The Fantasy Trip™
Companion

A Fantasy Trip Anthology!
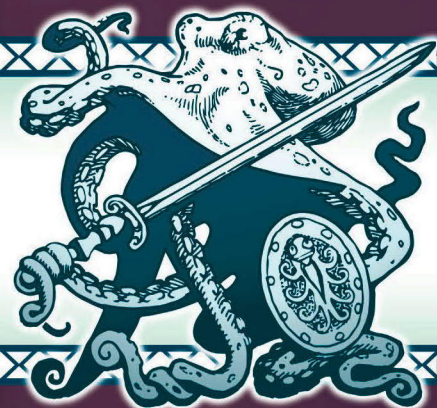
This is **The Fantasy Trip Companion** – both part of the game, and a book about the game. It's a very limited print run, made possible by supporters of the 2018 Kickstarter that brought **TFT** back to the world. It was a stretch goal in that campaign, and we appreciate the support!

The **TFT Companion** is a collection of articles starting with Steve Jackson's original designer's notes and errata published in *The Space Gamer* in 1980. It includes expansions, and adventures created by fans for the magazines of the day, and closes with a collection of the articles posted online as part of the **TFT** Kickstarter in 2018.

So: 38 years of history of a classic old-school RPG, from birth to . . . well, to rebirth . . . brought together for your enjoyment. Good gaming!

Cover by Brandon Moore

ARTICLES BY:

Aaron Allston

Jim Dickey

David R. Dunham

Richard A. Edwards

Dan Goodsell

Steve Jackson

Jennell Jaquays

Forrest Johnson

Ronald Pehr

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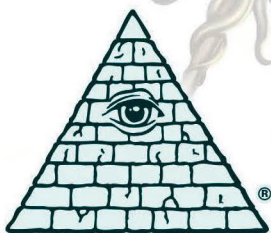Philip Rennert

Tom Riley

Ralph Sizer

and the entrants of the *Space Gamer* Magic Items Contest

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

#TheFantasyTrip

thefantasytrip.game

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Special thanks to Chaosium and Judges Guild for their assistance in arranging reprints
of articles from issues of *Different Worlds*, *Pegasus*, and *The Dungeoneer*.

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The Fantasy Trip Designed by Steve Jackson
Cover by Brandon Moore

**Articles by Aaron Allston, Jim Dickey, David R. Dunham, Richard A. Edwards, Dan Goodsell,
Steve Jackson, Jennell Jaquays, Forrest Johnson, Ronald Pehr,
Steve Perrin, Phil Reed, Philip Rennert, Tom Riley, Ralph Sizer,
and the entrants of the *Space Gamer* Magic Items Contest.**

**Illustrated by Graham Chaffee, Joanie Chladek, Steve Crompton, Liz Danforth, Janet Jackson,
Jennell Jaquays, Murray Lindsay, Denis Loubet, Norv Maples, Richard Mather,
William McAusland, George Pratt, George Webber, and J.D. Webster.**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES
thefantasytrip.game

Contents

Introduction

If you were to explore the shelves of my game collection at home, you would quickly discover two things:

1. I'm a fan of a wide variety of games, ranging from classic boardgames and RPGs of the seventies and eighties to today's newest titles.

2. I own a lot of game-centric (and toy, but that's a discussion for another day) magazines.

As incredible as the internet is, the greatest sin of the digital revolution has to be the destruction of the magazine as a viable product. Where we once enjoyed multiple magazines devoted to the hobby games market – *Dragon*, *Challenge*, *Pyramid*, *Shadis*, *White Wolf*, *Different Worlds*, *Inquest*, to name a handful from the past – we're now down to a handful of titles that struggle to survive. Magazines, it seems, cannot compete against the instantaneous access to news, reviews, variants, and discussion as found in countless Facebook groups as well as the big sites like RPG.net, EnWorld, and BoardGameGeek.

When work started on the *Legacy Edition* project, Steve created thousands of words of new material that we planned to use as Kickstarter stretch goals. Posting that new content on **thefantasytrip.game** website showed the game off to those new to *TFT* and gave long-time fans a small selection of new material. As the Kickstarter campaign progressed, we soon found that there was a higher demand for *The Fantasy Trip* than we had anticipated, and many project supporters started asking for all of the new content to appear in printed form. We couldn't jam everything into the *Legacy Edition* box, but we did have one idea that was perfect for the web content.

As the $137,500 stretch goal – unlocked on July 29, 2018, only six days after the project launched on Kickstarter – we promised to create this book, *The Fantasy Trip Companion*, and to include both some of the new web content and old *Space Gamer* articles in the printed book. (Not all of the new material from the website made it to the book; Steve included some of the original text inside the new edition of the *In the Labyrinth* rulebook.)

Those *Space Gamer* articles weren't going to be enough to satisfy all of us, though, so we spent a little time behind-the-scenes seeking out permissions to reprint *TFT* articles from other magazines and, in some instances, the original authors were kind enough to write new introductions to their works. Thank you to both Judges Guild and Chaosium for working with us to collect these near-forgotten *TFT* creations alongside the *Space Gamer* articles, making this Companion book truly a treasure for those of you who are completionists when it comes to collecting your gaming materials.

Please note that the articles collected here are not all of the *TFT* articles that have ever been published. We tracked down and secured the rights to the articles that we could, but there are still magazine works in the wild that do not have a permanent home in a collection. If you have a lead on any old *TFT* articles and contact info for the rights holder, please comment in the official forums at **thefantasytrip.game** and we'll see what we can do about assembling more articles together for a future book.

As we launch the new edition of *The Fantasy Trip*, we're happy to see the *Companion* serve as a love letter to the game's past as well as a harbinger of things to come. Mixing the old and the new between the two covers of this book marries works separated by decades into a single new title, and as with the *Legacy Edition* itself, this publication would not have happened without the generous support of thousands of fans of *The Fantasy Trip*.

Thank you, everyone. We hope that you enjoy reading and using the articles as much as we enjoyed seeking out the works and assembling them into *The Fantasy Trip Companion*.

– Philip Reed

The Space Gamer

By Steve Jackson

From TSG 29 (July 1980)
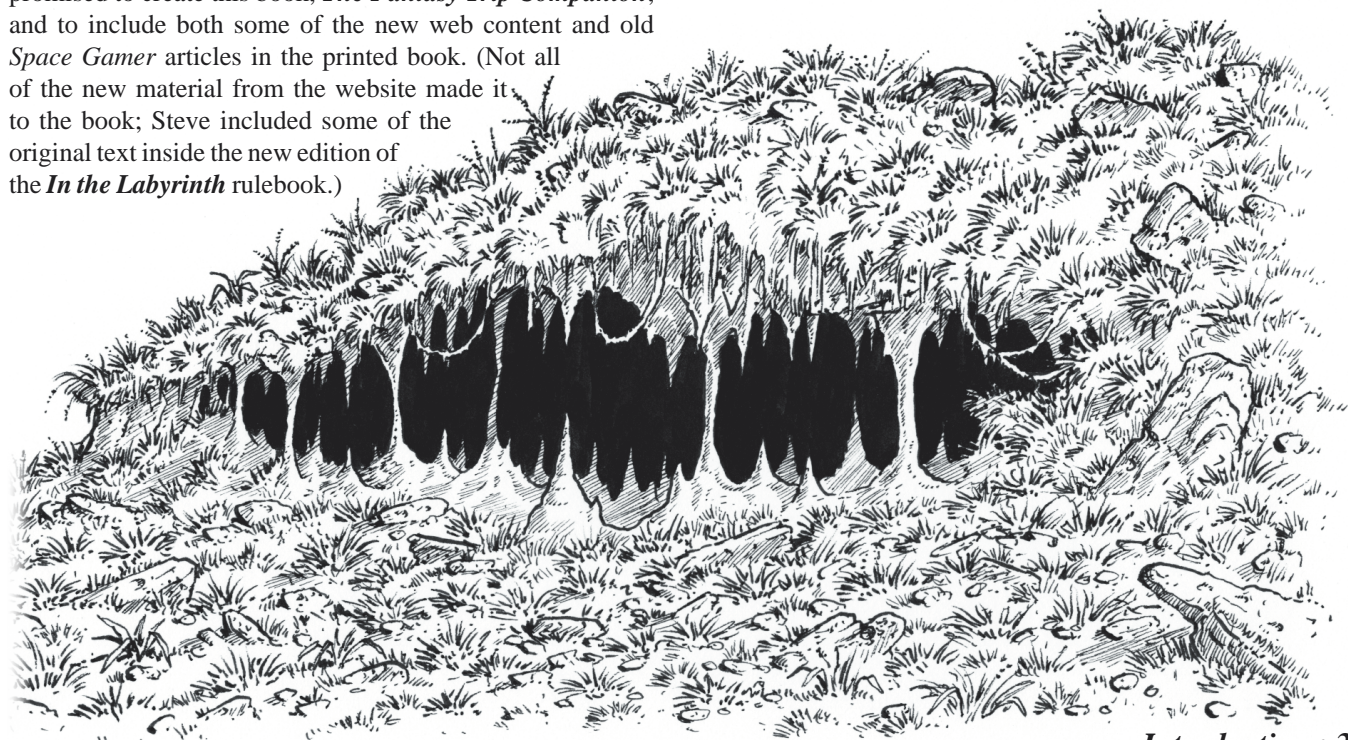
Well, It's Finally Out: Designer's Notes and Errata for **The Fantasy Trip**

Work on **The Fantasy Trip** has dominated the last three years of my life. It bothers me a little bit to realize that. Would I do it again? Maybe. But not the same way.

It started in early 1977. I had just found out, much to my surprise, that I could design games . . . people were buying **Ogre**. But the game that I was playing a lot myself was **Dungeons & Dragons**. And like everyone else who tried an early version of **D&D**, I wanted to make some changes. The polyhedral dice were irritating – but the biggest problem was combat. The **D&D** combat rules were confusing and unsatisfying. No tactics, no real movement – you just rolled dice and died. **T&T** was the same way. **Monsters! Monsters!** was more detailed in some ways, but still allowed no tactics.

So I did something about it. My original idea was to design a game that would accurately simulate medieval sword-and-shield combat. It would have to be simple and fast, and FEEL accurate. So **Melee** was born. It was very simple, as fantasy games go. Instead of six attributes, it used only two: strength and dexterity. Movement was very simple, and combat was handled by "options" which allowed a variety of different actions. When I designed **Melee**, I wasn't going for anything but a quick, somewhat realistic game that could be played by itself or used to fight battles in a roleplaying adventure.

It wasn't long, though, before I realized that the **Melee** system could be the basis for a whole new roleplaying game. Metagaming was *very* interested in getting in on the fantasy roleplaying boom . . . so work began, even before **Melee** was completed, on a set of roleplaying rules. The original name for the whole system was to be **Sword and Sorcery**. Unfortunately, SPI used that one first. The second choice was **The Fantasy Trip**.

The first mention of **TFT** came in *TSG* 10. "Where We're Going" plugged the upcoming **Melee**, and mentioned that it was part of Metagaming's upcoming RPG, **In The Labyrinth**. But it would be a long time before **ITL** saw the light of day . . .

March 1977: I finished researching and playtesting **Melee**.

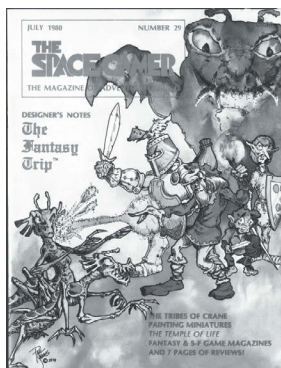May 1977: I finished the graphics and typesetting for **Melee**, pasted up the Liz Danforth counter and cover art, and handed them over to Howard at Metagaming for printing. (Back in the good old days, I didn't just design the games I did for Metagaming. I got to do the whole thing. Design . . . edit . . . playtest . . . set type . . . map and counter graphics . . . charts and tables . . . pasteup . . . proofreading . . . everything. I handled production work for my early games right up until they went to the printer. I even designed and laid out the advertising. Every designer should be so lucky! That's part of the reason I once enjoyed game design more than I have lately. It's great to have total control over the quality of your creation, every step of the way.)

July 1977: Metagaming printed up an extra 4,000 copies of **Melee**. It was selling! I was busy with **Wizard**. Adding one more attribute – intelligence – completed the character system. With combat already written up, and the magic from **Wizard**, I thought I was halfway there. Just write the rules for game-mastering and presto! An FRP system. Well, it *sounded* easy.

September 1977: *TSG* 13 mentioned **TFT**. For the first time, an estimated availability date (late February) was given.

December 1977: **Wizard** went to press – a press run of 30,000 copies. It was the fanciest Microgame that Metagaming ever produced: extra-large map, extra-long rulebook, and two counter sheets. (Subsequent editions had only one counter sheet.) Like **Melee** before it, it became immediately popular, rating high on both SPI and Metagaming surveys.

January 1978: The **TFT** schedule was altered again; it was now to be available "probably before June." At this point I was suffering from the worst case of writer's block that I've ever experienced. Fortunately, it only hurt **ITL**. I could and did work on other games, including the solitaire **Death Test**. But I was getting almost nothing accomplished on **TFT: ITL**.

March 1978: **Death Test** went to press. I knew we had a good system when **DT** was finished. You can *not* write clear, short solitaire scenarios for a roleplaying game unless the original rules are clear and coherent.

May 1978: *TSG* said **TFT: ITL** might be out by Origins. I, personally, was merely shooting for a finished rules draft before I left for the World SF Convention in Phoenix – that being Labor Day. I didn't make it.

September 1978: *TSG* announced that "work is progressing." It really was, but *slowly*. I was over the block, but now I had another problem. I was dealing with a truly massive pile of material, and I wanted to make it *all* fit together. It had to be "just right." I have a tendency toward monomaniacal perfectionism, and the tendency was *strong* right then.

Early 1979: I delivered the last rules draft (we thought) to Metagaming. It was better than 300 typewritten pages. *TSG* announced that publication would be in one of two forms: a "stripped" $20 game or a "Cadillac" $30 game. Most of the feedback on that was emphatically in favor of the $20 version.

Mid-1979: Correspondence with Draper Kauffman, a gamer in St. Louis, turned up some problems with the economics in *TFT*. That's my weak point; it seems to be one of Draper's strong ones. He pointed out some problems and loopholes in the sections on jobs and magic items. He also told me how I could fix them . . . and I did, gratefully. (Thanks again, Draper!)

Labor Day, 1979: l was at NorthAmericon in Louisville, trying to relax. In my spare moments, I would occasionally gaze at my briefcase and grin mindlessly. It contained a completely typeset copy of *TFT: ITL*. A little proofreading was all it needed . . .

Late 1979: Proofreading of the typeset copy was completed. A lot of corrections and changes were still needed – including some more on the economics. (Draper was still at work.) Howard was less than enthusiastic about the corrections. This I could understand; he had been waiting a long time for the game. My own feeling was that, after two years, another week was a good investment if it improved the finished product. I did the typesetting for the corrections myself, and turned the original rule draft, typeset copy, and corrections over to Howard. Ben Ostrander was in charge of the final pasteup and graphics. I was confident he'd do a good job.

Right about that point (say, Christmas of 1979), I was probably as happy as I've been since *Ogre* first appeared. After nearly three years, I was *finished* with *ITL*, and it would be out shortly. Plans called for it to be in boxed format, selling for $20. And for that $20, the buyer would get a *lot*. The box itself (with a beautiful painting by Roger Stine); 140 pages of rules; hundreds of die-cut counters; four full-color labyrinth maps; light cardboard melee megahexes; master sheets for character records and mapping; a GM's shield with charts and tables; and even three dice. I knew it would be a winner; I knew people would play it; I knew they'd enjoy it. I was happy.

Early 1980: A couple of disappointments. The game will still be published, but there are two problems.

The first: The boxed game will not be published – not now, at least. Howard felt it would be too expensive and might not sell well. Instead, the rules would appear in four separate books. *In the Labyrinth*, *Advanced Melee*, and *Advanced Wizard* would sell for $5 each, while *Tollenkar's Lair* (the "stocked labyrinth" and adventure) would sell for $3. All of these would be booklets only; those components which could not be printed in the books would be omitted. No counters or ref shield; no color maps (after Ben had worked so hard on them). Too bad. But I could see his point. Probably, from a sales viewpoint, four little books that add up to $18 are better than one big box at $20.

The second: Howard informs me he's changing his procedures. I don't get to look at page proofs before the booklets are printed. I'd been expecting a last chance to catch problems; I feel I owe it to the people who buy my designs. That's the reason for the Designer's Errata, below.

March 1980 (give or take a few weeks): The four booklets came back from the printers. There weren't too many errors – but there were some. (See the Designer's Errata, below). On the whole, feedback has been favorable. Two new MicroQuests are typeset and awaiting publication. (I forgot to mention those in the chronology. They're both solitaire adventures. *Death Test 2* is my own design, created during 1979. *Grailquest*, by Guy McLimore, is a Knights of the Round Table scenario.)

May 1980: I concluded an agreement with Howard Thompson, whereby Metagaming gained all my remaining copyrights to the *TFT* material.

As Things Stand Now . . .

I've gotten a number of questions recently about my own opinions, future plans, etc., concerning *TFT*. Some of those questions, with answers:

How do I feel about *TFT* now? I still think it's a good game – one of the best on the market. There's always room for improvement. I no longer have any say in how *TFT* will evolve, but I'll watch with interest.

Will I design future *TFT* games? Unlikely. One supplement that I designed, and several that I edited, are at Metagaming now and may eventually be published.

There is dispute over the status of another supplement originally designed for *TFT*. I have literally reams of notes that were intended for later *TFT* games or supplements. If these ever are used, they will probably appear in a generalized form, suitable for any fantasy system.

Will color maps and counters for *TFT* ever be published? I don't know. That is up to Metagaming.

Am I earning a royalty on *TFT* material? Not any longer. The copyrights on *Melee*, *Wizard*, *Death Test*, *Death Test 2*, *In The Labyrinth*, *Advanced Wizard*, and *Tollenkar's Lair* are now owned by Metagaming. Metagaming has applied for a trademark on the name "*The Fantasy Trip*."

Do I run my own *TFT* campaign? Not any longer. I haven't played for six months or so. Right now I'm a little burned out on *TFT*, and I'm very busy with *TSG* and several new game designs. But I'm keeping my notes. One day I may get back into it. Right now, the Friday night *TSG* play sessions are busy with other games.

Errata

Here follows the product of some two months' perusal of the four new *TFT* booklets as they were finally published. I would like to thank the many gamers who wrote to me with questions and comments; many of you caught things that I missed.

These are the "Designer's Errata" to the first editions – my own opinions about what should be changed in the four books for better clarity and playability. These are not "official" – I no longer own the game copyrights – but they are published with the express permission of Metagaming. For each change, I have noted whether the original problem was an

apparent pasteup error, an apparent error in my original draft, or simply a clarification of the rules as printed. I understand that Metagaming is working on revisions to the *TFT* system; I hope this material will be of use in that project. And until then, I hope it adds to your enjoyment of the game. That's what this whole business is about.

IN THE LABYRINTH

Page 2. Index. Comment: The index is all right as far as it goes, but could have been more useful had it been more comprehensive.

Page 6. A correction for WOODSMAN was pasted at the end of GADGETEER. Just delete the last four lines under GADGETEER.

Page 7. Omitted word. Should read "WIZARDLY THIEF. He'll have a high DX, and a few thievish talents . . . "

Page 8. Under DEXTERITY, reference is made to a table of DX adjustments. This table was to have appeared on the referee shield. It is not included in any of the present booklets. Players may wish to compile their own.

Page 12. A paragraph appears to have been omitted from the SWIMMING talent. Should read "General swimming ability. This talent also increases your chances of surviving a fall into water, even in armor. If you fall into water make a saving roll vs. adjDX: 4 dice for a nonswimmer, 2 for a swimmer. A figure with the Diving talent (see below) succeeds automatically."

Page 13. Typo. Fencing talent, last line, should read "you do *double* damage on any "to hit " roll of 7, 6, or 5 . . ."

Page 13. Business Sense talent (clarification): A figure with this talent cannot swindle another figure who also has the Business Sense ability. Note that almost all merchants have Business Sense.

Page 14. Inconsistency (my fault!). Line 3 of the Thief talent should read "This skill is of less use against magically locked doors (see DOORS, pp. 44-45) . . ."

Page 16. Clarification (this is supposed to be under Talents, but I can't find it. Possibly I omitted it from the final draft.): "It takes a minimum of 3 months of study to add a talent requiring 1 IQ point. A 2-point talent takes 6 months, a 3-point talent 9 months. These times double for wizards."

Page 19. Clarification: Last line should refer the reader to GUNPOWDER WEAPONS in *Advanced Melee*.

Page 21. "Mapping and Map Making" suggests that GMs take the time to color the labyrinth maps with colored pencils. I would say that this is absolutely necessary.

Page 21. "Narrow Tunnel." Clarification: Note that a multi-hex creature *could* travel through a 1-hex tunnel, if it is only 1 hex wide itself.

Page 25. JOBS. Clarification: Magic items (except Charms) do *not* help on the job-risk roll. Omission (may have resulted from my own error – whatever the source, it's important to play balance): should read ". . . give him enough experience points to raise one attribute, or 1,000 experience points, whichever is less."

Typical 1-hex-wide creatures:
horse (2 hexes) and lizard (3 hexes)
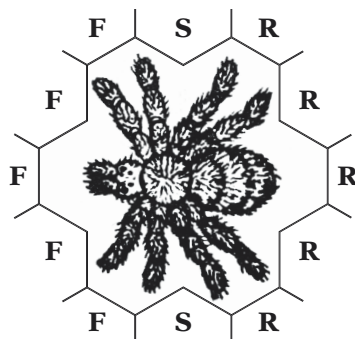
Giant spider or other megahex beast
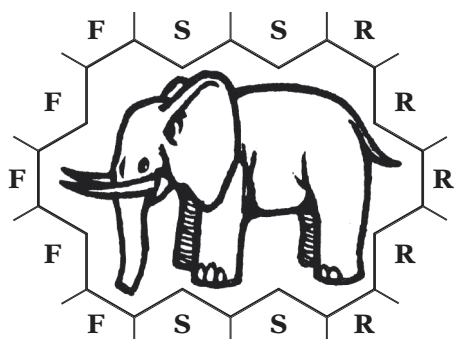
Elephant or other 10-hex beast
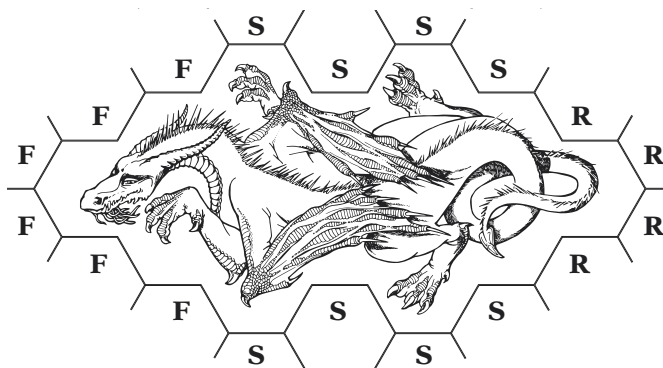
14-hex dragon

Page 30. Thieves' Guild: It takes a minimum of 6 months to learn DETECT TRAPS, 3 for REMOVE TRAPS – not the other way around. My mistake. Clarification: You pay no extra fee to learn the Thief or Master Thief talents, but you must be a member in good standing (whatever that is) of the local underworld during the time you are "studying."

Page 37. Reaction Rolls. Omission – fairly important. The modifiers to a reaction roll *cannot* give a character or party better than a +3 bonus. Nobody is so charismatic that they make friends every time.

Page 38. There is no table of saving rolls; that, too, would have been on the GM shield. Players may wish to compile their own.

Page 50. Counter shapes – front, side, and rear hexes – for several types of counters are mentioned, but not shown, in this section. Some appear in *Advanced Melee/Advanced Wizard*. Others are not given anywhere. Some of the useful ones:

Page 54. WRAITHS – clarification. For an explanation of "insubstantiality," see the spell of the same name in *Advanced Wizard*.

Page 60. Apparent pasteup problem. The last paragraph under OTHER MAMMALS is a duplicate of an earlier paragraph; delete it. The next-to-last paragraph refers to the section on HORSES and should be the last paragraph in that section.

Page 63. Hymenopteran workers can carry 250+ kg – not 500. My mistake – I was thinking in pounds.

Page 66. Clarification: Slimes *are* vulnerable to all kinds of combat magic, though they cannot sense illusions. They die if exposed to daylight, which is why they are normally found only underground.

Pages 71 and 73. Colored pencils will make these maps more readable.

ADVANCED MELEE

Page 1. Unfortunately, there is no index.

Page 4. As noted above, there is no table of DX adjustments.

Page 10. Omission. The fifth line in the second column should read ". . . half-destroyed armor can be repaired for somewhat less than the cost of new gear."

Page 12. The notes to the ARMOR AND SHIELDS table should include a reference to *Advanced Wizard*, "Iron, Silver, and Magic," to explain the DX penalty here.

Page 15. PINNING A FOE. I assume that the note "for Greeks only" was intended as a witticism. It was added after the manuscript left my hands. Nevertheless, I apologize to anyone else who was offended.

Page 18. Clarification: In REACTION TO INJURY, a figure that takes 8 or more hits one turn, and is knocked down, could take option I.h, crawling, rather than standing up or remaining prone.

Page 20. AUTOMATIC HITS. Second to last line should read " 'to hit' roll when he feels it's necessary . . . "

Page 21. Pasteup error. A correction line has been put in the wrong place, making the next-to-last paragraph of COMBAT WITH BARE HANDS very confusing. It should read something like this, starting with the fourth line: ". . . fighter does 1d-2 damage. A fighter with an UNARMED COMBAT talent does extra damage when fighting bare-handed: one extra hit for UC I, 2 for UC II, 3 for UC III and above. See TALENTS in *ITL*."

Page 23. Clarification: A torch will stay lit if you drop it intentionally, but will go out if you drop it because you rolled 17.

Page 24. Clarification: The blunderbuss affects a triangular area 15 hexes in size. Its apex is the hex the blunderbuss is pointed into, adjacent to the user. The blunderbuss hits that hex, two in the next line, three in the next, four in the next, and five in the fifth.

Page 26. SWEEPING BLOWS. Clarification: The attacker rolls separately for each figure being attacked. All rolls are made at the time of the lowest adjDX applicable to any of them.

Page 27. Line 3 should read ". . . Example of Play, given in Section IV-B of *ITL*."

Page 27. There seems to be a paragraph missing. It basically explained the fact that Melio was jabbing with the javelin, which is too short to jab with. Melio is a sneaky character. He had previously told the GM that he would make jab-attacks with the javelin whenever possible, in hopes that he could appear to be engaging in real combat without the other characters realizing that he was in no danger! Had he rolled a hit, it would have had no effect.

ADVANCED WIZARD

Page 1. Not only can this game not be used by itself; it requires some familiarity with *Advanced Melee* if it is to be used with *TFT: ITL*.

Page 1. Again, an index would have helped.

Page 9, second-to-last paragraph. Clarification: "cannot use another wish to insure a roll of 3 or 4."

Page 10, starting from the top: pasteup problem. Should read: "of the failed IQ rolls, it wouldn't work. He would lose the wish to no effect.

Pentagrams will not protect the wizard in this battle of wills – though a good pentagram would prevent the wizard from smashing anything else . . ."

Page 12. Clarification: A "good hard Magic Fist" might be 4 hits or more.

Page 14. The last sentence of the LIGHTNING spell is inconsistent with DESTRUCTION OF MAGIC ITEMS on p. 38. I suspect I failed to correct this problem before turning in the final copy, though I remember noticing it. At any rate, delete the last sentence of LIGHTNING. P. 38 is correct.

Page 15. A paragraph is missing from the EXPLOSIVE GEM spell. I cannot say for sure what was there originally. The following rules will be playable:

"The Explosive Gem spell costs 5 ST for every die of damage the gem will do when it detonates – maximum 8 dice damage. Unlike most magic items, a gem may be made instantly if the ST is available. One must begin with a gem worth at least $50. Once a gem is rendered explosive with a given power, it cannot be enchanted again to make it stronger. If this is attempted it will explode with the combined power of both spells."

Page 16. Clarification: The TRANCE may not be attempted more than twice per day.

Page 26. Clarification: Gold, bronze, etc., weapons may also be carried by a wizard, but edged weapons of such materials will do less damage than silver or steel.

Page 27-28. Put a "B" after Trip, Blur, Slow Movement, Sleep, Freeze, Fireproof, and Stone Flesh. Put an "A" after Detect Life and Detect Enemies (double cost for each additional MH) and a "C" after Drop Weapons (double cost for ST 20+).

Iron Flesh should require $16,000, B, 5 weeks, 450 ST/day, $1,600/week. ST battery (1 point) should require $1,000, B, 2 weeks, 20 ST/day, $40 ci/week (no potion).

Page 29. Two clarifications, courtesy of Draper Kauffman. Footnote B: "Furthermore, some items, like Trip, Sleep, Fireproof, etc., affect only one hex in their basic forms. A basic Trip would not trip a giant; you would need either a triple-powered Trip (3 wizards, or one wizard and 6 weeks) or 3 normal Trip items. If you want to fireproof your horse, you could use a double-power Fireproof item, or two basic items. If you wanted to put a 14-hex dragon to sleep, you could do it with a 14-power Sleep item ($14,000!)."

Footnote C: "The basic Drop Weapon item works on figures with ST less than 20; the 2-power version works on any ST."

Page 30: My "cost of magical items" example is misleading. It was a calculation of the price the wizards would have charged for their work. However, it was *not* the "fair market value" of the coronet. Fair market value assumes the wizards worked in the most efficient way – and these did not.

Fair market value would be correctly figured thus: Jeweled coronet: $15,000. Add Telepathy spell: $20,000. Add Iron Flesh, doubled cost: $32,000. Subtotal with two spells: $67,000. Add 20% of this, since Control Person is an "E" spell: $13,400. Add Control Person (quadrupled cost): $40,000. Add Reverse Missiles (octupled cost): another $40,000. Total value: $160,400.

Page 31. Apparent pasteup error. If the "Multiply Enchanted Item" rules is read at the beginning of page 30 the rules are more clear.

Page 34. Some lines have been omitted from the WORD OF COMMAND explanation. Starting with the fourth line from the bottom, try "*already* unaffected by the Word, merely to tip it over or turn its face to the wall."

Page 38: Usually when an arrow is enchanted, the actual spell is cast only on the arrow*head*. Otherwise the spell could be nullified merely by breaking off the arrow shaft.

Page 39. Apparent pasteup error. The last paragraph, "Thrown Spells," is a duplicate of a paragraph in *Advanced Melee*, p. 14. The two paragraphs above it, RECOVERING LOST STRENGTH, duplicate paragraphs on p. 25 of that booklet. If it was intended that these rules be repeated (maybe not a bad idea, at least for the ST rules), another location would have been clearer.

TOLLENKAR'S LAIR

The pages of this game were not numbered. I have numbered mine beginning with the first right-hand inside page as 1. This makes the last page (inside back cover) 17.

Page 1. Pasteup error. Delete the line "OK starting with 'Beginning characters.' " It was apparently intended as a note to the pasteup artist. It has nothing to do with the game.

Page 9. Figure 4-1 could be misleading about the blunderbuss' effect. Place the blunderbuss in the center hex of megahex B and figure its effective range as given above.

Page 9. *Advanced Wizard* is also useful for Level 5.

Page 9. Second column should begin "Ten hand-picked killers mount guard here . . ."

Pages 16-17. By all means, use colored pencils on the map.

By Ronald Pehr
From TSG 31
(September 1980)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, here it is. It's stupendous, it's colossal, it's the greatest fantasy role-playing game on earth! Presented by Metagaming, designed by Steve Jackson, in the year 1980 . . . *The Fantasy Trip*! (flourish of trumpets).

This is Metagaming's long-awaited FRP game, designed for a game master and any number of players. It consists of three 8½" × 11" rule booklets, each costing $5, with identical pictures of fantastic adventurers on each cover. *In The Labyrinth*, the Game Master's module, has 78 pages. *Advanced Melee*, the combat rules, has 32 pages. *Advanced Wizard*, the magic rules, has 39 pages.

Those who recall the mutually incompatible Original, Basic, and Advanced versions of another, extremely popular, FRP game may feel that there is dirty work afoot here. Is Metagaming attempting the same type of skullduggery, marketing the same games twice? Not really. The originals are just that, stand-alone Microgames. They can be part of *The Fantasy Trip* if you don't want to buy the *Advanced* versions, but only because they're so well-designed themselves. The *Advanced Melee* and *Wizard* books make no claim to be games; they are just part of *The Fantasy Trip*.

This puts the game in a bad price range. At $15 it isn't anywhere near as expensive as *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* (a game whose price, scope, size, and complexity put it in a whole different league). However, it is slightly more costly than the basic versions of *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Runequest*, or *Tunnels & Trolls*. "Worth the money" is a subjective evaluation; the price differences are small enough that *The Fantasy Trip* can be honestly considered a competitor. To me, it is a very good one. The game systems pioneered in the Microgames were playable, fun, and adapt well to their expansion and improvement. Does *The Fantasy Trip* do anything that *Runequest* doesn't? Honestly, no. The latter also has a far better developed background world and a seemingly more realistic combat system. However, it requires a lot of time, attention and numerical figuring. *The Fantasy Trip* offers as much scope for gaming, better playability, the magic system is just as "realistic," and, most important, you can keep track of what the characters are doing without the arithmetic.

The problem, again, is price. Someone who had played the original *D&D*, and was looking to start his own FRP campaign, might have purchased *Runequest* or *Chivalry & Sorcery* because they offered coherent games with better mechanics than *D&D*. Adding the supplements made *D&D* better, but also more expensive, and the Advanced version was more expensive still and wasn't published as a full campaign game one at a time. So someone who wanted that, wasn't satisfied with Original *D&D*, and didn't own a money tree went out and bought one of the other games. *The Fantasy Trip* isn't cheaper than they are and didn't come out until they were established.

