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here comes a time when we can no longer do all the things we would like to do. Sadly I have found that over the past few years I have had progressively less time to spare on editing White Dwarf. More and more of the job has fallen on the competent shoulders of Ian Marsh, and I now recognise that the time has come to relinquish the position of Editor to him. Ian has made his distinctive mark on the magazine over the last year, and I think you will agree that the White Dwarf has surpassed even its own high standards.

Don't worry that I am deserting the magazine, however. As Editor-in-Chief, I will be keeping a benevolent eye on the progress of my eight-year-old love-child. It has been a productive eight years, and I pride myself on the fact that White Dwarf has remained true to its origins — providing expert coverage of all that is best in Science Fiction and Fantasy Gaming. A new indecipherable signature on the editorial next issue!

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ISSN 0265-8712.

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SUPERPOWER
A History of the Game of Foreign Policy, by Co-inventor Bruce Hollands

Superpower is a game of international affairs and world politics where each player, as leader of a superpower, must compete in the global power struggle until one emerges with the greatest amount of influence and dominance in the Third World. It is based upon academic and first-hand knowledge of the world, particularly the situation in Central America. The game involves plenty of player interaction, and players win through the skilful application of their foreign policies. Superpower, although complex in its outlook and scope, can be played at basic or highly involved levels.

I admit to being a little puzzled being asked to write about Superpower for White Dwarf, given its bias towards role-playing games. However, I was told that White Dwarf used to feature articles about similar games in earlier issues, so I was more than happy to comply with editorial whim in this case. It all began in August 1983, during the Trivial Pursuit craze, when Daniel McGregor and myself—eighteen and nineteen respectively, at the time—decided to invent an original boardgame entitled Foreign Policy. We had both previously attended one year of university in the Sciences, but had discontinued because the Sciences, however interesting, proved near-technically and superintellectual for our basically artistic, political temperaments. Today we are both pursuing degrees in Political Science at different universities in Ottawa, Canada, where we live. Presently, I've postponed my studies to invent another game while Daniel is continuing with his degree.

Inventing the game involved research, positive thinking and resourcefulness for there was very little money at our disposal. Since we could not work at regular jobs during the inventing period, our parents agreed to support us provided we work diligently. For myself, this also entailed performing the household tasks of cooking and cleaning! Throughout the development period regular playing sessions were held to iron out bugs. All the time we were secretive—lest someone steal our idea—and serious—we were going to ‘make it’, and we were important.

One thing became very evident in this period. People constantly undermine and doubt their abilities; to such an extent that they lose sight of their dreams. Often we were told the odds were weighted too heavily against us and that we would never succeed. Most people somehow believe that those who achieve success are special or great. This is false. They are only people who went beyond convention and after their dreams—creativity is the ability to look beyond convention. Positive thinking and the willingness to take risks, and thus learn, are all that is necessary to succeed. If you choose to live in fear, then you should accept whatever you are given. Life is a series of choices and one must choose to succeed if one wishes to succeed.

Given the fact that we planned to produce Foreign Policy ourselves, many printing and plastics companies were visited in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto for price estimates and information on processes involved. Friends and artists helped to complete the master-board and cards. Everything except the plastic pieces was finished to near professional standards—an edge that helped. In the end, however, we realised that producing Foreign Policy privately was impractical; a games corporation with greater resources was the next logical step.

To help ‘sell’ the game it was decided that a newspaper article would help so that companies could be shown the interest in the game and therefore the market potential of the product. Immediately after the interview, radio stations and other newspaper chains approached us to do stories about Foreign Policy. But as we did not have a finished product, all further
publicity was stopped. Soon it became clear there would be no licensing agreement in Canada because the business establishment is too conservative and avoids doing anything new or taking any sort of risk. Moreover, most of them are foreign-owned branch plants, leaving management with little decision-making power. The companies told us Foreign Policy was too different and that if we had a Trivial Pursuit-type game we would instantly have a contract provided, of course, that the game played well. We retorted, to no avail, that Trivial Pursuit and all its clones were saturating the market and would soon be passe: Foreign Policy represented a new generation of games and the future.

Goliath, where the game was finally licensed and is now being produced, came into the picture because of several propitious factors. Firstly, Daniel's father was in the Canadian Armed Forces, enabling him to get Daniel a flight to London for the next to nothing price of five dollars. Secondly, Daniel had a friend in London with whom he shared lodging and thus cut costs, for money was always short. And lastly, it was reasoned, Britain offered a suitable environment for our product. Here there was a large population and a public generally politically concerned and interested in world affairs.

The biggest question was how to respond to Games Workshop, and the response was very positive: 'We would be very interested in evaluating your game with a view to production...'. This company was going to buy our game and propel us out of the doldrums! How could we be so sure? Well, because the 'problem' was not the subject matter but the game's playability, which everybody said was good. Mechanically the game was sound. Only short-sighted people questioned its viability. With Games Workshop in agreement in the idea behind Foreign Policy it was almost certain we would license the game to the company and leave it to them and within hours was discussing contract terms. Finally, a contract was signed, by correspondence, in December 1984.

Games Workshop commenced with numerous playing sessions, including one with members of gaming fandom, and also made a full examination of Foreign Policy. Suggestions were made to change various aspects of play, but in the end the rules held up and were not changed at all. Two minor changes, nevertheless, did manage to materialise. The first had to do with the fact that some players found the scorecard, which is logically reasoned, will enable the product to reach a larger audience because it is a more familiar name. The second comprises cosmetic improvements the Production Manager, Albie Fiore, has made. We may add that he has done a wonderful job, and that goes for everyone at Games Workshop.

...In the end, however, we realised that producing Foreign Policy privately was impractical; a games corporation with greater resources was the next logical step.'

Enough history, however, and on to the game itself. The board represents, in a reduced form, the geopolitical areas of the Third World – Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. The aim of the players is to acquire influence in the countries of these regions by establishing economic interests, instigating coups d'etat, and carrying out military invasions. The opponent is a coven of military coups or economic invasions. The game is won by the player who is unable to stop the other player from achieving his aims. The player who has the most influence at the end of the game is the winner. The player who has the most influence at the end of the game is the winner.

Superpower is founded upon, and is a function of the partnership of two usually dichotomous lines of vision, to wit, commercialism and intellectualism. Most games in today's market focus only on the commercial aspect and neglect the creative side. Consequently, they tend to be void of knowledge or understanding of the world they are depicting and leave us with no more than a shadow of the real thing. This is why the Superpower cards were created shortly after purchase. The average game company seeks only to 'cash in' on 'bandwagon' concepts, knowing that once the consumer has the product in his home they have their profit. Flashy covers and 'popular' themes entice the consumer into buying, but in reality, the game is empty. The board of Superpower, on the other hand, contains what is called an 'airport'.

Superpower is a conflict of power, based upon military and economic considerations, and somewhere in all the propaganda, an ideological battle, which it is. Not ideology helps to further deepen the rift between both sides and to trick people into believing this is the reason for the undeclared war. There is no real reason but the fact that both sides are very powerful and want to dominate the world themselves – a natural thing for an empire. This is why we shall never see them co-operating – their outlooks are the same and thus conflicting.

The conditions there greatly affected me, causing me to disillusion; clearly the US is not interested in democracy for the Third World, but rather in upholding its empire. The Superpower conflict is fundamentally a power struggle, based upon military and economic considerations, and somewhere in all the propaganda, an ideological battle, which it is not. Not ideology helps to further deepen the rift between both sides and to trick people into believing this is the reason for the undeclared war. There is no real reason but the fact that both sides are very powerful and want to dominate the world themselves – a natural thing for an empire. This is why we shall never see them co-operating – their outlooks are the same and thus conflicting.

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It should also be stated that this does not leave out other culprits, like the French and the British, in the exploitation of the Southern Hemisphere. For the sake of argument it is easier to discuss the prime instigators; those at the top of the pecking order, and furthermore, it does not discount the internal problems existing in the Third World countries. Only, it seems that superpowers are the biggest problem.

Superpower is trying to show people, through being a fun, interesting and topical game, that we must always question and re-evaluate ourselves in order to improve. Placing all evil on the backs of others when we have plenty to place on ourselves serves only to polarise opinions and keep things stagnant.
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OPEN BOX

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Role-Playing Game

Corgi

The casual bookshop browser, glancing at the covers and paperback forms of the Dragon Warriors series could be forgiven for assuming them to be yet more solo adventures in the Fighting Fantasy vein. (He or she) would be entirely mistaken, for Open Box takes the ordinary fantasy role-playing game out of the games department and into the bookshop. Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson (names familiar to all readers of White Dwarf) are breaking new ground, for the three books in the series provide a straightforward, fast-playing and well-though-out multiplayer game system complete with a dåve for players for a mere £2.25. At this price, no serious gamer can afford not to buy Dragon Warriors, even if they are only looking for ideas to adapt.

Many role-playing games can be justly criticised for complicating the rules governing combat to a ridiculous degree, and in Dragon Warriors, a conscious effort has been made to produce a streamlined game that relies on a few basic principles consistently applied. Bookkeeping, to keep track of spell effects, for example, can cause problems and Dragon Warriors uses an alternative which involves one die roll. Similarly, combat tables which compare Attack and Defence factors have been abandoned in favour of a simple subtraction. D20 is rolled to see who wins, and the alternative which involves one die roll. Similarly, combat tables which compare Attack and Defence factors have been abandoned in favour of a simple subtraction. D20 is rolled to see who wins, and the alternative which involves one die roll. Similarly, combat tables which compare Attack and Defence factors have been abandoned in favour of a simple subtraction. D20 is rolled to see who wins, and the alternative which involves one die roll. Similarly, combat tables which compare Attack and Defence factors have been abandoned in favour of a simple subtraction. D20 is rolled to see who wins, and the alternative which involves one die roll.

The result is that the players and game master can concentrate more upon the play and less upon the rules. Having playedtest Dragon Warriors I ought to say that the combat and magic systems are not, for all their simplicity, arbitrary, inconsistent or unfair (as was certainly the case with some early role-playing games). For me, however, a game stands or falls by its setting or background (and here I should perhaps declare an interest, having had a hand in one of the scenarios in book 2). It does not matter how good a combat system is if White Dwarf is associated with it and badly presented or dull. Dave and Oliver have endeavoured (and to my mind succeeded) to reintroduce a sense of mystery and real fear of the unknown into the game, for it is the role of the gamemaster to progress beyond statistics or mechanics.

The three books are well-presented, eye-catching, and should appeal to the uninitiated. The more experienced gamer should appreciate the care that has been taken to provide a fast, unrefined, yet balanced and fair game. You should be hearing a great deal more about Dragon Warriors over the next few months, and with very good reason.

Complexity: 6 Ease of Use: 8
Production: 8 Value: 10
Overall: 9

VIKINGS

RPG Supplement

Avalon Hill £18.95

This is the first of the RO3 Alternate Earth supplements; it draws on the historical and medieval Norse sources to provide a new setting for your roleplaying game. The choice is a good one: the Viking world is a natural setting for adventures, often as preoccupied with loot as any other society. Visions of the future are readily accessible through good modern surveys, translations and novels, of which the Gamemaster Book provides a good shortlist, and I doubt if there is a role-play-er in the Viking world who doesn't know something about the Vikings and Norse mythology.

Though rich, the sources are complex, and it is pleasing to be able to say, as one who knows them well, that Greg Stafford has done an excellent job of developing a coherent picture of a society from the inside, lucidly presented in the Players Book, with apt quotations. The Islandic sagas are in a major source, so this is more a picture of Vikings at home than abroad, but it explains the social background from which characters will come. The Players Book provides all necessary information for creating a character, also offering a list of names (a note on pronunciation: 'j' is better explained as 'y' in yes) and nicknames; a table for determining family, etc., very important in a society where much depends on the family; drinking rules, and a full account of religion, the source of magic. Spirit and divine magic are available, not only through the church and priests but at annual ceremonies or through direct contact with a god, which is risky but can produce lasting benefits. Typical home- stead and ship plans are on the back of a rather sketchy four-one map covering the Viking homeland.

The Gamemaster Book mainly provides details and statistics for the rich variety of supernatural creatures to be found in Norse legend and folklore. It also includes a map of the Vikings' known world and a summary of the Viking history. The map has errors: notably, Dublin and Normandy are misplaced, Galicia, in Spain, and the Unrealm CALIPHRHE, which rules most of Spain as noted in the text, omitted. Although, the book did not receive the Oliver Nipkicker treatment in time, and contains a fair sprinkling of goofs. A separate Viking Digest provides statistics for all levels from Jarl ( Earl) to Poor Warrior (some inconsistencies on helmets here); these are to be drawn on for scenarios. Some of the role development, cutting the space spent on personal details. Some are presented as generally the highest social rank, but in fact kings abounded in early Scandinavia (especially Norway) and in Viking armed bands, and kings differ from kings that their families claim descent from the gods; any member of such a family with a decent following might call himself a king overseas, and, if closely related to the king, try to claim a share of his power at home.

To players used to Glorantha, the scenarios may well seem rather prosaic: a basic monster hunt, activities at the Thing (assembly), especially participation in the notorious court cases, defending the jarl's homestead against raiders, and adventures on Viking and Irish expeditions that could take a few months to last and could be tough enough to be the most exotic, against wicked wind children and magic. But the scenarios are carefully designed to offer many opportunities for the players to develop their characters and to fit the spirit of the period. Those who like a semi-mythical atmosphere will prefer the pre-Viking age of the Volsungs, Beowulf, and others, for which the scenarios are also quite 

NIGHTMARE IN NORWAY

Role-Playing Scenario

Games Workshop £2.95

Hm, I can see a lot of the attraction of this Call of Cthulhu scenario being in the fun you can have doing silly Norwegian accents. Also probably the greatest problem that the players will face in their total inability to communicate with the locals. How many Investigators do you know with a Speak Norwegian skill? You also need to be able to ski, drive a sleigh and so on. Fortunately, details of all of the snow-related skills with default values for novices have been provided. As with all of Workshop's Cthulhu material, these have been approved by Chaosium.
and can be regarded as 'official' rules additions by those of you who find such things important.

But what about the plot? As far as continuing story goes there isn't much. What the author, Marcus Rowland, has done is create a classic detective story setting in which the who that dunnit may be better left undisturbed. Perversion has been left to investigate. Well actually it isn't quite that easy. As far as the Investigators' objectives go, who did the murder is almost a red herring. It is the human crook who has turned it to advantage that you are after. And that isn't the only blind alley you get led up either; the collection of sub-plots involving the various characters is in true Agatha Christie tradition. It's all very devious.

If I have any complaint it is that the scenario is too short. I feel that much more could have been made of the various sub-plots and an enterprise GM could still do so. Marcus, of course, restricted by the size of a Monthly Module but his attention to detail is occasion-ally obsessive and I would have thought that detail is easier for a GM to make up on the spot than plot.

Presentation is as per Trail of the Loathsome Slime but with the advantage of a cover by the very wonderful Lee Gibbons. Overall well worth it if you think your players can handle Norway.

Complexity: 8  Value: 8
Ease of Use: 7  Skill: 8
Production: 7  Overall: 8

Pete Tamlyn

ORIENTAL ADVENTURES
RPG Supplement
TSR £10.95

Sourcebook often implies something too limp to be a set of rules or a proper scenario pack. Whatever TSR of course, restricted by the size of a Monthly Module but his attention to detail is occasion-ally obsessive and I would have thought that detail is easier for a GM to make up on the spot than plot.

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Complexity: 8  Value: 8
Ease of Use: 7  Skill: 8
Production: 7  Overall: 8

Pete Tamlyn

Kara-Tur, the background world included as part of the book. Armour can be bought as pieces, rather than as 'platearm' — and who could resist a set of rules that includes 'The armour does not cover the backside at all...?'

Rules for 10 character classes are provided, along with three non-human races. Some have been seen before: the monk and barbarian, for example, have been altered to fit into an Eastern pattern. The monk is at last in the proper context, and the barbarian is primarily a steppes warrior, or a forest and jungle dweller. The ninja is a class that everybody has had a go at designing. The 'official' version is the most satisfactory yet. It is not a whole character class, but a split class available only with one of the other new classes, and weaker than you might suppose, with fewer hit points, skill restrictions and the possibility that the whole ninja clan might hunt you down if you fail in your appointed mission...

All the character classes have a twist to them which makes them interesting, different and worth having a go at playing. Kensai, for example, seek to perfect their weapons technique to the exclusion of all else. They are deadly in combat, but cannot use magical weaponry because it detracts from the appreciation of their skill! Wu-jen, the magic-users, must obey their personal taboos or lose all spell powers. Shukkenja, the clerics, are penalised if they slay too freely... OA character classes are as restrictive as any others in ADD&D, but the 'feel' is much more acceptable thanks to the Eastern background.

The new character races are a bit different too. Gone are the ranks of multi-classed non-human characters. Non-humans are generally more restricted than non-humans in ADD&D, and about time too. Korobokuru are the OA equivalent of dwarfs, but without the bad-tempered greed. Hengeyokai are shapechangers, intelligent animals who can transform themselves into any folk that are apparently human, but are 'proper' elves in a sense. Their life-force is tied to a particular location, and they die if it is damaged or destroyed.

All in all, ORIENTAL ADVENTURES has been grafted into the rules is a sensible extension of the character rules, and should be extended to cover the whole system, not just this Eastern supplement, as it was intended to bring ADD&D closer to what has become 'state of the art' over the last couple of years. Without changing character classes, the concept of 'proficiency slots' extends the idea of weapon proficiencies into more peaceful arts, and provides a simple, workable skill system. Once a character is proficient in a skill such as Noh Theatre, for example, it can be used automatically in most cases, but a die roll is needed in critical situations.

The Honour system is also a good touch. This will be an awful shock to the chaotic evil player. Fail to behave in a correct fashion, or uphold the family name, and honour points are lost. Eventually the character sheet is simply thrown away — the ADD&D equivalent of seppuku. Personal honour is also reflected in the honour of the family, and characters must bear this in mind.

Karate and other real-world martial arts styles are covered in some detail, but there is the real strength of this new material is that it allows the DM to construct any number of new martial arts styles and techniques. Distinct styles are built up by choosing from a range of menu options, which in turn define the damage done, armour class and special abilities of a particular style.

There are nice touches throughout the rules, from 'kiai' shouts on entering combat, to outstaring the opponent and defeating him without even drawing a weapon. The new hardware — spells, monsters and treasure — is solid and workmanlike. The inclusion of a long background section on the lands of Kara-Tur is simply a bonus, the standard maps of a daimyo's hall, a temple and
houses are particularly welcome. Comparisons with Bushido are inevitable, and Oriental Adventures does not suffer at all as a result. There are similarities, but this is as a result of the situation that both sets of rules are trying to cover. Oriental Adventures is in this probably a better choice as a game system, if only because it does not require an ability to remember Japanese names, and it is likely to receive more support in terms of adventure and background material.

