

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

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Issue 3
Summer '79



Roger Zelazny • Bear Peters • Karl Edward Wagner

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR Ken St. Andre	TROLL TALK / Editorial3 <i>Ken St. Andre</i>
PRODUCTION EDITOR Liz Danforth	DRAGONS: A SPECIFIC OVERVIEW / Article4 <i>Bear Peters</i>
PUBLISHER Rick Loomis Flying Buffalo Inc.	SEAREAVER'S TOMB / DM Dungeon10 <i>Liz Danforth</i>
PRINTED BY Contempo Graphics	ARCANE GRAFFITI / News, Clues and Reviews15
PUBLISHING STAFF Liz Danforth Ugly John Carver Pat Mueller	CLASSIFIED ADS15
ARTWORK IN THIS ISSUE BY Rob Carver Liz Danforth Mike Leone Mike Rizzo Peter Laird Don Warner Robert Barger	GARDEN OF BLOOD / Fiction16 <i>Roger Zelazny</i>
FRONT COVER Joan Hanke Woods	YGGDRASIL / Cartoon20 <i>Brian McCrary</i>
	HEROIC FANTASY / Feature21 <i>Ken St. Andre</i>
	LETTERS27
	KANE: A BRIEF ESSAY WITH CHRONOLOGY / Article28 <i>Steve Trout</i>
	DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW / Poetry30 <i>Karl Edward Wagner</i>

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE is published quarterly by Flying Buffalo Inc., P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, Arizona 85252. Single issues cost \$2; subscription rate for a year and a half (six issues) is \$8 (add \$4.50 for overseas airmail subscription rates). Advertising rates, trade enquiries, and dealers/distributors' discount lists are available on request from Flying Buffalo.

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Perhaps by the time you read this the revised 5th edition of *Tunnels & Trolls* will be going to press. If not, it will surely appear before the year is over. I want to urge you all to buy a copy, even if you have an earlier edition of T&T. As far as I'm concerned, this will be the final revision of the T&T rules, and will, in years to come, become the standard edition of the game. I have been working on the revision since September, 1978, and my cohort in fantasy gaming, the ever bountiful Liz Danforth has been working on art (and some of the writing) even longer.

I have taken the opportunity of this revision to add some things to the rules that might otherwise have appeared in a supplement. There will be some major changes in the rules — weapons and armor will be more powerful, some new spells have been added to the spell tables and some old ones have been deleted, more explanatory material about the basic universe of T&T has been included to give new gamers a better background to build on, and last, but not least, it will be completely re-illustrated.

1979 has been a year of changes. Metagaming has given up their claim on my companion game to T&T: namely, *Monsters! Monsters!* and *Flying Buffalo* will be publishing it also. *M!M!* has also been revised to conform with the new edition of T&T, and the two games are meant to complement each other.

Believe it or not, T&T had an exclusively English edition out in Britain before D&D did. It wasn't exactly a best seller, but that's because it had a boring cover and didn't get much promotion. We are trying again with a new agent, one Chris Harvey, a splendid fellow from Walsall, West Midlands. Chris was in Phoenix for Easter this Spring and it was truly a pleasure to meet him. Chris will be publishing and selling the rules and solitaire adventures in a uniform format, although a reduced size with the American editions if all goes according to plan.

Last but not least, I had been thinking of changing the name of *Tunnels & Trolls* to something else like, say, *Heroic Fantasy*, so that it wouldn't sound so much like you-know-who, but after much consideration, have decided not to do so. We're not at all ashamed of *Tunnels & Trolls*, and Gary Gygax didn't invent alliteration. There are many significant differences between the two gaming systems, but perhaps the greatest is the difference in attitude between Gygax and myself. Some of you

readers will know what I mean. Rest assured, T&T will remain dedicated to principles of fun and playability, and where possible to innovation and low cost.



All the best,
—Ken St. Andre

As co-editor of this periodical, to me fall those jobs which can lighten Ken's load, and to fill in where he's left off — like this bit of editorializing.

It is with unalloyed delight that we can offer you a brand-new story from Roger Zelazny, author of *Lord of Light* and the famed *Amber* series (among countless others). The new story is in the *Dilvish* of *Dilfar* series, of which several saw print some years back in the pages of *FANTASTIC*, and one in Lin Carter's upcoming *Flashing Swords* #5. The *Know Your Foe* feature for dungeon delvers is continued by Jim "Bear" Peters in a scholarly discussion of dragons in all their myriad types. *Heroic Fantasy* is wrapped up with this issue, Ken's tour-de-force of *Tunnels and Trolls* by mail. Steve Trout, an avid fan of Karl Edward Wagner's *Kane*, provides a chronology of that character, the most stalwart sword-and-sorcery hero since Conan. Wagner's own comments follow, along with his poem *Death Angel's Shadow*, which missed publication in the novel of the same name.

We promised you the best in fantasy art as well, and these pages should show our work to that end. Joan Hanke Woods' dragons decorate the front cover; she is an artist relatively new to the fantasy field but incredibly prolific — you'll see more from her. Rob Carver has long acclaimed Zelazny's earlier *Dilvish* stories and to him went the enviable task of illustrating it. Peter Laird and Mike Rizzo are new to these pages and excellent artists both. Why Peter hasn't gone pro long before is a mystery; he's currently illustrating Ken's new solitaire dungeon *Arena of Khazan*, which will appear before the summer is out. Don Warner is a local artist with a penchant for dragons and so the logical choice for Peter's *Know Your Foe*.

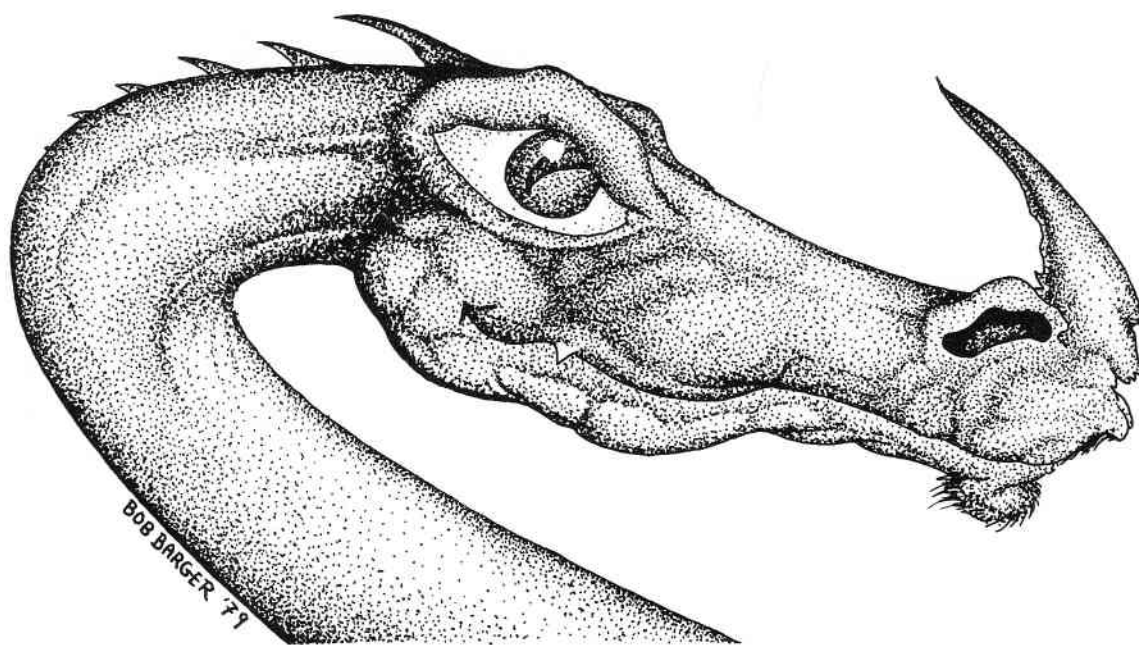
A final word in reference to Ken's comment about the revised 5th edition of T&T — of course we'd like you to pick it up, but it is rather unprincipled to expect you to fork out a handful of cash for a new set of rules each time we make a rule change. So we will be publishing a lengthy article here in *SA* detailing the changes we make. The game is the same; both Ken and I have striven to keep what we can, making only such changes as significantly improve the playability of the game.

Sorcerer's Apprentice, like T&T, continues to grow — we hope you'll stay with us while we do.

—Liz Danforth

Know Your Foe 101

DRAGONS: A SPECIFIC OVERVIEW



BY BEAR PETERS

Until the advent of the present scientific age what little man has learned of these giant pseudo-saurians has come in bits and snatches from frantic peasants or boulder-brained warriors. Neither can be counted as truly "informed" sources. In this enlightened time, however, the adept wizard with presence of mind can become better informed about these powerful creatures who would share man's domain.

Obviously, it is not easy to get "close" to these animals. They, like all predators, find themselves in direct conflict with man! This makes them wary of betraying themselves to researchers. It was with frankness, patience, and substantial bribes that I gained much of the information herein contained.

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Age has been one of the major stumbling blocks in the study of the common or true dragon (*Draco draconis*). A researcher must be extremely long-lived, an elf say, or have at his disposal an ages-old organization to continue the studies. Not having either, with all respect to the wizard's guild — which though ancient (with a claim of over 1000 years of continuous membership) is barely a surface scratch on the span of dragon lives — I was forced to rely on an informed source.

On the subject of dragon ages, I have been reliably informed that the following chart holds true for all true or common dragons.

Chart I

The Ages of The Dragon

A Young Dragon up to 1000 years
 Dragon Adolescence 1000—3000 years
 Early Adulthood 3000—5000 years
 Full Adulthood 5000-10,000 years
 Old Dragons 10,000—15,000 years
 Truly Ancient Dragons 20—30,000 years +

It is interesting to note that I have yet to find anyone who knows of a dragon which has died of old age.

The above estimates date from the advent of "dragonhood". There is some speculation that dragons spend an as-yet-undetermined amount of time in a larval stage previous to their maturation into full dragon status. The dragons, however, are reluctant to confirm this.

The greatest hindrance to communication and confidence between men and dragons is the fact that these winged monsters are seldom smaller than 30 feet in length. It is not conducive to calm discourse when the speaker might accidentally crush his audience with a gesture.

The common Dragon is an egg-laying fire-breather possessed of thick armour plates. In this almost impenetrable armour can be found only one weak spot, seemingly located at random.

Dragons are famed far and wide for their vast stores of age-accumulated knowledge, usually in the form of lore, songs, and riddles. Their greatest fame (and their greatest doom) is their drive to collect vast hoards of treasure. A seemingly innate urge causes these creatures, in their youth, to attack and raid for gold, jewels, silver, and other such tokens of wealth. These items they secrete in caves, old castles, dungeons, or other similar structures, and den among them. They are loathe to part with the merest fraction of these troves.

Even without their treasure, it is highly likely that these beasts would be hunted by the greedy, for the dragon's fangs, blood, hide, eyes, and venom all have great commercial value. These creatures also possess, within their skulls, an area (organ if you like) which upon their death congeals into a gem of no mean dimensions. From the size of a dragon's gem it is possible to determine the age of the beast.

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At this point I would like to pause to mention the Dinosaur. In many places in modern times small herds (or, in some cases, isolated individual representatives) of these ancient giant lizards may be found. This is due to the magical machinations of the Wizard's War (1300 years B.K.) Although the unenlightened peasants take these beasts for dragons, they are not. The modern school of thought holds that the present dragons are descended from these primitive beasts.

It is interesting that dragons themselves look askance at this notion. In fact, they claim to have fed off the dinosaur herds in days gone by. These claims may be true, but anyone who has seen the preserved *Tyrannosaurus* skull in the Baronial Hall at Khosht would doubt even a dragon's claim to have "grazed" off his kind!

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In the course of my studies I came to find that the forms of dragons are many and diverse. Often the differences are spawned by isolation through distance, and effected magical machinations. One such example is the Eastern Dragon, who not only is the oldest decedent species of dragon but is shaped and possessed of a unique form of magical skill.

The Eastern Dragon (*Draco sininsis*) is divided into two distinct subspecies, based on the organ in the dragon's brain that forms the gem in the common dragon. In the gem-bearing Eastern Dragon (*Draco sininsis gemma*) the organ behaves much like that of the common dragon. In *Draco sininsis margaritta*, the Pearl-bearing Eastern Dragon, the organ forms a magnificent pearl, instead. The reason for this divergence is not known.

The chief differences between the

common dragon and the Eastern Dragon are three:

1) The rates and types of aging of *D. sininsis* are as follows:

Chart II

The Ages of the Eastern Dragon

"Water Snakes" (a wurm form) 0-500 yrs
 Pond Dragons (wurm form) 500-1200 yrs
 Adult Dragons 1500-2000 yrs
 Horned or Mature Dragons 2000-3000 yrs
 Winged or Ancient Dragons 3000+ yrs

The speed of aging these dragons undergo has afforded researchers the opportunity to study their wurm-like young forms — giving rise to the theory that the common dragon too might rise from a wurm form over a similarly protracted time span.

2) The second difference is an inbred hierarchy biologically ingrained in the Eastern Dragon. This ranking is determined by the number of "toes" or claws that the dragon possesses. The Imperial dragon has, in all cases, five claws (this may also be the case with members of the Imperial dragon's line of descendents), and all others have less. There is no apparent outward effect of this hierarchy save perhaps a certain deference among the dragons themselves.

3) The third and most unique aspect of the Eastern dragon is its ability to seemingly metamorphose into a human being. In this human form these dragons are wont to go cloaked or robed, as they retain a lizard-like tail depending from the base of the spine. How this is possible is yet unknown. It seems to act like a limited *mutatus mutandorum* spell.

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The Eastern Dragon has several distant relatives seldom seen around these parts. One of these is the Toad Dragon (*Dracobuffonus draconus*). This beast is similar to regular dragons, except that its hide is covered with a warty pebbled surface. This surface secretes a toxic, hallucinogenic compound related to types obtainable from some toads. These dragons do not lair, or collect treasure. The Toad Dragon is also much less intelligent than its counterparts. It is not known if this type is a fire-breather or not.