Having stated the foregoing economic facts, let me say if you missed it the first time – that *The Fantasy Trip* is very, very good. Good enough to be competitive.

In The Labyrinth tells you how to create Warrior or Wizard characters, set up dungeon adventure maps, learn and use talents for adventuring, gives the background of Cidri – the world where the action takes place – and describes the various humanoids and monsters. There are rules for encumbrance, character reactions, traps, and how the various talents are applied in an adventure. There's a brief foray into economics (did you ever wonder how much a wizard can make washing dishes if he can't get a magic gig?), sample dungeon and outdoor maps, and sample character record sheets.

Advanced Melee covers movement and combat options, various contingencies a character might face such as climbing, swimming, and ambush, various optional additions to the combat system – specifically designed to add a realistic feeling but slowing play of the combats – and there is even an optional combat system for faster, less complex play.

Advanced Wizard describes different types of spells, use of magic in conjunction with the combat system, and rules for characters to create magic potions and artifacts. Each of the rules booklets has a page or two of sample hexes which can be photocopied for an unending supply of gaming arenas.

It is the hexagonal-spaces game "board" which makes *The Fantasy Trip* unique. Unlike other RPGs, it is designed to be played with pieces moved on a board. The board consists of linked hexagons, each representing one and 1/3 meters; the pieces are anything which indicate individual characters. Most people use 25mm metal figurines, sold by many different companies. Whenever a situation arises where distance is important, and that usually means combat, markers are put on the board at the appropriate distance from each other. All movement and weapon ranges are given in terms of the number of hexes separating characters. In this way are resolved the questions of who could perform certain activities at certain times during the hostilities between characters. All games have some sort of movement criteria, usually expressed in scale inches, but *The Fantasy Trip* fully develops the use of a board to completely define the operational limits of the characters. This might seem limiting, the kind of thing you took up FRP to avoid, but it actually makes the game far more workable. Gone are the disputes between the players and Game Master in which the former claims the characters were out of position or didn't have enough time. There is now a graphic, discernable basis for ongoing actions which
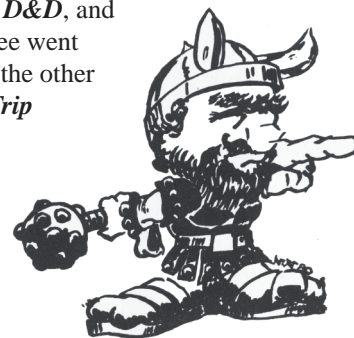
increases rather than limits the fun. Those who can't stand the idea of a board in FRP can simply convert "hexes" to inches and play on any surface, even actual scale-model terrain. The other unique feature of *The Fantasy Trip* is use of the basic characteristics of the characters to resolve situations. Every character has Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), and Intelligence (IQ); every special action attempted depends directly on these. You roll a certain number of dice and if the number is less than the parameter being tested then the action was successfully undertaken. Thus, to kick open a locked door requires rolling 5 dice to generate a number less than or equal to the character's ST, to walk and chew gum at the same time requires rolling a number less than the character's DX (only kidding, Steve, put down that battleaxe), and so on.

ST, DX, and IQ are selected, within limits defined by the rules, and they may be increased as the player achieves experience for slaying monsters, avoiding traps, casting magic spells, and otherwise performing heroic deeds. There may come a point where a character can do nearly anything, nearly any time, a problem in many roleplaying games. The only antidote is an imaginative Game Master arranging more perilous situations requiring higher amounts of dice to be rolled, or situations where the player must figure out the solutions.

The use of only three basic characteristics may seem overly simple-minded to those who are used to a character having six, eight, or more, and even then have various charts and tables to resolve combat, magic, and special situations. If that's the way you feel, you won't like *The Fantasy Trip* no matter what it offers. To some extent, I'm one of those people. But *The Fantasy Trip* must be evaluated by the criterion "Does It Work?" Yes. It allows absorbing, interesting, fascinating play, by an elegant system which is easy to use and doesn't sacrifice too much of the character identification that comes with elaborate sets of basic characteristics that are rolled in other games.

There are faults in this game, no doubt about it. The static "you-move-then-I-move-then-we-strike" is a holdover from Microgaming wherein a balanced tactical system was more important than simulating the fluid motion of a real duel. There are facets of play that are glossed over (personality, size, and reactions of different characters). Some monsters are too stereotyped and limited in their options ("Uh oh, it's the Giant Amoeba; we've got one roll to hit the nucleus before we're engulfed." "Uh oh, it's an Apep; we've only got a chance to run or fight because he won't talk to us.")

The absolute worst, and inexcusable, fault is the total lack of organization. Rules are scattered hither and yon, with no index to give you a clue. *In The Labyrinth* has an inadequate Table of Contents, the other booklets don't even have that. It should have been easy enough to preserve the presentation sequence of the Microgames rules and insert the *Advanced* rules to be playable as Microgames. It also states on the first page of the two *Advanced* rules that they aren't stand-alone games, but even though Metagaming wanted to preserve that difference, it wouldn't have hurt to have had as clean and organized presentation in the FRP modules as in the Micros. *The Fantasy Trip* was a long time in coming, in that time there could have been a lot more attention to detail and presentation. Coming late in the current cycle of interest in FRP, *The Fantasy Trip* needs every advantage it can get.

The Fantasy Trip is an excellent FRP game system. I'd have liked it to be better organized and a few dollars cheaper. Those who purchase it anyway will be very glad they did.
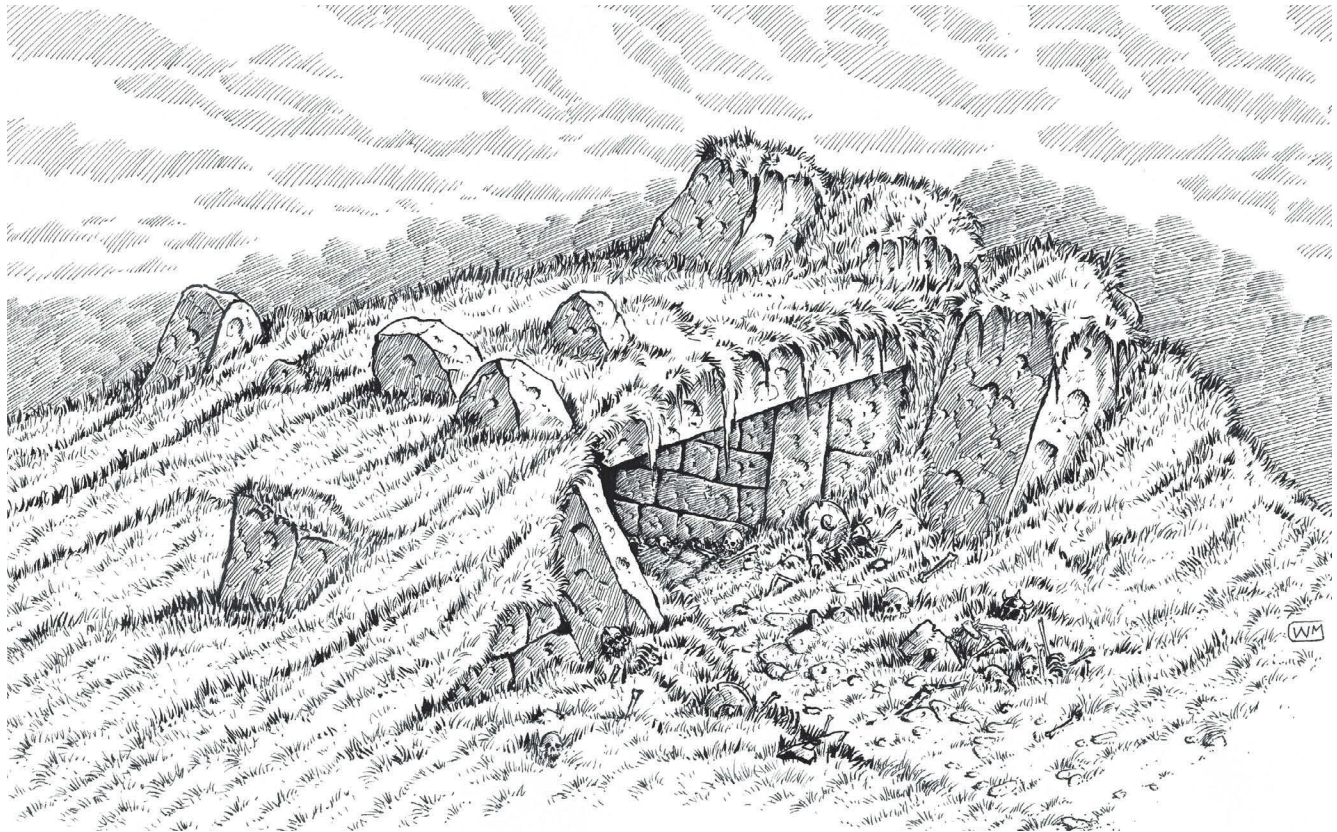
By Aaron Allston

*From TSG 36
(February 1981)*

When, very early in my *D&D* career, I rolled up my first paladin (an affable chap named Astolph who has an intense dislike of undead), I barraged the DM with questions about the character's requisite behavior: Can he sympathize with an evil foe? Call for help when his life is threatened? Weep? Destroy an inhuman foe who is surrendering? Make love? Marry? Sire children? Crack jokes? Make awful puns?

The collective answer was NO. The reason was BECAUSE HE'S ABSOLUTE LAWFUL GOOD. The DM was fourteen. His only idea of paladin-type behavior seemed to come from watching Launcelot in the musical version of *Camelot*. His supposition that each of the listed activities was inherently evil was frustrating in the extreme.

Most of his answers fall before logical reasoning. A paragon-figure, besides going out, destroying evil, gathering loot, and giving most of it away, is trying to act as a role-model, a racial/national hero-figure to whom the young and weak may look for advice or aid.

The society of the paragon's people, his protectorate, will influence his behavior to a great extent. A paladin from an England-like kingdom will not act identically to a paladin from a Japan-like land; chivalry is not the same thing as bushido.

A paragon born in Rohan already has certain of his behavior modes laid out before him. He'll be a Rider of Rohan.

As a role-model, he'll try to become a superb horseman. On the other end of the spectrum, an Earthsea paladin may not even know which end of a horse is which. He'll become the best seaman he can.

Some DMs allow non-human paladins. Obviously, an elf-paragon will not function as does a dwarf-paragon, and neither's behavior could be confused with that of (yech) a half-orc-paragon. (The concept of a prootwaddle-paragon is so chilling that I will not deal with it.) The elf will fight for woods and streams, for love of things green and growing. The dwarf will defend deep tunnels and caves of dwarfkind; he will be moved much by the beauty of gold, though he will not accumulate much. The half-orc will fight to express his dislike of the other character races, and the world at large.

There are certain weapons appropriate to a paragon. A human-paragon will automatically opt for sword and shield, unless his culture emphasizes some other weapon. The elf-paragon will master sword, spear, and bow. The dwarf-paragon will choose first the axe and hammer. The orc-paragon will probably pick up the nastiest thing available, then drag it in a swamp to poison the edges.

A paragon will develop his abilities to benefit his people. Expressed in *TFT* terms, almost any paragon may have Literacy, Courtly Graces, Charisma, Diplomacy, New Followers, Tactics, and Physicker. A human will also have Sword and Shield at the very least; an elf, Sword, Spear, Bow, and Woodsman; a dwarf, Axe/Mace, Thrown Weapons, Engineer, and Mechanician. An orc might have Whip or Monster Followers.

If the paragon's society does not disallow it, bedding a consenting partner will do neither harm. A paragon can obviously feel sorrow for his opponent (as he cuts him down); a paladin can interpret "mercy" to a surrendering vampire as the release of its soul from its soon-to-be trashed mortal form. A paragon born to a witty Renaissance-type society may be an unstoppable punster and will probably opt for rapier and main-gauche in lieu of broadsword and shield.

Regard Arthur Pendragon, legendary King of Britain. Was he not a paragon? He carried forth the noblest ideals to his people, and fought for them with all the abilities and forces at his command. He was surely a paladin. Yet he suffered much in spite of all his goodness, was betrayed, and died unhappy. Though a paragon, he was still a feeling, mortal man, not the typical boring personification of good.

Magic Contest Results

From TSG 39 (May 1981)

One of the contests *The Space Gamer* ran, back in the day, was for magic items. Many of the winning entries were *TFT*-related, and here they are!

The winner was Draper Kauffman, of St. Louis. He sent three items, all ingenious and useful.

The Spell Crystal: A prismatic lens of pure rock crystal, usually worn on a headband, helm, or pendant. It can store the memory of any one Creation spell and repeat that spell at the wearer's command. Power for its spells must come from the wearer (or a ST Battery) at the normal cost. The Spell Crystal can be used in either of two ways: a) to double a spell as the wearer casts it, creating two gargoyles instead of one, for example, or b) to repeat a spell which the wearer has just cast; thus, having just summoned a gargoyle (or two, as in A), the wearer could use the Crystal to continue summoning one gargoyle per turn until he got bored or ran out of ST. The wearer may fight, move, cast other spells, etc. while the crystal repeats its spell, but once the repetition is stopped, the wearer cannot restart it without successfully casting a new spell.

The Spell Crystal is a greater magic item that takes 5 weeks to prepare and costs $12,500. The enchantment requires a suitable crystal ($500), 150 ST per day, and supplies worth $1,559 per week: one dose of Telepathy potion ($1,500), one parrot's tongue ($35), and $24 of common ingredients.

Summon Small Creature: Creation spell. Brings a small non-magical creature the wizard specifies to do the wizard's bidding. Neither ST nor IQ can be more than 6. Useful creatures include cats, dogs, monkeys, slinkers, ferrets, skunks, otters, hawks, bats, dragonets, snakes, scorpions, and so on. Might be: IQ 8, 1 ST to cast and 1 ST/turn to maintain. Note: If the wizard barely succeeds (i.e., makes the maximum possible successful roll), the GM may substitute any creature that is similar in some way to the one specified.

(Note from SJ: Something like this definitely needs to become official, though I don't know if it should allow for a wide choice of creatures.)

Rod of Aaron: Thrown spell. Might be around IQ 13 in *TFT*. Costs 3 ST to cast, 1 per minute to maintain. Makes limp things stiff while spell is on. Can be used to turn a vine into an impromptu pole or hook, to turn a rope ladder into a rigid one, to make a rowboat out of an appropriately shaped piece of oilcloth, and so on. Object should be laid out in the desired shape first; a single spell can affect only volumes of 2.5 cubic meters or less. The spell can be used on living things – it is much prized by courtesans, for example – but the cost to maintain it is 1 ST per turn if the target is resisting being stiffened. (A magic item based on this spell would cost about $6,500, should be wand-shaped, and must be touched to the item to be stiffened; the effect lasts as long as contact is maintained, at no ST cost.)

Second place went to Theodore Miller (Howard Beach, NY) for a remarkably sinister gadget:

Rings of Dorian Gray. When each is worn by a living humanoid, any physical change that would normally affect one wearer happens to the other wearer instead. This includes injury, disease, the effects of aging, magically-induced changes (polymorph, clumsiness, invisibility, etc.), energy drain, fatigue and rest, hunger and eating, normal or magical healing, and so on.

If one wearer dies, all injury above that necessary to kill that wearer happens to the one who is actually being attacked. The effect of the rings stops. A ring may only be removed by Remove Curse, Wish, or the death of the wearer.

Player characters may discover either a single ring or a pair. Those finding only one ring from a pair, when the other is worn by someone somewhere else, are likely to end up in unusual situations. For example, they may starve in the midst of plenty, since when they eat the other wearer feels full and doesn't eat. A PC with one ring might wade through melees without being harmed, but only until the other wearer dies, or ends it by "suicide," which will kill the player character instead.

Someone who discovers or produces a pair of rings may avoid the effects of aging by giving the other to a young person, buy a slave to take injuries for him, and so on. A reverse suicide is always possible, however, so that the player had better either make a good deal or hire some trustworthy guards to watch the other wearer.

(SJ note: I have thought of a couple of non-evil uses for these rings. But only a couple!)

Mapping Potion: Endows user with the ability to sense his location accurately, including his direction and distance from any known reference point, and to remember accurately any path actually taken by the user. Lasts 1 day. Requires the brains of 20 homing pigeons ($3 each), and five weeks to make. Costs $300.

– Susan Kauffman

Ring of Direction: When the wearer concentrates on a place that is personally known to him, the Ring will tingle if the finger it is on is pointed in the direction of that place; the strength of the sensation is inversely proportional to the distance. In addition, the wearer may use that finger to trace on a map an accurate rendering of any path he has taken within the past 48 hours while wearing the ring. May also be set in a headband or helm and worn on the forehead, in which case it tingles when the wearer looks in the right direction and allows him to retrace a path with his eyes while walking or looking at a map. It is a lesser magic item, costs $3,000, and takes 3 weeks to make, starting with a gold ring or nugget worth $70 and using 120 ST per day and one dose of Mapping Potion ($300) per week.

(Obviously, there could also be a Location spell – perhaps IQ 11, costing 1 ST per 5 minutes, or something like that.)

– Susan Kauffman

Smoke (C)/IQ 12: Fills one hex with thick, yellow, roiling clouds of noxious smoke, extending some 3 meters into the air. A hex may be smoked while a figure is in it. Figures may move freely through or into smoked hexes. A figure attacking from or through a smoke hex does so at a -4 DX; any attack into a smoke hex is at a -2 DX. Any figure which moves into a smoke hex and stops (to attack, disbelieve, etc.) takes 1 hit of Fatigue damage due to smoke inhalation. Any figure present in a hex when it is first smoked must make a 4-die roll vs. DX. Success means the figure held his breath and jumped away into an adjacent hex; failure means the figure takes 1 hit of Fatigue damage. Cost for this spell: 2 ST.

This spell would probably also be available in 4- and 7-hex forms. I recommend that the 4-hex version be an IQ 14, 4 ST Cost spell and that the 7-hex version be an IQ 16, 6 ST Cost spell.

– Steve Woodcock

Zone of Silence (C)/IQ 14: This spell creates a magical barrier to sound. A Zone of Silence will prevent all sound of any type or strength from passing through it, as well as any sound originating in the affected area. It will *not* stop light, insubstantial beings, or in fact anything physical . . . just sound. Basic ST cost is 3 to cover an area within 1 hex of the wizard; range can be increased by 1 hex in all directions for each additional ST point the wizard puts into it. Duration of this spell is 3 turns, but this too may be increased (no matter what its range) at a cost of 1 ST per turn. *Example*: A wizard wishes to cast a Zone of Silence over an area 3 hexes from his own hex for 4 turns. It costs him 3 ST to cast it, plus 2 ST for extending it an additional 2 hexes, plus 1 more ST to hold it an extra turn, for a total ST cost of 6 ST. If the wizard is killed or goes unconscious, the Zone will lift. The Zone *can* be adjusted to affect a part of an area, if the wizard so desires.

If a Zone of Silence only partially restricts the "flow of sound" (that is, if sound can still find some path around the Zone), subtract 1 MH from the distance the sound carries for each hex covered by the Zone.

– Steve Woodcock

Force Field (C)/IQ 25: This spell will create a magical barrier that will stop almost anything – spells, physical attacks, illusions, images, summoned beings, etc. It does not affect spells already cast, and will not block Demons, astral bodies, or insubstantial figures. When a spell is cast on a figure protected by a Force Field, the wizard casting the spell loses the full ST cost for that spell, because it succeeded but was nullified. Physical attacks against a figure protected by a Force Field are conducted normally, except that no harm is done to the protected figure (no matter what the die roll is). Costs 20 ST to cast, plus 5 ST per turn it is maintained. Range is 1 hex from the wizard's hex; this may be extended at a cost of 5 ST per hex (not per extra hex of range). This spell may NOT be removed by a Dissolve Enchantment, although of course a Wish will remove it. The catches: (1) It takes 5 undisturbed turns to construct a Force Field; any disturbance of the caster costs the wizard 1 ST and forces them to start over. (2) When the first attack is made against the Force Field, the wizard who constructed it must make a 5-die saving roll on IQ; failure means the Force Field is faulty and offers no protection.

– Steve Woodcock

SJ note: IQ 25? Well, it is a powerful spell. Nevertheless, if GMs introduce this one, it should not be freely taught by the Wizard's Guild.

Mobius Ladder: A ladder runs through the center of an open shaft in the center of a room in a dungeon. The shaft extends for three levels, though it seems endless. When someone climbs through the ceiling of the highest level he enters the floor of the lowest level on the opposite side of the ladder and vice versa.

– James H. Kelley

SJ note: It could extend for any number of levels. It could be a stairway or a series of ramps rather than a ladder, with a different "reverse sides" effect. What happens if you are on the ladder and you drop something?

The following is a list of hints based on almost three years of *TFT* play. I hope that this article will inspire some of you other players to write in and share your experiences.

1. Sending a character out into the world with a low DX should be grounds for a charge of criminal negligence.

More often than not, I have seen the smart, the strong, and the heavily armored ripped apart by the quick. Characters with a low adjusted DX flail away turn after turn without hitting, low DX wizards waste ST on botched spells, and both usually meet a quick end if they have to make a saving roll against DX. An adjusted DX of 10 gives a 50% chance of hitting, casting a spell, or making a 3 dice saving roll. Because of the bell curve nature of the numbers generated by 3 dice, a 9 reduces your chances to 37.5%, while an 11 raises it to 62.5%. The lesson from these figures should be obvious: Don't start a character with a DX lower than 10. Don't encumber him with armor or goodies that reduce DX below 10. Don't have him use weapons he doesn't have the talents for, or that are too big for him. Pick talents that raise DX.

A related matter: DX points "traded off" for armor protection are a better deal than those same points allocated to ST, when it comes to protecting your character. Say you have a beginning character and you've given him ST 10, DX 10, IQ 10. You still have two points to give him. Your main concern is keeping him alive. Assuming I've convinced you to maintain his adjusted DX at 10, you have two options. You can give the 2 points to ST, and he'll get to absorb two hits of damage once. But if you put the two points on DX, you can put him in leather armor, (and still maintain an adjusted DX of 10), and he can absorb two hits of damage any number of times. (But to keep your decision from being too easy, though, remember that ST is good for other things besides absorbing damage, like bigger weapons and being able to carry more loot and equipment.)

2. Don't overlook the value of pole weapons.

I don't know if it's just the people I play with, but in my experience beginning players tend to overvalue missile weapons at the expense of pole weapons. Due to the close-quarters type of fighting most prevalent in *TFT*, bowmen usually get off a shot or two and then get sliced up by an adjacent figure while trying to draw a new weapon. If this happens to you, try screening your missile weapon users with polearm wielders. The +2 DX for a set pole weapon, and the double damage bonus for a charge attack, make polearms devastating. The ***Advanced Melee*** rules, with

two-hex jabs and polearm attacks coming off first, make them even more effective.

The next time your group of adventurers takes on a giant or a dragon, try to get somebody with a pole weapon around behind it. The +2 or +4 DX and the double damage bonus will usually bring a quick end to your adversary.

3. The character who tries to do everything usually ends up doing nothing well.

This applies more to beginning characters than to the "veterans." This is mainly a matter of selecting talents wisely.

For starters, if you have to have a character who knows both spells and talents, you're better off with a wizard who knows a couple of talents, rather than a hero who knows a couple of spells. Wizards pay double to know talents (and in some cases not even that), while heroes pay triple for spells. Heroes also cast those spells at -4 DX. Don't waste your hero's attribute points knowing something they can't use very well.

When picking talents for new characters, don't spread their areas of expertise too thin. There is a tendency to try and make a jack of all trades. Don't. Consult the table of jobs and pick those talents which will make your character strong in some area from the start, (fighter, leader, thief, martial wizard, etc.). Later on, as he gains experience, you can turn him into a cardboard Renaissance man.

4. Think "cost effectiveness" when selecting talents and spells.

Say you have two IQ points to allot to a weapons talent. If you take a peculiar weapons talent, like Lasso, you can use a lasso, period. But if you spend that two points on Sword, you can use up to eight different weapons, depending on your strength. If your character should ever get caught weaponless on an adventure, he'll probably be able to find a suitable sword to use long before he finds a boomerang or some nunchuks just lying around.

When selecting a wizard's combat spells, consider giving him a high/low mix. Give him the most powerful missile spell he can use, the most powerful defensive spell, and one of the "cheapies," like Blur, that doesn't cost much to cast. The same goes for summoned creatures; take the most powerful one you can get, but also take Wolf or Myrmidon. It's been my experience that the character who loads up on the fancy spells usually doesn't have the ST to power more than a couple of them over the course of an adventure, while the wizard with several of the simpler spells proves to be more of a help to himself and his companions.

When selecting the talents you have your character "learning," keep this in mind. Assuming that you will use all your experience points to add attribute points to IQ, (a dubious assumption), it only costs 375 experience points to learn three one-point talents. It costs 2500 points to learn three three-point talents! Knowing this, you might want to keep your character's aspirations modest.

The Flinger and the Blob

*Probably the best munchkining of the **TFT** rules that I ever heard of . . . and directly responsible for some tweaks to the new edition rules.*

By Phil Rennert
TSG 49 (March 1982)

Recently I played **Death Test 2**, trying an experiment with new types of characters. It worked out (a party of four 32-point figures came through without a loss, even with rooms picked at random to make it fair), so I thought I'd report the results. These character types are made up with a **Death-Test**-type adventure in mind, but can be of use in any **TFT** adventure.

The Flinger

With the advent of **TFT**, all of us old **Melee** players watched our favorite weapon, the light crossbow, become obsolete. It's been replaced by the boomerang, which is easier to use and does as much damage. Coupling this with the insidious stopping power of the bola and the awesome hit potential of a barrage of sha-ken produces a powerful character: the Flinger. Statistics for a beginning Flinger are given below:

ST 9
DX 15
IQ 8
Talents:
Thrown Weapons
Boomerang
Bola
Sha-ken
Shield
another 2-pt. talent (Running?)

He carries as many boomerangs, bolas, and pouches of sha-ken as you can talk the GM into. He also carries a small shield.

Let's see how he fights. His high DX will probably let him get off the first action. With his Thrown Weapons talent, he can throw a weapon on the turn he readies it, so he can chug out one throw per turn. First (range permitting) he tangles a foe's arms with a bola, reducing him to helplessness for at least two turns. With the Thrown Weapons bonus, his DX to bola an adjacent foe is 16, minus one per additional hex, so the odds are in his favor out to 6 hexes away. Then he polishes off said foe with a volley of boomerangs.

His DX with a boomerang is 15 (the Thrown Weapons bonus canceled by the fact that he's two points understrength). Remember that boomerangs are treated as missile weapons when calculating DX penalties for range. His boomerangs do 2d-1 damage when they hit (-1 for under-strength penalty), which is as good as a shortsword. If an unarmored foe comes adjacent, the Flinger can emulate a machine gun, throwing 9 sha-ken at DX 10, or 12 sha-ken at DX 8. Each does 1d-2 damage when it hits; altogether, there's about an even chance of scoring the 8 hits needed to knock the attacker down. If a very heavily armored foe is adjacent, the Flinger can try to throw a single sha-ken through his faceguard (dagger marksmanship rules) at DX 10: it does 1d-2, doubled if it hits, and the victim's armor and shield don't help. Finally, since the rules don't require the use of more than one hand for all of the above, the Flinger can carry a small shield in his other hand, stopping 1 hit/attack.

Not bad for a beginning character! As he gains experience, most of it will go into DX: he can then increase his range and effectiveness (particularly the effectiveness of his 12 sha-ken barrage), or alternatively, start wearing armor, keeping his adjusted DX the same and gaining protection. All in all, he's not someone you'd want for an enemy.

Another word along these lines: in an adventure like **Death Test**, there's much to be said for making mini-Flingers out of wizards. In such an adventure, where wizards' strengths must be carefully husbanded (which I feel makes such adventures more challenging and interesting than the routine of "throw a 7-die fireball, stop and rest up, throw another . . ." encountered in some **TFT** adventures), wizards spend much of their time standing in back doing nothing. It only costs 6 IQ points to buy Thrown Weapons and Boomerang, which skills allow the wizard to become a useful part of the barrage, and he still has enough IQ left for Illusion, Fireball, Sleep, and a few others (these spells seem to be a wizard's mainstays; others, like Control Animal, Reverse Missiles, etc. are occasionally very useful, but if there's more than one wizard in the party, they can be split among the available wizards, so that someone will have the spell if you need it, and still all the wizards can throw boomerangs). This all sounds good, you may say, but who's going to hold off the mobs of sword-armed orcs while the Flingers are flinging? And another perennial problem in making up parties: who's going to bring useful talents like Physicker, Tactics, etc., and how can he be kept from getting killed? The answer lies in another new character type . . .
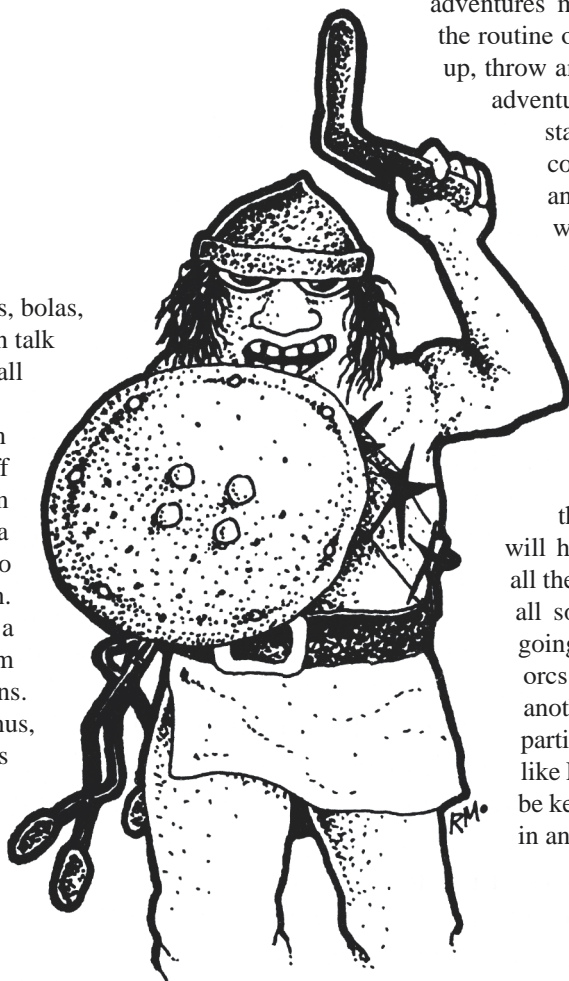
The Blob

The basic idea behind the Blob is to keep the enemy engaged while the Flingers take care of him, and also provide a safe repository for the party's vital talents. Remember how nice it was to have a heavily armored upper-level character? Now you can have the same benefit (sort of) from a beginning character. Statistics for a 32-point Blob are given below:

ST 13
DX 8
IQ 11
Talents:
Physicker
Tactics
Charisma
Alertness
New Followers
Naturalist

(Alternative talents might be Detect Traps, Diplomacy, Monster Followers, Animal Handler, Literacy, Languages, or Detection of Lies.)

He wears plate armor and carries a tower shield and a bastard sword; he stops 8 hits/attack, and his movement allowance is 6. (If you're using nonhuman figures, you can make him a dwarf: then his DX can be 6, freeing 2 more points for IQ or ST; also, he can carry twice the weight.)

You may have noticed that his adjusted DX won't be very high. Let's tote up the damage. He wears plate armor (-6), carries a tower shield (-2) which he doesn't have the talent for (-4), swings a sword he doesn't have the talent for (-4), and carries 3 to 4 times his strength in weight (-1). His adjusted DX to hit with his sword is -9! The point of this is that there's no difference in the rules between DX 5 and DX -9: he still hits on 3 (triple damage), 4 (double damage), or 5. And even if you have a reasonable GM who says "I don't care: This guy only hits on 3," the Blob isn't out there to hit anyone; he's there to keep the enemy busy while the Flingers kill him. Standing a hex or two in front of the rest of the party, he has the power to keep foes engaged, keeping them off the necks of the Flingers and wizards, meanwhile taking little or no damage from their attacks, due to his heavy armor. And as party leader, he can help you avoid trouble by spotting traps and making friends out of potential attackers, as well as providing healing for all after the fights.

A Blob also presents an interesting roleplaying challenge. A possible biography:

Although Hugo was a strong youth, his lack of dexterity kept him from taking up the career of wizard or warrior. Instead, he turned to learning, amassing a diverse collection of skills and knowledge. Well-liked by all who knew him, he stood out as a natural leader, and his advice was frequently sought. When the call to adventure sounded, he generally preferred to remain at home, functioning as an adviser for the collection of friends and followers who had gathered around him. Now, however, he has been drawn out of his armchair (by some great quest?) to walk the glory road at last, though not without taking the wise precaution of obtaining the strongest armor available. Now at the head of a picked group, he is about to come face to face with . . .

Sound interesting?

A word of caution about playing a Blob, though: he doesn't gain experience rapidly. He can easily go through a whole adventure without landing a blow. This may relegate him to being one of the two or more characters being played by the same player. All that no-joy die-rolling can get frustrating.