The rules of Oriental Adventures are distinct from the ‘Western’ ones of previous books, but this doesn’t mean that they should be added straight into an existing campaign. The current campaign, and devalue what is presented here. Oriental Adventures deserves to stand alone as a complete subgame of the overall AD&D rules. By remaining compatible with the rest of AD&D, Dave Cook has written an excellent set of rules which should be very popular. Oriental Adventures has even persuaded me to start playing AD&D again.

**Production:** 7 **Usefulness:** 8

**Ease of Use:** 9 **Value:** 7

**Overall:** 9 **Ashley Shepherd**

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**THE PENDRAGON CAMPAIGN**

**RPG Supplement**

**Chaosium**

£10.95

This is the first supplement for the Pendragon game recently issued by Chaosium. Unfortunately, it is not really a supplement but more a straight part of the game, and it is very naughty of Chaosium to issue it separately and still charge so much for each. Many passages from the GM’s book in Pendragon are repeated exactly in TPC and two-thirds of the GM’s book was probably a late idea from some bright spark in the Marketing Department. However, this does not detract from the quality of either the game or the ‘supplement.’

The Pendragon Campaign fulfills its promise of detailing the Arthurian campaign, the legend and the tragedy in all its epic proportions. Here are the characters and the countries detailed by the ancient chroniclers and portrayed on the colourful map that comes with the game. Here also are additional rules and guidelines on how to run not just the campaign but individual sessions, hints that should really have been included in the game.

The supplement is laid out in the same way as the main book; the main text is a column at the side containing glosses, comments on the rules, examples of rules in use, and details of the many Kingdoms of the British Isles and Faerie folk’s time. There are amplifications on the magic ‘system’ (not available to players), new beasts and monsters to fight, travel and random encounters (a slightly poor section), and a wealth of details of the dramatis personae and historical figures, protagonists and antagonists. Details of events that can happen each year are given (battles, kings, plots, kidnappings, quests, adventures), so that each session can have a realistic backdrop for the characters to work with or against as they see fit. This section is most useful for tired or uninspired game masters, naturally. All these facets of the legend are handled with great erudition and occasionally humorous jabs by Greg Stafford, who makes it all come alive: ‘To prove that it is not always shameful to ride in a cart, Sir Lancelot set off for a year of adventures without a horse, only a cart...’ ‘I guess he wouldn’t joust too much, though.’

However, through all this, at no time does the author insist that the storyline as laid down by Malory in the Vulgate is sacrosanct. There are options given for different characters: perhaps Lancelot, Sir Gawain, or Sir Tristram stay chaste and never consummate their plans for leaving Arthur’s court and the Round Tablestrong enough to defeat the treacherous Mordred. Perhaps, perhaps... A thousand things can be altered to suit your own preferred direction to the campaign whilst all the time adhering to the general sweep of the story towards an ultimate tragedy and the twilight of the age of chivalry. But even this can be altered and nothing is certain, so players with only a little knowledge can be as assured as those who have consumed every last volume of the genre.

The campaign booklet also contains some ideas on starting scenarios and details one at length. Although I have not had occasion to use it yet, it seems to hold everything that a good scenario should, and will demonstrate the game very neatly to the players. The TPC on the whole is a very good production, and an essential addition to Pendragon.

**Production:** 10 **Skill:** 7

**Ease of Use:** 9 **Overall:** 9

**Graham Stapleton**

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**THE OUTCASTS**

**TERMINATION 1456**

**RPG Scenarios**

**FASA**

At long last, FASA have released something that lives up to the high standard of the Star Trek main rules. The strength of those rules is that beyond their basic playability, the system has the right basic assumptions to effectively simulate the Star Trek universe, thus helping the GM create the right atmosphere. Likewise, these scenarios evoke the flavour of the same universe, which is no mean feat considering that they are both somewhat non-standard adventures.

Outcasts is basically an espionage mission involving a renegade Romulan. The plot works equally well for Star Fleet officers and civilian adventurers and there are notes in the text covering changes for both situations. As usual the adventure is broken down into a series of scenes (fifteen in all) occurring more or less sequentially as the story unravels (although some scenes simply describe a scene and can be returned to whenever the character wish, others are events which the GM introduces when the time is right). There are three scenes, including the last, which contain combat and these punctuate nicely the shady dealings and detective work that make up the bulk of the playing time. Also included is a very useful section of GM’s notes with hints on play and some ‘Signpost Encouragements’ (This Way To The Plot) some of which are rather heavy-handed unless the GM devises lots of insignificant encounters to intersperse with the plot. If you have got the time to expand the adventure in this way, the Signposts are good little scenes in themselves. Rather than giving players clues on a plate simply because they work for every inch makes for a more satisfying, and longer, game.

**Termination** is an adventure for Klingon characters, set entirely in Klingon ship. This useful section of GM’s notes with hints on play and some ‘Signpost Encouragements’ (This Way To The Plot) some of which are rather heavy-handed unless the GM devises lots of insignificant encounters to intersperse with the plot. If you have got the time to expand the adventure in this way, the Signposts are good little scenes in themselves. Rather than giving players clues on a plate simply because they work for every inch makes for a more satisfying, and longer, game.

**Outcasts**

**Termination**

**Complexity:** 6 9

**Production:** 7 5

**Skill:** 7 9

**Value:** 6 5

**Overall:** 10 10

**John Grandidge**
Critical Mass is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, written by Dave Langford.

Newts That Never Were

Daily your reviewer is forced into contact with frightful manifestations from the bottomless pits of creation; publishers continue their fascination with graduation rituals — in 1984 Sphere were taken over by Penguin, Hutchinson (ie Arrow/Hamlyn) by Century, and Granada by Collins, explaining why Granada books now appear as Grafton books. Same initial, same number of letters; shrugged SF editor Nick Austin. Another strange practice of Granada — dammit, Grafton — is to defy review copies with hugescreers saying a PAPERBACK ORIGINAL.

This is why pictures of their books rarely appear on this page. 

One false PAPERBACK ORIGINAL is just this ‘Pirates of Adventime’ by John Grafton (536pp £3.95), which appeared here in four volumes circa 1975 from Mayflower (Granada again). This is the ‘Tscha’i’ quartet, beloved by British fans for its tittie diet of sacred sex which is the Wank. The narrative is a near-triumph of ironic, exotic style over routinely grotty space- operative plot: Adam Reith, stranded star scout, fights and tricks his way across planet ‘Tscha’i’, populated by numerous enslaved/ adapted human tribes and four species of inimical aliens with racial subdivisions of their own. No hum. The good stuff lies in Tscha’i’s rich scents and colours, and in elaboration of style. No Vance villain would say, ‘I’ll get you for that’, instead: ‘Low-grade assassins will drown you in cattle excrement! Twenty parties will drill your cortex! A cur will drag your head along the street by the tongue!’

Ordinary conversation in Vance-land is similarly ornate: ‘In what way could gipsy starships be distinguished from the estimable Matrons?’ By providing fodder for the Matrons’ newt farms. ‘Actually this isn’t Vance but Michael Shea, who (with permission) does an amazing job of pastiche in *A Quest for Simblis* [Grafton 204pp £1.95]. *The Eyes of the Overworld* now has two immediate sequels, this and Vance’s *Cugel’s Saga*. Vance can be relied on for unvarnished polish, but tends to recycle old plot elements; Shea, though more rough-hewn, adds innovations plus a touch of true, murky hellfire from an imagination fuelled by Hieronymus Bosch. Since Vance was indirectly responsible for the whole *D&D* magic system, players who fail to buy these books will drop to the charisma and street credibility of a newt. It’s the diet of sacred sex which enables the Matrons to achieve the massive solidity essential to their religious progress.

The fun coincidences department gives us: ‘In this way we consumed a Newt we used to call Hans; it was an educated and clever animal with a special talent for scientific work. . . . it could be trusted with the most exacting chemical analyses. We used to have long chats with it in the evenings, amused by its insatiable thirst for knowledge. We were sorry to lose our Hans when it had lost his sight in the course of my trepanation experiments. . . . ‘ Thus Karel Capek’s 1936 War with the Newts, now a welcome reissue (Unicorn 241pp £2.95). Capek’s sophisticated wit converts what could be a plodding satire into something painfully funny. Discovered, given the benefits of Science (as above), bred and exploited, the man-sized Newts absorb the logic of humanity and swiftly control their destinies. ‘Hello, you people! No need for alarm. We have no hostile intentions. . . . We only need more water, more shallows to live in. . . . That’s why we have to dismantle your continents.’

Newts are scarce in the hefty, impressive Encyclopaedia of Things That Never Were by Michael Page and Robert Ingpen [Paper Tiger 240pp £15.95]. Encyclopaedia this is the wrong word: the huge pages offer an idiosyncratic collection of whatever myths and magic Page wanted to write about or Ingpen to paint. The artwork is triffic (I hadn’t realized the goddess Venus looked so much like Princess Diana); the writing is sometimes tiresome in its paraphrase of well-known myths and fictions. Wisely, this book sticks to ‘assumed’ fantasy and images which have long wormed their way into the English culture: Bunyan, Carroll, Coleridge, Melville, Poe, Shelley, Stevenson, etc. Tolkien and his plagiarists are omitted; Kenneth Grahame’s The Wind in the Willows becomes an introduction to the study of contemporary matters, which is wearying since you’re constantly translating back into twentieth-century terms. His heart’s in the right place, but the endnotes — citing Shakespeare — are perhaps being set aside owing to Hubris’ immense popular support. Oh yeah?

*Modern Science Fiction* and the American Literary Community by Frederik Pohl. Harcourt, Brace & World Press dist Bailey Bros & Swinford 325pp £26.00 is one of those extraordinary US academic productions with 169pp of notes, appendices and index: it assembles endless page quotes and paraphrases of what people have said about SF, and reads like newts (I mean notes) for an evaluative study which, unlike this, might reach some actual conclusions. *Methuen* have paused their programme of dreary new Clifton Simak books to reissue two older goodies, works that shaped my own love of SF: *Time and Again* and *All Flesh is Grass* [both Britain 283pp £2.50]. Bob Shaw’s *Fire Pattern* [Grafton 208pp £1.95] tries to combine two taut action-adventures, one about spontaneous human combustion and one about talking alien computers and their alien world: it wasn’t two books. And Thomas F Monteleone’s *Microworlds* [Hamilyn 176pp £2.50], though more adventurous and interesting than Penguim’s rival Carpenter-SF anthology sponsored by a surfeit of Asimov stories, has the disadvantage of not appearing first.

Speaking of newts, I’d better stop before the pubs are still open.

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PSS 452 STONEY STANTON ROAD COVENTRY CV4 5DG
Considerable numbers of letters flooded into the White Dwarf offices this month. Was it a response to the desperate pleas for more letters? Had some great event occurred in the roleplaying world? Perhaps the article had solicited more comment than usual? No, none of these minor things; what had happened was of a far more serious nature...

Andy Davice, Sutton Coldfield: You fiends! What have you done to him?

Hugh Callings, Portsmouth: You gravy-sucking pigs...

Andrew Horne, Wallington: You’ve gone and screwed up again, haven’t you?

Perchance we have done something wrong?

Nigel Espley, Kingswinford: Whoever it was that managed to eliminate Gobbledigook from the pages of WD72 does not deserve to die cleanly; how dare he replace such a fine feature with a mere advert? Is White Dwarf being infiltrated by fiendish saboteurs?

Funny you should mention that...

Graham Stokhuizen, Rugby: I eagerly turned to that page, only to be faced by an advert for... MERP!

Ah yes, the bitter irony of Gook, champion of goblinkind, gourmand and paragon of eloquence being replaced by an advert for a game loaded with cute, cuddly hobbits. The staff were in fits!

But seriously, Gook fans, it won’t happen again... unless the saboteurs get into the building again.

D. Green, Northants: I open the gloriously nostalgic and softly pornographic cover of WD70, and what do I find? Feminism, no less! Alas the day, for Comrade S. A. Carbery (Miss) of Stourbridge has ruthlessly exposed the (heretofore unknown) existence of White Dwarf as a nudi mag for the under 12s. No more will evil, vile sadistic perverts such as Ian Livingstone and his rubber-clad minions be able to exert their vile influence upon unsuspecting innocent little boys.

You cannot be serious, can you?

D. Green: Seriously, though, (Aha! I thought as much) — in relation to sexism in role-playing games, what is Miss Carbery speaking about? With the exception of AD&D, which is after all notorious for its inflexibility, most games nowadays bend over backwards to assist the female player.

Paul Holmes, The Peak, Hong Kong: If you want the authentic medieval atmosphere, you can’t have liberated women rushing around as adventurers. Why not encourage women to play male characters? Isn’t that really rather easy for an intelligent twenty-first century woman than it is for a human to play an elf or a dwarf?

After all, the game world isn’t a world most of us would choose to live in.

Jez Keen, Oxford: The main reason I am writing is to express my disgust at the cover of WD72. The female depicted is (a) fully clothed, (b) holding a weapon (thus implying she actually has a useful role to play in the group), and (c) depicted as protecting the rest of the group. Come on, surely you haven’t come all this way to let standards slip after 72 issues? Just think of the thousands of people in your readership, who, like Dave Dickens, will have rushed up to their bedrooms with their latest WD expecting to feast their eyes on yet another classic image of female subjugation and incitement to rape, only to find that this Lee Gibbons person has chosen to demonstrate artistic ability, not expansion and revelation of various parts of the female form.

Dave Morris, London: I agree that more women should join in the hobby, but the usual problem is that if you’re running a medieval campaign — I mean a supposedly serious one — and you have female warriors in it, then you’re having to make a compromise that damages your game reality. Personally when running games in a medieval setting (such as Dragon Warriors) I try to persuade female players to be sorceresses, mystics or assassins — roles which don’t strain the world’s credibility. The rules allow for lady warriors because such a game would not be complete if it did not allow the choice.

D. Green: White Dwarf is one of the last great bastions of filth and pornography in our society, and as for feminists ‘getting their own back’, they seem to have been doing that quite systematically in this country since 1928, and it is high time the rest of humanity ‘got their own back’ back. Still, we must pity Miss Carbery — she has a difficult job ahead of her. You try getting a bronze brassiere to burn.

Andrew Hill, Farnham: I totally disagree with your thoughts about Imagin’s coverage of the fanzine hobby. Personally I thought their fanzine report was pretty nifty, and your reply to Pete Thompson’s letter sounds more like a cop-out to me than anything else.

Mark Ryan, Milford-on-Sea: I would like to see the return of the zine section you originally tried, or at least some reincarnation of it. I think the gaming public need to know more about zines as they are an excellent part of the hobby.

Steve Gilham, Stevenage: Fanzines are boring, boring, boring. Either they are monster and magic items shopping lists (SEWARS) or mutual ego-fondling between the self-chosen hobby elite (Acolyte, Dragonlords RJP) in which the actual topic of playing role-names appears almost as an afterthought. White Dwarf small ads provide opportunities for the curious to explore them.

Alex Richardson, Baldock: The prozines need the fanzines and vice versa, if only because it gives them something to rant about.

Excuse my mirth.

Alex: In ignoring zines, WD is turning its back on its heritage. Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone both contributed to Albion (Don Turnpope and Iold). Paul Mason edits Imagine, and you lan, most of all, were involved in one of the best fanzines of all time (Simper).

Which therefore allows us to judge the case from two points of view, no? Paul no longer edits Imagine, in fact, due to something called ‘contractual obligations’... .

Tim Ellis, Sutton Coldfield: The amount of coverage given by WD to fanzines in its 72 issues is pitifully small, and to say that WD has nothing to do with the gaming public stretching the meaning of the word to the limits — I would guess that more words have been printed in the personal ads concerning fanzines, than articles appeared. Furthermore, how long has White Dwarf been concerned about concepts like ‘fair treatment to each one’?

There is no need for WD to carry a monthly review of every fanzine published — why not a quarterly column mentioning some of the best and/or most popular? This would elicit cries of ‘unfair’ and ‘elitist’ from all the other editors, but I’m sure this would be nothing new to you.

Mark Rogers, Retford: The new letters page using the ‘Barry Took’ approach gives more brevity of view and is more entertaining than previously, but depth of view might well be suffering. The entertainment should be in the letter itself.

Alex Tingle, Wolverhampton: Generic scenarios? Forget it! Mark Stansfield and Paul Harcourt seem to want you to take a step backwards. There are plenty...
of generic scenarios around: we call them books, films and comics. All of these media offer much more detailed scenarios than a magazine such as *White Dwarf* has space for, and at much less cost.

It takes little imagination to convert a suitable book into a scenario. What it does take is time. It takes less time, of course, to convert a generic scenario, but it is up to us to do the modding. Surely what we pay for when we buy an adventure module, or a copy of *WD*, is the time spent by the author of the scenario working out the details?

**Tim Ellis:** I dislike generic scenarios for the reasons you state — they are often scenarios for one game with the words changed and stats removed. The result is that not only do the ‘minority’ system users have to change things to fit the system, but so does everyone else. One of the prime functions of a scenario is to provide a GM with a fight or dungeon and a scenario. The GM can run it with a minimum amount of work: those who want to use a different system are going to have to work anyway, defining monsters, magic, treasure, etc.

Anyone who just wants a game of ‘whatever’, either because they don’t have the time or experience to evolve campaigns, or because the regular GM can’t run it, should also be catered for. Scenarios should therefore be written in a system, or preferably more than one, so that it will make them easier to convert.

**Andy Swan, Dublin:** Instead of three or four lots of statistics, each relevant to the game, a lot more could be achieved if the scenario information content is increased.

**Mark Rogers:** Obviously the amount of games on the market has increased many times within three years, but to expect to be able to print scenarios for each individual system is pure folly. So can’t we just sit down and agree on what we want to do so that the campaign can be used in many systems, thus saving all the duplication of efforts? Someone else has already written a load of scenarios — let’s see if someone else wants to sell them.

**Tim Ellis:** By the way, I thought the letters page ed was one Ian Marsh, who once said that there was no basic difference between AD&D fantasy and RQ fantasy, and that anyone who disagreed should do something fairly unpleasant to themselves.

The motto here is never write for fanzines — all that ever happens is that your words are thrown back at you many years later. However, I would still maintain that there is little difference between one fantasy system and another in what they set out to achieve: what makes each one unique is its background.

**Runequest** demonstrates this quite nicely, because it was a fantasy package set up which is easily reconstituted using the AD&D rules. And you can quite easily go out killing monsters no matter what system you use. . .

**Matt Lawrence, Minehead:** I find myself needing to ask a question: why has WD thrown itself wholeheartedly into the idea that everyone is bored with hack and slay? I, and the rest of the maniacs that dungeon-bash on Sunday afternoons, revel in it. I must admit though, with AD&D we did get slightly peevved. But then when the smoke cleared, *Middle-earth* appeared. . .

**Marcus Hill, Preston:** I’d like to add my voice to the throng objecting to George Stephens’ letter. I am not a ‘younger player’, but I play many different games. I have designed a campaign world, and have a 23rd level MU and a 33rd level cleric, which should be (I think) considered adequate achievement even by ‘older players’.