Another distant kin is the Dragon Horse (*Dracohippus draconus*). This creature is a dragon-headed, short-bodied, long-legged form which gives the overall beast the appearance of a ferocious giant scaled horse. Not clever or particularly intelligent, the Dragon Horse has proven quite incapable of domestication when captured. They are swift and predatory. Little else is known about this creature, for even in its own environs it is rare.

The last of these unusual Eastern types is the Tortoise Dragon (*Testudinis draconus*). Picture if you can an enormous tortoise shell 20—30 feet long

from which extend four short legs terminating in stout claws, a short armoured tail, and a longish neck ending in a slightly blunted Dragon head and you have a working format for the Tortoise Dragon.

This beast is far less dull than its cousins, but on the whole less intelligent than true Dragons. *Testudinis* finds its sustenance in lairs under rock falls, and in caves. This creature seems to derive great pleasure from shifting immense weights, either on its back or with its head or tail. Thus it is that the Tortoise Dragon can be found routing out animals who hide or den in the aforementioned caves and rock falls. The shell of the beast seems to act as an all-purpose construction worker's helmet. When one would lair for its rest, it merely brushes up against a cliff face and causes an avalanche to bury it.

Rumour has it that the Tortoise Dragon is neither malicious nor hostile, and can be made to bear great burdens. This, however, remains to be seen.

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The third dragon form that comes to light is the Wurm (*Vermisauris draconus*). The Wurm was at first supposed to be a separate wingless genus of the original dragon stock. However, a modern school of thought holds that this is just an immature form of the common dragon. For the time being, I shall treat them as a separate line.

The Wurm is a large, wingless, semi-sapient pseudo-saurian. It lays eggs (which, incidentally, is one of the most telling points against the immature dragon hypothesis), and is very dragon-like in appearance save only for the lack of wings. Most forms of wurm are not

fire-breathers (a trait most dragons possess).

Another common wurm form is the Western Dragon (*Vermisauris africanus*). This type of wurm is very long of body and is capable of belching forth gouts of smoke and fire. These qualities are not, however, its prime weapons, since the Western Dragon is capable of sustaining its flaming for a mere 1 — 2½ seconds at best. This creature is primarily a constrictor, and has been known to crush whole elephants in its sinuous coils.

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An indication of the length of time dragons have existed on earth is the fact that though long-lived, there are in existence a variety of degenerate dragon forms, representing the possible decline of the species back into its saurian ancestral stock.

The first of these degenerate forms is the Razor Mouth (*Draco novaculoris*). This creature has not sunk so low that it has lost the inherent dragon intelligence, but it has changed dramatically in its life cycle.

The Razor Mouth undergoes a period of comparatively brief adolescence, then settles down to an almost stationary existence. It is found almost 100% of the time in its lair, resting among a treasure trove acquired while in its younger, more mobile form (the treasure-collecting instinct seems to be retained). Due to the similarity between the young forms, the depredations of the Razor Mouth are oft mistakenly attributed to the Wurm.

These creatures are largely carrion-eaters, relying on an ability to "breathe" a poisonous gas (instead of the

customary dragon fire) to kill whatever seems edible that wanders into the lair.

The single, most distinctive feature of this beast is the way its teeth have grown together into a form of sharp dental ridge. It is this characteristic upon which both the specific and common names are based.

The most degenerate form of the dragon line is the Fire Newt (*Pseudo-draconis ignius*). The Fire Newt may point toward a "missing link" in dragon evolution, tying the dragon to its possible dinosaur ancestry.

Bearing a striking resemblance to primitive plant eaters of past ages, this creature is significantly less intelligent than any other dragon form. Wingless, and quite un-dragonlike in appearance, the Fire Newt's front limbs have atrophied, though they can still be used for light grasping work. Its posture is upright and tripedal (supported in part by its tail). The Fire Newt's main link with its dragon ancestors is its fiery breath.

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The Wyvern (*Gallacerta volanta*) is a very distant cousin of the common dragon, and as such it is the most airborne of the dragon family. Like most creatures of the air, its sapience is not of the highest order. Despite this, it is very cunning.

For reasons unknown the wyvern family has undergone the widest form of evolution. Retaining the scaly outer plates and wings, little else remains the same from one wyvern subspecies to another. In most cases the hind legs have either atrophied, merged into the tail, or vanished completely to all outward appearances (there are, however, a few four-legged varieties still in existence).

Head structure forms the easiest method of differentiation used by specialists. The wyvern's head can be found crested, non-crested, original (crocodilian), original (dragonlike), or beaked. In as many ways as factors are beaked. Neck length is also a factor to be taken into consideration: the length of a wyvern's neck ranges from almost nil to a distance that would do justice to any serpent's body. It is interesting to note that comparatively few wyverns have retained the ability to breathe fire.

The Triverne (*Gallacerta tricophalus*) is an artificially-bred mutation. Few of this type are found in the wild, though, for the three-headedness seems to be a weak genetic trait. Trivernes are bred selectively in captivity, however, and a small clutch can be found in the Imperial "Menagerie" at the court in Khazan. There is even a small subspecies that has three tails.

The most unique form of wyvern ever recorded is the Corrabus (*Galacerta horribilis*). About the size of a house, this long-bodied eagle-taloned wyvern



form has a long serpentine neck terminating in a cobra-like head. It is prudent to note that Corrabus' venom is more deadly than that of any other dragon or serpent, even in combination.

A more common wyvern type is the Chaffinch (*Gallacerta rubripectus*). Named for a small red-breasted songbird, this wyvern — whose song is flame — is the most dragonlike of all the wyvern family. Chaffinch has a soft crimson-coloured belly, while its back and sides are upholstered with the usual dragon hide. For this reason, although an excellent flyer, the Chaffinch will fight its tougher opponents on the ground.

The Chaffinch has two squat clawed legs and a long serpentine neck. It is as long-lived as true dragons, and is a true fire-breather. Chaffinch is also possessed of venom acidic enough to etch bare metal in seconds.

Superficially, this creature is nothing more than an oversized wyvern with a dash of colour. However, above and beyond all its previously mentioned qualities, it possesses a singularly sinister intelligence that sets it apart from its smaller cousins. (Note: the Chaffinch is seldom found smaller than 30 feet in length.)

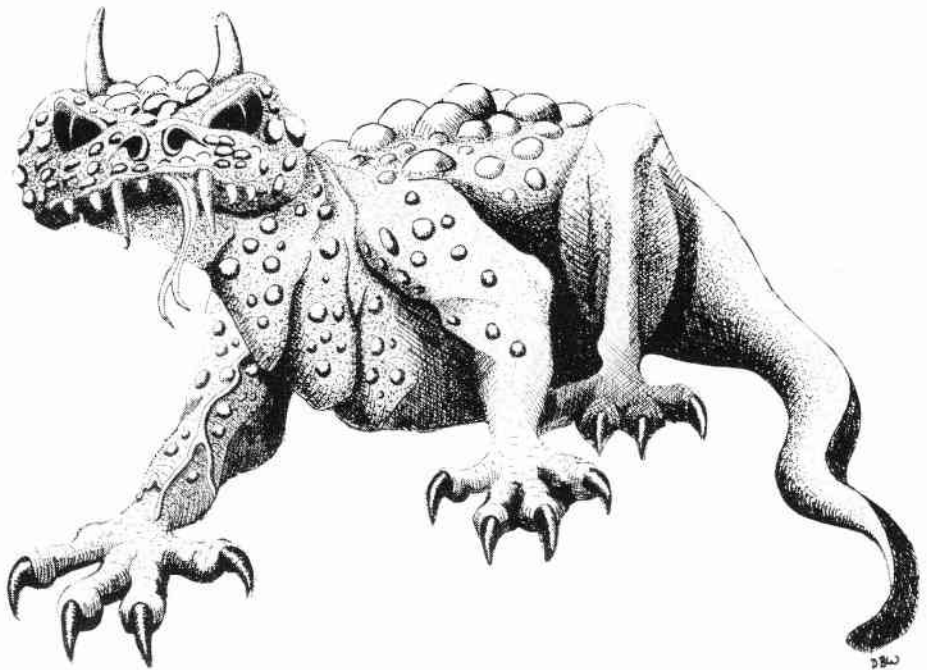
An oriental wyvern form is called, lyrically enough, the Wyrthing Spirit Dragon (*Gallacerta avinis*). This creature is the final step in the dragon evolution into bird form. The *G. avinus* not only has a vaguely birdlike form, it has also shed its scaled heritage for rudimentary feathers. However, it does retain the dragon-like head form.

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As will soon be seen, the sea too has been breached by the dragons, this seemingly infinitely-adaptable family of creatures. The case in point is the sea dragon, or *Draken*, to borrow from the Norse.

In its foreparts the Sea Dragon (*Kraken draconis*) resembles its land-dwelling counterparts, with two exceptions. First, it tends to develop catfish-like barbels, and secondly, the talons have a less clawlike appearance, and a degree of webbing unites them. The hindquarters, however, are a study — this part of the beast is like an armour-plated whale, having flukes of articulating plates. This species (it almost goes without saying) is non-fire-breathing.

The eastern form of this creature is found largely in freshwater lakes, rivers and (large) streams. The Wolf Dragon (*Pseudokrakens sinensis*) possesses an extensive external gill system and is a true amphibian. Its external gills tend to enhance its fierce appearance. Though this creature's hind legs are not as atrophied as those of other water forms, they still retain the webbed claws. Its tail is perpendicularly broad and flat, to aid in swimming speed.



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The next family we shall touch on are among the most remarkable in this line of remarkable creatures, driven by a bizarre internal chemistry that few have ever been able to study.

The Salamander (*Infernus salamander*) has an intense internal heat which radiates through its smooth amphibian-like hide. This hide gives the impression of being smooth and moist, which in light of the heat generated, is unlikely. In general appearance the Salamander resembles the Wurms, in that it is wingless and generally dragonlike. The heat this creature is capable of generating is so intense it can melt through solid stone like a hot rivet through a block of cheese.

As unlikely as this may seem, the closest relative to the Salamander is the Frost Drake (*Infernus gelidus*). The Frost Drake is, in effect, a Salamander in reverse. Due to its zone of habitation, the vast internal heat required for this beast to live is drawn from any available source. Its breath, often mistaken for frost or ice breath, is in reality a mechanism for the leaching of heat from its environment. The Frost Drake is frequently furred, and in the varieties that are not the hide is a light powder blue. Its presence can be detected in advance — its breath, like its body, is also a device to leach heat and subsequently lowers the temperature of its surroundings. This animal is so specialized that it does not do well in hotter climates.

The last of this unusual line is the Kroan (*Infernus electricus*). The Kroan is truly amphibious and is about the same size as the Komodo Monitor Lizard found on some southern isles.

Its survival seems to depend upon a curious bio-electric phenomena. Possessing organs in its skin that release an electrical charge into its prey (or attacker) upon contact with its hide, this ability gives the beast a "shocking" advantage against armoured knights with metal weapons.

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Vastly different, yet truly a dragon form as well, are the Dragons of Pern (*Pseudodiplodicus pernensis mccafrui*). These creatures bear a striking resemblance to their saurian ancestors. It is the wings, intellect, and their unique breath that link these creatures to the Dragon. The Dragons of Pern also have a brother species that is miniature in size. These "Mini-Dragons" (*Pseudodiplodicus pernensis parvis*), if they are truly related, would be the smallest naturally-occurring variety. They are unnaturally bright for their size and retain most of the attributes of their larger kin.

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As with all things man comes into contact with, the dragon, too, has been affected. Thaumaturgically and physically this creature has undergone some unusual adaptations.

To begin with, as there is a Necromantical division that deals with the creation of creatures called *Homunculi* from human blood, even so there is a similar science that deals with the blood of dragons. The results are called *Draconetts*, and are similar in size to *P. pernensis parvis*. Due to the power inherent to dragon's blood, these creations are imbued with a wide variety of powers which are largely dependent upon what spells and incantations are used in their creation. Following is a list of all known types of Draconetts.

Chart III

Kinds and Powers of Draconetts

Black	Spits Acid
Blue	Sends forth an electrical discharge
Brass	Gives off a sleeping agent
Bronze	Gives off a field of repulsion
Copper	Creates a "slow" field
Gold	Breathes fire and poison gas
Green	Breathes out chlorine gas
Red	Breathes fire
Silver	Creates a field of fear
White	Creates an aura of cold

Other types that are larger and more powerful, that may be summoned using more than just blood (and requiring greater magic) are:

Sapphire	Has a type of polymorph ability (it may change itself, or its victim)
Emerald	Has a gorgon-like ability
Ruby	This one's power is instant death (similar to Death Spell #9)
Diamond	Electrical discharge, sleep, and blindness
Crystal	(often mistaken for a Diamond Draconett) Has the power of coherent light and fire
Chrome	Breathes an irritant gas
Rock	Spits molten stone, also eats stone
Wind	Cyclone power
The Sun Devil	Created as a combination of the Chrome Draconett and the Salamander. A metal-bodied nightmare whose body heats up to fantastic temperatures

Needless to say, Mages find these creatures indispensable watchdogs and bodyguards. The spells, alas, are known to but a few.

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Last, but by no means the least interesting, are the Anthropomorphic Dragons. These creatures have been a source of interest to man for as long as recorded history. Speculation has been rife as to man's magically enhanced ability to cross biological barriers in reproduction. The following information, I fear, will do little to clear those muddled, tabu-ridden waters.

The most productive and accessible line is that of the Naga (*Naga sapiens*). These people have a heritage that can be traced back over 10,000 years.

The Naga are the perfect fusion of mammal and reptile. These creatures are serpentine-bodied from midtorso or from the waist down, and eminently human from that point up. They lay eggs and suckle their young. They are as intelligent, and in most cases more so, than man. The Naga are a very circumspect people who are seldom found outside their own communities.