I hope you enjoy trying out these character types. They can add a lot to a party, or, on the other side, they can be a nasty surprise. I would be interested in hearing your comments.
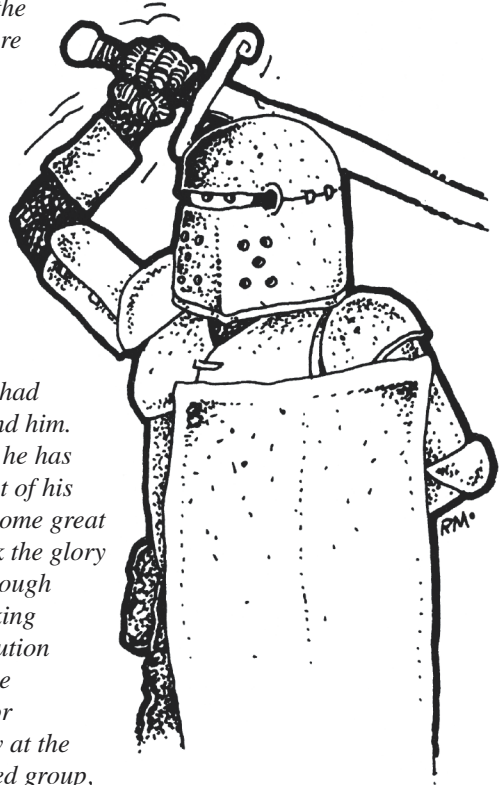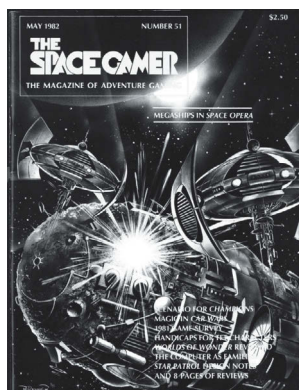
By Forrest Johnson
From TSG 51 (May 1982)

SJ note: As far as I know, this article was the first appearance anywhere of a "disadvantage" system for characters!

Kill-da-monsters-and-grab-da-loot.

That's what it often gets down to. **The Fantasy Trip** allows creation of personalized characters – you can create a character who spots traps and cracks a whip like Indiana Jones, for example – but if the players want to hack, they hack. Roll-playing replaces roleplaying; the designer's work is wasted.

One way to make characters more interesting is to give them handicaps. Indiana Jones was afraid of snakes. Captain Ahab hobbled around on a peg leg. Conan kept losing his temper. These things can enhance roleplaying, but they interfere with hacking. A sharp GM rewards roleplaying with an occasional experience bonus, but the easy points come from butchering goblins. Who wants a character that's afraid of snakes?

There is a way to make handicapped characters more attractive. The GM can give *bonus points* for handicapped characters during creation. For example, allow a player to start with a 34-point character during creation, but give that character a handicap *which he will never outgrow*. Below are some suggested handicaps, with suggested bonus points for each.

1-Point Handicaps

Gullible: ("Hey, mister! Look behind you!") It matters not how outrageous the lie, this character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ or believe it. A similar roll is required if he wants to avoid taking the first offer in bargaining. However, this handicap will have little effect on his combat ability, since few monsters will know about his little problem, or be bright enough to take advantage of it.

Hard of Hearing: ("Eh, what did you say?") This character must roll an extra die to notice a sound. He will not hear what is going on if the other characters whisper. He cannot learn Acute Hearing.

Miserly: ("Bah! I wouldn't give you three coppers for that thing!") A miser must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to part with his money for anything. He will often sleep in a barn rather than waste his hard-earned silvers on an inn. If he misses a roll, he can try again the next day (or week, if he is trying to buy a magic item).

2-Point Handicaps

Alcoholic: ("Get that bottle away from Spitsky!") An alcoholic must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to abstain any time the opportunity for drinking presents itself. Once he starts drinking, he must roll 4 dice vs. IQ to stop. He may roll once after each drink he takes; it is assumed that these are hefty drinks. After consuming a number of drinks equal to his ST divided by 4 (drop any fractions) he will be sufficiently pickled that his resolve will evaporate entirely; he will continue drinking until thoroughly soused. Thus, a human with a ST of 11 or less would get two chances to quit once he started drinking; a character with ST 12-15 would get three chances, and so on.

Once drunk, he will be no good to anyone for 8 hours, and will have a hangover (-2 to all rolls) for 8 hours after that. (It is presumed that the character is a binge drinker rather than a chronic drinker; no modification need be made to employment rolls.)

Caiaphas (Lame Wizard)
ST 8
DX 14
IQ 12
Talents: Whip, Literacy
Spells: Trip, Detect Magic, Illusion, Lock/Knock, Magic Rainstorm, Mage Sight, 3-Hex Fire, Repair, Fireball

History: Caiaphas always wanted to be a warrior. He was a very promising student, outshining the other boys on the practice field: that is, he outshone them until an accident left him crippled, lame and weak. Apprenticing as a wizard rather late, he did not learn all the spells his intelligence would allow. However, he retains skill with the whip, one weapon he can still use in his present condition.

Personality: Caiaphas cannot get it out of his head that he was crippled deliberately in a faked accident. He is a bitter person, and treats heroes condescendingly.

Lame: ("Do we have to wait for Thorbald to catch up again?") This character suffers a modifier of -2 to his movement allowance, after other modifiers. A lame character cannot learn Running.

Nearsighted: ("Look out! Osmund's trying to use his bow!") A nearsighted character must roll an extra die to notice anything that requires vision. He is -2 with missile weapons and spells, and cannot learn Alertness.

Odious: ("I have a better idea. *I'll* negotiate with the gargoyles.") This character is physically or personally offensive. He gets a -1 to all reaction rolls, and cannot learn Charisma.

Over-Sexed: ("Oh no! There goes Julia again!") This person suffers from satyriasis or nymphomania. He/she must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid trying to seduce strangers of the preferred sex. A roll of 17 means the attempt is especially crude and gross; check reaction at -2.

3-Point Handicaps

Choleric: ("To hell with negotiating! Let's just clobber them!") A choleric character prefers violence to talk. He must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid attacking any potential enemy without preliminaries. A roll of 17 means he will also attach anyone who tries to restrain him; 18 means he automatically goes berserk. Once combat is initiated, he must roll 4 dice if he wants to stop hacking while his enemies still stand. A choleric character cannot learn Diplomacy.

Slyhock (Cowardly Halfling Hero)
ST4
DX 16
IQ 13
Talents: Thrown Weapons, Sha-Ken, Charisma, Alertness, Recognize Value, Assess Value, Business Sense, Thief
Spells: None
History: Slyhock is small, even for a Halfling. He learned early that there were two ways he could deal with larger folk – outwit them or outrun them. Practicing both arts, he left home shortly before the new owners came to take possession of the Brandywine Bridge.
Personality: These days, Slyhock makes his living as a dealer in valuable objects of mysterious origin; in other words, as a fence. He generally prefers to let other people take the risks, but he can usually put on a brave face when his greed is aroused, or when he feels personally threatened.

Cowardly: ("I'll make sure no one sneaks up on us from the rear!") This character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ at the beginning of every round of combat to avoid choosing the option "disengage" if engaged and "run like hell" if not. A roll of 17 means he drops his weapons in addition; 18 means he has also soiled his britches.

Kleptomaniac: ("I'll check the bodies!") A kleptomaniac must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid stealing something every time the opportunity presents itself. (If he is on a long expedition with a group, check daily.) It does not matter that the object is of little worth, belongs to a friend, or is completely useless; a klepto will steal anything. A roll of 17 means he must try to steal two items; 18 means three attempts. One small advantage: it costs a klepto only one IQ point to become a Thief. (He already is, competent or not!) A kleptomaniac sometimes feels guilty afterwards; let him roll 3 dice vs. IQ to give back whatever he has stolen. He only gets one try.

Note: When a kleptomaniac fails his roll, indicating that something is to be stolen, success is *not* automatic; he must still carry off the theft, using any Thief talent he possesses. If caught, he may attempt to use Charisma, Diplomacy, etc. to explain it away.

One-Armed: ("No, I don't want to buy a shield!") If he is a hero, he can only use one-handed weapons. A one-armed wizard is effectively limited to spells at least two points lower than his IQ. (Higher ones require gestures with two hands.) Note that a one-armed wizard can use a staff in combat, but does not benefit from the Quarterstaff talent.

One-Legged: (Thump, thump, thump.) This character is presumed to have a peg leg. He moves at half his normal MA. (A human in leather moves 4.) He can learn Running (which increases his MA by 1), but cannot learn Silent Movement.

4-Point Handicaps

Blind: ("You say you want a helmet with no eye slit?") A blind character is in darkness all the time. He has no chance of noticing anything which requires vision. However, he gets Acute Hearing free, regardless of his IQ, and he can move his full MA. Even so, he is at -4 to hit, or perform any other task that requires hand-eye coordination. A blind wizard cannot benefit from Dark Vision, Mage Sight, or other vision-oriented spells, though he can cast them on others. He cannot use any creation spells except Fire, Rope, and Shadow, and obviously, he gains no benefit from scrolls or magic books. (They haven't heard of Braille on Cidri.) However, he is at no DX minus for the creation spells he can use, for self-targeted spells, special spells, and spells cast on something he can touch. (You usually cannot touch an enemy in a combat situation; he won't let you.) Also, blind characters are in no way inhibited by Blur, Darkness, Dazzle, Shadow, or Invisibility.

Hemophiliac: ("Medic!") A hemophiliac takes an extra hit from every attack which penetrates his armor. Moreover, he will take an additional hit point per minute per wound until he is attended by a Physicker or dies.
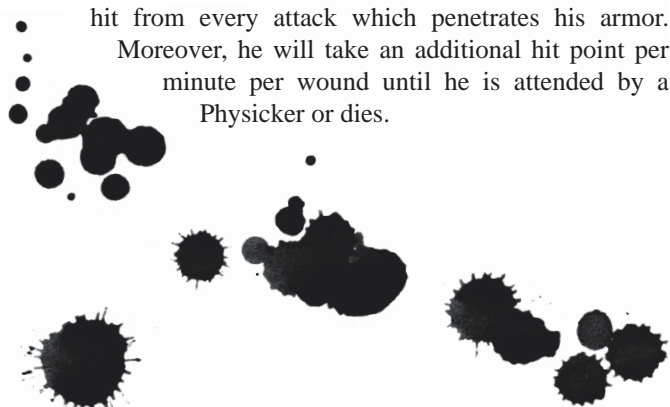
Gerta (Moronic Hero)
ST 13
DX 15
IQ 7
Talents: Sword, Shield, Pole Weapons, Riding
Spells: None
History: Gerta was a talented opera singer until a sandbag fell on her head during a performance of *Die Valkyrie*. The brain damage was irreversible.
Personality: In her own mind, Gerta is a glorious Valkyrie. The fact that other people consider her a drooling idiot does not seem to enter her consciousness.

Moronic: ("Duh.") This fellow starts with IQ 7, and can never raise his IQ except by magic. He has trouble tying his shoelaces. Sometimes a moron is an *idiot savant*; a moron can learn any one talent of IQ 8 or higher by paying twice the usual point cost. Morons also pay double to learn languages; they cannot learn spells at all.

Pacifist: ("Look, that slime will leave you alone if you leave it alone!") A pacifist is possessed by high moral principles. He will never initiate combat, and sometimes will not even fight back if attacked. He must roll 3 dice vs. IQ every time he tries to make an attack which does damage (pins, shield rushes, etc. do not fall in that category). If he fails his IQ roll, he can change options and dodge or defend. However, a roll of 17 means he will attempt to disengage if engaged; 18 means that he will stand meekly and try to explain things to the enemy while it attacks.

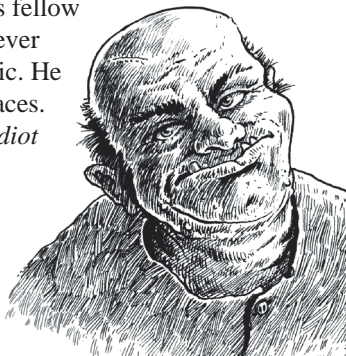*Stuttering:* ("L-l-l-look out!") This is a severe handicap. A character who stutters must roll 3 dice vs. IQ every time he tries to communicate through speech. This applies to Bargaining, Diplomacy, etc. He cannot learn Courtly Graces; his fine manners will seem clownish. A wizard who stutters is at -4 with any spell that requires speech. Worst of all: if you have a character who stutters, you should stutter every time he says something!

Variable-Point Handicaps

Fat: ("How come the monsters always want to eat *me*?") A fat character gets one bonus creation point for every 4 encumbrance points of fat (8 for dwarves). Fat encumbrance is permanent, and is cumulative with carried encumbrance. However, it does have one small advantage – it doesn't count for swimming. Fat people tend to float.

Neurotic: ("Why did it have to be snakes?") There are many kinds of neuroses, but phobias are the easiest to handle.

Points would range from 1 for a mild phobia (fear of snakes) to 3 for something radical (general xenophobia). See *Call of Cthulhu* for a useful list of phobias. A phobic character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ upon encountering the Terrible Whatever. A miss means he flees in panic (and may roll 4 dice vs. IQ per round to recover). A 17 means he drops his weapons and flees; 18 means that he does not drop his weapons or flee, but attacks with berserk fury!

Old: ("I warned you youngsters what would happen if you picked a fight with a dragon!") Some people don't start adventuring until late in life. For each 10 years of age above 20, allow the character one bonus point for creation purposes.

Handicap Table
In real life, you don't get to choose your handicaps. If the GM prefers, he can decide how many handicaps to allow a player-character, and then let him roll five dice for each:

5	Moronic (4 pts)
6	Pacifist (4 pts)
7	One-Armed (3 pts)
8	Choleric (3 pts)
9	Cowardly (3 pts)
10	Old (3 pts)
11	Alcoholic (2 pts)
12	Nearsighted (2 pts)
13	Old (2 pts)
14	Miserly (1 pt)
15	Hard of Hearing (1 pt)
16	Neurotic (1d: 1-3, one pt; 4-5, two pts; 6, three pts)
17	Old (1 pt)
18	Fat (1 pt)
19	No handicap here.
20	Gullible (1 pt)
21	Fat (2 pts)
22	Lame (2 pts)
23	Odious (2 pts)
24	Over-Sexed (2 pts)
25	Fat (3 pts)
26	Kleptomaniac (3 pts)
27	One-Legged (3 pts)
28	Stuttering (4 pts)
29	Hemophiliac (4pts)
30	Blind (4 pts)
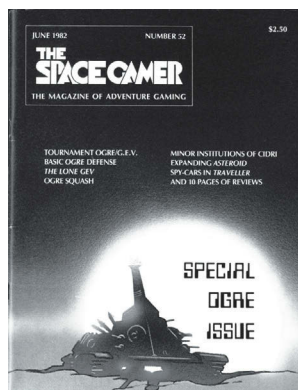
By Forrest Johnson
From TSG 52
(June 1982)

There are several institutions of Cidri, in **The Fantasy Trip**, which are of little interest to a Game Master, but which become important in solo play.

Mercenary Wills

Adolphus the Dull got eaten by a mutant termagant in **Death Test XVIII**. *Rottentooth the Orc picked up his battle axe and Crosseyes the Mage appropriated the two bars of platinum he was carrying. But Adolphus left his $35,920 in savings outside the maze, along with his nifty +1 magic switchblade. The rules say, "The rulers of the area may take a percentage of the estate, ranging from 10% to the whole thing – depending on how greedy and despotic they are." A scrawled note at the bottom of Adolphus' sheet says, "Will – everything to Sssis the Reptile Man." What to do?*

The Mercenaries' Guild regularly acts as a bank for its members. A balance kept in one Hall can be drawn on from any other. Members can leave a will with the Guild, in the not-too-unlikely event of death. When the inevitable comes, the Guild simply transfers the balance from one account to another.

There is no fee for making a Mercenary Will, and local rulers seldom interfere. But the Guild will take 10% of the balance transferred as compensation for this service. If the heir is not a Guild member, the Guild's share jumps to 50%. (Of course, if the deceased was not a paid-up member, he could not keep a Mercenary Will at all.)

What about the magic switchblade? Roll one die. On 1-4, Sssis will find it among Adolphus' possessions. On a 5 or 6, it is lost, stolen, destroyed or otherwise gone for good. (If there were several items, Sssis would roll separately for each.)

The Apprentice Exchange

*Larnyx is an experienced wizard with IQ 18. He knows Lesser Magic Item Creation and some related spells, and would like to go into the magic manufacturing business. Having found a laboratory (**Advanced Wizard**, p. 8) for sale by means of a 5-die roll vs. IQ (p. 38), and having made a reaction roll and purchased the place, he is ready to set up shop, except for one problem. He is going to need a lot of apprentices. The rules say, "The GM plays all 'hired' characters." But no GM is available. How does Larnyx get his apprentices?*

For every potential great mage in any population, there are several persons of lesser ability. Hence, there is rarely any shortage of apprentices. The Wizards' Guild Apprentice Exchange in any city always has a sufficiency of competent individuals, guaranteed to reliably supply 25 ST a day. (The wizard, of course, can himself furnish a similar amount.)

A wizard must have at least IQ 12 to hire an apprentice. The Exchange will furnish all the apprentices you need for a fee of $50 a head. Each apprentice must be paid $50 a week. (This figure includes living expenses.) They work on 6-month contracts. If you fire an apprentice for any reason before his six months are up, you must give him $100 severance pay.

An Exchange apprentice will loyally assist in conjurations so long as he gets his pay. He will not go on adventures without a GM reaction roll. Once a year, he may demand a 10% pay raise. Roll 3 dice vs. his IQ. If he demands a raise and doesn't get one, he will quit (no severance pay necessary).

Normally, you are obliged to teach your apprentice one spell every four months. But this should cause no inconvenience. You can assume he will learn in the course of his employment.

If you want to learn more about your apprentice, you can roll for his race (***In The Labyrinth***, p. 7). If he is a giant or gargoyle, assume he has IQ 9.

Otherwise, he is a beginning character. Roll one die for his IQ. On 1-3, it is 9. On 4 or 5, it is 10. On a 6, it is 11. His IQ will not normally be higher than that. Of the remaining points to be distributed, assign 1-3 to DX and the rest to ST. Your apprentice will speak your language, unless you speak his. There is a 5-out-of-6 chance he will have Literacy, and a 1-in-6 chance he will have some other talent. (Determine randomly. If you roll up a talent for which he lacks DX or ST, roll again. If you roll up a talent which requires another talent as prerequisite, give him the prerequisite and the talent.)

Your apprentice will know the Aid spell. There is a two-thirds chance he will know Staff and a two-thirds chance he will know Detect Magic. Determine his other spells randomly.

Every week, roll 3 dice for the apprentice's job risk at 4/18. If he gets 3 or 4, add one point to an attribute chosen randomly. If he gets 18, he dropped a beaker or such worth $50, which is subtracted from his salary, and you should make a saving roll for him (***ITL***, p. 25). As for his salary, you do not keep the books for him. You can assume he finds some good use for the money.
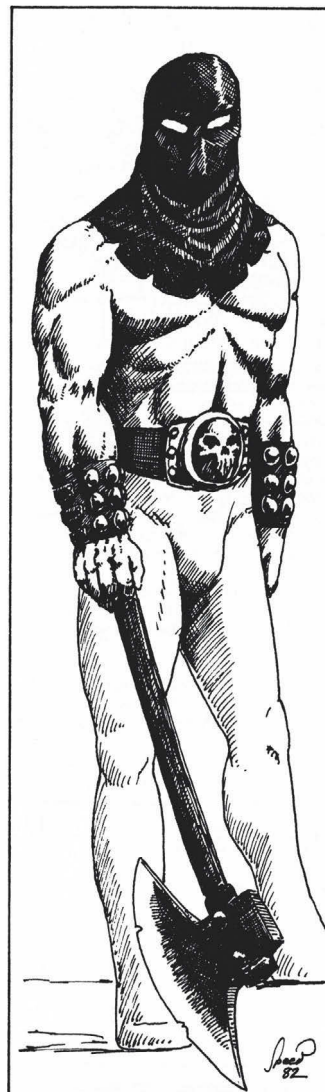
Jailhouse Blues

Scrofula the Goblin was minding his own business, practicing his simple trade as a brigand, when he blew a couple of job rolls. By rare good fortune, he survived the 4 dice damage, but now he has only 1 ST left and is in jail. There is no prospect of an expedition to get him out. Should he despair?

Not necessarily. The jails of Cidri have a certain gross consistency. One may expect filth, vermin, rotten food, etc. Justice is slow. It may take months or even years for a case to come to trial.

A character in jail recovers from his wounds at only 1 ST a week. He is considered to be working at a 3/12 job with no pay. If he should roll a 3 one week, add nothing to his attributes but set him free. If he rolls 13 or higher, the usual consequences ensue.

When and if a character recovers completely from his wounds, he can try to break jail. Roll 6 dice vs. his highest attribute. If he fails, roll 5 dice vs. the same attribute, or he takes a beating of 2 dice damage from the angry guards. You cannot try to break jail more often than once a week.

A jailed character can also try to bribe his way out, assuming he has savings stashed away somewhere. First, write down the amount of swag you are offering the guards. (Money only; you can assume any magic weapons, etc., were confiscated.) Then, roll on the bribery table (***ITL***, p. 28).

Assume your turnkey earns $70 a month. If you roll a 6, he tricks you; you lose the whole stash and stay in jail. If you roll a 1, the bribery attempt fails, but you can try someone else next week. If you roll 2-5 and succeed in tempting the turnkey, make an adjusted reaction roll on one die. On a 6, you're free. Otherwise, try someone else next week.

Magic Backlash in *TFT*

By Richard A. Edwards

*From TSG 54
(August 1982)*

It does a gamemaster's heart good to have a system which allows nasty things to happen during the course of regular events. Players can be pursuing the best possible course and yet run into difficulties beyond their control; there is risk involved in any pursuit. It is helpful if these difficulties are beyond the GM's control as well, for he is otherwise open to criticism for being the wrench-thrower.

This is the basis for such mechanics as die rolls for proper use of skills. Something might happen beyond the character's control which ruins his plans. Even the highest-level characters in ***TFT*** have to deal with the approximate 5% chance of an automatic miss.

Unfortunately, ***Advanced Wizard*** does not continue the practice of fumbled spells. The only effects of rolling 16+ are located in the ***Fantasy Masters' Codex 1981*** on the "to hit generalized table." There it is stated that a 16 costs 1 ST and the spell fails, on a 17 the same is true except for missile spells (which take full ST and fail), and on a 18 the exact same results occur (except for missile spells which take full ST and the wizard falls down). From the index to the Codex, the only source for this information is the microgame ***Wizard***, page 11.

This article will describe a Magic Backlash table which lets gamemasters even things up a bit. To use this unofficial variant, add the following rule additions and chart:

On a to-hit roll of 17, roll 3d6 and use the result on the Backlash Chart. On a to-hit roll of 18, roll 3d6 and to the result apply the following modifier: on a 1-3 subtract 5, on a 4-6 add 5.

Those results above which do not mention the ST expended all take full casting ST and then the results applies. The items this applies to specifically are 3-6 and 13-18.

Players should remember that there is only a small chance per spell that this chart will be utilized. Even if it is, there is a good chance that minor events (ST losses, spell failures) will occur. Don't panic when three sixes come up; there's a price to be paid for the pleasure of seeing three ones.

This chart is meant to liven up the game in unpredictable ways, not to destroy player characters. Gaming the errors to humorous effect can be easy; several of the accidental doings from "The Conjuring" in this issue of *TSG* can be worked out from this chart, assuming that the GM has an active imagination and an antic sense of humor. Be reasonable in application and magic backlash will become just one of those things which can upset the best-laid plans of adventurers and mages.

SO WHO NEEDS TO STEP OUT OF THE PENTAGRAM?

The Fantasy Trip Magic Backlash Table

3 or less	Caster is stricken mute and suffers physical spasms, and cannot cast any spells which need gestures or incantations. This affects all spells of the same as or up to four less than the caster's IQ. This lasts for 3d6 turns (optionally, 3d6 days if the spell was cast in other than combat conditions, or treat as a curse which must be removed).
4	Caster is cursed with physical spasms. Caster cannot cast any spells which need gestures. This affects all spells of the same as or one less than the caster's IQ. This effect lasts for 3d6 turns (optionally, 3d6 days as above). If this result occurs to a character already mute, then apply the results of 3, above.
5	Caster is stricken mute and cannot cast any spells which require incantations. This affects all spells of the same as or one less than the caster's IQ. This effect lasts for 3d6 turns (optionally, 3d6 days as above). If this result occurs to a character who is already afflicted with physical spasms, then apply the results of 3, above.
6	Caster is stricken blind and cannot see for 3d6 turns (optionally, 3d6 days as above). Apply a -8 modifier to caster's DX in doing anything except casting a spell on himself, cut MA in half, and have the player close his eyes as long as blindness continues.
7	Caster pays full ST cost for the spell, but the spell affects a wrong target. If the spell were meant to hit the caster himself, it hits a randomly determined character instead. If the spell were meant to hit another character, it misses, continuing on to perhaps hit another character or object instead. Roll to hit normally. In creation spells, control of created items goes to the gamemaster.
8	Caster pays twice the normal ST cost for the spell and falls down. If ST cost exceeds caster's available ST, unconsciousness occurs. All continuing spells cease, but may be recast.
9	Caster pays full ST cost, but spell fails.
10	Caster pays half normal ST cost, but spell fails.
11	Caster pays 1 ST, but the spell fails.
12	Caster pays full normal ST cost, but spell only takes half-effect. Thus an Iron Flesh spell would provide only 3 hits of protection, missile spells do only half damage, and so on. If the spell cannot be halved in effect, then treat this as 9, above.
13	Due to the powerful shock of the spell failing, the caster drops one magic item (or one is shaken off), randomly determined. If the caster has no magic items (remember, his staff counts), then drop some other important piece of equipment, randomly determined.
14	Due to the powerful shock of the spell failing, one magic item, randomly determined, breaks. If the caster has no magic items (remember, his staff counts), then break some other important piece of equipment, randomly determined.
15	Caster's mind is badly shaken. Caster's IQ is temporarily reduced to half its current level (rounded down). Any spells or abilities known above this new level are temporarily forgotten and may not be used. This effect lasts 3d6 turns (optionally, 3d6 days as with a result of 3).
16	Caster's mind is badly shocked. Caster permanently forgets the spell just used and his IQ is reduced by 1. All continuing spells cease and must be recast to continue. Note that this spell may be relearned just like any other spell is learned.
17	Caster really backfired this one. The caster is affected by a Curse as per *Advanced Wizard* rules of 1 d6 level. This acts as a harmful modifier to all rolls until it is removed.
18+	Oops! Failure caused a rift which allowed a demon to appear as if summoned. See the Summon Demon spell in *Advanced Wizard* for the gruesome details.

By Ralph Sizer

*From TSG 57
(November 1982)*

In TSG issue 51, Forrest Johnson presented an article on handicapped characters in **The Fantasy Trip***; it proposed a number of handicaps with which characters could define their personalities further and also start off with more initial attribute points. Physical and personal defects such as alcoholism, myopia, satyriasis, kleptomania, cowardice, and blindness were presented; for each disability a character took, he was awarded a certain number of starting attribute points.*

Reader Ralph Sizer, following in the grand tradition, has given us several more appropriate disabilities. We won't be presenting **TFT** *handicaps as a regular series, but we felt these were useful enough to warrant a few more pages.*

1-Point Handicap

Dyslexia: ("What does that say?") This is the lack of the basic eye-to-brain coordination needed for reading; a character with dyslexia can never learn Literacy, or even basic map-reading. He also can't learn to read music, but can become a Bard or even Master Bard.

2-Point Handicaps

Acrophobia (Fear of Heights): ("Get back from the edge!") It goes without saying that a character with this affliction can never learn Climbing. He must add one die to any roll against climbing a long way (a cliff, into a deep hole, or out of a tree), since even being near an edge makes him a bit dizzy. Subtract 2 from DX any time he's doing anything within one clear MH of such a long fall. He can never try to climb anything steeper than a flight of stairs unless he's being chased by something nasty, or unless it's the only way out. (Even so, he'd much prefer to look some more for another exit.)

Cuteness: ("You're a nice kid.") This affliction can strike people of either sex and any species. Physically, victims are no more than 9/10 of the average size for their species, sex, and age, and have cheerful, round faces and soft-looking bodies. They have an automatic Charisma talent. They can learn Tactics or even Strategist and use them, but nobody else will ever take a cute person seriously enough to let him command in battle. In strategy conferences, anyone wanting to take his advice must first make a 4-die roll against IQ (only very wise people will consider advice from someone who reminds them so strongly of a teddy bear).

At some time between ages 35 and 50 (say, 32 +3d6), this handicap changes its name to Grandmotherliness or Grandfatherliness, but all its effects remain unchanged.

Laziness: ("You don't need me for that.") Someone with this handicap will never want to learn Alertness, Running, or anything else that requires sustained effort (unlike the narcoleptic, who may honestly want to learn Alertness, but just keeps falling asleep anyhow). Lazy people lose experience points for unneeded actions.

Migraines: ("Whadda ya mean, you can't fight in the afternoon?") Roll one die. If it comes up 1, the migraines usually strike in the morning; if 2-4, in the afternoon; and if 5 or 6, in the evening. Each day the GM rolls one die. For afternoon migraines, this gives the hour the headache strikes that day. For morning migraines, add 6 to get the hour, and for evening migraines divide by 2, round up and add 6. The migraine will go away if the character lies down and rests for two hours; it will go away after four hours even if he doesn't rest. (Time spent resting with a migraine headache does not also restore ST lost due to fatigue or spellcasting – he can only rest up from one thing at a time.) During a migraine attack, characters operate at DX -3, movement allowance is reduced by 2, and any Alertness or related ability he may have (Detect Traps, the Naturalist's ability to spot ambushes, etc. – anything requiring careful concentration) are lost for the duration.
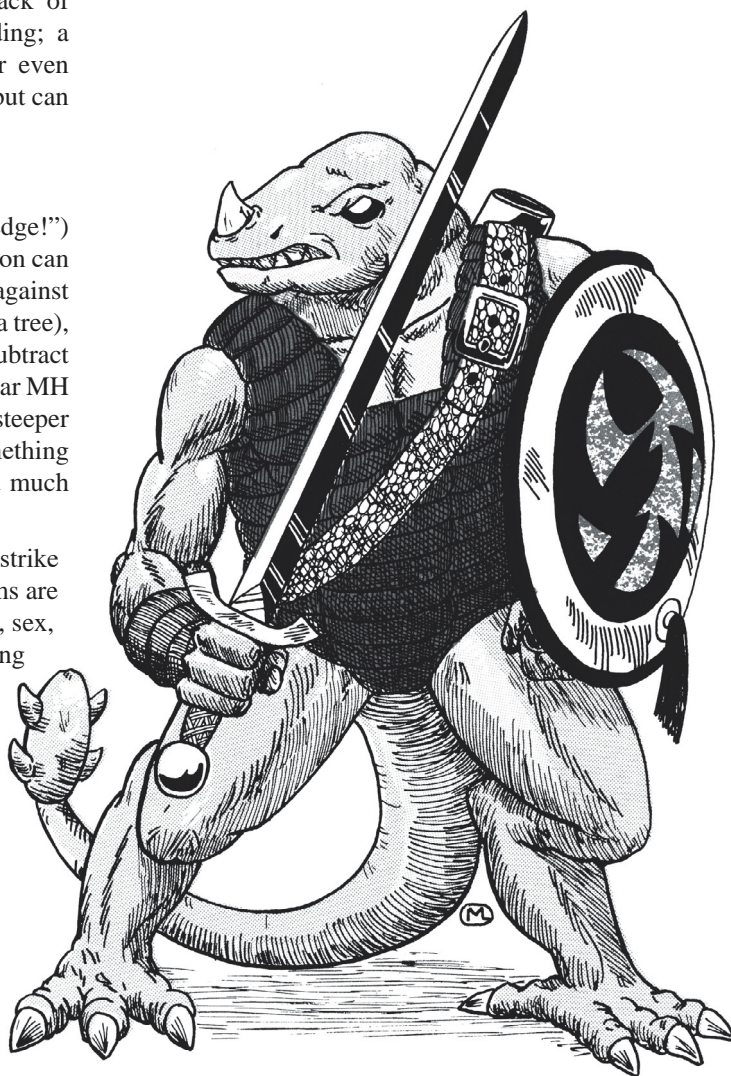
Narcolepsy: ("Z-z-z-z . . .") This is the tendency to fall asleep unintentionally, even when well-rested. Nowadays there are drugs that greatly alleviate the problem, but there are none such in a primitive fantasy world. A character rolls two dice against IQ for each minute to avoid falling asleep if left standing around with nothing interesting to do, three dice if sitting, and four if lying down. Falling asleep is automatic if left on sentry duty or if listening to a boring discussion for over five minutes. Someone with this handicap can never learn Alertness, and must spend twice the normal amount of time learning anything that requires a lot of reading.

Reputation: ("Hey! Aren't you the one who . . .") Back in his teens, this character did something very remarkable, and will never live it down. It may have been something glorious, like killing a large dragon or demon with one extremely lucky shot. (In this case, every young punk for leagues around will be eager to challenge him, to be able to say, "I'm the one who killed . . ." Also, anyone drawing up an order of battle will go by his reputation and give him a position suitable for a fighter or wizard with half a dozen more attribute points than he has.)

Or it may have been a disgraceful event – the character got drunk one night and made love to half a platoon of orcs, or tried a practical joke that backfired, making him the only person known to have tarred and feathered himself. (In this case, everyone will always expect him to act the same – promiscuous, stupid, or whatever – and they'll always underestimate his IQ by 3 points and treat all suggestions accordingly.) Also, reaction rolls should be adjusted up or down, depending on what others think of his reputation.

3-Point Handicaps

Asthma: ("Gasp, gasp . . .") The victim runs out of breath after about one minute (12 rounds) of fighting, climbing, or other strenuous exercise, and must rest for five minutes to recover. If the victim has to fight for over a minute, reduce DX by three points per full minute. Someone with asthma can never learn Running, and can only spend one hour a day trying anything strenuous; since so much resting must go with the exercise, this hour cannot be combined with any other learning, no matter how sedentary. An asthmatic can learn Swimming.

One-Track Mind: ("Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!") For a fighter, this means "Charge!" If the other players insist on talking it over for too long (more than a minute), he charges anyhow and lets them follow or keep talking, as they prefer. For a wizard, it means "I'll cast an illusion" (hawk or owl for scouting, an octopus with three bastard swords for fighting – no other choices) followed by a succession of the wizard's most powerful attack spells if in combat. A character with this affliction can never learn Tactics or Diplomacy. If a talent has a naturally-related talent, the character must learn the related talent(s) as soon as possible – someone with a one-track mind who knows one thieving talent will either know or be studying them all; a Bard will get Master Bard as soon as he/she reaches IQ 14, etc.

