nobility (that you have to yield a holding to). Putting such a place into good shape would consume much time and gaming in a campaign. It would give the player quite a bit of goods and start, yet very little too.

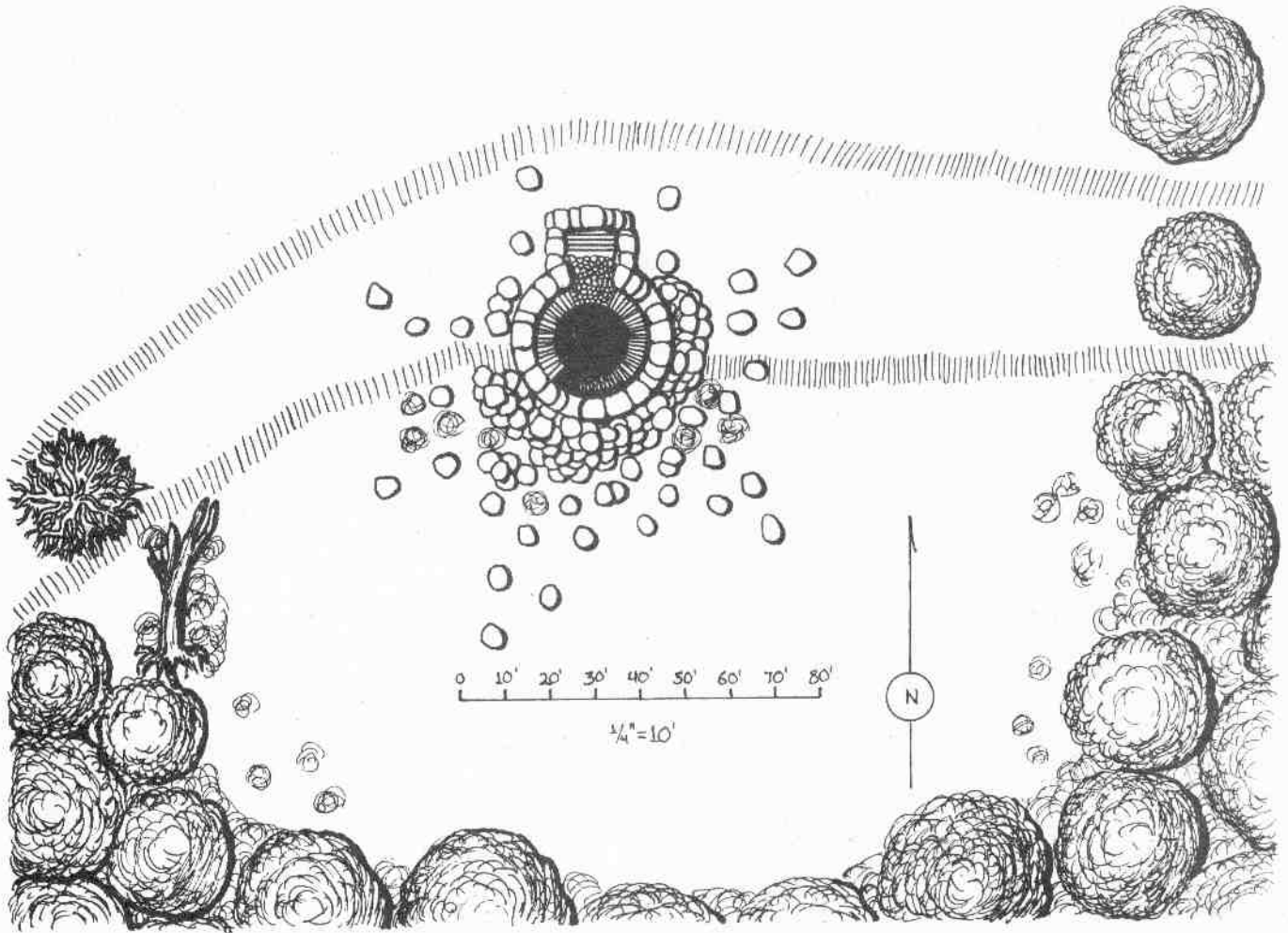
In all cases there is much flexibility. It is an old place of mystery and hopefully will provide much of the same. Add as desired. I did it up based on a small scenario I did once for a convention. Since it only took up some free time. . . .

This is an old stone tower. It is of smooth hewn granite set without mortar. Currently some vines have forced through the joinings.

It is very weathered and shows signs of some attacks including a few glazed area indicative of great magic. The gates, of rowan (mountain alder) wood bound in iron, are broken and half open. Old leaves cover the entranceway, blown into heaps by the wind. There is a great staircase leading both up and down. It is of stone, set into the walls of the tower in a great and gentle spiral. It is 10 feet wide with a 10 feet space in the center of the tower.

The top of the tower is missing so that the staircase winds up a turn and a half (15 feet) and then fails with the top of the tower broken away five feet latter.

The entranceway is approached by passing under an arch (it is recessed as per map) and going up a flight of wide steps. The tower is now 25 feet tall.



- A) This was a storeroom. It has barrels with salted meat, sour wine (vinegar), molded cheese, hard/dry bread, sweet fruit (preserves), and in general, food that has seen a long time since it was stored. Most of it is bad though some of the meat and sweet fruit (modern preserves came from this) is edible.
- B) This room appears to have been a storeroom for weapons. There are 40 spears set in racks on the walls, a forge and anvil, three hammers (2, 5 and 10 lbs.), some iron and steel ingots, and about 10 lbs. of charcoal. The charcoal will burn without fumes and produces a very intense heat.
- C) This room has a door of rowan wood, a threshold of silver, and has a six-sided star of bright white in the center of the door (the other doors, while of mountain elder and mountain alder, are well finished but not otherwise unusual), and is bound in silver. The star has sharp points and is runic in nature (a cold rune). Approaching the door an intense cold will be felt (about 80 degrees F. cooler than the current temperature).