Physically stronger than men, the Naga are nonetheless susceptible to extremes of cold, and therefore are seldom found any further north than the port city of Khmad. They are fierce fighters, but are invariably anti-chaotic, despite their appearance. In early ages the Naga, like the Elves, were much depended upon to help form the

armies that fought the wars against darkness. Needless to say, this ancient people has been much abused by the "higher" powers.

The Naga seem to have arisen more or less naturally, although they lay claim to divine origin. The most likely theories have it that the Naga are the product of an ancient and historic cross between man (or elf) and the Eastern Dragon in its human guise — a cross which was both dominant and bred true.

The only humanoid race that traces its ancestry directly back to the dragons are the Dragonewts (*Dracopartus sapiens*). These creatures are of a race which claims to have risen from prematurely hatched, embryonic dragons. Their bodies appear asexual, although there are unsubstantiated rumours that they are possessed of different genders. Their method of reproduction is deeply rooted in arcane magic. When a Dragonewt dies, another exact replica of the dead 'newt mysteriously appears in the city of the dead one's origin. (Birth is a dubious term under the circumstances.) As the number of Dragonewt cities is reduced through the ravages of time, so too is the Dragonewt population. On this "reproductive" system the Dragonewts are reticent, especially as to the possibility that the newly "arrived" newt is in fact the original reborn — thus giving the Dragonewts functional immortality.

Dragonewts are inherently peaceful, but in the event of an impending conflict which might adversely affect one of their cities, they will act with power and dispatch to bring the conflict to a satisfactory close (satisfactory being satisfactory to the Dragonewts' security!).

The resemblance to the dragons, among the Dragonewts, is largely from the neck up. In the priest class they have long sinuous necks and serpentine hands. In the warrior class, however, their humanoid bodies are covered with tough hide, made up of thousands of tiny scales. These impressive bodies are surmounted by turtlelike heads on short thick necks. The racial leader of the Dragonewts is an androgynous creature with an almost human appearance, save for the doglike facial features and the tiny bluish-violet scales that cover its body. This creature goes by the interesting title of "The Inhuman King."

The Dragonewts are basically unaligned towards "good" or "evil" due to their alien system of ethics. They will act only in what their alien judgment deems their own best interests, which may not necessarily make any sense to any of their wouldbe allies.

The last of these humanoid dragon types is the Krist-Haddin (*Sophosaurus van duynü*). These creatures are not

truly related to the dragon, but like the dinosaur merits study under the topic.

The Krist-Haddin are a hardy and powerful race which for an inexplicable reason finds its numbers dwindling in this day and age. They are 7½ to 9 feet tall and possess a massive tail. They look somewhat like scaled-down miniatures of the ancient saurian flesh-eaters of the past, save that their forearms are comparatively more massive, and these creatures enjoy a more manlike upright posture. Unlike many of their kind these creatures are unswervingly loyal to each other, and to any of their friends and allies who have not failed them.

In combat the Krist-Haddin wield enormous broadswords, many as long as 10–12 feet. They are also fond of having the tips of their tails plated with armour and adding a mace-like ball to the end. These devices they use with fearsome skill in combat. These creatures are friendly, if not gregarious, in nature — but in battle they have a fierceness that is beyond belief. In single combat the Krist-Haddin have been known to literally bite the face off a fully-grown and armoured Ogre with deceptive ease.

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Alas, I fear I have come, perhaps too quickly, to the end of my narrative. However, no true dragon narrative ever really ends, for in our world it seems there is something new and magical at every turn, and dragons are no exception.

For every species I've mentioned here, there are two that I was forced to leave off for the sake of brevity, one that is just an offshoot of one type already mentioned, and one or two which have yet to be discovered.

With our short span of years no dragon thesis written by human hands can ever be complete. As the elves haven't written one and the dragons themselves can't, or won't, it is likely that these, the most magnificent of all sapient reptilians, will be ever a source of mystery and fear to the unenlightened mind, and an unplumbed enigma to the scholar.

○○○

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—Anne McCaffrey

Kai Lung's Golden Hours

—Ernest Bramah

White Bear and Red Moon

—Greg Stafford & Robert Corbett

And lastly, from the wild imagination of

—Bear Peters (an informed source)



Two Friends Return. . .

ALL THE WORLDS' MONSTERS II

(*agarrett, air shark, akadus, alacorn. . .*) The second volume of this well-known FRPer-designed and FRPer-tested series is back in print at last! (*amanga, anaswami, aquazombie, archghoul, axebeak. . .*) About 250 monsters range from the absolutely terrifying to the totally ridiculous: there are beasts here to make high-level characters sweat and zaney creatures strictly for comic relief—whatever you need for your campaign is here! (*barghest, barluk, bionic bat, battle spider. . .*)

Alphabetically arranged, profusely illustrated, indexed by letter, level, and volume. Included are Steve Perrin's rules for more realistic (and interesting) melees, and Ken St. Andre describes statistics conversion to the *Tunnels & Trolls* system. (*blind worm, blood-rose, blue crusher. . .*) Second printing: 8½ x 11, 128 pages, saddlestitched, \$8.95 postpaid. Edited by Jeff Pimper and Steve Perrin. (*bobalynx, bomb monster, cockroach that ate Cincinnati. . .*)

AUTHENTIC THAUMATURGY

The classic study of magic in role-playing! Complete consideration of the necessary fundamentals for creating your own system or improving someone else's, by the only human holding a college degree in Magic. Many charts and illustrations cover psychic terminology, methods, and abilities, the laws of magic, what

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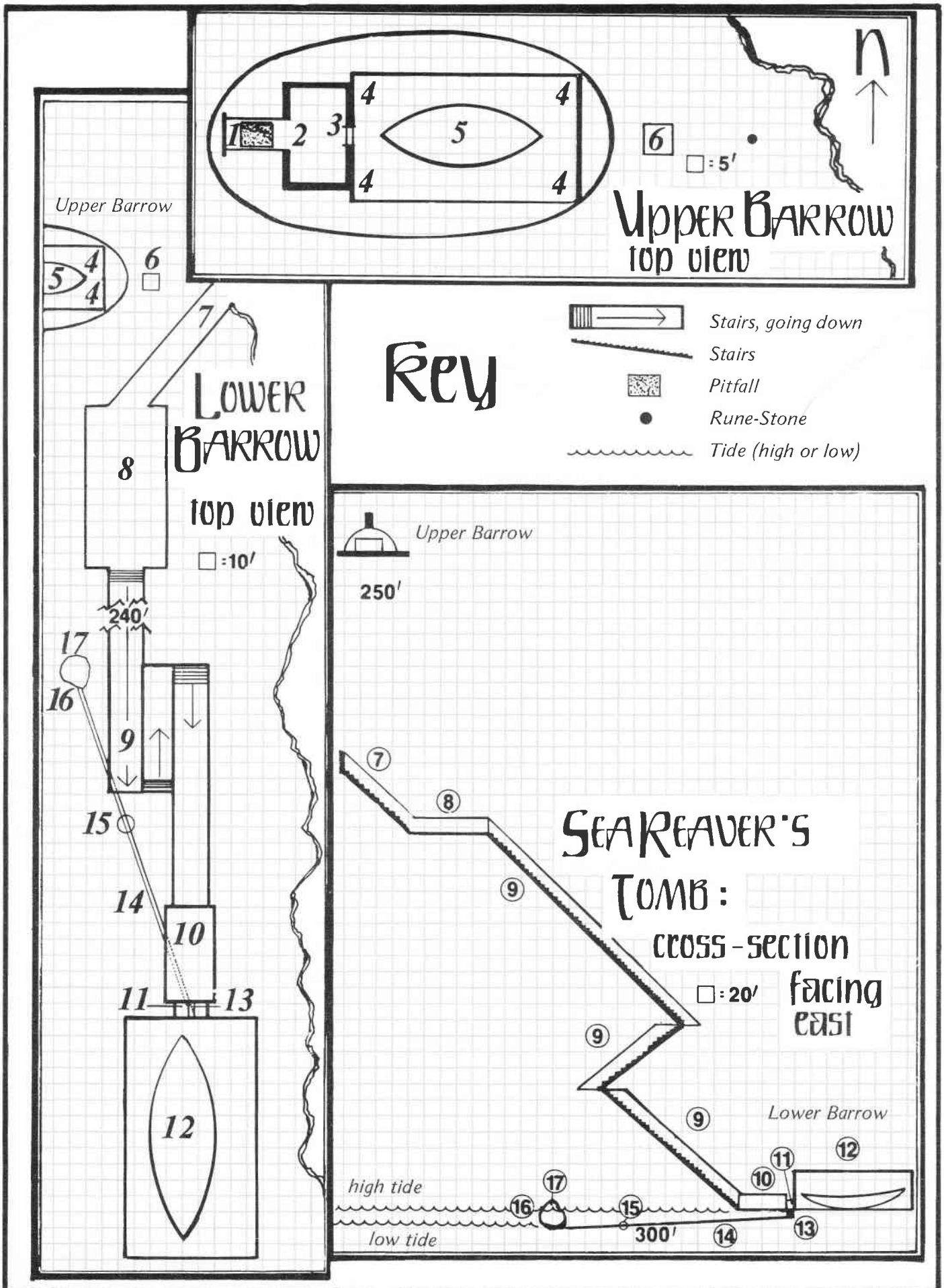
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SeaReaver's Tomb

— Designed by Liz Danforth

Near the prow of a wind-lashed, barren cliff overlooking seething surf stands a tall stele over a barrow. On the stone, weathered as it is, may be discerned writing in four tongues — Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, and Orcish — which reads:

The sons of Daegal SeaReaver have erected this monument to the honor of their father, lord of the clans. Let none disturb his bones while he dwells with the gods!

○○○

Silence is golden. Much of this dungeon depends on giving the players no notion that there is more. It defeats your purpose to giggle hysterically when they "loot" the upper barrow and pack up to go home, or to smirk in a self-satisfied manner should they bypass the entrance to the lowest treasure room. Hints and clues should be given fairly — that is, ask yourself if they would get them if they were "really" there!

When the players ask what level character they should take, shrug and ask what characters they want to take. This dungeon should be able to boggle middle to high level characters, partly because much of it depends on the intelligence and creativity of the players themselves. However, the upper barrow alone could be taken by several industrious low-level characters. Don't cue them by suggesting what levels to take. On the other hand, if you have a heart, don't let them try the lower barrow with three first level characters!

UPPER BARROW

This is a mound 120' long x 70' wide x 30' tall, completely covered with hardpacked dirt. There is no indication of an entrance from the outside; they must dig, to find it blocked by a huge slab of stone 15' wide and 5' high (requires a Strength of 60 to move). Within the upper barrow, the 'burial chambers' are surrounded by 2' thick stone slabs, with the final 'burial chamber' inside a welded iron box with walls 1" thick. This is set solidly in the bedrock and cannot readily be dug through or around.

1 Walls of close-set stones in a short entrance tunnel 10' wide but only 5' high. Here is a hidden pitfall 25' deep floored with 4' tall, thin steel spikes. Unless a character is looking for such, no saving roll is allowed. These spikes deliver 4 dice worth of hits (armor helps, of course). Note that the tunnel is too low for a character of average height to jump the pitfall, and shorter characters will probably not be able to jump as far as the taller, leggier ones. Let them devise some other way across or around.

2 Also a rock-walled room. *Important (do not neglect this): in this room is the corpse of an overweight dwarf lying face down near the entrance to the room.* He carries neither weapons nor magical paraphernalia. His left arm is underneath him, and the hand clutches a quartz pendant (cut in facets) with a bronze tag suspended from the end. On the tag is a rune (invent your own). This pendant is not magical, but is worth about 20 g.p. (or more, if the quartz is recognized as a prism — you needn't tell them that, however!). The dwarf's right hand is outstretched and seems to point to the S wall of the room (actually, he is pointing towards the lowest treasure room). The dwarf has been strangled — the cord is still around his neck.

Along both the N and S walls are the decaying corpses of 12 men in leather armor, with pitted iron swords at their sides. When a living being enters this room, the dead warriors become undead and attack invaders. They each have a MR of 10 (2+5). If not killed (their individual MRs must reach 0) they will regenerate 2 points per combat turn (in simulation of their zombie-like half-life). Poisons are ineffective, as are certain spells which logically take effect on living, breathing beings: *Smog* and *Mind Pox*, for example, should have no effect. (Further, a *Smog* in this small an area should deter the party!) On each warrior can be found 5 silver pieces.

3 No stone in front of a 5' high, 6' wide doorway in the iron 'box' around the tomb. Door opens inward with a latch handle. However, turning the latch causes a heavy spray of vitriol to spurt out, 5½' above the ground and out (in a curve) to fall up to 6' away. If it is deemed that this could hit a character's face, he will be permanently blinded, and should make a L3SR on luck to avoid instant death from inhaling it. If this is avoided, but the character is still hit, the GM should estimate how many dice the character will take in hits (1 to 3 dice worth). This vitriol will render even plate armor useless in 2 turns, and is quite capable of splashing through chain and leather to damage the being beneath.

Map, key and detailed room descriptions for the T&T GameMaster



4 This room is 40' wide, 70' long, and 15' high. In each corner there is a bronze statue of a dwarf. Magical, these can see the invisible and are unaffected by poisons and some spells (as noted for the warriors in the previous room). One hand and arm is constructed to be a crossbow with a single bolt. Gets 2+3, hits on a roll of 1-4 on a six-sided die. In the other hand, each has an iron taper axe. The MR of each dwarf is 60 (7+30). They are 'programmed' to kill all intruders even at the risk of disrupting the burial chamber (they know it isn't the real thing and can rearrange it).