Rube Goldberg Mind: ("That's too simple – it'll never work.") A character with this affliction will always support the most complicated proposal for action in any situation, and will usually add a few (or a lot) of his or her own suggestions to make it even more complex. If he's in a strategy discussion, it may last several hours.

Squeamishness: ("Eeek!") This character just can't stand the sight of blood. Every time he sees freshly-spilled blood, he must roll against IQ to avoid fainting: two dice if it's just a scratch (1 point damage), three if it's a minor wound (2-5 points), and four if it's a major wound.

Add one die if it's his own blood. If some fool revives him from the faint in a position where he can still see the gore, he must immediately roll again – and add one more die because he's already feeling woozy from the first faint. A squeamish character can never learn Physicker or Vet.

4-Point Handicaps

Butterfingers: ("Oops!") DX can never get above species starting level or DX 8, whichever is lower (he can't avoid most of the harmful effects by making the character a halfling). A butterfingers must roll two dice against DX to avoid dropping anything he's picked up or just been handed.

Claustrophobia: ("I can't breathe in here!") Anyone with claustrophobia should keep out of dungeons in the first place. However, if he does want to go in, he must first make a four-die roll against IQ to enter. Once in, anytime he enters a long (over 4 MH) or crooked (end not in sight) corridor, he must roll one die against the width of the corridor in hexes (one MH = three hexes – measure at the widest point); failure to make the roll means he runs back out of the tunnel. Finally, no claustrophobic can sleep or even relax underground, so wizards cannot recover ST. (A Sleep spell will solve this problem.)

Rheumatic Fever: ("My chest . . .") The character had a severe case in childhood. This means a permanent lack of strength – he/she can never get above his species' starting strength, or ST 12, whichever is lower. Prolonged exercise is likely to be fatal. After any fight in which he's taken action, roll against ST, one die for each full minute the character participated in the fight. If the roll is missed, he has a heart attack and can be saved only by a Master Physicker rolling four dice against IQ. The same goes for running fast or swimming.

By Ronald Pehr

From TSG 61 (March 1983)

One of the fascinating aspects of **The Fantasy Trip** (**TFT**) is its economic system. Not only are prices given for items that player characters might want to buy, but salaries are shown for different jobs they might undertake between adventures. Naturally, it would take a whole rulebook to list all the jobs one could possibly have, and doubtless players who want to have their characters work at something not on the list can extrapolate from the list.

However, characters might find it easier to find part-time or short-term jobs, rather than have to work around their steady occupations when they want to go adventuring.

In order to be attractive to employers on a one-shot basis, characters will have to be able to present an efficient, knowledgeable appearance. After all, who's going to hire an armor-polisher whose own sword and shield are rusty? To apply for temporary or part-time jobs, characters must be spending a minimum amount on lifestyle – this simulates having the appropriate clothing and buying drinks for the correct contacts or licensing officials.

For any job requiring a skill costing 1 IQ point: $10/week
For any job requiring a skill costing 2 IQ points: $20/week
For any job requiring a skill costing 3 IQ points: $30/week

These costs are in addition to the basic $20/week required of all **TFT** characters. For every $10 short a character is of his lifestyle total, he receives a -1 on his roll for employment. Other modifiers to the roll include: Any bonus or minus to reaction rolls, -2 if the character does not have all of the skills required for a job, -5 if the character has none of the skills required for a job (but it's still possible to con a prospective employer, if you have enough brains and charm), +2 if the character is well-known as a good worker or "industry leader."

Of course, not all jobs are worth having, for some characters. In a city of reasonable size – say, 2,000 inhabitants – a character looking for a job will find varying numbers of opportunities for different types of job. Income levels of jobs available and how many are easily found are as follows·:

Income Level	Number of Jobs Available
Subsistence	40/week
$5/week	20/week
$10/20/30/week*	10/5/3/week
Normal salary for employment type	2/week

*That is, $10/week for a job requiring one IQ point in talents, $20/week for two point's worth, etc.

For simplicity's sake, assume a proportional increase/decrease in the number of jobs available for different sized communities. For example, if the community is twice the size indicated – about 4,000 residents – simply double the availabilities. If a community is half the size, divide the availability in half. If the availability falls, in a small community, to "half a job" or less in a week, consider that a job only becomes open at the GM's option.

A character may apply for five jobs in the course of a week. To apply, he makes his intelligence roll, plus any modifiers from the list previously given. If he makes his roll he has found a job that will last for 2d6 weeks (or GM's option).

Also at GM option will be what sort of jobs become available at the higher income levels – it's quite likely that there will be short-term occupations available, but none for which the character is qualified.

Budding entrepreneurs have a place in **TFT**, too. Those wishing to go into business for themselves, using a mundane skill, must make an investment in property, equipment, inventory, etc. This investment is the weekly salary that is normal for that type of work multiplied by:

15 for 1 IQ-point skills
30 for 2 IQ-point skills
50 for 3+ IQ-point skills.

Once this investment has been made – and it may be paid by installments if the NPC representing vendors or suppliers agree – the business can start making money. Each week, roll one die:

1 – Lose twice the normal weekly salary for that type work.
2 – Lose the normal weekly salary for that type work.
3 – Break even.
4 – Earn the normal weekly salary for that type work.
5 – Earn twice the normal weekly salary.
6 – Earn three times the normal weekly salary.

Of course, this is just an abstraction – if a character in an ongoing campaign wants to become an entrepreneur, the GM will probably want to make the business in question more concrete, complete with a location, NPCs business decisions, trade embargoes, etc. The numbers above are for a very small business, assuming a small location (say, a tavern) and two employees (in the case of a tavern, probably a cook and a maid/servant).

Naturally, to make a business work, you have to be there. Characters may be off two days per week – to go adventuring or anything else they want to do – and the business will run. For every day a character is off in a week beyond the second day, it is -1 to the income roll (limit -3). This -1 may be prevented by having a capable employee run the business in the owner's absence. Roll to acquire an employee as you would to be an employee looking for that type of work. Once hired, employees will continue to work as long as desired – these are not adventurers. Employee salary is at the normal rate for that type of work, and when you're rolling for weekly results, must be subtracted from a die roll of 3 and added to the loss on rolls of 1 or 2. However, after the employee has been on the job for a while – four months per IQ point cost – the salary is subsumed into the die rolls.

Moreover, after a year and a half, the employee's production will have improved to the point where you may add + 1 to the die roll (a result of 7 brings in five times the normal weekly salary). If an employee is not hired, business will be presumed to have improved in any event within a year, allowing + 1 die rolls (except for those weeks where you have taken more than two days off). Employees will generally quit if not paid in a given week.

Those wishing to expand a business must invest whatever it cost originally to set it up, and may then hire an additional employee for each sum so invested. Each additional employee after the first adds or subtracts 10% to the amount earned/ lost.

Additional Jobs

Skill	IQ / Skill Required	Income	Risk
Cobbler	9	$20	–
Bricklayer/Mason	9	15	–
Carpenter	9	15	–
Glassblower	9	50	3/18
Lampmaker	9	15	–
Miner	9	20*	3/17
Perfumer	9	25	3/18
Ink/Dye Maker	9	25	3/18
Rope Maker	9	15	–
Valet	9	5**	4/18
Blacksmith	9	25	3/18
Innkeeper /Barmaid	Recognize Value, Business Sense	50	3/18
Miller	9	15	–
Tailor	9	15	–
Bureaucrat	Literacy Diplomacy also Courtly Graces also	10*** 25*** 50***	3/18
Bordello Worker	Sex Appeal, Charisma	50	5/16
Tinker/Peddler	(May have any or all of the following) Sex Appeal, Charisma, Recognize Value, Diplomacy, Business Sense, Detect Lies	10/skill	3/17

*May be considered an IQ 8 skill, $10, in areas where mining is a large industry and there is a lot of manpower.
**Low rate of pay because of room and board in relatively high style and chance of making beneficial contacts.
***May also get $1/week more for each additional skill that may be beneficial to that particular bureaucracy.

All of the above presume characters are in a place where they can find work at these occupations; not every part of Cidri may have every sort of work. The salary for a bordello worker presumes a legal bordello; for illegal bordellos, income is $75, risk factor is 5/15. Note that Tinkers and Peddlers do not work for anyone else. They are independent. Investment/ income rolls are not necessary, however, the character must either deduct the $20 basic lifestyle costs from profits or must be an itinerant who cannot sell wares in the same town for more than a week at a time.

Master's Thesis

By Philip Rennert

from TSG 62 (April 1983)

"Where do summoned creatures come from?" asked Melar. "Are they assembled from raw energy like illusions, or do they have real existences in some other place, from whence we snatch them as we need them?"

"I don't know," replied Illic, sipping his beer. "Why don't you summon one and ask him?" Illic's attention wandered as he glanced around the taproom of the Staff and Scroll, which was nearly empty this late afternoon.

"I know what you're thinking," Melar continued. "Why does it matter, so long as they appear and fight for us?"

Illic hadn't really been thinking that, or much of anything, but he sat up and told himself to pay attention. "Why the sudden interest?"

"Well might you ask," replied Melar, "for I have finally found a topic for my Master's thesis. Not only that, I have performed the experiment you suggested, and I'm well on my way."

What experiment? thought Illic, then remembered. "What, did you summon a dragon?" he asked.

"Be serious. I'm only a Class 12; who'd let me play with a spell like that? No, I summoned a warrior. You know my favorite archetype, the big fellow with the halberd?"

"Yes," said Illic, becoming more interested. "What did he say?"

"Not much, actually. He knew he was there to serve me, but everything else was a blank. When I asked him where he'd been a minute ago, he just looked very confused."

"Hmm," said Illic. "Perhaps the spell that binds them to our service also affects their memories? That is, if they have a true existence to remember."

"Ah, but that was just my first trial," Melar went on. "You know how, when you summon a warrior, you concentrate on strength and dexterity as the qualities you'd like him to possess? Well, it occurred to me, why not concentrate instead on intelligence?"

"Interesting. So you summoned a smart warrior. How did he do?"

"Better. When I asked him what he had been doing a minute ago, he thought about it. He replied that since he existed to serve me, he must have been serving me in some way, though he couldn't remember how."

"Logical, at least," put in Illic, "but still inconclusive."

"Ah, but at this point I felt I was on to something. I went and told Master Taradel about it, and he said it was a subject worthy of investigation. He wasn't sure anything would come of it, but he was interested enough to authorize me a section of apprentices and a power battery for a few hours."

"What did you have in mind?" asked Illic.

"I had two ideas," replied Melar. "First, that I would summon a warrior and temporarily augment his intelligence by magical means."

"Such an augmentation spell would last less than a minute," objected Illic.

"True, but perhaps long enough to get some answers. Second, you know how the imminence of danger can sometimes enable a person to break free of magical control. If I placed him in such a situation, it might shatter the spell that blocked his memories."

"So did you actually perform this experiment?"

"Yes, this morning. We used the tower room. I made the preparations and cast the summoning spell, concentrating totally on intuition and understanding. The warrior appeared, and didn't look like any I'd seen before. He was, well, puny. Some of the apprentices snickered. I asked him where he was from, and he said he couldn't remember. Then the moment came! I ordered him to leap to his death through the window!" Melar paused for a sip of beer. "He turned and put one foot on the sill; I signaled the apprentices and started my own spell. The power of six strong young lads, plus my own, plus all the energy from the battery, hit him as he looked down from the window. He jerked and shivered like a man with an ague, and then he turned and looked at me! The spell was broken!"

Illic looked across the square at the Guildhouse tower. "That's a long way down," he said.

"I wish you could have seen his face," continued Melar. "It was a study in realization, in comprehension. 'You summoned me to do your bidding, didn't you?' he said softly. 'Yes, yes,' I cried. 'Where are you from? Do you remember what you were doing before you appeared here?'

"He didn't appear to have heard me. 'So many gone,' he said to himself. 'So many vanished, to return hacked and gutted. None remembered, none knew why. But I know.'

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"He looked at me then, and there was dark, deep hatred in his eyes. Then, all of a sudden, he vanished."

" 'Huh?' I said. 'I didn't do that. Come back; I haven't finished!' But he was gone."

"A summoned creature vanishing of his own accord!" exclaimed Illic. "I've never heard of that before."

"Yes, but he left behind the proof I needed. He implied that he'd known others who'd been summoned. Therefore, there is a place somewhere from which we draw the creatures we summon." Melar took a triumphant swig from his mug.

"You know," said Illic, "someone with that kind of thinking ability could be extremely powerful. And he didn't sound friendly."

"I considered that," replied Melar, "but no one has ever summoned a mage, so the place he's

from must be magic-free. The augmentation spell would have shattered as soon as he returned. And even if it didn't, the limitation on the spell has expired."

"But you don't know all the parameters," said Illic. "It might be that a return to a non-magical plane would freeze his condition at the instant of return, allowing your spell to hold indefinitely."

"If that's true," said Melar after a moment, "then somewhere there's a very smart fellow indeed! But I don't believe it. Besides, if his people aren't magical, what can they do to us? No, the next thing to do is to repeat the experiment, but include some way of holding the subject here until he answers my questions."

Illic was on the point of replying when the Guildhouse exploded.

Superheroes in *The Fantasy Trip*
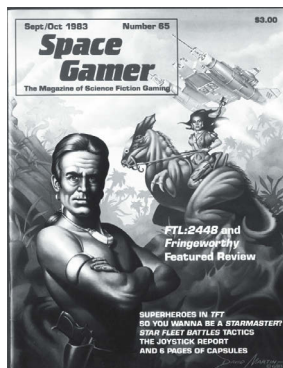
Why Should Wizards and Warriors Have All the Fun?

By Ronald Pehr

From TSG 65
(September/October 1983)

One of the prime attractions in the roleplaying game *The Fantasy Trip* is the rapid yet involving method in which combats are resolved. Unlike many fantasy game rules, which are more complex and lock the player into a realistic but rigid system, *TFT* is readily adaptable to different gaming situations. One such is the superhero roleplaying game.

In a superhero RPG, players take the roles of costumed crimefighters. Superhero background worlds generally resemble reality as we know it – except for the presence of superheroes. In many ways, superhero RPGs are easier for a referee to run than fantasy RPGs. Players don't have to behave like preliterate, pre-technological wizards and warriors. They already understand their background world, since it is essentially their own, and they are not required to kill and loot in order to progress in the game.

This article provides general guidelines for the creation and play of characters in a superhero world, using *TFT* rules. It is compatible with *TFT* as much as possible. Remember that a superhero world resembles the one we live in; thus, the pseudo-medieval economics of *TFT*, as excellent as they are, are irrelevant.

However, there is no reason heroes and wizards from Cidri cannot operate alongside superheroes, either in a superhero world or a fantasy world. The culture shock alone is worth the price of admission!

I. Types of Characters

Let's begin by identifying the types of characters which populate a superhero world and by describing the common abilities available to such people.

Mundanes are essentially normal people who are not player-characters or super-level heroes or villains. Mundanes start with 1d6+24 points to allocate, minimum 8 each in IQ, ST and DX. Thus, they start out below the standard of superheroes and even beginning heroes and wizards from *TFT*. Mundanes may purchase skills from the "normal" skill list presented later in this article, and have the listed common abilities.

Heroes are player-characters generated in the standard *TFT* fashion: 32 points allocated to ST, DX, and IQ, minimum of 8 in each. They may purchase skills from the "normal" skill list below, and have the listed common abilities. These are our noncostumed heroes, superspies, private detectives, and superheroes' love interests.

Superheroes also start out with 32 points to allot to characteristics. However, instead of having a number of IQ points equal to his IQ to spend on skills, a superhero has a number of Creation Points equal to his current number of attribute points to spend on talents, spells, and superpowers. A beginning superhero, then, will have 32 Creation Points to spend on these things. All these points could go into talents if the character wishes – he is not limited to a number of skills dictated by his IQ, although he cannot buy skills of a higher IQ level than his own IQ. It's the superpowers, though, which distinguish the superhero from the common man – the ability to fly, to throw cars around the block, to project laser beams, to bounce bullets off the chest.
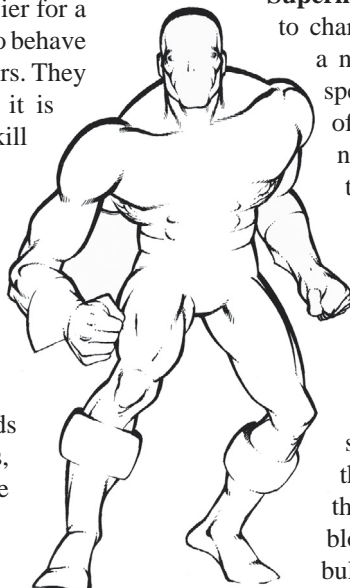
There are several skills that almost everyone growing up in a modern technological culture will have, and which all characters from a superheroic Earth will have. Unlike *TFT* Mundane Talents, which are not terribly heroic but require formal training, these common abilities may be presumed to be available to everyone who grows up in the society. They do not require allocation of IQ points. Common abilities always operate; you don't do anything special to perform them, and no check is necessary against IQ, DX, or ST except in a difficult or hazardous situation. The two significant common abilities are Literacy and Driving.

In modern society, Literacy is a common ability; it does not require the allocation of any IQ points. All characters may be presumed to be literate in their own tongue, and in any tongue they speak which uses the same alphabet as their native language.

Driving means driving a standard four-wheeled passenger vehicle. The ability to drive more esoteric vehicles must be purchased as skills.

These two skills operate automatically under normal conditions. A Literacy check – 3d6 vs. IQ – might be necessary if the character is puzzling out a peculiar word (e.g., figuring out that "pachycephalosaur" indicates some sort of thick-headed lizard). A Driving check – 3d6 vs. DX – would be necessary to keep control of a car if it has just hit a curb or been sideswiped, 4d6 vs. DX if this occurred on slick streets, or 5d6 vs. DX if it occurred on an ice-covered street during a snowstorm. These die vs. characteristic rolls are made at the referee's determination; since so many varied and different circumstances occur in a superhero game, more so than in a fantasy campaign, the referee's ability to make such determinations about a character's abilities is greater here.

A note on magic: Magic is not commonly available to normal citizens of a modern world. However, player-characters can certainly learn magical spells from *TFT*, given sufficient rationale and the referee's approval. Note that magical spells are usually not as cost-effective as superpowers, as they tend to drastically decrease characters' ST whereas powers do not. A Superhero learns talents as a Hero and spells as a Wizard; a Hero-level character must choose to be either a Hero or Wizard; Mundanes may not be wizards.
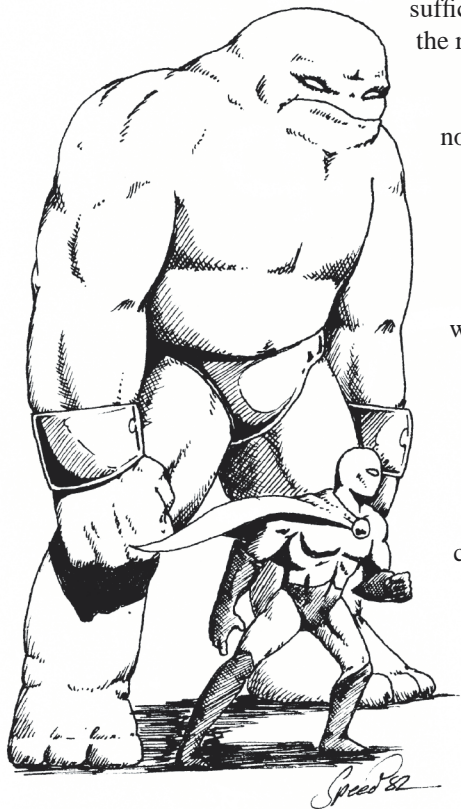
II. Talents

Talents are used by superheroes and heroes in the same manner as any *TFT* character uses them, by rolling a number of dice to achieve a number equal to or less than the relevant characteristic governing the talent. For instance, Acrobatics is obviously governed by Dexterity.

Since education is more common in a superhero world than in most fantasy worlds, talents may be increased in ability and utility more easily than in regular *TFT*. Some *TFT* talents – for example, Thief/Master Thief – already have built-in means of achieving higher levels of expertise. Other talents aren't subject to improvement – either you have Sex Appeal or you don't. Those *TFT* talents which don't fall into the previous two categories, and many talents from Section IV, may be purchased at higher levels of proficiency.

Consider there to be four levels of proficiency in a talent: Basic, Improved, Advanced, and Expert. Basic allows use of the Talent as described; each additional level of proficiency allows you to subtract 1 from a die-roll being checked against the relevant characteristic, unless otherwise specified for the particular talent. Thus, basic Tactics allows a 6d6 roll vs. IQ to figure out an opponent's moves. With Expert Tactics, the roll is 5d6-3.

Training to each new level of proficiency is done exactly as if acquiring the talent at its basic level: Allot IQ points (Creation Points with Superheroes). The Basic and Improved levels of the skill each require the basic cost of the skill; Advanced requires one point higher, and then Expert requires 2 points higher. Purchasing, for example, Expert Pilot would require 11 IQ points . . . 2 (Basic) +2 (Improved) +3 (Advanced) +4 (Expert). Note that common abilities may be bought up in proficiency. Consider them 1-point IQ 7 skills. Thus, Basic Driving is free, Improved Driving costs 1 point, etc.

Any character may attempt to use any talent, even if he doesn't have that talent. A character attempting to use a skill he doesn't possess suffers some restrictions, however.

If the relevant characteristic governing the skill is DX, the character suffers the following modifiers to his DX while using the skill:

-4 for any *TFT* talent, unless specified otherwise in *TFT*
-2 for any 1 IQ talent from this article
-4 for any 2 IQ talent from this article
-6 for any 3 IQ talent from this article

If the relevant characteristic is IQ, roll twice the number of dice usually rolled against IQ.

Any skill which is exercised under difficult conditions – such as lockpicking in total darkness – is at -2 to the relevant characteristic. A skill exercised under hazardous conditions – such as hang gliding with an injured arm – is at -4 to the relevant characteristic.

III. Firearms

Although legally restricted in some areas, firearms are available to most people; even those people who don't normally use them will be vaguely familiar with their use. Note that the *TFT* Guns talent applies only to gunpowder weapons common to the fantasy world of the character's origin (blunderbuss, musket, etc.); a fantasy musketeer will *not* be able to use an Uzi as though he'd been born to it.

A character with no training in firearms but with a passing familiarity in the subject (e.g., a modern character with a modern firearm) may fire the weapon at -2 DX and may reload it. He may not fix malfunctions. A character with the *TFT* Guns talent but no modern firearms talent may fire modern firearms at -1 DX, and may reload them if he is familiar with or has seen the reloading process; he may not fix malfunctions. Likewise, a character with only modern firearms skills may fire antiquated firearms at -1 DX, and may reload them if he's familiar with or has seen the process, and he may not fix malfunctions. A modern character with no firearms skills may fire (at -2 DX) an antiquated firearm, but may not load or fix the weapon. A fantasy character with no firearms skill must make a 4d6 vs. IQ roll to figure out how to use the weapon in the first place (6d6 if he's never seen or heard of such a weapon) and will fire at -4 DX once he's got it figured out.

Each firearms skill is an IQ 7(1) skill. Each skill covers all firearms in a given class. Typical firearms classes include pistols, rifles, submachine guns, and shotguns.

A typical pistol is a .38 caliber six-shot revolver. Most pistols do 2d6 damage. People with the Pistol talent may elect to use the *TFT* "dagger marksmanship" rules when using the pistol. Otherwise, pistols are fired like any *TFT* missile weapon, subtracting 1 DX for every megahex of range to the target. A pistol, however, may be discharged up to five times per combat round. For each additional shot beyond the first, subtract DX as if the character were throwing an equivalent number of sha-ken as per *TFT*. If the shots are directed at different targets, subtract 2 DX per additional target.

A typical rifle is a bolt-action .30-06 which holds 20 rounds. Such a typical rifle will do 3d6 damage per hit. Rifles are missile weapons, and may be fired twice per combat round, -2 DX if the second shot is against a second target. A bayonet on the end of the rifle makes the weapon the equivalent of a *TFT* spear. Military rifles are semi-automatic, hold an average of 30 rounds, and may be fired up to five times per round like a pistol (actually, the genuine rate of fire is considerably higher, but this will keep things a little more balanced).

A typical submachine gun holds 30 rounds per clip. It may fire in single-shot action, doing 3d6 per hit, up to five times per round, or on autofire. Each autofire burst uses five bullets, doing 5d6 when it hits and granting a +3 DX to the firer; two such bursts may be fired per round. A burst may be sprayed into three connecting hexes at -3 DX per target; each hit does 3d6 damage.

Shotguns operate as a *TFT* blunderbuss, doing 4d6 damage. They may be fired twice per combat round; the second shot, if it is not at the same target, is at -2 DX.

Science fiction guns – hand lasers, blasters, phasers, etc. – fire once per combat round, and act as *TFT* missile weapons. An average weapon of this type will do 5d6 damage.

Note: Modern artifacts are not adequately covered either by *TFT* or this article. Readers will have to extrapolate from examples or similarities in the *TFT* rules (at least until articles expanding the concept of Superheroes in *TFT* can be written). For example: A modern flak vest encumbers a character as *TFT* chainmail but stops 6 hits; presume that bullets and missiles hit the vest on a roll of 5-9 on two dice.

IV. Normal Talents

For Heroes and Mundanes, each of these talents costs a number of IQ points. For Superheroes, each talent costs a number of Creation points. In neither case can a character buy a skill which requires a higher IQ than the character possesses.

IQ 7 Talents

Grenade (1): Any character may throw a grenade a number of hexes equal to his ST, treating it as a thrown weapon. With this skill, characters throw them as missile weapons. Grenades explode with an effect of half a *TFT* Petard; they go off at the end of the turn in which they were thrown. This skill does not go through levels of proficiency; the basic skill is all there is.

Bureaucrat (3): A character with this skill will be able to understand official documents, records, etc., when there is some degree of confusion about their contents due to legalistic writing styles. This requires a 3d6 vs. IQ roll. A bureaucrat can detect forgeries of official documents on 3d6 vs. IQ (4d6 vs. IQ if done by a Calligrapher, plus 1d6 for each level of training of the Calligrapher), and will know if someone is attempting to lie about official regulations just as if the bureaucrat had the Detect Lie talent.

IQ 8 Talents

Blackjack (1): When one character clubs another from behind, without the victim's knowledge and with the attacker knowing the Blackjack skill, the skill allows one additional die to the damage done by the club. When used with a blackjack or sap, the skill allows the user to double the normal damage for the weapon, but consider it to be HTH "subdual" damage. Having this talent does not grant the user the stealth to be able to sneak up on a victim. There are no additional levels of proficiency with this skill.

Fast Draw (2): Allows a character to ready and fire a firearm in the same round. There are no additional levels of proficiency with this skill.

Parachutist (1): With this skill, the character may use any sort of parachute. When landing, he must roll 2d6 vs. DX to avoid incurring 1d6 damage from the fall. Without this talent, a character may use a parachute but must roll 4d6 vs. DX when landing to avoid 2d6 damage. Without the talent, in addition, a character attempting to use a free-fall parachute must roll 2d6 vs. IQ to successfully open the parachute at all.

Scuba (2): Only costs 1 if the character already has the Swimming talent: This skill allows the character to competently operate scuba gear to breathe underwater and to swim as confidently as though he had the Diving talent when using flippers and facemask. In case of equipment trouble, a 3d6 vs. IQ roll is needed to fix failed equipment, avoid the bends, etc.

Flight Device (2): Each purchase of this skill allows the character to operate one peculiar flight device, such as a jetpack (which allows one to fly as though he were affected by the *TFT* Flight spell), hang glider, or hot-air balloon. As with Driving, difficult circumstances require a 3d6 (or worse) roll vs. DX.

Motorcycle (1): This talent allows use of a motorcycle as a Common Ability of Driving.

Truck (1): This allows operation of a bus, trailer truck, etc. as a Common Ability.

Tracked Vehicle (2): Only (1) if the user has Truck Talent. This allows operation of a tracked vehicle (bulldozer, tank) as a Common Ability of Driving.

IQ 9 Talents

Pilot (2): Allows driving-type operation of aircraft. Requires a 3d6 vs. IQ roll every round if it is an unfamiliar craft (e.g., a jet plane when the pilot was only trained on prop planes).

Marksmanship (3): A Missile Weapons talent applying specifically to firearms. The actual Missile Weapons still does not apply to firearms. This has only one level of proficiency.

Sharpshooting (2): Only (1) if character also has Marksmanship Talent. This allows +4 DX (with any specific weapon), provided the shooter fires only once per melee round.

IQ 10 Talents

Sleight of Hand (2): On 3d6 vs. DX, the character can palm small objects, pick pockets, etc. This resembles the Thief skill, but is more theatrical, and substitutes palming of items for lockpicking.

Trance (2): One 3d6 vs. DX, the character can feign death for two minutes. He can also use this as a form of concentration; on 3d6 vs. IQ and given an uninterrupted minute (12 melee rounds), the character may clear his mind to enable him to use any knowledge Talent at +1 IQ for the subsequent minute.

Firefighting (2): Only (1) if the character also has Climbing Talent. The character, given access to sand, water, chemicals, etc., can extinguish a megahex of fire or less per melee round on 3d6 vs. IQ.

IQ 11 Talents

Gambling (2): The character knows both cheating techniques and odds at games of chance. The skill allows +1 on any sort of dice roll used to determine the outcome of a gamble.

Detective (2): The character can use principles or criminology and observation, on 3d6 vs. IQ, to identify suspicious or contraband items, similarities or ambiguities of physical evidence associated with a suspect, etc. It's similar to the *TFT* Naturalist talent, but for use on people.

IQ 12 Talents

Gadgets (2): Only (1) if the character has Mechanician talent. This skill allows use of some specific weapon or "gadget" which is not commercially available, on 3d6 vs. IQ; it does not confer the ability to fix or modify the object.

Cryptography (3): This is the ability to decode secret writings, ciphers, etc. on 3d6 vs. IQ.

Escape Artist (2): Prereq: Sleight of Hand. The character can escape ropes on 3d6 vs. DX. Escaping handcuffs, jail cells etc., requires 5d6 vs. DX+IQ.

IQ 13 Talents

Lawyer (3): When the legality of a character's activities is called into question, or when confronted by hostile law enforcement officials, someone with this Talent can avoid the confrontation by recourse to legal knowledge and a convincing speech on 3d6 vs. IQ.

Eidetic Memory (3): On 3d6 vs. IQ, the character will remember anything he has read or been told. He must have made the effort to commit the info to memory; it is not automatic. However, the memory is permanent thereafter.

IQ 14 Talents

Interrogation (3): If the character has an uninterrupted 12 turns to question someone who is not inclined to answer a question, and makes a 3d6 vs. IQ roll, he will obtain the answer by techniques of interrogation (subtlety, misdirection, deceit – not torture). The victim may save vs. his own IQ, as per resisting a Control Spell; however, the interrogator may continue the questioning another 12 turns.

Ambush/Assassination (2): Prereq: Silent Movement and Tracking, or Disguise. When striking from ambush, with a victim unaware he is under attack, a character with this talent is +4 DX and does 2 additional points of damage with any weapon or U.C. Talent.

V. Powers

There are three categories of superpowers: Personal, Ranged, and Enhancement.

The superhero uses personal powers when exercising paranormal abilities which do not project some sort of energy over distance. Such powers include Healing, Flying, and Shapechanging. Each personal power costs six Creation Points to buy; allotment of an additional six "doubles" the power, as explained for each individual power.

To use a personal power, a superhero activates the power in the Movement Phase of a combat round, either in lieu of or together with actual movement (depending on the power). To activate the power entails rolling 3d6 vs. the relevant characteristic specified for the power.

Personal powers may be continued indefinitely, without loss of ST, by rolling against the relevant characteristic in the same phase as wizards renew their spells. If the attempt fails, the superhero may then attempt to renew the power in the Movement Phase of the same round. If a power such as Flight "fails" or does not activate, it does not mean that the flier suddenly drops like a stone, but rather that he cannot fly in any specific direction until he regains control.

If a referee wishes to limit the capacities of personal powers, he may specify that they can only be used a number of times per day equal to the relevant characteristic.

Ranged powers are those which allow superheroes to hurl energy across distances. They operate similarly to *TFT* Missile spells, except that they do not deplete the superheroes' ST. They require a 3d6 roll vs. the relevant characteristic to activate; the roll occurs in the Action Phase, when the character uses the power. If a referee wishes to limit the use of Ranged powers, he may require an expenditure of 1 ST each time the Ranged power is used; the ST would be recovered at the same rate as the Wizard's ST lost in spellcasting, and excessive power use would have the same damaging effects as ST lost through spellcasting. If the activation roll fails, the power does not activate this round. Purchase of a Ranged power requires the allotment of eight Creation Points.

Enhancement powers do not need to be activated; they usually multiply the effectiveness of a hero's characteristics. Each enhancement requires the allotment of 12 Creation Points; they may have increased effects through the allotment of additional Creation Points, depending on the individual power.

Personal Powers

Shadow: Allows the superhero to duplicate the ability of the legendary radio show character of that name. If the superhero has one combat round to concentrate (in other words, a round when no one attacks him), and succeeds in his 3d6 roll vs. the relevant characteristic, he can move unseen as if using the *TFT* Invisibility spell. Doubling this power confers actual invisibility, usable against animals or mechanical light sensors as well as people. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

Light: The character can glow, as per a *TFT* lantern. Doubling confers the equivalent of a Dazzle spell for each turn the power is activated. ST is the relevant characteristic.

Detection: With this power, a character may, once per turn, say that he is trying to detect a specific object, emotion, person, or other item – such as magic, or the nefarious General Willkie, or radiation, or falsehoods. With a 3d6 roll against the relevant characteristic, IQ, he may detect any examples of his target within a three-megahex radius area. Doubling allows him to know what the specific instance of that target is – e.g., "two pounds of plutonium" instead of "radiation," or "confusion spell" instead of just "magic."