I would also like to comment on the ‘high’ level Adventure in *WD73, The Name of Bisinganga*. I consider 7-10 levels as being low rather than middling. I think you should print, at least once a year, a real high-level adventure (levels 15+).

**Carol Lockner, Norwalk, California:** I am very upset and angry at some of the tones your articles and letters take. In *WD71*, Graham Morton dumps the blame on Americans for his beloved *Imagin8* shutting down. As if we voted to shut it down! A true apology please.

Also, Marcus Rowland stereotypes Americans as self-serving creatures in his review of *Twilight 2000*. Quote: ‘This game has been written for and by Americans, with little or no understanding of European attitudes.’ WAKE UP! Why should we (Americans) take the blame for *Twilight 2000*? As far as I know, the majority did not create the game. And it does not express (necessarily) our views. Let’s not bring international bigotry into role-playing games. We have feelings too.

**Richard Hayter, Gosport:** Role-players really must stop this inter-game bickering. We must learn that every game has its drawbacks (and although I am a staunch D&D man, I am not ashamed to admit that it has its problems), but every game also has its merits. I, personally, do not like *Runequest*’s combat system, but many people do. We have all chosen the games we want to play, so let’s get on with it without knocking people who’ve chosen others.

**Richard Edwards, London:** I read with interest Pete Tamlyn’s discourse on the creation of player characters, *Origin of the PCs*. (Horrid pun, by the way, it took a couple of minutes before I thought it was a well-thought-out analysis of what is, after all, the most central part of a role-playing game. I’m from the design school myself, but I agree that there should be a quicker generation system for one-offs and beginners, although my non-player characters usually get by with a name and enough stats to deal with any combat they may get involved in — e.g. that a NPC should do what I want them to do without being constrained by the rules.

**Steve Gilham:** A possible solution to the complexity of a character-design system is to use the games master as a user-interface. The player describes the character they want to the GM, who then does the number-crunching. That way characters can be balanced out as necessary for the campaign — given enough skills, armour, and not too much killing power. This approach has worked well for me when I started playing Champions.

The main drawback to this approach is that the GM does have to have a thorough knowledge of the system, and that there will have to be a pre-play session just to establish the characters.

**Dan ‘ Dare’ Coombs, Pershore:** WOWEE! Ollie Tamlyn hit that nail right on the head with *Origin of the PCs*. What a great article; the sort of interesting read that applies to all games and is damn useful as well.

**Neil Smith, Childer Thornton:** Have you ever played live-action role-playing? If you have, then how is it that you (White Dwarf) refused to support this area of adventuring anyway?

**Alan Johns, Nailsworth:** Someone once said that a grudge held for too long destroys the soul. Well I think White Dwarf and its editorial staff are definitely in need of a cleric. Almost every issue for the past six months, letters and articles have appeared knocking real-time role-playing. I realise that the financial collapse of Treasure Trap was embarrassing to White Dwarf, but what happened at Treasure Trap should not mean all live role-playing should be damned.

Why should WD feel remotely embarrassed about the collapse of Treasure Trap?

**Alan Johns:** *Treasure Trap* as it was is now part of the past, and *White Dwarf* should accept this. A lot of us real-time players are now attempting to start other organisations — organisations with better administration and solid financial backing. Stop putting down real-time role-playing. Instead, do what you’re best at — promoting all forms of role-playing for the enjoyment of people in general.

It wasn’t only TT’s behaviour that has influenced attitudes about live role-playing, incidentally. Public profile is all-important in this hobby. . .

**Saarine, The Unheard Of, Brampton:** On the evening of Tuesday 3rd December, my sister was watching that goblin’s bile *Tucker’s Luck*. I was painting my AD&D dungeon. When I read the part of the script where the goblin said ‘Liz, come quick!’ it’s D&D on the telly! I rushed to investigate and was amazed! D&D was portrayed as snobby, set pattern, and (wait for it) BORING!!!

And there’s me, this poor, homely elf, not a care in the world, and there on TV is a ridicule of role-playing. BBC, how could you?

**The Barry Took of role-playing I may be, but I have no influence at the Bee!** And finally . . .

**Mike Hamann, Cold Spring, Minnesota:** Boy is it cold here.

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Accepting the task, you journey the short distance to Trollmarsh, and cross a wooden bridge to get to the barony. As you leave the bridge, though, there is a crash behind you: looking back, you see the bridge collapse behind you. Sharp-eyed individuals may notice, on the far bank, a peasant hurry-

ing away. Ahead stands the brooding, squat stone form of the manor-house . . .

DM'S BACKGROUND

Almost a hundred years ago the brave paladin Lord Uther Torgrim the First destroyed the evil vampire Gallowfire. Unfortunately Gallowfire's lover, the penanggalan Alicia, survived, and swore vengeance on Uther and his line. Now, her plots are nearing fruition, for her aim is the return of Gallowfire to unlife. She has his dark soul captured within a gem, and now plans to convert Uther's great great grandson into a new vampiric body for Gallowfire to occupy. At the same time, she aims to erase the line of Torgrim from the land.

While the penanggalan plans, though, other matters are afoot at the barony. One cold cavern under the manor is being used by a coven of worshippers of Maloth, the god of Darkness and Evil. Although they have planned many evil acts, they have achieved little until recently.

While exploring the corridors one night, however, the coven lead a dark rite, and a female creature emerges from the depths. Pursued by it, he panicked and caved in the tunnel that led out into the open. Unable to get out, the monster ventured into the tunnels that were still in use, and is now stealing servants for food. The presence of an unknown, powerful monster in the dark tunnels is terrifying the house, but there seem to be none capable of dealing with it. Dogbry, Captain of the Guards, led his troops to search the corridors for the creature, but it slew five men, and drove the others before it. Now the soldiers fear to enter the corridors, and will not venture in again—Dogbry fears a mutiny should they try the journey down again.

The coven, realising that anyone disappearing will be assumed victims of the monster, have taken advantage of this to steal a couple of serving girls, who have since been used as human sacrifices.

Within the house, there are other plans afoot. Dr Halvinstrom, the tutor of the eldest son, Dane, has unconventional political views. He has decided to carry out an experiment to see if they will work, and to this end he has indoctrinated Dane with his ideas. He hopes that when Dane comes to power upon Uther's death he will attempt to try them out. However, now this has become apparent, other members of the family are dubious. Katherine, Dane's sister, feels that if Dane becomes baron he will destroy the barony: she cares about the people, and is trying to arrange that Dane be replaced as baron by his illegitimate younger brother, Thorn. To this end she is proclaiming that Dane, as the future Baron, should deal with the monster. She rightly expects Dane to refuse, and hopes that this 'cowardice' will be sufficient to force him to renounce his claim to be baron in Thorn's favour. Thorn knows nothing of this. In an attempt to ensure this does not happen, Dr Halvinstrom has persuaded Dane to send for a party of professional monster-killers. Hence the party has been summoned by a messenger from the village on behalf of the baron to deal with a monster. When the party arrives, though, no one will admit having sent for them—it will be up to the party to prevent the baron having them either thrown out or arrested for lying. Also, as they arrive Alicia (posing as Helena) will begin her plans to destroy the barony with her first killing. Sincerely, a villager in her pay will destroy the baron's chamber leading across the marshy river to the barony, isolating it. Thus even if the party is thrown out they have no place to go.

THE MANOR-HOUSE

Growing out of the bleak hillside overlooking the village and the marsh (where trolls used to dwell, and where dark, misshapen forms are still seen) stands the dark conglomeration of stones piled on stones that is Torgrim House. Age-old moss clings desperately to its massive walls. The sprawling shape contains three floors, of which the uppermost is now inhabited by the few rats that can survive amongst the dust. The lower floors still retain the threads of their ancient grandeur, but the beautiful stained-glass panels in the chapel are cracked or broken; the library now holds only a fragment of the wisdom it once knew; the paintings are dulled; and the very stones are being ground into powder by their own weight.

On venturing into the entrance hall the party will first see a large, imposing chamber with paintings (including a very impressive one of a paladin) around the stairs, and a large tapestry on the west wall. But on a second glance it will be seen that the paintings are all old and dusty, the tapestry is moth-eaten and a little faded, and the whole chamber has seen better days. This dimmed elegance is repeated throughout the
house: a typical room [the display chamber] contains the treasures of the family: around the walls are the trophies of Uther I, the saladin, the family wedding dress that all brides wear, the holy symbol that is carried by all young men of the house when they go on quest, a couple of poor paintings, some jewellery, and Uther's magic items: +1 Chain Mail, a Ring of Warmth, a Rope of Climbing, and a Wand of Metal Detection. Viessa, the saladin's sword, is also normally kept here because not many people in the baronial line has been able to carry it since Uther I's death (Helena/Alicia, with tongs, has recently stolen it—the loss has not been missed). But all the trophies are tarnished or rotting; the shelves are unsafe; and even the magic is losing its brightness.

**TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

**Day 1.** The party arrives at the barony. Behind them, the bridge collapses. Simultaneously, Stephen is found murdered in his room. Another serving girl disappears, apparently a victim of the monster. In reality, she is a coven victim, and will be sacrificed to Maloth at night in the cellar. The same night, Helena/Alicia bites Uther for the first time (his hit points go from 17 to 13).

**Day 2.** Uther seems weakened and unwell. Cordelia is visited by Bardolph, according to her nurse. In fact this is Helena/Alicia under a phantasmal force—he uses a suggestion on Cordelia that she would like to visit the ice room. Cordelia does, and Helena locks her in there to freeze swiftly to death. Karnad falls on the stairs and breaks a leg. Helena calls a phantasmal force so that the first step appeared six inches in front of its actual position. (Helena felt that Konrad was the only serious threat to her outside the family.)

Later that day, Helena tells Roderick that Cranmer is stealing from their treasures, and tells that Roderick is visiting Uther. There is much tale-telling to Uther, not helping his weakened state. Konrad is fed a tale by Thor and Katherine about how upset Sara is about his injury, and his heart softens towards her. The monster kills another servant; his body is found bound, horribly mutilated and he was strangled outside the wine cellar. That night Helena sends Thor a message to meet her in her room secretly. Thor does, and Helena attempts to seduce him. This is the first part of her plan that goes wrong—Thor refuses to be seduced, and Helena is forced to become a temptress in front of him. He is driven mad. She robs her head and body, and kidnaps Katherine as planned. She dumps Thor in Katherine's bed, and takes Katherine to the old treasure chamber as a prisoner. She does not, as a result of all this, have time to visit Uther as well. Uther loses one hit point.

**Day 3.** Helena slips poison into Elana's food before it is taken up to her room (where Elana always eats): Elana dies. There is now universal worry about Uther, who is obviously unwell. Bardolph is found without a heart. And there are whispers that Uther might die. Helena persuades Bardolph that she and Dante should be married at once, so that the marriage can have Uther's blessing before he dies. Bardolph agrees, and gets from the display chamber the holy symbol of Uther I, the paladin. Helena requires this for the unholy sorceries she needs to return Gallowfire to unlife, and it disappears from her room. Katherine's plot to make Sara and Konrad fall in love reaches fruition, but she is not there to revel in it. That night, a serving-girl disappears, presumably a victim of the monster. In fact, Korrik grabbed her for a third human sacrifice. Helena visits Uther again, and his hit points drop to 9.

**Day 4.** Early the next morning the monster kills a stable boy. The wedding takes place despite the worries and all seems quiet. Bardolph gets an anonymous letter (from Helena) telling him of the coven; she tells him that if he wishes to observe one of their rites he should wear certain robes so that the coven can tell. The coven does not, however, hold this morning's meeting chamber. He is told not to tell anyone, otherwise the coven might hear and not meet. Meanwhile, Thorn and the party will also get notes telling them that they can capture the coven and its leader. That night, the coven will meet. Bardolph will turn up and Korrik (whom Helena has arranged to be the officer of the watch tonight) will be absent. When the party and Thorn arrive it will appear from Bardolph's clothing that he is the coven leader, and the note that Bardolph will talk about will have disappeared, thanks to Helena. The party should be able to rescue the serving girl. Also that night, Helena secretly gives Dane a sleeping draught, slips away and visits Uther again. (Uther's hit points are now 4).

**Day 5.** The next morning the barony will be alive with rumours after Bardolph's unmasking. But late that afternoon Rosalind will disappear, kidnapped by Helena, and Helena will persuade Dane to wander down into the tunnels to look for her. Once in the old treasure chamber, she will use her magic to subdue Dane, and she will drain Rosalind's blood to provide the final ingredient for her sorceries. Dane's soul will be destroyed, and Gallowfire will return. Gallowfire, waking, will partake of his first meal he will drain the blood from Katherine, who has been held prisoner down here for the past three days. Of course, Helena will not be able to visit Uther tonight, so he will only lose one hit.

**Day 6.** The next evening, Dane (now Gallowfire), who has been missing all day, will reappear, claiming to have been lost in the depths, hiding from the monster with Helena. He will visit his sick father, and will complete the destruction of the house by draining the last of Uther's blood.

Obviously, this timeline will be altered as the party's actions take effect: for instance, if the monster is slain, then it will no longer kill servants, and the coven will not be able to use it to cover their kidnappings.

**THE CHARACTERS**

**The Nobles**

**Uther:** AC10; LV3L; HP17; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:13; INT:12; WIS: 14; DEX: 10; CON:11; CHA:16; +2 Longsword

(with the baronial arms carved into the blade). Also the magic items in the new treasure room (See The Manor-House).

Complacent and a little lazy, the 11th Baron of Trolmarsh presides over a declining house that has lost its former greatness and size, thought this doesn't bother him unduly. A little shaken recently by the untimely death of his brother in an accident, but now only worried that Dane may not be a good baron after him. He regrets that of his three children only Dane has failed to meet his expectations.

He can be very talkative to people he likes, especially after a meal and a good wine. He will tell many stories about the barony's history—the exploits of Uther I, the paladin, the ghost of the murderer on the top floor (who doesn't exist), the Troll Wars, the tunnel below that leads to the heart of the marsh (this also doesn't exist), the story of Uther the First's sword Vitalis (which no one has ever seen), and so forth. Later he can be persuaded to talk about current family matters, though.

Age has made Uther's face seem far more handsome than it once was; he is far more imposing in his official regalia than in private life. Originally an energetic man, his muscles are going to flab as he loses his old fitness. Not fat, but not very fit either.

**Elana (Uther's Wife):** AC10; LV0L; HP2; Human (female); LN; STR:9; INT:14; WIS: 14; DEX:9; CON: 8; CHA:13. Unarmed.

Her marriage with Uther was a political one; she is loyal to Uther, but there is no affection. She has suffered continually from ill-health since Katherine's birth and she accepted for a long time that Uther would find female companionship elsewhere. She is somewhat cold in conversation—polite but not forthcoming. Oddly, she is fond of Dr Halvinstrom, and has on a couple of occasions prevented Uther dismissing him.

Never a great beauty, Elana's years of ill-health have robbed her of that looks she had. She is thin and bird-like, with her skin the colour and texture of parchment. She has a constant dry, wracking cough that makes her shake, and her eyes are sunken and dark. Tends not to move around much.

**Dane:** AC7 (5); LV6L; HP22; Thief; Human; NG; STR:12; INT:9; WIS:7; DEX:17; CON:13; CHA:12; +1 Longsword; fake bracers (which he uses to explain why he doesn't wear chainmail); Eleven Boots, Coin of Good Fortune (when tossed, it always lands the way up he wishes it to).

Uther's eldest son and heir, Dane was trained as a thief by Gor. He came back from a trip with his bracers one time, and has never worn metal armour since. Studious, earnest, but not very sharp; a little easily led. Very idealistic, and fired with the ideas that Dr Halvinstrom has been feeding him. A little lawing.
in a sense of humour, and prefers a book to a flagon of wine. Besotted with Helena, with whom he will permit no fault to be found. Dane is always willing to talk, and will discuss at length political problems with the region and the socio-economic effects of the ruling class destroy this, ann. He is happy to talk about his lovely Helena, but what he tends to talk about are her manifold virtues, rather than anything the party might find of interest.

His room is plush and well-appointed: a few books stand on the shelf, with titles such as ‘An End to Poverty’, ‘Freedom and Justice for all!’, ‘The Decline of the Feudal System’; and ‘The Evils of the Class Structure’.

Slender and slightly built, with a shock of fair hair, he has not inherited much of his father’s looks, and takes more after his mother.

**Katherine:** AC6; LV1; HP4; Magic-User; Human (female); CG; STR:14; INT:17; WIS:8; DEX:16; CON:15; CHA:15. Dagger; +2 Ring of Protection.

Spell book: comprehend languages, dancing lights, feather fall, jump, light, mending, spider climb, unseen servant.

Well-meaning but scheming, Uther’s daughter Katherine is bothered about Dane becoming Baron. She is attached to her home, and doesn’t want to see it falling into disrepute under Dane; thus she is attempting to put Thorin forward in his place. But she is fond of her big brother, and doesn’t want to hurt him. She is forever inventing schemes and plots, and is currently attempting to make Sara and Konrad fall in love (with some success): anyone talking to her will be told that each is already in love with the other (she is spreading this rumour to make it come true . . ).

Uther knows little of her nature, and wishes she had been his eldest son. She will willingly chatter to anyone about anything – but she is sharp enough that a questioner will and up as the one questioned. On serious matters she keeps her thoughts to herself and tries to cope with matters personally.

Tall and slim, with dark hair and an attractive face; she has the same cool beauty that the portrait on the main stairs shows Cordelia had when she was young. Always wears simple (but tasteful) elegant clothes.

Her room is well-decorated; her spell-book sits on her desk. In a desk drawer is a letter to Sara from Konrad, professing his love. ‘He was going to destroy this, and would not send it to Sara,’ according to Katherine (who forged it). Also in the drawer is a very complimentary sketch of Konrad, which she stole from Sara.

**Thorn:** AC7; LV1; HP4; HP7; Ranger; Human; LG; INT:14; WIS:14; DEX:12; CON:16; CHA:16. +1 Longbow; longbow; +1 Leather Armour, Amulet of Protection vs Sleep (gives a save vs magic).

Uther’s younger bastard son was brought up under a cloud (because of his illegitimacy) in his mother’s family’s small farm: on his mother’s death Uther acknowledged the young man and brought him to the manor. By then, Thorn was trained in the ways of earth and forest, and for a time resented his new obligations. He is getting used to his position, but finds the family homestead one he peculiarly disappears back to his forest. He has no desire to become the next baron, and tends to fight against any attempt to drag him into baronial politics, which annoy him. He likes Dane, though doesn’t appreciate his political views. Normally open and frank, the atmosphere in the baronial hall is less willing to talk unguardedly. He always bases his actions on what he feels is right, rather than on what he thinks will go down well. Lacks the social graces, sometimes deliberately: will not engage in polite small-talk, but if persuaded to talk by someone he can respect will talk honestly.