5 Here are the remains of a (short) long-boat, 50' in length with room for 12 oars. At the prow (on the east end) is the corpse of a human laid in state on furs, silks and tapestries which are placed over a platform of three wooden chests. Beside the corpse are a notched broadsword (ordinary, gets 2+3) and a buckler (2 hits) and a francesca (2+2). The corpse holds in his arms the object noted below.

The three chests contain the following:

Chest 1: 2000 s.p. and 500 c.p.

Chest 2: 1000 s.p. and assorted bronze and copper jewelry worth another 300 g.p. (weighs 800 — the worth is primarily in workmanship).

Chest 3: Another lot of copper and bronze jewelry — torques, bracelets, pins, brooches, rings — and also plates of bronze and tin, cups and tankards, candelabra, and a few eating knives (not suitable for fighting). Worth 200 g.p., weighs 500.

The only object of gold in the barrow is a 7' long magical staff held on the chest of the corpse by his crossed arms. It has the appearance of a bird-headed *lur* or trumpet-swan, but it has no barrel. It does have a L9 curse, however: anyone who touches it (even through gauntlets) is instantly turned into a swan for 900 years, after which time he or she can regain human form — 900 years old. The person who has thus been metamorphosed will not recall his human(oid) lifestyle, even if the curse is removed, unless he can make a L2SR on IQ. The staff is worth 200 g.p. if there can be found anyone to buy it!

LOWER BARROW

Before this is entered, take note of the sea level. Roll 2 dice to find the hour of high tide (you'll miss 1:00, but it is after all, only one hour . . .) — or, if you have a 12-sided die, it's a snap. Then ask the party what time of day they think they're dealing with. This will allow you to find out if it is high, low, rising or falling tide. (This becomes important, so keep careful track of the turns which pass.)

6 This is the carved monument. 50' high, it is slightly magical. It will not support any weight being pulled against it, nor will ropes remain knotted around it. If rope is simply looped around and held, the stele will slowly lose solidity and allow the rope to slip. It will take about 2 minutes for a rope to slip through the stele, or about 1 minute for a rope to unknott itself. Note that the stele is the only thing on the cliff rope can readily be attached to . . . parties will have to make some other arrangement.

7 The cliff face is sheer, unclimbable and descends 800' to a rocky surf which makes arriving by boat unthinkable. 250'

down the cliff face is the entrance to the lower barrow. This entrance is cut from the rock itself, and is 20' wide and high. Steps descend steeply to a depth of 80' into the following room.

8 This room is 100' long x 50' wide x 20' high. The upper ten feet of the E and W walls are lined with shelves holding thousands of skulls and other bones. These provide vantage and hiding for a clan of twelve pixies who have sworn to protect this tomb for the life of the clan. They move constantly among the skulls and attempt to remain hidden at all times. They 'talk' through the skulls, foretelling death and destruction. They can make the skulls shift, move, even fly for short distances, and have mirrors to make the eye sockets glint in torchlight. (To the GM: ham it up here. You might even be able to scare off the party!)

Pixies, who aren't more than 6' high, have MR of 4 each, but attack the party by shooting tiny darts ('elfshot') which, if they hit, cause a debilitating disease which drains 2 CON/turn until or unless completely healed (*Healing Feeling* needed). Six pixies at a time will shoot from one side while the other side puts on a show. Plate armor is full protection but other kinds only afford a L1SR — if the roll is missed the shot will strike (if it was going to hit in the first place). Pixies hit with 1-3 on a six-sided die. If the party saunters through, the pixies will have time for at least 4 shots apiece. (That's 48 shots! Effects are cumulative.) With the party at a dead run, each pixie gets only 1 shot off, maximum.

9 A great many more stairs, descending in many stages. If someone wants to try to count and remember how many steps down, they should make a L8SR on IQ. Then tell them 1234 steps (538'). (Don't tell the party outright, but this brings them near the average sea level). Walls are still bedrock, 20' wide.

10 This is a puzzle room — they must solve it before continuing. Room is 30' wide and 60' long. These things only are visible and apparent . . . in the center of the room hangs a magical gem, suspended from the ceiling on a fine chain; it comes down to eye level. It emits a soft glow in the general torchlight — if a torch comes very close (within 6'') the glow brightens into a shaft of light which falls against the far S wall. On the S wall are 3 square impressions (about 5x5''); they are set about 1' apart. On a table against the E wall are three 5x5'' squares of copper embossed with animal heads (with what look like gems for eyes). One copper square has a cat's head with what seem like ruby eyes; one has a dog's head with sapphire-like eyes; the last has the head of a manticore with what appear to be topaz eyes. Dwarves in the party will quickly determine these "gems" are mere colored glass.

This is all the party can see — they must experiment and think out the rest. The solution to the puzzle depends on the proper sequence of actions. A torch must be held near — within 6'' — of the magical gem. This gem amplifies the torchlight to a strong white beam of light which shines in the center of the central square on the S wall. A party member must remember the dwarf's pendant/prism and suspend it on its chain in front of the beam of white light. The prism will break the light into its individual colors which will

fall on all three squares.

Now the party need only match the correct animal to its appropriate color on the wall — red (ruby), on the *right*, for the cat; yellow (topaz), in the *center*, for the manticore, and blue (sapphire) on the *left*, for the dog. All must be placed correctly for the doorway to open — this wall cannot be penetrated any other way.

—Should the party attempt to place the animal medallions at random, without the cue of the spectrum (if they have left behind or have forgotten about the prism pendant), and/or place the animals in the wrong positions, there is a surge of magic which drains 1 ST point from all party members except the one placing the medallion. The medallion-placer loses ¼ of his current strength rounded down (at least 1).

—If the manticore is placed correctly (in the center), and is placed first, nothing happens (*yet*).

—If just the dog or cat is placed, there is a different magic surge and the appropriate (very oversized) creature appears and attacks the party with a MR of 300. If the character immediately slaps in the second medallion, the dog or cat first summoned will fight the party at least 1 combat turn before turning on its enemy.

—If the cat and dog squares are placed simultaneously, the animals attack each other, ignoring the party.

—If the dog and cat medallions are in place, and the animals are either still fighting each other or one has been defeated, and if the manticore medallion is then put in place, a manticore of MR 500 appears which will attack the party regardless of distractions. (If the manticore medallion was placed first, it will appear once both the dog and cat squares are in place.)

—The most dangerous variation transpires if the party first places the manticore (nothing happens), then, say, the cat. The cat will attack the party. If the party slays it, and then places the dog medallion, both the dog and manticore will appear together and attack the party. (Neither dog nor cat will attack the manticore.)

—*The one and only safe way to solve this puzzle is to place all three medallions simultaneously. Then the door opens, and no monsters appear.*

Once the manticore has been slain, or the puzzle safely avoided, the S wall will part, revealing the next section.

11 When the S wall parts, a spill of gravel from the short corridor beyond gushes into the puzzle room. The corridor is only 10' long (20' wide) but is *totally* blocked with gravel and rock (average size of the rocks are 1-2''). The party must shovel past this gravel to reach the next door, which can be opened by pushing against it once the latch is released. The *easiest* way to get through this section is to clean away just enough gravel to crawl through, and only low enough (3' above floor level) to reach the latch. In this case the delvers will *not* discover that there is more gravel leading down into a shaft (see **13**) and so into the main treasure room. If they are thorough enough to dig to the 'floor' they will find the shaft.

12 Actual burial room, 150' long x 75' wide x 50' high. Here is a true long-boat, 130' long and 40' wide, with room for 30 oarsmen. (The ship was cut apart

and reassembled after transport into the tomb.) There are 30 corpses (including some of elves) at the oars, armed with broad axes, and wearing shields and leather armor. They also have kris knives secreted somewhere on their persons. In the ship, too, are two chests, contents described below. In the prow of this ship, seated on a massive carved chair, is the real Daegal SeaReaver. Behind him, on the E wall, are these words carved in Common Tongue:

Dwelling with the gods, I have not forgotten the earth. Disturb my bones and impoverish my soul at your direst peril!

If anyone disturbs the oarsmen or the chests, the oarsmen will come to undead life and attack the intruders. (Same stipulations as the undead in the upper barrow, except these warriors are immune to *all* spells 3rd level and below — their kris — and also to those higher level spells the GM determines would not logically affect them.) Each undead warrior has a MR of 30 (3+10).

If Daegal SeaReaver is disturbed, he arrives in a new form (thus, it will accomplish nothing to destroy his bones at a blow). He is like a lich, and a L9 wizard-warrior. His attributes: ST:90, IQ:30, LK:25, CON:100, DEX:30, and CHR:27. (+109). He also has a ring which protects him from all magic 5th level and below (the 'original' of this ring can be found on the corpse). He is armed with a broad, very heavy ax (gets 8 dice, weighs 500, nonmagical, takes 2X normal ST and a DEX of 20 to wield). The 'original' of this item can be found inside the back of his throne-like chair. He also wears a heavy leather jerkin which is magical and halves the effect of any projectiles which strike him.

With Daegal is his lady Bela Spearshaft, a 4th level rogue whose bones lay near him. Her attributes: ST:30, IQ:25, LK:30, CON:50, DEX:25, and CHR:30. (+37). She carries two spears, a kris (which protects her to 3rd level magic), and a broadsword, and wears leather armor. Bela also knows 1st to 4th level magic.

In the two chests are these things:

Chest 1: great lengths of fine silks, tapestries and cloth-of-gold. Resale value 100 g.p., weighs 300. Also one serving of gold plateware, a tankard, some navigational equipment: total worth 200 g.p., weighs 150.

Chest 2: 2000 s.p., a small pouch of jewels worth 100 g.p., weighs 10.

13 Gravel-filled shaft, 5' around, goes down 10' and stops. At only 1' below gravel and the lip of the floor, the party will encounter water at high tide, and at least some water in the shaft for 2½ hours before and after high tide. In this area the tide rises and lowers 24' — in actual vertical distance it covers 4'/hour. Note that in the slanted tunnel (see 14) the tide will still cover 4 vertical feet per hour — but it will appear to cover about 85' an hour.

14 The aforementioned slanted tunnel, 300' long. Little has been done to improve on this natural crevice in the rock. Although the crevice has an average height of 5' and a width of 3', this varies considerably to spaces even a small human would have difficulty squeezing through. The rocks in the tunnel are sharp and jagged; there is evidence that chipped obsidian and flint has been carted down to make things worse. Passage through here on foot (i.e., when the tunnel is dry) cannot be faster than 2'/second.

If swimming, speed will be slightly greater, say, 3'/second. Any character attempting to traverse the tunnel must make saving rolls (one each) on DEX, LK, and IQ to avoid the rocks and snags underfoot and overhead. Hits should be taken according to what the roll was missed by.

15 Down amongst a particularly nasty tangle of rocks there lives a magically-engineered creature with unusual characteristics. It does not radiate magic, nor do its offspring (which are released into the area about every 12 hours, just after low tide, and live for only 14 hours or so before dying and rotting). The 'offspring' are many tiny animalcules encased in ¼" glass-like spheres. When the corridor is dry, the spheres are scattered on the floor for about 20' around the 'mother' creature. When stepped on, these spheres release a noxious, stupefying gas. Characters must make a saving roll on CON for every 2' into the area if they are breathing the air — or they will fall unconscious. Characters will almost certainly cut themselves on the rocks, and the animals (not harmed by being trod upon) will crawl into the cuts, or an open mouth, ears, etc. and make a meal in short order.

When the corridor is full of water, the spheres will float at various levels within the prescribed distance of the original creature. In the water, the glass-like spheres are virtually invisible. The animals (easily a dozen to a sphere) appear as little more than large dirt particles or stray bits of seaweed. If a character swims through here and breathes the water (i.e. through magical means, gifted gills, etc.) he is certain to inhale one or more of the spheres. The silicon covering will break, probably in his throat, cutting it slightly. The animals will be released and will again begin feasting voraciously. A character will be dead in two or three minutes.

The effect of the animals eating from the inside out is not a curse, not a disease, and not a poison; hence, spells to combat those ills will have no effect. The mother creature is not affected by *Take That You Fiend*, and GMs should keep in mind that that spell would affect only one of the little hungry creatures at a time.

The safe way past this trap is to hold one's breath, whether swimming or walking. However, this will entail an additional four saving rolls on CON, at increasing levels (suggested: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th — you may wish to start higher, or have 2-level jumps), to hold one's breath for the full 300', which will bring you into the main treasure room. Missing the roll means drowning if in water. If breath is held just through the spheres, one SR is sufficient — if missed, the creatures have the normal effect, as above.

16 This is the main treasure room, which is also natural, about 20' around, and 30' high at the top (17) where a crevice runs out into the ceiling, allowing air to flow out when water flows in. The treasure is mostly packed in small bags (even those who originally set the trap up had to crawl through the narrow!) but most of the bags are badly rotted.

The cave is also the constant habitat of a dragon-like Kroan*. This one is small but

quite deadly: MR 700. It will not rise above 20' over the floor when the room is filled with water — even it cannot fight off the strangtleweed (see 17). If severely wounded, it will attempt to escape down the crevice which feeds in and drains out the seawater to the treasure room and slanted tunnel. The Kroan can fight equally well in air or water; the GM should determine what handicap to give a character or characters attempting to fight underwater, especially if they wear armor.

If the Kroan is defeated, the characters may loot the treasure room. If they spend much time at it, they're sure to get wet under even the best of circumstances (the room remains dry less than 15 minutes during low tide). The gold and rotting bags are likely to be half-hidden in the muck and garbage.

The treasure room contains these things: 35,000 g.p.; 10,000 s.p. (mostly corroded into a solid mass); a small box of jewels (total value 2000 g.p.); bronze, silver, and gold plateware, of which only the gold has survived the action of the seawater (worth 1000 g.p.); a magical scrying stone — if dipped in the fresh blood of a virgin elf or human, it will provide one minute's viewing of any location (an anonymous amoral wizard would pay up to 3000 g.p. for it); a gold-plated mechanical simulacrum of the solar system (in gold, worth 300 g.p., but an astronomically-inclined character would pay up to 1000 g.p. for it).