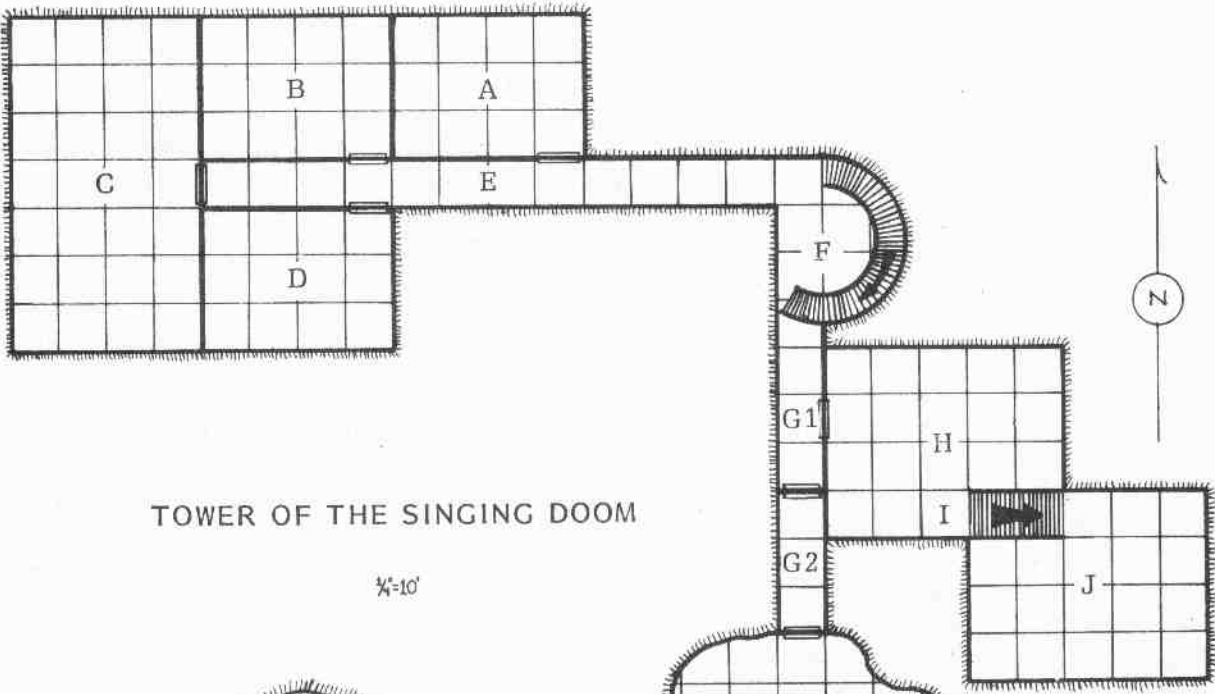
The room contains spear-armed Zombie warriors. They have skins that have been toughened by the drought of death. Since they have no nerves to speak of this hasn't caused them overmuch concern. The Zombies have spear and armor* as effective as banded leather/cuirboilli. 50 stand in loose formation and 50 lie stacked like cordwood against the wall, with coins on their eyes (electrum stamped with a swastika). They are all dormant, but the ones in formation will attack, and if roused the stacked ones will not obey, unless commanded in the proper language and terms of power. The silver portal acts as a barrier to them.

The rune keeps the room cold and is focused inward by the door. This protects the Zombies from a variety of things that would otherwise eat their dead flesh or cause it to rot.

- D) This room is foul and dank and 3 - 4" deep in water. The door, like the others, is well-finished and seals in the smell. In the center of the room is the body of some long-dead and rotting creature with a semi-humanoid skeleton. This was the room of the smith/armorer and his three assistants. They died the wet death of the old curse. The room is quite large and apparently had some slaves and such kept in it (judging from the rusty chains on the walls), though the rest of the furniture is a shambles. Like all the rooms, it has walls of native rock (granite, which begins after 5' of topsoil, subsoil and the like). The armorer was a Kinor (a seatroll/fell creature) and the curse was powerful.
- E) This is a corridor. The corridor is lined with worm-eaten white birch panels (cut from the woods nearby and seasoned for a year by drying). It is filled about 18" deep with molding leaves.
- F) The bottom of the stairs. There is a broken statue of a rearing horse, nine feet tall, and a huge pile of leaves (around five feet deep). Check to see if people fall or injure themselves on the marble shards.
- G) Another corridor of white birch, well-eaten by worms. Beneath the 1" panels are stone walls. The floor, beneath the foot and a half of leaves, is marble tile (both corridors), etched with scenes. 1) The main corridor, ends in an iron door; 2) the second corridor, beyond the iron door. This corridor ends in a door with a peephole that is cleverly disguised. From the other side it looks like another fleck of quartz in the granite. This door also bolts as does the iron door, and the 'K' side is disguised.
- H) A workroom and private quarters. The bed was a down-filled silk pillow that was suspended from the ceiling. It has long since disintegrated into dust. Some of the rotting quilts remain, covering the large lump on the floor with bright colors. The private quarters have three sets of shelves, one with very dry, brittle parchments (a history of Elchanar from the founding to the Triad Wars, 12 scrolls, the lore of Nimthanic Frost Master, 6 scrolls bound in wire, a Grimoire with covers of brass and locked - approximately 300 pages, and three pattern-covered scrolls, recording data on the stars, seasons, and local individuals of note several hundred years ago), the second with personal clothing and such (all very fine, will crumble to dust as touched), the third somewhat of a room divider with a double width (30" wide). One side of this third shelf has several porcelain statuettes (a tall, slender man in a robe, a very minutely detailed oak tree, three wood nymphs, a fierce-looking barbarian in combat with a strangely dressed and armed man [axe vs. rapier], and four that do not make sense [abstracts]) and six marble tiles with etchings (patterns similar to the flooring but more minutely detailed, like Japanese Mons), plus six brilliant fibers woven together in a helix. The side towards the work area has an anthane (ritual knife) with obsidian grip covered by a finely scaled skin (sharkskin). There is also a weight and balance set with silver and clay weights, five bottles of reagents (the first is acid of sulphur [2d6 if all lands on someone, 2d6 per ¼ drunk], the second acid of wine [acetic acid, 1d3 if all lands on someone, 2d6 if all is drunk], the third is pure distilled water, the fourth is salt, and the fifth is dried witches' blood) in narrow glass vials, three flasks of quartz molded into a glass-like substance (quartz glass), a small brazier and a pound of the special charcoal, five tablets of wax with a stylus, and some very hard clay.