Force Field: This power allows the character to project a protective force field. If he stands still, he may create a force field covering a megahex (he is at the center of the megahex). The force field repels incoming missiles or any character with a lesser ST than the caster. (Attackers of higher ST smash their way through and the force field drops until reactivated.) Doubling allows the character to cover a mega-megahex area. ST is the relevant characteristic.

Fire: The character can produce the equivalent of a *TFT* Fire spell in his own or an adjacent hex. Doubling allows the superhero to create a megahex-sized flame, with one hex adjacent to his own hex (unless he wants to project it on the hex he's in). The caster is immune to his own flame. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

Armor: The character can harden his own body, giving him the equivalent of Stone Flesh (stops 4 hits). Doubling makes it equivalent to Iron Flesh (6 hits). ST is the relevant characteristic.

Regeneration: The character regenerates damage he has taken. At the beginning of each round after he has been injured, the character makes his 3d6 roll against ST; if the roll is successful, he gains l ST. This power will not raise a character's ST above his starting, uninjured, total. A character trying to perform Regeneration may not do anything else for the rest of the round. Doubling this power means that the roll against ST is only 2d6.

Healing: As Regeneration, above, but usable instead upon other people. The superhero must touch the intended recipient of the healing and make a 3d6 vs. IQ roll (2d6 if the power is doubled).

Fly: Acts as a *TFT* Flying spell.

Ranged Powers

Telekinesis: Acts as the *TFT* Telekinesis spell. Telekinesis acts at the superhero's "original" ST, not the ST granted by certain enhancement powers. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

Mindfist: Allows a character to punch someone at range; use the character's own attack ST to determine the normal HTH damage, which with use of this power may be applied at range like a missile spell. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

Fire/Lightning/Cold/etc.: These are direct-damage powers. Despite their many forms, they basically operate in the same way: Some sort of energy gouts from the superhero and damages what it hits. (The referee may determine any additional effects of the power, such as fire setting objects aflame, cold blasts nullifying fire blasts, radiation blasts not penetrating lead shielding, etc.) Unlike the cost-to-purchase of other Ranged Powers, these powers cost 6 Creation Points per die of damage each blast is supposed to do. ST is the relevant characteristic.

Force: This power pushes open doors, overturns cars, etc., but will not damage living entities or characters. It acts in all ways like a fire/lightning/cold/etc. blast, except for the fact that it will not hurt living things. Each die of possible damage costs 4 Creation Points. ST is the relevant characteristic.

Psychic Blast: This power does damage to a person's IQ instead of ST. A character may not die from being psi-blasted, and his IQ never drops below 0. Characters who have been psi-blasted act as though they'd been Confused by the spell of the same name; at IQ 6 they take on the reasoning power of prootwaddles, and the referee can enforce typical random and irrational behavior; at IQ 5 the character loses the power of speech and can not distinguish between friend and foe. Each die of damage to a target's IQ per blast costs 12 Creation Points. A target regains 1 IQ per round, at the beginning of the round. IQ, naturally, is the relevant characteristic.

Darkness: This power acts as the *TFT* spell of the same name. DX is the relevant characteristic.

Empathy: If the attack roll is successful, the target becomes friendly rather than hostile. This power acts as a Control Person/Animal spell, but with the range of a missile spell. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

Enhancements

Superstrength: This power doubles the character's ST for purposes of lifting weight and doing HTH damage. For each additional +3 Creation Points, the ST gains an additional multiple (i.e., for the original 12 points, a character gets 2× ST; for an additional 3 points, he has 3× ST; for another 3 points he has 4× ST; and so on).

Invulnerability: This power grants the character a higher resistance to damage. Any incoming attack less than the character's original ST does no damage to the character. Each +3 Creation Points gives the character +2 defensive ST for this purpose only.

Toughness: The character's ST is doubled for purposes of taking damage. If, for instance, he has an original ST of 12 and the Toughness power, he will not be killed until he takes 24 points of damage. Each +3 Creation Points gives another multiple to the effect (i.e., 12 points means 2× ST, 3+ means. 3× ST, etc., as with Superstrength).

Speed: The character moves at 2× MA. Each + 3 points is + 1 MA.

Reflexes: The character is allowed two actions per turn. (This does not mean that he can run 2× MA in a turn, but rather that he could move half or less of his MA and then perform two attack actions.) Each +3 Creation Points adds 2 to DX for purposes of determining when someone acts in a round. If a character's DX is doubled through this means, it means he gets yet another action per round; tripled, another action; and so on.

Intellect: This power doubles the character's IQ for purposes of resisting Control spells and powers and for figuring out such things as codes, unfamiliar devices, etc. Each +3 Creation Points multiplies IQ by one more, as with Superstrength.

Wrap Up

Although the Powers listed, particularly the Enhancements, will give superheroes a great deal of combat ability, remember that they are **super**heroes.

Naturally, the powers listed in this article are only a few of the ones which might be worked up for superheroes. This article is not a superhero roleplaying game, but rather superhero guidelines for *TFT*.

Note that these rules really do not allow for characters such as DC's Superman, who can juggle battleships, move planets, squeeze coal into diamonds, and annihilate supervillains before sitting down to breakfast. This was intentional; Superman is a legend, and entertaining to read about, but does not game out very well.

This supplement package is only an outline for a superhero campaign; it would be impractical to publish a full-length superhero *TFT* expansion in *TSG*. Let us know what you think about this article, and whether or not you'd like to see similar RPG expansions and variants in the future.
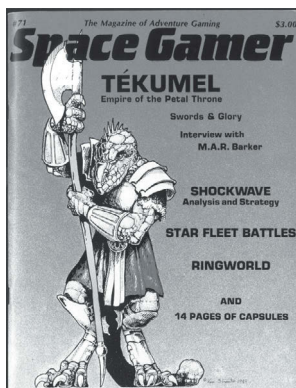
I hope these guidelines will allow players to begin superhero activities with *TFT* rules, and will provide inspiration for expanding those rules.

Superhero Character Record Sheet

Character Name: _____

Player _____

Description: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Notes: _____

_____

ST	Superstrength:__ Invulnerability:__ Toughness:__
DX	Reflexes:__
IQ	Intellect:__
MA	Speed:__

Powers/Skills: _____

_____

_____

_____

Converting *TFT* Characters to *T&T*

As one of many gamers who thought Metagaming's *Fantasy Trip* was the only really playable FRP system, I was pretty upset at the demise of Metagaming, and worried more than I should have about whether there would ever be any new *TFT* material. Reluctantly, I began looking at other systems. I had already tried many of them and gotten no satisfaction, and most of the ones I found on store shelves seemed no better. Then I happened on *Tunnels & Trolls*, and realized my luck had changed.

T&T and *TFT* have an awful lot in common. Both require only ordinary, six-sided dice. Both are easier to learn than most other systems. Most importantly, both systems possess a logical framework that makes it easy to apply a simple procedure – the saving roll – to any number of tasks in the game world. *T&T* is even more free-form, however, than *TFT*: There is no need for a playing board to regulate movement; it is easier to attempt tricks and original stratagems in combat; and the monsters can be easily adjusted to the powers of the player characters. Now that I have some experience as a GM, I can accept this freedom as a positive value, and realize that in *T&T* I have found not a *TFT* substitute but a system with many unique virtues of its own.

When I first turned to *T&T*, though, I realized that my players would be more likely to try it if I allowed them to use their favorite *TFT* characters, so I had to work out a method of converting *TFT* stats to *T&T*.

At first sight, this task might seem simple: *TFT* characters have ST (Strength), DX (Dexterity, and IQ (Intelligence); why not just roll for CON (Constitution), LK (Luck), and CHR (Charisma) in order to complete their *T&T* profiles? This method did not strike me as fair. Imagine an experienced *TFT* character with ST 20 rolling a 5 for CON. In *TFT*, the character might have been used to charging recklessly at his foes, confident he could take on almost anything. But in *T&T* he would be as afraid of facing trouble as a feeble old blind beggar. Clearly, he would not be the same character.

The method I finally settled on was to base CON, LK, and CHR on the average of a 3d6 roll and one or more *TFT* attributes. Thus a character's *TFT* strengths (and weaknesses) would be carried over into *T&T*, but attributes could still diverge markedly, as they are supposed to in *T&T*. I base CON on ST because ST in *TFT* serves the same purpose CON does in *T&T*; I base LK on DX and IQ because a nimble, clever *TFT* character tends to be luckier than his or her cohorts; and I base CHR on ST and IQ on the theory that fit, witty people are more attractive than out-of-shape dullards. (Most people who say muscles are ugly – on women or on men – are just plain envious.) With a few more adjustments for race, possessions, and magic, this system achieves a fair and accurate translation from *TFT* to *T&T*.

The steps in the adaptation process are as follows:

1. Find the number of attribute points the *TFT* character has gained since entering the game by subtracting his or her beginning attribute total from the present total. From the result, subtract 2, then 3, then 4, etc., until the next subtracted number would bring the result below zero. The last number you subtracted is the character's *T&T* level. For example, a *TFT* human with attribute total 45 is a 4th level character in *T&T*.

2. *TFT* ST, DX, and IQ equal *T&T* ST, DEX, and IQ respectively.

3. *T&T* CON = (*TFT* ST + 3d6)/2.

T&T CHR = (*TFT* ST + IQ +2(3d6))/4.

T&T LK = (*TFT* DX + IQ + 2 (3d6))/4.
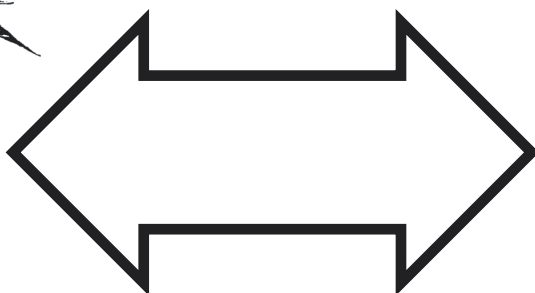
4. **T&T** adjustments for non-human races are now applied if the **TFT** character belongs to one of those races. However, in any case where the ratio reduces an attribute, and where that attribute, in **TFT** terms, is less than 11, the difference between 11 and the **TFT** attribute is added to the **T&T** attribute after the ratio is applied. Likewise, in any case where the ratio increases an attribute, and where that attribute, in **TFT**, is greater than 10, the difference between the **TFT** attribute and 10 is subtracted from the **T&T** attribute after the ratio is applied. Finally, after applying these adjustments, the GM should calculate minimum attributes for the **T&T** races concerned, and make sure none of the character's attributes fall below these minima.

(**TFT** Reptile Men are treated in **T&T** as permanent were-types, except that they retain their normal DEX and can still use weapons. Friendly Reptile Men should be extremely rare in the **T&T** universe. **TFT** Prootwaddles can safely be kept out of **T&T** altogether.)

5. **T&T** characters receive AP appropriate to their level, plus any **TFT** EP they have squirreled away.
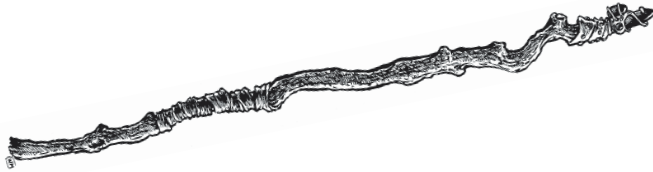
6. Possessions are translated into **T&T** as nearly as possible. A magic staff in **TFT** is equal to a **T&T** staff ordinaire. A **TFT** staff-of-power is a staff deluxe, but as yet possesses no spells its owner does not have.

There are few weapons in **TFT** that cannot be found in standard **T&T**. One exception is the boomerang, but it is not hard to come up with a **T&T** equivalent for it. In **TFT**, a boomerang requires a ST of 11 and does as much damage as a light crossbow. If the GM assumes that a boomerang is similar in effect to a light crossbow in other ways, he might decide that in **T&T** it does 4 dice damage, requires ST 11 and DEX 10, weighs and costs about as much as a baton (20 WU, 10 GP), and has about the range of a javelin (40 yds.). This is just an example, and GMs may have other interpretations (especially if they are more familiar with boomerangs than I), but it should not be difficult to come up with fair assessments.

GMs may translate **TFT** magical items into **T&T** as they see fit – or simply declare that the magic in the item has worn out.

7. A wizard whose DEX or IQ, inherited from **TFT**, is too low for a wizard in **T&T** has low attributes adjusted up to the **T&T** minimum: DEX 8 and IQ 10.

8. If **TFT** wizards have spells similar to higher-level **T&T** spells, and if they have the DEX and IQ to cast those spells, they are awarded those spells free of charge. Likewise, any heroes with spells in **TFT** become **T&T** rogues, and get the equivalent spell they already possess if they have the DEX and IQ to use them. Wizards naturally inherit all the Level 1 **TFT** spells, but rogues do not.

9. **TFT** heroes without any spells must choose whether they will be warriors or rogues in **T&T**. The GM may allow qualified heroes to become warrior-wizards.

Now that the guidelines are spelled out, let's take a typical **TFT** character and see how he converts to **T&T**. Our convert is Arkebus, an Elvish Wizard.

. . . And Adapting Them Back Again

Characters who have found and enjoyed adventures in the **T&T** universe may nonetheless not want to stay there forever. Perhaps they left friends in the world of Cidri. Perhaps they have a favorite Microquest they're dying to get back to. Or perhaps things are just getting too hot in a world of MR 270 Flame Demons. Whatever the reason, players may want to convert their characters from **T&T** back to **TFT**. (In my campaign, for instance, I am using **T&T** for PBM encounters and both **T&T** and **TFT** for face-to-face play.) The reconversion is not difficult at all.

An important difference between the two systems is that **T&T** tends toward bigger numbers. Weapons do more damage, armor stops more hits, magic costs more ST, and, once characters have begun to advance, attributes increase to much higher levels. ST 60 characters are quite common in **T&T**; in **TFT**, the suggested natural lid on the ST of human characters (30 pts.) is rarely needed, for few characters even get that strong. (The **T&T** character will need this extra ST, and it can be argued that ST 60 in **T&T** is actually equivalent to, say, ST 25 in **TFT**). The point is that, once a character reaches the higher levels of **T&T** experience, high attributes cannot be transposed unchanged into **TFT**.

The fair thing to do is to keep a copy of your **TFT** character sheet once you have finished translating into **T&T**. Every time your **T&T** character goes up a level, add one attribute point to his or her somnolent **TFT** counterpart. If **T&T** level bonuses go to ST, DEX, or IQ, add the point to the corresponding **TFT** attribute; if to CON, add to **TFT** ST. If to LK, add either to **TFT** DX or IQ (player's choice); if to CHR, add either to ST or IQ (again, player's choice). The basic rule is that after some time in the **T&T** world, one **T&T** character level equals one **TFT** attribute point – a conversion factor that allows a fair balance between systems. (And if you choose the **T&T** option which allows you to add to ST and CON, be careful to add only one point to your **TFT** ST.)

Conversion of property, spells, and skills from **T&T** to **TFT** requires the old gamer's standby, common sense. Just reverse the guidelines in the main article. **T&T** Adventure Points and **TFT** Experience Points may be considered roughly equivalent, so points gained in a quick adventure in one system may benefit the character in the other system.

So be the first warrior on your continent to go through both *Deathtrap Equalizer* and *Death Test*. And don't be surprised when the innkeeper says: "There's something strange about you, traveler."
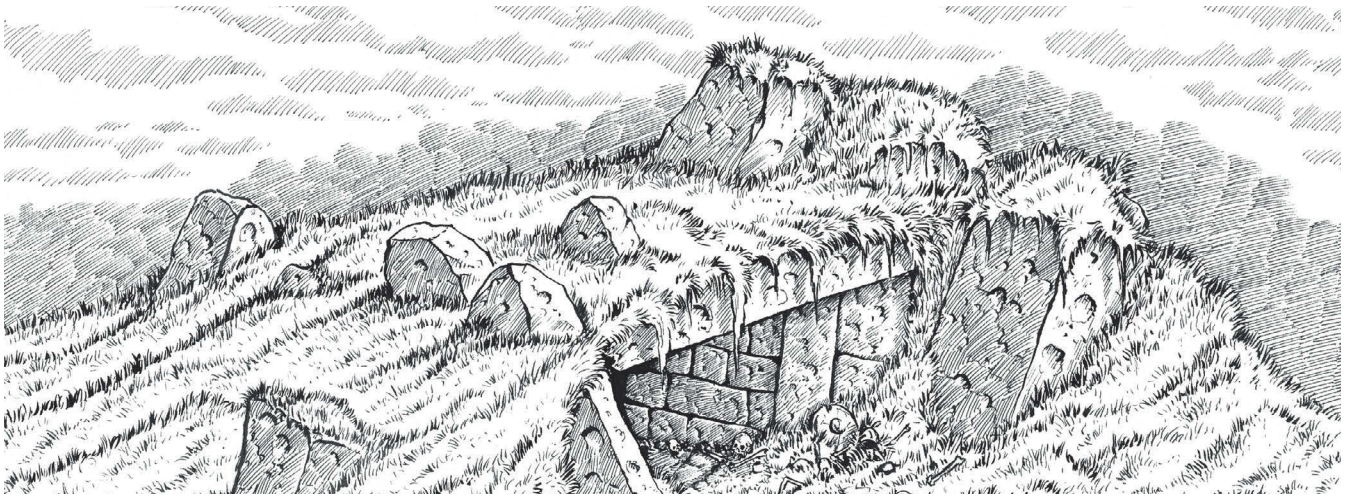
TFT Character Record

Name: Arkebus. Race: Elf. Type: Wizard. EP = 52

ST 12

DX 12

IQ 14

MA 12

Spells and Talents:

Human, Elvish, Literacy, Lightning, 4-Hex Illusion, Glamor, Curse, Sleep, Summon Bear, Reverse Missiles, Dazzle, Fire, Aid, Staff, Detect Magic.

Possessions: Labyrinth Kit, 2 Rations, Staff, 2 GP, 30 SP.

Step 1: Arkebus started with 32 attribute points. He now has 38. 38 - 32 = 6. 6 - 2 = 4, 4 - 3 = 1, 1 - 4 = -3. Since subtracting 4 brought the total below zero, we disregard the 4 and go back to the 3 subtracted before. Arkebus is a 3rd level character.

Step 2: Right now, Arkebus has *TFT* ST 12, DX 12, and IQ 14.

Step 3: Arkebus rolls 11 on 3d6, then averages this roll with his ST for a CON of 11.5. Rounded up, this gives him a CON of 12.

Arkebus rolls 3d6 again, and gets a 4. He multiplies this by 2, adds his ST and IQ, and divides by 4. Result: CHR = 8.25. Rounded up, CHR = 9.

Arkebus rolls 3d6 a third time and gets a 12. He multiplies by 2, adds DEX and IQ, and divides by 4. Result LK = 12.5, rounded up to 13.

Step 4: The *TFT* Peters-McAllister ratios for Arkebus' Elvish heritage are applied. ST = 12, IQ = 21, LK = 13, CON= 8, DEX = 18, and CHR = 18. However, because Arkebus' *TFT* IQ was already 4 points over 10, his *T&T* IQ = 21 - 4 = 17. Likewise, his DEX = 18 - 2 = 16.

Step 5: Arkebus' AP total = 3,000 (because he is level 3) + 52 = 3,052.

Step 6: In exchange for his labyrinth kit, Arkebus might be given the standard *T&T* clothes and pack. His two rations might be worth two days' provisions. His magic staff is a *T&T* staff ordinaire. And he has 2 GP and 30 SP.

Step 7: Not applicable to Arkebus.

Step 8: In addition to his Level 1 spells, Arkebus might be given Blasting Power (L3) for *TFT* Lightning, Rock-A-Bye (L3) for Sleep, Curse You (L2) for Curse, and Mirage (L2) for 4-Hex Illusion. Although he has the DEX and IQ to learn L4 spells, none of his *TFT* spells parallel them, so he doesn't get them. (And if he wants to buy them, he'll have to increase his assets considerably).

Step 9: Not applicable to Arkebus.

The final result:

T&T Character Record

Name: Arkebus. Type: Wizard.

Kin: Elven male. Level: 3rd.

ST 12

IQ 17

LK 13

CON 8

DEX 16

CHR 18

ADDS 5

Weight Possible: 1,200

Weight Carried: 132

Gold: 2 GP, 30 SP, AP: 3,052

Weapons: Magic Staff (Quarter-Staff, 2D, Costs 10, weighs 50).

Armor: None.

Languages: Elvish, Common, Dwarvish, Goblin (the last two rolled randomly from the Language Table).

Magic: All L1 spells, plus Mirage (L2), Curse You (L2), Rock-A-Bye (L3), and Blasting Power (L3).

Other Possessions: Clothes and pack (10 WU), 2 days' provisions (40WU).

Arkebus' height and weight can easily be rolled up without reference to his *TFT* existence. And if his brother Arbelest, a warrior, wants to keep his *TFT* skills, they can easily be adapted into *T&T* with the skill system from *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*. (Any *TFT* skills without specific *MSPE* equivalents can be treated as Special Interests). I think Arkebus and Arbelest will enjoy their adventures in the *T&T* universe, and I believe they can carry on their careers from *TFT* with a minimum of system shock. Moreover, I do not think the two Elves will be alone in their newfound gaming pleasure.

The Fantasy Gamer

by Steve Jackson
From TFG 1
(August/September 1983)

I had intended to write this column only for *Space Gamer* after the magazines split, and confine my *Fantasy Gamer* participation to articles. Well, that resolution didn't last long. But I've got a pretty good excuse. The subject I want to write about is one of particular interest to fantasy fans – and not much interest to sf specialists. I'm talking about **The Fantasy Trip**.

For the past month – ever since Metagaming's demise became common knowledge – I've been getting letters and even phone calls about **TFT**. A typical sample:

> *Dear Mr. Jackson:*
>
> . . . I'd like to encourage you to bring your loyal magazine readers more material on **TFT**, since you are the true designer . . . This leads me to a plea for help. Now that Metagaming is no more, and now that **TFT** is up for grabs, it would do both you and many **TFT**ers good, . . . if you could buy your **TFT** back. I'm sure that you and your little elves could give **Melee** and **Wizard** the attention they need. We all know **TFT** is (or was) the best FRPG on the market. As Princess Leia said, "You're our only hope!"
>
> PS: Any details on your possible RPG? I'm looking forward to seeing more from your company
>
> *–Glenn M. Doren*

Okay. First: Thank you, Glenn, and pardon me for singling you out – yours was just the most typical letter to come in on the day that I decided I had to write a column about this.

Second: We would definitely like to see more **TFT** material for *Fantasy Gamer*. I'm contractually bound not to run any "errata" type articles (which is all right with me; I covered all the errata that I know about in *Space Gamer* No. 29 (posted here)). Any other article – scenarios, variants, what-have-you – would be of interest. Scenarios should be short, though, since the featured scenario in each *Fantasy Gamer* is supposed to be "generic" – that is, adaptable, with a little spadework by the GM, to any system. But by all means, send in **TFT** material!

Third: Although many people have urged me to buy back **TFT** (or even "take" it back!) . . . it's not that easy. I can't just "take it back." Though the copyright was originally in my name, it was sold to Metagaming. Metagaming now owns all rights to the trademarks **TFT** and **The Fantasy Trip**, and the copyrights to the existing rules system. Just because the company is defunct, that doesn't mean the system is "up for grabs." The **TFT** titles are for sale by the former owner of Metagaming. The asking price is well into six figures.

I don't have that kind of money – and I doubt that any other publisher does, either – not for a system which, good though it may be, is one among many. Because I agree that it would be a shame for the system to die (and because I'd personally like to bring it back), I've written Metagaming with an alternative proposal involving a reasonable royalty. By the time you read this, I'll either have finalized an agreement, or given up trying. Next issue I should be able to tell you what happened.

If the basic **TFT** books aren't republished fairly soon (by SJ Games, or someone else) the system will be, for all practical purposes, dead. Gamelords still holds a license, and may release new material. Magazines will still run articles and, of course, there is the possibility of someone doing unofficial designed-for-**TFT** supplements, similar to the **D&D** material Mayfair is producing. But if the system stays out of print very long, its fans will move on to other and newer games. So it goes.

Fourth and last: I have not given up on the idea of a new RPG. But it takes a long time to finish one – and I have a lot of demands on my energies right now – and, as I mentioned, the market has enough RPGs already. If no deal can be made on **TFT**, I'll keep working . . . but, when it's finished, the new game may very well go on the shelf. It will be a minimum of eight months before a new system could appear.

My thanks go to everyone who's been asking me these questions. I wish I had answers that you (and I) liked better.

Different Worlds

By Steve Jackson

From Different Worlds #2
(June/July 1979)
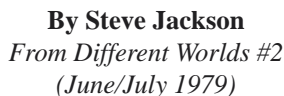
Steve has designed many of Metagaming's MicroGames. among them: Melee, Wizard, and Death Test. His current big project is The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth. He says it should be out by summer of 1979.

Into the Labyrinth

My life and role-playing? I can't think of an easier subject to write on. I became involved with role-playing games just before they started to boom, and role-playing – in one form or another – takes up a good deal of my time.

The first thing I'd like to point out is that, in my opinion, most people define "role-playing game" in entirely too limited a fashion. When someone mentions a role-playlng game, the usual reaction is the ***D&D/C&S/Traveller/RuneQuest/EPT/Monsters! Monsters!*** sort of game. Now that's definitely role-playing . . . but it is not the only kind, or even the most popular kind.

To begin with, most people who are reading this probably cut their gaming teeth on a role-playing game, years and years ago. The most popular board game ever developed in the US is pure role-playing. Yes . . . ***Monopoly***. Consider: each player takes on the role of a cheerfully rapacious real-estate tycoon, wheeling and dealing until he alone commands the board. The fact that the "role" is pre-ordained, and the same for every player, in no way lessens the appeal. To quote Shelly Berman: "It's that thrill you get when you know you've wiped out a friend."

Monopoly is pure role-playing. It lets you do on the game board all the heartless things you'll probably never get a chance to do in real life. That's why it's fun.

In a sense, almost any non-mathematical board game might be considered role-playing. Chess is a battle of armies, as is Go. But, to my mind, a "true" role-playing game must impose a more specific constraint on the players. In chess, you're just trying to beat your opponent. Even in ***Blitzkrieg***, which is much "closer to reality," you're still fighting a hypothetical war, with no "personality" involved. But a WW2 game that let one player "be" Hitler, and another "be" Roosevelt or Churchill – now that would be role-playing.

Let me offer a definition of a role-playing game, then – one that will surely stand until it is shot down. A role-playing game is one that invites its players to take on a personality different from their own. Not "requires" – you can't really do that. Just "invites." But, at least in my experience, the better games are those played by the people who do take on that alternative personality – and the more successful you are at it, the better your play will be.

Furthermore, a game which invites role-playing seems to have a definite advantage. The role-playing doesn't have to be the "point" of the game; even as a subsidiary ingredient, it can still add zest.

Case in point: my own first design, ***Ogre***, was a role-playing game. I didn't (consciously) realize it at the time – but that's exactly what's going on. One player takes the role of the Ogre. Not just an ordinary tank – but a gigantic, nearly unstoppable, murderously-armed killing machine of incredible power. An Ogre is not only capable of mass destruction – it's supposed to indulge in just that. Most gamers like tanks because they're powerful and dangerous. Not just to see one, or even control it – but to be the most powerful tank imaginable, and to be out on the battlefield, smashing everything that comes in your way – now, that's a role. The defender, too, has a role to play. Instead of being the epitome of all our dark desires, he's the archetypal "good guy." He has to stop a monster, and he can do it – but only through great sacrifice.

When some people tell me how much they like "being the Ogre" or "being the defense" – not "playing," but being – I know it's the role-playing that's got them. To me, that accounts for a lot of ***Ogre***'s popularity. Yes, it's quick, and the rules are relatively clean . . . but it's very simple, and contains one little bitty innovation (the one-unit side). Yet it's still very popular. I think it's the role-playing that does it. I know I'd still rather play ***Ogre***, myself, than most other games, although by rights I ought to be tired of it. And, while I'm quite willing to be the defender, I'd much rather be the Ogre – especially against someone who thinks he has the perfect defense. Then I can play cat-and-mouse with his leading units, wipe out a heavy concentration when he finally gets it together, waltz all over his CP, and (if I'm lucky) hunt down everything he has left on the board. When we start, that defender may think he's playing a game – but soon it's real. He's out there, with nowhere to hide, and the Ogre's after him.

So – an "ordinary" wargame, with a premise that allows for role-playing, can be more fun and more successful. No wonder, then, that the "standard" role-playing games are becoming so popular. These are the games that let the players live out a fantasy or science fiction novel. It's a shame that so many of their fans don't really bother with role-playing at all.

That, I'm afraid, was the first thing that impressed me about ***D&D*** – and it's still true today, with that and almost every

similar game. Role-playing goes right out the window. Every player is being himself, often in a most obnoxious fashion. Whether he's swinging a sword or a wand, every adventure is the same. Zap, slash, kill, loot. What did we find? Whoops, a random monster. A million hit points. Zap, slash, kill. A million experience points. Babble, babble, 27th-level Brouhaha with a Ring of Instant Permanent Total Monster Charming. *yawn* Whenever I see a fantasy game being played, I look in on it. I'm compulsive about it. But 95% of the time, that's what I see. I won't play in such a game, or stay within earshot if I can help it. A real role-playing game, played right, is a thousand times better. One where the GM isn't depending on random tables for everything, and where the players have developed their characters in an interesting and believable fashion, and are playing the game for its own sake, and not to see how many monsters they can kill and how many arguments they can win with the unfortunate ref.

For example, a hobby shop in Copperas Cove, not far from Austin, had an excellent C&S campaign going for a while. It had its own newsletter – everything. I never participated, due to distance, but I always heard stories about what was going on. The best tale that came to me was of a Samurai character. Another player-character had stolen his katana. The samurai swore a solemn oath to get his sword back. For a year (game time) he hunted the fleeing thief – and couldn't catch up with him. So at the end of the year the character committed seppuku. This was a good character – rather experienced, with a couple of interesting possessions. But he killed himself because he couldn't get his sword back. That's role-playing.

That player may have lost a good character – but I doubt it mattered to him. His samurai had lived a good life, and died an honorable death (which is far more important to a samurai). The role was fulfilled. He knew it, and his fellow players knew it.

An earthier example: When I do play a fantasy role-playing game (usually playtesting *TFT*: *In the Labyrinth*, these days), it's often with Howard Thompson. He prefers to play dwarves. And his dwarves are obnoxious.

His own conception of dwarves is as dumb, boisterous fighters with rather disgusting personal habits . . . and that's the way he plays them. Howard (as a dwarf) is likely to slug another character who disagrees with him, even if the party needs to be quiet. He'll urinate against the wall while someone is trying to negotiate with the goblins. He'll try to open a chest, fail, and pick it up and throw it against the wall. (When he did that, I was GM. The chest exploded. Everyone in the room was damaged except the dwarf, who made his saving roll vs. ST to avoid blast damage. The scum.) Naturally, the other characters were angry at Gimme . . . but the players enjoyed it. He was acting just like a dwarf. And when the fighting started, Gimme waded right in with his ax. He might be dumb and smelly – but he liked killing things, and he was good at it. Which was why the odious little twerp was along.

As far as I'm concerned, this type of game is only worthwhile if the players can create a new role and submerge themselves in it – meeting situations as though they were that character, rather than Joe Smith suddenly down in a dungeon. The intellectual challenge of formulating a new personality is interesting – and, once you grasp the idea, it's fun to be somebody else. You can try out new ways of dealing with

life . . . without ever leaving your living room. You could find out something new about yourself – if you'll put yourself aside and let Thud the Barbarian be himself some evening.

I'm doing what I can to promote this kind of play in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth*. Players will not "roll up" characters – oh, I give them tables, but I encourage them not to use them. Instead, just think about all the different things that go into making up a personality, and pick what you like . . . then select ST, DX, IQ, spells, and talents to go along. To me, that's much better for real role-playing than rolling up attributes and then trying to do something with them. And players get experience points for acting in character, whatever they have defined that to be. Establishment of a persona, and skillful play of that persona once you've established it, is the whole point of *TFT* – not just killing things and grabbing gold.

The establishment of a specific persona plays a big part in another facet of my life these days – the Society for Creative Anachronism. The SCA, as more of you out there ought to know, is a medievalist group. We recreate the combat, customs, arts, crafts, sciences, and knowledge of the Middle Ages. The SCA is role-playing to an extent undreamed of by most gamers. When you join the Society, you choose a persona – a person who could have actually lived in the Middle Ages – and then you live that persona. At any SCA event – feast, revel, tourney, Guild meeting, or fighter practice – you dress, act, and talk in the proper "period" style for your new personality. Viking berserkers mingle with Renaissance courtiers, Scots clansmen, Huns, Byzantines, and Teutons. It's incredible. (Incidentally, anyone interested in joining the SCA should inquire around his local hobby/wargame shop, or at science fiction conventions – many SCAers are wargamers and/or SF readers – or check out the information at **sca.org**.)

I first became involved with the Society because of my gaming work. I was researching *Melee*, and I wanted to observe some actual combat. Unfortunately, you can't go down to the corner tavern and see a swordfight any more. The SCA was the next best thing. Although the weapons are made of rattan rather than steel, they are weighted and balanced just like the real thing – and SCA armor and shields are as close to the originals as time, money, and safety will permit. So I went to a few demonstrations and fighter practices . . . I made notes . . . I began to get interested . . . and one day I put on baggy Viking pants and a leather vest and left my notebook at home. Exit Steve Jackson. Enter Vargskol – a halfbreed Viking/Celt, always torn between the Norse way (an enemy is to be taken advantage of, and a battle is to be won) and this strange new concept called "chivalry." I don't know where role-playing leaves off and schizophrenia sets in, because I'm Varg now for an average of two days a week – sometimes more. I know it's been a lot of fun, and I think it's been good for me as well – and if the mundanes think I'm a trifle peculiar when they find out what my hobby is, imagine what they'd say if they knew what I did for a living!