17 Because the treasure room is a natural cavern, it rises to the roof at a rough slant. The room will fill only to a depth of about 24', although the smallest area a human could crawl through reaches some 26' overhead, then becomes a small crack continuing up into the rock (this allows the air to flow up when the water flows in).

Beginning about 20' overhead and continuing up to this crack there thrives a humidity-loving breed of seaweed known as *strangleweed*. If characters are driven up here by the Kroan, or surface here for air (when the room is mostly full of water), there is a good chance they will be captured in the semi-sentient and highly sensitive tendrils of this plant. Should a character surface here at high tide, he should make at least a L4SR on LK to escape immediate entanglement by diving away. If entangled, he should make SRs of increasing difficulty to try to break free and dive — at least 5 such rolls should be allowed, one for every 5 minutes of entanglement. If friends try to help, they will quickly have their own difficulties; the GM should handle each case as it occurs. Anyone remaining in the immediate vicinity of the strangtleweed for more than a minute or two will become entangled, regardless.

In function, the weed does not actually strangle: Nematocysts (stingers) fire into the entangled one and eventually drive him into a coma. The plant will leave the character alive for up to several months (a good way to delay characters with reincarnation bonuses!) before digesting it past maintenance of life functions.

If a character is released, a *Too-Bad Toxin* will erase the worst effects of the strangtleweed. Likewise, one immune to poison would suffer only the indignity of being entangled, although the GM may wish to drop his CON slightly (due to the thousands of stingers puncturing his skin), if he is entangled for over half an hour.

*Compare the same creature listed in the *Dragon* article by Peters, elsewhere in this issue.

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reviews

SPI has released its first four "mini" space capsule games: *The Creature That Ate Sheboygan*, *Stargate*, *Titan Strike*, and *Vector Three*.

Stargate deals with tactical combat around the Stargates popularized by *Starforce*, and can be used as a tactical module for that game. It can also stand alone with its own historical background of Virunians vs. a Human-Humanoid Coalition.

Titan Strike takes place in a future where the economic fabric of the Solar System is badly frayed. The USA and USSR have gambled on interstellar colonization, leaving the EEC (European Economic Community) and the HEA (Hegemony of Eastern Asia) to come into conflict with each other over the discovery of fissionables beneath the surface of Titan. As the balance of power on Earth is protected by the presence of the Superpowers, the EEC and HEA mass forces on Titan itself and begin an all-out effort to secure its ultimate treasure — energy for centuries to come.

Vector-3 is an interesting game of 3-D combat. Two playing aids are included: a square hex map for 3-D movement, and a ship diagram sheet for each player. The counters do not represent the ships themselves, but different weapons modules that can be purchased and placed in different areas on the ship's diagram.

The graphic quality in all four games is excellent and the rules appear to be clear and straightforward. Barring the slight pang I receive at the SPI standardization of SF themes, the games are well worth the \$4 cover price, with *Titan Strike* standing out above the others.

Metagaming has also released two new Microgames — *Invasion of the Air Eaters* and *Holy War*.

Invasion of the Air Eaters may seem a humorous title at first glance, but the game brings out the serious possibility of man's inability to cooperate across national boundaries — even in the face of an all-out alien invasion.

Holy War is in essence a *Godsfire* tactical module, playable in itself, with some very interesting new ship additions such as the Warpline Generator Ship that can artificially link together weak areas in the Space Fabric. Another well-designed game from Lynn Willis!

GDW has several new SF titles in the works, all due to be out by the time this sees print. *Double Star* depicts interstellar combat between two rival colonies of Terra in a binary star system. *Kinunir* is the first adventure for *Traveller* about an expedition to locate the missing Battle Cruiser Kinunir. *Shapshot* will treat man-to-man combat aboard starships in the future. The rules structure is designed to allow complete games, or resolve *Traveller* combat situations with a variety of weapons. Piracy, Mutiny, and Boarding Party scenarios are included. Finally, *Belter* combines politics, economics and combat in a game of mining the untamed asteroid belt in the 21st century.

The Treasury of Archaic Names is a must for the role-playing gamer. It's a volume with charts of olden names, nicknames, titles, and surnames — plus place names and tavern names, with guidelines for name creation and combinations. Over 5000 names are listed, in dozens of charts — with a combination potential of over 50 million names!

— Ed Cooper

news

In *SA1* we announced a contest to give our Troll a name. Troll? That despicable fellow who roams our pages unchecked, pulling the wings off fairies,

playing yoyo with skulls, and hooking innocent mermaids . . . We're proud to announce that the Troll has acquired the appellation of *Grimtooth*, and that Catherine Francis of South Bend, Indiana, has won a year's subscription to *SA*. Several other people deserve (Dis)Honorable Mentions for their entries: Terri Gacesca, for *Malice Aforethought* (Malafor, for short), and Joan Hanke Woods for *Slimebrain*. Thanks to everyone else who submitted names!

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Sources for convention listings this issue were: *Wargamer's Information* (Rick Loomis), and *FANTASY*, *The Fantasy Artists Network Zine* (Kippy Poyser's con listings). If you would like to publicize your convention in this magazine, send us a flyer or progress report! (We assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the following listings.)

August 4. **Edain Rally II.** Thomas Jefferson Intermediate School and Community Center, 125 S. Old Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA. The Edain Wargamers' Association, Bill Pittman, President.

October 12–14. **Fifth World Fantasy Convention.** Biltmore Plaza Hotel (43 Kepler St., Pawtucket, RI 02860). Membership \$15 (9/1 — \$20).

October 20–22. **Rheincon '79 — Rhine Confederation's 4th Annual Convention.** Wiesbaden Middle School, American Housing Area in Wiesbaden, West Germany. D&D tournaments, miniatures & boardgames, demonstration games. Info: CPT Jody Sherril, TAMMC PSD, APO NY 09052, or SSG Forster L. Grant, HHC, 21st SUPCOM, APO NY 09325.

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ads

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED: WRITERS of game-related articles, esp. concerning the role-playing and wargames, plus assorted subjects. Mail to: Editor, *SORCERER'S APPRENTICE*, Flying Buffalo Inc, P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252. Please enclose SASE for return and reply.

WANTED: PBM Opponents for CHITIN I, WARPWAR or other Science Fiction War Games. Honor System used. R.D. Grob, 1219 N. Franklin, Junction City, Kansas 66441.

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Roger Zelazny

GARD OF BLACK



Earning his passage and pay as a scout, Dilvish rode on ahead of the caravan that day, checking the pass-worthiness of mountain trails and investigating sideways for possible hazards. The sun had reached midday when he descended the far side of the low Kalgani range and moved through the foothills into the widening valley opening into the wood beyond which lay the plains.

"A singularly uneventful passage," Black commented, as they paused upon a hilltop to regard the twisting of the trail toward the distant trees.

"In my day," said Dilvish, "things would probably have been different. This area was full of robber bands. They followed the sun. They preyed upon travelers. Occasionally, they would even join together to raid one of the small towns hereabout."

"Towns?" said his great, dark mount whose skin shimmered like metal. "I have seen no towns."

Dilvish shook his head.

"Who knows what might have happened in two hundred years?" He gestured downward. "I believe there was one right below us. Not large. It was called Tregli. I stayed at its inn on several occasions."

Black looked in that direction.

"Are we going down there?"

Dilvish glanced at the sun.

"It is lunchtime," he observed, "and the winds are strong here. Let's go a little farther. I'll eat down below."

Black leaned forward and began descending the slope, picking up speed as the land levelled, making his way

back onto the trail. Dilvish looked about him as they went, as if seeking landmarks.

"What are those flashes of color?"

Black asked him. "Some distance ahead."

Dilvish regarded a small area of blue, yellow, white — with an occasional flash of red — which had just come into view around a far-off bend.

"I don't know," he said. "We might take a look."

Several minutes later, they passed the vine-covered remains of a low-stone wall. Ahead lay strewn stones in patterns vaguely reminiscent of the outline of a building's foundation. Here and there, as they advanced, they noted depressions at either hand, disposed in such fashion as to indicate that here might have been cellars, now rubble-filled and overgrown.

"Hold," Dilvish said, pointing ahead and to his left to a place where a section of wall still stood. "That is the front of the inn I mentioned. I'm sure of it. I think we are on the main street."

"Really?"

Black began to dig at the turf with one sharp, cloven foot. Moments later, a spark flashed as he struck a cobblestone. He widened the hole, to reveal more cobbles adjoining it.

"This does appear to have been a street," he said.

Dilvish dismounted and walked to the crumbling section of wall, passed it, moved about in the area behind it.

After several minutes, he returned.

"The old well is still in sight out back," he said. "But its canopy's collapsed and rotted, and it's covered over with vines now."

"Might I suggest you save your thirst for that stream we passed in the hills?"

Dilvish held up a spoon.

"... And I found this part-buried where the kitchen used to be. I might have eaten with it myself, years ago. Yes, this is the inn."

"Was," Black suggested.

Dilvish's smile vanished and he nodded.

"True."

He tossed the spoon back over his shoulder and mounted.

"So much has changed..."

"You liked it here?" Black asked as they moved forward again.

"It was a pleasant stopping-place. The people were friendly. I had some good meals."

"What do you think might have happened? Those robbers you mentioned?"

"Seems a good guess," Dilvish replied. "Unless it was some disease."

They moved along the overgrown trail, a rabbit starting before them as they passed toward the far end of the town.

"Where did you want to take your meal?" Black inquired.

"Away from this dead place," Dilvish said. "Perhaps in that field ahead." He drew a deep breath. "It seems to have a pleasant smell to it."

"It's the flowers," Black said. "Full of them. It was their colors we saw from above. Weren't they there — in the old days?"

Dilvish shook his head.

"No. There was something... I don't quite recall what. Sort of a park-



Roger Zelazny is one of today's premiere fantasy writers, and it is with great pleasure we bring you another long-awaited installment in his saga of *Dilvish the Deliverer*, the once-dead, of the High Blood, of Dilfar. Cursed by *The Dark One* for attempting to rescue a sacrificial virgin from rites of Darkness, his body was turned to stone while his spirit writhed in the deepest abyss of Hell. Two hundred years passed, and Dilvish was released somehow to acquire a horse that was not a horse, but a beast-companion of steel called Black, to wander the world again . . .

Rob Carver has been a long-time fan of Zelazny, and of Zelazny's *Dilvish* stories in particular. This is the second set of illustrations Rob has done for *Garden of Blood* — the first set seems to have been eaten by the post office.

Zelazny is planning to assemble a *Dilvish* anthology later this year, and hopes to see it in print sometime next year. Now, however, we hope you enjoy *Garden of Blood* . . .

like little area out this way."

They passed through a grove of trees, came into the clearing. Large, poppy-like blossoms, blue, white, yellow — the occasional red — moved almost as high as Black's shoulder, swaying on hairy, finger-thick stalks. They faced the sun. Their heavy perfumes hung in the air.

"There is a clear, shaded area at the foot of that large tree — to the left," Black observed. "There even seems to be a table you could use."

Dilvish looked in that direction.

"Aha!" he said. "Now I remember. That stone slab isn't a table. Well . . . In a way, it is. It's an altar. The people of Tregli worshipped out here in the open — Manata, goddess of growing things. They left her cakes and honey and such on the altar. Danced here. Sang here, of an evening. I even came to one of the services. They had a priestess . . . I forget her name."

They came up beneath the tree, where Dilvish dismounted.

"The tree has grown and the altar's sunk," he remarked, brushing debris from the stone.

He began to hum as he rummaged in a saddlebag after a meal — a simple, repetitive tune.

"I've never before heard you sing, whistle or hum," Black commented.

Dilvish yawned.

"I was just trying to recall the tune I heard that evening I was here. I believe that's how it went."

He seated himself with his back against the bole of the tree and began to eat.

"Dilvish, there is something strange

about this place . . ."

"It seems strange to me just by virtue of its having changed so," he replied, breaking off a piece of bread.

The wind shifted. The odors of the flowers came to them more strongly.

"That is not what I mean."

Dilvish swallowed and smothered another yawn.

"I don't understand."

"Neither do I."

Black lowered his head and ceased all movement.

Dilvish looked about him and listened for a long while. The only sounds, however, were the rustling of the grasses, the flowers, the leaves in the tree above him, stirred by a passing wind.

"There does not seem to be anything unusual about," he said softly.

Black did not reply.

Dilvish regarded his mount.

"Black?"

Carefully, he loosened his blade and gathered his feet beneath him. He moved the balance of his lunch over to the slab.

"Black!"

The creature stood unmoving, unspeaking, like a great, dark statue.

Dilvish rose to his feet, stumbled, leaned back against the tree. His breathing came heavy.

"Is it you, my enemy?" he asked.

"Why don't you show yourself?"

There came no reply. He looked out across the field again, breathing the heady perfume of the flowers. His vision began to waver as he stared, smearing the colors, distorting the outlines.

"What is happening?"

He took a step forward, and another, staggering in Black's direction. When he reached him, he threw an arm about his neck and leaned heavily. Suddenly, he drew his shirt upward with his left hand and pressed his face into it.

"Is it a narcotic . . . ?" he said, and then he sagged, slipping partway to the ground.

Black still did not move.

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There were cries in the darkness and loud voices shouting orders. Dilvish stood in the shadow of the trees; a giant, heavily built man with a curly beard stood motionless nearby. The two of them peered in the direction of the flickering lights.

"The whole town seems to be burning," came the deep voice of the larger man.

"Yes, and it sounds as if those who follow the sun are butchering the inhabitants."

"We can do no good here. There are too many of them. We would only get ourselves hacked to bits, also."

"True, and I had looked forward to a quiet evening. Let us skirt the place and be on our way."

They drew back farther into the shadows and made their way past the scene of carnage. The screams were fewer now, as the number of dead increased. Many of the men were stacking loot and drinking from bottles taken from the flaming inn. A few still stood in line where the remaining women lay disheveled, eyes wide, garments rent. Across the way, a roof suddenly collapsed, sending a fountain of sparks into the night air.

