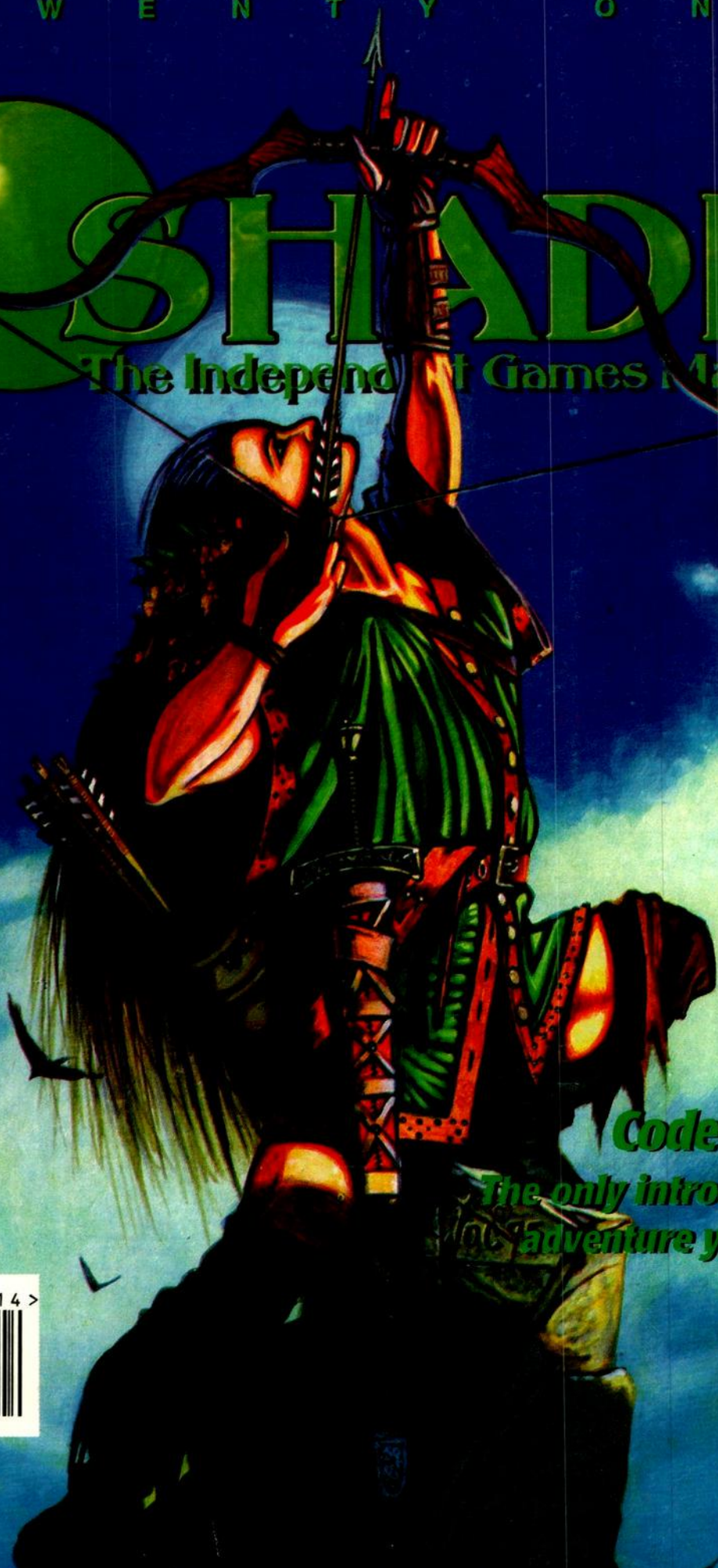


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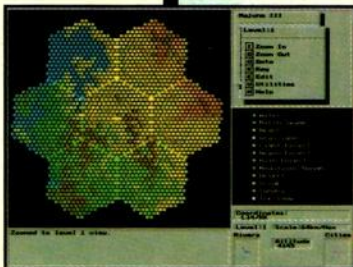
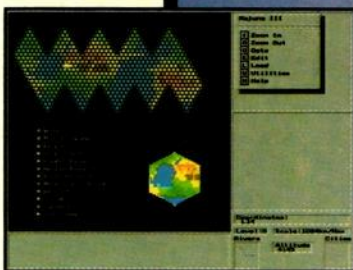
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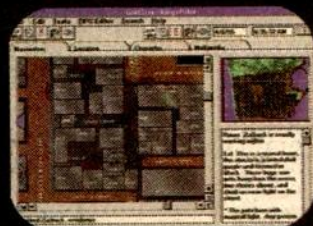
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**October 1995**

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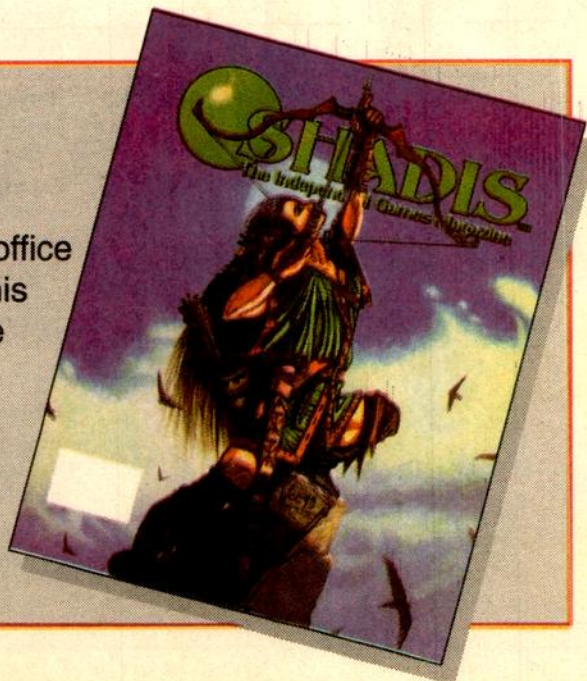
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### About the Cover:

William O'Connor is an office favorite here at AEG. This cover will give you some idea why...



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### Declaration of Independence

The staff of SHADIS is determined to keep this publication independent and bringing our readers the best coverage of the gaming industry available.

Although the Alderac Entertainment Group, publishers of SHADIS, publishes game systems and supplements — SHADIS will not become a house-organ.

Our policy (written in stone) is that SHADIS will not review products produced by AEG and that AEG is limited to one full page ad per issue. In addition, articles relating to AEG games will be limited to two issues per year — not to exceed a combined total of fifteen pages for both issues. (that works out to 15 pages per 672 published pages of SHADIS.)

This policy actually penalizes AEG for being associated with SHADIS rather than having an unfair advantage over other companies. We hope this policy demonstrates our determination to keep SHADIS truly independent.

**Amendment:** This policy does not apply to SHADIS PRESENTS. □

# Cries From the Attic

## Editorial of a Madman



### "The Stars are Right!"

On January 2, 1990 I walked into the Post Office on Fort Jackson, South Carolina and pushed 100 issues of SHADIS #1 across the counter for shipment. For three months I had been laboring away on a small computer in the corner of my bedroom, creating a fanzine from scratch.

For the next six years SHADIS became the master of my world and the center of my universe as it grew from a small, hand-assembled fanzine to a prozine reaching distribution levels of 20,000.

The cover of that first issue proudly invited the reader to "Witness the Beginning of a Great Adventure!" And what an adventure it has been. I had no idea when I chasing my dream that it would be so wrapped up in the dreams of so many others. My small fanzine, for whatever reason, attracted gamers. And with them came the talent and experience (and yes, the venture capital and business savvy I was lacking) to help SHADIS step up at the table with the big guys.

For the past two years, we've been the little guys who made good. Everyone seems to have been rooting for us. From our readers, to shopkeepers, to distributors, artists and game designers, it seemed everyone was calling up to pass along a good tip or ask for a few promo copies to show a friend or potential advertiser. SHADIS was launched with an attitude that we were here to serve the industry.

I don't think it ever hit me that we'd actually pulled it off until I heard the news that we had missed winning the Origins Award for Best Professional Gaming Magazine by just three votes! (Dragon™ and Duelist™ tied for first place.) It wasn't until that moment, when I saw that we were standing almost toe to toe with the 'big guys' that I had a sense of what we've accomplished with SHADIS.

Yes, it's been a great adventure indeed!

I speak in past tense because it is with great regret that I am announcing my resignation as editor of SHADIS. A few weeks ago, after months of deliberation, I placed a proposal before my partners asking that my interest in both AEG and SHADIS be bought out. With reluctance, they accepted that proposal and by the time you read this editorial it will all be settled and I'll already be sailing the uncharted waters of the freelance world.

Why? There were numerous concerns that led me to such a decision but most of them are inherent in any deadline-driven job such as stress, long hours, missed holidays, etc. One very serious problem for me is the fact that I've been turning down job opportunities and assignments for the past two years because the magazine demands too much of my time to even consider outside projects.

The clincher, however, was the fact that my partners and myself have been moving in different directions the past year or so. This problem is in no way unique to AEG. Countless business partnerships end over differences on how a company should be run or in what direction it should grow. Just one of those sad facts of life.

A good friend summed up the situation by commenting, "Jolly, you wanted a grass-roots company and your partners are aiming for the stars." I think his explanation is about as good as

any I would care to offer. (Consider this the Cliffs-Notes version of my departure).

Where am I off to? Well, I promised myself I would take a few months before tackling any major projects so I'll be freelancing for the time being. I've also retained ownership of *Knights of the Dinner Table™* so I'll be working on the comic books and doing the strip for one or more of the gaming magazines.

Since the parting has been friendly, the door is open for KODT to continue appearing in SHADIS. I've also indicated I may be interested in heading up a regular column, or freelancing an article from time to time. So don't expect me to drop from sight — at least not yet! I'm also in the process of setting up freelance assignments with several of the other gaming magazines while I'm waiting for my subscription to SHADIS to arrive in the mail.

I set up new offices so if anyone needs to reach me directly I can be reached at:

Jolly R. B., 8780 19th St. #181,  
Alta Loma, CA 91701  
Phone/fax: (909) 484-9284  
Email at: [jollyrb@aol.com]

Not to fear loyal readers, I am leaving SHADIS in capable hands of D.J. Trindle who has been serving as Assistant Editor for over a year now.

D.J. had the unfortunate experience of learning my home-brewed system for editing and laying out a magazine. I fondly call it the "Jolly Blackburn: One man - No I don't need any help - Oh my Gawd it's Saturday - I need someone to bring me a change of clothes to the office - Here's your damn proofs it's your problem now - I'm getting hammered" Layout/Editing System.

D.J. has learned the system extremely well and I'm expecting him to take SHADIS onward and upward as editor. He's been doing a great job on the magazine and if you're apprehensive about having a new set of hands at the wheel, relax. D.J. has pulled together the last three issues largely on his own.

It occurred to me as I was writing this that I am writing my last editorial for SHADIS. That got me thinking about all the editorials I've written over the years and before I knew it I had pulled out my archived copies and drifting back to that little fanzine that dragged me on this journey.

After reading the editorial in Issue #14 which presented the policies and standards I had set

IT'S THE GREATEST GIFT  
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AND TAKE NOTICE  
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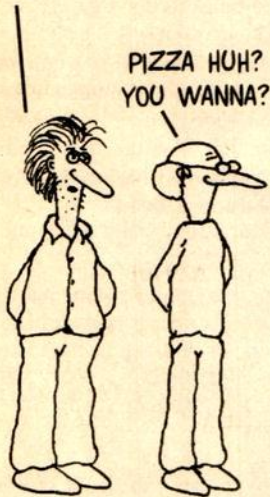


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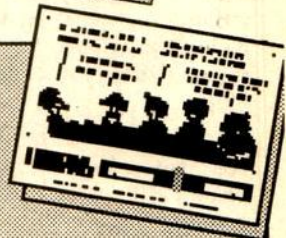
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down for SHADIS, I realized it would be fitting to present it again during the changing of the guard that's about to take place.

The SHADIS Policy Statement combined with the Declaration of Independence (check out the contents page of any issue of SHADIS from #16 on) define my original vision of SHADIS. It's the yardstick I've used to keep the magazine on course, and keep any would-be-detractors at bay.

## A Matter of Policy

Editorial: SHADIS #14  
July 25, 1994

In the grand scheme of things, I suppose a humble gaming magazine can't really be considered anything of great import. What can be said about it except that it's a forum for people sharing a common interest, in this case gaming, and a vehicle for advertisers to target their audience. A single magazine among thousands of others in a hundred different niche markets trying to find a place in the brutal and deadly world of publishing.

Over the last six issues my partners and I (along with a small army of contributors and feature editors) have strived to make SHADIS something special - something different. It's an ongoing process governed by a specific game plan and company policy. I won't bore you with all of the specifics, but I thought it might be of interest to some of our readers if I over-viewed some of our basic policies.

1. Independent as well as Neutral

I decided in the beginning that SHADIS would be a "house-organ for the industry." I wanted a magazine that brought gamers together as well as the game companies (both large and small) in a forum that was strongly independent as well as neutral.

This point of policy is simple - there is no room for politics at SHADIS. If you want to hear the latest dirt on various game companies and designers, you won't find it here. If you want to know which side of the fence SHADIS has taken when a lawsuit between two game companies is announced, you'll be hard pressed to find out. The bottom line is that SHADIS is a games magazine and we will concern ourselves with issues that concern gaming.

You'll find the details of such lawsuits - but you won't find personal opinions on which side is right.

### 2. Building Foundations

Another policy here at SHADIS wouldn't be of concern to our readers except that it might explain a few things that wouldn't otherwise be obvious. Many of you have inquired and even chided us for not going full gloss/full color. Well, there's a reason why we haven't made the move up in production quality. Our first priority is to transform SHADIS into a financially stable and healthy publication.

The fatal temptation for most fledgling magazines is to pump dollars into paper upgrades and color. I suppose the line of thinking is that more readers will read your magazine if it is pretty and attracts the eye. Such a rationale ignores the uniqueness of our hobby.

Gamers, as a whole, are intelligent, discerning individuals who are not easily fooled by flash and showmanship. In fact, most gamers seem to have an aversion for big business and their hype-marketing.

Gloss pages would be wonderful. But I'm confident there are other gamers like myself out there who, given a choice between additional pages or going gloss, would vote for content over cosmetics.

The typical issue of SHADIS is 112 pages for a cover price of \$3.50. That's over thirty additional pages of articles and adventure every issue that would not have been possible had we gone gloss.

### 3. Put on New Eyes

This is a favorite saying of mine, taken from an old Gallagher routine. It concerns taking a familiar subject and looking at it in a new way.

Popular sections of the magazine like *Hook, Line, and Sink*, *GameMaster's Workshop* and even the *Knights of the Dinner Table* were devised by looking something common and attempting to look at it in another way.



I'm constantly evaluating SHADIS and asking myself how I can improve it. I study small press gaming zines for talent and fresh ideas. I surf the net looking to see what people are talking about and what their feelings are. Anything I can tap into to bring to the reader is a bonus.

I try to step back and pretend I'm Joe Gamer (not a far stretch) and ask myself what I'd would like to see in a games magazine. What would make me pick it up off the shelf? Hopefully the results are obvious. If not, we still have a lot of work to do.

**4. Keep your Toes in the Grass**

I coined this phrase a few months ago after tracing the history and development of some of my favorite game magazines (i.e a few of our competitors). I've spotted a trend over the years. A magazine would start out as a grass roots endeavor, flourish for a time and then suddenly remake itself into something which hardly resembles the magazine that attracted its original reader base.

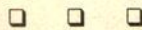
I'm not saying this is bad — it's the nature of progress. Change is good and often times its critical for survival.

As a matter of policy for SHADIS, however, I want to keep the magazine footed in the grass roots of gaming.

This can be achieved by staying intimate with small press publishers and becoming deeply involved in attending and supporting small con-

ventions. More importantly, we can keep SHADIS on track if you, the reader, speak out and keep us honest by throwing a few rocks when we drop the ball.

I hope that gives you some sort of idea on where we are heading. I expect you I keep us on our toes if we stray.



**A**nd so my watch ends here at SHADIS. Before I close, I wanted to make something very clear. Because I created SHADIS and have had my hand at the editorial-rudder for so many years, there's been a tendency to lay all things 'good and noble' associated with SHADIS at my feet. I've always been uncomfortable with that, which would explain why so many of my editorials have been no-more than 'thank you' notes to various people who have helped with this endeavor.

Sure, I'm proud of where the magazine has gone and I'm confident the foundation has been laid for a long and bright future for it. The fact is, friends, SHADIS is not and has never been a one-man show.

A magazine's lifeblood are the readers, contributors, artists, advertisers and everyone else who interacts with it on a monthly basis. A tremendous amount of effort and drive goes into pulling a single issue of SHADIS together. Effort derived from dozens of people, many of whom have never met face-to-face.

They've come together because they have something in common, a love for games and for the people they play them with.

It's natural, I suppose, that they would embrace a magazine inspired by those same feelings and dedicated to serving the community of gaming.

In the end, that's what SHADIS has always been about - friends coming together at the table and talking about their favorite subject, games.

Good gaming,  
until we meet again!

*Jolly R. Blackburn*

Jolly R. Blackburn

Oct 27, 1995



Discover...

# Fantasy Earth

*Sir Jeteki quickened his pace and moved his hand closer to the hilt of his sword as he scanned the shadows for signs of movement. He had left his friends back at the bar and his armor back at the palace. Now he was seriously regretting the entire outing. Suddenly, two men stepped out of the alley just ahead of him. As they drew short swords from under their dark cloaks, Jeteki glanced over his shoulder to see a third man stepping out behind him, a glint of metal reflecting moonlight under his cloak as well. He quickly considered his options. Three on one was a dangerous fight, even for the greatest swordsman in Trent, especially without armor, and there was no knowing how many more were lurking in the shadows. As the two in front closed on him, spreading to encircle him, Jeteki drew his sword and slipped it past one man's feeble parry and into his gut, dropping him instantly. He nimbly dodged the attack of the second thug and turned to face both remaining assailants while slowly backing in the direction of the city gates, and safety....*

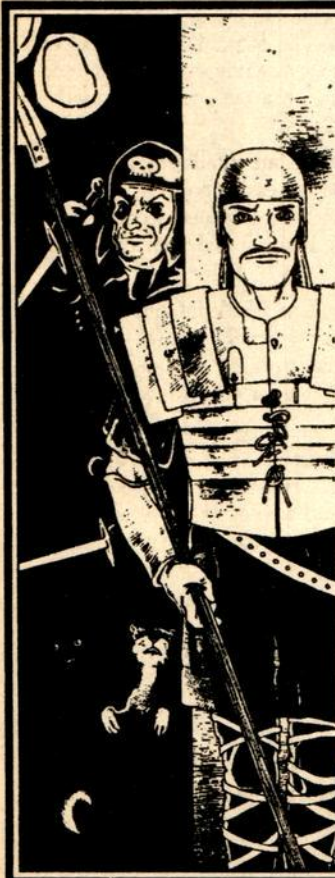
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*"The cave people had apparently worshipped some beast, and as we fled the cave, it appeared. It was huge. No, not what you're thinking, but truly immense. Forget armored scales, its mere bulk made any thought of killing it with sword or spear ridiculous. I considered that there were one or two spells I could think of that might kill it, but I didn't want to get close enough to find out. My companions apparently agreed, and we all cowered in the ditch and hoped it didn't notice us as it spread its wings and flew away."*

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# Role Call

## A Run-Down of New Releases in the Industry

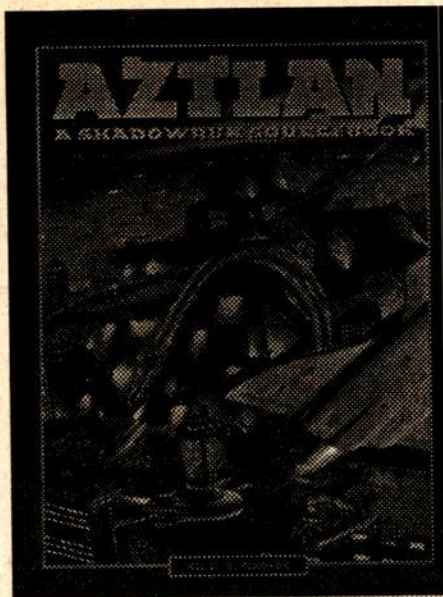
**R**ole Call is a new column devoted to recent releases in the gaming industry. Each month, a new series of products, systems and supplements will be displayed and discussed briefly.

The column is designed to give gamers an idea of what to expect in the product - beyond the simple "back page plug" on the cover. Role Call is not a series of reviews; the authors are not attempting to gauge the quality of the work or render an opinion on its overall usefulness.

Instead, they simply give readers an idea of what they're in for. New rules and settings will be given an overview, pertinent designers and supplemental material will be mentioned, and an overall summation of the product will be included.

Role Call has no bias towards any particular system or company. Both large and small products will be covered, and no more than two products from any one company will be discussed in the same issue.

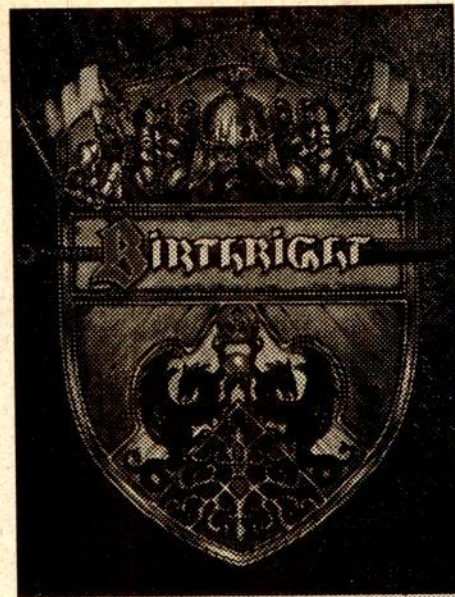
If you are interested in seeing a rulebook or game setting appear in Role Call, please send your suggestions to the SHADIS offices. We always consider reader interests when assembling this column. □



**Aztlán** is the South of the Border Sourcebook for FASA's **Shadowrun** RPG. Written by the late Nigel D. Findley, it centers around the growth and development of the Aztlán nation out of the ashes of old Mexico. The 184 page rulebook contains extensive information on running campaigns in Aztlán and a detailed description of its controlling interest, the powerful mega-corp, **Aztechnology**. As in many other Shadowrun sourcebooks, the information appears in the format of an "internet discussion" of various Shadowrunners, who comment on a series of recently stolen corporate files.

Aztlán has the distinction of being the world's only corporate nation: elections, government services and all practical facets of society are controlled by **Aztechnology**. A detailed history of the company is included, from its beginning as an extension of the Columbian drug cartels to its current status as the most powerful corporation on Earth. In addition, its business practices, corporate structure and key personnel are discussed in depth. The sourcebook also includes a more "traditional" history of the supposedly autonomous government, including its gradual absorption into **Aztechnology** and its current status in relation to other North American states. Information on geography, politics, day to day life, and the capital city of **Tenochtitlán** (formerly Mexico City) is provided as well. The book closes with a color map of the capital.

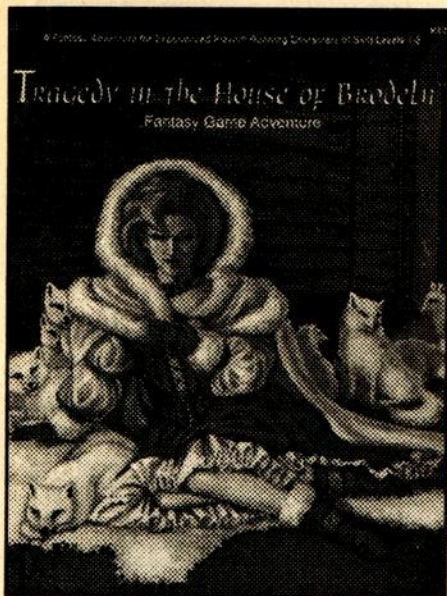
A rebellion of Native Americans against the ruling government has exploded in the **Yukatán** jungles, and the text covers the conflict in considerable depth. Players are provided with ideas on "inserting" their characters into the country, and GMs receive several ways on how to keep them busy once they get there. Finally, the book devotes an entire chapter to the specifics of the Aztec religion (revived by **Aztechnology** and currently the dominant faith), and includes rules for using native Aztec magic in your campaign. Eight color paintings have been inserted into the center spread, designed to complement each of the myriad subjects the sourcebook entails.



**Birthingright** is a new campaign set from TSR, designed to bring the **AD&D** game closer to its wargaming roots. Rather than normal adventurers, players create the rulers of entire kingdoms who must guide their realms and their people through a maze of intrigue, diplomacy and feudal warfare.

Thousands of years ago, on the continent of **Cerilia**, the forces of Good and Evil engaged in a cataclysmic conflict that marked the end of an era. The Gods themselves descended from heaven to take part in the battle, and the fury of their wrath was such that their very essences drained out of them like blood. The forces of Good won the day, but the old gods were destroyed in the process, the core of their beings spent. In their place rose new gods, mortals on the battlefield who had been imbued with divine essences. Players in **Birthingright** are the descendents of these new gods, noble rulers with holy blood flowing in their veins. They must maneuver their kingdoms between aggressive neighbors, internal politics, and the constant threat of the **awnsheghlien** (mortals twisted and warped into hellish monsters by the essences of the evil gods) to expand and become more powerful.

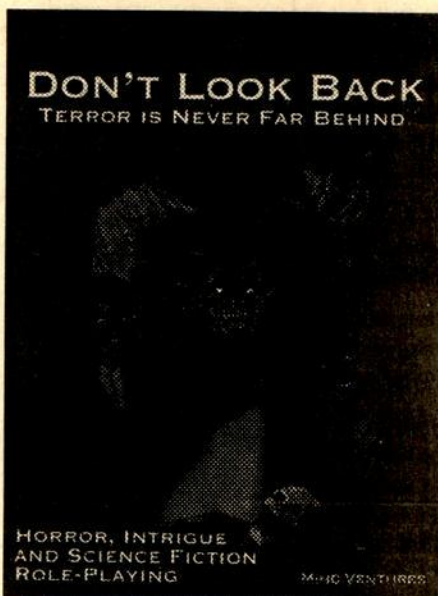
The boxed **Birthingright** set contains three rulebooks describing the setting and giving rules for play. The **Atlas of Cerilia** presents a brief overview of the people and history of the continent. The **Rulebook** discusses how to create noble characters, how to govern kingdoms, and how to conduct feudal warfare. And **The Ruins of Empire** book describes the various kingdoms of **Cerilia** in detail, some of which are designed for players to rule. In addition, the box contains two large full color maps illustrating **Cerilia**, a set of **War Cards** designed to help resolve military clashes, a **War Chest** for storing the cards, twelve sheets containing reference material and stats on major **awnsheghlien**, and a new GM's **Screen** specifically designed for **Birthingright**. Several supplements have already been released for the the setting, and TSR promises more in the near future.



Duke Aldriv III has been murdered and his brother Cardor has mysteriously vanished. Could he be the killer? Or is he merely fleeing before the assassins can target him next? Cardor's son, Mordeln, needs the characters' help to find out. Together, they must brave the sea village of Yelden, the dungeons of the Duke's castle, the humanoid-infested borderlands of two warring kingdoms and the sinister domain of a mysterious werefox to locate the Prince and restore order to the Dukedom.

**Tragedy in the House of Brodeln** is an adventure module set in *Kenzer and Company's Kingdoms of Kalamar* fantasy setting. It is compatible with TSR's *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, but can be used in conjunction with any high fantasy system. Intended for beginning characters, it sets the stage in a seaside Dukedom where the ruling family has fallen under a mysterious curse. It is up to the players to discover the root of the evil before the entire line is wiped out.

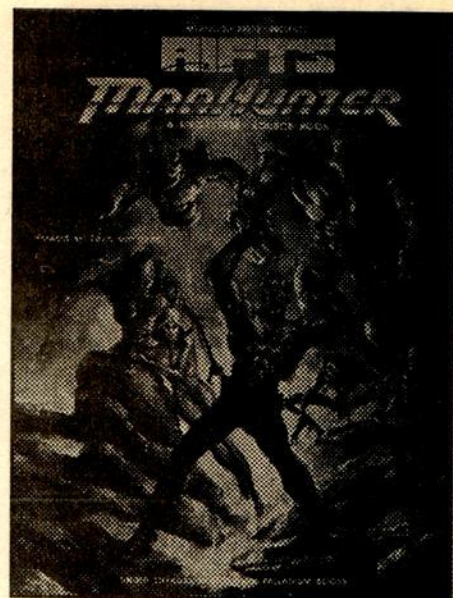
The fifty-six page module is designed to be run quickly and with a minimum of hassle. Seventeen pictures are included in the book as part of Kenzer & Co's ImageQuest system: the GM shows the players a particular picture during a particular period of the adventure. In addition, five starter characters are provided for an easy start, and the adventure descriptions are boxed for clarity and readability. A family tree helps GMs determine the lineage of the ruling nobles, and key NPCs are described in detail. Maps of castles, villages and goblin mines have been inserted, and numerous player handouts are provided in addition to the ImageQuest illustrations. Future products in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* line are promised.



**Don't Look Back: Terror is Never Far Behind** is a modern horror role-playing game from *Mind Ventures Games*. Players create characters in a world which appears normal on the surface, but contains dark and evil things prowling just beyond the view of humanity. Characters come from a variety of modern backgrounds (government agents, priests, teachers, etc.), and their ultimate role in the campaign is decided upon by the particular group of players.

**Don't Look Back** is designed with beginning role-players in mind. The 160 page rulebook guides readers through character creation process, skill rolls and combat, and designing adventures within the game's ascribed genre, taking care to clarify and explain the particular nuances of the rules. Tips on atmosphere and story development are spread throughout the work, and several ready-to-play characters are included in order to facilitate a rapid entrance into the gaming world. An appendix of charts and a brief index are provided to help locate information easily.

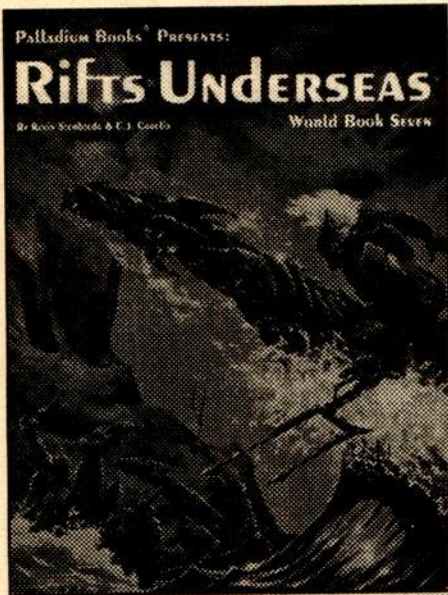
Background descriptions have deliberately been left vague; GMs are encouraged to fit their own concepts and ideas into the system provided. The basic concept assumes that the characters have seen things they shouldn't have (such as a vampire attack, a UFO abduction, or a government experiment gone wrong), and are forced to deal one way or another with the consequences. Statistics for a variety of supernatural horrors are included, as are descriptions of several sinister global organizations (the Men in Black, the hidden monsters, etc.) The GM is encouraged to use them as he or she sees fit, and a creation system is provided to bring "home-grown" terrors into the game. A pair of fleshed-out adventures close the book, providing foundations for a campaign and ideas on how to take the material in a specific direction (i.e., gothic horror, a government conspiracy, etc.)



The first clash between the Terrans and Aglians resulted from a misunderstanding. Horrified at what they perceived as the Terrans' wanton brutality, the peace-loving Aglians designed a series of robots - called Manhunters - to contain their adversaries. The Manhunters were programmed to match humanity's perceived cleverness, adaptability and deceptive cruelty in every possible manner. Their initial raids against the Terran advance went very well: the humans were stopped in their tracks and forced to retreat. Satisfied the Terrans had learned their lesson, the Aglians issued the recall order to their robotic troops. Then something went wrong...

**Rifts: Manhunter** is an official supplement for *Palladium's* cross-genre role playing game, published independently by *Myrmidon Press*. It incorporates the world of *Myrmidon's Manhunter* RPG into the *Rifts* Multiverse, and can be run as an expansion to *Rifts* or as a stand-alone science fiction setting using *Palladium's* Megaverse rules. Based very loosely on James Cameron's *Terminator* films, *Manhunter* takes place in the far future, where man has colonized the stars and made contact with a dozen alien races. A breed of sentient machines, unwittingly unleashed by the Aglians, now threatens all Terran civilization. Horrified by their mistake, the Aglians have made peace with their former enemies and created an alliance against the Manhunter threat. The Aglian-Terran joint government now stands at the forefront of interplanetary politics, and forms a strong bastion against any incursions by the murderous machines.

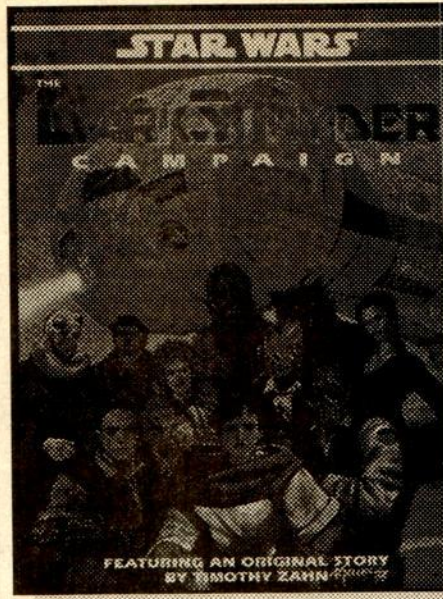
The 210 page rulebook contains background information on the *Manhunter* universe, rules for tying it into the *Rifts* multiverse and ideas on how to run adventures in either locale. Descriptions and statistics for a dozen alien races are included, as well as detailed information on various corporations, guilds and secret societies. Twenty new character classes are provided, for use within the *Manhunter* universe or other *Rifts* locations. New technologies, vehicles and weapons are described in thorough detail, and stats are given for eight models of fearsome *Manhunter* robots. Future supplements set in the *Manhunter* universe are planned for release by *Myrmidon Press*.



The kingdoms and conflicts of Rifts have stretched across the globe, but a large chunk of the Earth's surface has remained unexplored. The dimensional gates and alien marauders of the Rifts universe have not limited themselves to dry land, yet the vast worlds beneath the waves have remained mysterious and impenetrable. Until now. **Rifts: Underseas** has appeared to bring the vast underwater world to life.

Written by Rifts creator Kevin Siembieda and C.J. Carella, the 216 page rulebook discusses over a dozen new species and nations living beneath the wave. Most prominent among these are the forces of the Lord of the Deep, an alien being whose grasp can span the globe and whose appearance has given credence to legends of the Kracken. Opposing him and his minions are the Whale Singers, a group of "biformed" whale-human crossbreeds that have survived his hideous transformation magic. Other forces detailed include the Naut'Yll, an imperialistic race of amphibians bent on conquest; Tritonia, a floating city that has survived from pre-Rifts days; and the New Navy, surviving descendants of the old U.S. Navy who control their ancestors' pre-Rifts technology. In addition, supplementary information is included on Atlantis, Triax, and other powers from earlier Rifts products.

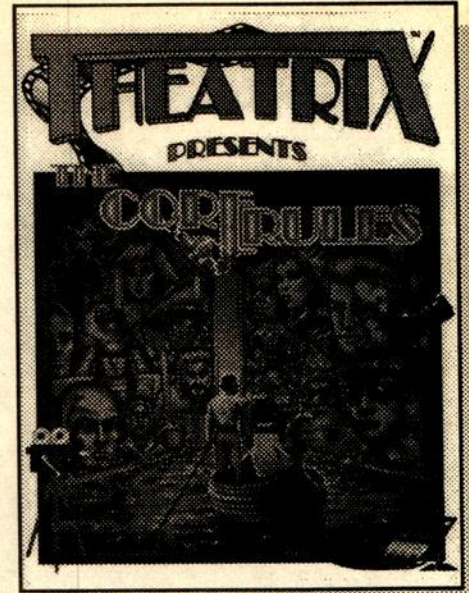
The text provides thirty new O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s from these new forces and elsewhere. Rules are also given for playing dolphins and whales as PCs, in addition to more "traditional" human and D-bee races. Stats for numerous underwater bionics, weapons and vehicles are included, as are rules for new underwater magic. These rules contain over forty magic spells related to the ocean, in addition to new "whale song" magic connected to the Whale Singers. The book also contains discussions of underwater ley lines, Dead pools, Gene-splicer abominations, and the six "magic triangles" located throughout Earth's seas. Additional products detailing more of the planet's underwater inhabitants are promised in the near future.



Four years after the Battle of Endor, a New Republic task force arrives on the backwater planet of Kal'Shebbol in the Kethol sector. The Imperial forces there, under the command of renegade warlord Moff Sarne, put up stiff resistance. In the midst of the fighting, a team of New Republic commandoes infiltrate Sarne's headquarters in an attempt to capture him and deactivate the energy field protecting the planet. Sarne, however, manages to escape, aided by a mysterious form of artifacts known only as "DarkStryder technology." The Republic, hard-pressed in other sectors, sends a rag-tag crew aboard a single modified frigate to try and track him down...

**Star Wars: The DarkStryder Campaign** is the first in a new series of supplements for *West End's* popular RPG. Players take the role of one of ten characters - the command staff of the frigate *FarStar*, charged with hunting down Moff Sarne and discovering the source of his DarkStryder technology. They are out on the fringes of the galaxy, cut off from the bulk of the New Republic government and forced to utilize their limited resources in the fulfillment of their mission. Republic operatives, local civilians and even Imperial sympathizers have all found themselves aboard the *FarStar*, forced to work together in order to survive. Numerous dangers, both internal and external, threaten the mission on all fronts, and Sarne himself has planned a few surprises for his pursuers.

The boxed set contains background material the GM needs to begin a campaign. The ninety-six page sourcebook covers the background of the setting, stats and detailed descriptions of the principal characters and a 16 page short story by author Timothy Zahn. The Adventure Book contains six short adventures designed to launch the DarkStryder campaign. In addition, a set of fifty-six punch out cards (giving quick stats on characters and ships) is included, as well as a map detailing the deck plans of the *FarStar*. Future products and campaign developments are planned for release over the next year.