To me, then, role-playing is much more than the newest fad in wargames. It's an ancient and honorable pastime, and a valuable tool for finding out about yourself and the world you live in. I hope to keep playing – and designing – role-playing games as long as there's a demand for them. I expect that will be a long, long time.

By Steve Perrin
From Different Worlds 7
(April/May 1980)

In the Labyrinth

In the Labyrinth is the Game Master's Module for Metagaming's long-awaited fantasy role-playing game, *The Fantasy Trip*, designed by Steve Jackson. It was worth the wait.

This is a full size book, 80 pages, and sells for $4.95. It is available with 50 cents postage from Metagaming, PO Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761.

This is not a complete game. Players will at least need the module, plus both *Melee* and *Wizard* Microgames. A further problem is that, even with the two Microgames, the game is still not complete. The module makes continual references to Poison, Fire as Weapon, Alchemy, Magic Items, and Chemistry. This is usually written as "see Poison," etc. None of these elements are in the book, nor are they in the Microgames. They will probably be in one of the later volumes of *TFT*, *Advanced Melee* and *Advanced Wizard*. They will also be $4.95 books. *Tollenkar's Lair* is also announced and will be a ready-to-play labyrinth with maps, notes, background, and instructions.

A Matter of Style

This is an impressive piece of writing. Steve Jackson has a good, clear, prose style, informal yet informative, a joy to read. Moreover, the book is full of good advice on being a Game Master for *TFT* and a background on the immense world of Cidri on which all *TFT* adventures supposedly take place (created by the Mnoren, a group of world-builders like Phillip Jose Farmer's Maker of Universes).

The book also has a lot of information on new weapons, earning a living, and social structure, plus a tunnel complex, a town layout, and a map of the Duchy of Dran.

More important, the book adds the major element of learnable skills to the basic sterile arena combat of *Melee* and *Wizard*. Now the games can be true role-playing games.

With ability to acquire skills such as Horsemanship, Swimming, Boating, specific weapon skills, Sex Appeal, etc., the dumbest character (these are all IQ 8 skills) can have specific skills which enhance his personality and give dimension to the gladiators of *Melee*.

One of the fascinating skills available to the character is for Priests. There are no gods in this game. All spells are strictly the bailiwick of the magicians. The skill of the Priest is that of organizing worship, making sermons, collecting funds, etc. A grudging provision is made for a Priest to maybe, if the GM really insists, have a slight control of probability (like the *D&D*/*AD&D* Bless spell). Basically, there are many religions in Cidri, but no gods, unless the local powerful Wizard serves the function.

Steve has also added a C&S-like alignment roll (actually several attitude and/or morality rolls) as an option for instant personality generation. Unlike C&S, however, this is not an integral part of the game, but simply a handy mechanism when the time or inspiration is not available for instant personality generation for a character. In themselves, these tables are of use to any FRP system.

One of the charms of this module is the continual supply of quick systems for setting up characters or situations, with a balancing emphasis on the need for carefully crafted adventures if the game is to go properly.

Perhaps the best part of the book is a column by publisher Howard Thompson, describing the story-telling requirements of being a GM. Truer words were never spoken.

Other Goodies

The rules also supply monster descriptions which are written in a format strangely like the first edition of *RuneQuest*. First the intelligent humanoid monsters, then the intelligent monsters, then beasts and riding animals, etc. Better he should have followed second edition RQ and alphabetized them.

However, a number of excellent new monsters have been added to the obligatory elves, dragons, centaurs, etc. The rules even provide specs for normal monsters like lions and tigers and bears (oh, my!) which previous rules sets such as *D&D* and RQ usually left out. Good show.

As well as the aforementioned maps of tunnel complexes, a village, and the Duchy of Dran, there are several pages of copiable character sheets, hex sheets, odd-shaped megahexes, and other neat stuff.
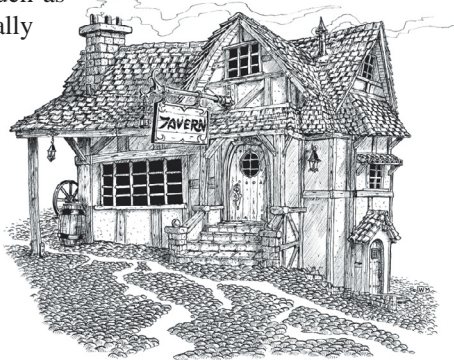
Super Characters

A personal cavil I have with *TFT* game system is the use of the *Tunnels & Trolls* mechanism of increases in level allowing the character to add points to characteristics. On a small scale, this is reasonable (actually indicating simple hardening of muscle, quickening of reflexes, and more stuff memorized). Over the long run, it allows for an incredibly strong, lightning fast, cosmically intelligent character who seems to have stepped directly from the pages of Marvel or DC Comics. In fact, Spiderman is exactly the model Ken St. Andre, author of *T&T*, uses as a justification for the incredible strength a high-level *T&T* character can have. In this module, Steve proposes a limit on Strength, but no serious prohibition is given to infinite increases of any characteristic, aside from the eventual mortality of the character. This is a realism issue that rankles me, but others have no problem with it. It's a matter of taste.
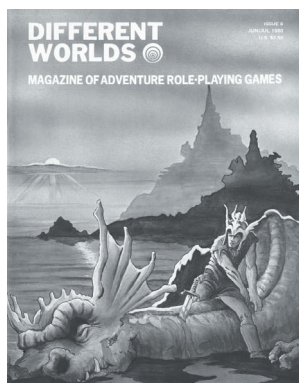
Advanced Melee

Advanced Melee is the combat part of ***The Fantasy Trip*** roleplaying system. The book sells for $4.95 and consists of the book alone. It is written by Steve Jackson. Published and available from Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761; include $.50 per order for postage and handling.

When *Melee*, Microgame 3, came on the scene almost three years ago, it was an interesting system for combat with archaic weapons. It was a quick and fun system with little of the roleplaying appeal of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but it had the virtue of consistency and not too much complexity.

Now we have *Advanced Melee*. The first page has a caution that the buyer should also have the *Melee* Microgame. Wrong. Unless the player feels a need for the Melee map (and the megahexes provided in the centerfold are perfectly adequate) or the cardboard counters (but miniature figures are much more fun), there is no need for the Microgame.

The rules include all the rules of the original plus many more. Here are the missing rules for fires, exotic weapons, aerial combat, critical hits, specific location hits, gunpowder, aimed blows, terrain problems, mounted combat, use of cover, and everything else which takes *Melee* out of the arena and into the "real" world. Well done.

The main problem in the rules is the lack of table of contents and/or index. The layout doesn't help, with indistinguished headings and little variety in type style. These lacks take the rules from a rating of around nine to around seven.

The appearance has one problem, as well. When they made the decision to go from one huge boxed game to booklets, Metagaming cut costs by keeping the same cover by Roger Stine on all the books, just changing the titles. The cover is a "good once," but they should have sprung the bucks for some variety. It also makes things difficult when you want one particular book and you have to paw through three to find the one you want. The printing of the titles is in a lettering style called "black letter" in calligraphy circles. It looks terribly archaic and old English, and is correspondingly difficult to read. A little sacrifice of style to practicality would have been a better choice.

As usual, the interior illustrations by Robert Phillips are quite excellent and occasionally have something to do with the text.
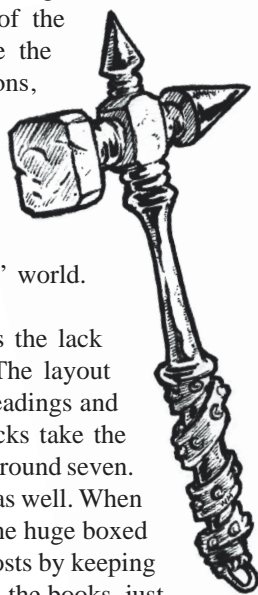
For those of you who are not familiar with the *Melee* combat system, it is quite simple in its basics. The character (***TFT*** uses the rather dehumanizing word "figure" instead of the usual "character") has a roll of 3D6 against his Dexterity or less in order to succeed in an attack. Anything over means failure. DX (as it's called) is adjusted by armor, the weapons being used, the distance to the foe (for thrown or missile weapons), and many other situations. The main complexity is in figuring the particular adjustments to a character's DX this round, but this is not too burdensome. Armor absorbs damage, and any damage getting past takes points away from the character's Strength (ST). ***TFT*** must have the fewest characteristics of any game, being reduced to Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity. Combat is regulated by being done on a hexsheet and a figure must pick one of several options each combat turn. In some ways this is perhaps overregulated, but that is a matter of taste. It does make for a clean system without the ambiguities of some of the others.

All in all, *Advanced Melee* is well worth the money. Don't pay any attention to the publisher's attempt to get you to buy the Microgame. *Melee* is dead, long live *Advanced Melee*.

Advanced Wizard

Advanced Wizard is the magical part of ***The Fantasy Trip***. The book sells for $4.95 and consists of the book alone (40 pages). It is written by Steve Jackson and published by Metagaming (see above). Like *Advanced Melee*, this book stands alone without the support of the *Wizard* Microgame. It is no more complex than the original, and the buyer does not really need to be familiar with the Microgame.

Like *Advanced Melee* again, this book is far richer than its predecessor. It contains potions and poisons, creation of magical objects and a listing of sample objects. There is a rule (The Rule of Five) about how many magical items a character can carry, which would be a useful adaptation to any Game Master's campaign.

The magic system is simple. The figure must memorize spells using his Intelligence, throw spells using Dexterity, and pay for spells using his Strength. As he goes up in levels, the character may increase any of these characteristics he chooses, and thus become better at memorizing, throwing, or fueling spells. Because the wizard must fuel spells with Strength, a simple two point blow could kill a wizard who had used all his Strength for magic. It is a simple, relatively straightforward system, and quite effective.

The spells and magical items are familiar to any fantasy role-player. Different versions of all the basics have appeared in all the games. The rationale and system for use in *Wizard* is consistent and meant for play on ***TFT*** hexes and megahexes. Like *Advanced Melee*, there is no table of contents nor index. At least this book has a page in the back for notes! Like the others, the same cover from Roger Stine is used. Robert Phillips' illos are again quite good, but have nothing to do with the content. Like its partners, this is a well-done set of rules and well deserves purchase.

A Modest Proposal for *The Fantasy Trip*

By David R. Dunham

From Different Worlds 15 (October 1981)

When I finally saw Metagaming's new ***In the Labyrinth*** (***ITL***), I was both pleased and disappointed. Pleased because there was a lot of good new material, but disappointed because what I saw as the major problem for a campaign based on ***ITL***'s forerunners, ***Melee*** and ***Wizard***, still existed.

Over the course of a campaign, attributes are going to build up alarmingly. Several things were done to slow this, notably increasing the experience point costs for raising attributes. Still, they can get very high.

What bothers me even more than a human with a 30 ST is that basic characteristics such as ST, IQ, and DX can increase so dramatically. Certainly they can be improved in real life, but it seems unreasonable that a person's IQ could ever more than double (ignoring any questions of the validity of IQ tests).

On the other hand, a person's abilities can increase indefinitely. You should always be able to learn new talents, although it is reasonable to assume that the more you learn, the more difficult it gets.

The underlying problem with ***ITL***, as I see it, is that attributes are used for two purposes. They are your physical characteristics, and they also represent the level of ability you have attained. Just because an individual gains the ability to absorb more damage (increase in ST) does not mean that she would be able to pick up a heavier weapon which does more damage. The ability to learn a new spell or talent (increase in IQ) should be unrelated to the ability to learn a more difficult talent. Finally, the chance of success in attacking with a weapon or casting a spell (adjusted DX) is not the same as a character's coordination, or his chance of not falling down (if walking over a slippery floor, for example).

What I propose doing is splitting all the attributes into their two components. Strength would become ST, the character's raw physical strength, and HP, the character's hit points, or ability to suffer wounds and exhaustion without collapsing. IQ would break down into IQ, the character's brainpower, and knowledge, KN. KN represents how many spells or talents could be learned. Dexterity turns into DX, the character's coordination and agility, and SC, or chance of succeeding when attacking or casting a spell. (A purist might want to further divide SC into CA, or combat ability, and MA, magic ability.)

Both DX and SC would be adjusted, since encumbrance affects how quickly you can move and your sense of balance, which are part of both SC and DX.

Having additional attributes means some changes have to be made. Most of these are terminology changes: deciding whether to use ST or HP when the book says ST. As a guideline, I suggest the following uses for the new attributes:

ST	Ability to use weapon; holding a rope; holding your breath; encumbrance; bare-hand damage.
HP	All damage taken, whether physical (from an attack) or fatigue (from spell-casting).
IQ	Ability to learn new spells or talents of a given difficulty; disbelieving illusions.
KN	Number of talents or spells that can be learned.
DX	Saving rolls; initiative in combat.
SC	Determining whether a spell or attack is successful.

The other important change is in starting attributes and how they are increased. To start out, you might want to distribute attribute points among ST, IQ, and DX as in the rules, and then say that HP=ST, KN=IQ, and SC=DX. Alternately, you can start with 8 points in each attribute and add 16 extra points to them (no individual attribute can be over 16, however).

The table of experience points needed to increase an attribute can be revised simply by adding 32 to all the attribute totals. Thus, 1000 EP would be required from 73-77 total attribute points. Actually, this will slow down advancement a bit, since you'll have to spread your increases among more attributes. You may want to counteract this by using a table such as:

|	
65-68 attribute total:	125 EP each
69-72	250 EP
73-76	500 EP
77-80	1000 EP
81-84	2000 EP
85-88	4000 EP
89-92	8000 EP

For each series of four attribute totals over 92, double the EP needed. This table will make it slightly easier to advance, until very high attribute totals are reached (around 100). It also has the advantage of being completely uniform, unlike the table in the rules which has erratic jumps.

Breaking down attributes should make characters a little more varied, because there are more attributes. For instance, you could have a character with an IQ of only 9 who nevertheless knows 20 different talents. You'll also be faced with more tough decisions – do I want to hit better or would I rather attack earlier? Do I want to take more punishment or should I graduate from shortsword to broadsword?

Chances are that most characters' ability attributes will rise higher than their physical attributes, so there will be less "supermen" in the game. There will also be more "realism," since a magician who can throw 30 points worth of spells will not necessarily be able to bend iron bars as well.

Mythological Monsters for *The Fantasy Trip*
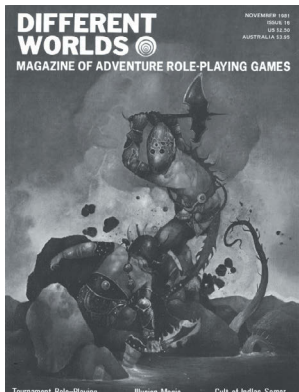
By Ronald Pehr
*From Different Worlds 16
(November 1981)*

Whether on the battlefield, in the arena, or in labyrinthine tunnels, one of the more enjoyable aspects of fantasy gaming is the prospect of encountering fantasy monsters. *The Fantasy Trip* has given gamers a taste of the inhuman evildoers and ferocious beasties that can oppose well-experienced players.

Players clamoring for new and more implacable foes for their characters might look to our own world's mythology – to play in the fantasy world against the legendary beings that existed as genuine terrors in the minds of our ancestors.

Be warned! These are for only the smartest, strongest, most dexterous characters.

The Harpy

The harpy comes from Greek mythology. Harpies have an avian body with the upper torso, arms, and head of a woman. The hideous aspect of the harpy was its ability to lure men by a mystically compelling song; the victim arrived entranced and the harpy pounced to feed. In *TFT*, this power is represented as a Control Person spell. They can utilize this spell automatically against any victim they can see by direct eyesight. The harpy casts the spell by selecting the option on its turn. The spell occurs regardless of DX and costs no ST, but the victim may save in the usual manner. If the harpy takes 8 or more hits in a turn or is knocked out of the air, all its Control Person spells end.

Harpies fly in the same manner as other winged creatures in *TFT*; however, a harpy can hover in the air over one hex and cast Control Person as though they were standing in that hex.

Harpies are one-hex figures. They have ST 15, DX 11, IQ 9, MA 4 walking / 20 flying. Their feathers stop one hit.

They may use weapons or fight bare-handed as a normal figure. Because of their anatomical structure, they cannot employ two-handed weapons or bows.

The Mummy

A mummy is the wrapped, preserved body of a long-deceased person that has become animated for some mystical reason and left its tomb to wreak havoc. The bandage-like wrappings will have hardened to a rock-like consistency, and the undead brain has a hatred for living creatures.

Because mummies are kept going by eldritch forces rather than biological means, and have no real nervous systems, they have certain immunities in *TFT*. They are invulnerable to any sort of Control spells, although there may be artifacts which can control them, and a wizard who brings a mummy to life may have a means to control it. They do not feel the pain of wounds and so ignore the penalties incurred by receiving 5 or 8 hits in a turn. They can battle freely until their ST is reduced to zero or less, and if you use the Crippling Hits option they are unaffected unless a limb is actually severed.

Mummies are one-hex figures with ST 25, DX 10, IQ 8, MA 6. The wrappings stop 4 hits, though fire burns them as if unarmored. Mummies disdain weaponry, doing 1d+3 damage in regular combat and 2 dice in HTH.

The Minotaur

This creature from the Greek legend of Theseus is a large man with the head of a bull. Consider it a one-hex figure with the mass of a gargoyle.

Minotaurs can talk, and they think as well as hobgoblins, but would rather eat people.

A minotaur may use any weapon it has the talent for (the double-bladed axe is traditional), or it may fight with its horns. The horns may be used in a charge attack, like a pole weapon, but get no extra reach. Drop and Break Weapon spells do not affect the horns. A minotaur may melee with its horns and a weapon together, at -4 DX. The horns are always treated as a single weapon even though there are two. They do 2d+2 damage in regular combat, 2d-2 in HTH. Minotaurs do normal damage with weapons.

The Lamia

In Greek myths, the lamia was accursed by the gods to become a woman from the waist up and a snake from the waist down. Because of their affliction, lamias hate all normal people, particularly women and children.

They may be considered one-hex figures, like large snakes, with the same -3 to be hit, and both their side hexes are front hexes.
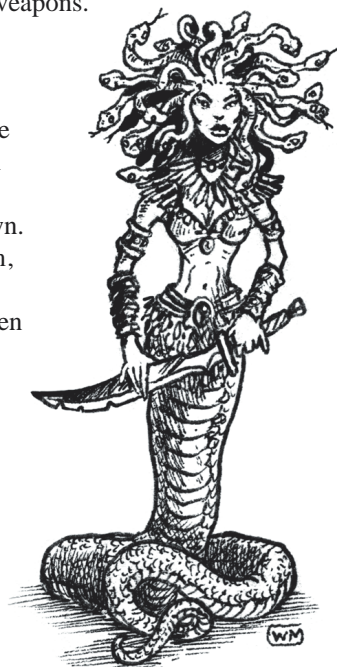
The lamia may fight either with weapons or bare-handed. In HTH she may do an extra constriction attack for 1d damage. She makes this attack at normal DX in addition to whatever other attack she performs.

Lamias may learn magic as if they were wizards, and talents like any other figure.

They have ST 30, DX 12, IQ 10, MA 8. Their scaly hide stops one hit.

The Chimera

This is a word meaning an impossible, nonexistent entity, but the chimera was very real to the Greeks.

It is a two-hex creature. The front is a lion, the hindquarters are those of a goat. It has a dragon tail and dragon wings. It has three heads: lion, goat, and dragon. Thus, it can fight simultaneously against three foes with no DX penalty. It can also lash with its tail and fly with its wings as a two-hex dragon, and can breathe fire into its front hexes.

Chimerae have ST 24, DX 12, IQ 5, MA 12 whether running or flying in combat. They follow *Melee* rules for aerial combat.

The hide stops one hit; the dragon head, tail, and wings stop two hits (this is an especially apt foe for use with the optional Aiming and Crippling rules).

The lion aspect strikes with paws for 2d damage; the goat aspect strikes with horns for 1d-1 damage (no pole weapon type attack). The dragon head breathes a 1d fire attack for 1 ST, and the tail operates as for any 2-hex dragon.

The Gorgon

Medieval bestiaries pictured gorgons as bull-like creatures with iron scales, whose noxious breath could turn people to stone.

In *TFT* terms, they will have the characteristics of an ox, yak, or water buffalo.

The breath power is employed by standing still, or moving only one hex, and then breathing in the manner of a dragon. The breath can go only into the gorgon's front hexes and cannot be used while also striking physically. Victims get a 4/DX saving roll. If it fails, the victim is turned to stone (as a Freeze spell) until the gorgon is dispatched, a Remove Thrown Spells is cast on the statue, or the victim is eaten.

Because of their iron-scaled hide, gorgons stop 4 hits at 30 ST and 5 hits if they are 40 ST.
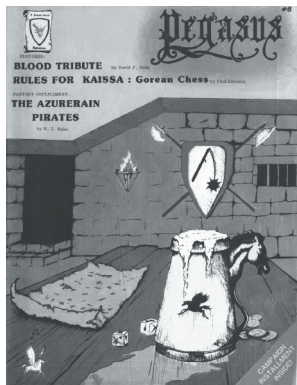
Pegasus

The Caves of the Goblin Lord

by Dan Goodsell
*From Pegasus 6
(February/March 1982)*

Author's Foreword:

When I was 11 years old in 1976, I first found the **Dungeons & Dragons** three-book set and later the **Monster Manual**. Those books fascinated me and my group of comic book-loving, science fiction movie-going friends. We started making up adventures, characters, worlds and telling stories through these games. I bought everything I could find, including modules, new games, magazines, miniatures and anything else gaming related. We made our way to Orc Con and other local southern California gaming conventions. These were glorious years of discovery.

The first Metagaming game I bought was **WarpWar** and I went on to pretty much buy their entire catalog. These games were fantastic, easy to learn, quick to play and had great art. We played **Melee**, **Wizard**, and eventually **The Fantasy Trip**. Never having enough pre-made adventures to buy, I made my own. They weren't the best but it was something I could do during the week and enjoy with my friends every weekend.

I don't remember why I made and submitted **Caves of the Goblin Lord** to *Pegasus* magazine in 1982. I already had one **D&D** adventure printed in the magazine so I am guessing I thought to mix it up by sending in a **TFT** adventure since there were not a whole lot floating around to play. These were the only two adventures I ever had published and for that matter really sent out for publication.

By 1983, I was in college and my life was changing. We still gamed on the weekends, but game design just never entered my mind as something I could do for a living. Now I am older (a lot older), and incredibly I work as an independent artist and writer. I spend large portions of my day working on my own books and art projects. I have crowdfunded a couple of card games and one of them ended up being produced by Hasbro.

I owe all of this to gaming as a kid. Without playing all those games, making characters, learning mechanics and maybe most importantly learning you can just do it yourself, I would never have ended up on this life path. To me, those games and game creators in the 70's and 80's were really doing something special and I was lucky to grow up in that amazing period of creation.

Dan Goodsell

History

A short time ago there was a great Goblin that commanded a large group of Goblins. His fame was great, but in the end he was driven back to lurk in his subterranean abode. For 15 years nothing was heard of him, then rumors of his return began to circulate. You are a group of adventurers that have set out to enter his caves and to kill him.

Judge's Notes:

This Dungeon is for a group of beginning **Melee**/**Wizard** adventurers who have no Experience Points.

Level One

1) **Entrance Room:** Standing in this room is 1 Goblin guard. He has a Club.

   Judge only: Goblin ST 10, DX 12 (adjDX 10), IQ 10, MA 8; Armor: Leather (2 points); Weapons: Club and Dagger. The Goblin has 10 silver pieces. If the party looks strong he will run to warn the Goblin Lord.

2) **Bedroom:** In this room is a small bed.

   Judge only: Under the bed is a small bronze cup worth 5 silver pieces.

3) **Wolf Room:** Sitting in this room is a Wolf.

   Judge only: Wolf ST 10, DX 14, IQ 6, MA 12; Armor: Fur (1 point); Weapon: Bite (1d+1). This Wolf will attack any party that is not with a Goblin.

4) **Guard Room:** 2 Goblins are sitting in this room.

   Judge only: Goblin A: ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, MA 10; Armor: None; Weapon: Small Axe. Goblin B: ST 14, DX 8, IQ 10, MA 10; Armor: None; Weapon: Broadsword. When the party enters, one Goblin will try to run out of the room and the other will fight. The one that ran, if he escapes the room, will return with the Orc in Room 6 after 4 turns.

5) Food Storeroom: Many bags of flour, sugar and salt lie in this room.

Judge only: The Goblins have to eat a mush made from this stuff. In this room is a Very Large Rat ST 2, DX 11, IQ 1, MA 8, Armor: None; Weapons: Bite (1d-2). The big rat is hiding under the bags, and will attack the first person who searches through them.

6) Orc Room: Sitting at a table in this room is a large Orc with a morningstar. He is eating a small dinner.

Judge only: Orc ST 13, DX 12 (adjDX 9), IQ 8, MA 6; Armor: Chainmail; Weapon: Morningstar. He carries 30 silver pieces.

Level 1

    ⊞ = Doorway
    ⬡ = Stairway

8) Goblin Lord's Bedroom: In this room is a large soft bed.

Judge only: This is the bed of the Goblin Lord.

Level 2

    ⊞ = Doorway
    ⬡ = Stairway

7) Goblin Lord's Room: In this large room is a large throne with a small Goblin on it.

Judge only: The small Goblin is the Goblin Lord. ST 12, DX 12, IQ 14, MA 10; Armor: None; Weapons: Wizard's Staff. What makes this little guy the Lord is his wizardry, which impresses and intimidates his fellow goblins. Spells: Sleep, Illusion, Reverse Missiles, Rope, Destroy Creation, Dazzle, Summon Wolf, Aid, Confusion, Magic Fist, and Staff.

Beneath the throne is an obvious trap door, but to move the heavy throne and get to the trap door, a total ST of 25 must be applied, with up to four figures able to combine their ST to do it. Failing that, the party could chop the throne up. It is gilded wood, and total damage of at least 20 points must be accumulated to chop it into chunks small enough to move aside. Under the trap door is a spiral staircase leading down to Level 2, Location 9.

Level Two

9) Stair Room: The spiral staircase in this room leads up to Level 1, Location 7.

Judge only: Nothing special.

10) Another Food Storeroom: In this room are barrels of salt pork, ale, and wine.

Judge only: This is the food the Goblin Lord eats.

11) Bear Room: There is a very large grizzly bear in this room.

Judge only: Grizzly Bear ST 30, DX 11, IQ 6, MA 8; Armor: Fur (2 points); Weapons: Claws (2d+2). The bear will attack anyone entering except the Goblin Lord.
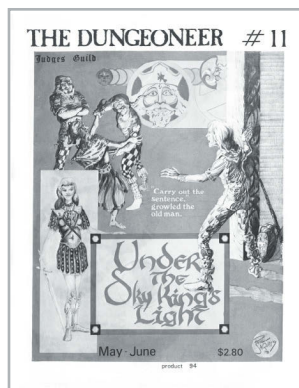
12) Treasure Room: There is a large chest in this room.

Judge only: Inside the chest are 350 silver pieces.

The Dungeoneer

The Lost Lair

By Jennell Jaquays
From The Dungeoneer 11 (May/June 1979)

The Lost Lair

"The goal of the quest is the dragon's lair, in which some fairly powerful magic items are kept. 4-6 characters with some experience under their belts should be able to tackle this adventure."

That's how I introduced *The Lost Lair* adventure when it first appeared in issue 11 of *The Dungeoneer* in 1979. Although I no longer owned it, I still created content for the gaming fan zine I had started with friends several years earlier.

What attracted me to writing a short adventure for **The Fantasy Trip** may have been its hex-grid maps and inherent board game play style. Designing an adventure for more tactical play from the outset presented a significant challenge. With no creative fudging allowed, I found myself calculating the effects of elevation and line of sight – things not a usual part of my design process.

The Lost Lair may be one of the first, if not *the* first published **The Fantasy Trip** adventures intended to be a game mastered experience from the start. Prior to it, *MCQ1 Death Test* by Steve Jackson, with its unconnected game-board-sized rooms, had been structured like a solo adventure with multi-player suggested as an option. My adventure connected those chambers with passageway play areas, elevation changes, and absolutely no story line; just encounters and challenges that interested me as a designer.

The **In the Labyrinth** roleplaying rules for **The Fantasy Trip** had yet to be published when I wrote this. I had only **Melee** and **Wizard**, the game's combat and magic systems. Where I found gaps in the rules needed to play my encounters, I made my own.

Like many adventures from that time, *The Lost Lair* was light on *why* heroes might be there, other than finding more loot and experience. The adventure had no setup. No adventure hooks. No history or backstory. Just, "Here's an adventure, set your characters down on location #1 and have at it."

I would write this differently today. I've since become a "backstory is important" kind of designer. But in so doing, I've lost the intense brevity once noted as a hallmark of my early works. Some saw that brevity as a plus. *The Lost Lair* has that brevity.

Yet it lacks things that characterize my more recent work. It's missing interesting characters. Encounters are little more than bundles of stats, with a note that they will fight to the death. It's devoid of humor. Not necessarily jokes, but the word plays and the conversational writing style of my current work. And there is nothing like my usual non-linearity with meaningful exploration choices; the design feature that would eventually result in the "verbification" of my name into "Jaquaysing the Dungeon." And oddly enough, it has a dragon in it. I rarely write adventures about dragons.
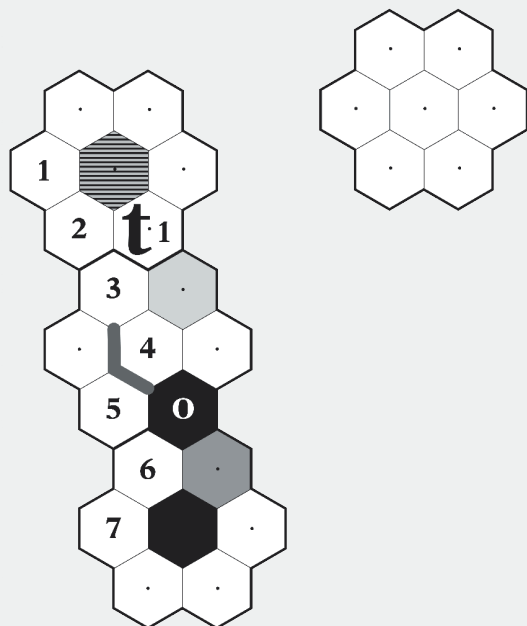
To be honest, I was guessing back then as to whether "4-6 characters with some experience" could handle this adventure. Playtesting adventures has never been one of my strong suits.

Jennell Jaquays

Map Key

1) **Pit**: A 1-hex pit is approximately 10 feet deep and will do 1d+1 damage to any character falling into it. A megahex-wide pit is approximately 30 feet deep and will do 3d+3 damage to any character or creature falling in. All creatures are assumed to land in the prone position. Once standing up, it will require 2 turns per depth of 10 feet to climb to the top. Giants and dragons will require 1 turn per 10 feet of depth. A climber may have only a dagger in readiness. Snakes, wolves, and bears may not climb out of pits.

For the purpose of missile combat between creatures in the pit and on the surface, treat an unshielded creature as having all rear hexes and a shielded creature as having all side hexes (except for one rear hex). Missile combat may only be made from a hex that touches the edge of the pit. Damage done from missile fire into a pit is at +1 DX due to the nature of the exposed areas. Missile fire against a climbing creature is assumed to be as against a rear hex.

Jumping over a 1-hex pit is similar to jumping over a fallen body. A roll of 6 on the die indicates that the creature has fallen into the pit.

2) **Trap:** A hex containing the "**t**" symbol and a number following it is a trap that will spring on a single die-roll of 1-3.

T1) A megahex pedestal, 3 feet high, with a hidden pit trap in the top. It is 20 feet deep and the lid closes up again, preventing escape by any unaided creature in the pit. Damage is 2d+2.
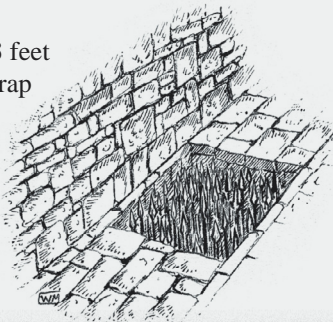
T2) This hex is trapped with a single heavy crossbow that will fire as if DX 13 for 3 dice of damage.

T3) The hexes indicated by the symbol are slippery, unstable patches of ground. If the trap on one of these hexes is sprung, the ground crumbles away and the creature will slip into the pit for 3d+3 damage. Making *two* successful 4/DX rolls indicates that a successful leap for safety was made and the creature is prone in an adjacent hex.

3) **Shelf or Ledge:** The shaded areas represent raised shelf- or ledge-like obstacles. These shelves cost 3 MA to enter from a non-shelf hex. However, it costs only 2 MA to go from a shelf hex to a non-shelf hex. There is no extra cost for moving onto a shelf hex by flying. Falling from a shelf hex to a non-shelf hex will cause 1d-2 damage. Shelf hexes obstruct the line of sight of all dwarves, goblins, halflings, wolves, and giant snakes.

Combat from a non-shelf hex to a shelf hex is at -2 to DX and -2 damage. Combat from a shelf hex into a non-shelf hex is at +1 to DX and +1 damage. The shelf does not affect the exchange of missile fire except as follows: A halfling, goblin, dwarf, wolf, or giant snake that is within 2 hexes of a shelf hex is fully protected from missile fire from any direction in which the line of sight is obstructed. At 3 hexes distance, dexterity of the missile attack is adjusted by -5, at 4 hexes by -2. Human-sized creatures, including orcs, gargoyles, and bears, follow as above, except that at 2 hexes they are -5 DX to hit, and at 3 hexes the penalty is -2. Giants and dragon are attacked at -1 adjusted DX from 2 to 4 hexes distance.

4) **Illusion Wall:** This is an illusion (as per the spell) of unbroken wall similar to the surrounding area. The wall appears to conform to the hex sides as shown on the map.