His room is simple, containing plants and an owl with a broken wing he is healing.

Dark-haired, fairly handsome with Uther’s looks: rough and unpolished socially. Tends to go around in light leathers, to some people’s disgust. Dislikes wearing elaborate clothes.

**Cordelia:** AC10; LV1; HP1; Human (female); LN; STR:5; INT:10; WIS:14; DEX:4; CON:11; CHA:12. Unarmed. Locket with continual light cast on the gem inside.

Uther’s mother was well-regarded as a beauty when she was young. Now her mind is wandering, and she often thinks she is still young, and expects every man to flatter her. Doodery but good-humoured, she makes the most of what little she can now do, but her rheumatism makes walking difficult. Regarded with tolerant affection by everyone else. She will look down her nose rather at adventurers (somewhat below the salt, you know) but if flattered by a handsome young man can be persuaded to talk at length on any subject under the sun. Of course, the information gained will be of little use,
though Cordelia will tell a questioner that there is unrest currently among the servants (she doesn’t know why — but you know what servants are like). Unfortunately, this information is wrong.

Her average height is lessened by her necessity to hunch over to hold her sticks; her hair is silver but always neatly combed and arranged. She is likewise always well-dressed, though in a slightly outdated style.

**Helena/Alicia:** AC9 (8 when head detached); LV5L (pretends she’s LV2L); HP13 (body), 29 (detached head); Magic-User; Penanggulan (FF)/Vampire (female); NG/LE; STR: 12; INT: 18; WIS: 14; DEX: 15; CON: 14; CHA: 17; +2 Dagger; Never-empty Wineskin; Scroll of trap the soul; Wand of Secret Door/Trap Detector; Brooch of Shielding (15 points left); always worn; gem (contains Gallowfire’s soul, kept in a locket my mother gave me’); Potion of Polymorphing; Potion of Healing (works on vampires not humans); Bag of Holding, 500lb capacity.

**Sir Konrad:** 1st level — burning hands, comprehend languages, dancing lights, detect magic, enlarge, feather fall, hold portal, light, magic missile, shield, sleep, shocking grasp, tenser’s floating disc, unseen servant, ventriloquism.

2nd level — audible glamer, continual light, darkness 15 radius, detect invisibility, tool’s fault, invisibility, knock, levitate, locate object, rope trick, shatter, web.

3rd level — clairaudience, dispel magic, gust of wind, hold person, phantasms force, suggestion.

As Helena, Dana’s fiancée, Alicia is sweet, kind, thoughtful and pleasant, though a little withdrawn and shy. As Alicia, she is callous, cold-blooded, calculating and vengeful; her only pleasures now are the pain of others and the sweetest of revenge, and the delight of Gallowfire’s return. She is an old, wicked, hideous woman completely submerged by her vampire nature. She is extremely sharp-witted and a very good actress; it will take very clever questioning to catch her out, though she will be quite happy to talk to the party, and may even volunteer some information, most of it lies. All she is likely to spot any invisibility by others against her and attempt to nullify them; if she realises that her plots are falling through she will attempt to escape. However, she has spent a long time setting this up and will only abandon it if the situation is hopeless and she is more likely to attempt to maintain the plan by new tricks if anything should go wrong.

Her room contains an ornamental urn filled with vinegar-scented flowers on all available surfaces almost mask the smell.

As Elena, she appears as a tall but very demure girl, with long, dark hair piled up on her head, who prefers wearing long, simple dresses. Very attractive indeed, with soft brown eyes and a snub nose.

**Lady Sara:** AC9; LV0L; HP3; Human (female); CG; STR: 10; INT: 15; WIS: 13; DEX: 15; CON: 12; CHA: 14. Unarmed.

Katherine’s cousin and companion Sara is sharp-tongued and keen-witted, and takes great pleasure from her verbal battles with Konrad; she is more than a match for him. Actually, she’s very fond of Konrad, though she wouldn’t admit it to him. She is also very fond of Katherine, and spends much time with her; she knows that Katherine is currently plotting something that she hasn’t told her about, and this bothers her. She doesn’t like Helena (toothed and cunning), and is worried about Dana. She tends to spar verbally with everyone, but only attacks people she doesn’t like (apart from Konrad), such as Thorn, whom she sees as an opportunist who wants to steal the barony from her husband.

Sara’s room is decorated with a large number of well-executed sketches and caricatures: Konrad is a favourite target. On her desk there will be a wicked caricature of a party member.

Sara is dark-haired, tall, graceful and well-built; striking but not classically beautiful. Tends not to wear typically feminine clothes, preferring something more practical.

**Konrad:** AC4; LV4L; HP38; Fighter; Human; NG; STR: 15; INT: 14; WIS: 14; DEX: 12; CON: 16; CHA: 14; +2 Bastard Sword; +1 Longsword; shortbow; +1 Chainmail; Ring of Water-breathing.

Konrad is a young nobleman ex-adventurer, now part of the barony to provide Dane with a good example of what to be. However, he tends to get on better with Thorn than Dane. He is sharp-witted and tongue-tied, with a penchant for verbal battles with all and sundry; his favourite target is Sara, who delights in fighting back. Actually very fond of Sara, though he wouldn’t admit it even to himself. Currently a confirmed bachelor, he now considers Dane a lost cause, though he is glad Dane seems contented. However, he is bothered about what Katherine is doing, as she seems very unhappy about Dane’s political views. A good warrior; but he prefers to avoid combat except with his tongue.

Konrad’s room suffers from his untidiness: trophies from his adventures (including an orc helmet, a hobgoblin scimitar, a burnt-out loun Stone and a stuffed hedgehog) are scattered all about.

Ruggedly handsome, Konrad sports dark, curly hair and a well-trimmed moustache that always gets rude comments from Sara; well-built and reasonably muscular without being overly so. Tends to wear armour except on formal occasions (another thing that Sara makes fun of).

**Lady Jennifer:** AC10; LV0L; HP2; Human (female); NG; STR: 11; INT: 15; WIS: 5; DEX: 13; CON: 10; CHA: 11. Unarmed.

Elena’s companion, Jennifer has the task of keeping Elena from becoming overly depressed (as she is wont to do). She is not particularly good at this, and has a knack of putting her foot in it, but her pleasant nature tends to make up for this. She and Elena tend to have rows every few hours and make up the next day. Jennifer specialises in vapid conversations and gossiping with anyone stupid enough to listen. Her current subject for gossip is her personal theory that Dr Halvinstrum (whom she dislike’s) has bewitched Dane: she suspects him of being behind all the troubles. She makes much of the fact that Uther would probably have thrown Dr Halvinstrum out if it was not for Elena’s influence.

Unkempt and unattractive, Jennifer has slid into middle-age without worrying about the loss of her youth. Her nature tends to make up for her looks.

**Fisyma:** AC10; LV1L; HP6; Cleric; Human (female); LG; STR: 14; INT: 15; WIS: 15; DEX: 13; CON: 14; CHA: 15. Unarmed.

A young cleric still in training, she has been given the task of looking after Cordelia by her superior as punishment for her ambitious nature. She is genuinely fond of Cordelia, but tends to gripe in private about being stuck here, and is impatient to be away. She tends to be theoretical in her approach here, since she feels herself superior to him intellectually. Not normally talkative, but might be persuaded to talk over a glass of wine.

Fisyma is rather plain and dumpy, but her vivacious nature makes her seem quite attractive.

**Dr Halvinstrum:** AC10; LV0L; HP3; Human; LN; STR: 8; INT: 17; WIS: 9; DEX: 12; CON: 10; CHA: 13. Unarmed.

Obsessed with his political ideas, the doctor sees the barony purely as a place to test his theories. He doesn’t care for the people here at all, and tends to consider any questions dispassionately. He is thus one who observes the human race without really being a part of it... Will try not to get involved in any internal events, and will not give any aid, but if anything happens to upset his scheme, he will attempt to remove the problem. If matters get too hot he will leave, cutting his losses. He will willingly discuss politics with anyone, but is likely to dismiss most questioners swiftly as lacking in any intelligence or knowledge of the subject — his keen tongue will cut most people to ribbons.


Short and plump, with a short goatie beard and a ‘beak’ nose, Halvinstrum tends to wear tatty slippers and a patched robe.
Bardolph: AC10 (4); LVL3; HP1; Cleric; Human; LG; INT:11; WIS:15; DEX:11; CON:12; CHA:14. Mace; Holy Water (six vials), Healing Potion, 3 Scrolls of cure disease.

Dedicated to his job as the barony’s priest, he realises that he is in a backwater within the church, but lacks ambition and does not care to move. Although loyal to the family, he is unhappy about the succession: he feels that Dane is not the best person for the post, but he has not even thought of any other possibility. A little slow, he will talk to anyone, but his conversation revolves around his faith: his theory is that all that is happening is divine retribution for Uther begetting a bastard (he was very shocked when Uther confessed this to him).

His room is simple and bare. Bardolph is very tall and thin, with a long neck, dark hair, and brown eyes. A little short-sighted; he also tends to look down on everyone.

Stephen: AC10; LVL0; HP2; Nuisance; Human; CN; STR:8; INT:13; WIS:6; DEX:14; CON:8; CHA:8. Wooden sword.

Uther’s nephew, Stephen is a typical spoilt brat. His room is especially untidy, and his pet spider glowers at all who enter from its small wire cage.

Lady Rosalind: AC10; LVL0; HP1; Right Cutey-pie; Human (female); CN; STR:5; INT:8; WIS:9; DEX:8; CON:11; CHA:13. Wouldn’t dream of using weapons, though she could scream if she had to.

Rosalind is the typical sweet, sugary little girl. Nice, well-behaved, tidy and sickening. If spoken to, she will reply very politly, but will be too shy actually to say anything of note.

The Servants Cranmar: AC10; LVL2; HP12; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:11; INT:14; WIS:16; DEX:12; CON:14; CHA:14. Dagger; +1 Shortsword – his pride and joy, which he keeps locked up in his room.

Originally Cranmar was an adventurer (which was when he met his wife), but as he grew older he entered the service of Uther, and has now reached the position of first servant. He has a mania for organisation and custom and dislikes any change to the normal routine. Tends to be a little less sardonic, keeping them in their place and at their tasks. Dislikes Roderick intensely: this started as a mild dislike, which over the years has grown in his mind. Roderick returns this in kind. Cranmar is not normally talkative, but will answer questions if ordered to. He has heard a rumour of a coven of Maliothians who have cursed the barony: currently, though, he is more worried about coping with Mrillion, who has reportedly assaulted another servant girl.

Haughty, stern-faced and always scowling, Cranmar carries himself very upright and stiffly. He always wears the correct clothes for his station and the time and place (as he sees it) but tends to blend into the background when he is not asserting himself.

Mrs Cranmar: AC8; LVL2; HP6; Ex-Houri; Human (female); NG; STR:11; INT:15; WIS:14; DEX:16; CON:12; CHA:13. +1 Dagger (hidden, only Cranmar also knows of it and its location), locket with continual light cast inside it. Spell book: ventriqloquism, detect charm, silvertongue, impotence.

Originally a great beauty, Mrs Cranmar has given up her old profession as a houri (BOWD Articles 1): she still retains the presence of her charisma, though her looks are gone. She is a formidable figure amongst the servants, especially in the kitchen (a noisy, smelly, large, smoky chamber filled with bustle and action), which she rules with an iron hand. She wields much power behind the scenes, and dislikes interruptions by anyone. She is unlikely to be swayed by a man’s flattery, though she may choose to be flattered if she is in a good mood. She is very fond of Elana, but dislikes Katherine, who is too scheming (perhaps this dislike is because Katherine is too like her . . . ). Of course, she can no longer use her houri skills (she couldn’t Seduce anyone now, but can still Hide in Shadows), but her spells are still clear in her mind. She finds her new employment has its advantages (she can eat as much as she likes now!).

Roderick: AC9; LVL2; HP7; Ex-Thief; Dwarf; LN; STR:12; INT:13; WIS:8; DEX:15; CON:13; CHA:9. Dagger.
Roderick was a thief, but not a very good one, and when caught by Uther's father, he agreed to become his personal messenger rather than go to jail. He now performs the same role for Uther, and is a loyal follower of the House of Torgrim. However, he has a deep dislike of the 'new' servant Cranmar, which is reciprocated. By nature he is dour, slow-tongued but sly, and has kept his delight in sharp practices. He will not wish to talk to Cranmar if there is work to be done, he will also comment that Dogby is out of his depth in dealing with the monster (somewhat true). He has maintained his skills at thieving.

His room contains little except examples of his hobby: carving stone figures. Roderick has deep-set eyes and a stern expression. His beard is grey but neatly trimmed.

Gor: AC5; LVL6; HP22; Thief; Half-Elf; CN; STR:14; INT:15; WIS:7; DEX:17; CON:10; CHA:12; +2 Longsword (well-hidden); w; +3 Cloak of Elvenkind; +5% Thieves' Tools, Potion of Invisibility.

An ageing thief, Gor 'retired' after getting into trouble with the local underworld. His position as chief grooms here avoids the attentions of an assassin. Although he must stay here, this doesn't bother him unduly – he likes being with horses, and the job is fairly cushy. No one else in the barony knows of his background. He has begun training Dane to be a thief, partly out of boredom, and partly in the hope that Dane could complete the job he began so suddenly. Gor knows the underground tunnel complex better than anyone except Alicia, but has no inclination to do anything with this knowledge. He knows of, and ignores, the coven, but doesn't know of the old treasure chamber. He is aware that the monster exists, but doesn't feel threatened by it. He will be betrayed at any one or all of questions, and will refuse to talk to anyone about anything: if he feels too threatened by the party's investigations, he may go into hiding in the marsh.

Gor is dark and moderately handsome. His face is normally covered by a light stubble. He wears a filthy hat, torn khaki clothes, and always has a whip in his belt.

Holly: AC10; LVL0; HP2; Human (female); CN; STR:13; INT:9; WIS:12; DEX:11; CON:8; CHA:11. Unarmed.

Holly is Katherine's and Sara's maid. She is bubbly, cheerful and plucky, but at heart sensible: whilst very fond of Katherine and her brothers, she dislikes Dr Helvenson and suspects that he is behind all the trouble. She will refuse to talk to her, but will quite happily gossip to another woman. Her current fear is the rumour she's heard that one of the serving girls, supposedly eaten by the monster is hidden away as the soldier's prisoner (this is not quite true: the current guard is one of several girls belonging to the 'eaten' serving girls in a cell in the tunnels near the barracks, where she had been held by Korrik before she was sacrificed). Holly also knows that recently a number of village men have died in odd circumstances. This is a habit of making deep, meaningful philosophical statements that could contain much of value, but are complete rubbish (eg 'The assassin's tongue is forged from eloquence'; 'Call for justice and distort the truth'; 'The mute sings the siren's song'; 'Where are the prophets?') Millirion tends to pop up when least expected. He does actually know some of the secrets, but will not voluntarily reveal his secrets. Normally an indifferent nuisance, though he makes an excellent fool/jester.

Millirion is very tall and heavily built, and surprisingly imposing and charismatic. He wears scruffy, multi-coloured rags and earrings in the shape of fish. Tends to jump around a lot.

Other Servants
There are a large number of servants at the manor (though less than previously), under the supervision of Cranmar. Most are normal humans, but there are a few who are thieves or fighters. They are mostly fairly apathetic, or just plain scared, and will not try to aid the party, though they will not actively hinder them. Most know who the monster is, and may be induced into not talking, though the party may learn from them that Korrik is having an affair with Lady Katherine (this is untrue, and resulted from Korrik being seen sneaking out to a coven meeting), and that one of the servants saw an unholy thing fly out of the manor-house a week ago. (True – the servant saw Alicia going in search of food. He has since convinced himself that he was blind drunk, and will deny everything unless questioned carefully.)

The Soldiers
Dogby: AC5(3); LVL4; HP39; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:17; INT:8; WIS:13; DEX:13; CON:17; CHA:16; +1 Longsword; +1 Battle Axe; +1 Shield; loun Stone, absorbs spells up to 4th level, 8 charges left.

Dogby isn't very smart, but is competent and well-respected. As Captain of the Guard he keeps the barracks (such as it is) in good order, however, he would probably be at a loss in a real emergency. Dogby normally carries a book that appears from the cover to be the Book of Lyrn: in fact, it is 'The Compleat Sergeant'. He is not a go it, and will object to anyone taking up his time or that of his troops.

Heavy-set and solidly built, Dogby has a rusty scar across his temple. He wears a heavily rotted and battered armour, and an odd, horned helmet. Not handsome, but garrulous and striking – he certainly stands out!

Vorg: AC4(4); LVL3; HP20; Fighter; Half-Orc; LN; STR:14; INT:15; WIS:12; DEX:15; CON:13; CHA:11; +1 Bastard Sword; +1 Shield.

Curt and apparently cold, Dogby's lieutenant, Vorg, is inwardly quite easily hurt by insults. To disguise this he acts the part of the brutal sergeant and takes no notice of anything. This is a habit of making deep, meaningful philosophical statements that could contain much of value, but are complete rubbish (eg 'The assassin's tongue is forged from eloquence'; 'Call for justice and distort the truth'; 'The mute sings the siren's song'; 'Where are the prophets?') Millirion tends to pop up when least expected. He does actually know some of the secrets, but will not voluntarily reveal his secrets. Normally an indifferent nuisance, though he makes an excellent fool/jester.

Korrik: AC3(2); LVL5; HP27; Cleric; Human; LE; STR:15; INT:16; WIS:18; DEX:16; CON:10; CHA:16; +2 Longsword (Align:LE); +1 Longbow; garrote; Brooch of Shooting, 19 charges; Coin of Alignment, disguises his alignment as LN; Potion of Flying; Potion of Delusion (he thinks it's a Philthe Persuasiveness).

Korrik uses his position as a lieutenant as a cover for his other activities. Cool and calculating, Korrik is the leader of a coven of Malothians that meet secretly in the depths. He is ambitious and unpleasant, but has enough drive; he plans to set up a true Malothian shrine to attract the attention and favour of his superiors, but his deeds run far behind his dreams. He tends to excessive caution and waits for chance occurrences, rather than making his own luck. He is the only officer who will talk to the party: he will tell them, when he is off-duty, over a pint, that he has heard that Bardolph is a Malothian (Helena started this rumour – Korrik, lacking her subtlety, is passing it on). He will also say that he suspects that Vorg is a werewolf, and this is the monster (this too is Korrik's lack of subtlety betraying him). There is a Book of Maloth hidden in his room, together with an unholy symbol and his two pottons.
TERROR AT TROLLMARSH

DARKLY handsome, with an imposing appearance, Korrik normally appears cheerful except when on duty: when he seems the typical brutal sergeant with a heart of gold (the latter is, of course, faked). Tends to wear armour at all times.