**Theatrix: the Core Rules** (*Backstage Press*) presents a new game system which encourages cinematic roleplaying. Characters are larger-than-life, battling against monstrous evil and seemingly unkillable foes as the Director leads them through his Script.

Theatrix is a dice-optional system; random results are available for those who want them, but are not encouraged. Flowcharts are copious, and attempt to cover results for almost every situation and skill level. Description is king; everything, from scene-setting background, through results of actions, all the way down to the various kinds of ways characters can be hurt, has at least some sort of description associated to heighten the impression of "being there."

Characters have numerical ratings in Attributes and Skills (ranked from one to ten on a logarithmic scale; three is Average or Competent). They also have Descriptors, words or phrases which describe the character's background, and Personality Traits. Descriptors and Personality Traits may be Activated during the adventure to gain an automatic success in the appropriate area, or can sit in the background informing the player's characterization.

Although the mechanics are important, they exist to support the more important aim of Theatrix, the attitude towards roleplaying. Whatever genre you choose to play in, the common thread running through any Theatrix game is capital-C Cinematic: superhuman feats, last-minute dives for cover as the bomb goes off behind you, fistfights on the wing of a biplane, harrowing plot twists and the narrowest of escapes.

Theatrix: the Core Rules is a 144-page softcover; the final page promises "Embrace Tiger/Return to Mountain," an Oriental backgrounds sourcebook which is, inevitably, "Coming Soon to a Store Near You."



# BIRTHRIGHT

## sword and crown

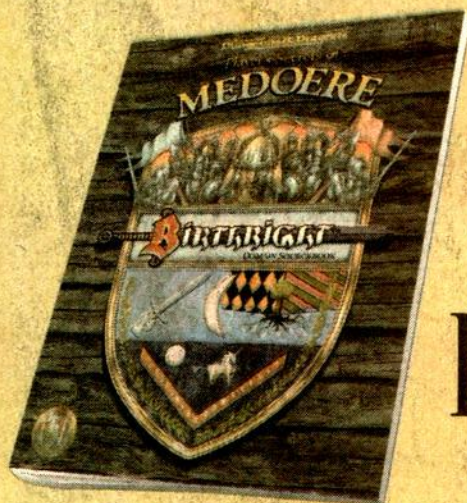


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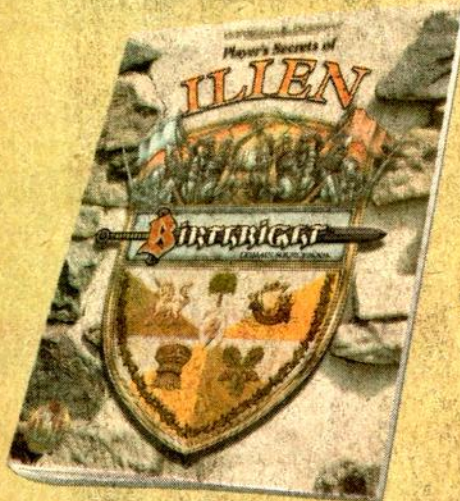
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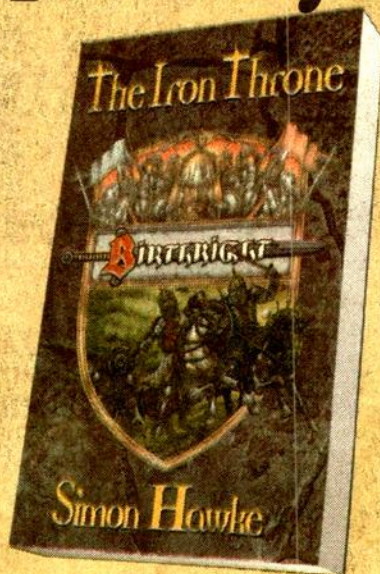
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and  
fall of  
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# Mail Bag

## Our Readers Talk Back

Due to space considerations, some letters have been edited. Even if your letter isn't printed, your comments are welcome and your suggestions and constructive criticisms are thoughtfully considered. So keep the letters coming. Remember SHADIS is an interactive magazine - we want you, the reader, to be involved.

Jolly R. Blackburn

Dear SHADIS,

Thank you for putting out a great magazine. It's good to see a non-house organ that boldly covers a wide range of game genres from a variety of companies. There's a feeling that comes across from your work that suggests you actually play and enjoy games for their own sake - a quality lacking in many of the slicker mass-market publications. Keep up the good work.

Best wishes for the rest of this year and on into the future.

David G. Trotti  
Fullerton, CA

Thanks David. Since creating SHADIS, one of my favorite tasks was reading the incoming mail from our readers. As difficult as it will be to hang up my editorial hat at SHADIS and move on, it's very comforting to know that our efforts have been appreciated.

JRB

Ken Carpenter,

I am interested in playing Full Thrust but have not been able to find it. What is the name and address of the company so I can write for more information?

Also, I play the RPG Underground by MGI. I run some squad sized battles

and miniatures rules might be a great help. What miniatures rules should I try and how should I modify them?

David Arnold

Dave,

Full Thrust is actually produced by Ground Zero Games in Great Britain, but Geo-Hex (aka Capricorn Space) distributes both the game and the figures in the U.S. You can write them at: 2126 North Lewis, Portland, OR 97227. As for a squad-level miniatures game for Underground, you could try Grenadier's Kill Zone. You'll have to customize it a bit, tailoring the 'hit' rolls and a few minor things like that, but the game does an excellent job of simulating squad level tactics. Many of the figures are also appropriate for Underground.

KC

Dear SHADIS,

Your magazine is probably the best RPG periodical that I have seen in years. It's fantastic - just the kind of magazine I hoped it would be.

I read with great interest the Gamemaster's Workshop, sighed with relief at the lack of irritating advertisements, and was impressed at the open and supportive attitude of the Mail Bag. But what impressed me most was the publication's Declaration of Independence, which set to rest my fears that SHADIS would turn out to be just another house-organ. There are scant criticisms, mostly regarding the coverage of those insidious, cultish card games which have so acutely gained (unfathomable, in my opinion) popularity in the minds of so many. But, I realize the need for comprehensive coverage, and since I

haven't finished reading the entire piece, I'll reserve further editorials for a time when my opinions are complete.

For the greater part, however, I'm very pleased with what I've seen. So much so that I gleefully set ablaze my entire collection of [name deleted by editor] magazines.

You gave me what I asked for, and I'm thankful. As a result, please find enclosed the ashes from my [name deleted by editor] magazines. I hope they don't shift out of the envelope during mailing.

My heartfelt thanks. As a player in my campaign is fond of saying, "The Goat-man shall reward you well for your efforts."

Good gaming!

Edward D. Smale  
Hellertown, PA

Thanks Edward. The ashes came in handy. We sprinkled them on John Wick's (one of our staffers) powdered doughnuts one morning. He began speaking in several dead languages and started writing poetry on the warehouse walls with the art director's best Sharpie.

A fist fight ensued and after taking the worst of it, John grabbed the company water cooler and darted out the door.

The last time we saw him he was running down the 10 freeway with a copy of "Swim with the Sharks" under one arm and a mayonnaise jar with a mouse in it under the other. If you see him, send him home. We miss the mouse terribly.

JRB

Dear Jolly,

I first saw SHADIS at ORIGINS '94 and was so impressed I had to subscribe and have continued to be impressed by the many facets of the magazine.

Unquestionably, one of SHADIS' main attractions is its unmatched diversity. So many things get covered that it's hard to find an issue that didn't contain some pleasant surprises.

From coverage of the more obscure aspects of our hobby's subgenres to well written articles and informative reads. And yes, I've purchased some new RPG stuff largely because of Mark Arsenault's Bits 'n' Pieces column.

In general, I prefer the "Special Features" much more than any of the GM Workshop articles. Likewise, KODT is vastly superior to the other comics. Chris' Stick Figures, and Joe Genero are worthy as well.

I'm told that despite a surprising array of new RPG professional magazines (in contrast to an apparent shrinkage in the numbers of actual RPG players buying RPGs) SHADIS is now the 3rd most popular game magazine - Congratulations! (Especially since I wouldn't bother subscribing to the #1 or #2 magazines.)

As you can see, I'm optimistically willing to bet that regardless of all the other ambitious projects you have in mind, you'll still be able to spend enough time on SHADIS to keep me happy.

Mark Goldberg  
Las Vegas, NV

Dear Jolly,

I'm sure your time is short, so I'll make this brief. As an English teacher I know it can be hard to give out criticism, and cutting features out of a magazine can often be construed as criticism of a feature instead of the reality of limited space to appeal the most readers.

I do applaud your efforts to involve the readers in the process, but don't



lose sight of your own vision. Just as a group of students need a teacher to guide their learnings and explorations, a magazine needs an editor's purpose, direction and vision.

Thanks for letting your readers have some input into the contents of their favorite magazine.

Matt Helms  
Elgin, IL

## Exit, Stage Left.....

Shortly after Jolly announced his decision to leave SHADIS his email address began to literally flood with heart-felt best wishes and support.

Dear Jolly,

I have been impressed by the honesty and decency you have displayed in all your dealings. I only hope you find joy in whatever you pursue next.

Edmund Shaw  
Editor, Familiar

Dear Jolly,

Good Luck, Jolly. You did a very rare thing, making a fan magazine successful. Good luck in your future endeavors.

John Baichtal  
AOL Email

Dear Jolly,

As a loyal reader I would like to thank you for your work in making SHADIS an excellent independent resource for today's gamer. You will be missed.

Michael Breen  
AOL Email

Dear Jolly,

I'm sorry to see you go Jolly. You've been the heart and soul of the magazine for a long time. I hope that your new projects will take you to even greater heights.

Joe Kushner  
AOL Email

Dear Jolly,

Wow, what a shock! Jolly, I've only met you once in person, but you impressed me as someone who could get what they wanted. Hell, you even sold me a subscription!

I'm sure that wherever you wind up, it will be on your feet and running.

Best of luck to you. Thanks for growing us a great mag. If you're ever out near Syracuse for any reason, look

me up. I'd like to buy ya a beer or three.

Scott Gardner  
AOL Email

Dear Jolly,

We're behind you all the way, whatever you choose to do. Hang tough, our man. There are always new mayonnaise jars on the sunny horizon.

Barbara Manui & Chris Adams

Dear Jolly,

Thanks for everything you've done Jolly. A few years ago I was a burnt out middle-aged gamer with very little going on in my life to be happy about. One day I picked up a copy of SHADIS 10 and suddenly felt excited about my hobby again - something I hadn't experienced in ten years.

For that I am grateful, for it persuaded me to make a phone call to an old gaming buddy I hadn't talked to in years. That phone call led to the reformation of my old gaming group. Now we play every Thursday night and we are all loyal subscribers to the magazine that helped heal the old wounds and brought our circle back together. For the record, there will always be a chair at our table for you.

Frank Butler  
San Jose, CA

Dear Jolly,

You ol' tar heel you. For the record this is one reader who will always be thankful for your hard work and efforts.

Those crude early issues of SHADIS were every bit the works of art the newer mags are. You are SHADIS, Jolly.

Please keep the readers posted on where to find you.

Perhaps SHADIS can do a 'Jolly Report' to let us know where our old friend and mentor has wandered off to. Thanks again. If you ever hit Evansville, I have a couple of drinks I owe you.

Randy Summers  
Evansville, IN

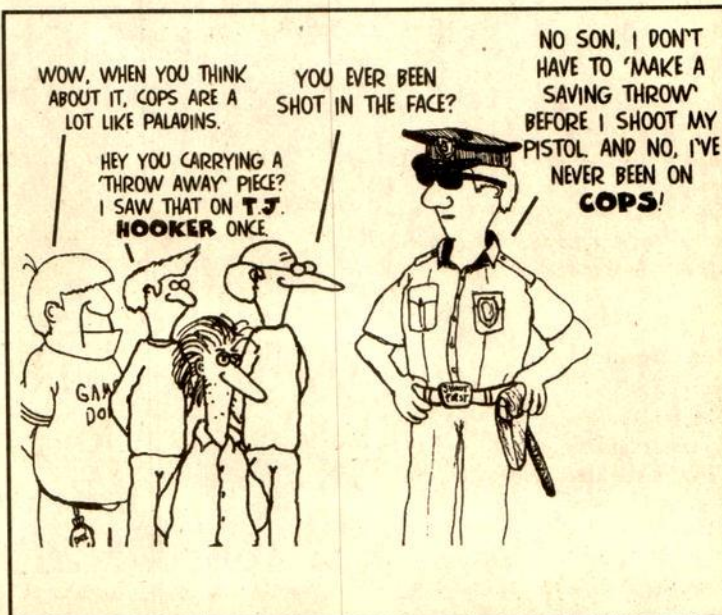
# I HATE WHEN THAT HAPPENS..

**W**e were recently informed that the plot line for the "The Gazebo" (which appeared in **Knights of the Dinner Table** "Not Ready For Syndication" (*Comic book: KODT #1*) was erroneously attributed to the wrong person.

**Richard Aronson** wrote a story in 1980 for **SPELL BOOK** the official publication of **Mensa's Fantasy Role Playing SIG**. The story, "Eric and the Gazebo" was later republished in **Alarums and Excursions**. As Mr. Aronson readily pointed out, the error was an honest mistake and he contacted AEG only to ensure his copyrights on the original story had not been jeopardized.

We regret this unfortunate incident especially since we place tremendous weight on creative rights and intellectual properties. We acknowledge that Mr. Aronson's claim is valid and would like to take this opportunity to publicly apologize to him.

Richard, there's an empty chair for you at the Knights of the Dinner Table at anytime. But remember, it's bring-your-own pizza.



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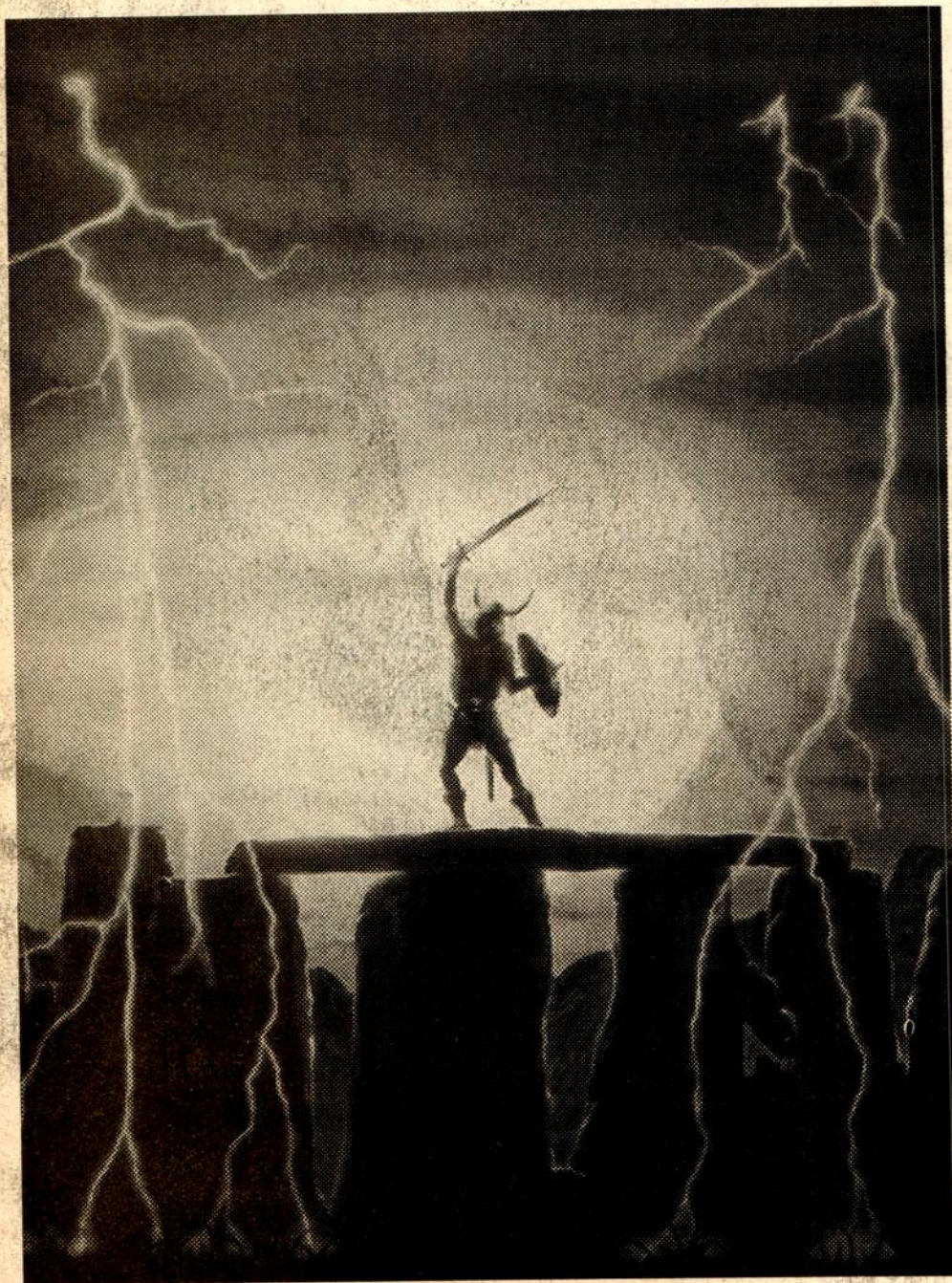
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OF THE COAST

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# Armies On the March

## A Companion to "Tuning Up Your Armies"

By Larry Granato © 1995



**B**rian J. Phillips' article "Tuning Up Your Armies" in SHADIS #16 contained a large number of ways in which a game master (GM) could beef up non-player character (NPC) forces to provide a challenge to increasingly powerful player characters. It inspired me to come up with a few additional ideas based on gaming experiences. Our local hobby shop owner used to run micro armor games where each side would have some surprises to spring on an opponent. Would there be tiger tanks hidden in haystacks? Carpet bombing? How about that guy who could make incredible shots with a bazooka? Stuff like that makes games really fun, so I offer the following for GMs and miniatures battle referees as special events and capabilities that can be used to spice up a tabletop battle or a role-playing campaign.

The ideas are designed to be generic enough to be used for any time period or genre. As before, a deck of cards can be used to make a choice. However, the equipment and miscellaneous categories have been combined. The format includes a new category, Blunders (hearts), since mistakes in war are more common than successes. For an RPG, pick one or more cards from diamonds, clubs and spades for the NPCs. For a miniature battle pick one or two for each side. Blunders can be imposed on the PCs or different sides as the GM sees fit.

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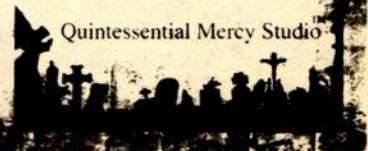
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increased 25%, medium range is up 75%, short range is double effectiveness, and point blank range is triple.

**Three ♦ Deception:** The enemy is adept in the use of deception and camouflage tactics. They may have units of civilians dressed in uniform, or employ dummy weapons and vehicles to deceive an opposing force of their strength. Real forces are hidden or disguised. Entire fake cities and fortresses may be built.

**Four ♦ Guerilla warfare:** Small enemy regular and irregular forces will attack depots, convoys and units behind the front. Guerrillas will look for any opportunity to overwhelm small, detached forces by quickly concentrating their forces, engaging in battle, and then dispersing. On the battlefield, hidden guerrilla units will pop up, cause casualties, and retreat. There will be one major and several small ambushes on the battlefield.

**Five ♦ Feigned Retreat:** Certain units are trained to be able to simulate falling back as if they are routed, but can immediately turn and attack.

**Six ♦ Mobile Warfare:** Animal or vehicle mounted forces utilize constant maneuvering to defeat the enemy. Extensive use is made of mobile rear-guards, delaying tactics, flanking and rear attacks, raids, and pursuit. Favorite tactics include holding positions just long enough to make attacking forces deploy, and making hit-and-run attacks on marching units, slowing their advance to a crawl.

**Seven ♦ Infiltration:** Troops are skilled in approaching enemy lines under cover of darkness, magic, smoke or camouflage. They will attempt to surprise enemy units by slipping between them, for rear attacks and assaults on second-line forces and commanders.

**Eight ♦ Sniping:** Expert marksmen firing from hidden positions will attempt to pin down enemy units and pick off leaders. The snipers' location will be difficult to uncover. Check for exposed leaders to be killed or wounded; attached units must make a morale check.

**Nine ♦ Attrition:** The enemy has large numbers of troops and is prepared to lose them in hopes of wearing their opponent down. They target opposing troops (or a

single PC) that are the most difficult to replace.

**Ten ♦ Counterfire:** The enemy has superior artillery, higher ground, or better fire control which allows them to accurately locate and suppressing opposing fire. This can be anything from slingers on a hill to counterbattery radar.

**Jack ♦ Counter-attack:** The enemy force is especially skilled in receiving an attack and holding while they evaluate the best response. They will keep a substantial force in reserve and pick just the right moment and place to commit it in a counter-attack.

**Queen ♦ Siege Warfare:** The enemy is skilled in siege techniques. On offense, they can spot weak points in defenses, quickly dig approach trenches, parallels and mines, bridge ditches or moats, create or deploy siege machines and artillery, make ladder assaults, plant explosives, and destroy fortifications. On defense, they are able to quickly repair breaches, build counterworks, successfully countermine, and have a knack for concentrating firepower and reinforcements in the right sectors.

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**King ♦ Scorched Earth:** The enemy has stripped the region for miles around the battlefield of all supplies and forage, driven off civilians and livestock, poisoned wells, destroyed bridges, blocked roads, etc. Invading forces must bring in all their supplies. As a result, their army is short of equipment and rations, and combat units that would normally be on the battlefield must be detached to guard extra convoys or carry supplies.

## Clubs: Equipment and Miscellaneous

**Ace ♠ Obstacles:** The enemy is equipped with or can rapidly emplace such impediments as mines, entanglements, sharpened stakes, caltrops, palisades, pits, ditches, booby-traps, abatis, and the like.

**Two ♣ Transport:** Wagons, railroads, trucks, or aircraft give the enemy extra mobility.

**Three ♠ New Weapon:** A new but not novel weapon is used on the battlefield, such as pressing anti-aircraft guns into an antitank role, or a new model of heavy tank.

**Four ♣ Secret Weapon:** A previously unknown weapon is introduced on the battlefield, such as a new spell, poison gas or gatling guns.

**Five ♣ Code Breakers/Mind-readers/Intercepts:** The enemy have learned all of the PCs' plans. The GM should arrange the battle so that everything the party does is anticipated by their opponents.

**Six ♣ Long-Range Bombardment:** Distant artillery, naval guns, missiles, magical spells, or space cruisers in orbit assist ground units.

**Seven ♠ Air Support:** Rock-dropping critters, bomb-laden dirigibles, tactical air, or space fighters provide support to ground units.

**Eight ♣ Spotters:** Keen observers, magic, satellites, or scanning devices make accurate fire possible at great distances. Increase effectiveness of artillery and long range missile fire by 25%.

**Nine ♠ Dirty Tricks:** The enemy takes hostages or threatens civilians, uses prisoners to clear mines or straps them to their war machines, employs banned weapons, pretends to surrender and then attacks, etc.

**Ten ♣ Psychological Warfare:** Propaganda, terrorism, psychwar tactics, torture and maiming of prisoners, etc., lower the morale of the PCs' forces.

**Jack ♣ Jamming/Counter-intelligence:** The party's attempts to communicate with each other or gain information on the enemy is blocked or confused by magic or technology. Spies and scouts are deceived, captured, or turned.

**Queen ♠ Massive Defenses:** The enemy is ensconced behind an array of fortifications; anything from the Great Wall to the Maginot line to a powerful force field.

**King ♣ Espionage:** Enemy spies sabotage or steal equipment, spread false information and rumors of treason, attack followers, infiltrate the ranks, and generally delay and confuse the party.

## Blunders: Hearts

**Ace ♥ Death of Leader:** A high-ranking (non-player) subcommander dies at an inopportune moment. All units under his command may take no action for one or more turns. Alternatively, a subcommander is drunk, insubordinate, or has a sudden attack of cowardice or incompetence with similar results.

**Two ♥ Counter-March:** Crossed signals make a unit reverse facing and retrace its movement of the previous turn. Alternatively, it leaves or never appears on the battlefield.

**Three ♥ Messenger Killed/Bad Communications:** During a battle, a unit does not receive new orders and continues with its current action, which may mean it does nothing.

**Four ♥ Wall of Dead:** Heaps of corpses cause advancing units to make an immediate morale check, and they attack at a disadvantage (slipping on blood, entrails, etc.). Defending enemy units gain cover from the mounds of dead.

**Five ♥ Poltroonery:** This affects the worst unit in your army. They will not enter within missile range of any enemy unit, and will automatically rout if attacked.

**Six ♥ Frontal Assault:** Bone-headed subordinates interpret their orders in the worst possible way. For example, a futile attack is made on the strongest enemy posi-

tion by a totally inferior force. ("Half a league, half a league, half a league onward...")

**Seven ♥ Compression/Traffic Jam:** The actions of enemy forces (usually encircling or multiple flanking attacks) or the loss of cohesion in a close-order formation force the PCs' unit into a tightly packed position where they are unable to defend themselves properly. Only troops in the front rank can fight, and then at a disadvantage due to the struggling mass behind them. Enemy forces inflict extra casualties. Alternatively, moving units accidentally cross paths and the formations become entangled into a confused mass, requiring one or more turns to sort out.

**Eight ♥ Ammunition Shortage/Equipment Failure:** Missile troops or artillery run low of ammo. Reduce attack effectiveness by 50%. Melee troops are at minuses due to faulty weapons.

**Nine ♥ Poor Marksmanship:** Reduce the affected unit's missile fire effectiveness by 20-50%. Alternatively, friendly units fire on other friendly forces.

**Ten ♥ Mud:** A sudden downpour, deliberate flooding, or destruction of local drainage by bombardment turn the battlefield into a mire. Infantry, cavalry, and tracked vehicles moves half; wheeled vehicles cannot move at all. No charges are permitted and attackers have their effectiveness reduced 25%.

**Jack ♥ Brittle Morale:** Green or previously defeated units have no stomach for an extended fight. Their first morale check is made normally, but thereafter increase negative results such that fallbacks become retreats and retreats become routs. In addition, the sight of another unit running away will cause an immediate morale check or automatic retreat, depending on whether the other unit is of the same or higher quality as the one with brittle morale.

**Queen ♥ Loot:** Any forces which break through the enemy line of battle will immediately head for the enemy camp or baggage train, and thus are taken out of the battle.

**King ♥ Bad News:** Just before the battle, news comes in that affects the morale of your entire army. It could be reports of defeat on another front, a revolution at home, an impending peace settlement, etc.

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## Spades : Personnel

**Ace ♠ Sharpshooters:** These elite missile troops have 20-50% more effectiveness in range, damage and rate of fire. Their morale is excellent.

**Two ♠ Foot Cavalry:** Fast marching infantry who move at a rate 25-40% greater than normal. For modern and post-modern games, they will have jeeps, motorcycles, jetpacks, small hovercraft, individual gravsleds, and the like.

**Three ♠ Iron Brigade:** These troops are never routed, and will hold their position when other units would fall back. If forced to retreat, they will make a fighting withdrawal.

**Four ♠ Reinforcements:** Extra units will appear on the battlefield at a propitious time.

**Five ♠ Screening Forces:** Well-trained light troops which aggressively prevent their opponents from gaining any intelligence on their main army. On a battlefield, the opposing side will have to set up before the side with the screening forces.

**Six ♠ Airborne:** Paratroopers, space-drop marines, or troops mounted on flying monsters, gliders, or helicopters may assault a section of the battlefield from the air.

**Seven ♠ Riverine/Amphibious:** Naval assisted forces appear on a nearby body of water. They may include frogmen (humans or monsters), marines, PT boats or iron-clads.

**Eight ♠ Berserkers:** Ferocious fighters crazed with blood lust. Berserkers never make morale checks and do extra damage. They immediately charge the nearest opposing unit once they "go berserk" and continue hand-to-hand combat until they or their opponent are destroyed. After each melee the berserkers will need to rest for a turn before going berserk again.

**Nine ♠ Die-Hards:** A unit which will make a valiant last stand against impossible odds. In a defensive position, the troops will neither surrender or retreat (ignore these results) and their wounded will continue fighting. As a result, reduce their casualties by 50%. The only way to eliminate them is to kill them.

**Ten ♠ Forlorn Hope:** A unit of elite, heavily-armed offensive troops who are sent in the vanguard of an attack, with the hopes of disrupting enemy lines or pinning up their forces. They can be guys with two-handed swords, grenadiers, heavy tanks, or automated battle machines.

**Jack ♠ Suicide Squad:** Fanatics intent on only causing casualties. On offense, they charge the nearest enemy unit and engage in hand-to-hand combat (with bonuses) until destroyed. On defense they will burn down or blow up their own position rather than give up the fight. Because of their disdain for self protection, they take double casualties.

**Queen ♠ Special Forces:** Elite light troops who can operate behind enemy lines, ambushing convoys and support units. On the battlefield they may make commando-style assaults on camps, headquarters, bases, and leaders, relying on speed and surprise.

**King ♠ Scouts:** Excellent reconnaissance forces who keep the enemy aware of the location, size, composition, and equipment, of all the party's forces. □

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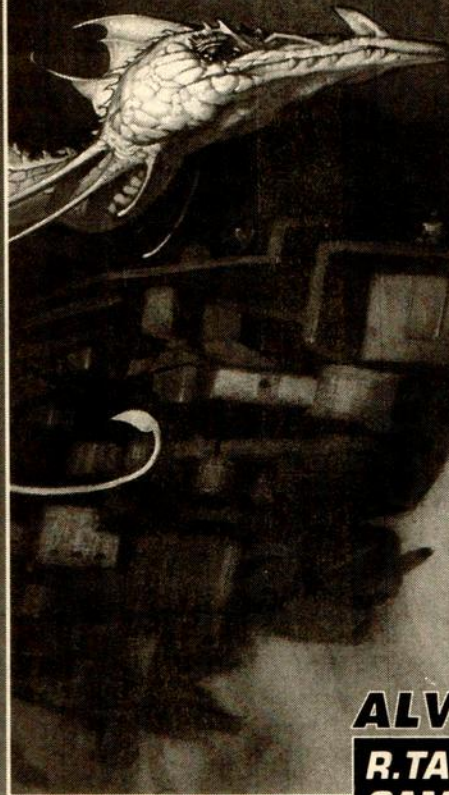
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# The Importance of Family Clans

## Part Two: Developing Your Clan

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**T**he gaming products out there that will tell you how to swing a sword or cast a spell are legion. The number that will offer guidelines for providing your character with a family (or even suggest that you should provide her with one) is infinitesimal.

Last issue (SHADIS #20) we discussed the medieval family structure and how having families for player characters could help your fantasy campaign. This issue, as promised, we'll provide you with a handy set of tables for generating those families and charting their lives through the passing of the game years.

For the inspiration for these tables, we owe a tip of the hat to Greg Stafford and his *Pendragon* game. Even if you've already invested your \$27 in the *Pendragon* rules, though, you might want to use our tables instead of theirs. Ours take more time to use and are a bit more complicated, but they are also more comprehensive, more realistic, and (unlike their gremlin-plagued forerunner) carefully calculated to provide plausible results over the course of a long-running, multi-generational campaign.

The emphasis here is on the word plausible, as it is impossible to be 100% historically accurate. Birth and mortality rates were affected by far too many different factors and varied far too greatly from time to time and place to place (even within the limited framework of feudal Europe) for us to create one authoritative set of tables to cover them all.

*Pendragon* players will find that they can plug these tables directly into Steps 6b and 6c of the game's Winter Phase as a replacement for the existing rules.



## Generating a Clan

There are two distinct uses that our Family Tables can be put to, though the tables behave in exactly the same manner in either case. The first use is for rolling up a clan for a PC to be a part of. Simply go back a few generations before the game starts (two should be adequate) and use them to chart the life of one of the PC's ancestors (a man if the clan is patrilineal, a woman if the clan is matrilineal) year by year, starting from the year that he would first be eligible for marriage. Ignore any results that would lead to the extinction of the clan, and simply keep rolling until the PC is born and ages to the point at which he will start the game.

In order to randomly determine a PC's specific descent, roll a d6 each time a child of the appropriate gender (male or female, as above) is born to a direct ancestor of the PC. If you roll a 1 or 2, that child is the next link in the chain. Of course if you're rolling for a child of the PC's generation, the "appropriate gender" will be that of the PC himself, regardless of the customs of the society, and you'll be rolling to determine whether that child is the PC.

If you ever get to a point where no more children can be born in a given generation, but you still haven't determined the PC's specific descent, select randomly from among the living children of that generation who are of the appropriate gender, assigning an equal chance to each.

Once you have rolled out enough years for the PC to be the desired age to start adventuring, you've created the skeleton of a clan for him. You can flesh it out as needed or as desired by naming the clan members, assigning them jobs and homes, etc.

## Tracking a Clan During Play

It is a common phenomenon among role-playing campaigns for time to have a very comic-book quality about it. Characters acquire vast wealth, skill, and power over the course of many adventures, yet age almost imperceptibly if they age at all. Neophyte game masters may try to keep meticulous track of time, but they soon

learn that most campaigns grind to a halt long before it has any appreciable affect on player characters, even if the PCs adventure so intensely that they blow all the caps off the experience charts. Unless the PCs are working under a time limit, what reason is there to watch the clock, much less the calendar?

If the PCs spend 365 days a year adventuring because they have no life outside the dungeon, then there really isn't much reason at all. On the other hand, if they have friends and family waiting at home; a manor that needs upkeep; a warm fireplace beckoning them to spend the cold winter months indoors; a feudal lord who expects them to be at his beck-and-call part of every year; tournaments and festivals inviting them to indulge in the sheer joy of sensual living... All these things and more place demands on the PCs' time that really add up, rarely leaving them opportunity to squeeze in more than two or three traditional adventures during a single year. Suddenly the days fly by and you find you're no longer straining your suspension of disbelief,

wondering how yet another player character got to be an arch-mage before she turned twenty-five.

If you took this approach to a campaign, it would be ridiculous to let your PCs' clans stagnate. To allow them to grow and change, simply keep on applying the Family tables to them year after year as the campaign progresses. Set aside a regular time at either the beginning or the end of each game year to take stock of the past year's events. In Pendragon, this is called the Winter Phase, and it takes place during those inclement winter months when no one with half a brain should be out adventuring anyway.

During the Winter Phase, Pendragon players pause not only to determine how their knights' clans are faring but to take a breather and put the entire game year into perspective. It is at this time that the effects of experience are tallied and characters are allowed a chance to train. It's a concept which could be put to excellent use in most any game system by only allow-

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ing PCs to gain new levels or otherwise spend their hard-earned experience points during the winter lull. In AD&D in particular it would provide a nice compromise between the instant acquisition of levels and outrageous demands for training — the only two official alternatives for raising your characters' expertise. It would also provide a solid gold guarantee in avoiding the child-prodigy arch-mage syndrome, since characters are never allowed to gain more than one level at a time, and thus could gain only one level per year.

With the evolution of both their characters' families and of the PCs themselves waiting there for them, most players will be happy to hurry on to the end of the game year after just a few grueling adventures; character aging will become as much a reward as an inconvenience.

## The Family Tables

Once each year, roll on these tables as directed below. GMs may wish to use these tables to chart the lives and families of important NPCs in their campaigns, as well the clans of player characters.

**Step 1: Childbirth.** Roll on the Childbirth table for each married woman. Roll also for each unmarried woman who is known through game play to have had sexual relations with one or more men during the year. Non-player women in a matrilineal society are automatically assumed to become sexually active once they reach marriageable age, though they take the -2 penalty on the Childbirth table for being only briefly sexually active during the year unless they are known to have a husband or a full-time lover.

Men of any age may theoretically sire children, but do not bother to roll for

women 55 or older; they are considered to have gone through menopause.

If the parentage of a child is in question, create a simple table by assigning a value of 4 for a long-term sexual partner (husband or live-in lover), 2 for each part-time lover (much-absent husband or discreet paramour), and 1 for each "one night stand" or other quick fling.

**Example:** Beautiful, flirtatious, and generally naughty, young Lady Constance kept two discreet paramours and slept with three different young knights on a whim last year; the GM assigns the following values to them: 1-2 = lover #1, 3-4 = lover #2, and 5, 6 and 7 are respectively the three "one-knight" stands; he then rolls a d8 to determine who the father is, being prepared to reroll any result of 8.

In many cases, the GM may determine the father of a child for his own notes without ever revealing the result to any of the players, no matter how privy they were to who slept with whom when. In medieval times, poor nutrition meant that pregnancies rarely lasted the full nine months, and the exact length of a pregnancy was quite unpredictable, contributing to the high infant mortality rate. Unless there were several months between the time a new mother slept with the father and any other candidates, she herself would not know who the father was unless and until some of his father's distinctive physical traits started to show in the child. In the game, all this is left up to GM's discretion, being too complex a business to create tables for here.

To determine the gender of a child when it is born, roll any handy die with an even number of sides (no d7s, please). If the result is an even number, the child is a boy. An odd number indicates a girl.

### Childbirth Table

d20 result:

1-14 No birth.

15-20 Child born. Roll on Child Table.

Modifiers:

- Woman had just one sexual encounter. during the year: -4.

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- Woman was only briefly sexually active during the year (an unmarried woman with one discreet paramour or a few one-night lovers, a married woman with a much absent husband and no lovers): -2.
- Woman is over age 50: -1 per year past 50.

### Child Table

d20 result:

1-4 Child is stillborn or dies shortly after birth.

5-18 Child is born healthy.

19-20 Child is born healthy, plus roll on Multiple Births table.

### Multiple Births Table

d20 result:

1-19 No additional child.

20 Additional healthy child is born, plus roll again on this table.

### Modifiers

- Each parent who came from a multiple birth: +1.

The Twins table should be rolled on once for each additional child in a birth. Identical twins are always identical to the child just before them.

**Example:** quadruplets are born. The roll for the second child indicates that it's identical to the first. The third child is fraternal, and the fourth is identical to the third. The quadruplets are essentially two pairs of identical twins.