"If a few should stagger our way, though," the curly haired man remarked as they passed, "let's hang them by their heels and gut them, to square accounts somewhat with the gods."

"Keep your eyes open. You may get lucky."

The other chuckled.

"I never know when you're joking," he said after a time. "Maybe you never are. That can be funny, too — for others."

They moved along a rocky, brush-strewn declivity paralleling the town. At their left, the cries grew fainter. An occasional burst of flame still sent shadows dancing about them.

"I wasn't joking," Dilvish said a little later. "Maybe I've forgotten how."

The other touched his shoulder.

"Up ahead. The clearing . . ." he said.

They halted.

"Yes, I remember . . ."

"There is someone there."

They began to move again, more slowly. A regular flickering of light, as from a number of torches, came from the farther end of the field in the vicinity of a large, heavy-limbed tree.

Drawing nearer, they saw a knot of men at the small stone altar. One of them sat upon it, drinking from a wine bottle. Two others were bringing a blonde-haired girl in a green garment across the field, her hands bound behind her back. She spoke, but her words were indistinguishable. She struggled, and

they pushed her. She fell, and they drew her to her feet again.

"I recognize that girl," Dilvish said. "It's Sanya, their priestess. But —"

He raised his hands to his head, pressed them to his temples.

"But — What happened? How did I come to be here? It seems that I saw Sanya long, long ago . . ."

He turned and stared into his companion's face, taking hold of his arm.

"You," he said, "my friend . . . It seems I have known you for ages, yet — Forgive me . . . I cannot recall your name."

The other's brow tightened as his eyes narrowed.

"I — You call me Black," he said suddenly. "Yes — and this is not my customary form! I begin to remember . . . It was daytime, and this field was full of flowers. I believe that we slept . . . And the village! It was but a bare remnant —"

He shook his head.

"I do not know what happened — what spell, what power brought us to this place."

"Yet, you have powers of your own," Dilvish said. "Can they help us? Can you still use them?"

"I — I don't know. I seem to have forgotten — some things."

"If we die here — in this dream, or whatever it is — do we truly die? Can you divine that?"

"We — It is coming clearer now . . ."

The flowers of the field sought our lives. The red ones are those that have slain travelers. They drug you with their perfumes, then twine about you and draw out your life. Yet something has interfered with their attempt on us. This is not a dream. We are witnessing what actually occurred. I do not know whether we can change what has already happened. Yet, we must be here for a reason."

"And can we die here?" Dilvish repeated.

"I am sure of it. Even I, if I fall in this place — though I can foresee all sorts of intriguing theological problems."

"Bugger them!" Dilvish said, and he began to move forward, making his way through the shadows around the edge of the clearing, heading toward the far end. "I believe they mean to sacrifice the priestess on the altar of her own goddess."

"Yes," Black said, moving silently behind him. "I don't like them, and we are both armed. What do you say? There's quite a number at the stone and two with the girl . . . But we should be able to get very close without being seen."

"I agree. Can you use that blade — this being an unfamiliar form and all?"

Black chuckled.

"It is not totally unfamiliar," he replied. "The two on the right will never know how they got to Hell. I suggest that you deal with the one on the end



while I'm sending them on their way. Then dispatch that one to the left." He drew a long, double-handed blade soundlessly, holding it with one hand. "They may all be a bit drunk, too," he added. "That should help."

Dilvish drew his blade. They moved nearer.

"Say when," he whispered.

Black raised his weapon.

"Now!"

Black was little more than a blur in the flickering light. Even as Dilvish fell upon his man to slay him, a gory head bounced near his foot, and Black's second victim was already falling.

A great cry went up from the others as Dilvish tore his blade free from the body of the man he had slain and turned to face another. Black's blade descended again, hacking off a man's sword-arm at the elbow, and his left foot flew forward, catching the man on the slab in the small of the back. Dilvish thought that he heard his spine snap as the man was hurled to the ground.

But now there were blades in the hands of the remaining men, and from across the field in the direction of the burning town there came a series of cries. From the side of his eye, Dilvish saw a number of figures rushing toward them, weapons in their hands.

He drove his second man several paces backward, beat his guard aside, kicked him in the kneecap and cut halfway through his neck with a heavy blow.

He turned to cut at another who was coming fast upon him, noting that Black had brained one man against the side of the altar and skewered another with his long blade, raising him up off the ground with the force of his thrust. By now, there were cries all around them.

He got inside his opponent's reach and used the guard of his weapon as a knuckle-duster against the man's jaw. He kicked him as he fell and ran the point of his blade into another's guard, severing fingers as he drew it back. The man screamed and dropped his weapon. Ducking a head cut, Dilvish swung low and cut another behind the knee, hamstringing him. He backed away from two more then and circled quickly, getting one into the other's way, beating and thrusting, being parried, parrying himself, thrusting again, slipping around a parry and slashing a wrist. From somewhere, he heard Black bellow — a half-human, half-animal sound — followed moments later by a series of different voices screaming.

Dilvish tripped the injured man and stamped on him, caught the other in the stomach with his blade, felt a stinging in his shoulder, saw his own blood, turned to face a new attacker . . .

He dispatched this man in an almost dream-like series of movements.

Another, who was rushing toward him, slipped on a patch of freshly spilled blood and Dilvish finished him before he could rise again.

A club struck him on the side. He doubled for a moment and backed away, swinging wide parries. He saw Black nearby, still felling his attackers with almost reckless swordplay. He was about to call out to him, that they might get back to back for a more complete defense —

A sharp cry rang out and the attackers hesitated. Heads turned in the direction of the altar, and motion was frozen for a moment.

The priestess Sanya lay across the stone, bleeding. A tall, fair-haired man had just withdrawn a blade from her breast. Her lips were still moving, either in curse or prayer, but the words were inaudible. The man's lips were moving, too. Across the field, a fresh group of men was advancing from the direction of the town. A red trickle began at the left corner of Sanya's mouth and her head suddenly slumped to the side, eyes still open, unseeing. The blond man raised his head.

"Now bring me those two!" he cried, raising his blade once more and pointing it toward Dilvish and Black.

As he did this, the man's sleeve fell back revealing a series of bluish tattoos along his right forearm. Dilvish had seen such markings before. Various hill-tribe shamans scored themselves in this fashion, each marking representing a victory over some neighbor and adding to the wearer's power. What was such a man doing with this band of ragged cutthroats — obviously their leader? Had his tribe been destroyed? Or —?

Dilvish drew a deep breath.

"Don't bother!" he shouted. "I'm coming!"

He sprang forward.

His blade engaged the other's across the altar, was beaten back. He began to circle. So did the shaman.

"Did your own people drive you away?" Dilvish asked. "For what crimes?"

The man glared for but a moment, then smiled and with a sweeping gesture halted the men who were now rushing to his aid.

"This one is mine," he stated. "You deal with the other."

He moved his left forearm, which was also covered with tattoos, across his body and touched it to his blade.

"You recognize what I am," he said, "and still you challenge me. That is rash."

Flames sprang up along the length of the blade that he held. Dilvish narrowed his eyes against the sudden glare.

The weapon traced confusing lines of fire as the other moved it. Still, Dilvish parried its first thrust, feeling a

momentary warmth upon his hand as he did so. From over his shoulder, he heard Black's battle cry and a resumed clashing of arms. A man screamed.

Dilvish swung into an attack which was parried by the blazing blade, feeling the increasing heat of that weapon across his wrist as he parried in turn and sought an opening.

They drew away from the altar and the tree, testing one another's defenses upon the open field. From the sounds, somewhere behind him now, Dilvish knew that Black was still holding his own. How long could that continue, though? he wondered. Despite his great strength and speed, there were so many moving against him . . .

His sleeve began to smoulder as they swaggered blades. The shaman, he realized, was a good swordsman. Unlike his men, he was also cold sober — and he was not as winded as Dilvish.

What was the meaning of all this? he wondered, throwing a head cut that he knew would not get through the other's guard, backing away and parrying the riposting chest cut which arrived with great force, pretending to stumble and recovering, hopefully to make the other overconfident. Why were they here? Why had Black been transformed, and the two of them set upon the scene of this ancient massacre?

He continued to back away, giving only half-feigned indications of fatigue, studying the other's style, blinking against the glare of that blade, his right hand now feeling as if it had been in a furnace. Why had he rushed to the aid of an already doomed girl, and against such odds?

A vision suddenly crossed his mind, of another night, long ago, of another girl about to be sacrificed by another magician, of the consequences of his act . . . He smiled as he realized that he had done it again and knew that he would do it yet again if the situation recurred — for this was something he had often wondered over through long days of pain. In that fleeting instant, he saw something of himself — the fear that his trials had broken a thing within him, a thing which he now saw to have remained unchanged.

He tried another head cut. There had been something about the shaman's return on the last one . . .

Had some kindly disposed deity anticipated his action, seen some incomprehensible use for it in this battle, granted him this small insight into his own character as a death-boon? Or —?

Yes! The riposte came too strong again! If he were to back away and flash his blade beneath and around . . .

He began to plan the maneuver as he gave ground and pretended once again to stumble.

He heard Black shout an oath, from

somewhere off to his right, and another man screamed. Even if he slew the shaman, Dilvish wondered, how long would the two of them last against the men remaining on the field and the men still on their way from the burning town?

But then — and Dilvish could not be certain that it might not be an effect of the blazing blade upon his watering eyes — the entire prospect before him seemed to ripple and waver for a moment. Everything appeared frozen in that instant — his own parry, the grimace on the shaman's sweat-stained face . . . In that splinter of timelessness, he saw his opportunity.

He threw a head cut.

The other parried, and the flaming arc of the riposte came flashing toward his chest.

He moved back, whipping his blade clockwise beneath and around and up. The point of the flaming blade tore through the sleeve of his jacket above his right biceps as it passed.

Twisting, he caught hold of his burnt right wrist with his left hand, blade straight ahead and pointing at the other's breast. Already off-balance from the movement, he threw himself forward and saw his weapon pierce the shaman as they both fell, feeling for a moment the other's hot blade upon his right thigh.

Then again, the wavering, the timeless pulse, prolonged . . .

He pulled himself back, withdrawing his blade. Colors — flame, brown, green, bright red — began to smear about him. The burning blade flickered, dimmed, went out, where it lay upon the ground. Then it, too, was but a dark smudge upon a changing canvas. The sounds of conflict grew still in Black's quarter.

Dilvish got to his feet, his blade at guard, his arm tensed to swing it. But nothing more approached.

From the end of the field, in the direction of the altar where the dead priestess lay, a voice seemed to be speaking — feminine, and a trifle strident. Dilvish looked in that direction and immediately averted his still-watering eyes, for there was only light, brightening from heartbeat to heartbeat.

"I heard my hymn, Deliverer," came the words, "and when I looked, I saw that within you which I might trust. An old wrong cannot be undone, but long have I awaited this cleansing, of those who follow the sun!"

About him, as through a frosted glass, Dilvish saw the standing forms of many of the men who had come to attack them. They wavered and their outlines blurred even as he looked. Yet, one of them seemed to have come up, soundlessly, upon his left . . .

The voice softened:

". . . And to you, who cared for this place — if but for a brief while —

my blessing!"

The man seemed so near now, blade upraised, swaying from side to side in slow motion. The other men had all become smears of color in a brightening light — and this one, too, seemed to be changing even as Dilvish swung his blade—

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The flower fell.

Dilvish put forth his hand for something to lean upon, found nothing, used his blade as a cane.

He heard a single stamping sound, then silence. About him, the place was filled with the sunlight of an afternoon. Amid the long grasses, there were cut and trampled flowers, near and far. Those which yet stood still faced the sun, swaying.

"Black?"

"Yes?"

Dilvish turned his head. Black was shaking his.

"Strange visions . . ." he began.

"But no dream," Black finished, and Dilvish knew by the throbbing of his reddened hand and the blood that still came from numerous cuts that this was true.

"Manata," he said, "I will finish the work, for that which you have shown me."

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As they mounted into the foothills, Black remarked, "It was good to fight beside you that way. I wonder whether I might learn that spell?"

"It was good to have you there," Dilvish replied as they headed into their lengthening shadows. "Very good."

"Now you can tell the caravan chiefs that their way is clear."

"Yes. Did you hear it, too?"

Black was silent for a time. Then, "Flowers do not scream," he said.

Below and behind them, the smoke still rose and drifted across the shortening day.

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JUST ESCAPED:

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Yggdrasil



"Beautiful! But where do you get your ideas?"

HEROIC FANTASY

play-by-mail Tunnels & Trolls

by Ken St. Andre

With an indulgent Game Master and resourceful players, a game like Heroic Fantasy could go on for years. Regretfully, I'm too busy to allow that to happen, and so this issue concludes the adventures of our friends in Gristlegrim. I would like to take this opportunity to list and thank my co-authors and players for all their creativity and effort. They are: Frank Gardner of Santa Maria, California (who played Merlin and Frankroth), Robert Moore of New Orleans (who played Robert Funck and Fineous Fingers), Bill Luther of Brooklyn (who played Justin and Alaric), Tom Westfall of Three Rivers, Michigan (who ran Arch the Fiend and Tamara the Small), Buford Chambers of Dallas (who controlled Oscar Kay and Milton Visor), and Harry and Carol Boyd (who played Gorgo and Faelin). To all of you — many thanks!

—Ken St. Andre

DELVERS vs. ORCS

(It's not easy to describe a melee with a number of things all happening at once. I could just say they fought, and give you the results, but that's no fun, so I'm going to use an experimental technique. Paragraphs listed below will be numbered. Everything in paragraph 1 will be happening simultaneously. When that's described, I go on to paragraph 2, and everything in it will happen simultaneously. Etc. until the fight is done. I must also warn you that I'm going to break this fight into a number of sub-fights. Frankly, even invisible, I don't think these characters would have much of a chance in regular melee combat.