THE TROOPS

The troops are either LV.0 men or fighters of 1st or 2nd level. Few have ideal experience of combat, and their brush with the owlbear has frightened them all badly. Even if the monster is slain, they will still be wary of venturing down. The party can expect little or no aid from them. They will not be allowed by Dogby to talk to the party on duty – off duty, they can tell the party little. The barracks is a rough, grim chamber filled by bunk beds and tables, normally occupied by those of 24 guards that are on duty.

THE COVEN

The coven is made up of thirteen members of the barony. Their leader is Korrik, but the rest are troops and servants. They meet irregularly, whenever Korrik can arrange it, in a rough cavern draped with red and black, with a pentagram carved in the floor. In this cavern is an altar, topped with manacles and newish bloodstains. Obscene carvings and statues line walls of the room. Opening off this room is a chamber containing Korrik’s robes and symbols; a large goat’s-head mask stands in one corner, and there is a pair of shackles and a dozen wooden coffins. In a wall there is one wall, on which he marks his explorations; one room has the words ‘The Monster!’ written over it. Also here in Korrik’s library of books on torture and cruelty, both techniques and case-studies, with them is his own half-written and annotated book on the subject.

Korrik has arranged a system of communication amongst coven members. They are well-organised, and dedicated to their secret worship, but somehow have never actually done anything. The two recent human sacrifices have horrified a number of the members, who had never before experienced anything like it, but the others have been fired with a new enthusiasm. Of the members, apart from Korrik, four are soldiers and the rest servants.

One of the serving girls, who joined the coven because she enjoyed the secrecy and the chance to escape the humdrum of the human sacrifices and wants to get out, but doesn’t know how.

Another serving girl, who is a 4th level thief, found out about the coven and for the last eight months has been running a lucrative business selling the members a lucky charm with magic items. She is carrying a Coin of Alignment Changing that makes her read NE (she is CN). Recent events have unnerved her; she had thought the coven more of a joke than a danger, but now they have sacrificed a couple of girls she is trying to leave, but she can’t think of a safe method.

GALLOWFIRE

‘And at this time the people in the region of Koveroth were much plaque by the actions of the vampire Gallowfire. Lord Uther was distraught, as you can see her, but not to the point of doing battle. He strode fearlessly into the stronghold of the creature, and there, after much battle, did destroy the fell creature. So did Gallowfire die, but as he did he invoked a mighty curse upon Uther’s line, so that it would dwindle and be destroyed. But Uther took heart from Lyrr, and was not struck down by the curse.

‘In the midst of the struggle the creature’s mate, another vampire, the evil Alicia, did flee, and though Uther sought her for many years she was never found. She is believed to have fled beyond the walls of the temple. And there she lived, and her lineage continued, until the time of brother Uther’s pursuit’.

Extract from ‘The Deeds of Light: or a History of the Paladin Uther the First’, in the manor’s library.

Also in the book are details of Uther’s First’s other feats, including the slaying of a green dragon, a group of trolls and the vengeful destruction of the temple. And book deals with undead, where the party might recognise a penagallan – the information is very sketchy, but there is a picture of a penagallan that Thoron, in his insane state, will react to.

If Gallowfire is returned to life, the party may probably already be too late. Their barracks is likely to be able to deal with them. If they should try, though, he is a typical vampire. He will grow in power during the month after his rebirth until he reaches full strength. From then onwards, Gallowfire and Alicia, as they now are, and his wife, will plan to spread their influence until they have encompassed the kingdom, assuming that no one stops them.

THE TUNNELS

Under the manor house run many old passageways and tunnels. Ork baron, centuries ago, objected to servants walking down the main corridors, and so excavated a warren of tunnels under the house so that the servants could use those and not be visible. Below the manor is an ice room (where food is kept frozen), a crypt (where lies the family Torin), a wine cellar amongst other rooms. Over years many of the tunnels have fallen into disuse and are now forgotten. The DM should ‘improvise’ as far as tunnel layout goes – it helps create more atmosphere.

When the party start searching these dark, narrow tunnels, the DM should let them encounter the ‘monster’ fairly easily (it is more likely to find them), but the confined space and visibilility should give it a fighting chance.

Owlbear: AC5; HD5+2; HP38; MV12’; At 1-6/1-6/2-12; hug (2-16) with paw hit of 18+; INT:low; XP529; [MM p77].

Also easily discoverable is its lair, strewn with mangled corpses and bones, and its old route to the surface, blocked by the explosion of a glyph of fire.

More difficult to discover (but by no means impossible) is the coven’s chamber. Its entrance is hidden behind a store of moulderclot.

What the party should have trouble finding is Alicia’s focus of cult猪肉s, the manor-house’s old treasure room, which was lost and forgotten after an old baron died without telling his sons of its existence. Alicia has rediscovered it and turned it into a shrine to evil. It is too far away from the manor to be reached by any detection spells, though magic might locate it if the party looked through the tunnels for a day or so. See Longsword with a female spirit, Yiassa (LG), in the blade who can talk; she gives the blade the powers of detect alignment three times a day, dispel magic at 8th level once per day, and heal 3 hits once per day. Yiassa will inflict 2-24 damage on anyone non-lawful (this damage is cumulative), and will object vocally if carried by a lawful good non-paladin. Yiassa was originally the sword of Uther the First. She is to be destroyed while returning Gallowfire to life. (Uther will unwillingly fight anyone to save his sword, but might give it to a paladin if he saved the barony from Alicia.) Also there are 3000gp worth of treasure (of which a certain amount must be returned to the crypt which Helena stole it from), and some of Helena’s magic items.

DM’S NOTES

This scenario is a murder mystery, with Alicia’s killings as the central plot. However, the party should not begin to suspect ‘Helena’ immediately, and at all times the DM should suggest facts to confirm it.

Helena’s tactics will take into account the fact that the party may have the spells speak with animals and speak with dead, and will ensure that no one, including her victims, can accuse her. For example, she will stab Stephen from behind so he doesn’t see her, because Stephen’s pet spider, the one ‘witless’, can’t tell one human from another, and is not very bright.

Helena will not immediately move to eliminate the party; at first she will keep them around to aid in the ‘unmasking’ of Barhol. If they begin to get too close, though, she will set at them, killing or incapacitating them one by one.

Thorn, when insane, should give the party the first clue that a penagallan is at work, (‘Wheee! Her head came off! It was pretty!’) though his insane ravings will be too confusing to actually be a try. Even ESP will not give clear pictures, though it may help. Note that unkind DMs could suggest through Thorn that someone else is the penagallan. However, if the party knows that a penagallan is at work, and Alicia separates head and body in order to kill them, those seeing against spells will be all right, and those who fail will be feebleminded (It is shock that kills, and if the party are aware, the shock is less deadly.)

Most importantly, though, the atmosphere must be maintained at all times. The killer should be unknown and capable of striking anywhere, at any time, and should appear quite unstoppable. The monster, as described by the few to see it and survive, should be massive, unkillable, and demonic; its roar should be heard echoing eerily down the dark, narrow, winding tunnels. As the run properly, the atmosphere of the scenario should be a cross between Hammer Horror and Agatha Christie! □
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A Company of Wolves

The Lycanthrope Revealed in AD&D, by Pete Blanchard

Lycanthropes in AD&D receive short shrift from the rules, and the resulting creatures hardly do justice to the sort of monster that they should be. In this article I hope to add to the effectiveness of lycanthropes in the game by examining both their folk-lore and modern backgrounds.

In the modern world, lycanthropy exists as a disease, or rather a group of diseases with similar effects. In the majority of cases it is a mental affliction which causes the victim to take on the mind of an animal rather than its physical form. The disease is probably a result of toxins suppressing the action of the human mind, releasing its innate animal characteristics. The victim may well be in control of the disease for much of the time, with the animal side only being in control for short periods. As such, the disease could well be mistaken for possession, or other enchantments which mimic lycanthropy to an extent. Lycanthropes who actually take on animal form, therefore, can be assumed to result from magical 'engineering' of the disease, since no physical disease could account for the biological changes.

Perhaps this form of lycanthropy was also created by some powerful being in order to inflict it upon mankind.

Bitten by the Bug

Fortunately, contracting the disease is rather difficult! Although there is a slight possibility of being infected by coming into contact with a lycanthrope or their personal effects, infection is only really likely if the disease enters the bloodstream either from the blood or saliva of a lycanthrope. This prevents the disease reaching epidemic proportions, although it can become locally widespread. The likelihood of contracting the disease would be dependent on the general health, constitution and disease resistance of the victim. More important, however, would be the victim's psychological state: those who deny their bestial nature would be far more susceptible to the ravages of the disease. Watch out monks, paladins and some clerics! Those more in tune with their animal nature would have a lower chance of contracting the disease, although the larger the normal they infected they would make fairly spectacular lycanthropes!

The effects of lycanthropy may not immediately be apparent. The victim may show symptoms of extreme restlessness and anxiety, followed by incredible strength (especially if the were-form is of a strong creature such as a bear). Strange cravings will also develop, such as for the taste of raw meat, but it is only when the true animal nature manifests itself that the victim will know that he is definitely suffering from lycanthropy.

The effects of the disease vary widely. Sufferers of mental lycanthropy seem to fall into two groups: those who suffer continuously and those who suffer intermittently. In both cases, the victim mimics the behaviour of an animal, walking on all fours, being unable to speak and uttering only animal-like cries. There is only a real danger if the animal form is a carnivorous one and if the bestial nature manifests itself in short bursts, the victim having little time to rid himself of the animal desires that have built up. The urge to kill will then become incredible, and the victim may well be forced to go on a murderous rampage.

With this form of lycanthropy the change-over between human and animal form is very fast, and the victim usually has no conscious recollection of what he did when the bestial side was in control. Fortunately, most sufferers from this form of disease can be cured relatively easily, with normal brain functions returning once the disease is removed. If it has reached too advanced a stage, however, the brain may well have suffered irreversible damage, leaving a feeble-minded individual when the disease is cured.

Shape-changing lycanthropes suffer from an even more virulent form of the disease, with both physical and mental changes occurring. Within this group there are also two sub-groups: one where the two natures are split between the two different forms, and the other where there is total mixing of the two natures. The former are more common, being the epitome of those who've suppressed their animal nature. The latter is typical of those 'in tune' with this nature. Those with suppressed animal feelings will tend to have no conscious memory of their activities in beast form - the only testimony to their activities might be wounds sustained in animal form. However, like some mental lycanthropes the memory may remain within their subconscious, waiting to be revealed through hypnosis or some great trauma - the 'soul destroys'. The other kind of victim will already be aware of their animal activities. These should prove to be no threat, as long as they are not allowed to act on them.

A Relaxing Change

The extent to which a victim of lycanthropy takes on the animal form will vary: a werewolf can appear as anything from a wolf-man to an ordinary wolf. The more human forms may well appeal to evil, perverted people who are more out to horrify and terrify others. Transformation would be a relatively painless affair, except in the case of those who have previously denied their nature. The change may well cause them to black out temporarily, resulting in them merely believing that they are unwell (and suffering from terrible nightmares).

Apart from the differences in the extent to which lycanthropy affects various people, there is a variation in the species that the victim becomes or behaves like. There are two categories: specific lycanthropy, in which the victim is forced to become or behave like a specific animal, and non-specific lycanthropy, in which the person becomes or imitates the animal they are most close to in terms of mentality and physical make up. For instance, people described as 'ratty' might become wererats if affected by non-specific lycanthropy.

In both cases, the animal nature tends to manifest itself at specific times, usually associated with the cycle of the moon. The time and period of the change might possibly fall under the control of the victim, but I imagine that this would only be the case amongst a few of those in touch with their animal nature.

But I'm All Right Nooooo!

Since lycanthropy is a disease, there are cures. Ordinary, non-magical cures could work, typically preparations that affect the mind. These would slow the effects of the toxins on the brain, and
may actually stop them from increasing. Ordinarily though, mental lycanthropy needs to be cured by a skilled herbalist or healer. The type that results in an actual change in form, however, requires strong magics to counter the magical origin of the affliction, and even then a cure is not guaranteed. Holy water should have little effect - the disease and transmutation are not evil, even if the creature they produce commits evil. And, of course, you have to catch the lycanthrope before he can heal it - I can't think of too many that would be willing to co-operate or who would survive long enough!

Lycanthropy, especially the shape-changing form, would be seen as unnatural and sorcerous in the fantasy world. A known lycanthrope would be the scapegoat for a myriad of unexplained crimes it would be unlikely to commit, and some ghastly punishment would then be inflicted to purify the body - being burnt at the stake, mutilation, or resorting to exile or imprisonment. Care can be put to trial their nature must be proven. Many of the 'reputable' means of doing so would be ineffectual, resulting in the death of many innocent people. For instance, a common test might be to sprinkle holy water on the beast form to force it to return to human form. Whilst effective on the odd sorcerous shape-shifter it would be unlikely to affect a lycanthrope, resulting in the needless slaughter of many animals. Injustice of some kind would prove a useful starting point for a scenario. Clues to look out for, however, are traits and features which resemble that of the animal form, although this may be unfair on slightly deformed or overly hairy people.

Once you've found your lycanthrope, there is the problem of how to dispose of it. Mentally afflicted lycanthropes will probably be easy to deal with, and I also think that physical lycanthropes should also be as easy to kill. The idea that magical or silver weapons are required to hit were-creatures (as is the case in the rules) probably stems from a confusion between shape-shifters and lycanthropes - they are not the same thing.

The majority of shape-changing lycanthropes will assume the behavioural patterns of the animal as well as its physical attributes. To my mind they should be much more powerful than their animal counterparts, although instinctive skills might be retained in either form. Only those who are more animalistically inclined in human form will ever reach a powerful status, deriving power from the animal spirits around him. The power will be greatest in those individuals not only aware of their bestial nature, but of their links to nature itself. Whoever created this form of lycanthropy certainly did not foresee its possible power.

BEASTLY BEHAVIOUR

The versions of lycanthropes presented in the AD&D rules per se are either a load of rubbish, badly developed or total fiction - other role-playing games fare little better. More care is needed in their application to make them an interesting, dangerous opponent with reasons behind their actions: the notes presented here should at least provide ideas on using lycanthropes more effectively and integrating them into the game better.

The range of lycanthrope types can be quite extensive, although limited by 'natural selection'. (A mental lycanthrope who thinks he is a bat is quite likely to throw himself off the nearest high building!) Also, although you cannot really say that all werewolves (for example) are evil, you can assign some basic characteristics to each type based on its animal nature. Although it is quite obvious how some lycanthropes will behave, there some others which merit special treatment, some of which I feel should be expanded on.

Werebats are a rather unusual type of lycanthrope - they will tend to be of the large, fruit-eating variety. However, the possibility of carnivorous types, especially were-vampire bats, would provide a tricky problem for adventurers, even if it is a question of finding out which of many diseases they have contracted!

Weredogs, unlike many other lycanthropes, would not shun mankind, even going to the extreme of searching out man's settlements. A typical form would be of a large hunting dog and they may well ingratiate themselves with solitary hunters. There is a more vicious type, however, which takes the form of a large black dog about the size of a calf. Its more usual pursuits would include setting up travellers, possibly by gaining their confidence first.

Domestic animals may not seem to be a particularly exciting form of lycanthrope, but they can be the source of some interesting adventures. There is a fascinating story about a werepig and his brother: the brother would take the 'pig' to market, and at an appropriate moment the werepig would revert to human form and slip away from his new 'owner' and back to his brother. Alas the tricksters were undone when the pig was bought and slaughtered by the new owner for his daughter's wedding feast!

There are other forms of lycanthrope which can be slotted into a game for added intrigue and atmosphere - although the GM should be wary of 'frivolous' creatures. The odd creature that your players will have to puzzle out will make for an interesting play if not overused. Remember that lycanthropes need a special touch to be played well; the victim in human form is often strange and affected.

I try to limit character-lycanthrope conflict and I don't actually relish the idea of a player character becoming a lycanthrope. It is far better for players to think their way through trouble to avoid infection, as it is up to the DM to provide an interesting challenge rather than a hackneyed presentation of an interesting range of creatures. □
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THE POWER OF THE FROG
A Lightly-Hopped Tale, by Dave Langford

"Stamping on frogs," the Rigellian complained, "is not in accordance with protocol."

Sumner took no notice and continued to stamp. His arms waved wildly, and from time to time he gave out an unearthly shriek; the only other sound was the soft repeated squeal of frogs, or froglike things.

"Feigning insanity is not a new trick," mused the Rigellian, whose name was Arik. "I know nothing of your history, but ours is full of tales concerning prisoners attempting to escape in just such a fashion... in violation of our unspoken code."

He paused significantly.

Gibbering horribly, Sumner stamped - squeal! - squeal! - all round the oval cell. He paused for a brief epileptic fit, and then trembled in the beginning spasms of a berserk psychotic episode. More of the froggy things became two-dimensional. Arik, whose face was a solid mask of bone, remained imper turbable (if only because he had to).

"In such a grave case as this, we must assume that the deranged condition is induced by confinement; one obvious solution is to release the sufferer on a temporary basis..." He turned his whole body to stare at Sumner (having no neck that could be twisted round); the by now dripping Sumner gave absolutely no sign of sanity or understanding.

- This being out of the question, nerve-induction therapy is our only hope. The Rigel Bloc is always concerned about the health of prisoners, and the excellent results of NI therapy must surely justify the peculiarly agonizing nature of the actual process...

The squealing stopped, temporarily. "The possibility of a spontaneous recovery should not be discounted," said Sumner in suddenly lucid tones.

Arik left without further comment, pondering on the ways of men. Having nothing better to do, Sumner idly continued to stamp on frogs.

The trap had worked perfectly. Obviously Earth couldn't be content with the wary trickle of information (a mere few thousand pages a day) exchanged through the neutral Contact Zone out in deep space to be one up, they fancied having a Rigellian hostage.

One-man and one-Rigellian messenger ships continually plunged into and erupted from the Contact Zone dock. The Zone was only a number of odd Earthly and Rigellian ships bolted together into an unlovely mess looking like a million tons of derelict scaffolding aflato in space: space sprawled with craft coming and going. Problem: to capture one of Their people without fuss. Answer: cunning Earth technicians built an exact replica of a typical Rigellian one-man ship, and swapped it for one of the genuine ones in what they called the Zone's car park. It wasn't a very good replica when it came to the interior, but by the time the unfortunate Rigellian passenger had taken a good look at the interior the airlock closed and the infallible and unchanged autopilot sent him zooming off to Earth.

The trap had worked perfectly, then. A genuine Rigellian had been captured; now, at last, they could get to work! In depth study to reveal the secret of the strangely human Rigellian mind, the weird and inhuman variety of Rigellian body shapes and the oddly shielded Rigellian mind, on which mindtrackers couldn't lock - no chance without one of following them through the secret paths underneath space to their own system.

Young Ensign John Sumner had run for his messenger ship when he heard the trap had worked: his message read roughly Kill the fatted oonon (a delicacy prized by Rigellians), our guest is coming! Travelling from Zone to Earth by a quicker non-space route than the automatic capture-ship, he could easily get there first... he was so excited that he was into his small craft and halfway to the control cabin before he noticed that something was wrong, that the decor looked peculiar, that the airlock had closed automatically behind him, that the autopilot was boosting the ship clear of the Zone, undoubtedly in the direction of Rigel... The trap had worked perfectly.