### Twins Table

d20 result:

1-15 Fraternal twins.

16-20 Identical twins.

**Step 2: Survival.** Roll on the following tables for each non-player character whose life is being charted to see if he or she dies some time during the year. Cause of death

could be anything from a warrior's death in combat to a woman's death from birthing complications to falling random victim to a fatal disease. No distinction is made here. Even the sons and daughters of a player character who are actively training to follow in his footsteps should roll on this table until such time as they actually go out and start adventuring, becoming player characters in their own right.

With high infant mortality being a harsh fact of life for folk of all classes, very young children have been given their own survival table. All other non-player characters use the standard NPC Survival table.

### Infant Survival Table (for children age 3 or younger)

d20 result:

1-2 Infant dies.

3-10 Infant is sick but lives.

11-20 Infant lives.



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**Modifiers**

- Infant raised by poor family (peasants, a poor knight, or others in bad but stable economic circumstances): -1.
- Infant raised by desperate family (in a bandit camp, by an impoverished knight, or others in poor and unpredictable economic circumstances): -2.
- During time of plague or war: -1 to -2, GM's discretion.

**NPC Survival Table**

d20 result:

- 1 Life threatened. Roll on NPC death table.
- 2-3 Character is sick or severely wounded, but lives.
- 4-20 Character lives.

**Modifiers**

- Character is venerable (age 70+): -2.
- Character gave birth this year: -1.
- Character involved in warfare during the year: -1 to -20 (GM's discretion, or -2 per 5x killed on NPC's side).
- During time of plague: -1 to -4 at GM's discretion.

**NPC Death Table**

d20 result

- 1-8 Character dies.
- 9-20 Character lives.

**Modifiers**

- Character is a child (age 4-14): +4.
- Character is elderly (age 50+): -4.

- Economic status is superlative (important nobility or spectacularly successful merchant): +2.
- Economic status is rich (minor nobility or wealthy merchant): +1.
- Economic status is poor: -2.
- Economic status is desperate: -4.
- Character involved in warfare during the year, during which his side was systematically slaughtered (more than 50x losses): -1 to -10 (GM's discretion).

**Step 3: Marriages.** This roll should be made for each non-player family member currently eligible to be married, save for the sons and daughters of the player character. Though it is perfectly workable to use the Marriage table for a PC's offspring as well, the player should be allowed to arrange the marriages of any or all of them through game play if he so desires; arranged marriages were not only acceptable in the



medieval world, they were the expected norm. Rebellious children who actively defy their parents' wishes in the matter should be few and far between, especially if the society is patrilineal.

The age at which a character is first considered marriageable will vary from culture to culture, but 15-21 is the normal range.

An optional practice which appears on this table is that of concubinage (discussed at length in Part I of this article). It is assumed that an arrangement of concubinage will endure until the man takes a wife or another concubine or until one of the couple dies. If you use concubinage, keep making yearly rolls on this table for the man (but not the woman) until something happens to terminate the relationship.

If marriage is indicated for a man with a concubine and the couple has already produced one or more children, there is a 5 in 20 chance that the man will take his concubine as his wife. Otherwise, his marriage will be to somebody else, and the former concubine will be free to roll on the Marriage table herself if her life is worth charting in the campaign.

Women who are over age 50 or who already have children from an actual marriage will not become concubines.

### NPC Marriage Table

d20 result:

1-14 Character remains unmarried.

15-16 Character takes or becomes a concubine (optional).

17-20 Character marries.

#### Modifiers

- Character is parents' legal heir: +2.
- Character has children from a previous marriage: -2.
- Character is age 50+: -2.

To determine the age of a character's mate:

a) Start the mate at minimum marriageable age.

b) Roll on the Marriage table.

c) If rolling for a spouse, if the result is marriage, proceed to step e. Otherwise, add one year to the spouse's age, then return to step b.

d) If rolling for a union of concubinage, if the result is either marriage or "takes or becomes concubine", proceed to step e. Otherwise, add one year to the mate's age, then return to step b.

e) Roll a d20. If the die roll is less than 19, you have determined the mate's age. Otherwise, this marriage or concubinage was to a previous mate. Proceed to step f.

f) Roll a d20. If the die roll is a 1 or 2, the mate's previous mate dies now — return to step b. Otherwise, age the mate another year and repeat this step. If these steps ever indicate that a man's concubine would be older than 50, ignore the result and start over again from the top.

For added detail, you may, if you wish, roll on the Childbirth tables (Step 1) and/or the Scandal tables (Step 4) for the years of the mate's previous adult life to determine if he or she already has children. Unless the character taking a mate has an active part in actual game play, however, this will probably be more headache than it's worth. Regardless of whether the clan being rolled for is patrilineal or matrilineal, children from a mate's previous marriage will not be considered members of the clan you're generating.

**Step 4: Scandals.** This roll should be made for each NPC clan member who is 15 or older. Ignore the "illegitimate child" result for married women and concubines, and for anyone in a matrilineal society. In the former cases, it's usually impossible to tell if a child is illegitimate; in the latter case, illegitimacy has no meaning; and in both cases, the women involved should already have rolled on the childbirth table.

When an illegitimate child is born, roll again on this table, treating a second "illegitimate child" result as a "no scandal" result if the NPC concerned is a woman.

### Scandals Table

2d6 result:

2-10 No scandal.

11 Illegitimate child born.

12 Scandal rumored (optional).

The "scandal rumored" result is included primarily for the sake of Pendragon players who wish to use our tables. When this result occurs, roll on the Scandal table on page 346 of the Pendragon rules (or page 112 of the third edition rules) for details.

Alternately, GMs of any game system may use this result as a story hook, indicating that the NPC has gotten himself into a sticky situation and could really use his PC relative's help.

Readers should notice that in some cases, if you are disregarding the "scandal rumored" result, the only possible outcome of a roll on this table would be "no scandal". When such instances arise, we don't encourage you to make the roll unless tossing dice is your only form of exercise. □



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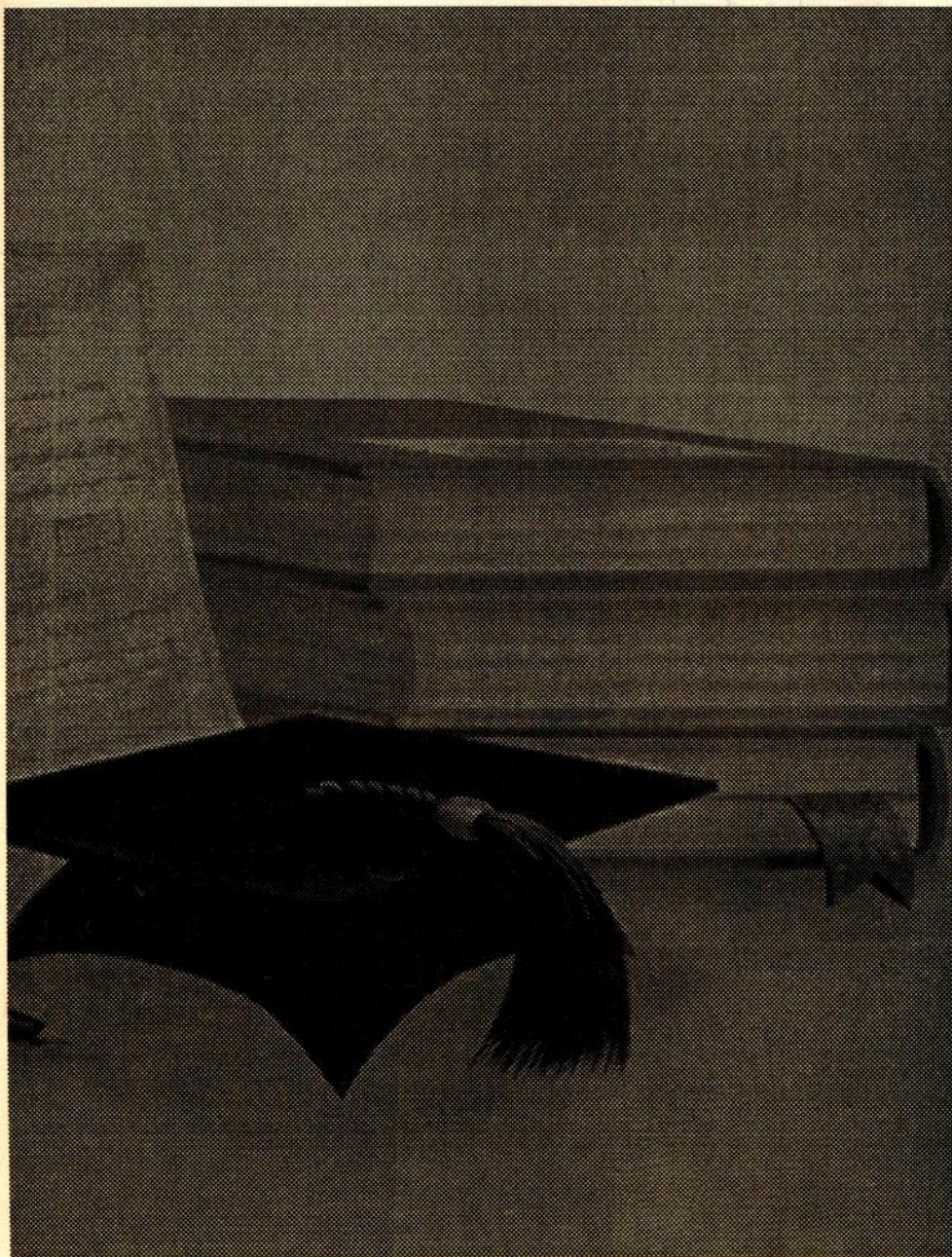
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# Code Of The Rats

## "From Spuds To Studs"

By Dave Dollar ©1990-1995, Art by Chris Myers ©1995



**T**here are many deep and meaningful questions that mankind has been asking himself for centuries...

"Why are we born?"

"Where do we go when we die?"

"Did God create man, or man create God?"

"What is the purpose of life on earth?"

"Where do my socks go?"

The list goes on and on. Somewhere, down near the bottom, just after "When do they take out the service charges?", and just before, "Why does the drive-thru teller have Braille controls?" are two questions...

"In my new campaign, how do I justify the various characters in my group all having to work together as a team?"

...and...

"How did my new PCs go from average nobodies to steeled adventurers—capable of taking an arrow shot through the shoulder and still not spilling their coffee? Where did they *start*?"

Answering these questions both effectively and believably, is one of the most annoying and time-intensive problems facing the GM of a new campaign.

You could have them all meet at the local tavern (as starting adventurers with enough scrapes behind them to have gotten through that mysterious 1st Level), road-weary from their respective travels and itching to brag about their new victories; but then, every group always has one maverick who does his best to not fit in with the party and agree to go on your latest brilliant quest. This character always seems to have the attitude, "These guys are bozos and it sounds like a stupid quest anyway.



I'm gonna go steal something and/or get in a fight!" The GM usually has to resort to hurling sharply pointed dice across the table and saying, "Shut up! You're going!"

So, unless your party has adventured together before (which really doesn't hold water if you are starting a fresh campaign) or all know each other from childhood (unlikely in most scenarios where the youngest character is 17 years old and the oldest is 580), the GM is forced into a compromising scenario. How do you get all these varied personalities started in the same direction, and then how do you develop a lasting bond among them that will carry them through the campaign? How do you collect them all under a single banner? And, if you are starting with adventurers fresh off the tree, how do you get them started off as a ready team?

Solving these problems is the main goal of this module. Code of the Rats gets all the characters together and whips them into (what is sometimes a really interesting and unnatural) shape.

But that's not the important part. In the more than twelve years that I have been gaming, I have uncovered an alarming statistic: in any group of 10 gamers, 7 of them will be "Hack-and-Slashers". Much thought has been put into why this is. Careful study has proved that the problem does not reside in diminutive reproductive attributes, as previously thought. Many gamers, at heart, would like to participate in more thoughtful, elaborate, mentally challenging campaigns. Having a player rely on his wits over his stats is much more satisfying to the player because he feels like he has actually done something when he solves a riddle or defeats a puzzle. The *character* was not the reason he was victorious. The *player* did it. By concentrating the adventure on the player's cognitive abilities, rather than the character's combat stats, "Code of the Rats" provides players with a great sense of accomplishment at "graduating."

Yes, that's right, graduating. Code of the Rats is the first ever, hands-on college of adventuring. It teaches a code of survival, a code of adventurers, a code of heroes. To defeat Roshia's Gauntlet is to graduate — a Rat. To fail is to die. So don't cut any more classes...

Pre-generated characters are provided with the module. Code of the Rats is also equipped with a tournament scoring system, if you happen to enjoy putting your

players through a little rigorous competition.

What sets this module apart from others of its kind is that it can be run with an extremely variable number of players of extremely varying levels. You, the GameMaster, can throw a zero-level stable hand in with a tenth level superstud and they will both have the same chance of survival.

Primarily, however, it is designed as a starter adventure, taking characters "From Spuds to Studs." Simple modifications can be made to accommodate more experienced characters, although it requires more system-based adaptation on your part.

The watchword of the gauntlet is "thinking," and the players will have to do a lot of it to escape with their hides intact. *Read the module thoroughly before running it, and try to picture each scene in your mind as you do.* I personally find that doing this makes for a much smoother go.

Have Fun!

### The Gauntlet and your Fantasy system:

The Gauntlet converts easily to any fantasy RPG system because it stresses concepts that are universal to role playing: life and death. Most of the complex is a series of traps and puzzles that could occur in any system. System differences would be the most visible if the adventure relied primarily on monsters, characters or specific spells, which it does not.

There are only four monsters in the complex that are combative: Frack the ogre, the Killer Tree, Boaseth and the Water Beast. Almost every fantasy system has examples of similar monsters. All you need to do is pull out your books and scratch down some statistics for a set of similar buglies. The only important thing to remember is that the buglies must be a *lot* tougher than the party. If the players just go through offing everything they see, the whole point of the gauntlet (thinking) is lost.

The gauntlet is not a hack-and-slash setup. Actually, the purpose is not to fight anything at all.

### Who Built the Gauntlet and Why:

On the world where the Rats campaign originally took place, adventurers typically congregated into groups who were in turn sponsored by a wealthy noble or wizard. They then executed the orders of their patron under a group name. Some examples of group names are:

Roshia's Rats

Estevan's Warfalcons

The Wolfpack (sponsor unknown)

Malichai's Marauders

Westwind Enterprises (independent adventuring agency)

Some enchanters and gentry are more concerned than others that their representatives behave properly. The Wizardess Roshia is an idealist who is very concerned about building not just a group of mercenaries, but a team of *heroes*. As such, she has asked a boon of her late master, Rorja (a wizard of immense power), that he build for her a testing ground to try the mettle of those who would serve her. A test to choose adventurers.

A test to find heroes.

And so was made the Gauntlet—to teach the Code of the Rats.

### How the Gauntlet works:

*This is a critical section of the module!*

#### 1. Lighting:

Unless otherwise stated, the gauntlet is lit by fairy dust. Yes, fairy dust. Several hundred pounds of fairy dust were collected and incorporated into the paint that lines the ceiling.

The result is a luminescence from above that illuminates the halls and rooms with a dim but comfortable light. The glowing ceiling gives clear illumination out to fifteen feet and shadowy, uncertain distinction out to forty.

*Disclaimer: All of the fairies used in the making of this module are highly trained stunt-fairies and only a few were killed in its production.*

#### 2. Monsters:

None of the monsters in the gauntlet will willingly leave their posts, so wander-

ing monster checks are not necessary. The creatures under Roshia's employ are not particularly hostile to the adventurers. They simply carry out their duties as ordered by their Lady.

### 3. Death in the Gauntlet:

The gauntlet is not designed simply to kill people. It is designed to teach a code of conduct and to challenge the adventurers' minds. The maze is highly enchanted with magics that the characters will find, quite frankly, astonishing. The effect of the enchantments is twofold. First, no foreign magics will function within its bounds — not even the holy magics of priests or the mental powers of psionics. *Player spells will not work in the gauntlet.* The second is that the entire place is covered by a highly complex set of illusion and teleportation spells, capable of deceiving even the most acute senses of touch, smell and taste. The purpose of these spells is to simulate character death. The deception is so complete that even the affected character cannot tell the difference. This will likely be quite a shock to the first character who "dies." When a character "dies" the teleportation magics will place him, alive and unharmed, at the rear of the party — quite likely frightening the pants right off the characters nearest him. In the unfortunate event of entire party "death," the magics will work to place the entire party back at the beginning of the room test where they will have to try it again. For best effect, the death should be graphically described, right down to the character's dying scream. (Tip: A fork and brick of wet styrofoam make a REALLY heinous noise for impalements.)

For any given group entering the gauntlet the pseudo-death will occur *only 17 times*. After seventeen deaths the hazards of the gauntlet become quite real. For example, if two characters were going through the gauntlet, one could die ten times and the other seven before the danger of real character death was incurred. Or the ratio could be sixteen to one, or seventeen to zero, or whatever. The GameMaster should keep a careful, secret record of the death toll, but on no account should the characters be informed that there is a limit on "safe" deaths. The illusory deaths are designed to punish the characters every time they fail a room. Carelessness does not make for good heroes, and only a fool will believe that the Gauntlet will be forever forgiving. Forgive me if I seem long-winded

but this is vitally important to the proper working of the adventure.

### 4. White Feathers:

These large, white plumes represent extra lives. If the party captures a feather and carries it with them, the next "death" in the presence of the plume will cause it to burst into flames and burn to ash. The "dead" character is then "resurrected" at no cost to the party's life tally. Note that the feathers are not indestructible. Should the party deliberately destroy a feather...well, that's their tough luck! It also really bites to be covered in kerosene when that feather in your belt lights up — but, hey...the Gauntlet is not perfect and life's not fair, eh?

*The feathers will not resurrect characters retroactively.* If the party has used all of their "freebies" early and then captures a feather, the feather will be expended to save existing party members later in the Gauntlet.

### 5. Theme plaques:

At the entrance to most room tests is a brass plaque, firmly riveted to the wall. In some cases the plaque is replaced by a carving or other inscription, but the purpose of each is fairly consistent. The plaques define the lesson of each room. If the players follow the lesson of the plaque they should live through the test. Not all plaques teach a point of the Code: some simply give clues to defeating a room.

### 6. The Room of Reversal:

This room is designed to keep the players thinking. After the room of reversal, all the theme plaques are *reversed*. Now they tell the characters how to die, instead of how to live. Trust becomes Mistrust, Unity becomes Disunity, etc.

### 7. Illusions:

The illusions in the Gauntlet are of a special variety that cannot be disbelieved. Nor can they actually hurt a character. They are simple deceptive magics without substance. For instance, if a character is hurled against the 'electrified' grating in the room of Reversal, it will doubtlessly scare the doo-doo out of them but it will not injure them. Whether they originally believed in the reality of the electricity or not, they will not be electrocuted by the phantasm. Characters will not be able to

see through these illusions unless they use some method for testing them, such as throwing small stones at illusory floors to see if the stone falls through, etc.

### 8. What not to tell the players:

Do not tell the players about the pseudo deaths or hint to them how the theme plaques work. They will quickly figure it out on their own, and more power to 'em. Telling them the workings of the gauntlet will make their quest too easy: just keep 'em guessing.

### 9. Scoring:

The score charts in the gauntlet are based on a one-player one-action system. Award points to individuals by the chart. It's probably easiest to let each player keep track of his own score.

### 10. Ham it up:

Game Masters! Here's your chance to describe your players' deaths to them in grisly detail, *without being branded a killer referee!* Make all the silly sound effects you like, scream all you want, and really become a part of the action. Players really do love that stuff.

Do warn them beforehand that if you start counting on your fingers it does not mean that you are mathematically challenged, it means they had better think fast!

With all this in mind, go to the section marked "The Setup" and have a grand adventure full of perforations, abrasions, lacerations, contusions, multiple fractures, deceleration trauma and fun for all!

## The Setup:

As we said in the GM's notes, one of the more tedious obstacles in the setup of a new campaign is uniting all the various characters under a single banner. We refer to the following scenario as the "Guilt by Association" scene.

It is a known fact that aspiring adventurers love to congregate at taverns, inns and restaurants. Presumably, this is because few of them can cook for themselves; since, in most campaigns, the "Portable Camp Microwave" has not yet been invented, adventurers usually hit the Bar n' Grille as soon as they hit town.

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The town in question in this case is the village of Salanon. Salanon is a small, quiet town, whose inhabitants do not particularly care for excitement, news, literature, sports or, well...anything. In fact the name Salanon is derived from two old Khendoran words, "Sally," which means "To gather together with important purpose," and "Anon," which means "later."

As the name suggests, Salanon is a town that enjoys their apathy. In fact about the only thing that gets them riled up is when someone disturbs that apathy.

The Guilt by Association setup is simple. The Characters are strangers. They are new things in a town that does not like new things. They are *outsiders!* (insert hostile murmuring here). About the only people in the town not apathetic enough to leave well enough alone with hostile whispering is a young man named Lance Boyle (snicker, snicker). Lance is the leader of the town's band of local toughs. He also has a lovely singing voice.

Shortly after the group arrives at the inn, Lance and his boys will start making trouble. They will do so in one of several ways.

1) Trip the barmaid carrying one or more of the party's drinks, causing a nasty spill on the best dressed character in the group.

2) Begin making off-color comments about someone's questionable parentage.

3) Begin making overt gestures of affection at any female members of the group (i.e. groping).

4) Launch into a rousing, loud, and exceptionally long version of The Village People's "Y.M.C.A."

Any of these antagonistic devices should be adequate to start a fight with *someone*.

The combat statistics for Lance and his boys are not exceptionally important. Just make sure they are tough enough to give your group a bit of a fight and a heavy property damage bill before they are bludgeoned into goo.

As the fight ends, the sheriff of Salanon will arrive on the scene to break things up. His name is Carlton Cody and he has brought with him the entire Salanon militia. After all, this is more action than the small town of Salanon has seen in years.

The "outsiders" will be summarily thrown in the klinkski. No trial. No questions. Welcome to the world of small town law enforcement.

It does not matter if any of the characters did not participate in the fight. They are all outsiders and therefore they will be arrested and charged. *Guilt by Association!*

With all of your player characters safely locked up in small, lonely rooms together, this is a perfect opportunity for them to really get acquainted.

Enter the Wizard Estevan; governor of the township and county of Salanon. Estevan is a wiry man, perhaps in his late thirties, dark of hair and gray of eye. He is well aware of the reputation of Lance Boyle and his propensity to sing Village People songs at passers by. He will agree wholeheartedly that Lance is a jerk and will offer to release the entire group without charges. However there is the small matter of the damages to the inn....

He will then offer the group a job. Whoever refuses to take the job will have to cover the damages to the inn. But he will offer both freedom and a tidy sum to the ones who will agree to help him! (What a guy!)

Estevan has long been at odds with the Wizardess Roshia, who lives in (and governs) a nearby county. Estevan is a smooth beguiler and a model scumwaffle with few to no redeeming qualities. Simply for hate's sake Estevan will contract the party to "...retrieve a precious enchanted chime which the most wicked and hateful woman has stolen from me."

In actuality, Estevan is sending the characters on what he knows is an impossible mission; to break into the home of a kind and just lady and tear the place apart looking for an item that doesn't even exist! The GM can choose to play out the farcical break-in in full or simply read the following passage to the players:

**When your party left the town of Salanon, your mission had been fairly well defined by Salanon's governor, the kindly wizard Estevan. You were to travel by horseback to the hamlet of Villano, commonly called "Villa Moo" by the inhabitants of larger cities. Upon your arrival you were to seek out the black tower of the despicable witch, Roshia. Through stealth and cunning you were to recover from that tower a small platinum**

**chime with magical runes etched upon it. The evil witch had stolen the chime from Estevan some days ago. Estevan warned you that the woman was very dangerous, and under no circumstances should you allow yourselves to be caught.**

**The offered reward seemed more than ample compensation for any danger involved, considering the circumstances...**

**Things got off on the wrong foot immediately. To reach the black tower, you had to perilously scale the four-foot-tall, white picket fence and tread the treacherous path through the hedges and flower beds to reach the well trimmed inner yard. The witch's black tower appeared to be an elegant but simple manor house whose expansive gardens were tastefully decorated with fine statuary. You began to mistrust Estevan's character description of the Wizardess Roshia when you noticed the bird feeders hanging from the front porch lamps.**

**The sculpture garden was full of exquisite, pleasant statuary, mostly depicting forest sprites, athletes and large cats. One statue in particular, that of a life-sized wyvern, was very realistic. So realistic, in fact, that it began chasing you all playfully around the gardens. You and the wyvern yelled, screamed, bellowed, knocked over statues and trampled rose bushes in a joyful, panicked frenzy — all in all, it was quite a ruckus.**

**The last thing you remember was seeing a tall, light-haired woman in the doorway of the manor—she was wearing only her nightgown, and did not look pleased. From her outstretched hands a bright blue light flared and the world seemed to buckle beneath your feet...**

The party awakes in the chilly, subterranean entry room of the Gauntlet—Room #1.

As the party encounters each area, read to them the associated **bold, italic text**.

## 1) Entry Room

**You awake groggily, at first aware only of the cold flagstones beneath your prone forms. It seems that you are no longer in the witch Roshia's sculpture garden, but are in a barren stone room with a single brass-handled door of polished mahogany in the north wall. The only other notable feature in this room is a**

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wrought iron spiral staircase in the center, ascending through a hole in the ceiling.

As you quickly take stock of yourself, you immediately notice that you are devoid of all your equipment. Not a scrap of what you were carrying before remains on your person. You are wearing a plain robe of white cotton, belted at the waist with a thin rope. Attached to the belt-robe is a flimsy, but serviceable knife in a simple cloth sheath.

A woman with pale skin and long, flowing white hair — perhaps in her mid-thirties — is standing at the top of the stairs. She is clad, head to toe, in black. The scowl she casts in your direction makes you think of a lot of places you would rather be.

"You needn't try to explain yourselves," she says. "I know who you are and why you've come skulking into my house. You would fain call yourselves, 'adventurers.' 'Thieves and cutthroats,' is far more appropriate. Reason told me I should have killed you on sight, as intruders to my demesne. I'd have been completely justified.

"However, I suspect that my (ahem) esteemed colleague has deceived you as to my motives — so I shall give you a chance to redeem yourselves." She points. "Through that door is my gauntlet. It is a rite of passage — to teach and test. If you can get out of it alive, it shall prove to me that you are (perhaps) worth keeping around. Should you survive, I shall not only give you your leave, but shall also take you under my proverbial wing. Should you choose to accept, I shall be your sponsor. That is your choice. The matter of your going in there, however, is not open to discussion — though I sincerely wish you the best of luck."

Looking a bit forlorn, the wizardess Roshia draws a heavy sigh, "Now get in there, and for both our sakes, please do try to learn something."

As Roshia leaves, a massive stone plug settles itself over the hole, sealing you in.

#### GameMaster:

The stone plug is immovable. The only egress is the door in the north wall. It is here that the players will probably discover, much to their chagrin, that their magic, and near-magical abilities, do not function.

Unless otherwise stated, all the doors in the Gauntlet are similar to this one: a finely polished, mahogany portal with an elliptical brass knob. The hinges of all the doors are strongly riveted, so that the doors may not be removed. I am constantly amazed at the number of players who inquire about the specifics on doorknobs.

Other than the above description, the room is totally bland. The door in the north wall opens easily, on well-oiled hinges. Characters able to mundanely sense their approximate depth underground will feel as though they are about 200' down.

#### Score Chart

(no score possible in this room)

## 2) The Room of Abstinence

The door to this room stands partially open. A brass plaque affixed to the door reads, "ABSTINENCE: to my dear friend, Carnalla, whose lust for wealth destroyed her at the hands of the orcs of Willowgrove. May your soul rest forever in peace, my friend."

The door opens into a ten foot wide hallway running perhaps forty feet. It ends in a thirty-foot by thirty-foot room. The floor of this room is glassy smooth and slopes steeply down to the wall at your right. A forest of yard-long metal spikes jut from this wall in a malevolent mass of certain death to anyone falling into them. They drip with a caustic-looking green ichor.

Directly in front of you, a five-foot wide, railed catwalk of wrought iron runs above the sloping floor to a small landing on the far side of the room. On this land-



ing is a pedestal, and on the pedestal is a huge bar of gold bullion. The gold shines even in the dim light of the ceiling's glow.

#### GameMaster:

Any character proceeding more than ten feet onto the catwalk will trigger the trap. The catwalk will collapse, folding suddenly down to touch the sloping floor on the right-hand side. Now, normally this would not be a problem: a dirt-diving adventurer would easily catch himself on the seemingly solid rail of the catwalk. Therein lies the catch! The rail is an illusion — characters fall right through it and slide directly into the spikes. ("Oops! Holy aerated adventurers, Batman!")

The character 'dies' on the spikes and reappears, gasping and trembling (perhaps even vomiting) behind the last member of the party.

The gold bullion is actually just a painted brick and is bolted to the pedestal. Since the catwalk is floored with a fine metal grating (just a bit too fine to get one's fingers through), it might be possible for a quick-thinking adventurer, rolling really well on his initiative, to drive the point of his knife through the grating and arrest his fall. Knives used in this unorthodox manner tend to snap off unless they make a saving throw of 13 or better on a twenty-sided die.

The catwalk slowly rights itself after each dumping.

#### Score Chart

+5 For any player safely testing the catwalk for traps / illusions.

+5 For first player to show that he has grasped the room's meaning. "Hey guys, the plaque says 'Abstinence,' maybe we'd better just leave it be."

+5 For best role player.

+3 For any player moving to skip the room entirely.

+2 For any player suggesting a safety rope (possibly made from cannibalized robes or belts).

-10 For dying in this area (in the Gauntlet, negative scores are quite acceptable).



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### 3) The Room of Peace

The door to this area is wide open and looks into a 30' long hallway with a similar, closed door at the far end. A brass plaque on the inner door simply reads "Peace."

#### GameMaster:

How much the characters actually see of this room depends on how quietly they approach the inner door. The room of Peace is the home of Frack, who doesn't know many words, but if he did, "peace" would not be among them. Frack is about 7' tall, 350 pounds, and no brains. He has stringy, greasy, black hair (all over his body), four-inch tusks and grungy fingernails that are similar to the blades on a modern rocksaw. For clothing he wears a ratty leather kilt which quite possibly smells worse than he does. In his matted hair is a greasy but definitely white feather. The feather glows with a dim, magical light. In Frack's bony-knuckled hand is a human thighbone, gnawed to a ragged point by his own hideous teeth.

Frack knows his orders: He may rage and roar and growl and scream at the adventurers all he likes, but he may not attack anyone — until someone brings a weapon (i.e. a knife) into his room.

If this happens he will viciously attempt to impale the offending character on his thighbone and chase the rest of them all the way back out to the main hallway. He is not permitted to pursue further than the outer door. When he has chased the adventurers off, he will return to his room.

If any character asks him nicely for the feather, he is to hand it over without a fuss.

Frack is an ogre.

If the party makes an effort to approach the inner door silently they will catch Frack snoozing. It is possible to steal the feather from his hair while he sleeps. Frack is a light sleeper.

If you happen to be playing with exceptionally powerful characters, you may wish to magnify Frack's statistics to give him a better chance, should a fight ensue.

#### Score Chart

- +5 For politely asking Frack for the pretty feather.
- +5 For best role player.
- +4 For stealing the feather from Frack's hair.
- +2 For suggesting to approach the inner door quietly.
- 3 For entering the room with a weapon and being chased out.
- 10 For entering the room with a weapon and being killed.
- 11 For anyone performing an unprovoked attack on Frack.

### 4) The Room of Forethought

This room has no door. Instead, a simple brass plaque is mounted on the north wall of the passageway leading to the chamber. The plaque reads, "Forethought." The room itself is totally bereft of fixtures except for a 10-foot diameter metal hoop, elevated parallel to the floor, four feet up, by four metal legs. In the middle of the hoop is a round piece of leather, stretched tight by several score of small springs. The springs are spaced at

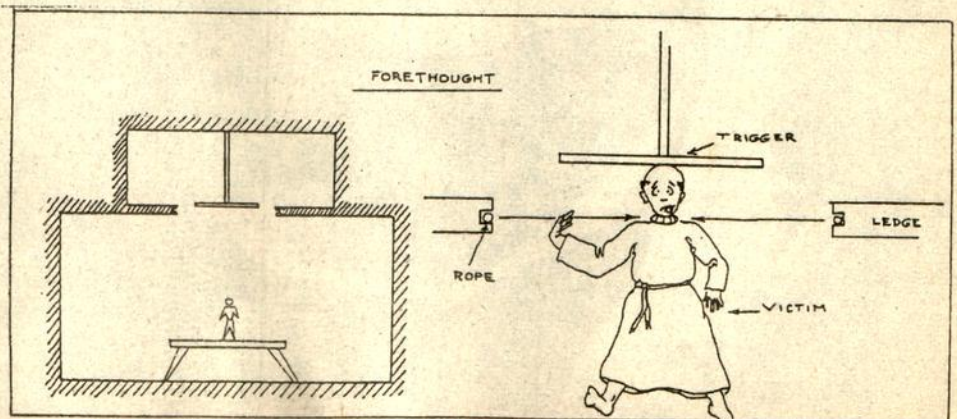
equal intervals around the inside of the hoop. Here, the ceiling is noticeably higher than in the rest of the complex; perhaps 13, maybe 15 feet high.

#### GameMaster:

The above is a layman's description of a trampoline. If you consult your map concerning this room, you will notice a dotted circle in the center of the room. This is not the trampoline, but the illusion-covered hole in the ceiling above it. Using the trampoline, the characters may bounce up through the hole and grab the edge of the 5' wide ledge surrounding it. From the ledge, the characters may stroll over to the passageway in the north wall and proceed to the room of Reversal.

Pretty simple, right? Not really: Suspended from a metal bar hanging down from the ceiling is a six-foot diameter metal plate. The plate hangs down above the hole to a level about a foot above the covering illusion. This plate is a trigger which, when hit from below by even a little pressure, causes the release of a 300 lb. stone block. The block is housed in a silo not shown on the map. Tied to this block is a strong rope which enters a slot in the ledge through a small hole. The rope circumscribes the hole to the upper level and is tied into a noose.

The effect? When a character bounces up through the hole, he hits his head on the trigger, causing the rope to snap tight around his neck. The three-hundred pound block is brought to an abrupt halt as the character's neck is instantly snapped against the stone ledge. The victim then dangles limply from the hole with his head apparently stuck through the ceiling. After a short time, the trap resets itself, releasing the victim to land with a meaty thud on





the stone floor below. A grim teacher for the lesson of forethought.

The GM should give the player a few subtle hints of what is to come. It will probably take a few bounces on the trampoline for intrepid adventurers to get their heads up through the illusion, so we'll start our bounce count on the first bounce on which the character can glimpse the room above. On each of these bounces, tell the character what he sees, remembering of course, that the descriptions should be skimpy and unsure, due to the short viewing time of the room above. Here's an example of how it should work:

Bounce #1: "You could only see for a second, but it looked like there's a room up there with a ledge going around it. The hole is about ten feet around and has a brown stripe running around it."

Bounce #2: "Yes, it's definitely a rope, recessed into a slit in the ledge. For some reason the ceiling seemed really low up there — maybe just an effect of the illusion..."

Bounce #3: If the character hasn't taken action by now, such as leaping for the ledge, stopping his bouncing, or feeling above for the trigger (which would close the noose painfully, but harmlessly, on his arm) then he deserves what he gets.

How does this room demand forethought? It takes forethought to think, "Hey, maybe there's a bad nasty something-or-other waiting up there for my head to pop up, so it can turn my skull into a fine red paste!" as opposed to jumping up there to look around. The simple forethought of probing ahead with one's arm is sufficient to get through this room alive.

It is possible to salvage about thirty feet of rope by severing it right where it enters the room. The trampoline is securely bolted to the floor.

#### Score Chart

- +5 For feeling above while jumping (and thus avoiding the trap).
- +5 For best role player
- +3 For testing the ceiling for illusions (and thus finding one).
- +3 For any character thinking to salvage the rope by disabling the trap.
- 4 For mutilating the trampoline.

-10 For dying in this room.

## 5) Pit Trap

### GameMaster:

This is a common pit trap with a secret trap door that drops the first character walking across it into an 80 foot pit. The bottom is a pool of concentrated acid. (Just for all you silly martial arts-types who think you can fall infinite distances without getting hurt — suck on that one buddy!)

A plaque with glowing letters (so that it may be read easily from the top of the pit) is affixed to the north wall, ten feet below the trapdoor. It reads, "Just to keep you on your toes." It is a simple matter to circumvent the pit trap by hugging the wall and stepping around the pit's southeast corner. The pit slowly resets itself after each dumping.

### Score Chart

-10 For dying only if pit had been previously discovered. It's happened — they do forget.

## 6) Wolves & Sheep

**T**his fine mahogany door sports a brass plaque that reads, "Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing."

## 7) Dank & Dark

**F**ive feet down this dank, cool passageway is a brass plaque that reads, "Humor." About ten feet further down is another labeled, "Wisdom."

## 8) Room of Humor & Wisdom

**A**s you exit the dampness of the passageway behind you, the air becomes both fresher and warmer. A gentle breeze blows through your hair and the mingled scents of sweet flowers caress your nostrils. Bird songs drift liltily over the lush hedges as the summer sun purges the chill from your body. You seem to be standing somewhere outside Roshia's estate, at about noon on a summer day. Or perhaps you are somewhere within her expansive gardens, but the sights and sounds give no clue as to your specific location. The mountains, vegetation and climate all indicate that you are not far from Villano, but you cannot place exactly

where. Around you is a garden of thick, robust, nine-foot tall rose hedges in full bloom.

A path of fine, white gravel leads from the doorway (which hangs eerily in the air behind you) to a towering, ancient oak tree, standing alone in the center of the garden. About ten feet down the path from you, two branch paths meander off through the rose hedges. One goes to the left, and one to the right. Next to the left path is a short, wooden sign, carved to say, "DANGER! Man Eating Flowers!" Just before the right hand path is a similar sign reading, "DANGER! Woman Eating Flowers!"