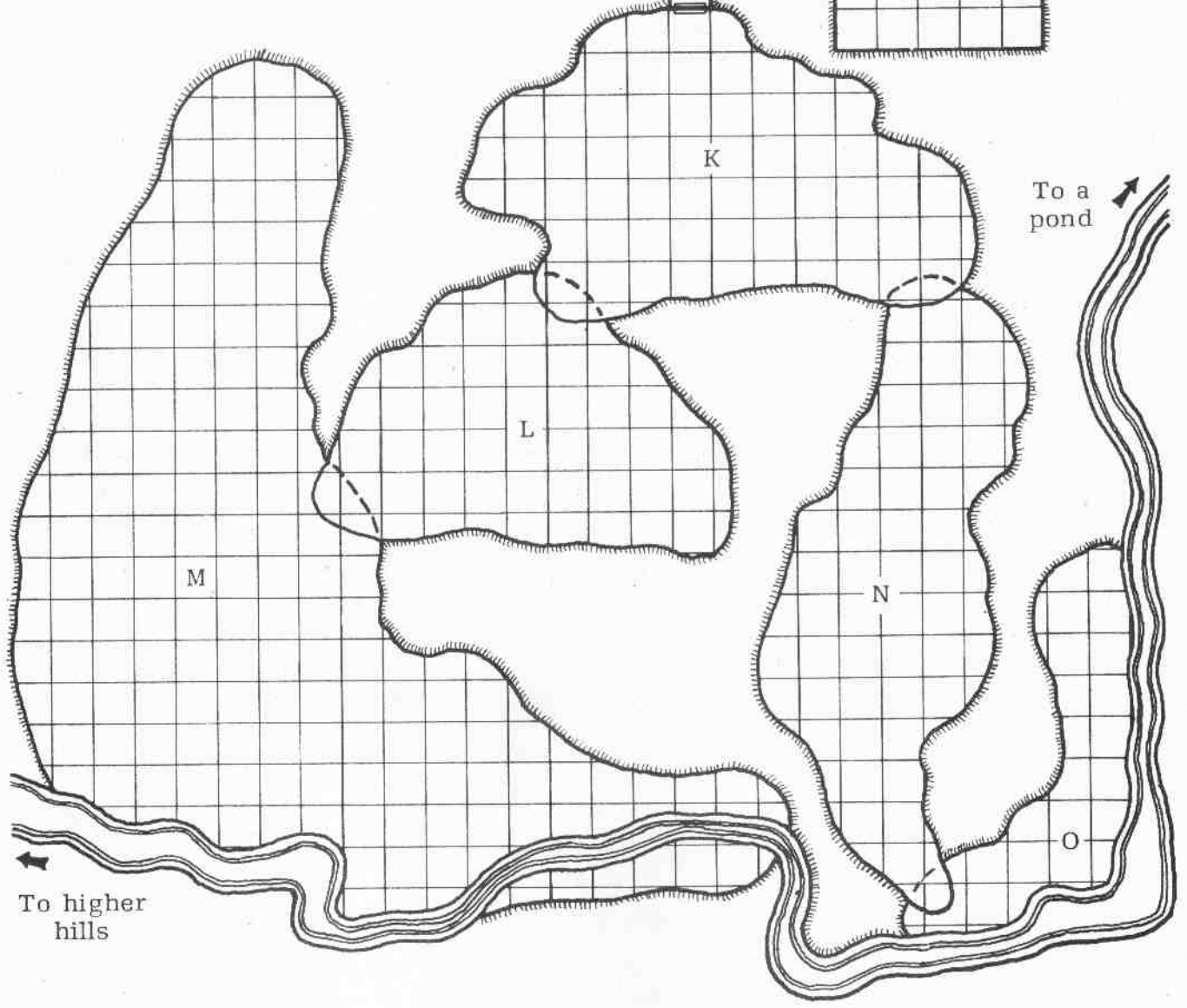
The workroom area has a table of clear glass (a rectangular solid 1' x 4' x 3') on 1' blocks of silver (one at each corner). Each block is worth 650 GP but weighs 6500 encumbrance points (about 650 pounds). It has a parchment on it (third of the scroll of the lettering of Joachim - pieces miss-

* Their skin, of course.



TOWER OF THE SINGING DOOM

¼-10'



To higher hills

To a pond

ing here and there from decay, or illegible due to spattered bloodstains). Also there are some blank sheets of parchment with an inkwell, long since dried into solidity, and a brush.

There is a large chest of stone in the far corner...