Arik felt a little uncomfortable in the presence of an inferior. He can't help his caste, he told himself. In truth, the Manipulator was, as he caste name suggested, mobile to the point of indecency - a bundle of writhing multipurpose limbs. In such company, Arik always found himself exaggerating the proud, stiff movements of his own Overseer's rank. One grasping limb and two for walking: so much more dignified... His thoughts flashed longingly to the Thinkers.

"What do you wish, Overseer?"

With amusement, Arik noticed that the Manipulator was trying to make his own movements less fluid - ideas above his station, eh? "More tads must be supplied; the Terran destroyed many of them. Before you replace them, it is necessary to convince him not to repeat his actions."

"Shall you convince him by superior logic, Overseer?" said the awed Manipulator.

"Hardly."

The other knotted his tentacles in concentration. "Can we not tranquilize the Terran?"

"No. The mildest tranquilizers like cyanide have a bad effect on his metabolism; and he is difficult to resuscitate. It exhausts the Healers."

"Oh, yes," said the Manipulator, stiffening a trifle further at the warming thought of his own inferiors.

"Perhaps something mildly salutary"
might be achieved with the aid of a Sewage Processor." Arik outlined his suggestion. "Remember, this project is most important. An adequate performance could mean extra status for your whole family line." And mine, Arik thought. My offspring could be Thinkers yet.

The Manipulator's control began to slip, his limbs writhing obscenely once more. Arik stepped stiffly back, his rigid features projecting distaste as well as they could.

"Failure, of course, may entail the raising of your young as ... Sewage Processors."

The Manipulator froze in salute and fled.

The frogs were not frogs, of course: they were warm-blooded and fuzzy for a start, though otherwise startlingly frog-like. When he had first been put in the cell with them, Sumner had naturally assumed the place to be the Rigellan equivalent of a snake pit, and had stayed awake for more than forty hours avoiding the aimlessly rambling things - just in case. As sleep crept upon him in various ways, he commended his soul to the care of more gods than he'd known he could remember.

Walking, he found himself in a cluster of seemingly inoffensive frogs. Their company kept him warm - and Theory Number Two was that they were the Rigellan equivalent of bedding.

"Not very clean bedding, either," he muttered, trying to wipe away the results of their tiny digestive systems.

across the floor leaving a trail of shiny cleanliness. Arik called it a Sewage Processor, which seemed fair enough.

So the weeks or possibly months went by. Sumner was questioned, but not with any urgency. Arik seemed to be passing the time, and no more.

But as he washed his clothing one day, cursing the unsuitability of vitaminized mineralized glucose-rich soup for this purpose, he daydreamed of rescue ... Lieutenant Malsenn of the Fleet flagship blasting the wall down and congratulating him on his resistance to fiendish treatment, whipping out the Nova Award medal in all its garishness and pinning it to Sumner's chest. Some hope.

If he was in the zone of the Rigellan Bioc, he would therefore be outside mind-tracker range. Lost, lost, lost. How could he increase his mind-power by a factor of ten or so, to show up on Earth's distant screens - by mental weight-lifting?

Then he noticed something about the frogs. They were bigger, distinctly bigger. They were growing.

"Augh! I see it all!" he shrieked. "The slow torture - huger and huger - forty-odd of them - rushed to death!"

Either that, or they'd turn on him and savagely rend him when once they were grown. Had Arik not seemed to be waiting for something? The cunning, cunning fiends.

It was then that Sumner began stamping on frogs.

Arik led the Manipulator and the Sewage Processor into the cell: they entered in that order, which was as it should be, the fastest-moving and thus lowest-caste creature at the back. The sight within was appalling. Mangled tads - frogs, the Earthman insisted on calling them - were everywhere; Sumner was just hurling the last one speculatively against the wall. It bounced.

"Forty-love," said Sumner to the empty air.

"It is inadvisable to act in this fashion," said Arik; his subordinates, not knowing English, said nothing.

"Go to hell," Sumner remarked.

Arik motioned stiffly. It was beneath his dignity to convey orders to the Processor, but the Manipulator made the appropriate signs: the sewage-lover slid smoothly across the floor absorbing deceased tads, while the Earthmen watched incuriously.

"A lesson," said Arik, motioning again to the Manipulator. The order was passed on and the Sewage Processor put on a sudden turn of speed, flowing towards Sumner, who retreated hastily. Arik watched his movements critically, especially the curious joining: if there were a caste between Overseer and Manipulator, the Earthman would fit in there. At the moment he was pressing himself against the wall as if trying to be completely immobile, and could back away no farther: the Processor reached him and carried out its orders. Sounds almost at the limits of Arik's hearing range came from the Terran's mouth.

"A lesson," said Arik as the Processor retreated jerkily. "You will not molest any further the creatures you call frogs!"

"There aren't any left," said Sumner slowly from floor. To Arik's interested gaze, he appeared to be leaking slightly at the lower extremities. What disgusting habits these Earthfolk had!

"There will be more," said Arik as he turned ponderously to go. The Manipulator followed at a discreet distance, and last of all came the Sewage Processor. It

was not a healthy colour: the tiny ingestion of Terran protein must have disagreed with ... But who could feel sympathy for a mere Sewage Processor?

Sure enough, a new batch of forty-odd frogs, tads, whatever you called them, arrived only one sleep later. Sumner decided that this time he'd be nice to them - considering that the alternative was apparently to have a purple flesh-
THE POWER OF THE FROG

eating amoeba turned loose on him by an octopus with too many arms, while that unspeakable Arik watched impas-
sively. Arik, as usual, was a bit of a clown, stark and insensible. His ankles and feet still hurt, but new
skin seemed to be growing; there wasn't any infection, either through careful disinfection or by sucking local bug-suckers
harlessly — no, design, the bacteria on his own skin or in his own blood could make life nasty for him without foreign aid.

All this confirmed his fear that the frogs were eventually to form some sinister threat to him. He decided, then,
to win them over while they were still small, before they grew. At first he took the negative approach of
pointedly not stamping on them; then he moved on to stroking them and making encouraging noises, or murmuring sweet nothings in the vicinity of where their ears ought to be.

Arik seemed not to object to this.

Again, weeks passed. Again, the frogs grew.

Sumner increased his efforts. He had never seen them as huge — the size of dogs now, and flopping out of shape like overfed basket-hounds.

"Nice doggy, er, nice froggy," he crooned, it was the largest. It didn't look like a frog at all. What the devil did it look like?

"Nice thingy, nice thingy, say hello to Daddy." The huge ex-frog rolled slowly over.

In a high voice it said "Dardeeex . . . ."

Arik stood carefully still before the Thinker. This Thinker was his personal master, and was even more neurotic than most Thinkers when it came to the delicate matter of mobility — this nauseated and disgusted him, which was why no Ligellan below the rank of Overseer was permitted in this chamber at all.

Even Overseers had to wait outside the door long enough to give the Thinker time to flush off the "awful sight of primitive Mobility as the visitor entered the room and made ready for a long session of perfect, pain-
ful stillness."

"Daddeeex," conveyed the huge cone which was the Thinker, motionless in his floor-pond.

"Yes," said Arik. "As yet, the tads are still feeding themselves up to the required mass . . . in due course there will be plenty for all purposes. Dissec-
tion, psych tests, weapons trials, and so on. Things proceed smoothly."

"Excellent. If this continues, your tad will be raised in this room. I have spoken."

"The honour is great." Arik exulted: it could hardly be greater. "But more Terrans will be needed, especially if the intuition of the programmers is to continue."

"Impossible."

"Why is this?"

"Precautions have been taken to ensure that the Terrans do not acquire a second hostage. Identical precautions have been taken by Earth, against our

glorious Bloc. Sumner is all you have."

Arik almost twitched with impatience, but restrained himself not here! "Are there other instructions?"

"No. You may go now." Painfully, shamefully, the eye closed — the only motion which even the Thinker must acknowledge. Under continuous, the only motion: Thinkers absorbed nutrient from the pools in which they stood.

When the eye was quite shut, Arik turned and silently left.

Frog-babies — like the pig-baby in Alice? Strange that he hadn't noticed before how people-shaped most of them were now. They had continuously, growing at an amazing rate; now, swollen and inert, they lay there pulsing, rippl-
ing, gradually changing.

Into men.

Sumner thought hard, dragging himself from the daydream of Lieutenant Malsenn of the flagship (who every night or so blasted down the walls and rescued him. Sometimes Sumner got all the frog-written feedly from the as to side, seven medals before he woke up). This is some trick, courtesy of the Rigel Bloc, he thought: a sort of chameleon that turns into what it's exposed to. What's the advantage? Well, if they have a rough copy of me they'll have someone to take apart . . .

In fact, they'll very likely use these pseudo-Earthmen for all sorts of nasty things like weapons trials . . .

But whatever happens, they, the copies, will get out of this cell, now won't they?

"Look at Sumner looked for one which resembled him enough for what he had in mind.

Chameleon, he thought again. Now that he looked at the faces carefully . . .

All of them looked like him.

He dressed one luxuriously in his soup-stained clothes and stood back, shivering slightly, to examine the effect. The other things which were no longer frogs wrote freely from this as to side, but didn't seem quite conscious. The clothed one smiled. He looked clever enough to talk.

Amazing, thought Arik. The trance of the final forming has been reached amaz-

ingly quickly; but we knew that tads forming themselves on an Earth-man would not behave predictably.

He thought of his own tad-to-be: oh joy, that it should be chosen to form itself on a Thinker!

The Terran did not speak. Neither, naturally, did any of the tads: they had had their bodily forming, which was Terr-

an, but their minds should as yet be blank.

The Manipulator prodded the clothed Terran, who rolled to one side and said "Damn you!"

"We have finished with you," said Arik. "PsychoeXamination — perhaps with NI therapy, no? — and then the Pro-
cessors can have you.

The Terran screamed. Arik, not wishing to have him go unknowingly into the final immobility, explained the way of Rigel: how the tads were raised with one of their chosen caste, growing into the shape of that caste before the mind developed.

"You lack imagination, do you not?" said Arik mildly. "Rigelian spies in your shape will now penetrate Earth and all its subject worlds — and you have formed them without knowing it."

"I know now," muttered the Earthman, and leapt forward, only to be neatly restrained by the Manipulator's ten-
tacles.

But simultaneously: "I know now," said a dozen at least of the supine tad/ Terrans, and struck upright.

"What?" Had Arik's jaw been mobile, it would have dropped.

Sumner stayed quiet. He saw it all — the tads, the Rigelian young, had dupli-
cated his mind as well as his body. An intuitive flash: mindtrackers didn't work on Rigelians because their minds were

naturally shielded. But Sumner's wasn't. He listened as this was explained in low whispers by several of the other

Sumners.

Mindtracker — a thought that led to another thought.

Arik and the Manipulator, the odd octyl they pull out of each other, spoke in the low whistles of high Rigelian, and left:

"We'll be all right," said Sumner confidently, laying hands at last on that elu-
sive thought."

"That's too obvious for words —" said a second Sumner.

Unless they slaughtered us now —" put in a third.

"Thirty-odd of us with the same mind —" (a fourth).

"We'll be like a beacon in the mind-

tracker screen —" (a fifth).

"Even at this range. The rescue squad could be on its way already," said

Sumner sulkily. He hated sharing credit for brilliant insights. Even with himself.

"There was a tremendous explosion."

"The walls tremble."

"Sooner than you thought," said a clique of twenty Sumners, with slight variations in phrasing."

"Look here," said Sumner, "when they pull out of us here we must have a

spokesman. Now I'm the original, and I can prove by it these scars where that

jellyfish thing driibbled on me —"

"I'm the real one," they all screamed.

"Shots sounded outside."

"Remember Earth," said Sumner, as a fist struck his jaw.

"I have this other scar —" said Sumner

viciously.

"I — you rotten swine!" said Sumner, going down before a kick forbidden by the Queensberry rules.

Sumner lay there groaning while

Sumner slugged Sumner in the belly and Sumner jumped up and down on a recumbent, almost unconscious

Sumner whose teeth were fixed in the ankle of (who else?) Sumner . . .

More explosions; more shots; several metres of wall grinned red and melted. Lieutenant Malsenn of the Fleet flagship stood triumphantly there, the blaster in his hand still glowing dully at its dis-
charge cone.

"Ensign Sumner, I presume —" It was obviously a prepared line. But then he

looked at the struggle, and gaped. His voice weakened.

"Stamping on Sumners," the Lieu-

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A Scenario for RuneQuest, by Chris Watson

This scenario has been written specifically for 2nd edition RuneQuest – referees of the 3rd edition will need to modify it accordingly. Party strength should be limited to characters with weapon skills in the range 55-75%, with no Rune Magic and little or no stored POW.

REFEREE’S BACKGROUND
It is little known but true that there are a total of twenty six tribes of Ithillian-Fane, of both plains and mountain variety, some of which have been scattered by the winds of history. Balazar, the Elder Wilds, Dorastor, and Talastar. For details on the Ithillian-Fane see the section at the end of this scenario.

The Hide of the Ancestor is a holy relic of the Ithillian-Fane made by the Ancestor, the first Ithillian-Fane, from the hide of a bison; it is the first shelter (a leaning wall partially supported by a light wooden frame). For details of the Hide see the section at the end of this scenario.

The Hide is, traditionally, the heritage of all Ithillian-Fane and is retained by each successive year, until the Fated Warriors of the next year’s custodians take the responsibility for the safety of the Hide on themselves and their own.

The Fated Warriors of the Spirit Scar tribe (which resides in the central part of the hills on the eastern border of Beast Valley) are now carrying the Hide home from the Great Claw (dragon) resides in the forested hills which nestle against the Skyreach mountains just west of the Grazelands.

While every day at noon, the Shaman–Priest of the Ithillian-Fane performs a division to monitor their progress. But today he has found the Fated have made less than half the progress expected. A second division reveals the reason. They are all lost.

At once Shawanii gathers the warriors of the tribe and leads them north.

PLAYERS’ BACKGROUND
This scenario is in the nature of an extended encounter and the reasons for the players being in the right place at the right time is up to the referee.

Getting Involved
At some time after noon the party strike a shallow valley bottom where three bodies lie in disarray (give the players a description of the Ithillian-Fane, not the name). As the players examine the area things should become apparent:

1. A large tribal has taken place here.
2. There is a great deal more blood than three bodies could account for.
3. Each body has a short spear, medium shield, leather hauber and vambraces.
4. The tracks of the dead come into the valley from the west and are intercepted by humanoid tracks (possibly recognisable as trolls) from the north and heading southeast after the encounter. (Tracking roll required.)

The Ithillian-Fane Arrive
Shawanii will have a number of warriors with him equal to four times the number of the party. On arrival they will spread out into a crescent and stop, spears and shields ready. Shawanii, alone, will come forward to speak to the party (Shawanii will almost instantly be aware that the party were bachelors and not responsible for the carnage, but it is not necessary for the party to know that). He will begin to speak in Beast speech but, if necessary, will resort to Tradetalk to communicate his will to the party.

He will express his opinion that the presence of the party here and is now an expression of fate and that the party is, by their very presence involved in what has happened. He will repeat that the time to act has come. He will express his wish that the party return with him to the camp of the tribe. He will then walk away, assuming that the party will follow; the rest of the Ithillian-Fane will wait until they do.

Five Ithillian-Fane will remain as the party are escorted away; three to carry the bodies and two to read the tracks and scout the area.

THE CAMP
The camp consists of fifty or more shelters (leaning wind-breaks made of hide and supported by live dragon frames) around a large clear area. On a nearby hill stands the remains of a small stone castle; the walls are a metre high and overgrown, and only a single storey of the keep is visible.

Shawanii will lead the party through the crowded camp to his own shelter (which is quite large), and the warriors who were with him will disperse.

Shawanii will be at the shelter with his raw meat and water and will leave them to their own devices until nightfall; warning them only that they should not attempt to leave the camp.

THE BURIAL
Shawanii will return near nightfall and invite the party to attend the burials of the three Ithillian-Fane they found dead. To those who wish to attend he will explain the Daka Fal funeral rites and instruct them in what they must and must not do (Cults of Prax, p14).

The body is carried to the fire and is thus carried on the hides of their shelters. The torch-lit procession will weave its way through the night for a little over an hour to a large, bare stone gulley where many wooden platforms, built during the day, stand near the eastern end of the gulley. Each body is placed on its own platform, open to the elements; anyone who wishes to then places a gift on one or more of the platforms. These gifts include a warrior’s weapons and shield, the hide of his shelter (on which he lies), and anything which meant something to both the dead and the living. The rite will then take place; lead by Shawanii.

SHAWANII
The party extend the rest of the night in Shawanii’s shelter.

After breaking his fast (fresh raw meat given to him by the hunters of the tribe) Shawanii will explain the situation to the party.

‘We,’ he will begin, ‘are the custodians of the Hide of the Ancestor, which is a holy relic of great magical power. Our Fated Warriors were returning this afternoon to the tribe. Now they are dead and the Hide is lost to us all. Great is the honour debt of the tribe; and as it was you who found first the death place of our Fated, this burden is also yours. But fate has thrust a large fire bearing that one or the other cannot continue.

If the party state that they do not wish to fight, then he will tell the party: ‘You do not understand. You are involved; either you attempt to prove yourself worthy to be tested or the tribe will fall upon you and slay you all. This is our way. Either you go forward or you die.’

COMBAT
All the tribe will watch the combat. Their champion is Kymry, a Daka Fal Rune Lord.

If the combat is won, or even nobly fought, the party will be found acceptable to be tested. The combatants may wear only leather armour but may use the melee weapons of their choice. No spiritual or magical intervention is permitted.

Shawanii will call resurrection on a dead party member if asked, and will charge only a year’s service if the recipient is found unacceptable at the testing. Any severed limbs will be healed for no charge.

THE TESTING
At dawn Shawanii will lead the adult members of the tribe and the party to the nearby ruined castle. The outside walls of the ground floor of the keep still stand to a height of two metres and have been roofed over by many hides sewn together, making a large, low-ceilinged room. There is a hole below the smoke hole in the centre of the room. All the members of the tribe present, save only Shawanii, form a great circle around the fire and lie down facing the fire. When a CON×5 roll fails each Shawanii will indicate that they should join the circle. Shawanii will then circle around the outside and, from a leather sack slung at his waist, hand everyone present a small, knobby root. He will indicate to the party that they should eat it. He will wait until they have done so before leaving the room.

If the party have eaten the tough, fibrous root they will come to feel more and more relaxed. They will not realise that they cannot move until they try to do so.