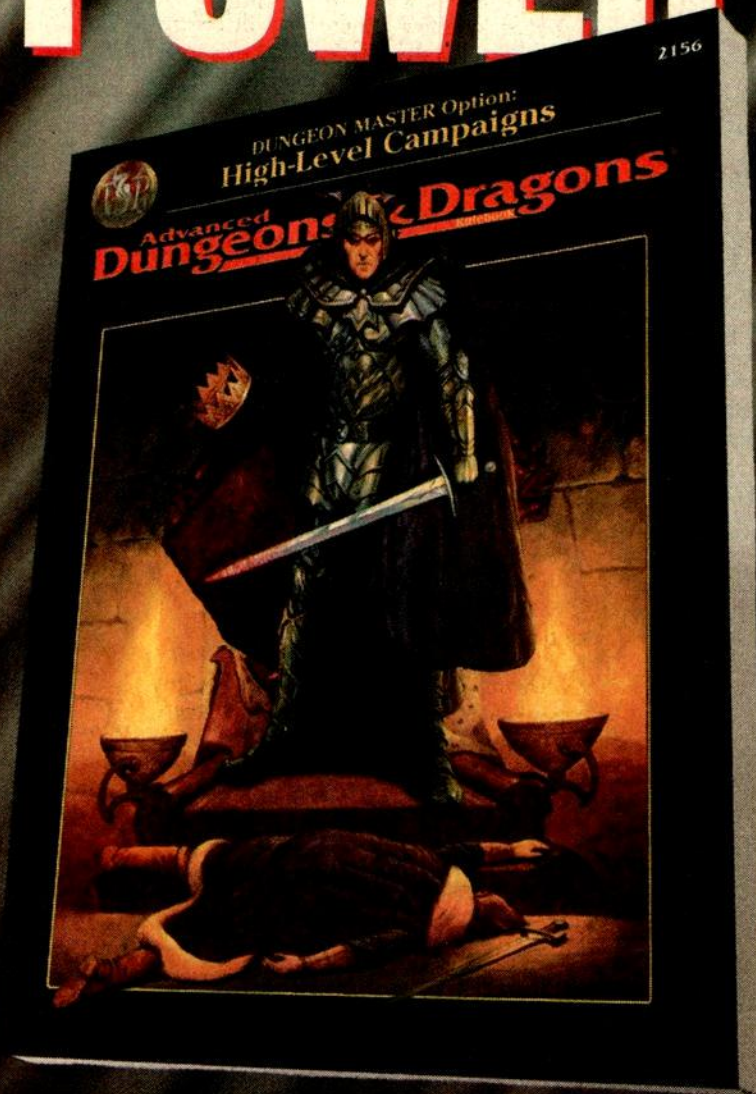
### GameMaster:

If the party proceeds down the left path, they will find exactly what the sign indicated — a man eating flowers. He appears to be a green-skinned elf, clad only in a kilt made from fresh, green leaves. A wreath of braided flowers rest on his head. Ignoring all else, he is blissfully plucking the red blossoms from the hedges around him and devouring them, petal by succulent petal. At his feet is a sealed bone scroll tube. The sprite is not hostile in the least. He is, however, mute, and has nearly vegetable intelligence. He will in no way hinder the players from capturing the scroll tube. The sprite is pleasant and friendly. He will silently offer the characters some roses to eat.

Yes, this clearing does have a man eating flowers. It also has danger; a point your players are likely to forget. The scroll tube contains an exquisite painting of a bouquet of white roses. The painting is cursed: any character looking upon it will be instantly transformed into a bouquet of white roses — just like the one on the scroll.

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The sprite is just wild about white roses (having eaten only red ones for so long) and will snatch up the character, lightning quick, and devour him. Provided that the



party has lives remaining, characters killed in this fashion will reappear at the intersection of the paths.

The situation down the other path is similar. The roses of the "Woman Eating Flowers" side are white. Instead of a male sprite, this clearing contains a female sprite. The scroll changes characters into a bouquet of red roses. Like her brother, she will devour transformed characters almost instantly. Again, killed characters should hopefully return at the intersection of the paths. Characters saved by their quick-thinking partners before they can be devoured, take a few minutes to wilt before they are considered dead.

The scrolls work only once and their magic is destroyed if they are taken from the room. *The curse does not work on vegetable life forms.* If the sprites are attacked they will retreat by melding into the thorny hedges, where the characters cannot follow.

The oak tree in the center of the room is sentient, as well as being very old, very intelligent and very hostile. He also has some magical control over the rose bushes. The tree is nasty-tempered, foul-mouthed and resents on sight anything that he encounters. If a member of the party approaches him, he will command the hedges to silently move in and close off the exit. Then after gratuitously insulting and threatening the party, he will ask them a riddle. He will gruffly instruct that only one person answer at a time.

A wrong answer is just what this guy wants to hear. If a wrong answer is given, he will vigorously swat the answer-giver dead with a thick, gnarled limb (of which he has plenty for everyone). If a more powerful character happens to take several swats, well...so much the better. If he is given a correct answer he will order the hedges to allow the group to leave. These are the rules he is forced to abide by. Otherwise he would just swat the puny flesh-creatures into fertilizer and call it art.

### The Riddle Of The Tree:

"Standing against the wind and sun  
I make the homes of Man.  
I shelter the poor and slay the strong,  
With gut and steel at hand."

The correct answer is "Wood," or "Tree."

Should the characters start digging through the foliage in an attempt to escape the gauntlet, they will discover that the

outdoor scenery all just an elaborate illusion. The room is as it appears on your map. Sorry, adventurers, no shortcuts.

### Score Chart

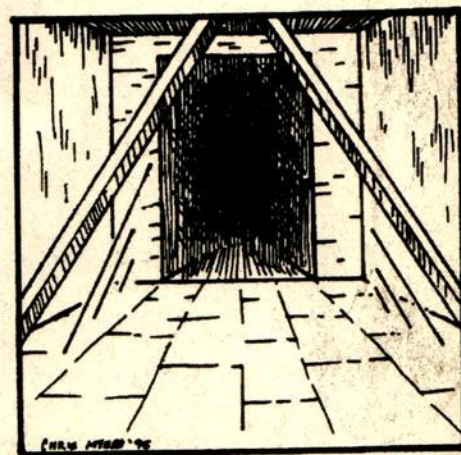
- +7 For correctly answering the riddle.
- +5 For best role player.
- +2 For anyone proposing that the outdoor scene is an illusion.
- 3 For unnecessary vandalization of bushes.
- 3 For smarting off to the oak tree (and acquiring a sizable lump on the head).
- 10 For incorrect answer to the riddle (splat!).
- 15 For unprovoked attack on the sprites.
- 15 For attacking the tree (and being killed in self-defense).

## 9) The Room of Caution

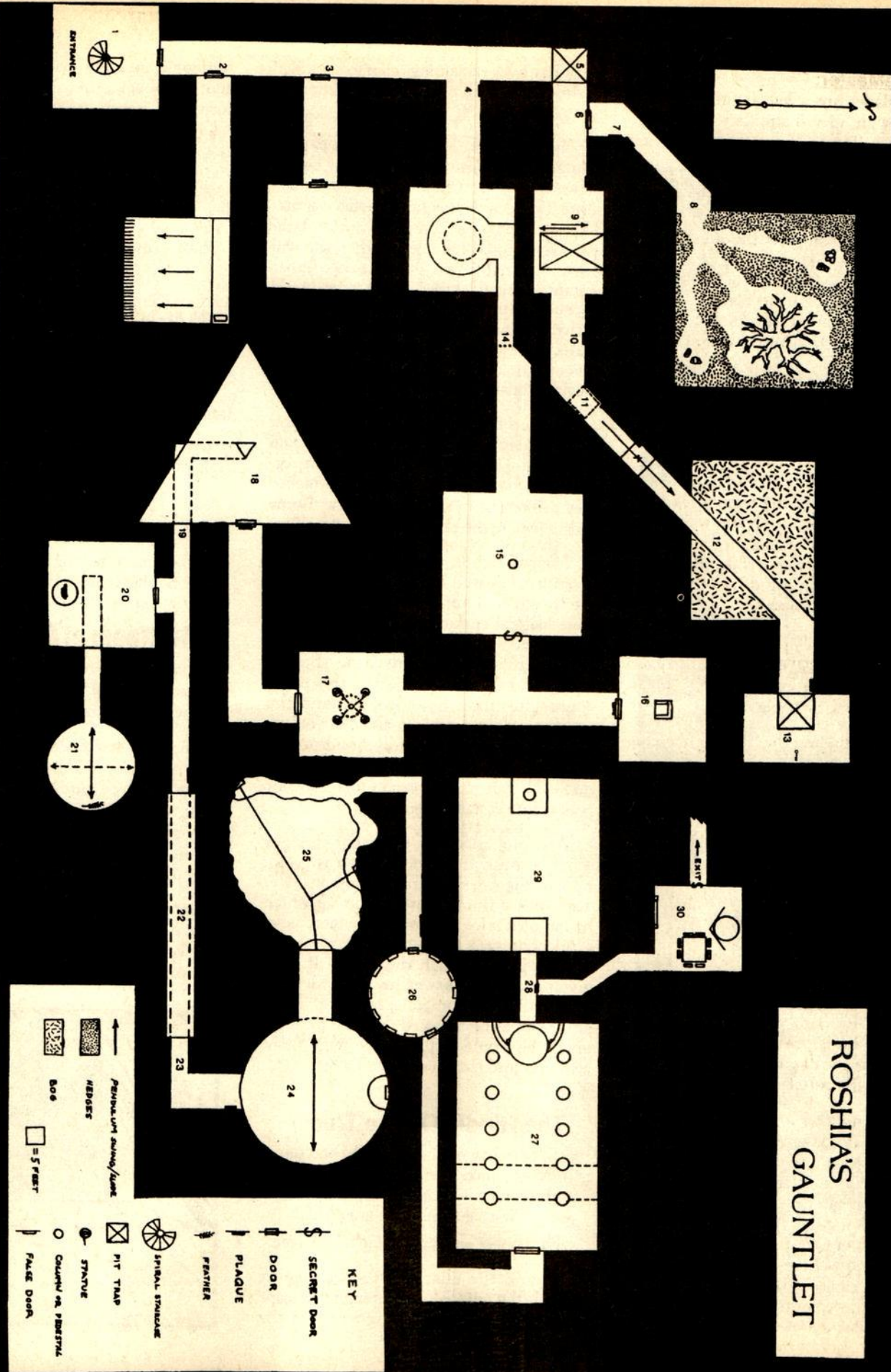
**A** plaque before this room is set into the north wall of the archway leading to it. The plaque reads, "Caution."

The room itself is nothing more than a 30' section of widened hallway. Two heavy, sharp blades protrude down through the ceiling through a narrow slit. They swing back and forth with a scissoring motion, hissing softly against each other as they pass.

At the outward end of their cycle they come a hairsbreadth from the walls. They pass each other in the center of the passageway about once every second.



# ROSHIAS GAUNTLET



**GameMaster:**

The blades are a legitimate trap, and while they are very sharp, there is nothing magical or illusory about them. Tell the players that it seems quite probable that, with a well-timed jump, one could pass easily between them unharmed.

The hidden danger is the illusion-covered pit just on the other side of them. A character might feel really smug about timing his leap through the blades — as he apparently plummets through the solid floor, to fall over 100' into a shallow pool of concentrated acid.

The pit is not impassable, however. Along the right-hand wall is a foot-wide ledge of safe floor, distinguishable from the illusion only by feel. Due to the angle of the blades, swinging from their unseen pivot, they are not long enough to reach the floor as they approach the wall. Brave characters can crawl across the ledge, under the blades, or they may take the easier option of sidestepping down the ledge, careful to avoid the blades.

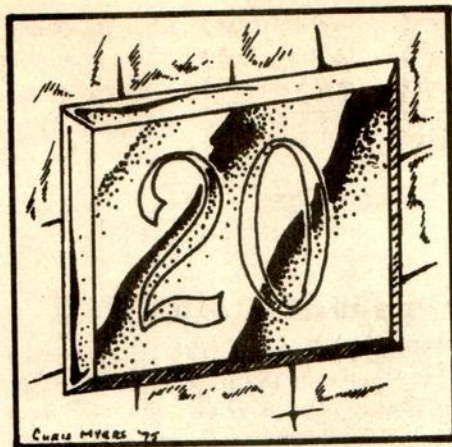
**Score Chart**

- +3 For suggesting there may be danger other than the apparent.
- +3 For finding the pit in a safe manner.
- +3 For finding the ledge.
- 10 For leaping blithely into the pit.
- +5 For best role player.

**10) The Lone Plaque****GameMaster:**

No player description is given for this area due to its highly variable nature. There is a simple brass plaque, mounted on the north side of the passageway. It is a magical counter for the party's remaining lives.

Unfortunately, due to a rather blatant and deliberate design flaw, it always reads double the party's actual number of lives. If the party happens to have 14 lives left, the plaque will read, "Lives remaining — 28." If the characters lose lives in the rooms of Consistency or Questioning (and I've never seen a group where at least one person didn't get greased in there) they should notice, as they return up the hall, that the plaque's mathematics aren't quite right.



"Wait a minute! We only lost two, not four!"

Be certain to mention the number on the plaque as they pass it again — it's crucial that they at least get a fair shot at figuring this one out.

**Score Chart**

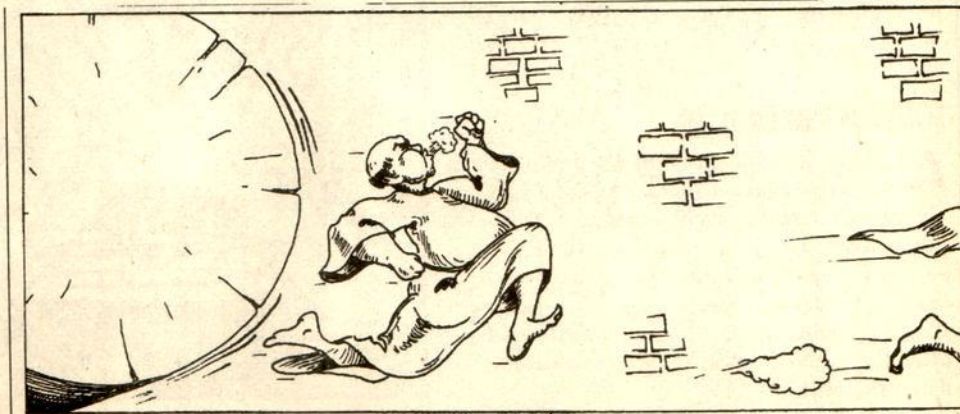
- +10 For character figuring out how many lives the party actually has remaining.

**11) The Hall of Consistency**

**A**long the north wall of this uncomfortably dim hallway is a huge brass plaque. The plaque is three feet tall and over fifteen feet long. In huge, clearly carved letters it reads, "Consistency." It is too dark to see very far ahead, but you can tell that the passage slopes significantly downward.

**GameMaster:**

Looking at the map of this hallway, you will notice a 10' by 10' square marked with



an "x." This marks a pressure plate in the floor. When a character steps on the plate, a panel in the ceiling, at the top of the slope, will slide silently open and drop a huge stone roller clamorously into the hallway.

The roller fills the entire passageway and weighs several tons. As it slowly begins to roll down toward the characters it should elicit a mad stampede toward area 12.

**12) Mud-Filled Room**

**A**s you sprint desperately toward the archway of this room, you notice, much to your dismay, that it is completely dark. From the meager light of the passageway, you can only tell that it widens out considerably beyond the arch.

**GameMaster:**

It is important at this point to make the characters think and act quickly. Hold up your fingers, counting out seconds, giving each character three seconds to act. If they pause longer than that, make the appropriate crunching noises and adjust the life total accordingly.

The first reaction of most players will be to leap around the corner, out of the way of the roller. On your map of this room, there is a ten-foot wide, safe pathway across the room. The shaded areas represent quicksand. Woe to those who leapt off the path, for they shall die most ickily.

The darkness shrouding the room is magical and confounds even the most refined magical sight. Characters will not be able to see the exit to this room until they are through it: they must make their way totally blind. Those fortunate enough to come zooming out the other side of this room will soon discover that the roller has

mysteriously vanished (it fell off into the bog). The roller trap is only functional once before a new roller must be installed.

#### Score Chart

- 10 For testing the roller for illusion (Goosh! Yup, it's real).
- +7 For running straight through the darkened room.
- 10 For suffocating in quicksand.
- +5 For best role player.

### 13) The Room of Questioning

**T**his plain, 20' by 30' room appears totally empty, save for a heavy iron key resting against the wall — directly opposite the doorway. Just outside the archway is a brass plaque reading, "Questioning."

#### GameMaster:

The pit directly before the door is covered by an illusion of normal floor. The pit is only 15' deep, but the bottom 5' is filled with concentrated acid. (My, my, but that stuff seems to be popular around here.) Whoever falls for this one deserves what they get. The key opens the portcullis (area 14) to the room of Reversal.

#### Score Chart

- +3 For safely discovering the pit
- +5 For retrieving the key
- 10 For dying by falling through the illusion
- 15 For dying by falling through a revealed illusion (bonehead!)
- 20 For dropping the key in the acid (Roshia will have to send them a new one...morons. This was actually done in playtesting, if you can believe it).

### 14) The Portcullis

**A**head of you, blocking off the hallway, is a heavy iron portcullis. It looks very secure. Set into the right-hand wall is an iron-trimmed keyhole. From beyond the portcullis you can hear the crackle and hiss of powerful electricity. The faint smell of ozone wafts to your nostrils and blue flashes are sporadically visible far down the hall.

#### GameMaster:

The key to this portal is in room 13. When the key is turned, the portcullis will slide slowly into the ceiling, allowing the characters to pass.

#### Score Chart

(no score possible here)

### 15) The Room of Reversal

**T**his 40' by 40' room is marked by a plaque on the north side of the passageway, and it reads, simply, "Reversal." The room's walls and ceiling have a wide metal mesh bolted to them, much like modern chain-link fencing. Held four inches from the room's basic stone construction by red-hot copper bolts, the mesh crackles and spits with tiny but violent lightning strikes. The odor of ozone hangs heavy in the damp, still air.

Exactly in the center of the room is a two-foot wide, four-foot tall stone pillar, upon which rests a golden dagger. There are no apparent exits to this room.

#### GameMaster:

The plaque to this room says, "Reversal," and it's a cinch that someone is going to try for the shortcut by reversing the plaque. While this serves no real purpose, it does show creative thinking on the part of the player. If the plaque is tested for secret mechanisms, it will be found to be mounted on a swivel. It may be flipped over so that its other side may be viewed. The other side says, "Not correct, but good thinking anyway." Just beneath this message are a pair of brass clips holding a white feather.



The room of Reversal is just that, in a very literal sense. The powerful electricity arcing from the mesh on the walls is illusory. The ozone smell, however, is not. That odor is coming from the (apparently safe) supercharged floor. That which appears dangerous is safe. That which appears safe is lethal.

Any objects placed on the floor; bits of cloth, wood, metal, rope and flesh, will fry and die almost instantly. The metal meshwork along the walls and ceiling is quite safe to climb on — strenuous though it may be. The room's center pedestal is not charged.

The pedestal itself can only withstand 25 lbs. of pressure before sinking rapidly down to floor level. This action opens the secret door across the room, and sets up a potentially comical situation. If the character is now too short to reach the ceiling, the GameMaster may have some fun watching the character traverse the electrified floor — by dangling from the legs of some charitable strong-arm. Some of the problems with this mode of transport include: tired hands, sagging meshwork and flimsy cloth robes being torn forcibly off by the weight of desperately clinging, former pedestal-jumpers. It could be amusing. Ability checks should abound.

When the players retrieve the dagger, inform them that the words, "This knife cuts only gold," are inscribed on the blade. It's true. The golden dagger does cut gold as though it were butter — but it does a pretty good job on flesh too. Characters will very likely discover exactly how well the knife cuts flesh in the room of Trust.

#### Score Chart

- +5 For testing the walls and floor for electricity...safely, that is.
- +5 For player retrieving the golden dagger.
- 8 For destroying the dagger on the electrified floor.
- 10 For dying in this room.
- +7 For best role player.

### 16) The Room of Trust

**T**he plaque on this open door says, "Trust." Inside is a massive iron chair with chains (also of heavy black iron) attached to its armrests and front legs.

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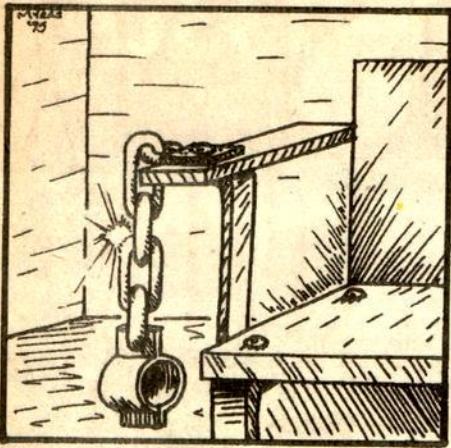
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Manacled to the chair by these chains is a hugely muscled, snaggle-toothed, green-skinned reptilian humanoid. The claws on his webbed hands and feet appear to have been filed to blunt harmless. The chains on his wrists and ankles give him only about a foot of mobility with each limb. Yellow, slitted eyes widen at your approach.

#### GameMaster:

Since, after the Reversal room, all the plaques reverse their meanings, the real theme to this room is Mistrust. This should be a learning experience for the party. The chair is authentic iron and is securely bolted to the floor. The chains and manacles, however, are solid gold — only painted to look like iron. The monster's name is Boaseth: he is a master of vocal mimicry.

When Boaseth spies the party, he will look immediately for the gold dagger. Upon seeing it, he will give a stunningly authentic puppy-dog whine and beckon to the character carrying the precious trinket. Without actually speaking, Boaseth will do his absolute best to beg or borrow the golden dagger from the party. He will whimper. He will whine. He will cry (crocodile tears). He will rattle his chains pathetically. If questioned, he will only shrug and nod his head in response to queries.

The instant he gets the dagger in his hand, the reptile will, in one murderously fluid motion, slash the chain on his knife hand and bury the golden blade pommel-deep in his benefactor's throat. He will then fully free himself and go after the rest of the party. Killing people is not something he enjoys, but he knows his duty. He may not pursue the characters farther than the door.

The ideal solution is to mistrust Boaseth and leave him right where he is.

Very little is known of Boaseth's race. He is a member of a very warlike, tribal society called the Gorata, native to the jungles far to the south. After his tribe was destroyed, he was found, and adopted, by Roshia. His education was rapid and intense — schooling him in the ways of human society. In addition to being an exceptional knifeman (knifebeing), he is also highly educated, literate, and fluent in several languages. His normal duty is to guard Roshia's magical laboratory. He is very grateful for his treatment at the hands of Roshia and will fight to the death to protect her.

#### Score Chart

+5 For first player who notes the significance of the reversed plaque and deduces the room's true meaning. This score is available even if the player does not notice the reversal of themes until several rooms later (if he lives that long).

+5 For scraping Boaseth's chains to reveal their gold construction.

-10 For attempting to slay the helpless prisoner.

-5 For attempting to fight Boaseth after he is freed.

-10 For player giving him the gold dagger (i. e., dying).

+5 For best role player.

**Note:** If the party abandons the gold dagger in the room (likely), Boaseth will open the door a crack and hand it out to them. "Dreadfully sorry," he will say. When his role is complete, he will return to his chair and await further orders from Roshia. He can tell the party nothing of what lies ahead.

### 17) The Room of Power

This 30' by 30' room is dominated by four bronze statues. The statues are realistic renderings of heavily armored knights, standing in salute. They are larger than life-sized: about seven feet tall each. Their four swords are drawn and held aloft to touch their needle-sharp points in the center of the room. Beneath the raised points of the swords is a simple but elegant marble pedestal with a purple velvet cushion. Upon the cushion rests a

brilliantly sparkling crystal crown. The floor in this area is not congruous with the rest of the complex you've seen so far. Instead of plain stone, it is tiled in thousands of inch-wide blue hexagons. It looks to be a very expensive job. The plaque set into the door of this room reads, "Power."

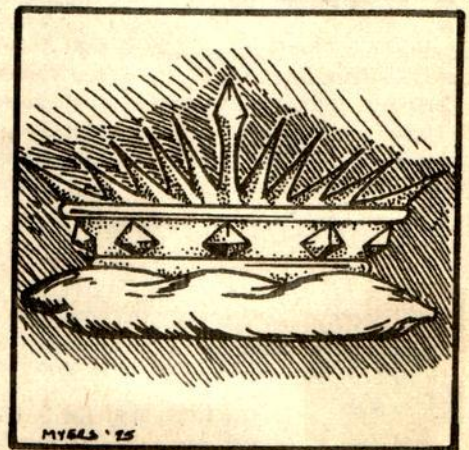
Another door is set into the opposite wall. It is of heavy wooden construction, banded in iron. It looks very sturdy.

#### GameMaster:

Since the plaques are reversed, the theme to this room is Powerlessness. The door in the south wall is securely locked and will open only after the room test has been passed or failed. Should a character approach the pedestal, the room's dweomer will be activated.

When a character first approaches the crown, two things will happen. First, a ring of tiles surrounding the pedestal will rise up out of the floor. The tiles are actually caps, used to conceal a ring of iron bars. The bars extend from the floor to ceiling, forming a fine, circular cage around the pedestal—trapping the character closest to the crown. At that point, the four bronze statues will animate, dropping from their salute stances into poised fighting stances. There the statues will freeze, waiting for the character to act.

Two courses of action will affect the statues. One is smashing the crystal crown. This will drop the cage and cause the statues to resume their normal positions. At that point, the door in the south wall will open to allow the characters to proceed. If, however, the character places the crown upon his head, the statues will animate again. In turn, each statue will attack the trapped character through the bars of the

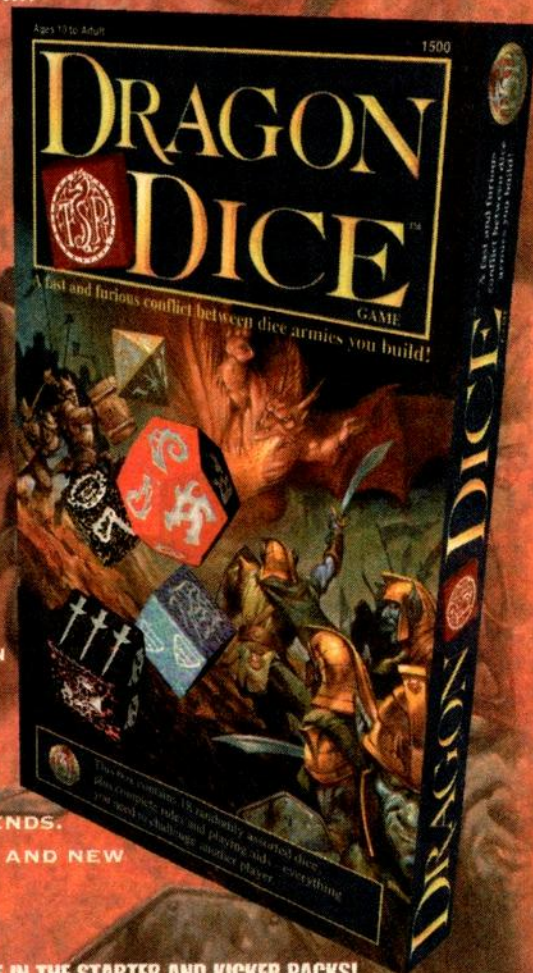
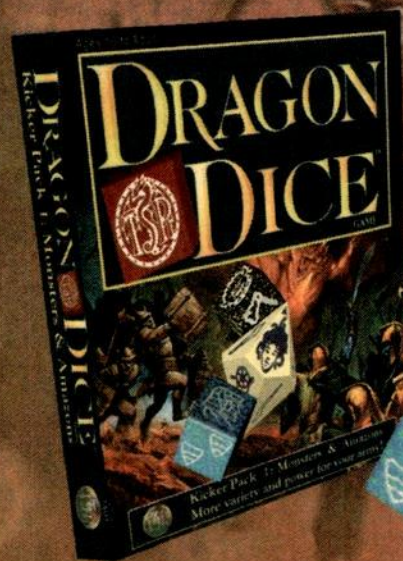




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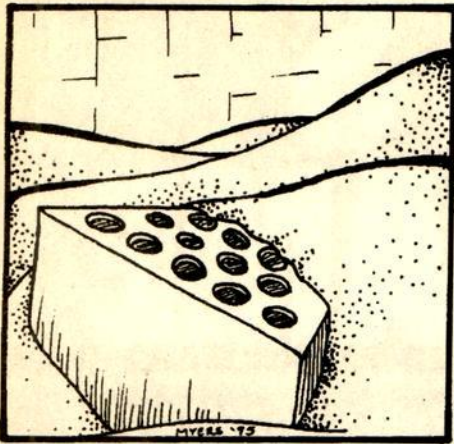
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age. There is no place to run and little room to dodge, so it is only a short matter of time before the statue impales the victim on its blade. *The teleport magics common to the gauntlet will not remove the character from the cage!* After all four statues have killed the character once, the cage will drop and the and the statues will return to their normal formation. The south door will then open and allow the group to proceed.

In the hysterical fracas, the crystal crown is about 100% likely to be smashed to bits. When it breaks, its sparkling fragments will be bathed in blood. It's a nice special effect — it does not have to be the character's blood: it just appears there.

Being stuck in that cage will be a hellish experience for the victim and his comrades both. Four times will he be slain, only to awake again to the nightmare pain and terror of another deadly thrust; outside the cage, his friends can only watch helplessly as the screams of their dying friend wrack them to the very marrow of their frozen bones. (Ooo. Waxing poetic, are we?)

Four lives lost to the dream of Power.

#### Score Chart

+10 For smashing the crystal crown.

-10 For dying in this room (not cumulative).

## 18) The Room of Disunity

Upon the plaque mounted to the door of this room is the word "Disunity." The floor of the room itself appears to be a perfect equilateral triangle, 60' on a side. The ceiling is at least 80' up.

In the room's center is a triangular stone pedestal, about 5' on a side. It too, is an equilateral triangle, but is oriented exactly opposite the lay of the room. The top of the pedestal is set with a pattern of shallow indentations, each holding a featureless brass coin.

#### GameMaster:

The coins and indentations are a common logic puzzle. In fact, you may have seen one like it yourself. Initially, players may remove any coin from its recess. To remove coins after the initial one, however, players must use an adjacent coin to 'jump' the coin they wish to remove. Jumps must be in a straight line and only one coin may be jumped at a time. The purpose of the exercise is to have only one coin left on the board at the end.

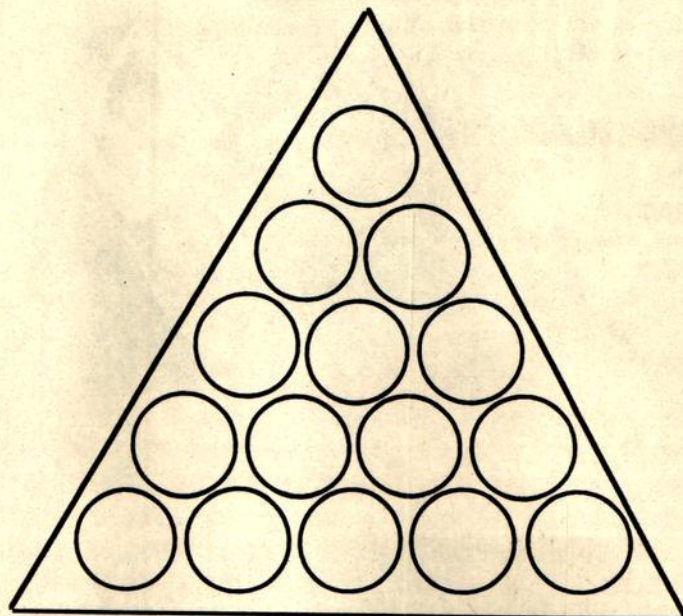
For the characters, the end may not be very far off. When the first coin is touched, the door will slam shut, sealing the characters in the room. Then, three large holes will open in the corners of the ceiling and torrents of white sand will begin pouring into the room.

Hand the players a copy of the Disunity puzzle diagram provided, and allow them ten minutes to solve the puzzle. After that, assume that the sand has covered the pedestal, leaving all in the room to be buried alive.

After a coin has been legally removed from its recess it may not be replaced. It will leap forcibly from its indentation if this is attempted. If a coin is removed illegally, it will forcibly leap back into place.

This is a difficult puzzle to solve. It is also an elaborate red herring. Solving the puzzle will avail the characters nothing. Hopefully, they have figured out that the plaques are lying to them and will know the true theme of the room to be Unity.

As it happens, the pedestal is mounted upon a swivel. If the pedestal is rotated 180 degrees, the sand will cease to fall. When the pedestal is aligned with the lay of the room (i.e. when their positions are unified), it will begin to extend toward the ceiling, becoming a tall, triangular shaft. It will rise all the way up to touch the ceiling. Woe to anyone standing on top of it. (Squish!)



Disunity Room Puzzle

(Some Assembly Required)

As the shaft rises into the room, exposing more of its length, the characters will see that it has a narrow door in its side. When the top of the shaft touches the ceiling, the doorway will be aligned perfectly at floor level.

Inside the shaft is a ladder descending 100' into the darkened hallway below.

### Score Chart

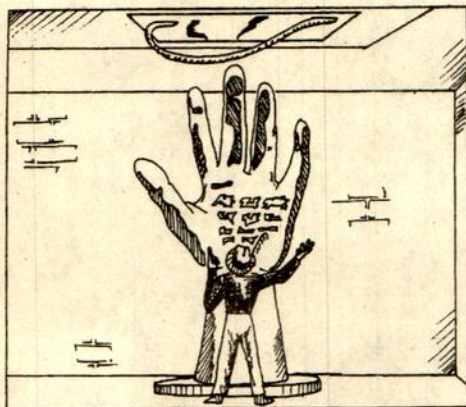
- +3 For first player to figure out how the puzzle works.
- +5 For first player noting that removing the coins from the board demonstrates disunity.
- +5 For player proposing to ignore the puzzle on the basis of the reversed plaques.
- +7 For player rotating the table to unify the triangles.
- 10 For dying in this room.
- +5 For best role player.

**Note:** If the entire party is killed in this room, they will appear once more, outside its door. However, when they look in, the floor will be free of sand and the pedestal will be fully extended to show the exit ladder. This helps keep entire parties from killing themselves repeatedly in this area.

## 19) The Darkened Hallway

### GameMaster:

As the characters enter this pitch black passage, they will hear the distant, hollowly echoing sound of rhythmically grinding stone. This sound is coming from the rotating tunnel in area 22.



## 20) The Room of Mindlessness

The door to this 30-foot by 30-foot room stands open, allowing characters to easily see its interior and the large, obsidian statue dominating it. The carving is a twelve-foot tall, polished obsidian representation of a human hand and forearm, reaching ceilingward from a foot-tall, granite dais on the floor. Letters carved into the palm glow with an eldritch, sapphire light. The illuminated carving reads as follows:

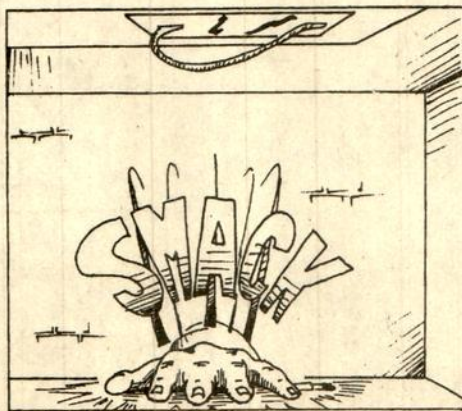
*"I'll accuse you, or call you,  
Or tell you 'just one.'  
With my four friends I'll fight you,  
But never alone."*

More glowing carving in the base of the statue reads, "Mindlessness." The object for which the statue is apparently reaching is a giant, brass door handle in the ceiling. The ceiling here is 15' up.

### GameMaster:

When the characters enter this room, the door will slam shut and lock behind them (My, but that seems to be catching). They will be trapped in this area until they correctly answer the riddle inscribed on the statue. The correct answer is "pointer finger," or "index finger." A wrong answer spoken at the statue earns a vigorous and deadly swat. The statue is capable of some reach — magically extending the rest of its arm into the room to paste wrong-answering victims. It will resume its original posture after each swat and await a correct answer.

If a correct answer is given, the hand will reach up and grasp the brass door handle in the ceiling. It will then pull on the handle, unfolding a secret staircase up to area 21.



The outer door will only open after the feather from area 21 has been retrieved.

### Score Chart

- +8 For player giving the correct answer to the riddle.
- 8 For dying in this room.
- +5 For best role player.

## 21) The Room of Acceptance

This sixty-foot tall room is perfectly cylindrical. Slowly swinging across the center of the room is a massive axe blade. You assume the stem of the pendulum must vary in length during the course of its swing, for the wickedly sharp blade never rises more than six inches from the floor, even as it nears the walls.

Directly across the room from you, past the silently swinging monster axe, a single white feather leans against the barren wall.

### GameMaster:

Okay, here's the shtick. The swinging axe that the players see is actually an illusory replica of the real, invisible axe, swinging perpendicular to the illusory one. The one they see is swinging side-to-side, the one they don't is swinging toward them. Should a character try the simpleton's approach and just stroll down the center of the room, he will quickly find his hair parted — all the way down to his toes.

The feather can be safely retrieved if a character skirts the edge of the room and quickly snatches it.

### Score Chart

- +3 For testing the apparent blade for illusion.
- +5 For discovering the invisible blade (without being hit by it).
- +5 For brave soul recovering the feather.
- 10 For dying in this room.
- +5 For best role player.