5) **Obstacle:** This is a tall stalagmite or rock formation that does not connect with the ceiling. It will obstruct the line-of-sight of all creatures except giants and large dragons. Flying creatures of single-hex size may land upon an obstacle at a cost of 3 MA. Obstacles fully protect creatures behind them from missiles and thrown spells. Giants and large dragons are only partially protected; adjust the DX of attacks against them by -2.

6) **Shadow Hex:** This is a magical shadow as per the spell.

7) **Column or Pillar:** This is similar to an obstacle, except that the column is connected to the ceiling of the cavern. Line of sight for all creatures is blocked.

Final note: Assume that all rooms and corridors will allow flight by single-hex creatures (gargoyles and flying wizards).

Encounters

1) Starting Point: A megahex shaft descends 50 feet from the surface. The corridor to room 2 is littered with human skeletons.

2) Pillared Hall: This room is faintly lit by phosphorescent green fungus. The pillars are of vaguely Doric design. The floor is set in a checkerboard pattern of green and white marble tiles.

A) This is an illusion wall as per the spell.

G) Each G marks the location of a goblin fighter: ST 9, DX 9, IQ 10, no armor, short bow, club, dagger. They are hidden and will attempt to attack from ambush.

W) This is a goblin wizard. He is ST 10, DX 10, IQ 12, no armor, wizard's staff. Spells: Staff, Blur, Slow Movement, Drop Weapon, Summon Wolf, Fire, Trip, Dazzle, Sleep, Summon Bear, Illusion.
Each goblin carries 5 gold solers.

3) A Parting of Passages: Standing at this point (right on the number 3) is an image of a giant. It will make threatening gestures until it is dispelled.

4) Grod's Lair: A two-hex shadow blocks vision into this chamber. Sitting on a shelf at the far end of the cavern is the giant Grod (K). ST 30, DX 9, IQ 8, no armor, club does 3d+3 damage. Grod is protecting a large shield that is of lightweight construction and gives no DX penalty.

B) This is Grod's bear, Grungey. ST 30, DX 11, IQ 6, MA 10, fur stops 2 hits, claws do 2d+2 damage.

5) Shadowed Fire: Hidden in the shadow hexes is a wall of 3-hex fire.

6) Room of the Gargoyles: The shelf in the center of the room appears to have a 10-foot statue of a man standing over the Trap symbol. It is an image and will disappear if touched. What will then be seen is a magic broadsword that can be used at ST 10 and increases the user's DX by 1.

A) An image of a gargoyle.

B) A gargoyle, ST 20, DX 11, IQ 8, MA 8/16, skin stops 3 hits, fist does 2d damage. Behind the gargoyle is an illusion of a wall.

C) An illusion of a gargoyle. See B for statistics. Will attack as a real gargoyle.

D) A real gargoyle. See B for statistics.

E) An illusion of a gargoyle, as C above.

T1) See Map Key item 2.

The gargoyles appear to be stone statues until a creature is in an adjacent hex. At that point, all gargoyles (real, image, and illusion) will attack.

7) The Point Where Maps One and Two Connect: Hopefully self-explanatory. Note that the explorers have been walking very gradually downward, so part of Map 2 actually lies below part of Map 1.

8) The Three Bears: Another cavern-like room, illuminated dimly by glowing fungus. The room contains several shelves.

B) Each B marks the location of a bear. ST 30, DX 11, IQ 6, MA 8, fur stops 2 hits, claws do 2d+2 damage.

T2) See Map Key item 2. Four bars of gold, worth 20 solers each, are bait for this trap.

9) Weird Wizard: Sitting on the shelf is an old man (W). He is a very powerful wizard who has gone off the deep end, so to speak. He will sit there and cackle at all who pass by. He will ask for gold, and if any pass without giving him something of value, he will wait till backs are turned and then start blasting with very powerful lightning bolt (no less than 3 ST per spell). ST 30, DX 13, IQ 14, no armor or weapons. Spells: Blur, Drop Weapon, Fire, Trip, Summon Myrmidon, Dazzle, Sleep, Summon Bear, Reverse Missiles, Destroy Creation, Fireball, Invisibility, Lightning. He has on him a magic coin that will add half the character's current ST score to his total ST.

10) The Glowing Cavern: A cavern lit, like Room 8, with glowing fungus.

G) The locations of two normal gargoyles. ST 20, DX 11, IQ 8, MA 8/16, skin stops 3 hits, fist does 2d damage.

W) A gargoyle wizard. Stats as above, with the following spells: Magic Fist, Blur, Slow Movement, Drop Weapon, Image. Note: If at least 2 ST points are used on a Magic Fist, it can be used to push characters into pits. Making *two* 3/DX saving rolls will indicate the character took the spell damage but did not fall into the pit.


T3) See Map Key item 3.

11) The Great Cavern: This is an extension of room 10.

S) Each of these is a single giant snake. ST 12, DX 12, IQ 4, MA 6, no armor, bites for 1d+1 damage.

T3) See Map Key item 3.

12) The Dragon's Hall: The lair of a small dragon (D) and three snakes (S). Small dragon: ST 30, DX 13, IQ 16, MA 6/16, scales stop 3 hits, breath does 2 dice damage, claw does 2-2 damage, tail knocks down on a hit. The snakes are as above. The dragon is guarding a +2DX short bow and 10 +1 damage arrows, a wand that contains 50 Strength points that can only be used for a Summon Bear spell, and a dagger that will cast a Dazzle spell when drawn from its sheath up to 3 times a day. There are also 200 gold solers and three gems worth 20 solers each.
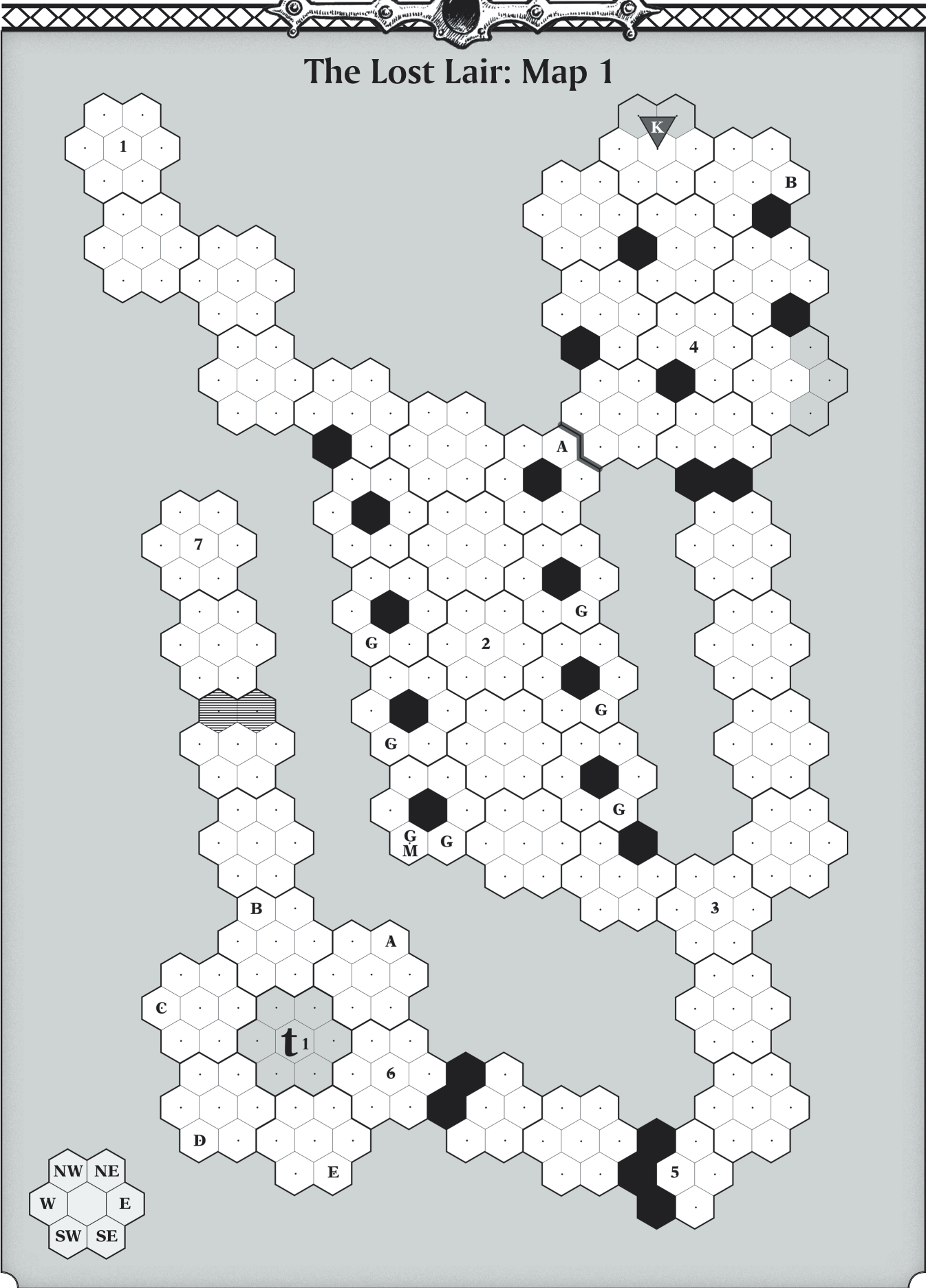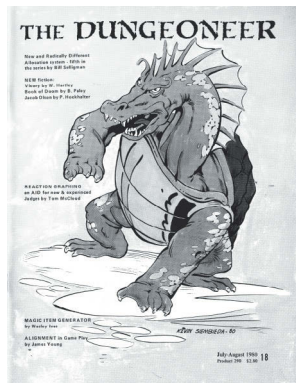
The Lost Lair: Map 1

The Lost Lair: Map 2
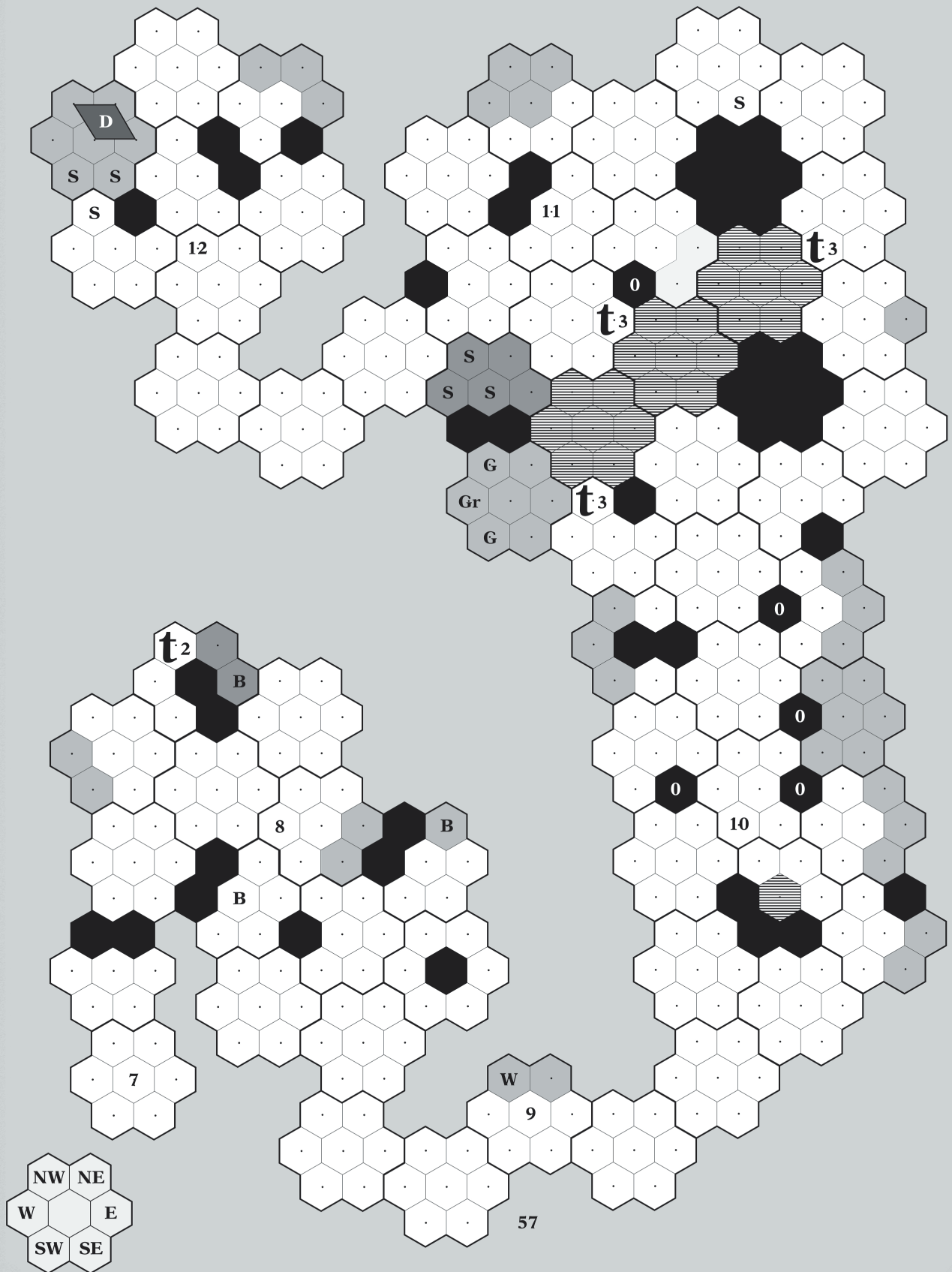
The Oldcastle Inn

A mini-dungeon for *The Fantasy Trip* or *AD&D*

The following is a mini-dungeon designed for *The Fantasy Trip*. While it is modeled after the *Death Test* mini-adventure, it is not approved by Metagaming. In this adventure, both *Melee* and *Wizard* rules are used. If you do not own *Wizard*, a fighter character may be substituted for each wizard encountered. Other than that, all rules are as per *Melee*, *Wizard*, and *Death Test*.

For those of you who do not own these games, but do play *D&D*, I have devised a rough conversion table so that this adventure can be modified to fit your campaign. Once this is done, it plays very much like *Survival of the Fittest.* One simply moves from one numbered paragraph to another as indicated. Of course, there may still be some minor differences in play, but I am sure that the average *D&D* player will have no trouble with the conversions.

From *TFT*	To *AD&D*
Strength	Hit Points = 1dN, where N = Strength
Dexterity	Treat fighters as (DX-8) = their level against an Armor Class 10. Magic users must roll their Dexterity or less on a 3d6 to cast a spell.
Movement Allowance	Not crucial to *AD&D*. Ignore.
Damage	See *AD&D* weapons damage table.
Armor	Leather armor = AC9. All others = AC10.

With this in mind, I am sure this adventure can be modified to meet any players' needs. Originally, I had intended for this to be a solitaire dungeon. However, as many as 10 characters can be taken in at once. In a similar manner, a GM may be used to act out NPCs, or the player may elect to do both. In either case, I find that four players against the GM makes a very interesting adventure.
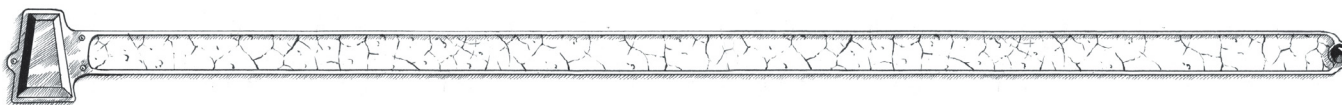
You and your bold band of adventurers have just come back from looting a dungeon. Before you head for home, however, you decide to stop off at a lonely inn and relieve its occupants of all their wealth. Thus, you and your fearless group approach the Oldcastle Inn . . . go to number 1.

1. You stand outside a small tavern. If you have finished your adventures, go to 59. Otherwise, you enter through wooden double doors. Go to 45.

2. As you examine the objects, the old man turns and discovers you. In a flash of light, he turns into a tall youth. Go to 38.

3. You are in a sparsely furnished bedroom. On one wall is a bed and a large chest of drawers. On another wall is a very large oval mirror. On the third wall is a rack containing three platinum swords, and on the wall nearest you is a large wooden chest. Leave (10), search the drawers (40), take the swords (34), or try to open the chest (13).

4. You walk through the curtain and find two chests and a small leather pouch on the floor. You may try to open the first chest (29), the second chest (14), or the pouch (50). Otherwise, you may leave (10).
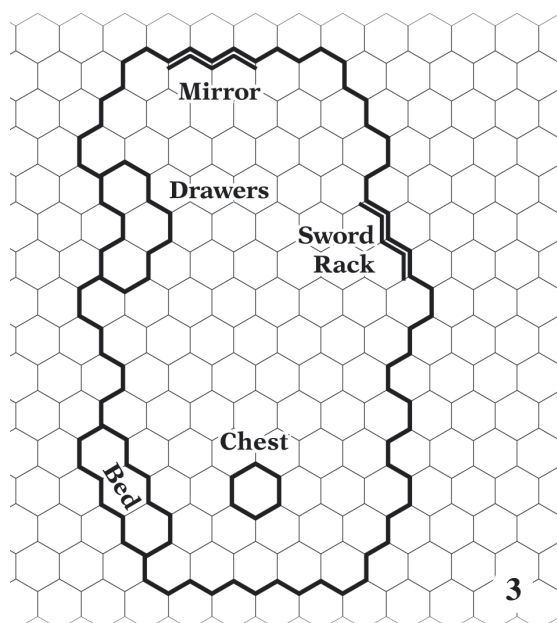
5. Go to 9.

6. You are in a small, candlelit room. In the center of the room are three prone figures whispering softly. Their dress is ordinary, but a long object hangs from one of their belts. Attack the figures (23), approach the figures (17), or leave (39).
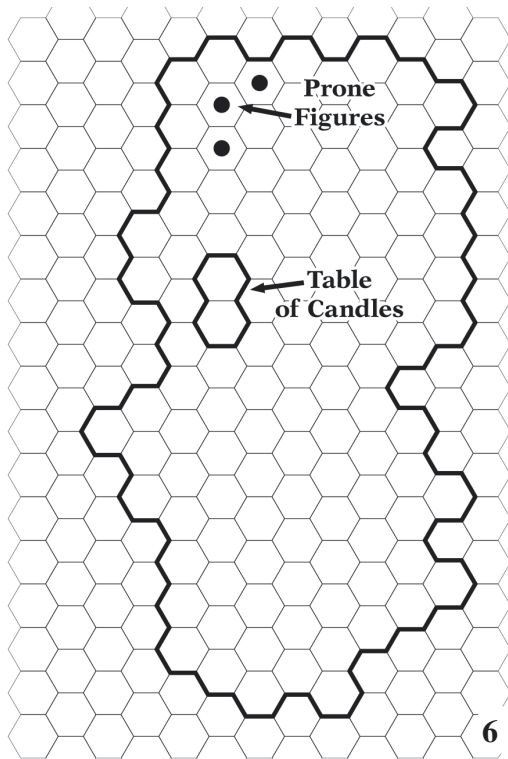
7. You are unable to open the chest; it disappears in a cloud of smoke. Examine the swords (34), examine the drawers (27), or leave (10).

8. You turn a corner and come to a three-way intersection. Follow the arrow marked with a 3 (46), the arrow marked with a 1 and a 2 (16), or the arrow marked with a 4 and a 5 (24).

9. You are in a small corridor with a door on each side. Enter the door numbered 1 (21), the door numbered 2 (6), walk back toward the tavern (45), or walk away from it (16).

10. You are in a small corridor with a door on each side. Enter the door numbered 5 (22), the door numbered 3 (3), walk back toward the tavern (45), or walk away from it (24).

11. As you look around the tavern, four goblins come up to you with swords drawn. Defend yourself (25), run for the right door (9), or run for the left door (10).

12. Go to 2.

13. As you try to accomplish your task, three fighters and a wizard walk through the mirror. They have initiative. If the wizard dies, the fighters will run back through the mirror. If the fighters all die, the wizard will flee the same way. If you kill them, go to 20 if you were opening the chest or 27 if you were opening the drawers. Fighters: ST 9, DX 10, IQ 10, MA 8, leather armor, sword (1d+1), dagger (1d-1). Wizard: ST 14, DX 11, IQ 10, MA 10. His spells include Drop Weapon, Fire, Magic Fist, Shock Shield, Summon Myrmidon, and Trip.

14. You open the chest and find 40 gold pieces. You may open the pouch (50), open the other chest (29), or leave (10).

15. You find nothing. If you want to look at the swords, go to 34. If you want to look at the chest, go to 20. Or you may leave (10).

16. You are in a narrow corridor. Walk toward the tavern (9) or away from it (8).
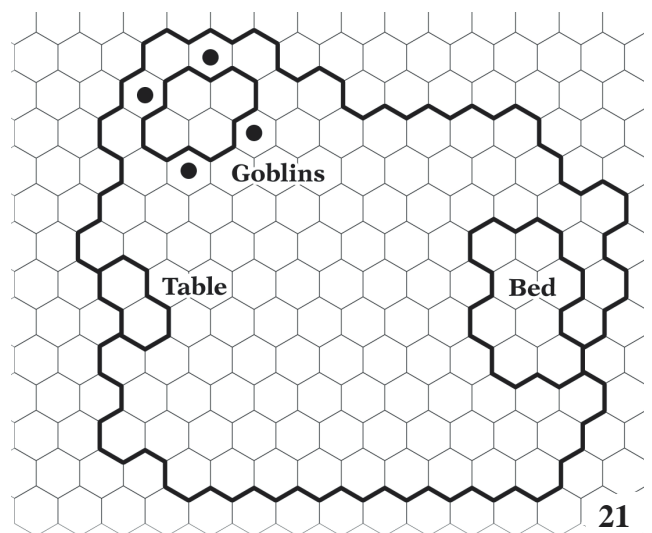
17. As you approach the figures, they turn. One of them points the long object at you. Go to 30.

18. The words here have no meaning to you. Go to 44.

19. Go to 38.

20. Roll a die. On a 1-3, go to 54. Otherwise, go to 7.

21. You are in a small, drab bedroom. In the corner is a small table. Four goblins are playing cards and there is a pile of gold on the table. Leave (5) or attack (33).

22. You are in an ornately furnished room split by a red velvet curtain. All the furniture is painted silver and gold. Four large men are facing you with drawn swords. Run out the door (35) or fight (41).
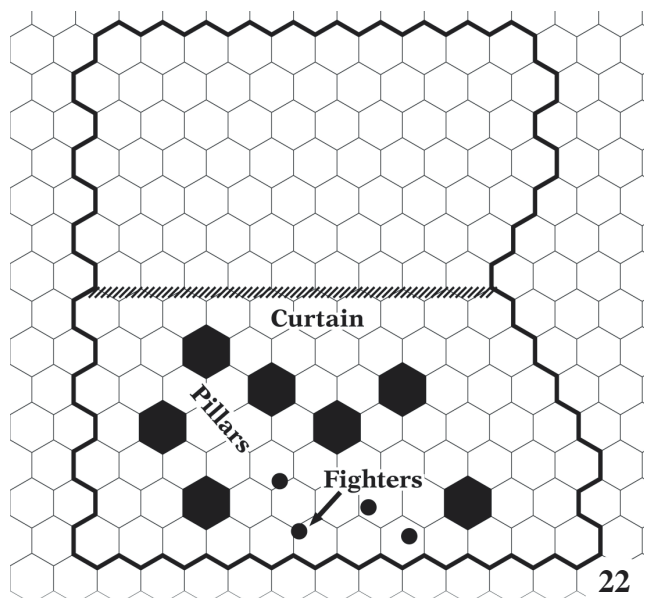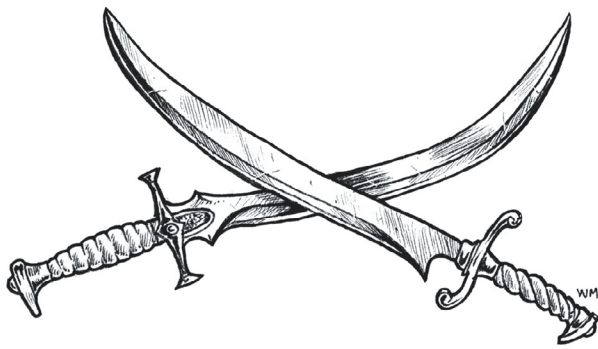
23. The figures disappear and reappear behind you. You turn and see that one is pointing the long object at you. Go to 30.

24. You are in a small corridor. Walk toward the tavern (10) or away from it (8).

25. The goblins attack. Each fights until his ST is 3 or less and then runs. If you kill them or they run, go to 56. Each has ST 9, DX 10, IQ 7, MA 8, leather armor, small axe (1d+2), and dagger (1d-1).

26. You are in a very large room. It seems to be a laboratory. On the left wall are a large bookcase and a table holding a glowing chest. To your front is a bent, haggard old man stirring a potion in front of a table filled with strange objects and bubbling liquids of various colors. On the wall to your right is a large cave entrance with bars in front. Examine the right wall (2), the front wall (12), the cave (47), attack the old man (19), or leave (32).

27. Roll a die. On a 1 or 2, go to 55. Otherwise, go to 15.

28. You are standing among several dead goblins. You take the money (10 gold pieces) and run. Go to 9.

29. You open the chest and three snakes slither out to greet you. At the same time, the curtain turns into a stone wall. They have ST 4, DX 12, IQ 4, -3 to be hit, with a bite that does 1d+1 damage. If you kill the snakes, the curtain will reappear and you may leave (10), open the other chest (14), or open the pouch (50).

30. The figures are wizards. They will fight until their ST is 5 or lower, and then disappear. If you kill them or they leave, go to 36. Wizards 1 & 2: ST 9, DX 10, IQ 10, MA 10; Aid, Confuse, Fire, Magic Fist, Summon Wolf, Trip. Wizard 3: ST 12, DX 11, IQ 12, MA 10; Aid, Break Weapon, Fireball, Freeze, Sleep, Summon Bear, Trip.

31. What you read confuses you. Subtract 1 from your IQ. Go to 44.

32. The door will not open, and you have alerted the old man. There is a flash of light and you see that he has transformed into a tall youth. He is pointing his finger at you. Go to 38.

33. You surprise them and have initiative. Go to 43.

34. As you touch the swords, they come alive and attack you. You can run out the door (10) – but they will still be here if you return. If you defeat them, they vanish; return to 3. There is a -1 DX penalty to hit the swords. They have ST 3, DX 13, no IQ, and MA 10. A sword hit does 1d damage.

35. The door will not let you pass. They attack you. Go to 41.

36. There is nothing else in the room except for a burning candle. You exit; go to 9.

37. Each goblin had three gold pieces (24 altogether), which you may now take. You may leave the building (1), go through the right door (9), or go through the left door (10).

38. You are now facing a very angry wizard. At the same time, his pet dragon has escaped his cage and is now behind your party. The dragon fights to the death. The wizard fights until his ST is 3 or less and then vanishes. If you get rid of both opponents, go to 51. Wizard: ST 13, DX 11, IQ 15, MA 10. His spells include Break Weapon, Control Person, Fire, Freeze, Lightning, Stone Flesh, Summon Wolf, Summon Giant, Trip. Dragon: ST 30, DX 11, IQ 16, MA 6/16, scales stop 3 hits, breath 2d, claw 2d twice.
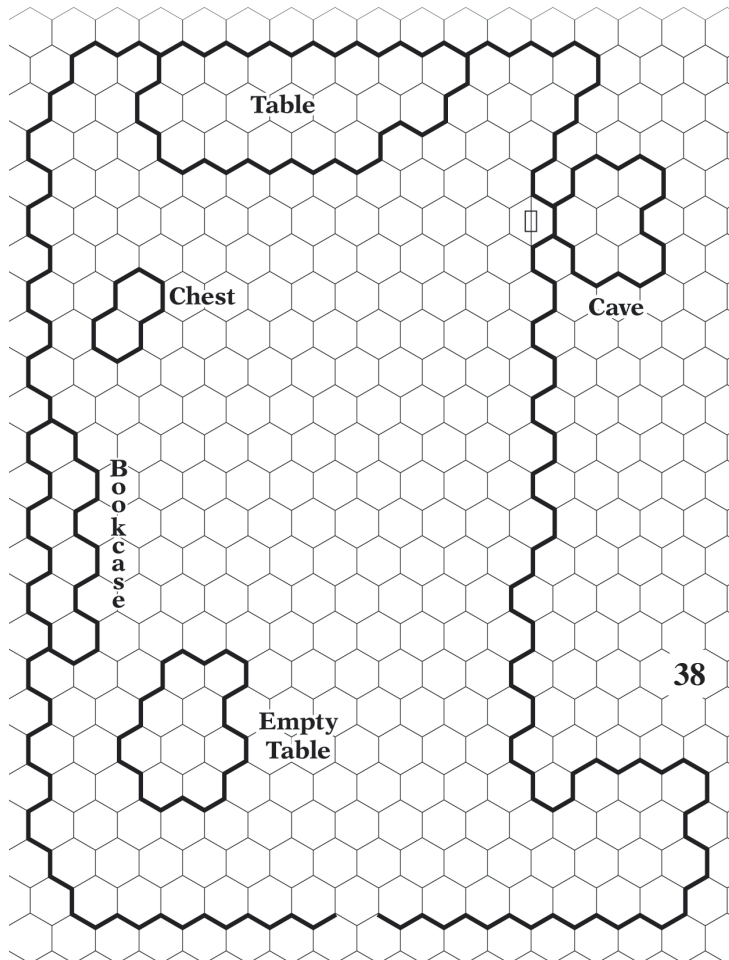
39. The door will not open. Go to 6.

40. Go to 13.

41. They have initiative. While fighting, you may not pass through the curtain. If you kill them, go to 4. Each has ST 10, DX 10, IQ 8, leather armor, cutlass (2d-2), dagger (1d-1), and a small shield.

42. You have read a healing spell. Raise your ST to its full amount. Go to 44.

43. You begin to fight. The goblins fight until their ST is 4 or lower, and then run out the door. If you dispose of these pitiful creatures, go to 28. They have ST 8, DX 12, IQ 7, MA 8, leather armor, sling (1d-1), dagger (1d-1), and a small shield.

44. You are facing the wall with the bookcase and the glowing chest. If you want the chest, decide who will open it and go to 57. If you want to go to the front wall, go to 49. If you want to leave, go to 53. If you want to read one of the books, roll a die. On a 1 or 2, go to 42. On a 3 or 4, go to 31. Otherwise, go to 18.

45. You are in a large tavern. Throughout the room are tables and chairs where sit various beings. On the back wall is a large bar with open doors to either side. Roll a die. On a 1-3, go to 11. Otherwise you may leave (1), go through the right door (9), or go through the left door (10).
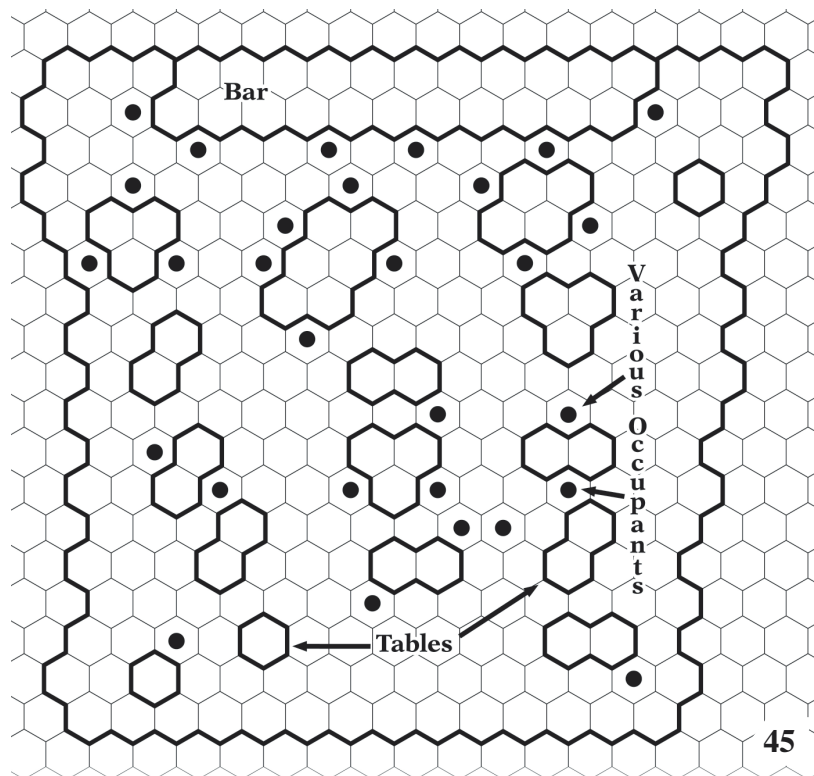
46. You come to a large wooden door numbered 3, which is open just a crack. Enter (26) or turn around (53).

47. As you walk toward the cave, a dragon comes into the room to meet you, while the old man runs out the door. Go to 52.

48. The ring melts into your finger and cannot be removed. It adds a point to your DX. Go back to where you were.

49. As you approach the cluttered table, all the items vanish except for a small pouch. You find it contains 25 gold pieces. Look at the books and chest (44) or leave (53).

50. You open the pouch and find a ring and one gold piece. If you wish to put the ring on, make a note of what number you are at and go to 48. If you want to look at the first chest,

go to 29. If you want to look at the second chest, go to 14. Otherwise, you may leave (10).

51. You may now examine the books and the chest (44), examine the table where the wizard was standing (49), or leave (53).

52. The dragon fights to the death. If you kill him, go to 51. Dragon: ST 30, DX 11, IQ 16, MA 6/16. Armor stops 3 hits. Breath does 2d damage; claws do 2 each.

53. Go to 8.

54. You find a flask of clear liquid. If you drink it, make a note of what number you are at and go to 58. You may also look at the swords (34), look in the drawers (27), or leave (1).

55. In the bottom drawer, you find a sword wrapped in brown cloth. It is magic, and needs only ST 9 to wield, but does 1d+2 damage. If you want to look at the platinum swords above, go to 34. Otherwise, you may look at the chest (20) or leave (10).