- I) That large chest of stone... When opened (it is counterweighted), it reveals a flight of stairs down. There will be a faint smell of almonds from it (HCN, hydrogen cyanide). There is a door at the bottom of the stairs, which are hewn from the bedrock and are not dressed. The door is of iron and is banded about with silver. It has three bars of wood (oak, rowan, oak) set into the center in 3' x 1' vertical strips. It opens when pushed and shows no handle from this side.
- J) This is the workroom and place of resort. It is walled in a gray wood (driftwood) and floored with the same, though the floor is polished and waxed. The near corner is covered with sheets of crystal (to protect the floor, 1' x 6' x 1" sheets) and had a statue of sandstone carved out. There seems to be something "fossilized" in the sandstone that the statue is of and the statue is not fully complete. A small chisel of steel with a basalt handle and a tassel with three red bead lies nearby.
- The far wall has a hanging mural and it is embroidered into silk with cotton thread. It seems to be of a beach and a seashore with a small rock island about 30' from the shore and about 20' x 10' x 10' (or possibly twice that distance and size due to perspective). It must be either evening or morning in the mural. It is a lesser portal evokable from the mural side.
- There is a barrel of fluid (essence of hyancity, about 20 gallons), and three barrels (of five gallons size each, partially full of essence of poppy-opium, water of life-alcohol, and sea water, respectively) of smaller size, all made of ash staves, in the corner. A tripod supports a crystal ball and is made of copper staves. Under it is a small dish with some partially burned incense (frankincense, musk, applewood, olive oil).
- K) Natural cavern. Below the band of granite (and here in a fold in same) is a band of limestone. This is unusual when taken in the general geographic/geologic context of the area and will be apparent to some players and characters. This cave has a damp feel and is an even 60 degrees F. The surface is rough. This cavern has a max height of 8 feet, an average of 5 feet and a low of 3 feet, varying somewhat randomly with the 8 foot peak near the opening to cavern L and the 3 foot drop near the opening to Cavern N.
- L) Natural cavern of limestone. It has several skeletons, apparently of four men dressed in chain armor (since fragments of the armor are still about) and armed with axes. There are also the skeletons of several other creatures but they were ripped limb from limb. Where the L is there is a blasted patch with fragments of a creature's limb bones on the edges. It is dome shaped and the opening to K just drops through the ceiling of the dome.
- M) A white light fills the cavern and reflects off the underground water that flows in and out the far end. The light comes from five flames that "burn" at the corners of a pentagram. Spread-eagled within the pentagram one will see a scaled and horned creature with a head covered with a black silver and silk bag. The horns from the knees and elbows appear to be very sharp. It is chained with silver chains that smoke where they contact the body. The flames are very cold, the pentagram radiates great heat. The creature continually writhes and turns but cannot break the chains nor shift from being spread-eagled. Nearby on the floor (which, unlike the others, is covered with sand) is a great sword of black iron, shattered into three pieces with the hilt stuck into the wall. The pentagram is made of silver and was apparently poured into the floor in molten state. The letterings are in black cords and knots and the double circle is in frozen blood on the sand. There is a braizer suspended from three copper staves and holding within it mixed incense 1) Myrrh and Cedar; 2) Clove and Ginseng on a base of olive oil and mandrake, twisted into a coil and partially burnt (take oil and mandrake powder and make a paste. Twist two incenses into it while forming it-that is what you've got here).
- N) The floor of this cavern is like a thousand knives of stone. Someone set a lot of flints here once.
- O) This area has a bad smell. It has a pool in the far corner where a blind thing sleeps. It wandered in here once, ate too much, and has not been able to leave since. Its eight tentacles each has a great

mouth at the end and is bleached of any color. A similar creature is sung of in the sixth cycle of lore as a source of a blood that will give wisdom and with ability to sing songs that will drive men mad.

Designer's Notes

Caverns L and M were the home of a Rock Lizard/Demon that slept from the old times. It slew several including a certain one's father. That one blasted it freeing the Demon who had been bound inside of the body (it had fled into the body of one of the small blind Cave Lizards and the power of the Demon had given the lizard great size and power but little mind). Then there was struggle, banishment, and then binding.

In D&D terms the Demon would have $12d8 + 12$ hit points, the Sword would be a Life-drinking, Man-slaying weapon (two-handed), it would have skin equal to chain in protective qualities and not biteable by normal weapons (silver, blessed iron, magical, etc. would all hit). Magic use like a Mage of Darkness, Level 12.

Cavern O is the blind thing's pool. The flints were summoned from the rock by the Rock Lizard/Demon to protect itself. In D&D terms the creature would sing so that its voice would lure one a full move's distance closer each round you failed to save (and nothing else would you do that round). The tentacles squeeze for $1d8$ /turn of constriction (up to one turn per foot tall target is) and bite for $1d6 + 2$ and suck blood at $2d6$ per turn thereafter. It has enough blood to provide the equivalent of three Commune spells. Only the blood from the belly counts. One must save vs. poison (it is poison in effective use—just as wisdom poisons) and vs. magic (corruption—to avoid being polymorphed into a similar creature by the power of its wisdom). Both can be protected against with protective spells and such.

It would have 65 hit points and armor like leather.

Room J once had HCN within it as a last barrier. It has a large flask of HCl and a handful of NaCN crystals on the table therein. The table (not mentioned) is of old leather on a frame of wood (portable) and near the door. It would be knocked over, breaking the flask, if someone barged in and knocked the door all the way open.

The tower was built by a warrior-Mage and his entourage who were given this area of the forest as a holding. It was made using much rowan and silver to bar the Witch-led Werewolves that had long held dominion and raided the nearby settlements. He built here sensing it to be a center of power for the evil and a place where the high coven had held sabbath.

Works below ground encountered a cavern which was explored. The Singing Doom claimed the Baron's wife and the awoken Lizard slew him. His only child called earth fire to blast the creature and then banished it to the abyss.