## 22) The Rotating Tunnel

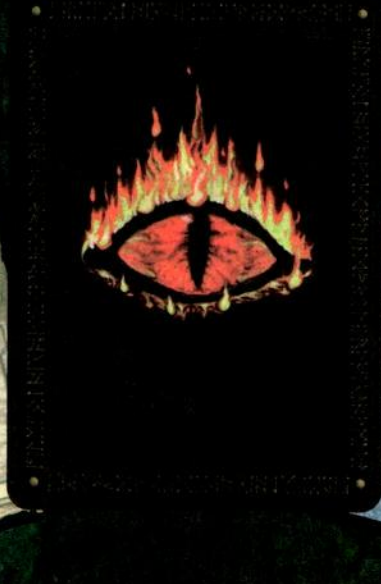
The dim light from the room of Mindlessness slowly fades to blackness as

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—“The Istari” *Unfinished Tales*, p. 405



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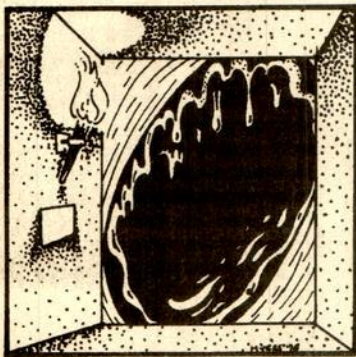


you proceed down the hallway. Through the blackness comes the rhythmic sound of the grinding of stone on stone. It becomes louder as you cautiously approach through the darkness. Abruptly, a torch sputters and blazes to life from a sconce mounted into the northern wall. In the dancing orange light of the torch a soot-encrusted, brass plaque reads, "Light."

The flickering illumination reveals to you the source of the grinding noise. Immediately before you, the passageway changes from plain stone to what appears to be a rotating carnival tunnel. Instead of being round, however, the tunnel is elliptical in shape. Its inside is thickly coated with a glistening, oily, black substance. The unmistakable odor of lamp oil stings your sinuses. The cloying darkness makes the tunnel's length indeterminable.

#### GameMaster:

The hall of Light is indeed a rotating carnival tunnel; oiled and elliptically shaped so as to be virtually impossible to walk in. Characters attempting to do so will undoubtedly fall many times before flopping out on the other side, weary and saturated with oil. If characters have not noticed the reversed theme plaques by now there is little hope for their survival. The western 35 feet of the tunnel is coated in a very slippery oil that can only be ignited by a very hot flame. The eastern 35 feet is coated in a less slippery, but very flammable oil. The flame of the torch is not enough to ignite the western half of the tunnel. However, if the characters carry the torch with them, past the midway point, the eastern half will ignite. The heat from this flame will ignite the western half, and the entire tunnel will be ablaze.



The clue to this room is "Darkness" — reversed from light. Any fool so bold as to carry a lit torch into this potential inferno will turn himself, and anyone in the tunnel with him, into a nice piece of crispy black stir-fry. Any moron who successfully flops out on the other side of the tunnel, saturated with oil, and then asks his friends to throw him the torch, should be allowed to catch it — simply for the purpose of clearing out the shallow end of the gene pool.

The oil will burn for ten minutes before exhausting itself.

#### Score Chart

- +5 For anyone making it through the tunnel without an open flame.
- +3 For testing the oil for flammability.
- +4 For player extinguishing the torch and carrying it along.
- 10 For dying in this area.
- +5 For best role player.

## 23) The Refreshments

**A**s the light in the hallway begins to brighten once more, you see ahead of you a set of clean, white robes, hanging on pegs in the north wall. Below them, is a stone ledge, upon which rests a ceramic platter. On the platter are a number of delicious-looking fruits, pastries and steaming mugs of coffee.

#### GameMaster:

This is a little refreshment area where the characters may grab a bite, and get into some clean clothes. There will probably be a great demand for new robes, since the party has very likely been cannibalizing their garments since the room of Abstinence. All is as it seems here.

## 24) Lemmings Leap

**T**his cylindrical chamber is 40 feet in diameter, rises 80 feet above your heads, and appears to have no floor whatsoever. Directly across from where the passageway opens into this bottomless silo, is a door. Immediately below the door is a sort of perch — a metal bar, bent into a semicircle and affixed to the wall at either end.

Apart from a very long drop, the only thing between you and the door is a gargantuan iron pendulum, sweeping out the entire diameter of the room with each ponderous swing. This is, by far, the nastiest looking pendulum you've seen yet. Its stem is a sharp, steel blade, descending from the ceiling to terminate in a huge (5' diameter) iron sphere that must weigh many tons. Protruding from this sphere is a veritable forest of jagged blades, ranging in length from several feet to only a few inches.

Just inside the passageway where you are standing, a stout iron spike has been pounded into the wall. Hanging from this spike is a 100-foot coil of climbing rope. A grappling hook has been tied securely to one end.

A plaque just above the iron spike reads, "Lemmings' Leap — just to keep you on your toes."

#### GameMaster:

Lemmings' Leap is by far the most difficult physical challenge in the Gauntlet. The drop to the bottom of the silo is well over 500 feet. The door to the north is nothing more than a very clever painting. The real exit is an open passageway in the west wall, covered by an illusion. Two-inch deep holes are all that hold the metal perch in place on the north wall. Anyone putting their weight on this perch will soon discover this — as they plummet screaming to their deaths. The drop is quite long, so they will have time to take a deep breath and scream several times.

Wax seals are all that hold the (smoked glass) blades to the iron pendulum. Any heavy blow to the sphere (such as striking it with the grappling hook or a coffee mug) will set it vibrating, causing the glass blades to shower down into the dark depths. Lastly, the sharpened iron pendulum stem is not sharp at all; it is only polished on the edges to make it look sharp from a distance.

In playtesting, several groups tried to stop the pendulum by grappling the stem and tying the rope to the spike by means of a slipknot. When the pendulum reached the center of its swing, they yanked in the slack and the knot came tight. This met with disastrous results. The pendulum does weigh several tons and its weight snapped the rope off at the spike. The characters ended up looking disparagingly down at the dangling rope — their only means of egress.

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This was, however, more effective than the group who tried to simply pull the pendulum to a stop; they were summarily yanked off into space — dangling below the pendulum, they were beaten repeatedly against the walls of the silo until they lost their grip.

It is no problem for a character standing on the pendulum to touch either wall as the pendulum draws near. In this manner, the character will be able to test the walls for illusion. From the pendulum, it is an easy, if somewhat unnerving, matter to leap through the illusion and land in the hallway to area 25.

Remember that it is physically taxing and totally terrifying to climb across a moving rope and scramble up onto a metal sphere, especially when the only thing below you is a whole lot of air. The GameMaster should make the characters roll gratuitous dice against their physical strength and willpower scores as they attempt this. Characters hanging below the pendulum from a severed rope will be vigorously pounded against the walls until they either lose their grip or find another way to remedy the situation. In playtesting this has been proven to be a high-mortality area. But all the screaming was kinda funny.

### Score Chart

- +4 For character striking glass blades off the pendulum.
- +4 For first character reaching the pendulum.
- +8 For character discovering the real exit.
- +10 For any character who breaks or loses the rope or hook (Roshia will just have to find a way to bring them a new one).
- 10 For dirt-diving into oblivion.
- +50 For surviving the fall (ha, ha, ha! The sky must be very pretty where you live!).
- +5 For best role player.

## 25) If Left Is Not Right

Here, the passageway opens out onto a small ledge overlooking a large natural cavern. The flat bottom of the cave (about 30 feet below you) is filled with clear water—perhaps about ten feet deep. A



scattering of rocks on the bottom glow with a bright magical light. In the illumination of these stones, you see that the water is filled with thousands of small fish. On the bottom rest the skeletal remains of three cows. The light, shining up through the rippling water, throws patterns of dancing, wavering lines onto the stalactite-encrusted ceiling, some twenty feet above you.

Carved into the archway before you are the words, "If left is not right, then right is the only thing left." Directly above the archway leading to this room is a strong-looking iron bolt, from which leads a thin, tightly drawn, cable. The wire stretches into the cavern, over the water; it descends at an angle. In the center of the cavern, it splits into two cables, one going right and one going left.

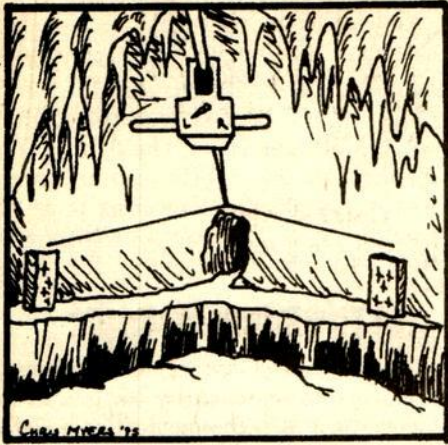
Each cable terminates in the far wall, just above a mattress affixed to that wall — presumably to cushion the impact of someone sliding down the cable. A narrow ledge leads from each mattress to the exit tunnel in the far wall.

Hanging in mid-air, below the wire before you, is an odd device. It appears to be a pair of wooden handgrips protruding from a metal box. A sliding switch on the side of the box has two settings; "left" and "right." The switch is presently in the "left" position. The box levitates just beneath the wire by some unseen enchantment.

### GameMaster:

The solution to the puzzle carved into the ledge is quite elementary. Is left right? Of course not! So right is the only thing left. The position of the slide switch determines the direction the suspension traverse will turn when it reaches the intersection. Characters hanging from the rapidly sliding handles will have to hold on tight when the trolley makes the turn, lest they be yanked off and fall into the water.

This may be for the better, however. If the switch is set to the wrong (i.e., left) position, falling into the water is preferable to the fate they would meet otherwise. You see, while the right-hand mattress is an authentic mattress (that the characters can comfortably 'poof' to a halt against), the left one is an illusory mattress concealing a wall of sharp, iron spikes. (Get your fork and wet styrofoam ready!)



The spikes are set at a slight downward angle, to allow the impaled victim to slurp noisily off and splash into the water. (The GameMaster should feel free to make all the sticking and slurping noises he likes.)

The fish in the water are goldfish. Wait until after the adventure to tell the players that they were scared away from a pleasant swim by a fearsome pack of goldfish. However, if your players are the types who search the tavern's champagne glasses for secret compartments, and happen to somehow test the fish for ferocity, they should score a few points for thoroughness. After each character reaches the bottom (one way or another), the hand trolley will slowly make its way back to the top of the wire for the next person to have a go.

### Score Chart

- +5 For any character figuring out the puzzle and thus turning the switch to the "Right" position.
- +3 For player revealing the goldfish sham (without falling into the water).
- +5 For player suggesting that the party swim for it (provided they have discovered the fish ruse).
- 10 For being impaled.
- 6 For involuntarily falling into the water.
- +5 For best role player.

## 26) The Room of Day

A large, stone plaque next to the door to this room reads:

*"Coiled are the snakes that lie  
Follow them and you shall die."*

*Yet as they lie, They also lead.  
You need but plead, and then pay heed  
They show the ever-changing way  
Through the deadly room of Day."*

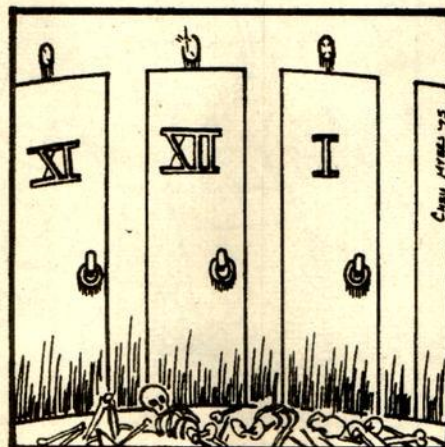
Just beyond, the heavy iron door to the room of Day stands open. It is a circular room with a sixty-foot tall ceiling. A total of twelve iron doors are spaced evenly around the room. Above each door, a small crystal is set into the frame. The crystals all glow with a pattern of changing colors: red, yellow, blue, green. The speed of the color change is different for each crystal, ranging from very slow to blurring quickness, but the pattern is always the same: red, yellow, blue, green.

Set into the ceiling, far above, is a large triangular crystal, one foot tall, and shaped as the centerpiece to a giant sundial. Carved on the iron faces of each door are a roman numeral, ranging from one to twelve. You are entering at nine o'clock. The smell of burnt flesh assails your nostrils and the room breathes uncomfortably hot. The room is knee-deep in charred bones. On each door, impressed from a light frosting of soot, is a flashburned silhouette of a human, or humanoid, dying in anguish. Illumination and heat radiate from the crystal in the ceiling.

### GameMaster:

Scattered haphazardly about the room, beneath the bones, are 110 small pewter statuettes of coiled rattlesnakes. Each of these snakes' eyes are set with glass beads that glow with a rapidly changing color pattern: red, yellow, blue, green.

Eleven of the doors are false doors. One is the real exit. For each door, there are ten snake statuettes attuned to it. That is, the eyes of ten snakes flash in sync with the



crystal above each false door. Coiled snake statues never flash in synch with the actual exit door. If a character asks the snakes (out loud) to please uncoil, every statuette in the room will animate and comply. The statuettes will then resume their rigidity and their eyes will now flash in synch with the exit door.

An alternate way of locating the exit door is to dig up all the statuettes and discover which door does not have snakes attuned to it. This last one is a bit of an endeavor, but will work.

If a character so much as touches a wrong door, the room's dweomer will flash to life (literally). The crystal in the ceiling will focus a blinding beam of concentrated sunlight on the offending character, frying him to ash. If the character is lucky, there might be a pair of very surprised-looking eyeballs resting atop the ash pile. This is a mental test to try the characters' dynamic thinking abilities. Roshia does not want stupid people working for her. In playtesting it has proven itself to be one of the tougher mental challenges.

### Score Chart

- +2 For first character to begin looking through the bones.
- +3 For first character to realize the correlation between the snakes and the fact that they must be pointing to false exits.
- +8 For character asking the snakes to uncoil.
- +10 For the brave soul opening the real exit door.
- 10 For dying in this room.
- +5 For best role player.

## 27) The Room of Cogitation

This vaulted hall is over sixty feet high and its roof is supported by two rows of thick pillars. The doors leading to this vault stand open and are, in themselves, quite impressive — a massive pair of brass valves, over twelve feet tall and six inches thick. Embossed into the right-hand door is the word, "Cogitation."

Against the far wall is a huge, brass statue, about 40 feet tall, of a man in a loincloth sitting cross-legged on the floor. Above his head, he holds a titanic brass bowl. His face is covered with a beaming



grin and clenched between his comically large teeth is a huge, brass rendering of a corncob pipe (kind of a Buddha from Deliverance). The walls, ceiling, floor, pillars, and statue are all covered with a thick coating of old soot.

### GameMaster:

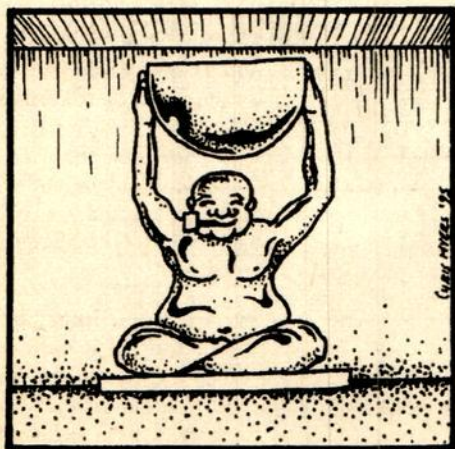
In the bowl above the statue's head are several thousand gallons of highly flammable oil — more than enough to cover the entire floor to a depth of one inch. On your map of this room are a pair of dotted lines. These lines represent a pressure plate that triggers the room's dweomer.

When a character steps on the pressure plate, the brass portals will slam shut, sealing the party in (not again!). The wrists of the statue will then hinge forward, dumping a horrendous torrent of oil from the monster bowl, onto the floor of the chamber. It will take only a moment for the oil to spread across the chamber floor, completely covering it. Just as the oil finishes spreading, the pipe in the statue's mouth will begin to emit a thin plume of black smoke. A booming voice will then emanate from the statue, so loud that it shakes the very floor:

"HEY, HOW ABOUT A LIGHT!!!"

At this point, explain to the players that the brass pipe is slowly swiveling on its stem, turning its open end down to face the floor. As you now hold up your hand and, using your fingers, count to five, some of your more intelligent players should be thinking, "Hey, if I don't start pounding some serious ground, real quick, a flaming something-or-other is going to come falling out of that pipe and turn us into stir-fry!"

In this regard they will be exactly right.



If by the time you've finished your count, someone has started running toward the statue, they will arrive in the nick of time to catch the burning torch that is being dumped into the room. If not, then it's adventurer *flambé* for the lot of them. The theme of this room is the opposite of Cogitation: Reaction.

The GameMaster may optionally wish to give the torch a fighting chance at actually hitting the floor. Roll several checks against the characters' physical scores to see if they slip and fall in the oil on their mad dash to the statue. Or perhaps they will bobble and drop the torch. The characters can then extinguish the torch using a (clean) robe.

**Surgeon General's Warning:** It is inadvisable for characters who have fallen in the oil to attempt the catch.

The exit to this area is through the hollow stem of the pipe. Inside the pipe stem, the tube turns into a steep slide that will shortly dump the characters out in the hallway west of this room.

As the characters slide down into the pipe stem, they may be able to sneak a peek up into the statue's head. Briefly, they will see a tiny control booth. Sitting on a stool is a hunchbacked goblin wearing a frock coat and a stovepipe hat. He is laughing maniacally and holds a lit torch in his grubby paws. If the characters ask Roshia about him, she will tell them that the goblin is one of the many reformed nasties that she has adopted. He is smart enough to tend the gardens, light torches and pull levers, but that's about it. His name is Budd (ACK! GAG! RETCH!).

### Score Chart

- +3 For anyone suggesting that the bowl is filled with oil (before it starts pouring out, that is).
- +10 For character who successfully catches the torch.
- +3 For any good "Budd light" jokes (GM's discretion).
- 10 For dying in this room.
- +5 For best role player.

## 28) A Locked Door

This door is larger and heavier than those common to the complex. It is

made of heavy slats of thick oak, bound strongly together with many-riveted iron bands. The handle of the door is also of stout iron — as is the huge padlock that secures it.

### GameMaster:

All is as it seems.

## 29) The Room of Illogic

This chamber has apparently been finished in some marble-like, black rock, polished to a high sheen. The walls and ceiling have been done in this polished ebony, but the floor has been tiled in a random pattern of three by three-foot colored squares. Every color of the rainbow is represented: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, and indigo. The room is very large and the uniform gloss makes the dimensions of it uncertain.

Only two sections of the floor are uncolored; a ten by ten-foot section at the entrance, and a similar section directly across from you. These landings are done in the same black marble as the walls and ceiling. Carved into the floor before you, in letters that glow with a bright blue fire, is the word "Illogic."

Again, the smell of ozone hangs heavy in the air. Bright motes of viscous magical electricity flicker and dance across the high ceiling.

Far across the chamber, a squat pedestal rests on the opposite landing. Upon it appears to be a heavy, iron key.

### GameMaster:

Show the players the expanded room map of this area. It's your adventure! Go ahead and tear it out, if you like! The proper path across this room is to follow the logical progression of colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet (Roy G. Biv). Any deviations from this path will cause the dancing electricity on the ceiling to coalesce into a bolt of magical lightning — frying the offending character into a charcoal briquette and shooting hair, teeth, and eyeballs all over the room. Diagonal moves are acceptable; jumping tiles and repeating tiles are not.

When the iron key is touched, all the tiles change color — to black: the room is then safe.

+5 For best role player.

### 30) The Room of Dishonesty

The hallway beyond the locked door is a striking contrast to the rest of the complex thus far. It is thickly carpeted in a rich burgundy pile. Even the lighting is accomplished in a much more domestic fashion — oil lamps burning softly on the walls. The plush carpet feels delicious under your scraped and battered feet, and the subterranean clamminess you've fought against the whole way is dispersed by a comfortable warmth.

Ahead of you, the hallway opens out into a lavishly decorated chamber. A low table of polished ebony holds a king's feast. Crystal decanters of fine wines reside beside silver platters of steaming, roasted meats and aromatic breads. The place settings and service sets are all of graphically embossed, polished silver. A card of folded parchment rests at the head of each place setting. Each card has one of your names, in an elegant calligraphy, in gold ink. The table is surrounded by plush, overstuffed sitting cushions of purple silk.

Just north of the table is a set of laticework dressing screens, sectioning off a tiled portion of the room. The tiled floor holds a deep, sunken tub of hot, bubbling water (a magical Jacuzzi?). Hanging over the top of the dressing screens are a set of beautifully thick, blue perfumed towels. Upon each towel, the words "Holy Day Inn," have been embroidered with golden thread. On silver trays about the tub area are numerous bottles of bath oil, perfume, cologne, soap and bubble bath.

Hanging upon the south wall are...no...yes!!!

#### YOUR STUFF!!!

Your clothes, weapons, armor and spell books are all there. The clothes have been laundered and pressed, weapons have been cleaned and oiled, and armor gleams with a fresh polishing.

Oops! On the wall above your equipment is a brass plaque marked, "Dishonesty." Maybe it's not quite over.

(concluded on p. 60)



The key on the pedestal opens the locked door in area 28.

#### Score Chart

- +5 For the first character realizing that the R.O.Y.G.B.I.V. pattern is the natural, and therefore logical, pattern of colors.
- +3 For the brave soul walking the pattern.
- +6 For successfully navigating the pattern.
- 10 For dying in this room.

R	Y	O	B	V	I			B	R	I	O	V	Y		
I	O	Y	R	G	B			V	Y	R	B	I	O		
R	B	I	G	V	B			R	I	B	O	Y	G		
B	V	R	Y	B	O			G	B	O	V	I	Y		
R	Y	B	I	G	O	R	Y	B	V	I	G	Y	R	O	Y
O	Y	R	G	B	I	V	O	I	R	O	V	B	I	Y	B
B	V	I	O	R	Y	B	G	V	B	R	Y	I	O	R	V
O	I	Y	B	G	I	Y	O	G	I	Y	O	V	B	V	O
B	R	O	V	R	G	B	I	V	Y	O	R	O	R	I	Y
I	Y	B	G	O	V	R	O	B	G	I	G	V	Y	B	R
R	O	V	B	I	Y	I	G	Y	R	O	I	R	O	Y	I
Y	G	I	V	R	O	Y	O	I	Y	B	O	V	G	R	O
B	O	R	Y	G	I	B	G	R	G	O	V	I	Y	B	Y
R	Y	I	G	R	O	V	R	Y	I	Y	R	V	I	O	Y
O	V	B	R	Y	V	G	B	I	G	O	B	R	G	I	B
B	Y	G	O	G	I	Y	O	V	R	B	O	G	B	Y	V
V	I	Y	I	B	R			I	R	Y	R	O	G		
B	R	G	O	Y	G			B	O	V	B	G	I		
O	B	G	R	B	O			R	I	G	R	B	O		
V	I	Y	V	I	R			V	B	Y	I	Y	R		

ILLOGIC ROOM PUZZLE  
PLAYER COPY

R	Y	O	B	V	I			B	R	I	O	V	Y		
I	O	Y	R	G	B			V	Y	R	B	I	O		
R	B	I	G	V	B			R	I	B	O	Y	G		
B	V	R	Y	B	O			G	B	O	V	I	Y		
R	Y	B	I	G	O	R	Y	B	V	I	G	Y	R	O	Y
O	Y	R	G	B	I	V	O	I	R	O	V	B	I	Y	B
B	V	I	O	R	Y	B	G	V	B	R	Y	I	O	R	V
O	I	Y	B	G	I	Y	O	G	I	Y	O	V	B	V	O
B	R	O	V	R	G	B	I	V	Y	O	R	O	R	I	Y
I	Y	B	G	O	V	R	O	B	G	I	G	V	Y	B	R
R	O	V	B	I	Y	I	G	Y	R	O	I	R	O	Y	I
Y	G	I	V	R	O	Y	O	I	Y	B	O	V	G	R	O
B	O	R	Y	G	I	B	G	R	G	O	V	I	Y	B	Y
R	Y	I	G	R	O	V	R	Y	I	Y	R	V	I	O	Y
O	V	B	R	Y	V	G	B	I	G	O	B	R	G	I	B
B	Y	G	O	G	I	Y	O	V	R	B	O	G	B	Y	V
V	I	Y	I	B	R			I	R	Y	R	O	G		
B	R	G	O	Y	G			B	O	V	B	G	I		
O	B	G	R	B	O			R	I	G	R	B	O		
V	I	Y	V	I	R			V	B	Y	I	Y	R		

ILLOGIC ROOM PUZZLE  
GM COPY



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In honor of those determined to push toward excellence, conquer fear and fight for that in which they believe, The Rats do hereby admit

---

to abide and uphold the Code of the Rats,  
now and hereafter.

Abstinence: Avarice is the road to an early grave. Never risk you or yours for the hollow dream of gold. Survive, and time will grant you greater rewards of its own.

Peace: A Rat is more than a hired bully — more than a traveling butcher. You are the agent of a noble and humane ideal. Solve conflicts by diplomacy whenever possible.

Forethought: A task poorly planned is a task poorly done—if it gets done at all.

Humor: In a world fueled by conflict, you shall both win and lose. Allow your spirit to be crushed by your enemies and your mind shall soon follow. Mirth in the face of evil makes danger diminish, and laughter can steal your enemy's spirit.

Wisdom: Experience can teach you the world's innermost mysteries. Let never a name, place or moment of your adventures be forgotten; for when strength fails, wisdom may triumph.

Caution: A fool leaps before he looks. The deadliest predators, of both man and beast, rely on fools.

Consistency: Consistency of method and of thought will carry through. Grim as the worst might seem, never abandon a working plan.

Mistrust: People lie. Lying is that part of human nature that pretends to protect people from adversity, or plays the easy road to that which they desire. Treat all around you with trust and respect — but never bet your life on them.

Powerlessness: A hero wears his crown in his heart, where it serves him best. Be ever wary of displaying your strengths to others...there will always be those willing to test them.

Unity: The river that sweeps away mountains is only a mass of smaller streams.

**Questioning:** Often, the most lethal of things appear harmless. Accept nothing at face value.

**Reaction:** As an adventurer, and a Rat, you must think on your feet. Consider your actions carefully, but not slowly. Ponder a problem too long and you may lose control of its solution.

**Logic:** The world is seldom spontaneous and coincidences are rare. Deduction is your most fearsome weapon. Deducing the "why" in your enemy's actions is halfway to finding the "how" in arresting his plans.

**Honesty:** All comes around in the end. While lying, cheating and stealing is, at times, painfully necessary, another way around your problems should always be explored first. Steal only from thieves and lie only to liars. The commonfolk mistrust and fear armed travelers. To win their hearts, you must show them only the finest parts of yourself; for what we may call "frailty," or a "minor flaw," they will see as a show of great evil. As a Rat, you are more than a common adventurer.

You are a Hero.

**GameMaster:**

All is as it seems in this room — with one exception. The Jacuzzi is actually a very powerful, summoned creature. It is a body of animated water. While it will allow characters to eat the food, drink the drinks, and even bathe in its bubbly effervescence, it will be watching them very closely. It is waiting for someone to take *any little thing* from the chamber that does not belong to them.

If this occurs, the creature will lash out at the offending character. The thief will be rapidly dragged back into the Jacuzzi, where the monster will ram one of its watery pseudopods down the character's throat — filling his lungs and drowning him almost instantly. The group is almost out of lives by now, so they had better be careful.

When the equipment is removed from the pegs on the south wall, a secret door will open in the west wall. The characters are free to proceed to the surface through a long, sloping passageway — out of the gauntlet.

**Epilogue:**

The passageway emerges in a stout stone shed in Roshia's gardens. There, Roshia will be waiting to congratulate the party—and extend her condolences for those who did not make it. Accompanying her, is her thing-at-arms, Boaseth. Roshia is dressed in black silk robes (a striking contrast to her pale complexion) and wears a dark blue sash, embroidered with the image of a rampant white horse. The sash unmistakably denotes her as the governess of the county of Villano. Boaseth is dressed scantily (as reptiles are wont to do), wearing a combat harness, black wool cloak and gold bracers. In his large, green-scaled hands he hold a polished rosewood box.

**The box contains, for each character:**

1. A rolled-up parchment diploma (containing the Code of the Rats) tied with a red, silk ribbon.
2. A gold stickpin of a rampant rat (to be worn on the left lapel). The eyes of the rat are ruby points. The pin is very classy-looking, but is somewhat small. Its worth probably comes to about 50 Imperials (GP).

Roshia will be relieved that the characters have escaped alive but will make no apologies for running them through the Gauntlet. She will explain that her old group of Rats vanished several months ago, on a mission overseas. She will gladly take them under her sponsorship — as the new Rat Pack. She will require a reasonable tithe of gathered income from each mission they go on. In return, she will provide housing (in the guest house), food and training in magic, weapons and other skills — for free.

The rat pin is rather like a badge of office and she will be quite appalled if anyone sells theirs. She plans to turn the Rats into the most fearsome, famous and beloved adventuring group in the world. First, however, characters must be taught how to read, write and behave properly at diplomatic functions — all of which she will teach them as they recoup. Their duties will often have them rubbing elbows with royalty.

Characters graduating from the Roshia's Gauntlet all now have something in common — and some common stories to tell. They have struggled together physically and mentally, proving to themselves and each other that they can rise to the challenge of the moment. Perhaps they will go on together as the Rats. Or perhaps they will decline Roshia's offer and strike out on their own quest. Either way, they have proven themselves survivors — perhaps even heroes.

**The Beginning...**

**Hey!**

Don't stop reading yet! You haven't read the truly earth-shaking closing notes yet. Did you buy this mag or not!?! Geeze...

**Closing Notes:**

A copy of the Code of the Rats is provided for your use. It's kind of a diploma to honor those who have survived the Gauntlet. It is this little author's suggestion that you photocopy those two pages for your players. Splice the two papers together so they will copy nicely onto one 11" x 17" sheet. Run off one copy for each of your new Rats.

Now, the Code itself is not an even 11" x 17" so you should have plenty of extra paper hanging off on all sides. Here's where the fun begins: soak all the copies in a mixture of water and lemon juice, then microwave them dry. Do this a few times. The paper should be taking on a yellowed, parchment color—like an old treasure map. Be careful not to touch the lettering with your fingers until the paper has cooled, otherwise you might smear the toner.

When the papers have gotten just the right hue (your discretion, of course), take a candle and *carefully* singe the edges. *Voilà!* Instant scroll! Now get some red ribbon and tie your scrolls shut. Your players will freak out when you present them with those!

Yeah. I know. Seems like an awful lot of effort to amuse the players. But is that not your role as the GameMaster? As many derogatory comments as I make about players, please know that they are all in good fun. Being a good GameMaster is a matter of caring that your players are enjoying themselves.

I would very much like to read your comments and criticisms. Or just write for the sake of writing — I feel like the Maytag repair man up here! We hope you enjoyed this adventure...a lot...yeah.

Thanx.

**Credits**

Many thanks to the original Rat Pack....

Matt Smyrl as Victor Ristel

Jacqie Ketterling as Sharra

Scott Parrish as Nesruseth

Chris Myers as Bilfurshort

Kyle Teague as Darwin

Special Thanks to Andy Vancil for the Riddle of Mindlessness. ☐



## GAME MASTER'S WORKSHOP

# The Good,

Artwork and Characters by Tonia Walden © 1995



## Mother Hopi

**Occupation:** Village Wisewoman and Midwife  
**Skills:** Magic Use, Herb Lore  
**Motivation:** To tend the women of the village  
**Weaknesses:** Secretly a witch

Mother Hopi is a village midwife and is thought of as a mysterious foreigner, even though she has lived in the village for about twenty years. She is wise in the ways of herbs and poultices and tends to all the women in the area when they are to give birth.

Hopi's mother was a Gypsy and her father was a horse thief—they met while trying to steal the same horse. Her mother trained her in the mystic arts and she learned more from an old man, who for some reason only she could see. She holds sway over the wild things, can predict the future and can command the shades of the dead to answer her questions. But she is far from foolish and does all such things in moderation, keeping her magic a secret for fear of being branded a witch.

Hopi travelled about while she was young, but eventually settled down in a village which needed her healing skills. As far as the villagers are concerned she is just a strange old woman who lives in a hut at the edge of the village.

Mother Hopi pretends to be older than her forty-one years and she has been known to feign deafness, madness and infirmity when it suited her. She is clever, sly and knows far more than she is willing to tell. □



## Gabriel Feugere

**Occupation:** King's Musketeer  
**Skills:** Sword Play, HTH Combat, Cooking  
**Motivation:** To serve the king  
**Weaknesses:** Quick Temper

One of the King's Musketeers, Gabriel has a reputation of being charming and clever but quick to anger. He is still quite young, only twenty four, and quite popular at court. However he is ruthless when fighting and it is rumoured that his companions have often had to drag him off opponents before he killed them in his blind rage. He is also an excellent pastry chef but he keeps this aspect of his past to himself.

Apprenticed to his father, Henri Feugere, the greatest chef in the land, from the age of four, Gabriel wanted more from life. He ran away from home to become a lawyer but his father petitioned the King to have him brought back to his kitchen. The King was as impressed by the young man's skill with a sword as he was with his cooking and his advocacy skills. He made Gabriel one of his musketeers and he has proved to be quite a favorite at Court.

A good looking but hot-headed, wild boy, Gabriel's worst flaw is that he takes insult too readily and he doesn't always think before acting. This has got him into trouble in the past and no doubt will again. □



## Claudette de Chalons

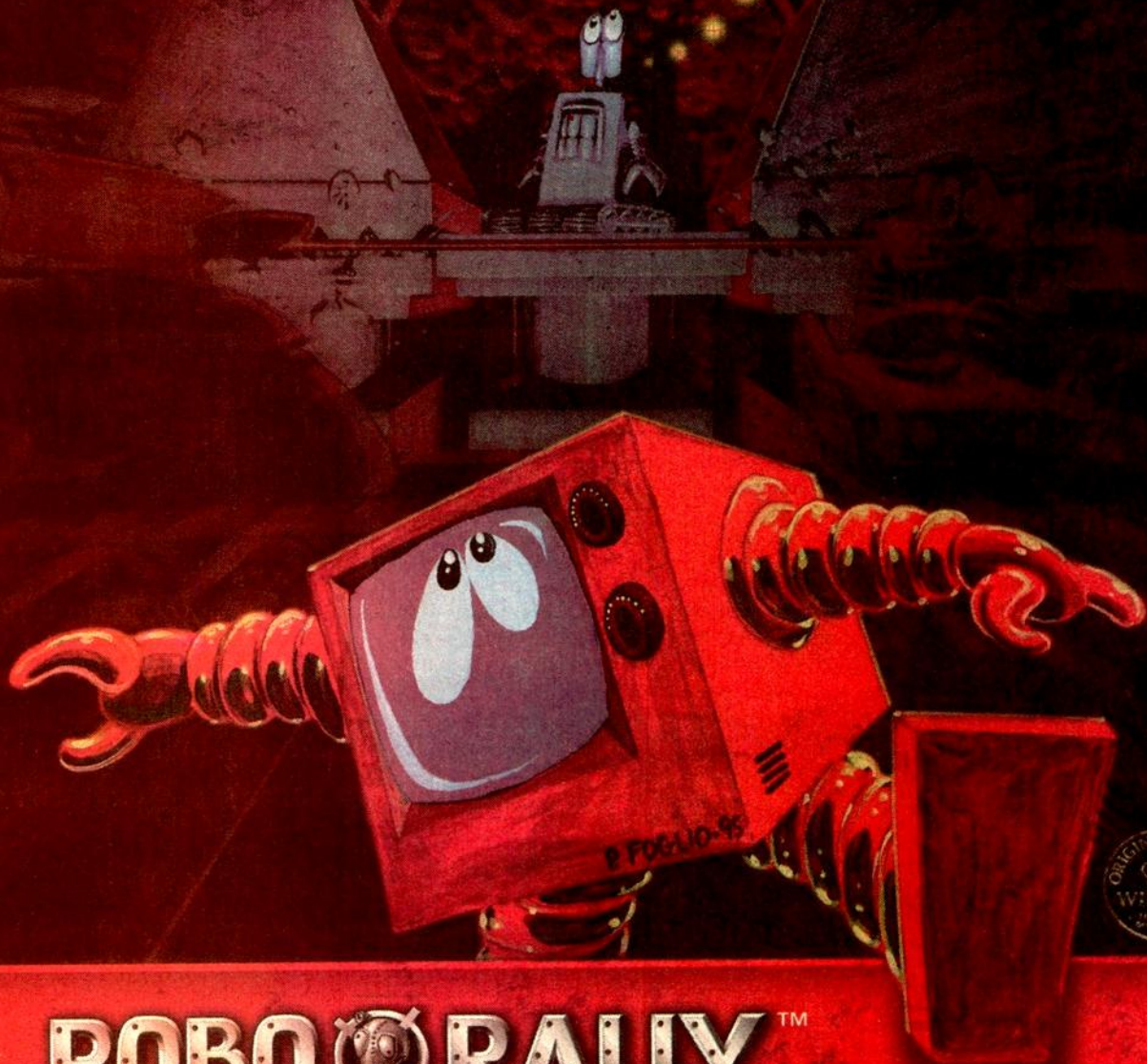
**Occupation:** Lady in Waiting/Highwayman  
**Skills:** Horse Riding, Pistol, Etiquette  
**Motivation:** To support her family  
**Weaknesses:** Secretly a criminal, Soft-hearted

Claudette is the youngest daughter of the deChalon family. After their father's death, three years ago, Claudette and her family discovered that their father had gambled heavily and was deeply in debt to many nobles. Claudette's brother, Guillaume was forced to sell their ancestral home and all the estates except for the game keeper's cottage where Claudette, Guillaume and their elderly mother reside. All debts were settled but little wealth remains.

Claudette was forced to become a lady-in-waiting to the local lord's wife. However, her family can barely afford to survive on the meagre allowance Claudette receives for her work and so she has been supplementing their income by highway robbery — she is in fact "Cunning Jacques," the notorious highwayman. She has managed to cut quite a figure in the local folklore by being flamboyant, daring and not harming any of her victims.

She is a woman with hidden depths — whilst always acting the polite lady in waiting in present company, she is brave and resourceful and would not shy from a fight. She has discovered to her amusement that Cunning Jacques has become somewhat of a romantic figure with the ladies of the region. □

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GAME  
MASTER'S  
WORKSHOP

# The Bad,

Artwork and Characters by Tonia Walden © 1995



## Marquise Blanche de Tarieux-Bourget

**Occupation:** Noble Lady  
**Skills:** Magic Use, Literacy, Etiquette  
**Motivation:** Escape from her intolerable situation  
**Weaknesses:** Overconfident

As the long-suffering wife of the Marquis, Blanche is considered a figure of tragedy. She is believed to be devoted to her family and to the Church and is well-respected by all. Her "health has been failing" recently and she is not seen often. In reality, Blanche has locked herself away with her studies into the Dark Arts.