56. After you finish off these goblins, four more appear and attack you. They have the same characteristics as the ones in 25. If you kill or scare these goblins away, go to 37.

57. If the person who touches the chest has a ST of 9 or lower, he/she immediately loses one point of fatigue. The chest stops glowing and you can open it, to find 10 gold pieces. You may now leave (53), look at the books (44), or examine the wizard's table (49).

58. Whoever drinks the liquid loses 1 DX, but gains back all of his/her initial ST plus one point. Go back to where you came from.

59. So you made it through without getting yourself killed! Very good! You may rate yourself by the following formula: Take the number of gold pieces you have and divide by the number of people you had in your group at the start of your adventure.

Over 105	Excellent
94-104	Very Good
83-93	Good
72-82	Average
61-71	You should have stayed at the bar!
50-60	Why did you even bother?
Under 50	Retire and take up knitting!
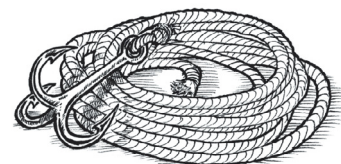
The Daily Illuminator

The Fantasy Trip Returns Home

December 26, 2017

At the beginning of my career, long before *GURPS*, I created a roleplaying game called *The Fantasy Trip*. For decades, the rights have been held by Metagaming, a publisher which is no longer in operation. I'm very pleased to announce that I have regained the eight *TFT* releases that I wrote myself: *Melee*, *Wizard*, *Death Test*, *Death Test 2*, *Advanced Melee*, *Advanced Wizard*, *In the Labyrinth*, and *Tollenkar's Lair*.

This is just an initial announcement, to invite you to celebrate with me a day that has been a long time coming!

I have no idea yet about release schedules. I will probably have to answer **most** questions with "I don't know yet" – but feel free to use the button below to go to the forum discussion of this post, and try me . . . or just share memories of the game!

– Steve Jackson
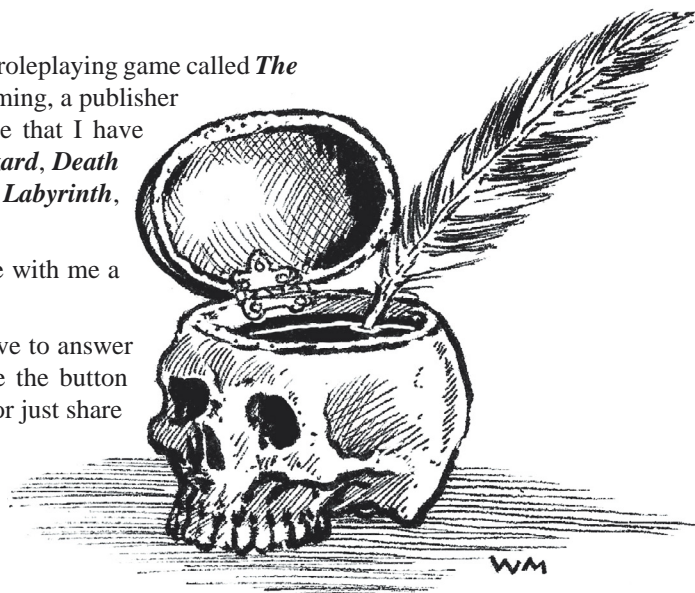
The Fantasy Trip Kickstarter Launches Soon!

June 13, 2017

On July 23, we will launch a Kickstarter for a big box of *Fantasy Trip* goodies. The *Legacy Edition* will contain, not the traditional three books of an old-school RPG, but two complete games and one fat book. To be specific: it will have *Melee* and *Wizard*, each as a boxed minigame with its own map and die-cut counters, and a 160-page *In The Labyrinth* that will be a reorganization of the material covered in the original *In The Labyrinth*, *Advanced Melee*, and *Advanced Wizard*. It will also have one skinny book – the 24-page *Tollenkar's Lair* adventure, plus (as it originally should have been), the labyrinth map in full color. We're going to offer this for just $60.

And that's just the basic goal. We're going to offer stretch goals to enhance *Melee* and *Wizard*, to put the two *Death Test* books into the mix, to add die-cut cardstock megahexes that you can use to map your adventures, and more. (I'm working on a ref screen right now. It will be playtested soon on the forums, where we have an active *TFT* discussion going.)

Over the next weeks, I'll be posting articles about *TFT* and bits of new material as well. Come along for the ride!

– Steve Jackson

NOTE: We're working with our Kickstarter fulfillment partners to find a solution for international supporters; if at all possible, this project will be EU- and Canada-friendly. More news to come before the launch on July 23. – Phil

The Fantasy Trip News
Web Posts by Steve Jackson

Inspirations Come . . .

. . . from the darndest places. I'm at home today, catching up on chores and working on *TFT*. While sorting through old minis, I came across a little model of an obviously sorcerous mirror. And the next thing I know, I had written descriptions for six magical mirrors.

Sometimes it works like that. Cudgel your brain for inspiration and nothing will come out. Get away for a while, think random thoughts, but pay attention to what you're thinking – and voila! Well, sometimes voila.

I'm also coming up with a lot of punny potential titles for cards in the next *Munchkin CCG* supplement. Sorry, can't give examples, because the theme has not been announced. So it's probably mean of me to mention it.

As partial apology, here's one of my magic mirrors. No stats yet, just effects. Assume it would be a very costly item, and the optimum size would be a couple of feet on a side. Bigger or smaller ones get really hard to make.

Trap Mirrors: These must be created as a pair, of identical appearance, and if one is broken, the other becomes an ordinary mirror.

When the mirrors are placed so that they reflect each other from no more than 10 feet apart, anyone reflected in both at once will vanish! Their frozen image will be visible in both mirrors, from any angle. No time passes for the victim.

Depending on the spell, a mirror trap may work just once, holding a victim until he is released – or it may take a new victim and release the old one each time someone new comes within its zone.

To release a mirror prisoner, you may either cover both mirrors at exactly the same time, so that they can "see" nothing at all, or smash them both at exactly the same time while they can "see" each other. The victim will reappear midway between the mirrors.

If the mirrors are taken away from each other, the victim's reflection will vanish, but will return if the mirrors can once again "see" each other.

If one mirror in the set is broken, and the other one is not broken at the same time or almost instantly afterward (GMs may choose to be merciful), then the prisoner is simply lost (again, unless the GM wants to introduce a rescue quest involving the highest of mirror magics).

Adventure idea: A party member is caught in the trap. His capture releases the previous victim, who is a very interesting person who can help the party or be helped by them. Probably both.

Perverse complication: Perhaps a right-handed person will come out of the mirror left-handed, and must go through again to be put, so to speak, to rights.

New Slimes

Pink Slime

These tiny leechlike killers drink your blood and multiply. In the morning your companions will find a drained corpse covered in a throbbing pink blanket of the little horrors. ST is 0 – you can crush one between your thumb and finger – the problem is that they attack the sleeping or hurt. GMs can use these when a party neglects its wounded. Describe the aftermath in the most terrifying way you can.
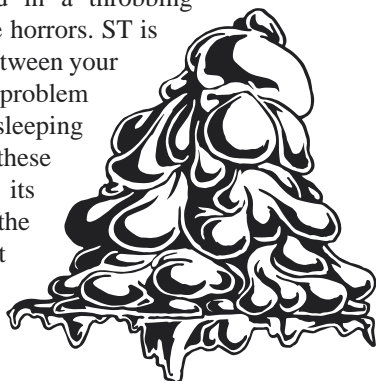
Water Slime

These amoeboid creatures are small – perhaps the size of two cupped hands – and almost perfectly transparent. Fortunately, they are rare, because they make bodies of clear water very dangerous. If you put your face in the water, the water slime will try to crawl into your nose and mouth – roll vs. DX to avoid it. If you fail, you are drowning, but can be resuscitated (see the Diving skill). Has been used as a rough practical joke and an assassination tool.

Stats not relevant, except for MA 4 in water.

Rough Slime

This slime is covered with what looks like green and gray lichen. This protects it against dim sunlight, so the Rough Slime can survive in dark woods and swamps. Otherwise it's like an outdoor Green Slime, dropping from branches on its prey.

False Slime

An underground plant that secretes a sticky material to catch cave bugs and so on. This glob looks a lot like a Green Slime, except that it may have bugs stuck in it, and it does not move at all. The problem is that some False Slimes – perhaps one in six – are explosively flammable. If poked with a torch, they create a fireball that does 1d+2 damage to anyone in their hex, and 1d-1 to anyone in an adjacent hex. It may also trigger molotails in the same hex, or other explosive False Slimes within two hexes.

Even if there were a good way to tell the explosive False Slimes from the harmless one, the fulminant glop is too unstable and fierce-burning to have any common use. The only way to tell if it's the explosive kind is to set it off, and it quickly loses its potency if bottled. That will not stop adventurers from trying to harvest it, of course!

Black Slime

This creature of darkness dislikes fire and even torchlight so much that it will hide instantly, squeezing into tiny crevices in the walls, floor, and ceiling. Therefore, a party will not meet this kind of slime unless they are trying to get around without torches. In that case, the slimes will come out, and the only way to spot them might be to look for dark blotches against glowing cave-moss. If it's completely dark, of course, you can't see them at all, but they can sense you! Treat them as Green Slimes, rolling to dodge them at 4/DX in partial darkness or 5/DX in complete darkness. An average Black Slime has ST 6 to 10, DX 1, and IQ 1. When a Black Slime falls on a figure, it eats at him, doing 1 hit of damage per turn. If you are trapped in utter darkness, you're probably dead. If you can make a fire, or indeed any kind of light that is brighter than cave phosphorescence, they'll flee instantly.

Gray Slime

This slime does not attack travelers directly. It animates its victims, or bodies that it finds, as zombies while slowly eating the flesh from within. Before the zombie reaches the "skeleton" point, it will be unable to move. The gray slime will finish the last scraps of flesh and flow away. However, if the zombie can bite a living victim, or if some foolish mammalian or reptilian scavenger tries to eat the zombie, it will transmit spores that may have unpredictable bad effects.

The slime zombie can also leave parts of itself lying around to serve as "starters" for new Gray Slime. If you find just the bones of a hand lying in the labyrinth, perhaps that's what happened.

Mud Slime

Black and brown blotched, the Mud Slime looks like the mud it hides in. Mud Slimes are found underground, underwater, or in very deep forest. They find or dig a hole big enough to hold them, perhaps a foot across and a foot deep. Then they crawl in and wait. When something steps in, or tries to drink the water on top of the "mudhole," the Mud Slime will quickly engulf it and harden (4/DX roll to sense the attack and pull away).

Against small victims, or even deer, this means death. Quick death if the head was covered, slow if a foot is trapped, but still death. Then the slime feeds.

On a human hand or foot it's more of a nuisance. The rare Acid Touch spell will let the victim pull free immediately. Otherwise, 30 points of damage with blunt weapons will break up the hardened slime . . . if it does not suddenly liquefy and try to flee before that.

DX is -4, and MA is only 2 if you have a slime on your foot. DX is -6, and MA is reduced by 2 if it is stuck on your hand – and of course you cannot use that hand.

Rotten Slime

Putrid brown and orange in color. They stink like a week-old corpse, so no one should be too surprised by them, but they will also attack openly. They can travel outside at night and curl themselves into leathery balls to resist the sun, so they may be found in places where the regular labyrinth ecology has not taken root; note that the stink is very faint when they are balled up, so they might be overlooked. Otherwise, treat as a Brown Slime.

Carrion Slime

This may just be a form of Rotten Slime. It looks like a grayish-pink chunk of decaying meat, complete with lumps, crusted filth, and bits of mold. It does not lurk above, but lies on the ground; they have been seen outside the caverns. It stinks of rotting meat. This is not something the average adventurer would even approach, but a scavenger might eagerly feed on it . . . and it might be that scavenger's last meal. Treat as a Brown Slime for combat.

Purple Slime

Looks like grape jelly with a lot of seeds. If it soaks into your skin, you will see visions. Larger amounts put you to sleep. It's not known what benefit the purple slime derives from this property, as they don't eat their victims.

Purple Slime stats are as for Green Slime, and they are vulnerable to fire in the same way.

White Slime

It looks like a thin mucus covering a large area of the wall. Harmless to living creatures, but if you get it on you, you need to clean it with fire, water, or magic. Otherwise, everything made of cloth or leather will rot away overnight.

Stats are not relevant – you can burn it with fire but otherwise you don't "fight" this slime.

Starslime

This precious creature looks like a handful of viscous clear gel, full of tiny points of blue-white light. Not only is this slime harmless, but it has healing properties, even "raw" off the cavern walls. However, it's only found in the deep darkness, and it takes only a few minutes of light to kill it and destroy its healing virtue, leaving just a nasty gray ooze.

Placed on a fresh wound, a Starslime will soak in and heal 1d hits of damage. A second Starslime will heal 1d-2 hits; later ones have no effect. A living Starslime is worth about $500 for its value as a healing potion.

Stats not relevant, except MA 4 . . . it might crawl away from you.

There will be no stats in this section, because the creatures are poorly known, unknown, or misunderstood. They may or may not really exist, and they may or may not have any of the properties associated with them by legend.

Dice Lice

These are magical creatures that carry a Curse spell, and are, themselves, attracted (or created?) by bad luck. Any time two critical failures are rolled within five minutes, the GM may roll against the IQ of the dumbest character to see if dice lice have appeared. If three critical failures happen within five minutes, the dice lice will certainly manifest themselves.

Dice lice put a 2-point Curse on each individual who actually rolled the critical failure, and a 1-point Curse on everyone who was nearby; that generally means the whole party gets them. They usually remain until someone rolls an unmodified critical success. Anything that will get rid of a curse, or destroy an elemental, can also remove dice lice, one character at a time. Neither the characters nor the players should receive notice that dice lice have appeared or disappeared. Like luck itself, they are ineffable. A Reveal Magic spell will show them as swarming green mites on their victims.

Tragically, there seem to be no equivalent helpful creatures.

Wednesday Hill

In the middle of a forest there stands a hill. Not a terribly unusual hill, though it's somewhat odd to find just a single hill in otherwise gently rolling terrain. Nevertheless, there it is.

. . . oh, wait, it's gone.

Wednesday Hill got its name because it's only there about one day a week. The schedule is not regular; local wise people have kept pretty fair track of it for centuries now, and they still can't predict when it will appear or how long it will stay.

If you are on Wednesday Hill when it vanishes, you will notice nothing. Time will not pass for you until it appears again. There's an old hermit who has lived in his hut on the hill for more than 500 years as the rest of Cidri measures time. Scholars, it is said, sometimes visit him to talk about history, but they leave disappointed, because he knows about as much about the world around him as does a turtle. If you bring him a skin of wine, though, he'll trade old stories for as long as the wine lasts.

When the hill is gone, it is replaced by perfectly normal forest. If you are in that forest when the hill appears, you find yourself somewhere on the hill.

Stories of "Wednesday Hill" are told in many lands. If it's real, there might be more than one. It's definitely not the same hill just moving around, because anyone who goes up it, except the old hermit, eventually comes down in the same area. The hermit never comes down at all!

Some tales talk wildly about the lost treasures of Wednesday Hill, but there is no common thread to those stories except that a sleeping elf-lady might be involved. And there are tens of stories about sleeping princesses of all kinds, so it may mean nothing.

Strong Toad

Some say this is a fat, greedy swamp dweller, big enough to gobble down a halfling. Others say that it is a toad of regular size, and inoffensive, but with such great strength that it cannot be picked up and contained in a regular cage, or even squashed with a regular weapon blow. Many tales hold that there is a valuable gem in the toad's head, and some claim that those who touch it will have strange visions.

Tiny Zombies

Travelers have reported local outbreaks of zombie-ism confined to small wildlife – squirrels, lizards, and so on. If this is true, it doesn't seem to spread widely and it doesn't seem to affect humans – not much, at least, or it would be well known. A wizard who uses the Zombie spell would no doubt be very interested in a specimen, and surely it would be safe to catch one. Surely . . .

Talking Jewels

There are hundreds of stories of gems, both unset and in jewelry, that speak to people. Rarely does this last for very long, as though the jewel is temporarily possessed by something that soon moves on. In the tales, the talking jewels are usually friendly. If they offer information, it's probably true, though often cryptic.
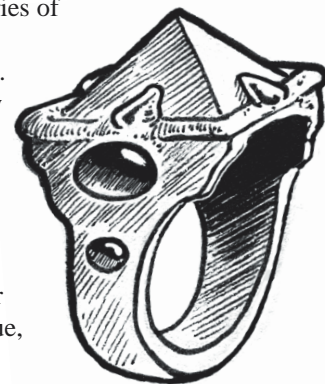
The Intelligent Sniffle

There are many accounts of people who, suffering from what seems to be a bad cold, are temporarily "possessed" by a personality that seems to be the disease itself. Multiple sufferers have been known to cooperate. The disease does not seem to be as sinister and wicked as one might expect from a talking plague; in particular, the stories of its spreading itself by force all sound like exaggerations meant to scare children. If anything, the "cold" seems to be surprised that it is a disease. Often it tries to learn about its surroundings, between sneezes, before it fades and the victim's normal personality reasserts itself.

Strange Elementals

Is there really such a thing as a swamp elemental, a sand elemental, a wood elemental? Perhaps these are just local effects of regular elementals – an air elemental in the desert makes a sandstorm, a water elemental in the swamp makes a moving bog, and so on. Or perhaps something different is going on.

The Wizards' Guild might send a couple of experienced wizards with Control Elemental and Create Elemental – backed up, of course, by scouts, woodsmen, and guards – to a place where such things have been reported.

Exploding Chickens

Sometimes chickens explode. Nobody knows why. It seems to be a thing that usually happened in the next village over, a few years ago, when only one or two people were around.

Beggars

Tales are told about canines no larger than a big fox, a shadowy gray in color. No one is known to have captured a beggar, and the occasional lucky bowshot yields a medium-small dead canine with no distinguishing marks.

Stories about beggars include:

- They have a natural Blur spell.
- They will follow parties in the woods to scrounge leftovers.
- They have telepathic abilities and will flee when you mean to attack.
- They can plant ideas in your mind such as "I can't eat another bite!" or "That poor little doggie looks hungry!" or "This meat is rotten, throw it into the bushes!"
- Control Animal spells don't seem to work on them; at least, wild canines caught with a Control Animal spell don't show any beggar abilities.
- They are very smart, and can breed with other canines. This might, depending on the tale, yield packs of deadly Blur-using wolves, or intelligent companion dogs with an uncanny ability to communicate with their masters.
- There are even stories of beggar packs, or lone beggars, helping isolated woods-dwellers in exchange for food, warmth, or protection. But wild beggars will not leave the wilderness.

It is said that guard dogs will not alert at the presence of beggars.

There are no credible stories of beggars attacking or endangering travelers.

The Foot-Tickler

Sometimes, in a country inn, a traveler will awaken with a start, feeling something cool and smooth, or warm and furry, gliding along his bare feet. Even if a Light spell is cast instantly, nothing is seen. What is it?

Hex Lizard

An ordinary fast-moving little lizard, usually green or blue. The lizard itself is a real thing, but its powers are rumors. Probably.

Its name is short for "hexapod lizard," because it has six legs. Mutation? Magic creation? Nobody knows. But the common people see an unusual creature with "hex" in its name! They believe that it is magical, and some wizards have spent a lot of time experimenting with hex lizard tails, eggs, tongues, and so far . . . with nothing, so far as is known, to show for it, except for a lot of leftover lizard bits.

Hex lizards run across roofs and branches, eating bugs and minding their own business. In some places they are very rare, just because people believe they are unlucky (Kill it!) or lucky (Put it in a cage!).

This lizard can shed its tail if it's grabbed by a predator. The tail will continue to writhe and twist, possibly distracting the would-be lizard-eater. The lizard will grow a new tail. Many lizards can do this, but the hex lizard's tail is especially wiggly and jumpy, adding to the idea that there must be some magic about it somewhere.

The Lake Where All Hunger

Stories are told of a large lake, so large you can't see across it at some points, but not an ocean; it's fresh water. Its location is not certain because – if it exists at all – it's a hard place to explore.

As one approaches the lake, food becomes less and less nutritious. Long before you can see the water, you will have to eat twice as much food, or more, just to stay healthy, and you will feel hunger pains anyway. By the time you reach the water, no amount, and no kind, of food will nourish you. Magically produced food is no better than regular rations. And if you enter the lake, or try to cross, you will get hungrier fast, as your body consumes itself.

The forest around the lake is said to be dreary and wild, with few animals, and those apparently small and secretive. They must be magical or derive their nourishment from magic. The tales are silent about what creatures might live in the lake.

What might be guarded by an enchantment this simple and powerful?

Giant Slime

Even the great Tarsus never reported seeing a Giant Slime, though he interviewed people who said they had. They spoke of greenish Slimes bigger than ten men, covering megahexes of roof area, or rising from the swamp. They smell like Green Slime, and they fear fire like Green Slime, but they move more quickly. And how much strength would a monster like this have?

Whatever they are, if they are anything at all, they are not just Goo. Goo has a clear body with a visible nucleus, and it smells nothing like a slime.

Four Impractical Spells

Here are four spells known to the wizards of Cidri but rarely used or even taught. However, every one of them does in fact have some practical use for someone.

Vertigo (IQ 9) (T): Makes the victim feel sick and dizzy. DX, IQ, and ST are all reduced by 1 for 1d × 10 minutes.)

Cost: 1 to cast. Cannot be maintained, but can be re-cast. Multiple castings continue the effect longer but don't increase it.

Practical use: by a secret agent, to convince a foe that he is sick, perhaps. In a tavern, to convince a troublesome customer that he's had enough, without setting off a confrontation. It would work as a combat spell, but others give a greater effect.

Warts (IQ 10) (T): Gives the victim 1d6 warts, at least one of which will be on the face. These are permanent unless removed by magic. A wizard can cast Warts again to remove the warts he has caused, but other wizards will have to use more heroic measures.

Costs 1 ST.

Practical use: to intimidate those who don't believe in your powers; as a cruel and unusual punishment.

Sour Milk (IQ 8) (T): Ruins all dairy products in one megahex, except for anything which the wizard chooses to omit. They become unwholesome and nasty, but not strongly poisonous.

Cost to cast: 2.

Practical use: Revenge or commercial warfare.

Hopping (IQ 12) (T): The victim is forced to hop on one leg. MA is reduced to 4, regardless of armor (go right ahead, put on your plate armor, and try to hop) and no jumping is possible. DX is reduced by 4 for any task performed while moving, but not affected for things the victim does while standing still.

Cost: 2 to cast, 1 to maintain.

Practical use: Practical joke; quick restraint of a prisoner. Emergency combat spell; if it were cheaper or less complex it would be a great way to harass an enemy in battle. As is, unless your side has missile weapons, an enemy can just stand still and wait out the spell.

Fifteen Typo Spells

Back when *Wizard* was first being playtested, a typo turned the Magic Fist spell into "Magic Fish." That has stayed with me . . .

So here are three fives of magic spells created by one-letter typographical errors from real spells. The back-translation to the original spell is left to the reader.

7-Hex Mall: Creates a small but well-stocked row of shops where you may buy dungeon essentials.

Blasé Trap: Catches its victims in the most mundane and boring fashion imaginable.

Bread Weapon: If you have read Terry Pratchett, you are already giggling. If not, you need to go read Terry Pratchett.

Control Parson: Also works on priests, mullahs, and (at a -4) lay brothers. Has no effect on senior clergy.

Death Smell: Creates a hideous odor, a carrion reek almost as bad as Orc perfume.

Drip Weapon: Causes strategic bits of condensation to fall from the cavern ceiling onto the nose of the foe, distracting them.

Giant Pope: Summons a huge pontiff to smite your foes.

Mage Fight: Creates a giant screen on which is broadcast the World Wizard Fighting finals.

Magic Brainstorm: Everyone in one megahex gets out-of-the-box ideas, which may or may not work.

Magic Fish: Sages have argued for centuries: does this feed a crowd of arbitrary size, or just smite the Sassenach with a summoned salmon?

Megahex Sleet: Creates a small area of truly filthy weather; leaves Slippery Floor behind it.

Nope: Summons many, many spiders, or one very big one.

Prance: Pops their pants! Makes them dance! Everyone will look askance!

Store Flesh: Creates a refrigerator.

Summon Bead: Creates a small glass bead which lasts for one turn.

None of these plants will "attack" you, but you'll still remember the encounters!

Goldflower

A small annual plant whose brilliant pink blossoms only appear if there is a trace of gold in the soil. Thus, goldflower might bloom downhill from a gold deposit. And it can indicate where treasure lies! But it can also show where treasure once lay. Nobles show their wealth by displaying beds of blooming goldflower, which they have fertilized with gold dust.

Ambrosia

This is a very rare mushroom which can be eaten fresh or dried. It is not harmful in any ordinary sense, but is so delicious to most humanoids that someone eating ambrosia, or any food strongly seasoned with ambrosia, simply will not stop while it's physically possible to eat another bite! IQ is also reduced by 6 for any attempt to detect anything wrong with the food – or, indeed, for anything that might distract the eater from another wonderful bite of ambrosia.

In very small amounts, the only effect of ambrosia is to make rough, common food taste good. It would be found in every pantry, but the cooks eat it all at the first opportunity. An ambrosia mushroom is worth $500 in the city, and they often are found in large patches. Few have gotten rich harvesting ambrosia, though. Someone will get a whiff of the heavenly scent, and there goes the treasure.

They look like ordinary white mushrooms, growing on the ground. A Naturalist can tell an ambrosia mushroom without sniffing it. Anyone who has gorged himself on wild ambrosia will always remember what the mushroom looks like, but on recognizing one must make a 3/IQ roll not to start eating. And anyone who sniffs a fresh one unexpectedly must make the same 3/IQ roll not to take just one little taste . . .

There are persistent rumors of terrible after-effects of gorging on ambrosia mushrooms. There is no proof; the stories might have been started by ambrosia hunters trying to protect their treasure. It has not worked.

On the other hand, a deliberately poisoned ambrosia mushroom is a fiendish form of assassination. It usually fails because the wrong person – sometimes even the assassin! – eats the mushroom.

Death Apples

The purple fruit of the death apple is delicious and usually nourishing, but about one fruit in a hundred is a potent poison except to a few creatures.

Thus, animals often don't learn to avoid the death apple, and a death apple tree may be surrounded by little bodies that will feed the tree.

A Naturalist can tell which Death Apples are safe to eat and which ones are poison. Biting through the skin of a poison one causes numbing of the mouth and then does 1 hit of damage a minute for the next 20 minutes.

An undamaged poison death apple is worth $50 to a Chemist or Alchemist. They can be used to create a variety of poisons and an effective topical anesthetic. In gaseous form,

Death Apple poison will not harm humanoids but is very good for killing bugs.

Firegrass

This is a plains grass that doesn't like sharing its space. It is very flammable, easily ignited when dry by a lightning strike or a torch. The resulting fire may leave some animal bodies for the firegrass to "eat," but more important, it burns off competing plants, while the firegrass will regenerate from its deep, water-filled roots.

A Naturalist can recognize firegrass. Its roots can be a water source in dry plains. Mostly, though, it's a hazard to anyone using fire.

Revenant Vine

This fast-growing small vine is found in many woodland areas. It seems normal until a sprout finds its way to a human or animal corpse. Then it quickly spreads over and through the body, and within 12 hours is ready to animate it.

The animated corpse goes staggering through the forest, looking for a good place to grow. Then it falls down and the vines flower, quickly decomposing the revenant, and setting the next generation of seeds.

A vine revenant is absolutely harmless. It does not fight or eat. It cannot even see; it has only a plant's sense of its surroundings. Nevertheless, it's horrifying.

In any game design project, some paths are not taken. This essay will present three paths that I considered, but did not take, for the new edition of *TFT*. In each case I decided that the "shock" of the change would outweigh its good points. But they all had possible benefits to the game! Here, then – knowing that these ideas may be considered heretical by some – are three directions *TFT* might have gone, and didn't.

Square Movement Grid

TFT and its younger cousin *GURPS* are vastly in the minority in their use of a hexagonal play grid. *D&D*, the granddaddy of them all, uses squares in those editions that have tactical combat. Most games follow the lead of *D&D*. I could have gone there too. It would have taken considerable testing to decide which combinations of adjacent squares were "front," and which ones "sides" and "rear."

Advantages: It would have made the game compatible with a lot of already-created maps from dozens of publishers. And human buildings have square walls, which map poorly onto hexes.

Disadvantage: The hex movement is a signature element of *TFT*, and I decided that too many people would miss it. It also gives much more consistent movement rates, since on a square grid a diagonal move is half again the length of an orthogonal one. I'm not sure how I would have gotten around that problem.

Solution: Don't go there.

D20 Rolls

I very seriously considered making skill rolls, such as the to-hit roll with a weapon, on a single d20 roll. It still would have been "roll your skill or less."
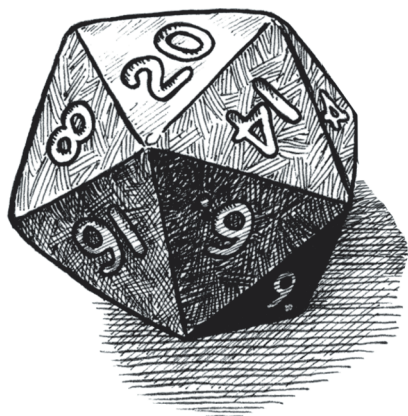
Advantages: Slightly faster play. Makes the transition from (for instance) DX 15 to DX 16 as meaningful as that from DX 10 to DX 11. Gives the ultra-low-DX people a better chance to hit. Opens up a different dimension of die mechanics (because I would not have discarded the d6s used for damage).

Disadvantages: Many of the existing *TFT* mechanics are built around the bell curves of 3d6 and, to a lesser extent, 4d6. Players' choices of stats, weapons, and armor are all manipulations of that bell curve. The seemingly small change to a d20 would have reverberated through the whole system. So I chickened out and went conservative, retaining the 3d6 success roll and adding more emphasis to the 4d "unskilled" roll.

Solution: Don't go there, either.

One More Stat

Using ST to represent fatigue, as well as hit points, was making exhaustion deadly, especially for wizards. Thus, some character designs featured "Conan the Wizard," who had great ST solely for powering spells . . . which is just silly. I looked at the addition of a Health or Fatigue stat, possibly derived from ST to simplify character creation. Another possibility, since it was wizards who needed the help, was to give them a stat for magical energy – Mana.

Advantages: Would have helped differentiate characters. Would have eliminated Conan the Wizard.

Disadvantage – Would have changed every single character ever created. Would have increased the perceived complexity of the system.
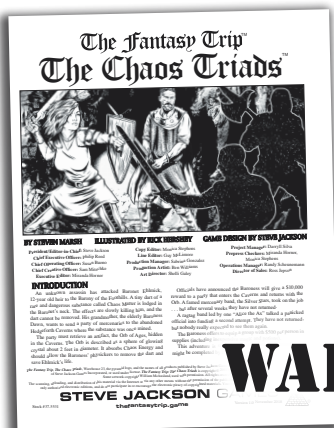
Solution: Beef up the abilities of the wizard's staff so advanced ones can store some extra ST for the wizard! So the extra stat does exist, but it is a stat of the staff, not the wizard. Conan the Wizard goes away.
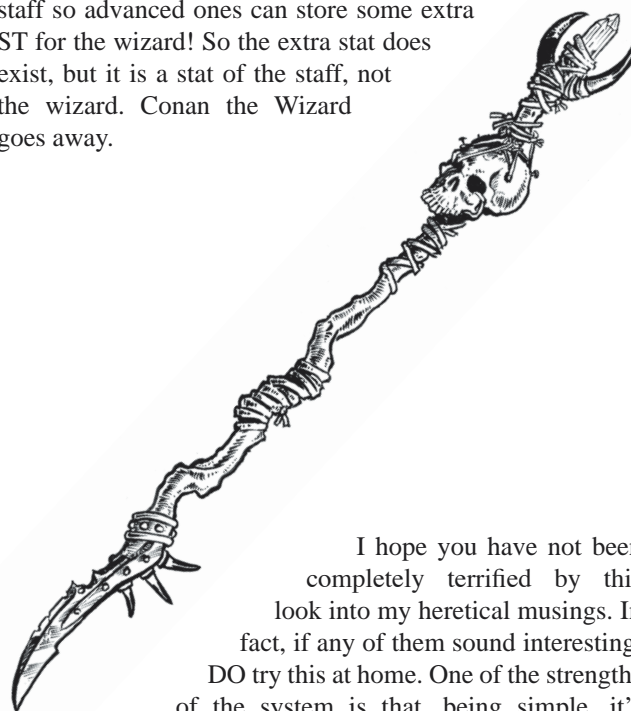
I hope you have not been completely terrified by this look into my heretical musings. In fact, if any of them sound interesting, DO try this at home. One of the strengths of the system is that, being simple, it's easily tweaked. I have always considered my *TFT* rules to be suggestions – well thought out suggestions, I should hope, but still suggestions. If something might work better for you, don't hesitate to give 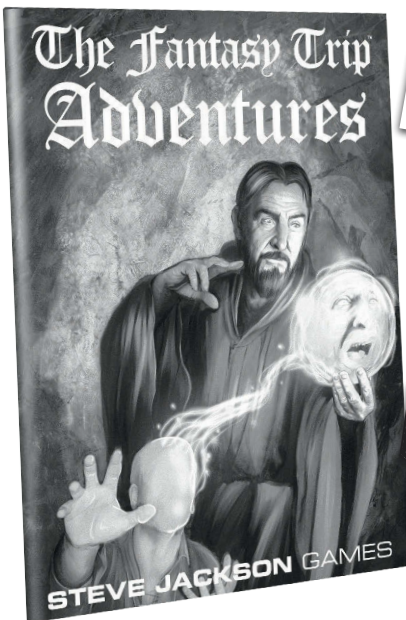it a try. And if it works, tell the world!