The Wolves grew bolder and made several assaults on the tower. A Kinor Smith was bound to service and forged the mighty banes of that folk (the Zombie spears will slay Were's with one blow and drain Witches of power. Such a blow destroys the spear and slays the wielder but Zombies don't usually care).

After due preparation had been made, the Demon (the second soul of the Witches) was summoned and bound, prior to a ritual of disolution which would have utterly destroyed it and cast what intelligence the Soul had held into the Realm of Outer Darkness.

The ritual was interrupted by a terrible assault by the coven which blew the very top of the tower off and caused the heir to flee as magic death fell like rain. The Kinor Smith died of the wet death, and a Stalking Terror pursued the only remaining living being. They fled to the "sighing sands" at the portal of the rock marsh and have wandered there in reveree since. The tower never was finished, the attack could not pass the banes at the door, though the door was shattered, and the Stalker turned upon its casters being frustrated. A few of the lesser Werewolves are all that remain. In D&D terms that would mean about $3d6$ Werewolves and $2d3$ Witches.





BY BILL PALEY

XXV

The sight of the onrushing wereboars caused the whole group to shiver in fear. Robert the Bold growled, "Just one silver arrow. . . ." Sombo thought over his spells, and decided on Enlargements upon himself to try to scare off the grunting lycanthropes. Chanting quickly, he gestured and smoothly grew to a twenty-foot height.

The monsters slowed in their charge as Sombo strode out into their midst, commending his soul onto Mastack. Behind him, Louise, the young witch, suddenly grew to a similar height. The wereboars began to back away, as Sombo tried to stomp on them clumsily (having never been so tall before, he found it difficult to maintain his balance). With a shouted curse, Robert the Bold led the fearful adventurers in a charge.

This was too much for the confused lycanthropes. They turned tail and ran for the cover of the brush, two giants and several screaming humanoids close behind them. The crashing sounds of the escaping monsters slowly faded in the distance.

Their relief was evident as the group fell on each other laughing hysterically, but soon the campsite was again silent as the emotionally exhausted party returned to their bedrolls.

Morning found them continuing west, where they turned south, playing in the waters of the river as they went. Near the confluence of the Rillcut Stream, Lilly called for silence, and pointed into the depths of the river. There, sleeping in the muck of the bottom, lay a great yellow sea-snake. Quietly, the adventurers followed the stream east, watching for a means to cross once again.

A short distance to the east, Ev cried out and pointed across the stream. A barge with three boatmen passing west. Shouting, the team talked the bargemen into carrying them across the stream for a few gold coins.

The travellers relaxed while they watched the boatmen pole across the river. Sombo lazily watched fish swimming deep in the stream, when he thought he saw a humanoid shape slip towards the barge. "No," he thought, "couldn't be."

Suddenly, some fifty (or more) greenish-tinged heads splashed up from under water. Surrounding the barge, it appeared that they were singing! As if in a daze, the bargemen dove into the water, just as the mercenaries and Elves fired arrows at the intruding heads. Three separate spells of sleep crackled through the ether, but the effects of the attempt were unnoticeable, since all the heads slid underwater.

The barge began to slip downstream, so Robert slipped out of his chain shirt, and, cursing, he dove into the water. Paddling swiftly, he managed to board and quickly pole the barge back to the waiting adventurers.

Soon, everything was loaded on the barge, and, while half of the team poled it into the stream, the remainder had bows out and arrows nocked. Other than the occasional ripple of flowing water, though, there was no indication of counter-attack.

Overhead flew a pigeon. This pigeon had followed the group for some time, occasionally being fed by them. Often they felt the bird might be intelligent, but they did not know why it continued to follow them. Just as they tied up on the far shore, and began unloading, this pigeon squawked loudly, as yet another fifty Nixies appeared singing.

The group clapped their hands over their ears and watched as the pigeon dove into the water. Just after contacting the surface, the pigeon changed into the shape of a figure familiar to Visson, Trudeau, one of the border fort's officers, who he had last seen assaulting the evil wizard's keep. The man disappeared underwater.

Sombo decided to try to do something, and, removing his hands from his ears, began

gesturing for a sleep spell. Before he could complete his action, he slowed, and, as if in a daze, he stepped off the barge into the water, disappearing among the reeds and lilies.

Upon the barbarian mage's loss, Chowl, one of the young clerics called upon his god, Krist, and reached for his sling. He, too, soon dove into the waters.

At this, the Nixies dove under the ripples, leaving none behind, and no shapes were seen underwater.

The adventurers gazed dumbfounded into the stream for some time before they began unloading the barge.

XXVI

As the grim group unloaded, they decided to travel at a small distance from the riverbank while on easily travelable ground. Saddened by their losses, their steps were slowed on their way south. Heads down in grief, they were less than watchful on their way.

"Halt!!" a voice cried near their line of march. To underline the threat, the 'spung' of a crossbow release was seen. There, to the side, stood three uniformed warriors in gray and red tunics, armed with swords and heavy crossbows.

Lilly, her anger pent up all day, roared shrilly, and drawing her sword, rode down upon the soldiers. Terrified, the three remaining armed crossbowmen fired awry, and before they could draw sword, she slew two of them!

While she exchanged blows with a third, Visson fired an arrow which passed through the remaining man's throat, and he dropped, gurgling in his death throes. Finally Lilly disemboweled her opponent, and dropped her sword, crying.

Visson came over to comfort her, while the mercenaries gathered the slain men's weapons and other useful items. Soon, they continued on again, as the land changed slowly to swamp. Just as night fell, the adventurers reached a point beyond which their mounts could no longer travel. Visson ordered the group to set up camp, a job which they did in total silence. The warmth and humidity in the swamp matched the discomfort they felt from guilt. Midges buzzed in great clouds over their heads as they worked, until they lit a fire to cook dinner. The wood was wet and rotten and gave off great clouds of evil-smelling smoke which drove the insects away, but also caused them to fall in great fits of coughing. They ate in silence, and, once a watch was set, they lay down upon their bedrolls to sleep, if they could.