Blanche came from a noble wealthy family and was advantageously married while quite young. She has no love left for her husband and for some years has been searching for a way to rid herself of him and his cruel ways. To her delight, Blanche has recently acquired an old collection of books that deal with hedge magic and other arcane ramblings. She found in them a spell for summoning demons, and has been attempting to use it, sending them to punish her husband for his selfishness and cruelty. Being untrained, she is not entirely sure about how to use the book properly, but this has not stopped her, despite the fact that it could be incredibly dangerous.

Blanche is a strong woman who is sick of playing the victim and has just started discovering how deceit and manipulation of others can make life far more interesting. Her interest in magic is a real one as she sees it as being one of the few means of escape she may have. She would be extremely grateful to anyone who could offer her training in magic use or free her from her unhappy marriage. □

## Doctor Harl Laarsbrocke

**Occupation:** Inquisitor  
**Skills:** Interrogation  
**Motivation:** To hunt out evil (no matter what the cost)  
**Weaknesses:** Obsessive, judgmental fanatic

Doctor Laarsbrocke is immaculately dressed and very well spoken. His every gesture inspires confidence in his medical skills — he is such a precise and clever man and it is reassuring to have him around. At the age of fifty-six, he is a distinguished, reserved and pious.

He is also a fraud: he is a Doctor of Theology, a priest and inquisitor. He lies about being a doctor of medicine as it makes people more willing to trust him — the Inquisition is feared by all, even other Church members. In fact, Harl is willing to lie about anything if it will advance his holy cause. Ten years ago his destiny was revealed to him in a vision: he must destroy the plague of witchcraft wherever it flourishes. He sought and received the blessing of his Church to join the crusade — the Holy War — against the witches. Armed with his *Malleus Maleficarum*, Harl has seen many and varied types of evil: he has helped unearth dozens of witches, had them and their evil cohorts confess their sins, and then burned them at the stake.

Harl is sure all women are potential witches and he is constantly on the alert for suspicious behavior and the scent of witchcraft. Most of this is all in his mind, but if he decides a person is guilty, they should try to make good their escape, for they face certain torture and death at his hands. □

## Marquis Phillippe de Tarieux Bourget

**Occupation:** Local Lord  
**Skills:** Negotiation, Manipulation  
**Motivation:** Greed and Power  
**Weaknesses:** Tormented

Phillippe is a ruthless man, driven by his desire for wealth and power. He is respected because of this wealth, but not trusted or liked. He has no respect for anyone else, especially not his family, and it is common gossip that his marriage is not a happy one. Since he treats his family as chattels, this is hardly surprising. The Marquis is married to Blanche and they have one son, Mathieu.

He has a habit of "acquiring" estates from those foolish enough to borrow money from him, when they find they cannot pay him back. Any pleas for compassion or charity only earns the contempt of the Marquis, and he is just as ruthless in dealing with the peasants who dwell on his lands. One of his many sins include ridding himself of the burden of a daughter. Sixteen years ago, his wife gave birth, after a difficult labour, to their second child. The girl was weak and sickly, and not wanting a daughter (they cost too much in dowry), or medical costs the Marquis thought it would be better to get rid of it; he gave it to a villager to do the task. He told his wife that the child had died.

The Marquis has of late been having severe nightmares and has consequently become increasingly superstitious that he is being called to account by supernatural forces. He thinks that perhaps if he finds his lost daughter (if she is still alive) and begs her forgiveness, the nightmares may cease... □



**GAME  
MASTER'S  
WORKSHOP**

# And The Ugly

Artwork and Characters by Tonia Walden © 1995



## Yersinia

**Type:** Plague Spirit/Demon  
**Skills:** Possession, Cause Illness  
**Motivation:** Spread disease  
**Weaknesses:** Holy Water

The plague demon is a filthy being that desires only to spread its "infection" as far as possible. Yersinia's usual hosts are animals, but it can be passed on to new hosts, including humans, through a bite or scratch. Once the wound has been made, Yersinia enters the body of its next host and leaves its former host who becomes sick and feverish a number of days after they have been "infected": eventually they will die. Yersinia then influences its next host to find another victim and the cycle continues. It can control its host but generally its only demand of them is to be passed to as many hosts as possible. If it decides to try to move to another host body, it will make its present host cause a flesh wound on that person with their teeth or fingernails.

However, it has to be careful as Yersinia can be harmed if it attempts to inhabit the wrong sort of person. If it accidentally tries to possess a exceptionally good or holy person or someone wearing an amulet of protection or vial of holy water, it will be repelled and its former host will be driving temporarily insane with the demons' screaming.

Yersinia can be exorcised by holy people or trapped by those wise in the ways of demon lore. □



## Isabeau

**Type:** Ghost  
**Skills:** Telepathy, Telekinesis  
**Motivation:** To regain corporeal form  
**Weaknesses:** Incorporeal

Isabeau d'Genevrier was a peasant girl killed in a holy crusade over two hundred years ago. She has until recently resided in a spirit realm that seemed to be somewhere between this life and the next. The place was crowded with unhappy spirits looking for a way to escape, and when one spirit was summoned by a magician, Isabeau managed to slip through with it and escape into the corporeal world.

Unfortunately, although this is more interesting than the ghostly world she had left behind, she cannot interact with people as they can neither see nor touch her. She has rudimentary forms of telepathy and telekinesis which she has been trying to use to communicate with people but unfortunately voices within peoples' minds and small floating objects tend to scare them away instead. She is looking for someone to befriend and communicate with.

Above all else she wants to regain corporeal form. She thinks if she can find an "empty vessel" (a person whose mind has gone) she may be able to possess them, but she has not tried this, and she is not ruthless enough to harm anyone to try out her idea. □



## Vicompte Guillaume de Chalons

**Occupation:** Dispossessed noble  
**Skills:** Fencing, Horsemanship, Hunting  
**Motivation:** To find a cure, acquire wealth  
**Weaknesses:** Cursed with lycanthropy

Guillaume lost his noble inheritance due to his father's large gambling debts. Only recently he was forced to sell his beloved horse and hounds, to afford a dowry for one of his sisters. He is well liked in the town, although he tends to be a little distant and his noble pride means he takes offence at any perceived slight or offer of charity. He is somewhat moody, some say sullen, and he goes through periods when he is reclusive and hardly ever seen.

His reclusiveness is actually due to something far more sinister. To Guillaume's horror he has discovered the only thing he has inherited from his father is a curse — the men of the deChalons family are stricken with lycanthropy. His mother has told him that according to the family legend it has something to do with a pact with dark forces that was broken by his great-great-grandfather, but Guillaume has been unable to discover any more.

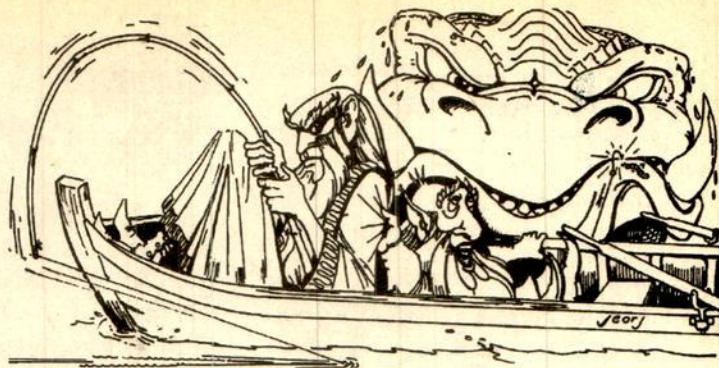
He deliberately avoids people so he cannot "inflict his madness" upon them. He hears reports of mutilated cattle that occur at certain times of the month and he is fearful it is his doing but he has few memories of his outings as the wolf. Guillaume has been thinking of leaving home to avoid discovery of his ailment and to try and find a cure. □



GAME  
MASTER'S  
WORKSHOP

# Hook, Line, and Sinker™

## Adventures on the Fly!



### The Black Dog

**Hook:** The PCs are traveling through the countryside when they see a group of people running towards them with weapons at the ready. The PCs may assume they are going to be involved in an attack when they notice they are chasing a large black dog — the dog sees them and runs right for them whimpering. If the party allow it to come close it will scratch a word, "HELP", in the dirt before collapsing due to its wounds.

**Line:** If the PCs choose to save the dog, by diverting the villagers or hiding him, the dog will scratch another word, "Nathan", in the dirt. If they ask around the town they will find out Nathan deTorrans is the name of the local lord's son, who is supposed to be returning to claim his inheritance after the death of his father. However, he is a few weeks late and no one has found out what has happened to him. In the meantime his uncle rules in his place.

There are also many stories of the appearance of a supernatural black dog who has been killing livestock and bringing ill luck on the village — the stories seem quite exaggerated and the beast has taken on the proportions of a demon in the villagers' eyes.

**Sinker:** The dog is indeed Nathan, who was sent a cursed amulet by his uncle who said it was willed to him by his dying father. When Nathan put the amulet on he was transformed into a large black dog. His uncle has been spreading rumors of a supernatural dog, in the hopes Nathan will be killed by the superstitious villagers.

Nathan's intelligence is slowly waning but he has been trying to find a way to get to his uncle and get the curse removed. His

uncle knows the spell to remove the curse; alternately, the party could help him find another magic user who might be able to transform him back to his original state. In either case he will be extremely grateful.

Tonia Walden

### It Ain't Easy Being Green

**Hook:** The party is wandering through the land, and comes across a recently abandoned village. Looking through the village, they find no people, but they do find a lot of frogs.

**Line:** When they search the buildings, they will find a book in the local church that explains that the town has been cursed, and that anyone in the town, or who enters the town, will be turned into frogs. A local witch apparently took offense from something the townspeople did, and cast this curse as revenge.

**Sinker:** The only way to remove the curse (a remove curse spell will not do it) is to find the witch, and slay her. Unfortunately, the witch lives about half a day away, and as each hour passes, the player characters become more frog-like: they turn green, they develop webbing between their toes and fingers, their hands start turning into feet, etc. So, as you can see, the players have a small problem; if they do manage to reach her, will they be in any shape to fight her?

The witch herself should be of average power, and not too exceptionally tough. The main problem in the big battle should be the party trying to figure out ways to overcome the handicaps they develop from being part frog, such as spellcasters trying to figure out how to cast spells with webbed hands, or fighters trying to adjust to shortened arms, loose-fitting armor, and

an urge to catch flies with their tongues. In other words, it's a good chance for the party to have some light-hearted fun, with frog jokes and puns flying fast and furious.

Obviously, you'll have to alter the details of this problem to fit the unique resources of your group, as a group with more resources might be able to reach her quickly enough that the curse will have had hardly any time to work, and they will have no problems fighting the witch. In this case, you may wish to use obstacles, either mechanical, magical, or living creatures, to slow the party enough for the curse to start working on them.

But before you're tempted to make things too rough on them, just remember this: role-playing a group of frogs sitting on lily pads and eating bugs, is not really all that much fun for either the players or the GM.

Michael Lampman

### Information Isn't a "Real" Commodity

This scenario is geared for the time travel campaign detailed in SHADIS #11 & 12 (and #18.5), but is easily converted to GURPS Time Travel's StopWatch/Timepiece setting, or other time travel based games.

**Hook:** PC members have just finished a raid on a base that launched illegal time jumps from their "native" era. People at the base either fought to the death, escaped or committed suicide.

**Line:** Analysis of the equipment captured shows that robotic units capable of manufacturing robotic agents out of raw materials were among the items sent back in time and later retrieved. (In short, they

can have robots made from matter that is indigenous to the era the manufacturing robot was sent to.) If cloning/braintaping technology is available at the existing tech level of the campaign, *human* agents will also have been cloned and sent on missions.

**Sinker:** The Ferrets and their robots don't show up as time displaced.

The PCs will have to discover these enemies using nothing but their detective skills. And, because these agents are *native* to their era, the forces that would send displaced matter back to its proper time won't work. Good Luck!

S.D. Anderson

## There's a Signpost Up Ahead. Next Stop...

**Hook:** The party is journeying. To or from somewhere. Your choice.

**Line:** They reach a place where several roads converge. An old-fashioned signpost stands at the intersection. Many destination arrows mark the post, some bearing foreign writings, some bearing writing that clearly isn't close to human. The sign post radiates magic and/or psionic power, if checked. Some destinations are to known cities and places. Others are unfamiliar, especially to anyone who knows the local area. And others are out and out Outer Limitsville!

**Sinker:** The post itself is magic, once part of a wizard's house. Any specific powers it may have aren't known, and it may just be that the wood has picked up a substantial charge of magic from being in the wizard's estate.

The wizard was slain by a cult of magic haters. Cult members watch the sign from homes built near the intersection. People who practice divining magicks to try and determine the "interplanar" powers of the sign post will be noted and the cult's bully boys will come along as soon as is feasible to eliminate the "diabolical users of unholy magic".

S.D. Anderson

## Obtuselisk

**Hook:** The party is contacted by a priest(ess) who wishes to hire them to retrieve an ancient obelisk for his/her church. It's currently being held by a mage, who has agreed to give it to the church in return for some magical artifact that they have that is of no use to them. The church wishes to hire the characters to take the magic artifact to the mage, and return with the obelisk to the church, and is willing to pay quite well for this.

**Line:** While this certainly sounds like an easy job, the church will only discuss the job with the party leader, if the party has one, or whichever character the party decides upon to negotiate things with the church. The church will be generous when hiring the party, but not excessively so, as while they consider the obelisk important, they won't break their coffers to get it.

Once this person accepts the job, he or she will be placed under a Geas to not reveal this information to anybody else in any form (writing, speaking, gesturing, etc.), not even the members of his or her own party, and to return the obelisk as quickly as possible. The church is a somewhat paranoid religious organization, and worries that were the other party members know of it, they might try to keep it for themselves, or try to sell it to another church for more money.

**Sinker:** Which leads to the real problem, as once the character returns to the party, how does he/she convince them to accept a job he/she can't tell them about? Somehow this person has to convince the party to deliver something he/she can't tell them about, to someone he/she can't tell them about, and pick up something else he/she can't tell them about, and return to the church.

How will the party react to this? Will they trust the character enough to follow him/her blindly? If they do, will he/she be able to keep that trust over the length of the mission?

Those are important questions, ones that you and your players will have fun finding out the answers to. Enjoy.

Michael Lampman

## Sorry, Wrong Car

**Hook:** Any modern or futuristic urban setting will do. The characters must spend a fair amount of time in one neighborhood over the course of a couple of weeks or months. The more suspicious they look doing it the better; any sort of undercover police, private investigators, door-to-door salesmen, or hoodlums will do.

**Line:** The characters catch a couple of hoods tampering with their vehicle. In fact, they are attempting to plant a crude car bomb. If the PCs exhibit a willingness to use lethal force to defend themselves or the vehicle, the punks immediately spill their guts, otherwise they flee. If the PCs do not catch a punk and sweat him to learn his story, engineer more such incidents (becoming progressively more lethal) until they do. Once the PCs catch a would-be assassin, he tells the players that he was hired to do the hit by Karl Spindler, a local crime boss. Spindler is the right-hand man to Malcom Warner, who is the most powerful underworld figure in the area. Someone has been moving in on Warner's territory and he has assigned Spindler to take care of it; he can't have just anyone making book, dealing drugs and running protection rackets on his turf. Somehow the PCs have been fingered as the offenders.

**Sinker:** Spindler is actually the one making trouble behind Warner's back, using fresh talent from out of town. To put Warner at ease, Spindler promised he'd take care of the situation, and so to protect himself he needs to produce a few bodies. The players are perfect dupes because they have been seen frequently in the area lately. Once Warner is put at ease with a few corpses (if the players get out of the situation Spindler might use some of his own people), Spindler will stage a coup. If the PCs are street punks of some stripe themselves, they could easily get caught up in the resulting gang warfare.

Matt Staroscik

# BATTLELORDS™ OF THE 23<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY

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# Up My Sleeve

## The World of Card Games

### Single Card Strategies By Jeff Scott Franzmann

#### Psychic Venom & Diabolic Vision

*The Mourning Lands lie south of the falls which spill out from the Great Forest, an expanse of fetid pools and rotting vegetation. Reed stands and moss covered trees dot the marsh, breaking the monotony of the landscape. It is within the great swamps north of the Scarwood that the Necromancer makes his home, in a tower which has stood since the time of the War. That is not all that remains from those dark times.*

Chained to the trunk of a blackened, scorched oak, he hardly seems human. Wild streaks of white hair splay out in all directions from his face, matted with twigs, mud, drool and blood. His pale blue eyes bulge with madness, and his lithe frame twists and contorts with rage and fury. A tattered loin cloth is his only garment, given to him ages ago by the Marsh Goblins, who regard him as a deity. In truth, he is a fallen Planeswalker, imprisoned here centuries ago. His immense power was his downfall, for now whenever he attempts to tap the lands around him, he falls prey to...

**Psychic Venom!** - A simple enough spell, which enchants any single target land, Psychic Venom costs a mere 1 Blue and 1 Colourless to bring into play. Whenever the land which this spell enchants is tapped, for whatever reason, Psychic Venom inflicts 2 points of damage on the controller of that land.

There are numerous applications for this spell, in a variety of circumstances. One of the more mundane, yet effective, uses for Psychic Venom is in use on lands which your opponent values highly. For example, if a foe is using both forests and mountains, yet only has forests in play, it would be prudent to place Psychic Venom on the first Mountain to reveal itself. Early in the duel, if an opponent is short of mana, Psychic Venom can give an early

edge. Combined with the Black Vice, a second turn Psychic Venom can be a painful experience.

However, the most popular use of Psychic Venom is probably the most dangerous to an opponent: using it to shut down specialty lands. There are numerous lands which provide benefits beyond mana, or instead of mana, and it is these which are most vulnerable to enchantment. The Library of Alexandria, the Diamond Valley and the Maze of Ith can be rendered next to useless through the use of Psychic Venom. Not only are they incapable of providing mana, but the benefits provided by the Maze of Ith and the Valley are almost instantly negated by the damage from the Venom. Multilands are another common target, and although they provide mana, it won't come without a cost. Since Venom doesn't destroy land, Equinox is ineffective against it, making Venom a potential addition to a land destruction spellbook. Indeed, placing Psychic Venom on a land enchanted with Equinox is a cruel, yet effective way of speeding up the demise of an opponent.

Combined with other spells and artifacts, Psychic Venom can become appallingly effective. While the Winter Orb is in play, using Venom on a few key lands can severely restrict an opponents options. Using them on multilands, for example, forces him or her to concentrate on untapping lands which they would not normally consider. If you're partial to such tactics, you could use land destruction to destroy everything except the lands enchanted with Psychic Venom.

Used with the Icy Manipulator or Elder Druid, Psychic Venom becomes even more powerful. Now, you are capable of forcing an opponent to take damage from the enchanted land, when normally you would have to wait. Twiddle, Power Sink, Mana Short can also be used to accomplish this goal, although they are a little more limit-



ed in this respect, as they can only be used once. Nonetheless, forcing an opponent to take damage is not something one should pass up. Against a Green Mage, an amusing combination involves Psychic Venom and Lifetap. Using Venom on any lands which are not forests, one can force an opponent to use lands which will provide you with life. While not the most practical or effective use, it can be worth the time and effort involved.

Psychic Venom, however, is not without its drawbacks. If an opponent has sources of mana other than land, he or she can avoid the worst of Psychic Venom. In addition, since it is highly unlikely that there will ever be four Psychic Venoms out at once, the more land that is in play, the less effective it becomes. As an enchantment, it is also highly susceptible to a large number of spells which can quickly terminate its usefulness. Nevertheless, it can be a valuable enchantment in a wide variety of situations.

*Once again, the old man focused his attention on the tower in the distance, eyes burning with hatred. His jailer had long ago turned to dust, yet still he remained trapped, his desire for revenge fuelling his determination to escape. Only when the tower was destroyed would he truly be free to walk the planes yet again. Gathering the fractured remnants of his mind together, he called forth dark powers, attempting to contact the Necromancer by means of a...*

**Diabolic Vision!** - At a cost of 1 Blue mana and 1 Black, Diabolic Vision allows a Mage to sift through his memorized spells. When this sorcery is used, the caster looks at the top five cards in his or her library, places one in hand, and then replaces the

The following prevue has been approved for all audiences.

If  
data  
is  
everything,  
who  
will  
control  
it?

Coming soon to cyberspace near you, **Netrunner™**,  
the new trading card game from **Wizards of the Coast**.



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Wizards  
OF THE COAST

others on the library in any order he or she desires.

At such a low cost, this spell carries with it a multitude of practical applications. One of the more obvious occurs early in the duel, when the only land available may be that required to cast this spell. In such an instance, the library can be searched using the Vision, and land put into hand. Appropriate spells for the mana on hand can then be placed back in the library in an order which provides maximum benefit.

This obvious strategy can be taken in several different directions, however. Few Magi, for example, consider the applications of Diabolic Vision as a defensive strategy. In many cases, one may find oneself facing a spellbook which makes extensive use of creatures such as Orcish Spy, or artifacts like Millstone. A combination of the above two cards can be particularly bothersome, since it allows an opponent to selectively Millstone your deck. However, casting Diabolic Vision allows you to put the spells in an order most beneficial to you. This requires a bit of thought, but can easily thwart a Millstone when properly applied. Once a card is put into your hand, alternate best spell, worst spell in replacing the cards on top of the library. For example, if you are desperate for land, replace the cards in order of land, spell, land, spell. If the opponent chooses to Millstone, you get a land on your draw. If your opponent neglects to Millstone, you are in the same situation. Alternately, you can do the same for spells. This requires a bit of prioritizing in terms of placement, but can save you a great deal of trouble in the long run.

Of course, there are far more mundane, yet effective uses for Diabolic Vision. A particular favourite tactic of mine is using it to place something immediately useful in hand, such as Dark Banishing, and then replacing the remainder in the library in an order which derives maximum benefit over several turns. For example, I may replace them in order of Dark Ritual, Hypnotic Spectre, Dark Ritual Foul Familiar. The possibilities are so varied that a complete examination of the permutations would require volumes, but the basic premise is simple: maximize your draws. In some cases, Diabolic Vision can be used to insure an early lock. In one duel, I managed to use Diabolic Vision to bring out Zur's

Weirding and Ivory Tower one after another, something which saved both life and provided me with a lock once the Mind Twist in my hand was cast.

Diabolic Vision also allows you to avoid the more deleterious effects of discard strategies. Discard relies upon the ability to deprive you of the ability utilize the spells you may have in hand. Most discard-related spells can only be utilized during your opponents turn, which gives you some breathing room to operate. When facing off against Hypnotic Spectres and the Hymn to Tourach, use Diabolic Vision to thin out your hand as much as possible. If you have only a little mana out, and high powered spells in hand, put land in hand and on top of your library. If you have no means of dealing with a Spectre, pull a flyer into your hand and cast it.

Discard isn't the only strategy which Diabolic Vision can circumvent. Since the placement of a spell into your hand is not considered a draw, Diabolic Vision becomes even more powerful, as maintained by Morgan Schweers. Using Diabolic Vision, you can gain an extra spell without having to face the problems presented by Enduring Renewal, Zur's Weirding or even Underworld Dreams. If Enduring Renewal is in play, you can even use Diabolic Vision to pull a creature into your hand, allowing you to utilize it.

Diabolic Vision provides one with an ability which any mage would envy: the ability to know what resources will be available. It allows for longer-term planning, and also allows you to tailor your strategies a little more effectively. If you know that a Dark Banishing is going to be made available soon enough, you may not waste that Drain Life on a creature which has been holding up your attack. If you have a Darkness coming up, you may decide to initiate the attack more often. Knowing what you have coming up allows you to plan ahead much more effectively.

*It wouldn't be much longer...it couldn't be. He had already waited an eternity. □*

## The Making of Ebon Praetor or "Why is there a rabbit in there, anyway?" by Randy Asplund-Faith

Ever since the *Fallen Empires* expansion of *Magic: the Gathering* came out, I've been bombarded by questions about the Ebon Praetor card. I was kind of used to people asking the regular questions like "Where do you get your ideas?" and "How do you know what to paint?", but when Ebon Praetor came out the big question became "Why is there a bunny rabbit on the Ebon Praetor card?"

At first, it only happened at conventions; then people started writing in and asking about it. For some reason, it seems to be one of the big mysteries of the game. When I went to Eindhoven in May I met a lot of really nice Dutch players who would come up to get their cards signed and then ask that familiar question (usually with almost no accent): "Umm, I was wondering, why is there a rabbit..."

Even in Holland! It got to the point where I would tell people that I would tell them the answer — for a price! The deal was I would tell everybody in earshot about the rabbit, but then they would be obliged to tell 10 people. This seemed to work pretty well at first, but somehow I know that something more had to be done. After the show closed each night, a bunch of us went out on the town to take in the night life. We were wild, we were crazy, we got...well, never mind. The upshot is that in the middle of it all I pleaded with John Zinser of SHADIS for help. I told him of my plight and he said I could write this article telling the whole world **why there's a cute little bunny rabbit in the Ebon Praetor card!**

So here goes. It's not the answer to Life the Universe, and Everything — everybody knows that is 42 — and the answer is not that I am crazy (well, not completely, that is the answer for a different question), the answer to this "hare-y" question is...

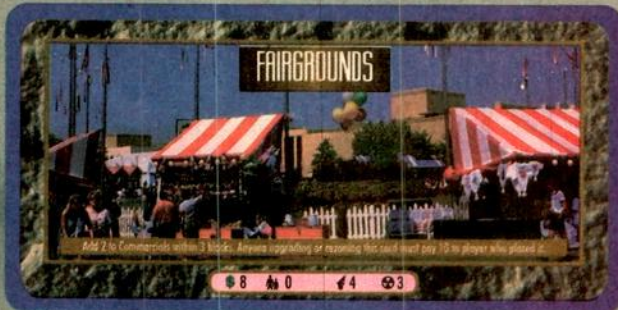
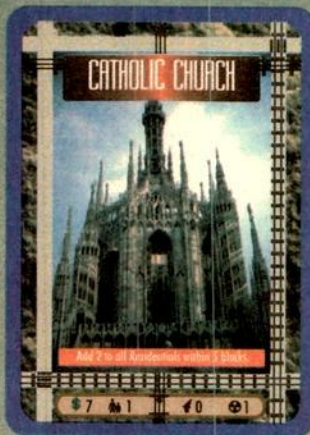
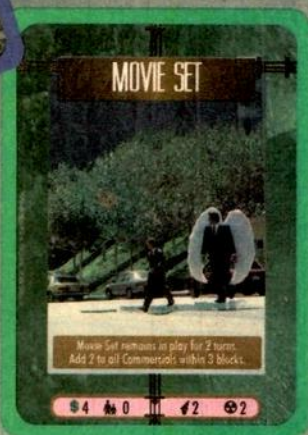
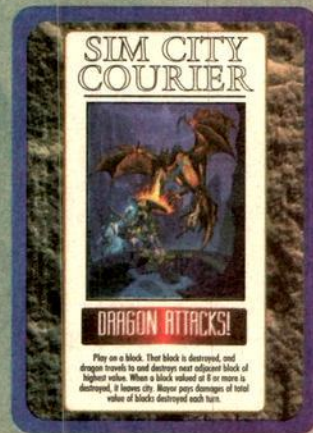
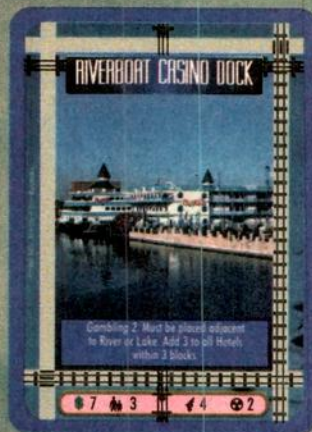
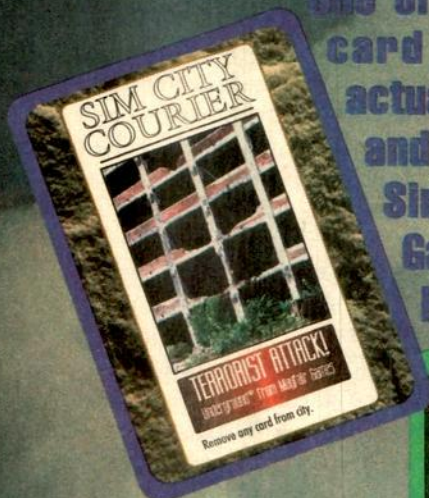
Once upon a time, in a reality far, far away, Sandra Everingham, the art director of *Magic: the Gathering*, called me up and asked me if I could do a few cards for *Fallen Empires*. The first list she had didn't include any black cards, but I really wanted to do a black card, so she offered to call me back as soon as she knew what they would



# SPOT THE FAKE...

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be. Not too long after, Sandra called back with a list of black cards and a suggestion for one that didn't have a title yet. I was told it was a counterpart to a white Judge and we could call it a dark judge for now. I wanted to know more. "What does it do?" I asked.

Sandra went on with a loose description about sacrificing cards to the judge to get more power, or something like that. If you sacrifice a mutant you get more. "A what? What kind of mutant?" I wanted to know what they would look like. As it turned out, I pretty much got to invent the mutant, but now the mutant seems to be a thrull, and my blue woman in the center is just a creature.

The next step was to knock out the black and white line sketch. This is the stage when I figure out what the picture is going to look like. I decided that since it was about a "dark judge" that I would play him up as the judge of the fiery pit. He has a deer skull face and his hat and robes are a parody of the medieval heraldic ecclesiastic emblems from real history. I also dug deeply into the past for inspiration about what the hellish underworld could be.

The Greeks believed in an underworld where cities and castles existed and the dead moved as shadows. I decided that if there could be castles, the castles would probably get wrecked every once in a while, especially with all of the evil nasty guys running around and the lava flows. The background is inspired partly by Dante's poem *Inferno* and partly by the wretched paintings of the Renaissance which depicted the horrors of war in that time when war, pestilence and famine were commonplace. Lava boils out of the ground to form vast molten lakes where the sulphur is so thick that I could almost smell it while painting.

Meanwhile, the judge sits on his marble throne which looms up from the pit on a spire pedestal. The title of Ebon Praetor, which was assigned to the card after I painted it, couldn't be more apt. The Ebon makes him black and a Praetor was a magistrate position in ancient Roman government. Thus, he really is the Dark Judge. Before him opens a tunnel directly to the surface. Through this tunnel the evil spirits rise to the upper world where they find the helpless and drag them down to the pit for

judgment. We see before us two such demons (this is the answer you've been waiting for!). On the right is a vile, disgusting caricature of blatant evil. On the left, a Pooka. He is a Celtic spirit representing disguised evil. Did you ever see the movie *Harvey* with Jimmy Stewart? Yup, it's the same kind of 6' tall white rabbit with an attitude. Not quite the head-hunting bunny from Monty Python's flirtation with Arthurian legend, and definitely not Thumper! However, if this rabbit bugs you, you had better be really careful!

So remember, the next time you go into a German restaurant and that hasenpfeffer is beckoning you from the menu, consider the Ebon Praetor card and order a nice plate of cabbage. □

## Highlander: the Card Game A review

By Julian Talliaferro

*Highlander: the Card Game* by *Thunder Castle Games* is the first *Swordmaster* game, which presumably means that TCG intends to use this game's mechanics in another setting. If they decide to do so, I'll buy it. The best part about this game is how straightforward it is. When your turn starts, you defend against the attack I made against you on my last turn. Then you attack me. That's it. It's generally that simple. The strategy and tactics in this game come from two areas — deciding where to attack and defend, and what special cards to use.

The simple back and forth of block then attack would get repetitive and boring fairly quickly if not for the special actions. Drawing from things that have happened in the syndicated T.V. series, actions can have seriously game-altering effects as well as special attacks, defenses and other more devious effects. One of my favorites is that Amanda (the most sublime of the immortals that you can play, in my opinion) can play the seduce card so that her next attack cannot be blocked.

Each of the immortals in the game have their own special abilities which correspond to the character's style on the show. The actual card for each immortal is rare, which makes it unlikely that you will get one if you only have a few cards, but if you don't play one of the immortals from the show you can play a "generic" immortal

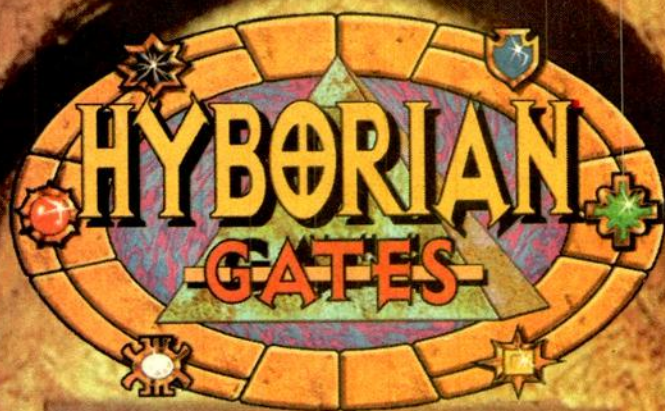
which is more versatile but less focused. As a generic immortal, you don't have any special cards of your own, but you can put one from each of the immortals in your deck.

This is a fast-paced game because your turn shouldn't ever take more than 30-45 seconds and is usually done with in about 15 seconds. The simplicity of the core mechanic makes sure that the game doesn't drag. Games last about 5-10 minutes consistently.

Your hand size indicates how skillful you are at any time and you fill up to your "ability" at the end of your turn. If you are hit, the damage reduces your ability. If you go through your deck, you have become tired and lose ability, although you do get to reshuffle. As you become more wounded, and tired, you have fewer cards to choose from which beautifully simulates the fact that a wounded fighter becomes more and more desperate and has fewer options. You can make "exertions" to look at 5 more cards for an attack or defense, but all five get discarded, and you get closer to being exhausted.

As good as this game is, there are only about 170 cards, so the number of combinations and different strategies is limited by that. I have already encountered a lot of decks that are very similar to each other in both the immortal chosen, and the basic card strategy. The first expansion set is supposed to have cards and immortals from the movies (I'm waiting for Ramirez), and hopefully that influx of new cards will refresh the game. The card quality is good, but the printing quality isn't quite up to the standards of some of the other games out there. Stills from the series are used on the cards where many games use artwork, and while some if it is outstanding and appropriate, some of the shots just don't seem to fit at all with what the card does.

In summary, this is an easy game to pick up. There are no major holes, and the game play is quick and fun. There may not be enough cards yet for the very long term, but an influx of new cards can easily fix that. This is definitely a game that any fan of the movie or T.V. series will want to check out, and is also a good bet for most card players. □



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Applicants must show initiative and be well versed in HYBORIAN GATES game play.

To arrange an interview call 817-530-1125.

## State of the Hobby

### A report from the field, post-GenCon

With GenCon behind us, there are quite a few new games that released or are about to release. Here's a summary of each:

### Expansions

#### **Umbra** for **Rage** *White Wolf*

The Umbra is the "spirit realm" of the World of Darkness. There are 90+ cards including two new card types (caerns and quests) with almost all the cards focused on the spirits and actions in the Umbra.

#### **Arcana** for **On the Edge** *Atlas Games*

Arcana brings an emphasis on mysticism. Psychics and magic abound.

#### **Powers of the Mind** for **Galactic Empires** *Companion Games*

A new faction, and new (mental) powers.

#### **Facts and Factions** for **Blood Wars** *TSR*

This "second" expansion brings out the factions within the Lower Planes. New groups and troops.

#### **Chronicles** for **Magic: the Gathering** *Wizards of the Coast*

This is a collection of cards from earlier expansion sets that are being reprinted. In a move made for players who were unable to find or afford cards from early sets, several of the most coveted cards returned in this set, which will be printed for quite a while. As this set is reprinted, *Wizards of*

*the Coast* has said that the cards included will be changed.

#### **Homelands** for **Magic: the Gathering** *Wizards of the Coast*

This 110+ card set is based on finding out the history behind some of the more popular cards in the original set (such as the Sengir, the Serra, and the Hurloon).

#### **Ancient Fighting Arts of China** for **Ultimate Combat** *Ultimate Games*

Brand new card templates are gorgeous and the moves are now all based on their styles, including drunken style and tae kwon do.

### New Games

#### **Quest for the Grail** *Horizon Games*

Quest for the Grail is a CCG based on Arthurian legend. A pre-release was made at GenCon with a full release to follow. Quest for the Grail uses period artwork to add authenticity.

#### **Highlander** *Thunder Castle Games*

*Thunder Castle Games* (*Towers in Time*) released this game, licensed from the t.v. series. Players can play an immortal from the series or a "generic" immortal.

#### **Guardians** *FPG*

Original artwork from FPG's outstanding collection of artists (including Parkinson and Brom) grace every card in this game. A whimsical game with solid mechanics and outstanding artwork.

#### **Wing Commander III** *Mag Force 7*

Based on the popular PC computer game, *Wing Commander III* shows the human versus Kilrathi wars in space.

#### **Hyborian Gates** *Cardz*

Dimensions are clashing together in the game by Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell. Little original art, but gorgeous nonetheless.

#### **Star Quest** *Comic Images*

Another Sci-Fi CCG, this game has a great many similarities in play to *Magic*. A small percentage of the artwork was done by Royo and Whelan.

#### **Shadowfist** *Daedalus Games*

Set in a B-grade Kung-Fu movie, *Shadowfist* has people and creatures across time and dimensions fighting for control of the earth. Great looking cards and a solid game.

#### **Battlelords** *New Millennium Entertainment*

Players take the role of mercenary teams in the 23rd century in the midst of an interplanetary war for power.

#### **Marvel: Overpower** *Fleer Entertainment Group*

Take the heroes from the *Marvel* universe and start clobbering each other. There are missions that you can complete if you stop clobbering for a while.

#### **Banemaster** *Chessex*

A brightly-colored and simple game of dungeon crawling. Aimed at the younger set.