—Ken

1. The 10 Orcs advanced in a line, swinging their blades wildly around in

front of them, and Spike attacked the leader. Faelin was poisoning his arrows, while Funck was getting a poisoned Jambiya into Fingers' fingers. Gorgo tried to bring an Orc down with his bola, but a randomly moving blade intersected it and knocked it harmlessly to the floor. The Orc leader's scimitar glanced off Spike's collar, knocking the dog back, but one of the mastiff's claws drew blood as it raked down the Orc's leg.

2. Faelin put an arrow into the Orc on the extreme left. The arrow struck the Orc in the face and killed him instantly. Another Orc, advancing, was about to step on the unconscious Merlin when Frankroth hurled himself upon him. Frankroth attacked with his poisoned gladius. (Adjusted combat score is Frank 33, Orc 17. Frank's 16 hits are doubled for poison.) The Orc was impaled, and he slumped down unconscious and dying as the Dwarf ripped his sword free. Robert Funck tries a silent *Knock-Knock* spell on the door behind him. There's a click, but when he tries to open it, it refuses to move. The door that the Orcs entered by is still open.

3. "Charge!" screams the leading Orc. They run forward hacking wildly. Another goes down under Faelin's arrows. Two of the Orcs have located Frankroth, and really come in swinging. However, most of the blows go over his head, and he parried the only one that came close with his buckler, managing to nick one of the Orcs in the process. (Adjusted score: Frank 35, Orcs 31.) Funck yells "No exit!" and draws his sling but hasn't enough room to swing it. He makes his saving roll and slips a blow that should have hit him. Spike, Justin, and Alaric pile into the Orc leader, but he is aided by the two

closest to him, leaving them all one on one. The leader knocks Spike back again without suffering any damage. Justin's foe hardly feels the quarterstaff blow delivered to his ribs, but the Orc's stroke comes down directly on the man's head, splits the steel cap and Justin's head. (Adjusted score: Justin 9, Orc 18.) Justin dies. Alaric trades blows with his opponent and neither hurts the other.

4. Faelin slays his third Orc with his third arrow, but then another comes up so fast that Faelin must hit him in the face with his bow to avoid being spitted. The bow breaks, and Faelin goes for his scimitar. In the center of the room Spike and the Orc leader are locked in fang to fang combat. The Orc makes the mistake of putting his hand in the dog's mouth, and Spike bites it off. A great surge of blood splashes all over the dog and makes him visible. An Orc trips on Merlin and slashes at him, wounding him badly in the leg. Gorgo, who was going to run forward and attack the Orc Frankroth wounded, changes his mind and stays to help Faelin. Two Orcs move to attack Alaric, but Fineous Fingers comes up to help the Dwarf. Alaric takes a slight cut from his foe (2 hits), but Fineous drives his foe back with a mighty war-hammer blow that breaks the Orc's arm (5 hits — no poison).

5. The Orc that found Merlin can't see him, but can feel him well enough to locate the head. He is about to kill the unconscious magician, but Funck sees him in the act and throws a *Take That You Fiend* spell (doing 14 hits of damage, but using too much strength as Funck also passes out). Frankroth finds that he has all he can do to cope with his two foes, and though he slightly scratches one, the poison has worn off

his sword, so that he does no harm. The leader Orc can now vaguely make out his blood-stained animal opponent and this time his blade strikes home (5 hits to Spike). Fineous follows up his attack and knocks his opponent senseless with a skull-splitting swing of his war hammer. That Orc drops out of the fight. Alaric is still getting the bad end of his fight, as he takes another slight gash (2 hits) (Orc 15, Alaric 13). Fortunately, the Orcs' weapons are not poisoned. Gorgo hamstring the Orc fighting Faelin, while the Elf's blade also strikes home, and the Orc goes down twice wounded and poisoned.

6. The enspelled Orc, though hurt, slashed at Merlin's body again. This time he took the fallen Elf's head off. Instantly the other fighters reverted to visibility.

It was a grim scene. Only 5 of the 10 Orcs were left alive, three of them were wounded and two badly. Robert Funck lay exhausted but untouched near the rear wall. Merlin and Justin were downright dead.

7. Gorgo finished off the Orc that Faelin and he had downed while the Elf ran to avenge Merlin's murder. Fineous and Alaric turned on the one that had been giving the Dwarf such a hard time. While the Dwelf kept him busy Alaric hewed his leg out from under him. The Orc went down in a pool of blood. In the middle of the floor Orc leader and dog still struggled. Spike bit the Orc's other hand off, and the suffering monster passed out. Without the advantage of invisibility, Frankroth was no longer equal to 2 Orcs in combat. (Orcs 66, Frank 32.) One hit him horizontally and 1 hit him vertically and there were just quarters of Dwarf on the dungeon floor.

It was down now to 3 living Orcs and 4 active delvers. The Orcs began to back toward the exit, but Faelin, Gorgo, Alaric, and Fineous rushed them. In the

flurry of fighting that followed, the Orcs were badly outclassed and took several wounds. (32 hits — Orcs 72, Delvers 104.) One of them dropped, badly poisoned. The remaining two stood back to back, dripping, to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

And the maddened delvers came in howling and slew them.

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MILTON AND OSCAR

"Hey, are you coming down to help us?" shouted Milton Visor.

"No!" answered Arch, looking back down at them through the trapdoor. "I think you two had better get up here as quickly as you can. Tam and I are going to investigate this room." The hobbit's head disappeared and the trap door fell shut.

"What are we going to do?" asked Oscar. "That's a tough climb."

BAMFF! BAMFF! BAMFF! BAMFF!

The question suddenly became academic, as they were no longer alone. The newcomers had appeared out of thin air, one each in the four corners. They looked like Hobbits, but were larger than any Hobbits Kay and Visor had ever seen. Standing four feet tall on large hairy feet, they were clad in black leather armor and horned steel caps. Their hair was black and wiry, and they were bearded, which was unusual indeed for Hobbits. They carried short greenish bronze scimitars, and now the two nearest began to move cautiously toward the two Delvers.

"Black Hobbits?" queried Oscar unhappily.

Milton had never seen a black hobbit, but these sure fitted the description. "Yeah," he muttered, "and we'd better not let them get too close."

"Right," said Oscar. "You rush the one on the left. I'll take care of the one on the right, and let's hope the others don't come up too fast." Oscar felt for a

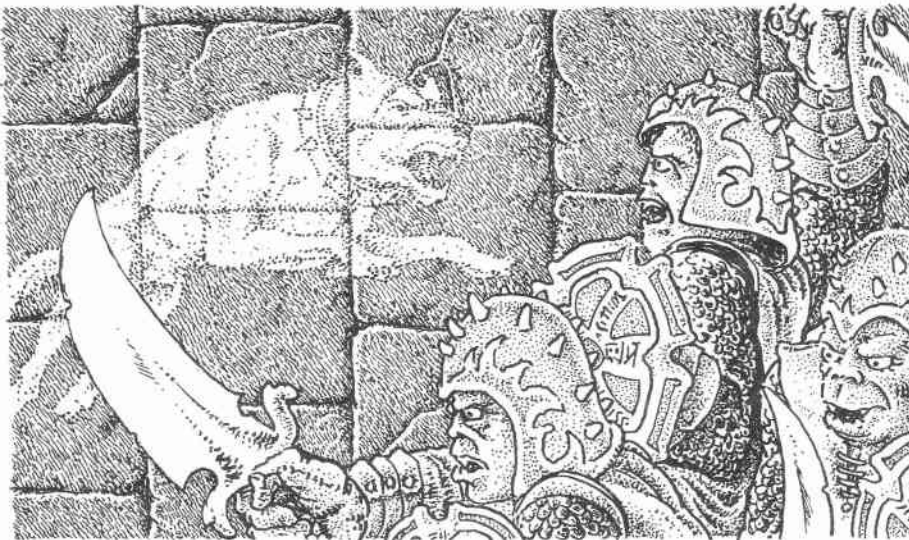
bag that was at his belt, then hefted his broadsword in the other hand. He would have liked to unlimber his arbalest, but there was no time.

With a scream Milton charged. He had his sax in one hand and his jambiya in the other. His larger adversary snarled and sliced viciously with his scimitar. Milton tried to fend the sword blade away with his jambiya, even as he stabbed viciously at the unarmored foot with his envenomed sax. He found that he didn't quite have the strength to stop the cut, deflecting it from his head along his arm, laying the forearm open to the bone. But his foe gave a gasp of pain and pitched over sideways already dead from what should have been a trivial wound. The dragon's venom on the big dagger had done its work. (Milton took 11 hits and his left arm is now useless. He gets e.p. for killing the first Black Hobbit, but another is approaching fast.)

Much to his dismay Oscar found that his foe was stronger and at least as fast with a sword. It was when he felt the Hobbit's blade strike deep into his hip that he wished he had more skill with a sword. His own blade had glanced harmlessly off the Hobbit's armor. (Take 10 hits in the first combat round.) Staggering back, he scattered the contents of the bag in his other hand along the none-too-wide area of solid floor. His foe leaped forward to finish him, and came down on the caltrops. His yell of triumph turned into one of extreme pain as they embedded themselves in his unprotected feet. Taking him off guard in that moment, Oscar made a sweeping blow with the flat of his broadsword that swept the injured Black Hobbit off his feet and into the quicksand that filled the center of the room. Cumbered with his leather armor the creature sank like a stone. Oscar instantly turned and hobbled back toward his companion.

The third Black Hobbit had come up and was cutting at Milton while trying to stay out of range of the smaller Hobbit's poisoned sax. When he saw the grimly-wounded Dwarf hobbling toward him with broadsword in hand he momentarily took his attention off Milton. That was all the opportunity Milton needed, as he hurled his sax at the largest available target — a foot. The blade flew truly, and though the minion of Gristlegrim tried to dodge it by leaping into the air, it still managed to cut his ankle in passing — a trivial wound. The Black Hobbit landed once more, ready to go in for the kill, and then his eyes glazed over and he toppled into the quicksand. The Dragon's venom was still potent. But as he fell he took the poisoned weapon with him.

"Quick, Oscar, cock the arbalest!" ordered Milton. "It's our only chance."



The invisible Spike attacks the Orcs!

Oscar's wounded leg wouldn't support him any longer. He fell beside Milton, who helped him unsling the arbalest from his back.

The last of the Black Hobbits was using his blade to sweep the caltrops off the narrow path along the wall. It figured that one good charge should be enough to overrun the two small delvers who had proven surprisingly tough. As the last caltrop fell into the quicksand he bellowed his war-cry, "GRISTLE-GRIMMMMM!" and came leaping forward. On his last leap, just as his blade was coming down for the kill on Milton, Oscar raised his loaded arbalest at point blank range and pulled the trigger.

The heavy iron bolt tore through the leather armor and carried the Hobbit clear back to the opposite wall, which he hit with a bloody splash, rebounded and fell into the center of the floor which was quicksand. The corpse vanished in seconds.

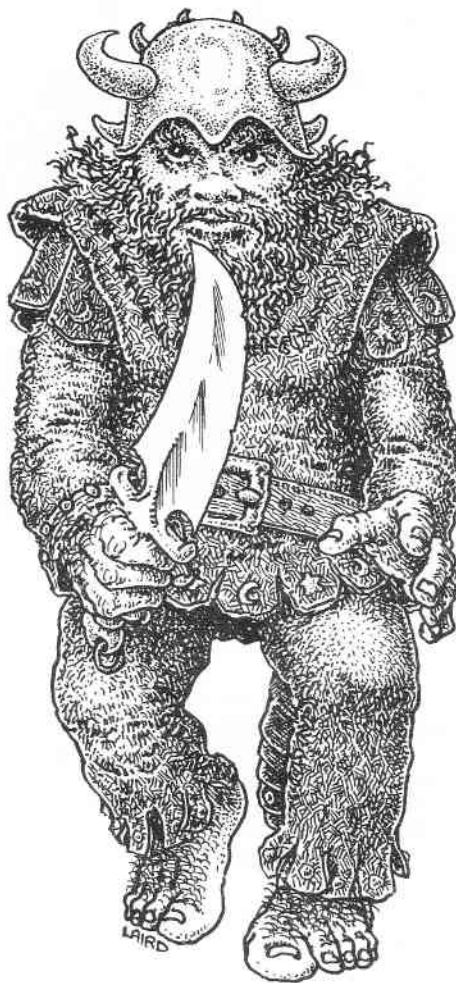
Oscar and Milton lay together near one wall bleeding and breathing heavily. (Give them 108 e.p. each for disposing of 3rd level Black Hobbits.) "We'd better get a tourniquet on that arm," said Oscar, well-aware that Milton's wound was worse than his own. He used a dagger to rip a piece of cloth out of his cloak and tie it tightly on Milton's arm.

At that moment there was a greenish glow from the trapdoor above and a far-off sound of singing. "Something good has happened up there!" muttered Oscar to himself, "and despite our wounds we've got to get up there."

Milton had lost a lot of blood. Fortunately, the big artery in his wrist had not been severed, but the wound was still very serious. Now the true pain hit him, and he started to whimper, but the pain got worse fast, and with a last groan, the little Hobbit passed out.

Oscar didn't feel much better. His wounded hip felt broken, though it wasn't. His leggings were all sticky with blood, but it seemed to be clotting now. He felt that his only hope was to get up to the floor above. He picked up Milton and tied him over his shoulders around his neck. He lightened the load as much as possible by leaving weapons, boots, anything unnecessary behind. Then he knocked it all into quicksand so no one could use it against him.

Climbing those niches in the wall with one useless leg and an unconscious Hobbit to carry was the toughest thing Oscar had ever done. Waves of nausea rolled over him as he dug in and inched his way up, but he dug in with a grip that could crush rock and held on. Finally, an endless time later, he felt his head bump against the trapdoor, and that was what he used to push it open. Throwing his elbows over the edge he



A Black Hobbit!

pulled the two of them through, and lay gasping on the floor of the fourth level.