Sallah lay praying for the safety and health of his companion in religion, Chowl, but he felt great fear for the young man. Perhaps his god smiled on him, for soon Sallah slept.

The Elves, as was their wont, did not sleep, but together they entered a dream state, to comfort one another. Lilly still burned with rage, but soon both were at peace.

The mercenaries slept, for they had seen the horrors of war, and no grief did they feel. In each of their minds, though, was a seed of hatred for Nixie-kind.

Louise and Kerk were on guard, but Louise still shivered in reaction to the day's occurrences. Kerk, the silent warrior, marched his patrol route, staying alert to cover for the lass' mental confusion.

Time passed as Howla and Vanis rose high in the sky. The watch passed from hand to hand until one hour before dawn. Lilly and Visson, on duty, were patrolling, when over a score of horrors glided from the mists of the swamp. Slowly the tattered bones of long-dead men marched into camp as Lilly passed the alarm. Grabbing up their weapons, the adventurers prepared to do battle.

Sallah, thinking quickly, called upon the powers Krist had given him, and caused the area about him to glow with light. As the glow assailed the group's retinas, a horn sounded far to the east, one. . . twice. Then Sallah, in a commanding voice, cried "Begone, creatures of darkness!"

A few of the monstrosities turned away to glide back in the mists, but there were two remaining for each stalwart in their path. Soon the clash of weapons, the grunts of pain and fatigue filled the silent night. Bursts of magical energy projected from Louise and Visson, blasting some of the attacking skeletons away. Once their magical powers were drained, Louise hid behind Kerk's broad back, while Visson lifted sword and joined in the battle.

Ev fell back with a deep claw wound in the shoulder. Lilly received a wound to the thigh, and a set of jaws were imbedded in her sword arm. Robert the Bold bled from seven wounds before he fell back. Sallah took two wounds on his forehead and chest. Kerk seemed unaware of a deep abdominal wound, and fought on with a rage glowing in his eyes. Visson quickly recieved wounds in both arms. Finally, Kerk and Visson battled but one more of the undead creatures. A final blow to its head by Kerk felled it, and he dropped to his knees. Louise ran to his side to bind his wounds. She, of the whole team, was the only one unwounded.

Sallah, trained in the stemming of tides of blood tended each one's wounds as the sun rose. As he finished, Visson rose.

"We cannot remain here. Recall that last night, as our cleric gave us light for hope and vision, a call upon a horn could be heard to the east. We can withstand no other attacks, and so it is my thought that we should go to seek help in this direction." There was no dissension, and so they rode slowly in that direction.

Before noon they reached drier land, and as the sun slipped towards the west, a citadel rose before them. The pennants topping the towers fluttered in colors of red and gray. Visson felt apprehensive at this, but then twenty, crossbow-armed warriors rode up—in gray and red uniform tunics.

"Halt and surrender yourselves," their leader cried.

XXVII

Led under heavy guard into the citadel, the adventurers were stripped of weapons and armor. Once certain that the sting had left the prisoners, the captain of the guard led a procession of weakened, wounded party members and guards into the main hall of the keep.

On a throne at the end of the hall sat a grossly obese humanoid form. A table before him was loaded with food from which he selected a roll and began eating it.

The guards halted before this creature (person?) and saluted. He waved back their attention and asked "Who commands?"

Lilly looked to each member and stepped forward. "I, Lilly, Warrior of Elfburn. Who asks?"

"I'll not speak with Elves," answered the strangely soft voice. Glaring eyes stabbed out and chose Robert the Bold. "What about you?"

"I have a tongue," the mercenary answered standing proud. "The question is the same, though."

"I am a wizard of great powers who you," he waved at the group, "have peeved." He reached for a sausage. Chewing, he continued, "I have lost four of my warriors, and I must pay their commander's death fees, or find new swords to fill his complement. I note that there are three warriors in your group. Pay is excellent, food and barracks space top-quality. Either you join my militia, or I execute the seven of you."

The Elves looked shocked, but Robert the Bold looked interested. "What about advancement?"

"Rapid, if you meet my requirements," the beings voice was muffled by an apple. "In addition, I require a lab assistant for the next two weeks to aid me in an experiment. I recognize that there are mages among you. I will pay in magical scrolls

(two) for your time."

"We seem to have no choice," replied Robert. "It is agreed."

"Commander," the obese creature said, "escort these Elves to Anatal. They may await their friends there."

"If you will, my lord, I will travel with them," said Sallah. At the fat one's nod, he turned to follow the Elves out.

The three warriors were soon absorbed into the guard, and though Louise saw them once in a while, she was so busy during her two weeks that she had no time to talk with them. On her last day, with a scroll of one, and another of three spells in her pouch, she was met at the gate by Kerk, with whom she had long adventured. He saluted her, in his silent way, and marched off when he saw the tears in her eyes. Then she was off, escorted by five citadel guards.

In Anatal, the three remaining adventurers had spent the time resting and healing from their wounds. Speaking with wise men of the town, they learned that Nixies take slaves for but one year, releasing them at point of capture exactly one year later. They decided to be there to meet Sombo, Chowl, Trudeau and the boatmen the day they were released.

The evening that Louise arrived, they celebrated at the reunion, and they made merry, in a sad sort of way. Lilly, somewhat drunk, stated loudly, "I'm tired of running away or backing down. The next danger we meet I will triumph." The cheers of the inn's crowd drowned out Visson's reaction, but his face showed alarm.