# **R**edemption

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ILLUSTRATION BY  
JEFF HAYNIE



**Six Clans to Conquer**

**Five Elements to Master**

**One Empire to Rule**

**Legend  
of the  
Five Rings™**

*The Collectible  
Card Game*

Legend of the Five Rings is TM & ©, Alderac Entertainment Group, 1995.  
AEG: 4045 Guasti Rd. #212, Ontario, CA 91761 (909) 390-5444  
Web Site: <http://www.isomedia.com/homes/aeg/~aeg.html>

### Redemption *Cactus Games*

Players try to save lost souls and conquer evil in this game based on the Bible. Every card has an appropriate bible verse.

### The Crow *Heartbreaker Hobbies*

Based on the popular movie, The Crow comes only in "master packs" and involves lots of dark pictures and fighting.

### Legend of the Five Rings *Alderac Entertainment and Isomedia*

Set in a world based on feudal Japan, Samurai and Ninja help the players fight for the Emerald Throne.

### Tempest of the Gods *Black Dragon Press*

Play a major religion trying to convert or destroy the other players' followers. Or

just summon your god to rain down mass destruction!

## Coming Soon

### James Bond: Goldeneye *Heartbreaker Hobbies*

Based on the new Bond film with Pierce Brosnan. Lots of gadgets and guns.

### Upper Deck: Gridiron Fantasy Football *Precedence Publishing*

A violent and amusing look at football as a Collectible Card Game.

### Heresy: Kingdom Come *Last Unicorn Games*

Angels and Devils in a Cyberpunk setting. Stunning artwork previews. May be out as you read this.

### Middle Earth: the Wizards *Iron Crown Enterprises*

Tolkien's world brought to card games. I.C.E. took this project back to do themselves.

### Dark Sovereigns for *Vampire: the Eternal Struggle* *Wizards of the Coast*

The game formerly known as Jyhad is finally getting an expansion. Brand new vampires and other dangerous things from Europe.

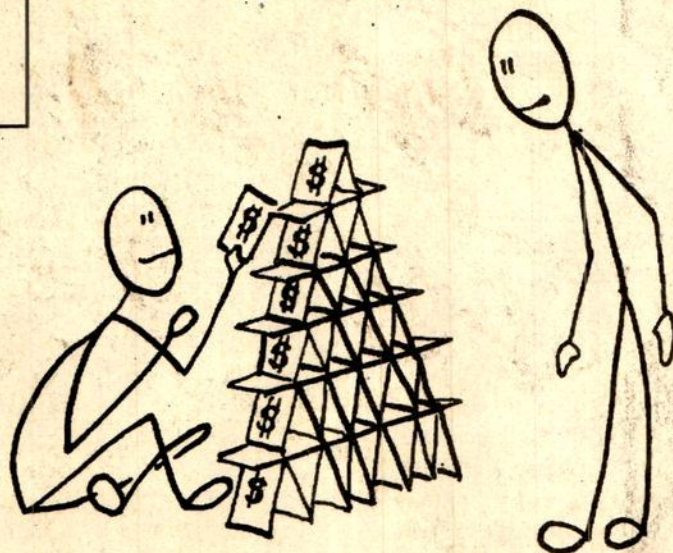
### The Last Crusade *Chameleon Eclectic*

WWII battles on the land, sea and air.

### Star Wars *Decipher*

Decipher has said that this game, based on the famous movie trilogy, will be out by Christmas.

Stick Figure Theatre!  
by  
Chris Avellone



"I take it you've never played **Money: the Garnering** before."

## A Collector's Checklist for FPG's Collectible Card Game.

Card Name	Rarity	Type	Card Name	Rarity	Type	Card Name	Rarity	Type
<input type="checkbox"/> Agent of Shadow	R1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Corruption Stream	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Gn'Olegable Gnomes	R2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Amber Well	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Cow	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Gn'Omish Gnomes	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Amulet of Flying	U1	IC	<input type="checkbox"/> Crook End Snoot	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	C2	Ot
<input type="checkbox"/> Ancient Ogre	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Crook End Snooter	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Goldthwaite Jumpers	U2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Angel	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Crystal Flash	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Gorgal Skag	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Annihilator Cloud	U2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Cyclops	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Avatar	R1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Anvil of Heaviness	C1	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Darkness Elemental	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Phooba Schnee	R1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Archangel Magnus	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Death	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Fanged Ogre	U1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Archangel Odessa	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Demon Horde of Kabod	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Air Elemental	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Archer	C2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Desert Giant	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Energy Elemental	R1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Arms of the Earth	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Detect Life Force	C1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Greedy Fiend	U2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Axeman	U2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Devil Dog	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Grilbus	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Baala-Gog	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Devil Hedgehog	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Grim Skull	R3	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Babe Hound	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Dispel Magic	C2	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Gringe Commander	R2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Babes	C2	Ot	<input type="checkbox"/> Djinn	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Groupie	U1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Baleful Eye	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Doomwing	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Gunner	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Bantam Drake	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Dragon Wing Lord	R1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Haba Naba Daba	R3	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Bealzebub	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Dreaded Doom Dog	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Haba Naba Kaba	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Beer	C2	Ot	<input type="checkbox"/> Drooling Clamjack	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Hair-de-hobbins	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Big Groaning Canker	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry Heaps	sp	Te	<input type="checkbox"/> Hammer of Doom	R2	IH
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Lung	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Earth Elemental	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Harkin - Spreader/Wealth	R2	Gu
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Unicorn	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Earth Mother	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Heels of Speed	U2	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackthwaite Jumpers	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Elder Cave Giant	U2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Helm of the Brotherhood	R2	Sp
<input type="checkbox"/> Bold Mold	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Embryonic Witch	U2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Holy Grail	R2	IH
<input type="checkbox"/> Bone Shambler	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Eater	C1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Horse	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Brap Back Goblins	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Leach	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Huge Rock Giant	U2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Back Goblins	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Toad	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Humungus Fungus	R1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Bruce the Goose	R1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Well	R3	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Elemental	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Bulbous Clamjack	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Eternal Witch Lord	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Ogre	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Bungee Bony Ridged	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Eye of Long Spying	C1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Spirit	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Burrowing Barg	C2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Eye of Missile Mayhem	R2	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Storm	C1	Sp
<input type="checkbox"/> Captain	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Female Pixie	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Idiot	R2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Captain Red Nose	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Female Titan	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Idiot Fiend	U1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Carreg Amroth Stronghold (C)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Finn - Swamp King	R2	Gu	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Crag Bagglers	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Carreg Amroth Stronghold (L)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Elemental	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Crag Bogglers	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Carreg Amroth Stronghold (R)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Walker	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Crag Bugglers	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Cave Giant	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Flame Cannon	R1	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron Lord	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Cherub	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Floyd the Flying Pig	U2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Jibber	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleric	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Force Barrier	R2	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Khnumian Stronghold (C)	sp	St
<input type="checkbox"/> Control Destiny	U1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaar - Influencer of the Masses	R1	Gu	<input type="checkbox"/> Khnumian Stronghold (L)	sp	St
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporal	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Giant Penguin	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Khnumian Stronghold (R)	sp	St
			<input type="checkbox"/> Gn'Obby Gnomes	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Kikijub	U1	Et



<input type="checkbox"/> King of Mystfall	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Sabu Amantek (C)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Summons Gate	R2	Sp
<input type="checkbox"/> Labyrinth of Spires	sp	Te	<input type="checkbox"/> Sabu Amantek (L)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun Spirits	C2	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Lake Serpent	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Sabu Amantek (R)	sp	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Super Model	U1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Lancer	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Sacrificial Alter	R2	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp	sp	Te
<input type="checkbox"/> Large Idol	U1	St	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand Lord	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Swordsman	C2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Schneeble	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Tangle Web	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Leprechaun	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Seer	C2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Teleport Tower - Elemental	U1	St
<input type="checkbox"/> Light Elemental	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Shadow of Ashes	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Tes Let - Leader w/Foresight	sp	Gu
<input type="checkbox"/> Lorg Mole	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Shadow Spy	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Thackle	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Mad Fiend	U2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Shadow Warrior	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Thak - Steady Hand	R2	Gu
<input type="checkbox"/> Magic Feedback	U1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Brom's Angelic	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Thunder Hawk	R2	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Magma Elemental	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Brom's Demonic	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiny Flying Fungus	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Major Party Animal	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Brom's Dragon	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Tookle - Leader of the Many	R2	Gu
<input type="checkbox"/> Make Juice	C2	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Brom's Skull	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Trumpeter	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Male Pixie	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Maitz's Dark	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Ugly Wart Fiend	U2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Male Titan	U2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Maitz's Lightning	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Valkyrie Spirit	R2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshal	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Ploog's Chicken	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Vampire	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Master Gunner	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Ploog's Ox	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Vampire Hunters	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Merchant	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Shield Warhola's Snakes	sp	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Vampire Lord	R2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Minataur	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Siin - Stealer of the Power	sp	Gu	<input type="checkbox"/> Vapor Elemental	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Mist Veiler	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Skeletal Minion	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Varmit Archers	C1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Monolith of Power	U1	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Slag Bunny	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Visionary	C2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Moon Spirit	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping Spirit	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitales Dark Cloud	U1	Sp
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountains	sp	Te	<input type="checkbox"/> Slippery Slime	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Wailing Specter	U1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Mud Elemental	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Sloarch	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Warrior Spirit	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Mule	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoke Spirit	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Watcher	U1	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Na Boob	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Snibs Bony Ridged	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Nymph	C2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Mold	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Snogwart	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Spout	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Nick	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Daughters	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Whispering Spirits	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Paladin	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Sorcerer	R3	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> White Unicorn	R1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Party Animal	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Speckled Clamjack	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Nymph	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Pauly, Official Parrot	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Sphinx	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Will o' the Wisp	U1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Pepe's Slow Down	U2	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Spirit of the Forge	R2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Wind Spirit	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Pesky Varmit	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Spirit of the Hunt	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Winterseed's Maiden	R2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Phantom Stalker	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> St. Ballantine's Evocation	C1	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Winterseed's Mistress	U1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Pig Dog	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Maitz Lightning 1	U1	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Nymph	C1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Pink Flamingos	R1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Maitz Lightning 2	R2	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Spirit	C1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Ploogak the Conqueror	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Angelic 1	R2	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Woods	sp	Te
<input type="checkbox"/> Polar Ice Ogre	U1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Angelic 2	U1	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Wraith	R2	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Potion of Movement Essence	U2	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Demonic 1	U1	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Yandrax	U1	El
<input type="checkbox"/> Power Lunch	C2	Sp	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Demonic 2	R2	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Yard Rat	U2	Mo
<input type="checkbox"/> Primordial Goo	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Dragon 1	U1	Sh	<input type="checkbox"/> Zombie	U1	Et
<input type="checkbox"/> Rain Spirit	U2	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Dragon 2	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rak Nam - Leader/Mighty	sp	Gu	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Skull 1	U1	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Reverend Smilin' Jack	R2	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Brom's Skull 2	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rik' Sook	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Maitz's Dark 1	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rivers and Lakes	sp	Te	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Maitz's Dark 2	U1	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Giant	C1	Mo	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Ploog's Chicken 1	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Lord	U1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Ploog's Chicken 2	U1	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Rat	R2	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Ploog's Ox 1	U1	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Spirit	C1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Ploog's Ox 2	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rocks of Skull Cracking	C1	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Warhola's Snake 1	R2	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rooster	C2	IH	<input type="checkbox"/> Std. Bearer Warhola's Snakes 2	U1	Sh			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rot Rat	C1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Stinking Spirit	U1	El			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rouge Specter	U1	Et	<input type="checkbox"/> Succubus	U1	El			
<input type="checkbox"/> Roving Force Inferno	R1	El	<input type="checkbox"/> Summon Gravity Well	C1	Sp			

Card Types:

Mortal	.....	Mo
Eternal	.....	Et
Elemental	.....	El
Stronghold	.....	St
Spell	.....	Sp
Terrain	.....	Te
Item-Hand	.....	IH
Guardian	.....	Gu
Item-Creature	.....	IC
Other	.....	Ot

Card Rarities:

C[1 or 2]	.....	Common[1 or 2]
U[1 or 2]	.....	Uncommon[1 or 2]
R[1, 2 or 3]	.....	Rare[1, 2 or 3]
sp	.....	Special

## A Collector's Checklist for *WotC's Magic: the Gathering* Expansion

Card Name .....Rarity

### Artifacts

- Apocalypse Chime.....R
- Clockwork Gnomes.....U
- Clockwork Steed.....U
- Clockwork Swarm.....U
- Didgeridoo.....R
- Ebony Rhino.....U
- Feroz's Ban.....R
- Joven's Tools.....U
- Roterothopter.....U
- Serrated Arrows.....U

### Lands

- An-Havva Township.....U
- Aysen Abbey.....U
- Castle Sengir.....U
- Koskun Keep.....U
- Wizards' School.....U

### Black

- Baron Sengir.....R
- Black Carriage.....R
- Broken Visage.....R
- Cemetery Gate.....C
- Drudge Spell.....U
- Dry Spell.....C
- Feast of the Unicorn.....C
- Funeral March.....U
- Ghost Hounds.....U
- Grandmother Sengir.....R
- Greater Werewolf.....U
- Headstone.....U
- Ihsan's Shade.....U
- Irini Sengir.....U
- Koskun Falls.....R
- Sengir Autocrat.....R
- Sengir Bats.....C
- Timmerian Fiends.....R
- Torture.....C
- Veldrane of Sengir.....R

### Blue

- Æther Storm.....U
- Baki's Curse.....R
- Chain Stasis.....R

- Coral Reef.....U
- Dark Maze.....C
- Forget.....R
- Giant Albatross.....C
- Giant Oyster.....U
- Jinx.....U
- Labyrinth Minotaur.....C
- Marjhan.....R
- Memory Lapse.....C
- Merchant Scroll.....U
- Mystic Decree.....R
- Narwhal.....R
- Reef Pirates.....C
- Reveka, Wizard Savant.....R
- Sea Sprite.....U
- Sea Troll.....U
- Wall of Kelp.....R

### Green

- An-Havva Constable.....R
- An-Havva Inn.....U
- Autumn Willow.....R
- Carapace.....C
- Daughter of Autumn.....R
- Faerie Noble.....R
- Folk of An-Havva.....C
- Hungry Mist.....C
- Hungry Mist.....C
- Joven's Ferrets.....U
- Leaping Lizard.....U
- Mammoth Harness.....R
- Primal Order.....R
- Renewal.....U
- Root Spider.....U
- Roots.....U
- Rysorian Badger.....R
- Shrink.....C
- Spectral Bears.....U
- Willow Faerie.....C
- Willow Priestess.....R

### Red

- Aliban's Tower.....C
- Ambush.....U
- Ambush Party.....C
- An-Zerrin Ruins.....R
- Anaba Ancestor.....R
- Anaba Bodyguard.....C

- Anaba Shaman.....C
- Anaba Spirit Crafter.....R
- Chandler.....U
- Dwarven Pony.....R
- Dwarven Sea Clan.....R
- Dwarven Trader.....C
- Eron the Relentless.....U
- Evaporate.....U
- Heart Wolf.....R
- Ironclaw Curse.....R
- Joven.....U
- Orcish Mine.....U
- Retribution.....U
- Winter Sky.....R

### White

- Abbey Gargoyles.....U
- Abbey Matron.....C
- Aysen Bureaucrats.....C
- Aysen Crusader.....R
- Aysen Highway.....R
- Beast Walkers.....R
- Death Speakers.....U
- Hazduhr the Abbot.....R
- Leeches.....R
- Mesa Falcon.....C
- Prophecy.....U
- Rashka the Slayer.....U
- Samite Alchemist.....C
- Serra Aviary.....R
- Serra Bestiary.....U
- Serra Inquisitors.....U
- Serra Paladin.....U
- Soraya the Falconer.....R
- Trade Caravan.....C
- Truce.....R


### Rarities:


Common cards were printed twice on the common sheet. Uncommon cards were printed either three times on the uncommon sheet or once on the common sheet. Rare cards were printed once on the uncommon sheet. The uncommon sheet was printed once for each three printings of the common sheet.

# BACK ISSUE MADNESS!


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# New Perspectives

## The World of Miniatures



By Ken Carpenter © 1995 ♦ Photography by Don Witmer

**W**ell, another GenCon has come and gone, and I ask myself, yet again, "What happened?" I enjoy the associations I've made (especially hangin' out at the Shadis booth and munching down pizza), but it's such a huge event that, no matter what you do, you miss a bunch of events that you were interested in. I do have to admit that GenCon is the most impressive gaming convention I've ever attended. To provide service to so many participants without a complete breakdown of the system is miraculous.

It also seems that just about every new miniatures game release expected at GenCon missed its target date. There were, at least, demo games for *Heartbreaker's Warzone* and *ICE's Silent Death: The Next Millennium* (not implying the release date, I'm sure). Both were showing off some great new figures for their soon-to-be-released games. They are both due sometime in September.

*Ral Partha* had a new, limited edition figure, *Dracolich*, with only 6000 issued (plus 1000 in pewter). *Grenadier* also had a Giant that stood about 10 inches tall, with only 100 issued (now *that's* limited). If you see them at your local shop, jump on them.

There were plenty of new miniatures products at the *Geo-Hex* booth, including all sorts of resin accessories for *BattleTech* and similar genres. *Global Games* had a number of newer figures for *Legions of Steel*, including some fabulous models for their *Black Empire* line. *Reaper Miniatures* has some incredible new figures from Julie Guthrie, Sandra Garrity, and other sculpting greats. In the coming months, we'll look at all of this and more.

Don't forget to enter the New Perspectives "Gimme" contest. Here's all you gotta do: Send us a letter with your name,

address, and the names of the miniatures games you are most interested in. In January, we will draw a random letter from those we've received, and that winner will get a box of miniature goodies! That's right, plastic and/or metal figures from many of your favorite manufacturers and games. We'll even throw in *The Guide to Miniatures Painting: Book I*. It'll cost you all of three minutes and a stamp! Get going. Write: New Perspectives "Gimme", P.O. Box 9, Murrieta, CA 92564.

I lied last issue (unintentionally, I assure you). I said that the release date for the first book in *The Miniatures Hobbyist™* series, *The Guide to Miniatures Painting: Book I* was in August, but it's really in November (calendar dyslexia). Pester your local hobby stores for it. If they can't get it for you, send \$8.95 + \$1.00 S&H to AEG's *Painting Guide*, 4045 Guasti Road, Suite 212, Ontario, California 91761.

## Reviews

### Tiko Marines I, Veteran Mercenary, Marta Simtac's Shatterzone line

Sculpted by Dave Summers  
#SZR-23/#SZR-3/#SZR-5 ♦ 25mm ♦  
\$6.25/\$2.15/\$2.15  
Technical: 5 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 6

These figures are designed for use with *West End Games' Shatterzone* role-playing system. The lower body of the Tiko Marines is the same, but the torso and upper extremities are quite different.

There are visible mold lines that aren't difficult to remove, but they do run across faces and through detail, so the preparation time is increased. Marta has a very slight

mold shift, which will require a bit of time, but it will clean up nicely.

The detail is pretty crisp, and there is a lot of it. These marines have a great deal of animation to their poses, with rifles at the ready and one prepared to throw a grenade. Marta is also pretty lively, with pistol up and a knife held down along her leg. The merc veteran has his rifle held loosely, plus another across his back. A cigar, or the stub end of one, is clamped firmly in the left side of his mount.

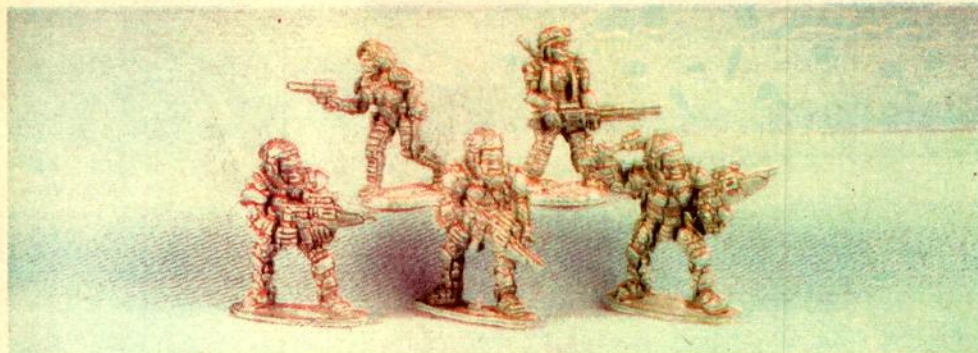
The clothing is well sculpted, as are accessories. These figures will paint up well.

**Vindicator (EAH-01),  
Prometheus (EAX-01)**  
**Rafm's Jovian Chronicles line**  
Sculpted by Stephen Koo  
#1074/#1075 ♦ 1/285 scale ♦ \$7.50  
Technical: 6 ♦ Artistic: 9 ♦ Value: 7

*Jovian Chronicles* and *Heavy Gear* provide some of the best anime available, and *Ianus/Dream Pod 9* isn't even a Japanese owned company. In keeping with the quality of the original artwork, *Rafm* has done some of the most incredible anime in miniatures. I must warn you, however, that while the blister gives the warning "Some assembly may be required", that is an understatement.

Both figures show minor parting lines, but most of the pieces are pretty clean. One or two of the smaller bits had minor mold shift problems, so a bit of work is required there, but they won't slow you down much.

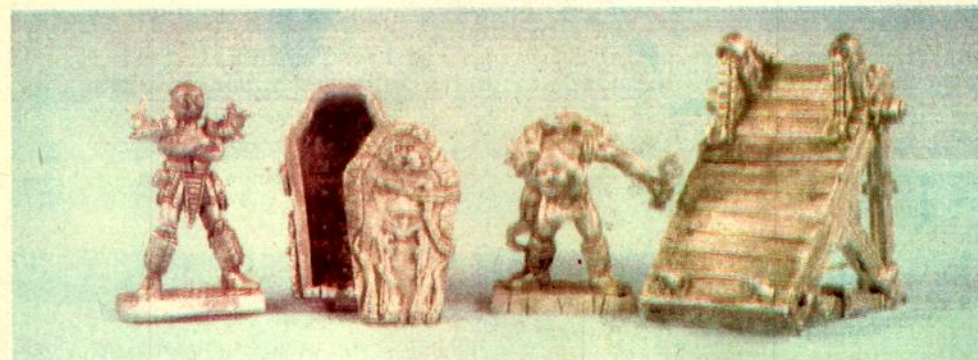
*Vindicator* comes in twelve pieces. It is an appropriately bulky figure with curves and angles in all the right places! It is a fantastic example of anime. In only nine pieces, *Prometheus* is also a huge figure



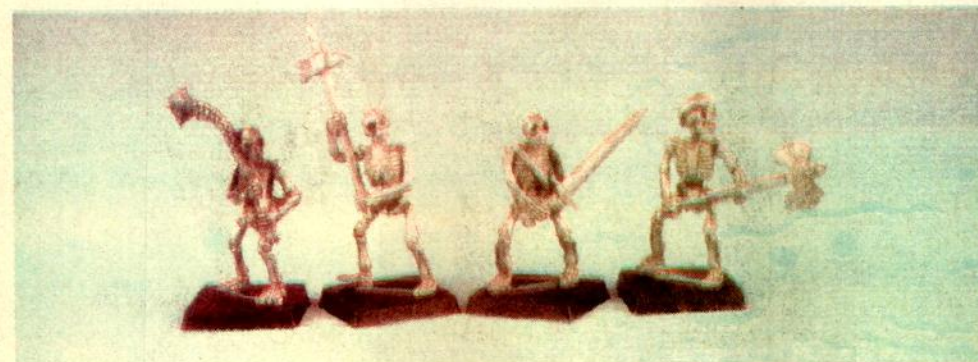
Tiko Marines, Veteran Mercenaries, Marta (Simtac)



Vindicator, Prometheus (Rafm)



Lord of Discipline, Lord of Pain (Rafm)



Skeletons with Two-Handed Weapons (Grenadier)

with a really huge weapon on his right arm. Both figures are incredibly well done, showing all the features of great anime. Assembly is pretty simple, once you figure out where all the pieces go. Painting will be a challenge, but well worth it.

**Lord of Discipline, Lord of Pain**  
**Rafm's Fantasy line**

Sculpted by Stephen Koo  
#3623/#3624 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$3.75/\$3.25  
Technical: 7 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 8

With only slight parting lines and pretty simple assembly work, these figures are clean. Only one heavy vent thread and a very slight mold shift on the wooden supports for the rack mar the quality of production.

The Lord of Discipline reminds me of my third grade teacher, who, by the way, had the same name. With some rather unpleasant implements, not to mention a rack, he isn't your average house guest, unless you're in the Addams family.

The Lord of Pain isn't any more good-natured than Discipline. Complete with a spike-walled sarcophagus, Pain is the creator of Discipline's tools of the trade. Both are sculpted in bulky detail, with refinements to the details, such as clothing and armor, and sarcophagus.

**Skeleton with 2 hand weapons**  
**Grenadier's Fantasy Warriors line**

Sculpted by Mark Copplestone  
#1460 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$6.95  
Technical: 7 ♦ Artistic: 8 ♦ Value: 8

For use with **Fantasy Warrior** and other fantasy games, these four skeletons mix creativity into the recipe. They all have minor parting lines, but the morning star has a slight mold shift which will require some time to touch up.

These go beyond the typical skeletons. The bony warrior with the two-handed sword has lost the back half of his skull, allowing you to see all the way through his eye-sockets and head, and the polearm wielding skelly has dreadlocks.

These are a fun piece of work and will paint up well. They come with 20mm bases for use with most miniatures battle rules.

## Unicorn

### Grenadier's Fantasy Legends line

Sculpted by Sandra Garrity

#3149 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$3.95

Technical: 7 ♦ Artistic: 5 ♦ Value: 6

A unicorn mother and colt, this is a cute set with a lot of possibilities. Just think of the consequences to a group of adventurers trying to capture a lone unicorn colt...or so they thought.

There are noticeable parting lines along the backs and underside of both figures and across the bases, but they don't ruin any detail and should clean up well.

Both have subtle musculature and pretty good proportions. Some interesting differences between these and most unicorns include the mother's longer mane and the cloven hooves on both beasts. The nub of a horn on the colt is creative as well.

## Powers of Chaos

### Ral Partha's Planescape line

Sculpted by Jim Johnson, Dave Summers, Geoff Valley, and Jeff Wilhelm

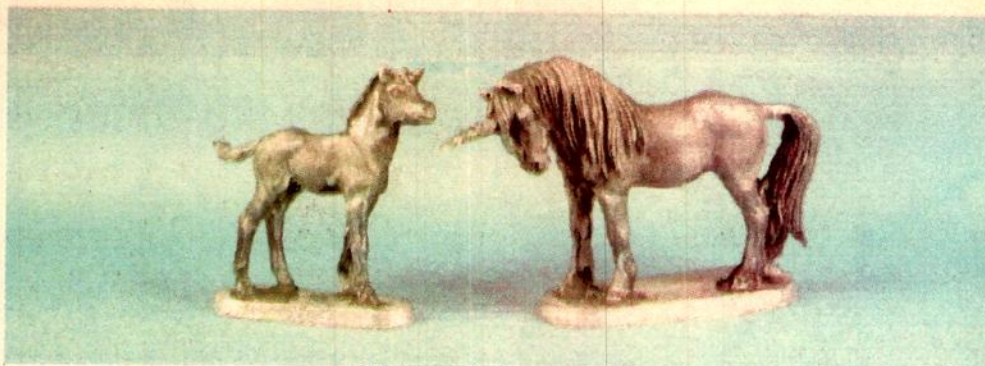
#10-520 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$19.95

Technical: 8 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 9

For use with TSR's role-playing setting, this set of eight Chaos deities gives a great cross-section of the pantheons in **Planescape**. Note: This set was mistakenly priced at \$19.95. The price is expected to rise to \$24.95 when *Ral Partha* releases new pricing in Jan '96.

Minor parting lines and a horde of small vent threads are the only evidence of the casting process. Some assembly is required, such as attaching Baphomet's hand and shield, and the Fairie Queen's wings.

The appeal of the figures range from "okay" (like Ygori) to "wonderful" (like Baphomet and Lolth). They lean toward the wonderful side, which makes this a great set. Painting will be a pleasure, considering the excellent muscle tone and detail on most of the figures. □



Unicorns (Grenadier)



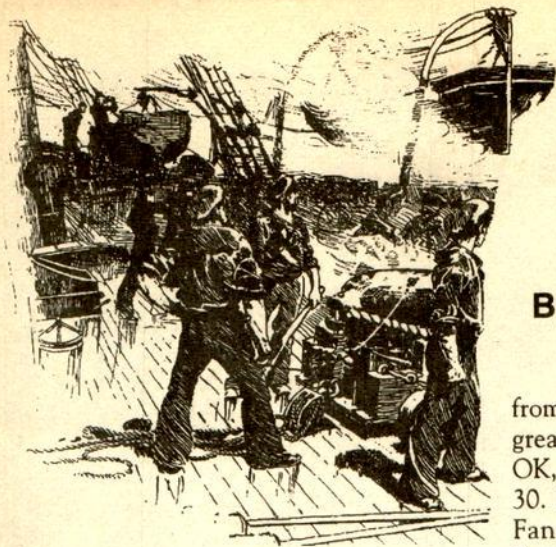
Powers of Chaos: Gorellik and Ygorl (Ral Partha)



Powers of Chaos: Bast, Corellon Larethian, Faerie Queen (Ral Partha)



Powers of Chaos: Loki, Lolth, Baphomet (Ral Partha)



# The Flag Bridge

## Sailing the Waters of Play-By-Mail Games

By Joey Browning, U.S. Editor, *Flagship Magazine* © 1995

I'd like to take a bit of a different tack this issue, and sort of split the column up into three sections. The first will deal with the cost of PBM games — one of the biggest limiting factors in the growth of the hobby. Following that, I'll have the usual obligatory game review, and then I'll finish up with some corrections and additions from last issue. So, in order not to waste space (and keep the Editor-in-Chief happy), I'll get on with things....

One thing that really scares off prospective new players is the perceived cost of PBM. The typical reaction is "Neat concept, but I have to pay for every turn? No way! That's way too expensive, man!" Said person then will blithely proceed to the nearest "Burger Quik" and whomp down \$5 for a mega-greasoid burger, humongo fries, and gigantor drink — burning the price of a modest PBM turn right there.

"That's not fair," you cry, "you gotta eat!" OK, let's compare PBM to something more expendable — an RPG, for example. Take your typical guy who likes to indulge in a bit of gaming: we'll call him Rollo. Rollo likes to play most anything — board games, RPGs, CCGs, you name it. However, Rollo doesn't get to play as much as he used to; since he left school and got a job, it's been harder and harder to get together with the old gang for a game or three. What will Rollo spend a year on, say, a new RPG vs. a PBM game? Let's find out....

Rollo decides to get into a new RPG, to GM for his friends (actually, others in the group may GM as well, but they use a different system). He goes out and purchases the basic rules for, as an example, GURPS

from *Steve Jackson Games*. A good game, great rules, good system; I like it myself. OK, the basic GURPS rules are about \$25-30. However, Rollo really wants to run a Fantasy world. Hmm...what's this — Fantasy supplements! We'll need *Fantasy Folk*, and *Magic*, of course (the basic set has only a few spells). That ought to do it...for another \$40 or so. Away he goes, happy with his new purchases.

Poor Rollo. Now that he's got a job and a semi-steady girlfriend, he just doesn't have enough time to design adventures from scratch. Back to the store for two books of magic items and two module books over the course of a few months. Bingo —

another \$60 at least. Ready to game, Rollo manages to get together with his friends twice a month, even at the risk of terminally annoying his girlfriend. He almost always has half a pizza and a six-pack while he plays, to the tune of \$10 or so. Playing sessions usually last 6 hours or so, on the average (not counting bantering, drinking, kibitzing, and quick trips out to Denny's). Total cost for the year for Rollo at this point is \$130 for the actual game materials, plus \$240 for the snacks, gas, and such — \$370 for 144 hours of fun.

In an alternate universe, Rollo decides to give PBM a go, and gets into *Odyssey*, from *Gamer's Den* (which I mentioned last



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issue). Rollo finds this convenient, as he can play via the Internet account he has. Hmm... Rules and setup are free for download, and turns are \$5 each, run once per week. Rollo will also do some diplomacy via E-mail, as well as submitting and receiving his turns. That'll tack on, say, \$1/turn (though that's probably a bit excessive). Rollo will pore over the rules, and probably spend at least 15 hours fine-tuning his setup, and then another 3 hours minimum on each turn. Over the course of a year, this amounts to \$312 for 171 hours of enjoyment — and he knows he'll be able to play even if half his buddies can't make it over that week.

Breaking this down gives (over the course of a year) a "cost of fun" ratio of \$2.57/hour for the RPG, and \$1.82/hour for PBM. Wow — looks like PBM is the better buy here! It just looks so much more expensive because the RPG costs are more hidden, and come in larger, more sporadic chunks. An RPG may have permanence in the form of books, but there are always new books every year...

Now, of course, there are exceptions to the above. PBM games (some of them) can get outrageously expensive in the larger "power" games: fanatics have been known to spend over \$100 a month on such. Still, how many *Magic: The Gathering* fanatics have you seen plunk down that much for one or two cards they'd been unable to find? It all depends on what you can afford to pay. The point here is that, on average, PBM is *not* more expensive than other forms of gaming — it's just the perception.

Time to clamber off my soapbox now, and get on with the review. This issue I'd like to talk about a light-hearted little fantasy wargame from the good folks at *Llucky Llama Games* — **You Rule!** Set in a mythical land dotted with whimsical place names and truly bizarre structures (used car lots, for example), each player initially controls only a single province and a few troops, along with the ambition to become sole ruler of the continent. This land is populated by a variety of fantasy races such as elves, dwarves, humans, etc. Each race has a historical superiority over one other race, and enjoys a combat advantage against that race. So, every race in the game has one race they "Rule Over", and one they are "Ruled By".

Each race also has certain bonus abilities in certain terrain types (elves have advantages in the forest, for example). Your job is

to manage your resources and different racial stocks of troops to best facilitate the control of the continent. In addition to recruiting troops, you can use your gold stockpiles for lots of other neat things — armor and weapon upgrades for the troops, for example, or the hiring of special characters such as generals, spies, doctors, et multiple cetera. You can even hire wizards that can cast spells for you, to assist in movement, production, or battle.

Combat in this game is very straightforward: if you know what you are up against, you can always calculate who will win, as there is no random element in battle at all. Everything has a fixed combat strength, and all the modifiers and adjustment effects are available to all as well. The trick, of course, is to have good intelligence on your potential foe (spies are handy here!).

The game is moderated by Bob and Debbi Thompson of *Llucky Llama*. Both are enthusiastic and hard-working moderators, and have a good customer service track record. Note that they will sometimes play in their own games, but will announce this to all up front — if you don't want to be in a game with the designers, you can request to be setup in a different one. Cost is \$10 for rules and setup, and \$5.50/turn thereafter. Games seem to last between 20-30 turns for those who survive until the end.

Now, a clarification from last issue: when I mentioned *Odyssey*, I gave only an E-mail address for *Gamer's Den*, and neglected to list *Llucky Llama's* mailing address. I'll quickly recap.

The first two games of the *Hero's Quest* module of *Odyssey* are now running. Sign-ups are being taken for *HQ-3*, the third game from *Gamer's Den*. *Llucky Llama* will be taking setups for a postal mail version only. Prices aren't yet set for the *Llucky Llama* version, but are \$5/turn (for up to 500 orders) for the *Gamer's Den* version. Mailing addresses for both are:

*Llucky Llama Games*  
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# The Goldtree Engine, Kingspoint

## Feature Review

By Wayne Wallace © 1995

Over a year and a half ago, Goldtree Enterprises completed work on and began selling **KINGSPPOINT™**, a "Role Playing Computer Application for the Game Master & Fully Developed Fantasy City." At the time, when the explosion of the personal computer population hadn't occurred and portable computers were few and far between, Goldtree took a risk in making their major product a \$49.95 piece of software that is only more useful than a paper RPG supplement when the GM has a computer in the living room, garage, attic, or wherever gamers might sit down.

You see, **KINGSPPOINT** is an active city. It does not sit there as a simple database, but lets time pass, and as the game time clock runs, NPCs come in and out of buildings, trigger events the GM set up earlier, and so forth. **KINGSPPOINT**'s main duty, in addition to being an excellent resource of hundreds of detailed NPCs, is to simulate the PCs traveling through a city. Does Ragnok the Dwarf, party leader, tell the GM that they leave the Orc Fall Inn in time to avoid overhearing a snide comment from the bartender? Does the party bump into a disguised assassin on the way out? Once the GM sets these special encounters, in addition to the ones provided with the program, the GM is no longer bound by his memory limitations or the disorganized binder of notes he made for the night's game.

Such was **KINGSPPOINT** 1.0 in 1993. Around early to mid-'94, the split between the city data of **KINGSPPOINT** and the software that did the main work was more evident. Goldtree advertised "The Goldtree Engine™: Role Playing Computer Application for the Game Master" and "KINGSPPOINT Version 2.0 free with purchase of The Goldtree Engine." This was the first version I was able to put on my (at the time) new 486 PC. Goldtree had sent us a review copy, and for the time, it was

good, but showing age. Version 1.0 didn't even require color graphics. Version 2.0 wanted at least EGA, and would run 16-color VGA.

City navigation became much easier. Now, there was mouse support, and one could move around the city with a click of the movable block cursor, use pull-down menus, and so forth. The city felt a bit more real, with expanded NPC descriptions, better support for GM notes to keep track of PCs and the rules system being used via the pull-down menus, and windows that didn't take up the entire screen in some cases.

Kingspoint the city, that is, the fictional history of the city and its inhabitants is good. There are many great ideas in there for a GM to get a Hook from and write his own Line and Sinkers. On the other hand, there are also many stereotyped characters and situations. One Temple Seductress, for example, has every single facet of the character description relating to her profession. No other interests, just repetition of the facts of her job. Such characters are a minority in the population of hundreds of characters, but the lack of adventure seeds in otherwise-important characters is obvious to the GM.