Each player must make a CON×5 roll each hour for eight hours. If the roll is successful then nothing will occur that hour: the character stares at the fire, smells smoke, hears wood burning; occasionally someone will get up and leave, he will hear people cry out in tongues known and unknown; the fire may shape itself into images of the past. If the CON×5 roll fails that character will have a dream if he then succeeds in
making a POW x 5 roll. (The referee may wish a character to have an encounter with a dead friend, hero or god. The ‘soul root’ he has eaten makes these things possible.) Unless a player has a ‘god dream’ select one from those provided.

As soon as the dream has occurred that person is free to move. He will be met as he leaves by Shawanii who will ask to hear his dream and will interpret it. A number of Ithillian-Fane equal to that of the party plus Kymry the Rune Lord will have had favourable dreams. Each player will run an Ithillian-Fane in addition to their own character the referee will run Kymry.

Dreams
1. You stand in a dark forest. You can see by an eerie half-light. There is no sound. The trees are black and seem malevolent. You become aware that you are on a path, walking. Intermittently you hear noises: your breath and footsteps, howling, the clatter of weapons on shields, the screams of maimed men and women, the roar of a battle. You can see many footprints upon the path, ranging in size from very large to very small. An ugly, corrupt human form confronts you upon the path and you slay it after a long, hard fight. The forest becomes a little brighter and you feel both sad and proud.

2. Yelm is very hot; he sucks the moisture and strength from you as you walk on an endless plain of scorched grass. Thirst is a fire raging through your body; this is the way it has always been, will always be, you know only this. Far away there is a small blob of darkness. You begin to run, this is new. As you come closer you see it is a black-clad man sitting at a small camp fire, staring into the flames. You call out to him but he does not respond. You see he has a water-skin and you reach down and pick it up, seeking to quench the awful thirst but the water-skin is empty. You drop it and begin to laugh and cry at the same time. Distantly you see the old man reach with both hands into the fire. He scoops up a double handful of flames, they form a pool in his hands like liquid. He offers the fire to you. At once you kneel before him and drink. Your thirst is eased and vitality pours through you. You look into the old man’s eyes for a moment and he smiles. As you walk away the thought comes to you that you know who the old man is.

3. It is dark and silent. Every inch of your body is pressed against firm, moist earth. With growing horror you realise you have been buried alive. You begin to writhe, to claw and scrape at the earth, searching for a way out. You slowly, painfully crawl upward through the earth. Eventually you reach the surface. It is night and the red moon burns full above you. Nearby there is a ruined keep and you begin to walk towards it. Your unnaturally heightened sense of smell brings you the scent of death and decay which you recognise as being other ghouls. You throw back your head and howl in despair. Other howls answer you from nearby as your new kin rush to greet you. You turn and flee from them, overcome by fear and horror. You run through a graveled course and until you come to a low, truncated hill with a great, dark monolith at its summit. Pursued, you climb the hill. You feel the monolith’s ancient power and are afraid. You come near to it, knowing that if you touch it it will destroy you. The other ghouls call you to come away, to join them. The choice is clear. You reach out to the monolith and touch . . .

4. You walk in the dark on a paved road. To your right hangs a dead man, strung from the branch of an old tree. A chill wind touches your heart, the man is you, and the thing which kills you stands at your back. Already you know you cannot defeat it. You try to walk faster but your limbs are as ice and the next step is never completed. You feel the thirst turn to water and you begin to whimper in fear; you cannot run, as you wish, from that which is behind you in the great darkness, reaching out for you. You feel a hand touch yours; at once you are filled with strength and courage. You turn and face the dark.

If there are more than four people in the party you will need to invent more dreams, remembering only that the shaman must interpret the dream as being positive.

Those who are found acceptable at the testing will be scarred on the upper right arm with the Spirit rune. The wounds will be bound with leaves which aid healing but do not inhibit scarring. These scars are the beginning things of design to be completed after the Hide is recovered.

The Fated Warriors of the party and the Ithillian-Fane will leave the same day as the testing. The trail will be cold to the Ithillian-Fane are superb trackers and will make light work of it. A two day forced march will bring the group, late in the day, to the outskirts of troll woods (any suitable encounters may occur during this time).

The trail leads clearly through the forest to the troll camp, which will be reached shortly before dusk.

STATISTICS
SHAWANII, MALE ITHILLIAN-FANE, DAKA FAL SHAMAN/PRIEST

STR: 13 Right Hind Leg (01-02) 0-6
CON: 15 Left Hind Leg (03-04) 0-6
SIZ: 19 Hindquarters (05-06) 0-8
INT: 16 Forequarters (07-08) 0-8
POW: 21 (8) Right Fore Leg (10-11) 0-6
DEX: 9 Left Fore Leg (12-13) 0-6
HP: 14 (14) 0-8
Move: 10 Right Arm (15-16) 1-6
Defense: 15% Head (19-20) 1-7

Bite: (1d6 + 1d4) SR8, 45%, x2
Claw: (1d6 + 1d4) SR8, 45%, Parry 45%, Points 4

2H Short Spear: (1d8 + 1d4) SR4, 45%, Pary 45%, Points 16

Spells: Mobility, binding, healing 6, glee 5, demoralize, repair (see also Spirits).

Rune Magic: Divination (x2), extension 3, warding 2, spirit block 4, free ghost, summon ancestor (x2), resurrection.

Skills: Map Making 45%, Climbing 45%, Hide
THE HIDE OF THE ANCESTOR

Item 45%, Jumping 45%, Set Trap 45%, Listen 75%, Spot Hidden 85%, Spot Trap 70%, Tracking 80%, Move Quietly 45%, Hide in Cover 45%, Camouflage 45%, Evaluate Treasure 50%, Oratory 80%.

Languages: Beast speech 85%, Tradetalk 85%, Spirit speech 85%.

Magic Items: POW 16 Storage Crystal, POW 4 Storage Crystal (contains Cub), POW Slumber Crystal (contains Wildpaw), bronze wristband with shimmer 3 matrix.

Treasure: 10L, 1W.


The Hide of the Ancestor

Ten: The dark troll Hunter Priest. Contents: a large pile of sleeping-furs, a small chest containing three flasks (4 doses, Healing 6, 2 doses, Systemic Poison), 5 javelins, the Hide of the Ancestor (amongst the sleeping-furs).

Ten Two: Three dark troll Hunter Initiates. Contents: sleeping-furs, two long spears, a finely crafted drinking horn (95L), a small clay statue of Kyger Litor, a small finely crafted bone box (60L) filled with the teeth of many animals.

Ten Three: Four troll hunter Initiates. Contents: sleeping-furs, a bone flute, a small leather sack hanging from the tent post containing 20 griffin claws.

Ten Four: Six troll hunter Lay Members (on guard duty round camp site). Contents: sleeping-furs only.

Ten Five: Three food trollkin (bound).

The Zorak Zoran Tent

Six: A dark troll Zorak Zoran Death Lord. Contents: a large pile of sleeping-furs, a small chest containing 20 griffin claws, 10 leather drinking jacks, a ruined large shield, a plain ring set with a ruby (2500L) which will require a special Spot Hidden to find (one of the trolls lost it over a season ago).

Seven: The four dark troll Zorak Zoran Initiates and the great troll Zorak Zoran Initiate. Contents: sleeping-furs, a considerable amount of debris from their last dozen or so meals, a bag of Change (1 coin), a braided bead (half-empty), five leather drinking jacks, a ruined large shield, a plain ring set with a ruby (2500L) which will require a special Spot Hidden to find (one of the trolls lost it over a season ago).

Eight: Three dark troll Zorak Zoran Lay Members. Contents: sleeping-furs, the head and half the shaft of a heavy mace.

Nine: The trollkin Zorak Zoran Lay Members. Contents: sleeping-furs only.

Troll Characters

Troll type, cult, and status are listed below. They should be generated by the referee who should make them as strong or weak as he feels necessary. Trollpak, Foes and Runemasters will prove useful if you have access to them.

THE CAMP (MAP 1)

The camp is in a rough clearing and consists of nine tents of thick, heavy hide. There is also a heap of debris not yet large enough to be tunnelled into and used as an abode.

The six trollkin Hunter Lay Members will be about when the group arrives on the scene, and will be evenly spaced around the camp. Unless they are killed silently and simultaneously they will raise the alarm.

The Hunter Tents

Ten One: The dark troll Hunter Priest. Contents: a large pile of sleeping-furs, a small chest containing three flasks (4 doses, Healing 6, 2 doses, Systemic Poison), 5 javelins, the Hide of the Ancestor (amongst the sleeping-furs).

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Eight: Three dark troll Zorak Zoran Lay Members. Contents: sleeping-furs, the head and half the shaft of a heavy mace.

Nine: The trollkin Zorak Zoran Lay Members. Contents: sleeping-furs only.

It is assumed that all the trolls are carrying whatever wealth they may have with them.

Boots

Kymry will take one magic item each for himself and Shawanii. The rest of the Ithilian-Fane (assuming any survived) will take the best of the furs for trade and other items of Jewellery, etc., in order of seniority (Kymry first). Coinage is of no interest to them and the players will have no trouble claiming it, and any pieces of jewellery remaining. Any magic items will be given to those Kymry considers most valiant in combat.

BACK AMONGST THE ITHILIAN-FANE

After a hero's welcome, feast and a week of rest, those who wish it may have their ritual scars increased. As this is done, a player must roll CON X 4 for every 25cm2 of scarring or pass out; the ritual scars will continue until a player's character does pass out. He may not be scarred in this fashion again until he has performed some great deed. The more scars he receives the greater his status amongst the Ithilian-Fane he may encounter in the future.

THE HIDE OF THE ANCESTOR

The Hide is a matrix for warding 6, cost in points of player. The warding will fade if the Hide is moved from the area the warding was cast to protect. When within 100m of the hide it is impossible to contract any disease; no sickly child is ever born, nor is childbirth ever fatal to parent or child.

THE ITHILIAN-FANE

The Ithilian-Fane are lion-men in exactly the same way that centaurs are horse-men. There are two races of Ithilian-Fane; one has much in common with the African plains lion, with a black or brown mane on head, throat, and in length of its human back; the other variety has more in common with the American mountain lion. Both varieties are tribal in nature and few in number. A small colony of the plains variety can be found in Beasley Valley.

Ithilian-Fane are exclusively carnivores but do not eat the flesh of intelligent beings.

Their scars, denoting tribe and status, cover the human portion of the adult. Ithilian-Fane to a greater or lesser degree. Ithilian-Fane commonly worship the Barbarian Gods found in Cults of Prax.

Characteristics

Average

TR: 3rd-6th

Move: 10

HP Average: 12

Siz: 25+12

T Treasure Factor: 7

INT: 3rd-6th

POW: 5th-6th

DEX: 5th-6th

CHA: 3rd-6th

Weapon

SR Attack Damage Parry

Bite 7 30% 1d6+1d4

Claw* 7 30% 1d6+1d4

1H Short Spear 5 15% 1d6+1d4 10%

Medium Shield

10%

*Can attack with claw and spear in same round.

Armour: as human, commonly leather arms, head, chest, and forequarters.

Spells: as human, binding and mobility are commonly used.

Other Skills: Tracking 45%; Jumping 50%; Move Quietly 55%; Listen 45%; Spot Hidden 50%. □
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‘Reporte feller wanted to know all about that show at Clacton; well I told him no talk to the Prof, all I did was go along for a wheeze, and give that fishy-looking chap a whack with a mashie niblick when he got frisky. Impertinent little cik though, he actually had the cheek to ask me whether I’d describe myself as a dilettante. Dilettante! Makes one sound like a bally thè dansant gigolo, what? I soon sent him off with a flea in his ear.’

The basic Call of Cthulhu rules assume that most investigators will be American, but for anyone running British characters or a British campaign, we’ve put together character sketches of two classic Twenties’ types with stiffer upper lips than the average Yank. Following the old cricket usage, we’ve called them Gentlemen, or aristocratic amateurs, and Players, or professional sportsmen.

GENTLEMEN

Gentlemen investigators need to be tall, languid and clean shaven. (Anyone with a beard is either of the older generation, a sailor, arty or a foreigner. Both the latter types are extremely suspect.) Educated at either Oxford or Cambridge, they will be of independent means, and won’t need to bother with a job, although something in the Foreign Office could be considered. A chap hardly has time for a job, though, what with the crowded social schedule. In town it is cocktails and the Charleston, Boston, jazz-step, one-step and fox trot. (Being able to play the banjo and ukulele helps.) Out of town, there is all the fun of country-house week-ends, with shooting and fancy dress parties. Just throw a brace of guns in the old jalopy, and bring your valet to double as loader, and away you go. As far as clothes go, they may still be made in Piccadilly by father’s tailor, but their style will be dictated by the Prince of Wales, the best dressed man in England (and that means in the world). Winters are best spent at Monte, and the rest of the year at the family home in the country, or at a town flat or house in Mayfair. A pretty agreeable life, but if an old college chum or tutor comes up with something that sounds like good sport, that may provide just the spice that it needs.

Crime fiction and thrillers of the Twenties and Thirties are littered with such aristocratic detectives. A typical Call of Cthulhu gentleman investigator will have an average to low strength, constitution and size, corresponding to a tall slim build. Unlike many fictional sleuths who concealed razor sharp minds beneath a veneer of idiocy, they should be of low intelligence, the classic silly ass. Power can be high, allowing them to lead charmed lives through high Luck rolls, and also giving them a high Initial Sanity. This may seem a little strange, but it does not indicate powerful mental discipline so much as a stunning lack of imagination. Dexterity will be high, representing years of training in ball games, riding, and hunting, shooting and fishing. Appearance will be high, as a result of impeccable dress and manners, and an easy charm. Education should be around 13 or 14, but no higher. In practical terms it will give the character extensive knowledge of restricted fields such as Greek, Latin and the Classics, but be of severely limited use in other areas. Such characters will have two main motivations: honour and sport. Honour mainly applies to members of the same class, but can also lead to acts of supreme self sacrifice, à la Beau Geste, Captain Oates, Sidney Carton, and the entire Light Brigade. Sport is no less important, and is an all-embracing term covering anything from organised sports themselves, through the thrill of the chase and hazardous pastimes, to outright criminal activities, like those of Raffles, ‘The Gentleman Cracksman’. (It should be noted, however, that although Raffles saw nothing wrong in breaking and entering, it was usually the middle clas-
GENTLEMEN AND PLAYERS

McNeile’s heroes, Tiny Carteret, could call on £5,000 a year. They have servants, run expensive cars, and are members of all the clubs. What makes them different from the Gentlemen, then? Two things, really; they are not aristocrats, and they are above all men of action.

Hugh Drummond, he ‘liked to lead’, to his friends. ‘Slightly under six feet in height’ and ‘broad in proportion’, with a nose that ‘had never quite recovered from the final year in the Public Schools’. Tiny Carteret ‘had been capped fifteen times for England playing in the scrub’, but in spite of his size ‘was at the same time marvellously agile’. When creating a Player, stress of both size and build should therefore all be fairly high. Intelligence, on the other hand, would not seem to be as important; men of action are not given to flaunting their erudition, and Drummond was more than a match for the also-ran variety, he was the possessor of a very shrewd common sense, which generally enabled him to arrive at the same result as a far more brilliant man and, incidentally, by a more direct route. ‘Power, in the sense of charisma, can be average or above, but should not be low, as much is made of such men’s qualities of leadership. Both all-players and all-heroes are in the Saturday Matinee variety.’

Players need to have a good Luck roll to get out of the situations their direct approach is likely to land them in. They also need a good dodge, which means grasping the fact that the game is about the fact that the game is about the tricks up T’s sleeve; Drummond had learnt some from an old Japanese, and when things got boring in the trenches used to prowl silently among the German lines noting the occasional Boche. Intelectuals they may not be, but as ‘Sapper’ said of his creation, they ‘are a sportsman and a gentleman. And the combination of the two is an unbeatable production.’

CREATING CHARACTERS

Players: The following skills are available to characters opting for this ‘profession’: Climb, Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Hide, Jump, Listen, Sneak, Spot Hidden, Swim, Throw, Track, Handgun, Melee. A Player’s disposable income is generated by the following formula: 1d6 x £2000 + 2000. If the player chooses to give an approximate equivalent in pounds. (See The Price is Right in WD70.)

Gentlemen: The following skills are available to Gentleman characters: Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Photography, Pilot Aircraft, Read/Write Latin, Read/Write Greek, Ride, Sing, Speak French, Shotgun.

A Gentleman’s disposable income is generated by the following formula: 1d10 x £1000 + £2000. Again, divide by six to reach a sterling equivalent.

Note: The Call of Cthulhu rules for generating characters’ incomes do not specify whether these are net or gross, and there is no definition of the difference when tax, rent, mortgage and other expenses have been taken into account. The amounts we have suggested represent what such characters could actually spend, but they would already enjoy a standard of living far above the average due to inherited wealth. They would also be expected to live up to their social standing, though no British Standard demo sets at 57.6, and no to win Bob Austins!”
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HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

Musicianship in AD&D, by Ian Berridge

A violinist myself, I felt that it was time some definite ideas on the neglected art of music in AD&D were produced. As the only music-making (non-)player character possible, the bard is a solitary figure, and an instrument given to him does not fairly represent the art as it stood in medieval times. The musician also has great potential as a spy. What guard, for instance, could refuse a travelling band of entertainers entry to a castle in order to entertain his liege? Street bawlers could also case the joint across the way in perfect safety. A Musicianship skill score is used to find success probabilities (e.g. bawlers must roll under this skill to avoid being moved on), and for hiring purposes to determine fees. (No 10th level lord or lady would be without their own troupe of musicians, purely as a status symbol.) Here, then, are some ideas based on history and experience.

For 300gp and one week’s intensive training, any character can increase his musical skill score in one instrument class (see Table 1) by 2% (from an initial score of 0%). The teacher must have a higher skill score in the class of instrument than his aspiring pupil, and no character can increase his score beyond an absolute maximum of Level + INT + DEX + (2 x CHA). Bards, thieves, monks and illusionists will therefore have a clear lead over other character types, whilst clerics come worst off (although what can you expect from a group whose services would consist only of Gregorian-style chanting?).

Table One: Instrument Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Group Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plucked-string</td>
<td>Lyre, harp, psaltery, gittern,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mandola, lute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowed-string</td>
<td>Oboe, ophicleide, viola,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rebec, pan pipes, horn,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trumpet, cornett, shawm,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bagpipes, flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind and Brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard</td>
<td>Bell, chime, great organ,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive organ, portative organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion*</td>
<td>Drums, cymbals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No skill required to play.

Within groups, the instruments are listed in increasing order of cost to play. Thus, in the plucked-string category, the lyre is easiest to play, the lute hardest. Descriptions of instruments can be found in most musical encyclopedias.