The next day the sadly depleted group of adventurers rode south from the town ("North certainly didn't get us anywhere.") Just after their noon lunchbreak, they began to hear a rumbling buzzzz-whooof, a very repetitious noise. As they rode over a rise, their horses shied at the sight of a large White Dragon snoozing in the shade of a copse of palm trees.

Lilly immediately pulled out an arrow, and, nocking it, let fly at the creature's eye. Visson, originally intending to stop her, instead prepared to loose a Magic Missile, as did Louise. Sallah, shivering in terror, pulled out a sling and swung it in preparation of launching a bullet.

The Dragon was struck just above the eye, and the arrow penetrated. It rose, roaring curses (in White Dragon, of course), and its less protected underside became open for missile fire. A barrage of two missiles, magical and two non-magical from the four adventurers smote the beast in its vitals, but did not quite slay it. Opening its mouth it turned towards the bunched group and breathed. . .

Darkness fell over the frozen bodies of four horses, two Elves, and two Humans.

XXVIII

During the time he worked for Glugclickgur, Sombo never once considered it strange that he could breathe water. He was told to wear a handsome pearl around his neck, and, as he did with any orders he was given in that year, he did so. Finally, a year passed, and he found himself saying goodbye to his former master. As he broke surface, the Nixie removed the magical necklace, and removed the charm spell from the young mage.

On the riverbank, in the tatters left them from a year's rotting of cloth, he found the bargemen and the "pigeon", Trudeau with Chowl. The bargemen took their leave to walk home, and Trudeau immediately took charge, as was his wont as a former officer of the Invincible Overlord's Hosts.

"I must return to my lord at the fort along the Overlord's Southern Border lands. As a group our chance of survival is much better than as individuals. Are you with me?"

Sombo and Chowl nodded dumbly. Trudeau turned north, leading them away from the banks of the River Angor.

Some miles on their way, a rustling was heard in brush around them in the woods. Unarmed, they were easy prey. A horde of soldiers charged out and took them prisoner, leading them deeper into the jungle. Soon they arrived at a huge, fallen tree trunk, larger than some of the castles that Sombo had seen. Portals had been carved. . . no, gnawed out of the wood. Playing outside were some giant rats. . . no! Wererat children!

They were dragged inside, Sombo shivering, Trudeau alert and Chowl stoic. In a huge main hall within the trunk, a trial was carried out in a strange tongue. Finally, the leader asked, in halting common, what gods each man prayed to. When Chowl said Krist, he was instantly executed, although neither Sombo nor Trudeau were harmed. They, instead, were led down a trap door into the earth under the great tree, and they were locked behind an iron grate in a dirt room.

"Your time will come, but on sacrifice, not in sport. Too bad for you. . . sacrifice is painful." The Wererat guard giggled as he left them in the dark.

Sombo said, half to himself, "I've no power here. . . .



XXIX

When Sombo stopped his prayers to Mastack for the third time, Trudeau whispered "Shut up, already." A powerfully built man, the officer grasped the bars of the cell door, and with a groan, he bent the soft iron wide enough to pass through, with difficulty. Sombo, eyes wide with amazement, scampered out the sundered door, followed by the warrior.

"I watched as we were brought here. We need weapons, and I think I saw an armory or guardroom. It's still daylight, so they ought to still be patrolling. Follow me."

Stumbling through the dark, they continued to the ladder up into the trunk, itself. Lifting the trapdoor, Trudeau peered about. Satisfied, he and the young mage swarmed up into the room.

Several bottles of oil and a lit candle were scattered on a table, and a chest sat between several tiers of bunks. Ignoring spears racked on the walls, Trudeau lifted the lid of the chest to find coins. . . and a silver-chased sword!

With a growl of delight, he drew it forth, and filled a pouch with gold. Then, spilling oil on the wooden walls, he lit the spill with the candle. As the smoke rose up, the two humans burst into the main hall of the lycanthropes.

"Fire, fire!" roared Trudeau. Pandemonium broke out, and the two men escaped almost without notice. As they approached the front gate, a guard tried to stop them, but a sword passed through his throat put the creature in its place.

Out into the fresh air they ran. Plunging through the jungle undergrowth, scaring squawking birds and chattering monkeys, they kept at a fast pace for some time. On they ran, well into darkness. Behind them they heard no sounds of pursuit, and Sombo dared to think that they had escaped, once and for all.

In the gloom of the moonlit jungle, suddenly a red glow appeared ahead of the pair. Trudeau turned toward it and the two men raced into an encampment containing. . . eight Elves!

The Elven warriors rose, weapons drawn, at the appearance of the panting duo. Two of the company were arrayed in splendid full plate armor, one set with a mirror-finish which reflected perfectly all light falling upon it. These two approached the humans with weapons at the ready.

The one in mirror armor demanded, "Who disturbs the rest of my esteemed master, Elberen, Elf-lord?"

Sombo, gaspingly replied, "Two ill-fated wanderers who have this night escaped the clutches of a tribe of Wererats, a group who executed one

ill-starred member of our train."

Before the Elves reacted, Trudeau added, "We're to the Old South Road, to travel back into civilized lands of the Overlord."

At this, the second armored Elf, the lord, replied, "Such civilization as there may be, I'll leave to you to find. We are afoot to Onhir, an Elven town next to the Fogbound Forest, with husbands," he pointed behind him, who grinned, "for some of their maidens. This town lies along the road. We offer you protection in exchange for tales."

"And such will we wag," answered Trudeau, grinning. The assemblage laughed, and settled down for a late sup, for the humans were famished. No pursuit by the lycanthropes developed, and Sombo suggested that the fire was raging out of control within the depths of the great tree trunk.