Later there were add-ons for **KINGSPPOINT** such as **Demon Tower** and other companion products such as **Hudson City**, a license from *Hero Games* for the city of their **Dark Champions™** RPG line.

Now, in 1995, Goldtree has made "The Roleplaying Software Company." I don't know how much the programming team changed, but the improvement is obvious in their product: **KINGSPPOINT™**: For Windows®. Let me say that I am really, really pleased with this product. While the RPG info for the city hasn't changed much, the interface is hugely improved, and is a joy to use. I saunter over to the

cutting edge of technology whenever resources permit me, and, one year ago, my system was top of the line: a 66Mhz 486 PC, great video card, soundblaster 16, double-speed CD-ROM, 16M RAM, and a crisp 17" monitor. **KINGSPPOINT** is now taking full advantage of my system with its new Windows version on CD-ROM (only) that takes about 16M of hard drive space. Whether as a window or full-screen application, **KINGSPPOINT** runs very fast, uses 256 colors, sounds, and has a user-friendly interface. I'd be scared to see it on a Pentium. It might go faster than light and create a black hole in my computer, right next to the one my wallet is endlessly being sucked into. **KINGSPPOINT** also now greets you with a better introduction graphic and the growl of the Demon whose hand holds the crystal ball that views **KINGSPPOINT**.

While, I'm a self-admitted computer geek, anyone who can use a mouse can use **KINGSPPOINT** with ease. As one can see from the first screen shot, the program is set up as four 'page dividers.' One just clicks on the section one needs, the screen changes, and one immediately begins using the options there.

I went in without reading any instructions (installing a Windows program is a no-brainer) and found that the program has helpful prompts on each page so you know how to do the inobvious.

**KINGSPPOINT** starts up in the 2nd divider (from left to right), so I clicked on 'Navigation' and found a large map of the city divided into sections. "Double click a map square to zoom" the page read to me, so I did, entering the temple district, K55. As I moved the mouse pointer around the map, a text box on the bottom changed to tell me what I was currently pointing at. "Double-click to travel" the page read once more, so I looked around, and saw, "The Temple of Seth." That sounded like an

interesting place for a party of adventurers to enter, so my brave band of...zero adventurers? Well, I haven't created them yet, but I'll go in anyway. Lo and behold, the divider changes from Navigation to Location. There's a lot of data on the screen, including a spot that tells me no computer art has been assigned to this location. (Other places, such as some Inns, have a picture of an Inn assigned) But, what's this? A clock is running in the upper right, and on the bottom fifth of the window, NPCs are coming and going! If only my party were here at midnight, they might see a Raving Prophet or a Mounted Mercenary. (Neither has a graphic assigned; with a bazillion inhabitants, a picture for every random guy with a name, even for the ones with major descriptions, would be a lot of data.) Behind the NPCs, Clouds! the weather is now visually apparent instead of just words on the screen, and changes as time passes.

A GM might say, "You had better find someplace else to go. The temple is damp, and it's cloudy out. It could rain." Since the time progression can be adjusted from one game second passing for every second to ten game minutes per second, the GM can control the flow of the encounters and weather as needed. Naturally, a GM who doesn't like anyone, even a computer, advising him or her on what to do can simply use the information as much or as little as s/he wants, but it is a nice tool and it's much less work to let this roleplaying aid do its job. Why else would one have paid for it in the first place?

After looking through the Temple of Seth, one can go back to Navigation, following the on-screen prompts, and visit other areas. There's a wealth of information to be read and enjoyed, especially in the presentation format of a Windows application. Once you've sated yourself on building descriptions and histories, it's time to double-click on one of those characters that appear in the bottom fifth of the window. I clicked on one while in the temple and found "Ægyptian Religious Figure." As KINGSPPOINT moved me to the 'Character' divider, I find that he wields a curved two-handed sword, carries a concealed crossbow with poisoned quarrels, has a pointed hood, and reacts to me in an excited manner, among other details. Thinking he's perhaps a bit too trigger-happy, I move off to examine the fourth divider, 'Multimedia.'

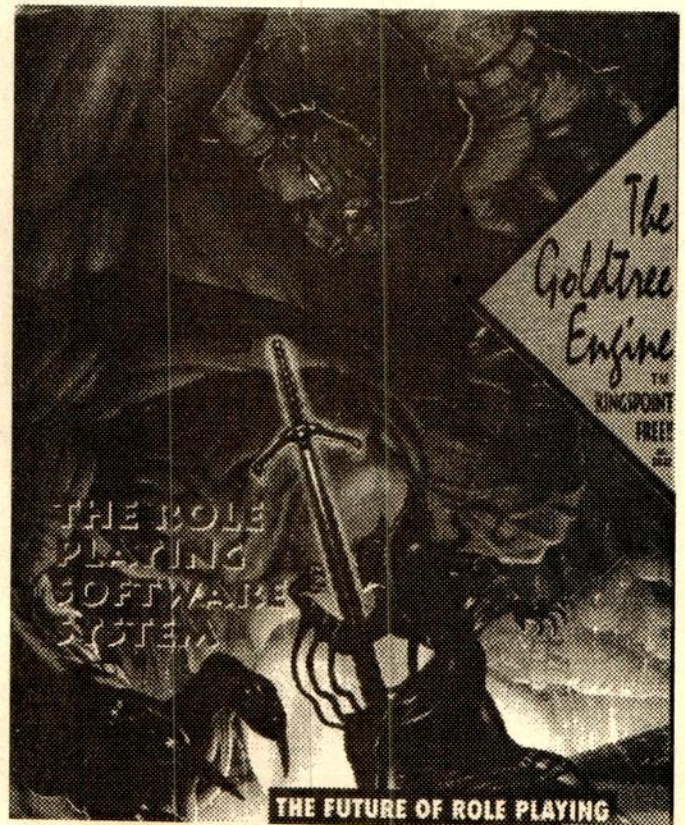
Multimedia is the testing ground for the GM who wants to try new .wav sound files, new .pcx graphics files so he has pictures to show the players, and otherwise fiddle around. Checking the list of sound libraries, I use the one they have provided, 'Samples', and once again hear the growl of the demon as I entered KINGSPPOINT, as well as a cash register, a man and a parrot arguing, many sounds from an inn's bar, and the 'Welcome to Kingspoint' spiel from the party's guide, Noladar. I spent some time checking the results of tying inappropriate sounds to characters or events, and the results were most humorous. You see, I used .wav files from the game *Civilization™ for Windows™*, which allowed me to set off a nuclear bomb when the archmage walked in, play American marching band music to announce the Seductress of Seth, etc. Your limitations are only what you can record with a microphone (or better equipment) or get off of on-line services or the internet. I think the Simpsons™ sound effects library works better in *Doom™* though. Still, the brave adventuring party marches through the halls of mist, searching for the assassin who killed the romantic young couple at the mansion, only to hear, "The Simpsons!" followed by Bart's hideous laugh. A GM might get a couple of good laughs before he realizes he was disemboweled, from the back, by his own players.

KINGSPPOINT for windows also has buttons and menus for other functions, which maintain its status as the premier GM Utility. Roll any kind of dice, define procedures to roll dice for character attributes to get stats for PCs and NPCs on the fly! Take notes, search for specific text files, print out character and building details, add to character details and journals as you like, stop or start time as slow or as fast as you want to generate weather. Type in a new date and/or time, import pictures, sounds, and create events your players will remember. With a microphone for your sound card, you could record a player's rendition of his charac-

ter's death scream secretly, and play it back for other players while you keep each player unaware of what happens to the others unless s/he can see or hear something.

When you combine all of these abilities with the lovingly detailed gargantuan city that is Kingspoint, you take the adventure so much further. Since you can change every detail, theoretically, you could rewrite the entire city so that you use KINGSPPOINT the program, but (for example) Sault Tet the city. Inserting your own city map is not an option unless you can get that level of programming detail from Goldtree, but the existing map is quite useful. As long as you can deal with the geography, Kingspoint could become TSR's *Waterdeep™*, *Judges' Guild's City-State of the Invincible Overlord™* (since acquired by TSR or someone else) or any other richly detailed city, if a GM applies his typing talents skillfully. Since the CD-ROM is not needed after installation, a GM could install it multiple times to have several cities, except...

The one major flaw that I was surprised to see stay in from our pre-release copy, was that even though you can install it to any directory, the program only looks for certain art, sound, map, etc. files in a sin-



gle, hard-coded directory: C:\KPWIN. This means that if you want the program anywhere else, another hard drive (like D: or E:) or another directory, you need to delete the list of pictures and sounds one by one on the Multimedia divider, (something I decided wasn't worth the hassle) and hope nothing else is needed. When I installed KINGSPPOINT to my D: drive under OS/2's windows emulation (KINGSPPOINT runs just fine under OS/2, except for one bug I'll detail later) the program came up, but couldn't find any of the picture files and would occasionally crash. It's possible that until new CD-ROMs are burned, one may not be able to run KINGSPPOINT from any other directory than C:\KPWIN. This bug will not prevent you from enjoying the program, unless you are like a friend of mine, whose C: is for DOS and Windows only, and doesn't have anywhere near 16 megabytes free. (A common practice in the days before 1,000 megabytes could be had for \$350.) He will have to do some lengthy repartitioning and backing up data before he will be able to use KINGSPPOINT. He has the room, just on D: instead of C:.

Some final technical points; there were no bugs when run in Windows 3.11. When run in OS/2 Fullpack (Windows support included), sometimes the program gives "No property value" and quits when you double-click an area from the navigation map, but only when the window is maximized. It works just fine when it's the default window size. I've got no clue what the difference is, and it works fine as a window or maximized under Windows 3.11, so it's probably just some little quirk no one could predict. It's likely in IBM's WinOS/2 code somewhere, some .001% imperfection in making Windows code run under OS/2.

My recommendation: If you can get a cheap 486 portable (under \$1,000) or can lug your computer near the gaming table, it's a worthwhile product to have. Even without using the city, the GM aids are great, and it has things automatically organized by windows. Using Windows 3.1, one could simply have several text editor windows running, each on a different file, but that's a bit of a hassle when you can just have KINGSPPOINT do it all for you. There are some people with portable com-

puters and at least a 256-color or grayscale display that live by KINGSPPOINT for all their needs in notes, dice, etc. Of course, they spent a grand or two for the computer, \$49.95 for KINGSPPOINT, and however much to charge the batteries on the computer. I would not recommend that someone spend \$1,000 or \$2,000 to get a PC that can run KINGSPPOINT, but if you already have the computer, and most of us gamers, do, then KINGSPPOINT is a great bargain. You might find a die-roller here, a character generator there among the various BBSs and the Internet, but KINGSPPOINT is all that and so much more, done at far greater quality.

If your computer is an older model, or you don't have a CD-ROM, you can always order the older, disk-based DOS version. The older version just needed a 12Mhz 286, DOS 3.1, EGA, a little bit of hard drive space, and not even a mouse (though it's really good to have). It's not discounted as far as I know, but there are still copies to be ordered from Goldtree, even though it's not advertised. □

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 ekial. Flying Saucers. Adam Weishaupt. Electronic Brainwashing. Hollow Earth. Roswel  
 e. Anti-Gravity Experiments. Black Bag Operations. Atlantis. Disinformationalists. Dre  
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# The Market Platz

## The Market's Open

*The Market Platz* is a meeting place where readers pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players, etc.

Subscribers may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of twenty-five words. Non-subscribers can place ads for 25¢ per word with a limit of twenty-five words.

Convention announcements, group meetings and public service notices can be placed free of charge.

Ads will be placed on a first-come-first-served basis, with subscribers having priority.

## Classifieds

Music Box Dancer,  
You once told me that "good guys always win in the end". I didn't think I really believed that until now. Thanks for reminding me that I march to the beat of a different drummer and travel a road 'less traveled'. Shall we push on to that next hill top?

Tin Soldier

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YOU'RE THE BEST FROG A GUY COULD ASK FOR BUT IF YOU DON'T PAY ME FOR THAT BOTTLE OF JAGGERMIESTER, I'LL FEED YOU TO KERMIT.

Amber,  
Thanks for the words of encouragement and all the knock-knock jokes. Your smile and laughter makes it hard to take life too seriously. Thanks for being you.  
Daddy

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Thanks guy for all the help and especially the 'true' stories. Whats-her-face in the Desert :)

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Anyone interested in contacting our renegade editor, Jolly R. Blackburn, may write to the following address:

**KODT Enterprises**  
8780 19th St. Box 181  
Alta Loma, CA 91701  
or call (909) 484-9284

If you see him, ask him to call home!

NOTE FROM OUR LAWYERS: Please insert a "TM" after every other word. Thank you.

# THE ADVENTURES OF JOE GENERO™ THE AVERAGE MAN



This month's igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic spectacular:  
**JOE THROWS A ROCK!**

HOW FAR CAN JOE THROW A ONE-POUND ROCK?

AD&D (TSR) . . . . .	30 feet*
Shadowrun (FASA) . . . . .	90 feet
GURPS (Steve Jackson Games) . . . . .	105 feet
Traveller (GDW) . . . . .	158 feet
MasterBook (West End) . . . . .	165 feet
Hero System (Hero Games) . . . . .	423 feet
Underground (Mayfair) . . . . .	426 feet



\*The Dungeon Master's Guide defines throwing distance as "30 feet or so" for any object. Does this apply to anything Joe can pick up?

### TECHNOLOGY IS OVERRATED (OR, "BUT THEY'RE SPACE ROCKS")

In *Traveller: the New Era*, thrown rocks are more effective than .38 pistols; they do more than twice as much damage, and have more than twice the effective range.

### WHO IS JOE?

Joe Genero is the "Average Man". His attributes are average. His skills are average. His rolls are average.\*

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What chance does Joe stand against your garden variety cybered technogothic dark horror magic-users? It all depends on the rules you use...

\*Joe's rolls are calculated with either matrices or DeMoivre's Central Limit Theorem for 95% certainty of results. Where possible, discrete values of time and distance have been converted to continuous units (I.E., we got decimals.)

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So, in what game can Joe throw the best fastball? In both *Underground* and *Hero System*, Joe can throw a baseball at speeds in excess of 210 miles per hour.



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In *Shadowrun*, any object thrown by Joe will deviate by at least 10 feet—and usually by thirty feet or more. This inaccuracy is the same regardless of how far Joe wants to throw the object—even if it's only one yard!

Joe is turned on and plugged in.  
jgenero@aol.com

**FINIEOUS  
FINGERS &  
FRIENDS in:  
They're  
Everywhere!**

In the cold night air  
of Saphid, it's just  
business as usual for  
Trevor the Snitch...  
but not for long.



Meanwhile, far away, Filteous Fingers and Jacqueline d'Chien attempt their daring escape from the Space Empire...

AND AS I  
LOOK OUT UPON ALL YOUR  
BLANK, THIRSTING FACES, I  
REALISE THAT THE FUTURE  
BELONGS TO YOU.

SO WITH  
THAT I SALUTE YOU, THE  
GRANDFATHERING CLASS OF  
33,999!

AS YOUR  
FINAL STEP INTO YOUR LIFE  
OF BLIND OBEDIENCE, YOU MUST  
SWEAR THE OATH OF  
SUPREME FIDELITY.

REPENT AFTER ME,  
I SWEAR TO SLAVISHLY OBEY ALL THE  
ORDERS FROM MY SUPERIORS.

I SWEAR TO  
SLAVISHLY OBEY ALL THE ORDERS  
FROM MY SUPERIORS....



HEY!  
WHO THE GRUNNY  
HECK ARE YOU?

SORCEROUS  
SWINE!

OW!  
MY FACET!



SEE, THIS  
ISN'T AT ALL LIKE  
THE RECREATER, SAID  
IT WOULD BE...

OW!  
MY FACET!



PREPARE  
TO BE PULPED,  
CHAOTIC SPAWN!

YOW! THE  
GUARDS ARE THROUGH THE  
DOOR ALREADY!

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU HAVE  
ALL GRADUATED!  
ALL LETS SEE A SHOW  
OF HATRED!



Oh no...

SO  
ANY DEANS ON  
HOW WERE GONNA  
GET OUT OF THIS  
SPACE  
BROTHER?

JUST  
ONE, NON FRER —  
BUT I FEAR IT IS QUITE  
DANGEROUS!

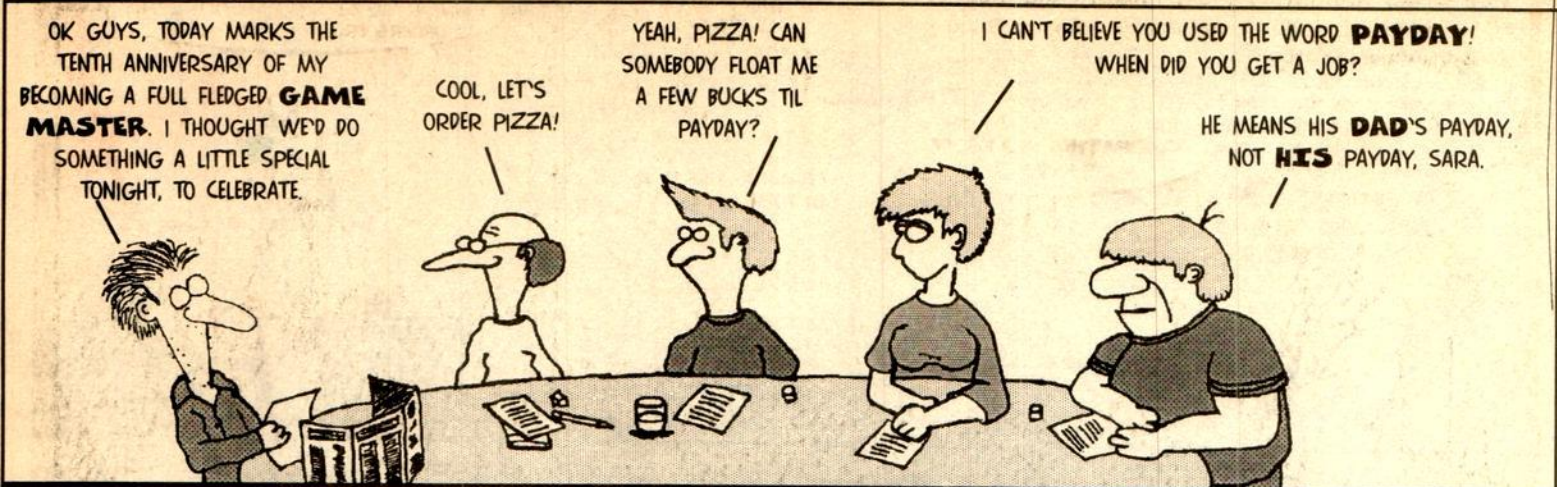
# SPA-FONGCHI!

Next episode:  
THE SPACE EMPEROR



# Knights of the Dinner Table™

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN © 1995



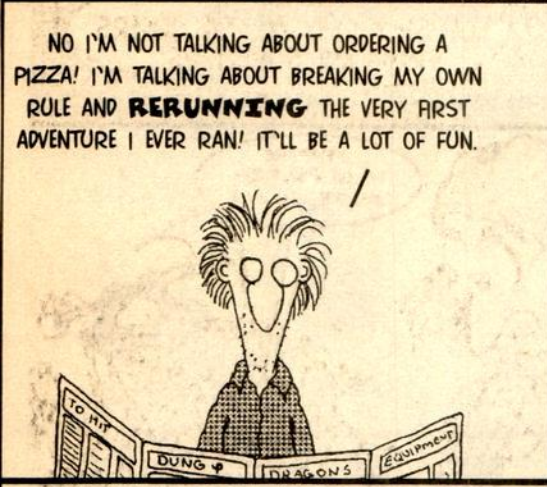
OK GUYS, TODAY MARKS THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF MY BECOMING A FULL FLEDGED **GAME MASTER**. I THOUGHT WE'D DO SOMETHING A LITTLE SPECIAL TONIGHT, TO CELEBRATE.

COOL, LET'S ORDER PIZZA!

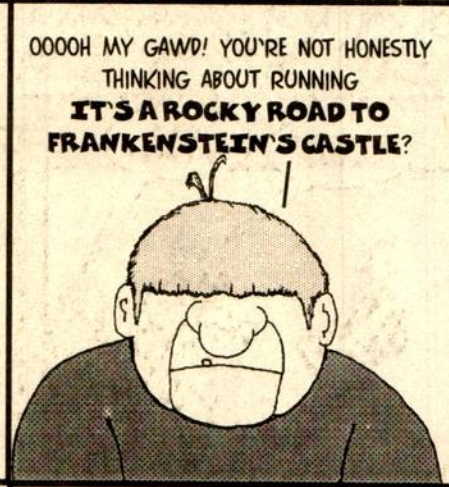
YEAH, PIZZA! CAN SOMEBODY FLOAT ME A FEW BUCKS TIL PAYDAY?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU USED THE WORD **PAYDAY!** WHEN DID YOU GET A JOB?

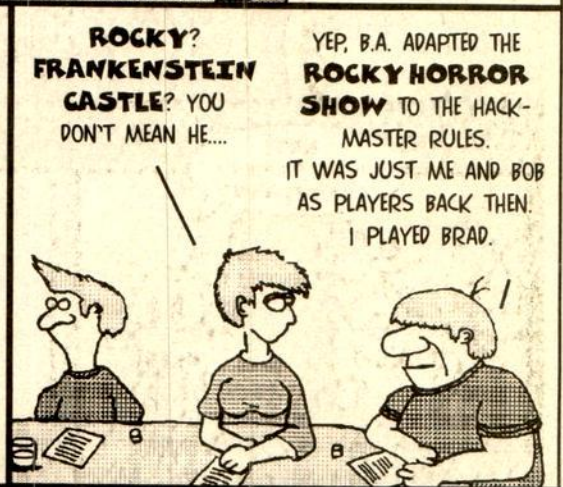
HE MEANS HIS **DAD'S** PAYDAY, NOT **HIS** PAYDAY, SARA.



NO I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT ORDERING A PIZZA! I'M TALKING ABOUT BREAKING MY OWN RULE AND **RERUNNING** THE VERY FIRST ADVENTURE I EVER RAN! IT'LL BE A LOT OF FUN.

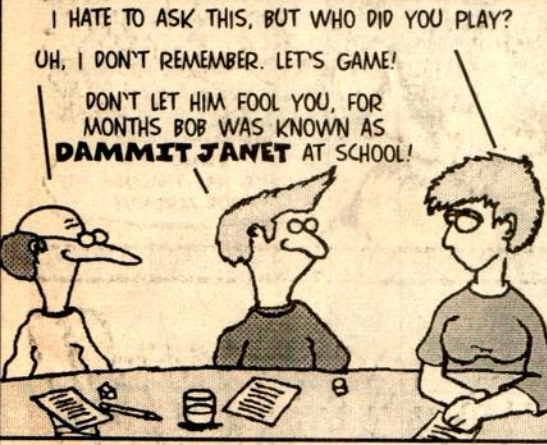


OOOOH MY GAWD! YOU'RE NOT HONESTLY THINKING ABOUT RUNNING **IT'S A ROCKY ROAD TO FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE?**



**ROCKY?** **FRANKENSTEIN CASTLE?** YOU DON'T MEAN HE...

YEP, B.A. ADAPTED THE **ROCKY HORROR SHOW** TO THE HACK-MASTER RULES. IT WAS JUST ME AND BOB AS PLAYERS BACK THEN. I PLAYED BRAD.



I HATE TO ASK THIS, BUT WHO DID YOU PLAY?

UH, I DON'T REMEMBER. LET'S GAME!

DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU, FOR MONTHS BOB WAS KNOWN AS **DAMMIT JANET** AT SCHOOL!



LET'S DROP IT OK? THAT WHOLE MESS ENDED UP WITH MY OL' MAN SENDING ME TO A SHRINK. MAN THOSE WERE DARK TIMES. HE MADE ME BURN ALL MY HACKMASTER BOOKS AND WOULDN'T LET ME WATCH MY SOAPS...ER...TV FOR 3 MONTHS. TO THIS DAY, MY DAD THINKS I'M PLAYING POKER ON THURSDAY NIGHTS.

GUYS, PLEASE, LET ME FINISH WHAT I WAS SAYING!

YEAH BUT YOU MANAGED TO HIDE YOUR DICE BAG IN YOUR SOCK DRAWER. ROLE-PLAYING TAUGHT YOU THOSE SKILLS - WHY CAN'T PARENTS SEE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF GAMING?

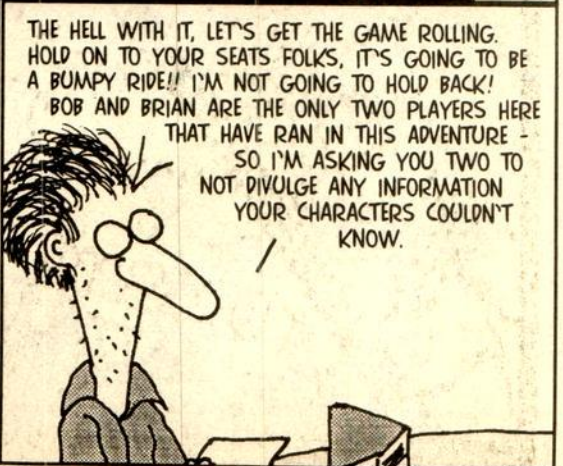
THEY'LL NEVER GET IT! (SIGH)



LET'S DISCUSS THAT LATER, GUYS. BESIDES, THE ROCKY-THING WASN'T MY **FIRST** ADVENTURE. THE FIRST ADVENTURE WAS **THE HORDES OF DARK DEVASTATION!!!**

WOOOOAAHHHH! THAT'S THE ADVENTURE I FOUND MY RING OF MANY DEATHS!

HA HA, OH THE MEMORIES. I WAS SO GREEN BACK THEN. REMEMBER WHEN I ACTUALLY HAD TO **LOOK UP** A RULE CITING?? I PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ANYMORE ABOUT **RPGING** THAN **B.A.!!!** - ER, UH, HEY ARE WE GOING TO ORDER THAT PIZZA?



THE HELL WITH IT, LET'S GET THE GAME ROLLING. HOLD ON TO YOUR SEATS FOLKS, IT'S GOING TO BE A BUMPY RIDE!! I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD BACK! BOB AND BRIAN ARE THE ONLY TWO PLAYERS HERE THAT HAVE RAN IN THIS ADVENTURE - SO I'M ASKING YOU TWO TO NOT DIVULGE ANY INFORMATION YOUR CHARACTERS COULDN'T KNOW.

LATER

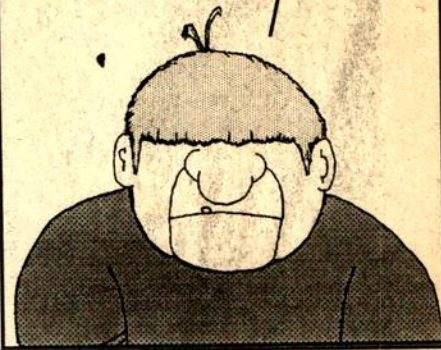
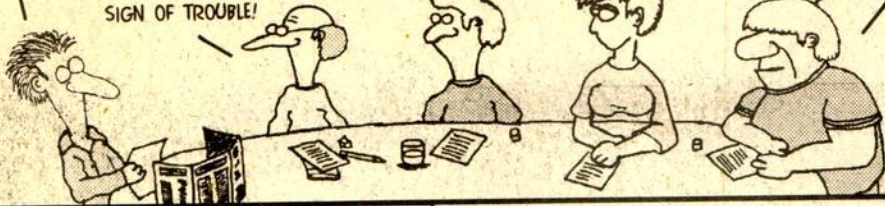
OKAY, YOU OPEN THE DOORS TO THE TEMPLE AND A LONG, DARK HALLWAY STRETCHES OUT BEFORE YOU. LYING ON THE FLOOR JUST ABOUT TEN FEET INSIDE IS A LARGE BULGING BAG. A DOZEN OR SO GOLD COINS HAVE SPILLED FROM A TEAR IN THE BAG'S SIDE. WHAT ARE YOU GUYS GOING TO DO?

I'M GUARDING OUR BACKS AND LOOKING FOR ANY SIGN OF TROUBLE!

GOING FOR THE BAG!!

WHILE THEY ARE FIGHTING OVER THE SACK, I'LL BE MOVING OVER TO THE **HIDDEN VAULT** BEHIND THE TORN TAPESTRY AND REMOVE THE **NECKLACE OF JADED PERIL!!!** BEING VERY CAREFUL TO NOT TRIP THE POISON NEEDLE TRAP.

THAT SHOULD BE WORTH ABOUT 8,000 EXPERIENCE POINTS, GIVE OR TAKE. NOT BAD FOR A MORNING STROLL.



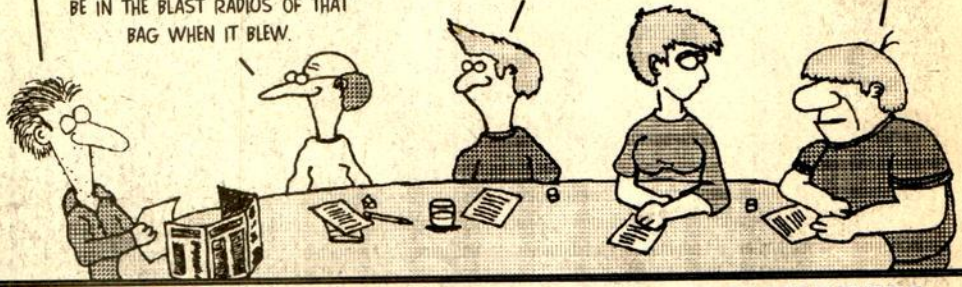
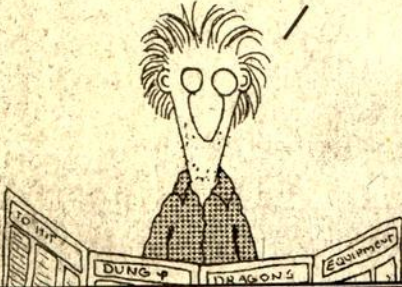
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD GUYS! YOU'RE BOTH ACTING ON KNOWLEDGE YOUR CHARACTERS CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE!! **BOB**, YOU'RE GUARDING THE DOORWAY BECAUSE YOU KNOW THE **GARGOYLE LORD** IS SUMMONED THE MOMENT THE TEMPLE DOORS ARE OPENED.

AND YOU BRIAN.... I'M AT A LOSS FOR WORDS. HOW IN THE HELL DID YOU EXPECT TO GET AWAY WITH SUCH A BLATANT ATTEMPT TO ACT ON KNOWLEDGE YOUR CHARACTER COULDN'T HAVE?

AWWWWWH, BUT YOU ARE WRONG OL' GAMEMASTER AND LET ME TELL YOU WHY!! MY CHARACTER HAS DETAILED INFORMATION ON THIS TEMPLE AND I'M PREPARED TO PROVE IT.

GEE, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT GARGY-LORD. ACTUALLY I DIDN'T WANT TO BE IN THE BLAST RADIUS OF THAT BAG WHEN IT BLEW.

**BLAST RADIUS?** WHY YOU LITTLE CREEP...



AS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT RECALL, THE CHARACTER I RAN IN THAT ADVENTURE TEN YEARS AGO WAS A CERTAIN FLEDGLING MAGE KNOWN AS, **CRIMSON LOTUS**! THE GODS MUST HAVE BEEN WATCHING THAT DAY BECAUSE HE WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE SURVIVED THE EXPERIENCE.

THAT'S GOOD AND FINE BUT IT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY....

WELL, CRIMSON DIED A FEW WEEKS LATER DURING THE **THREE RIVERS ORDEAL!** BUT NOT BEFORE RECORDING IN MINUTE DETAIL, COMPLETE WITH MAPS, THE **TEMPLE OF THE DARK HORDES!!** AS YOU KNOW, I CARRY ALL OF MY CHARACTER SHEETS IN MY BRIEFCASE WHICH LIES AT MY FEET AS WE SPEAK. THOSE SHEETS WILL PROVE WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT THE **JOURNAL OF CRIMSON LOTUS** WAS PASSED DOWN FROM CHARACTER TO CHARACTER AND IS ONE OF MANY ITEMS CAREFULLY ANNOTATED AND INITIALED ON **BLACK LOTUS'** CHARACTER SHEET AS SOMETHING HE CARRIES IN HIS BACKPACK AT **ALL TIMES!!**

LOOK AT BRIAN GO!! GIVE 'EM BOTH GUNS BIG GUY!



AND YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT FOR TEN YEARS EVERY CHARACTER YOU'VE PLAYED HAS BEEN HAULING AROUND THIS STUPID BOOK JUST ON THE OFF-CHANCE THAT SOMEDAY I WOULD RUN THE SAME ADVENTURE AGAIN??

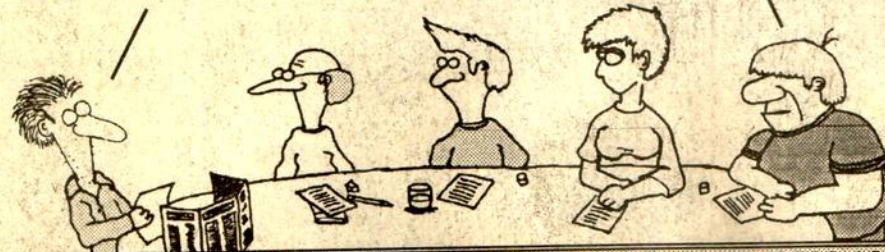
THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT. BUT JUST IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING, I HAVE A LIBRARY OF OVER 352 BOOKS IN MY **BAG OF MANY TOMES**. YOU SET THE CAPACITY FOR THAT MAGIC ITEM YOURSELF, REMEMBER?

WHEN A GM LOSES FACE IN THE EYES OF HIS PLAYERS HE ONLY HAS TWO OPTIONS. 1. ADMIT DEFEAT AND CONGRATULATE THE PLAYER ON HIS CUNNING AND EXCELLENT BATTLE-OF-WITS. OR 2. ROLL MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF DICE FOR NO APPARENT



REASON AND PRETEND TO BE CAREFULLY RECORDING THE RESULTS. AND AS **GARY JACKSON** POINTS OUT IN HIS BOOK, "NO SELF RESPECTING GM WOULD PICK THE FIRST OPTION"

YEP, THAT'S THE FIRST RULE I LEARNED, THERE'S NOTHING A HANDFUL OF TWENTY-SIDERS CAN'T SOLVE.

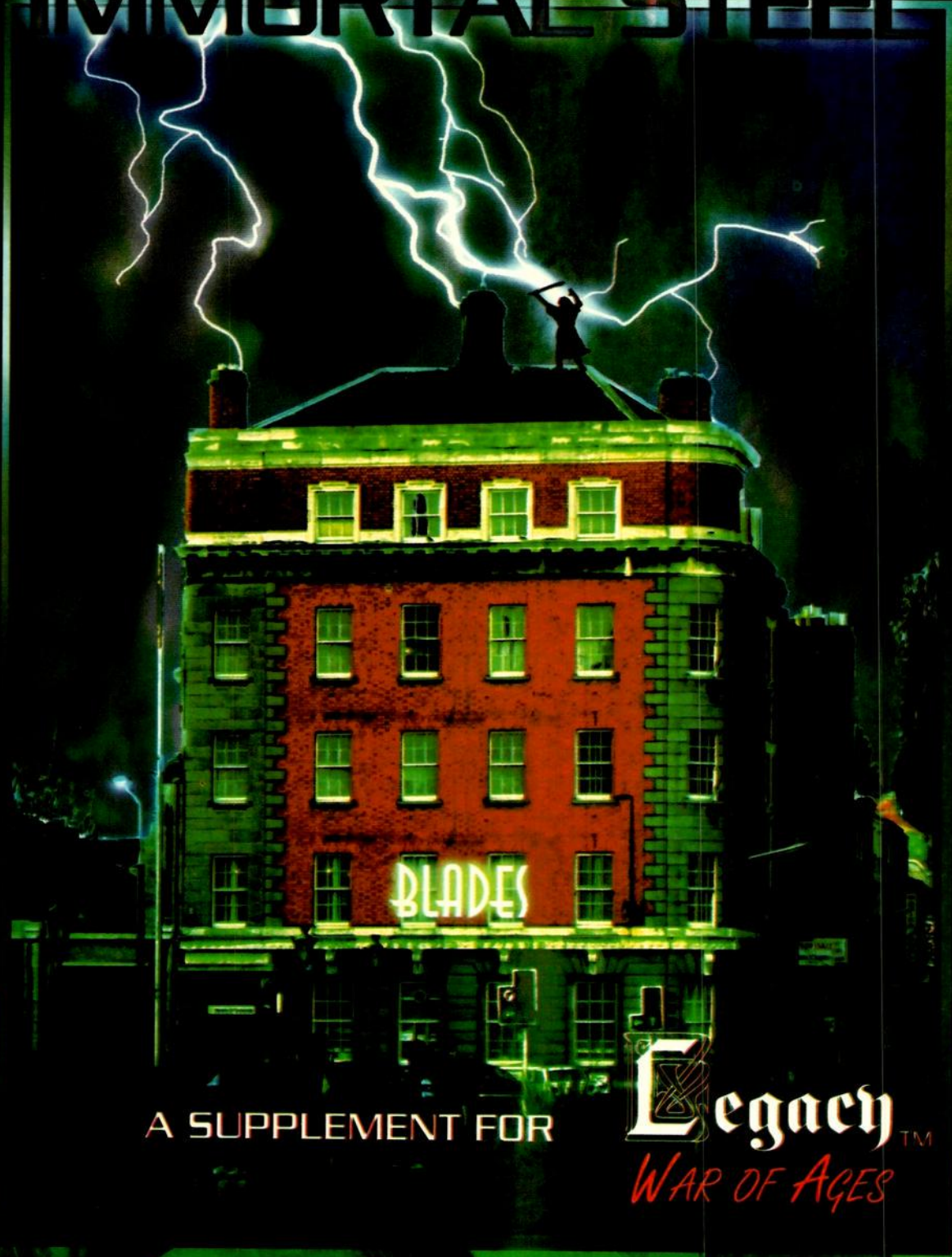


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