Apart from learning one of the listed instrument classes, most characters can learn to sing — this is always possible for elves, half-elves, gnomes and halflings, but sadly impossible for 8% of humans (93% on d100), 20% of all dwarves (81% on d100), and as many as 60% of all half-orcs (41% on d100): naturally, all bards must be able to sing. Singing ability starts at 30% and can be increased by 3% for each week’s training, at a cost of 250gp per week. Reading music, however, is far more difficult, and the ability to do so is taught separately, at a cost of 500gp per week for an increase of 2% (from 0% starting skill); characters must roll their INT or less on d10+10 to learn the ability, this being checked after every week of tuition. Failing this roll means that no further progress has been gained for the week’s tuition (although the character must still pay the fees!). The ability to write music costs 500gp for an increase of 1% per week, and requires the same INT roll.

Bards are a special case since they are compelled to learn how to sing and play the family of plucked-string instruments. They must have a singing ability score of 50%+ in order to start gaining experience as a bard. As well as their requirements for learning Legend Lore, etc., when gaining bardic experience levels, they must also spend two weeks studying the instrument class, and one week studying the voice (at the costs given above) after every level gain (including 1st). This must be done even if it is impossible to improve their score any more (standards have to be maintained!).

Since bards would learn to play the easiest instruments first, and because the DMG gives some instruments not yet invented in the medieval era, the magical bardic instruments should be renamed as follows: Fochlucan Lyre, Mac-Fuirmidh Lyre, Doss Harp, Caneth Psaltery, Cli Gittern, Anstruth Mandola

and Ollamh Lute. I would also recommend curtailling the bardic charm percentages at lower levels, mainly due to the lack of skills available on which the ability is based. Thus: 0%, 2%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, 35%, 40%, 45%, 50%, 56% at 13th level, and thence as in the PHB — after all, they must partly live off their thefts, and they do have spells as well.

Whilst music schools might be found in the largest towns and cities, all towns would have a professional band of musicians (with their own guild) to provide for large social events in the town. Monasteries might teach musical skills, as the discipline involved in the learning of instruments would be beneficial to all monk characters. If this is so, the monasteries would tend to accumulate large libraries of musical manuscripts. If player characters or non-player characters are to be hired as musicians, then the average musical score of the band is needed to determine the fee paid in Table 2 — virtuosos will, naturally be expensive! Any hirelings will always require lodgings and rehearsal space, and under no circumstances will they venture down dungeons — although they will happily tell of daring adventures in verse and song!

Table Two: Musician Hire Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Skill (%)</th>
<th>Fee (gps/musician/month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 51</td>
<td>Would not be hired!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–80</td>
<td>200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81+</td>
<td>Musician decides own fee, 500+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hope that all these ideas inspire DMs to add a little music, as an authentic ‘spice’, to their campaigns — they could have lots of fun seeing their players join militant guilds, marching to pipe and drum with their battle cry "Keep medieval music alive!"
The story so far. The party of adventurers, led by Thrud, has been tasked with retrieving a key to a treasure room in the depths of the Quark Caverns of Quark...

Six little adventurers - now, will they survive? We've come so close to finding the treasure...

Look - there's a note here! An inscription - if you're close enough to read this...

One stood in the wrong place - they think they were five.

The only way to get the key is to offer me a charm shrimp!

Thrud makes a deal...

One phoned the wrong one - they think there were four.

Take enough charm shrimp, you want?

Oh! It's all the charm shrimp!

This is it! There must be a key somewhere...

The key to the treasure...

Four little adventurers searching for a key...

Oh! Hold it! I am the guardian of the treasure room!

The only way to get the key is to offer me a charm shrimp!

Thrud makes a deal...

Oh! It's all the charm shrimp!

And then there were three...

Three little adventurers deciding what to do.

One said it was not a trap...

They were two.

That looks like a trap...

Yeah...

Whoa! What?

Boo!

They're found all the treasure.

Well, I couldn't really share it - it's only just clear, my sure as it is!

Two little adventurers there task is finally done.

Just think what we can do with all this treasure.

Awk! Ouch!

They're going to need all the treasure...

Then there was one - and he wasn't really all that little!
Some players find it particularly difficult to rationalise some combinations of powers when generating a Golden Heroes character. In addition, supervisors can find they have trouble convincing players to drop incompatible powers. Although the latter problem can be remedied by bribing the player with 10 DUPs of training for each power dropped, the best solution is to modify the Superpower Generation Table.

The alternative tables presented here have been constructed along similar lines to the one in the Golden Heroes rules. They are designed to avoid incompatible power combinations such as Cybernetics and Magic or Agility and Tough Skin.

Players who prefer to play a particular type of hero such as Batman or Daredevil, rather than the X-Men and Avengers types the basic table, can use the tables to generate such a hero. To avoid creating a bunch of Spiderman and Captain Britain clones, players should not choose powers but should instead roll on the appropriate table. For instance, someone wanting an Iron Man type of character would roll on the Equipment Table, whereas a Batman equivalent would be produced using the Skills Table. In this way, the fine details of the character are left to chance. Although the players need not make power rolls on the same table, each power should be labelled according to the table it came from. Therefore Flight rolled on the Equipment Table would be the property of a gadget such as jet boots, not an innate power.

If characters are rolled using this system, the players should be allowed to choose powers freely from any relevant sub-tables. Supervisors may wish, however, to limit choice or power grades according to the table upon which the power was generated. For example, Flight rolled on the Powers Table might only have a maximum grade of 3, escape velocity in comics is usually only achieved by means of a device or vehicle (Superman excepted!).

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POWERS
01-04 Agility
05 Chameleon Ability
06 Claws
07-18 Energy Attack
19-20 Energy Immunity
21 Energy Reflection
22 Field Manipulation
23-29 Flight
30-32 Force Field
33-34 Growth
35-37 Health
38-40 Heightened Senses
41 Intangibility
42 Intuition
43 Larger
44-45 Invisibility
46-48 Leaping
49 Mass Variation (Other)
50 Mass Variation (Self)
51-54 Precision
55 Probability Manipulation
56-59 Reactions
60 Replication
61-63 Shapechange
64-65 Shrink
66 Solidify
67-69 Speed
70-78 Strength
79 Stretch
80 Stunner
81-83 Teleport
84-89 Tough Skin
90-93 Vigour
94 Wallcrawling
95 Weather Control
96-00 Choose from this table

SKILLS
I'm afraid I don't like the Skills power in Golden Heroes. Compared to an Advantageous Background it looks like a waste of a power roll, and the power is far too vague for my liking. The supervisor will eventually end up with a massive, unmanageable list of skills all describing one small interest - something that doesn't imitate the comics too well.

I use a different system: one power roll gives a roll on the Occupational Skills Table and a roll on the Vocation Skills Table. Upgrading allows either another field of interest to be obtained within the first occupation rolled or another roll on the Occupation Skills Table. Vocations are only rolled once (they represent the character's major hobby). Each occupational skill has a practical value in terms of Campaign Ratings: the vocational skills are for a bit of colour.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS
1 Law Enforcement - Forensic Science, Police Interrogation, etc. Methods, Contacts
2 Professional - Law, Accountancy, Medicine, etc. Materials Level 6 (in field), Financial Level 6
3 Crook - Fraud, Safe-cracking, Burglary, Counterfeiting, etc. Materials Level 6 (in field), Criminal Contacts B
4 Spy - Codes, Surveillance, Counter Espionage, etc. Materials Level 6 (in field), Government Contacts 8
5 Scholar - English Lit, Zoology, Physics, etc. Materials Level 6
6 Vehicle Operation - Racing Driver, Airline Pilot, etc. Materials Level 6
7 Journalism - Photojournalism, cameraman, etc. Materials Level 6 (in this area).
8 Military - Weapons Use, Tactics, etc. Materials Level 6, Military Contacts B
9 Arts - Acting, Ballet, Operatic Materials Level 6, Financial Level 6
10 Choose.

VOCATIONAL SKILLS
1 Entertaining (juggler, conjurer, etc.)
2 Collecting (stamps, coins, etc.)
3 Modelling (military, civil, interior design, etc.)
4 Games (bridge, chess, etc.)
5 Photography
6 Music (piano, guitar, etc.)
7 Sport (running, cricket, etc.)
8 Craft (knitting, DIY, etc.)
9 Cookery
10 Choose.
The travellers enter the pyramids in two groups... Later, in the Shaft Chamber...

The search begins in earnest. Small Chamber: Gavin, Syrena and Dinah...

TIME: 8:35


Luck and 20+ DMs ensures Finns survival.

First Fault location... The First Shaft: 2nd Fault location; Flinn and Hayes...

Large Central Chamber...

Deep Level: bottom of First Shaft...

Deep Level: bottom of Second Shaft...

Unknown to Hayes, an alien skeleton lies half buried mere metres from him, clutching a small fibre pouch containing 37 gold coins... all of which will not be discovered due to inexpert role-playing... but I thought I'd let you anyway...

Outside, the Hunter Scout SM Degenerate (aka WD70) descends...

Will you join me and my fellow Hunter's for the kill? NO THANKS... I'll just... wait...

No my Juicy kinksize! [mean the accused travellers... a thus they are HERE-A, TRAP-ED!]

VOLTAH! I shall seek my awful revenge... or Hayes and his friends! duh!

Very well my side order of relish... will remain aloof of my name... until such time as the green...
**Dragonmeet 86**

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- participation and demonstration games – please write to Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP.
- some space left for trade stands, contact Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP.

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- helpers needed – contact Laurence Miller, Birmingham Games Workshop, Unit 37, West Court, Birmingham Shopping Centre, 021-632-4804.
- participation and demonstration games – please write to Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP.
- trade stands – contact Games Workshop 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP.

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DIORAMAS

Part Three: Finishing Touches

TREES

The alternative to buying the expensive kit-form or ready-made trees is to make them yourself. For years, wargamers have faced the problems of reproducing wooded areas on their games tables, and, out of necessity, several cheap and practical ways of simulating trees have developed. One such method is to use large widths of the tape or strips of bark as the basic skeleton. Rubberised horsehair, cut and positioned on top of the trunk, is perhaps the most realistic and cheapest way of simulating deciduous foliage. First, cut out an irregular chuck of rubberised horsehair correct in proportion to the size of the trunk, and spray it with a matt black or dark green paint. When dry, highlight with lighter shades of green before fixing it to the trunk with a strong impact adhesive. Horsehair was used as stuffing in old armchairs and sofas, and a cheap source of supply can be found at your local rubbish dump in discarded old furniture. Alternatively, Showcase Models offer the material by mail order at £2.50 plus 20% p&p.

For desert dioramas, palm trees can be made as follows: first, the leaves are made simply by sticking brown gummed paper or silk to lengths of 5-amp fuse wire and cutting to shape. The individual spines of each leaf are scored with a sharp knife and when all the leaves are made they are gathered together and bound with wire. The trunk can be made by winding smooth string around a piece of stiff coat-hanger wire coated with impact adhesive. The cluster of leaves is pushed into the top of the trunk and fixed in position with Miliput or glue.

To make fir trees, first cut thin wire to four times the tree's height and fold it in half. Then, cut pieces of sisal string to the width of the tree's base and unravel the fibres, twisting them between your fingers to stop them curling. Now, run a trickle of polystyrene cement along the inside of one half of the wire, starting 10mm from the bend, and lay the fibres closely together across the wire before pressing them into the glue. Twist the wire ends together clockwise and insert the tip into a vice. Fix the other end in a hand drill and wind slowly clockwise. When dry, a thin spiral so that it creates a brush shape. Trim the tree to taper from the top to the bottom and spray it matt black. Once dry, coat it with matt varnish and roll it in grass paint to form needles on the ends of the branches.

TITLES

Having lavished many hours of effort on your diorama or scenic base, all that now remains is to title your work. Whether you intend to enter your diorama in competition or simply display it at home, a neat name-plate will enhance its appearance. Engraved brass name-plates can be obtained to order from any trophy shop, or alternatively, you can produce your own using Letraset dry-transfer letters.

When thinking of a title bear in mind one golden rule — keep it short and to the point. Titles should be clear and legible: styles to be avoided like the proverbial plaguing beetle, or the script lettering, typewritten stickers, Dymo labels, paper labels fixed with sellotape, shaky hand-painted scralls and badly spaced or misaligned dry-lettering. When dry-lettering on cardboard, choose a colour that is complimentary to the subject and avoid anything that clashes, especially with the dominant figure or object of the diorama. Alternatives to name-plates are card captions that can be attached to the wall or table, or propped up by using a small triangular leg glued to the back of the card.

Having judged many painting competitions, I would say that a well-drawn and finished card captions that can be attached to the wall or table, or propped up by using a small triangular leg glued to the back of the card.

HUMBLE HOBBITTS

In Fig 2 we see one of Citadel's brave C11 Halflings (2 for 96p) defending himself against a rock-wielding C20 Troll (£1.95). Both of these 'little & large' combatants were painted and photographed by TTH reader Richard Chambers.

The Spined Dragon in Fig 3 (Citadel N15: £1.50) was painted and photographed by Graham Pritchard. The Sauron set from the Lord of the Rings range takes pride of place on the creature's back, which is also adorned with extra shields, paper wing-banners and lengths of modelling chain. It won Graham 1st prize in a recent Citadel painting competition. Graham has since set up a professional painting service called Humble Hobbits, which is one of the few to offer both a high standard of work coupled with excellent value for money.

Newcomer to the seething ranks of chaos comes Citadel's Chaos Lord (C35: 60p), shown in Fig 4, painted, based and photographed by Phil Lewis. Chaos looms large in Citadel's plans with the eagerly-awaited release of a range of miniatures based on the Eternal Champion novels of Michael Moorcock. Elric, Hawkmoon, Corum and a host of their demonic adversaries will be unleashed on unsuspecting publics throughout the course of 1986, supported by Warhammer-compatible battle-packs and rule supplements.

In Fig 5, a proud quartet of Citadel Northern Dwarves (C06: 60p) are seen on parade, wreathed in full battle armour and bearing a splendid owl-topped flag. The dwarves and their banners were painted and photographed by Michael Imaging, a TTH reader from Gelsenkirchen in West Germany.

Designed to supplement the Dragonroar role-playing game is the suitably vociferous reptilian featured here in Fig 6 (Standard Games F11: £3.45). It is part of a range that features such innovative creatures as a Manelephant, War Hedgehogs and Killer Penguins.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Farnham Models, 57A Downing Street, Farnham, Surrey. (Scenic modelling supplies; SAE for lists.)

Showcase Models, Den Blieklaan 72, 3766 A V Joest, Netherlands. (Rubberised horsehair £2.50+ 20% p&p.)

Phoenix Model Developments, The Square, Earls Barton, Northampton NN6 6NA. (Illustrated catalogue/handbook £1.50.)

Humble Hobbits, 56 York Road, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 2LG.

Standard Games, Arlon House, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8LH.
winter... cold snow covers the ground... everything is still silent... until...

That was all.

Gnomes
Cook
Daddy
Big Baby

In the next clearing...

Wot you doin? Not names, baby!

Say sorry!

I don't do again!

Bad goblin gone now! Now don't!
Flushed by the critical acclaim his first column received, your news editor returns with more fascinating news, juicy gossip and manufacturer's hype — see if you can spot which is which! Apparently the editor didn't think I introduced myself sufficiently well last time, so let me do so now by saying that I am a self-designated member of... CENSORED... — Ed... to which this column is affiliated. There, I hope that clears everything up. On with the news.

WE COULD BE HEROES

Mayfair Games have announced three new scenarios for their DC Heroes game, Project Prometheus, by Greg Gorden, pits player-generated heroes against a Crete-based band of villains who have stolen a new defense shield. Escort, by Matt Costello, is a solitary adventure, whilst Mark Acre's Doomsday Program has Brainiac kidnapping Superman as part of a fiendish plot to destroy the Earth. Sometimes I wonder why the villains spend so much time trying to do this, as the politicians seem to be making quite a good job of it on their own! For Golden Heroes players, Pete Tamlyn's The Lancelot Capers (Games Workshop) is due out soon. It will be in much the same format as Legacy of Eagles. Having helped to playtest Lancelot, I can thoroughly recommend it. Fantasy Games Unlimited have numerous new products for Villains and Vigilantes. Organised Crimes, Assassin, Pre-Emptive Strike and HONOR are adventures. Alone Into The Night contains three adventures for a GM and a single player only. Finally, the DNAgent's Sourcebook is a major information package based on the comic.

GENIUS

Look out for the appearance of D&D in the next Guinness Book of Superlatives. A group of players in Belgium, conforming to the agreed AD&D marathon rules of TSR and Guinness, played for 61 hours and 39 minutes using modules A1-4 and some White Dwarf scenarios, a feat of endurance too horrible to contemplate. Jean-Michel Vanderbeken was the DM, and the players were Christophe Viele, Jean-Pierre Combazier, Pascal Joris and Alain Marrier.

In this country, even royalty's getting in on the act. At a recent International Youth Year display in Staffs, HRH Princess Anne was seen expressing great interest in the role-playing display, particularly the chariot race game. I have copies of the photos, so if the Palace would like to contact me to discuss terms...

In future I'd like to include more fan-dom news in this column, so if you know of anything interesting happening then please write to me care of White Dwarf—but remember that the column is usually typed up a month before publication. Traveller players may be interested to know that Game Designers' Workshop run a Traveller Club Organisation. Any club can register, at no cost, and will receive periodic mailings with information about Traveller, new products and new ideas. Registered clubs can also get special materials not available elsewhere. All you need to do to register is to send a letter with details of your club to GDW, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, Illinois 61702, USA.

GOSH, WOW!

As a follow up to their Fantastic Treasures I, Mayfair Games have released (wait for it) Fantastic Treasures II. With yet another Boris Vallejo cover, this innovative product breaks new barriers by being a collection of AD&D compatible items. Included are such really thrilling mythological items as Magic Stones, Odin's Spear, Pan's Pipes and Robin Hood's Cloak. With the hobby so well established, it is almost a pity to see that there are still some truly creative companies who can continue to come out with 'exciting and original products'.

SNIPPETS

Games Workshop are to do a new version of the classic game Cosmic Encounter. The new basic version will probably also include the first expansion set. GW are also looking at other West End games with a view to UK production. FGU have licensed Ral Partha to produce the Official Bushido figures. These will be sculpted by Bob Charette, one of the original game's designers.

It's not everyone who can have a figure of themselves specially made. Citadel's recent releases include one called 'Lord Brian of Linby'. The fact that Games Workshop and Citadel's supremo Bryan Ansell lives in Linby is surely no more than a coincidence? I wonder when we'll see the first figure of a 'Chaos Fruitbat'? (No one will understand this, Trev — Ed.)

And finally... Everyone knows that White Dwarf is the home of the Unofficial Ron L Hubbard fan club, headed by Dave Langford. Well, to help promote Ron's book Battlefield Earth, his henchmen have been wandering around Wolverhampton dressed in 'space suits' quizzing locals. Apparently over half the people questioned feel that there is a possibility that aliens could invade Earth, whilst only 37% of them thought Earth's defences were strong enough to resist such an attack. (What defences? Perhaps we could blow ourselves to bits? Better dead than green, scaly and bug-eyed!) Those responsible for the survey have such a great understanding of science that the statistical sample for these results consisted of a massive 150 people.
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