When the Elves learned of Sombo's participation in the battle versus the giant skunks who had once terrorized Onhir, they gave him a hero's treatment, to his pleasure and embarrassment. Elberen, and the older Elf, Legothin of the Mirror Armor, remained aloof, and in command of the group's respect.

The next several days of march passed uneventfully, and the group swapped lies and lays, often singing until late at night. On the last night of the march, however, the idyllic trek was marred by the assault of two hungry minotaur lizards.

The great beasts tried to sneak into camp, but they were thwarted in the attempt by the sharp eyes and ears of one of the young Elf, soon-to-be-husbands. Quickly the Elves arrayed themselves in a line, bow-armed, and began peppering the great beasts with shafts. Although the scaly reptilian hide repelled most arrows like droplets of rain, under heavy fire, some penetrated, and occasionally caused grievous wounds.

One creature Trudeau attacked, on foot, with his silvery sword flashing in the firelight. The great saurian, already short gallons of blood due to gaping leg wounds caused by lucky bowshots, soon weakened, and died under the slashing attack. The second, having had both eyes lanced by arrows, trundled into the fire, and expired. To escape attacks by scavengers, the group moved away about a mile, and the remainder of the night cries of creatures battling for meat (cooked or raw) could be heard from the direction of the campsite.

XXX

The next day, the company reached the Old South Road, and while the Elves wound their way southerly, Sombo and Trudeau turned north. The

parting was jovial, and after trading insults, the groups parted as friends. The Elves waved as the Humans disappeared over a hill.

Travel was easy along the road. Soon they passed the invisible boundary which Trudeau described as being "between civilized lands and barbarianism." Sombo, a "barbarian" himself, kept his own opinions of the lands of Altanis, but nodded sagely at his companion's pronouncements.

Finally, ahead on the road could be seen the (to Trudeau) familiar uniforms of the castle of his lord. He halloed and waved as they approached, and was overjoyed to find men of his own company. They carried the two men back to the fort in triumph, and the lord, though still strangely affected with a steely voice, reinstated Trudeau to his former rank, and appointed him to the post of commander of far patrols, a dangerous but lucrative position.

Sombo was also pleased to meet once again Simon, the Paladin, who was staying that night with the lord. "I travel in these parts often, my friend, and so it is not surprising that you should meet me again." The two comrades-in-arms brought each other up to date on their adventures, but Sombo was disappointed to find that the young warrior had no news about the Elves, Lilly and Visson, or their group. "They must have traveled far south, perhaps to the Isles of the Blest."

Sombo and the Paladin agreed to join forces to search out the others. The lord gave Sombo a mare, with saddle, as a gift, and the next day's dawn found them travelling again towards the south-east. This took them off the road, into the jungles.

Their horses picked a careful path through great mud-puddles and ponds amongst the palm trees. Occasionally, great shapes could be seen to move under the surface of some of the waters. Suddenly, on either side, giant crocodiles sprang up from the muck, and, with scissor-like snaps, felled the men's horses.

Sombo had the misfortune of falling within the jaws of one of the creatures. Simon, soon wounded, fought his way to the slimy reptile who had the young mage's comatose body in his grasp. Desperately hacking at the beast's tough hide, he fell prey to attacks from behind, and he, too, fell.

Some argument developed as the awful monsters divvied up the feast, but soon the jungle returned to its deceptive peacefulness.

THE END

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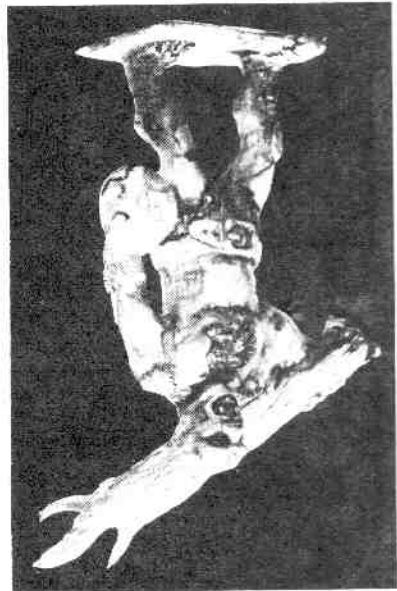
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The Edge of the Galaxy part 8 by Syauqaj N. Luap

AS YOU MAY REMEMBER... WE LEFT CAPTAIN KURK JUST AS HE HAD ACCIDENTALLY LOCKED INTERGALACTIC SPACE SCOUT, DAVID SYRINGE IN AN EVACUATED AIRLOCK...

ACCIDENTALLY MY EYE!! I AM NOT BUYING COOKIES FROM ANYONE THIS YEAR!!!

BUT... I'M A SPACE SCOUT... NOT A GIRL SCOUT!!

HOW COULD I KNOW THAT HE HATES CHOCOLATE CHIPS?

AIRLOCK
Vacuum Fresh Seal

OH, WELL... HOWEVER, I THINK THAT I CAN ONLY HOLD MY BREATH FOR ABOUT 10 MORE PANELS...

Emergency Hatch

Booby Hatch

MEANWHILE... IN THE SHIP'S NURSERY, THE BY-PRODUCTS OF ENSIGN DOXEY'S INDISCRETIONS HAVE BEGUN TO PILE UP...

AND WHAT ABOUT ENSIGN DOXEY?... SHE'S STILL SEARCHING FOR THE FATHER(S?) OF HER CHILDREN...

MADAM... I'M CERTAIN THERE IS A LOGICAL EXPLANATION...

FEET DON'T FAIL ME NOW!!

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AT THAT MOMENT, IN DR. McPALEY'S TEMPORARILY ABANDONED SICKBAY A CONFRONTATION IS BREWING...

SWISH

WAAAGH!

MEANWHILE...

Nosromo

... 4 PANELS...
... 5 PANELS...