Then he heard Tamara weeping, and looking toward the center of the room, saw her kneeling over the body of Arch with a chest of gold open beside her and another chest still closed.

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ARCH AND TAMARA

"Arch!" Tamara shouted, "it sounds like someone is getting killed down there. Do you think we should go down and help?"

"No. By the time we got there it'd be over one way or the other. It would do no good to get killed down there for nothing. Let's check out this room and the circles, Tamara."

"Hey, are you coming down to help us?" shouted Milton Visor.

"No!" answered Arch, looking back through the trapdoor. "I think you two had better get up here as quickly as you can. Tam and I are going to investigate this room."

"It's full of magic, Arch," said Tam. "I wish I knew second level spells, but it feels beneficial."

"Well, let me check it." He began to move around the circles cautiously,

searching for pitfalls, traps, etc., but he found nothing dangerous. "I'm going to step toward the chest now."

As Arch stepped inside the first circle he lit up with a red flash of light. Tamara gasped, but the Hobbit seemed unhurt. "Hey, I feel tremendous!" he shouted. (Double your strength to 12.) "Step in, Tam, this can't hurt you."

She did so. There was the same flash of light, and she felt better. (Double her strength to 20.)

"Let's try the next one," said Arch. He stepped into the second circle. There was a brilliant flash of blue light, but when it subsided, there stood Arch, grinning hugely. "I do believe I'm brilliant," said Arch. (Double your IQ to 22.) Try it, Tam."

Again, the room flashed blue. Tam looked dazed. "It's all so clear," she whispered. "I could learn or figure out anything. We've got to get out of here."

"Let's try the third one, Tam," cried the Hobbit. "The third time is the charm!" Hand in hand they stepped into the third circle. The room filled with green radiance and a singing as of heavenly voices.

When the magic had subsided Arch said, "I wonder what that did. I feel better, but I'm not sure how."

"It did two things," said the Elf Maiden sadly. "It made you luckier than you used to be, but it also completed the charm. We must now open the treasure chests in order to leave this room. (Double the luck of Arch to 12 and of Tamara to 40.) And I now know that the chests are a trap."

"Then we'll just walk away," said Arch. He turned away from the chests and stepped toward the second circle, and found that he couldn't cross the line. He didn't feel anything but found himself moving sideways, unable to cross the line.

The hobbit's good humor evaporated. "Well, then," he snarled. "If we must open these chests, we will. They're only here to be plundered. Let me go first, Tam."

She pointed at the first chest. "There is less danger for you here, Arch."

He gritted his teeth, took out his jambiya, set it under the edge and flipped the lid open. "That was easy," he said, and then deep sinister laughter echoed through the room, as the Hobbit's hair turned white, and his knees buckled beneath him. (Needed a 4th level saving roll of 23 to survive — rolled only a 7.) "Tam, what's happening?" His voice grew weak even as he tried to talk. She knelt beside him. Tears were streaming from her eyes as she held his head off the hard stone floor, but he couldn't see that as his vision was rapidly darkening.

Arch had only a few seconds to realize that he was dying. He tried to

gasp out, "I love you, Tam," but his voice was already too weak. . . .

A beautiful young Elf Maiden knelt in the center of the room, beside two chests, one open and obviously full of gold coins. The other was still closed. She cradled an aged Hobbit's head in her arms and tears flowed uncontrollably.

Oscar pulled himself and his burden through the trapdoor and lay gasping from the strain, his heavy breathing mingling with the weeping of the Elf maid in the center of the room strangely. Milton moaned but didn't regain consciousness. For a moment the room swam in a red mist, and he nearly passed out, but then he began to catch his breath and feel better.

A groan roused the Elf maiden from her tears. Looking up she spotted Oscar Kay and Milton Visor. They had no weapons and were covered with clotted blood, looking like death itself. For a moment she felt an irrational rage at them, holding them responsible for the death of Arch, but it quickly passed. Magically augmented, she was now far too intelligent to be ruled by emotional fantasies. And besides, they had obviously paid for their tardiness.

"By the great pick!" whispered Oscar, a little healthy greed coming back into his voice, "look at all that gold! I'll help you with it, Tamara!"

"Stay where you are!" she snapped, "unless you want to die. These circles are a trap. They've already killed Arch, and I'm still caught in it."

"Whatever you say," agreed Oscar hurriedly.

"I'm going to open this other chest now," she told the Dwarf. "If I die, too, you're on your own."

"Then don't die!" pleaded the Dwarf. "We need some help."

Tamara took the end of her staff and flipped the second chest open. There was a clap of thunder followed by a dismal groan. Tamara leaped back and a second later a bolt of green fire leaped from floor to ceiling where she had been standing. (5th level saving roll. She needed a 5 and rolled a 7 which is worth 35 e.p. and she lives.) As the lighting came back to normal, Tamara and Oscar could see that the chest was full of small emeralds, rubies, and diamonds.

"By Gris, there's a king's ransom there," said Oscar. "Pick some up for us, will you, Tamara?"

Tamara didn't care about the money. Her world felt empty without Arch. She pulled out a treasure sack and thrust four handfuls of gems into it. (65 gems — value enormous.) Then she turned and tested the barrier holding her inside the circle. It was gone. As her hand crossed the boundary, the chests snapped shut.

"But what about the gold?" cried Oscar in Dwarvish anguish.

"That gold aged Arch 300 years in



The Demise of Arch the Fiend

one minute," she snapped. "If you want it so badly, come and get it for yourself!"

"No thanks," said Oscar. "You will share the jewels, won't you?"

She ignored him. Instead she gathered the pitiful remains of the former fiend in her arms and strode out of the circle.

Putting her burden down she went to tend to Milton. She adjusted his bandages, which was about all she could do.

Some time had passed by now, and Milton finally recovered from his swoon. "Where am I? What happened?" he asked. Oscar filled him in.

Milton looked down at the ancient corpse of Arch the Fiend and delivered his own simple eulogy, an ancient Hobbit formula older than history. "Arch, may your soul travel peacefully to the great shire beyond."

Tam echoed that with "May his soul rest beyond the Boiling Sea!" Then she turned her attention to the door. There was something about it that seemed odd to her, and it didn't take her long to find the invisible writing.

"Watch that first step — it's a killer! What does that mean?" she asked.

"Open it and find out," said Oscar.

She slid the door open, and reeled back with a little cry of fright. The whole world seemed to be spread before them as they looked out at the ground over one thousand feet below. There were three little pops of displaced air, as three flattened canvas packages appeared on the floor near them. Each of them had straps to fit over a person's shoulders, and a sign on the front saying "Wear Me and Pull The String".

"We'll have to leave Arch behind," said Milton, "I wonder what these things are."

"I have an idea," said Tamara, starting to put one on. "You two would be wise to do this, too."

BAMPH!

RRRROOOAAAARRRR!

Suddenly in the room with them, only about 20 feet away, was an enormous cave lion. Seven feet high at the shoulder, with fangs like short-swords, it could have eaten them all at a single bite. It stood, lashing its tail for a minute, and then moving down into a crouch with its shaggy stomach rubbing the floor it began to move slowly toward them, going through the magic zones without the slightest problem.

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(And now for something strange from the hand of Tom Westfall. This kind of thing is known as press in diplomacy circles, and I usually encourage it. —Ken)

"Master, Master, the Power Board! Master, it horrible, oh woe, we are doomed!"

Sly-Gon slowly looked over his worktable at Mor-Ron. "What are you yelling about this time, slim rat of little worth? Is there a reason for this uncalled for intrusion, or do I turn you into a slim rat for good this time?"

Mor-Ron stopped dead in his words as Sly-Gon roared out this speech. "But, Master, the light on the board, it . . ."

"If you don't get on with this, you will find yourself not a slim rat, but a morgot! What's so horrible about one light on the Power Board?"

"Oh master, forgive this lowly one forgiveness and . . ." Stopping midway through his speech Mor-Ron saw the way Sly-Gon was moving his hands. "No, Master, please not a morgot, please, Master."

"Get on with it then!"

"Yes, Master. Light no. #G-7343 flared up like it had been doubled up in power, then it just faded into nothingness. But how is that possible, Master?

Also, light no.#A-1377 has flared up like #G-7343, but has not yet faded out like it did. Master, what should we do?"

"What are the names of the lights, and where are they at?" snapped Sly-Gon.

"#G-7343 belongs to one Arch the Fiend, the diabolically villainous war criminal. You know, that megalomaniac, paranoid psychopath who ordered the rape and sack of the Goblin city of Baraghash. (It is said that not one Goblin female was left untouched by him.) It was he who also saw to the slow impalement of the city's ruler, Serontin the Effete, and it was also this same Arch who put the city to the torch. Need I say more, Master, only that he was also tried for war crimes by both sides after the war, but he fled to us. Master, why did we take such a fiend in, pray tell?"

"Speak on, O Small One of Little Understanding!"

"Yes, Master. Light #A-1377 belongs to one Tamara the Small, as you know, Master, she was . . ."

"Stop! Say no more!" Waving his hand, Sly-Gon softly said "Begone" and so Mor-Ron was gone in a puff of smoke. "You can't get any good help nowadays."

Clapping his hands once, there appeared out of thin air one of the Order's dreaded Night Warriors. "I have a job for your troops, Psycho-Path. You are to take 200 nightriders, and go to Gristlegrim. You will be teleported to within an easy ride of it. You will bring back Tamara the Small if she should come out alive. Also you will try to get the body of Arch the Fiend if Gristlegrim will sell it. Now ride!" Clapping his hands again, Psycho was gone.

"Now, it is up to Tamara to get out alive."

—Tom Westfall

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"How's the dog doing?" asked Fineous.

"A couple of flesh wounds," answered Alaric, "but he'll be all right. By Thrain, I'm glad I brought him! How's your pal, Funck?"

"Exhausted," answered the Dwelf, "but he'll be okay if he can get a little rest."

At that moment Funck's eyes flickered open. He looked at the hacked and bloody Orc bodies all over the room, and his face began to take on a satisfied smile. "We won, didn't we? For a moment there I didn't think we were going to."

"It was a costly victory, Funck," put in Alaric. "My partner Justin is dead, as are Merlin and Frankroth, and I've been wounded, even if the rest of you did get off unscathed."

"What's the treasure status?" asked Fineous.

Faelin had been checking on the treasure chest while Gorgo went over the corpses of the Urukki.

"There's a lot of silver, but not enough to make up for three deaths," reported the Elf. "I count 480 coins."

"That's only 48 gold," snarled Funck. "Damn Gristlegrim! What a cheapskate! Any usable weapons?"

"Scimitars and shields — heavy ones," answered Gorgo. "No treasure on any of these scum."

"Hey, Fineous, you're the strongest one in this group, why don't you carry the loot?" suggested Faelin.

"I'll take half of it," agreed Fineous. "I don't want my mobility restricted. Let Alaric carry the rest of it."

"I wonder how the rest of the group is doing?" mused Funck. "They must have known we were in trouble. They should have come to help us."

"They couldn't get in, even if they wanted to," said Faelin. "The Orc door was open, and only one door can be open in a room at a time."

Gorgo had moved over to the open doorway. "This is weird," he exclaimed. "Come take a look at this, you guys."

With the treasure gathered, they moved over to see what Gorgo had found. Fineous also picked up an Orcish scimitar of hardened bronze (3 dice + 4 adds in combat. He is the only person left in the party strong enough to use one. Requires a strength of 15. The Orcish shields were too battered to be worth salvaging.)

They found a small room of barren stone only ten feet square. There was a rough-hewn block of lava for a table and a couple of crude wooden benches. Some ivory cubes lay on the table and there were ten neat stacks of gold pieces (total 60 g.p.). There were some well-gnawed bones on the floor, and in the back wall were two trapdoors with Urukki runes scratched into their surfaces.

Fineous and Alaric divided up the gold. "That's a little better," said the Dwelf rogue, "but I still don't feel like we're getting rich fast enough."

"What do the runes say, Gorgo?" asked the Elf.

"These are very interesting," answered the Goblin. "The one on the right says MONSTER CONTROL . . ."

"Gleep!" said Fineous. "We don't want to mess with that one."

"And the one on the left says EXIT! DANGER!"

"We'd better think about this," declared Funck. "Meanwhile, let's make sure we have everything useful we can get. Has anyone stripped our dead yet?"

"That's grim," said Alaric. "Justin was my partner. I ought to get what he was carrying."

They went back and looted the dead and came up with the following

equipment: 2 staff ordinaires, 1 jar of Dwarvish fire, 3 flash bombs, 3 smoke bombs, 1 gladius, 1 self bow and 22 usable arrows, 2 applications of cobra milk, 10 feet of hemp rope, 1 gladius, 2 bucklers (1 very badly hacked), 1 dirk, some drugs of unknown purpose from the body of Merlin, and 2 gold pieces. (Divide it up however you like, gang.)

"Let's check the quicksand room while we're in here," suggested Gorgo.

Closing the door to the Orc closet they were able to reopen the door to the quicksand room.

"Urrp! Look at all the blood!" gurgled Robert Funck. "I think they died in here."

There were splashes of gore all over the walls and ceiling, and one steady trail of it that went right up the wall in the corner to the trapdoor far overhead.

"Somebody got out alive," said Gorgo. "Perhaps we should follow them."

"I don't think I'm strong enough to climb that wall yet," answered Funck. "I think we ought to go back and try that exit we found before something else comes up from Monster Control."

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The enormous cat inched closer to the cowering delvers. Tamara, who was already half into the magical harness, pulled the pack-like object completely on and leaped.

"Nooooo!" howled Milton. "I can't do it! I'm afraid of heights!"

"Well, I'm not!" snarled Oscar. "I'm more afraid of big hungry cats!" Grabbing the two magic parcels in one hand, and the recalcitrant Hobbit in the other, he leaped.

The room behind them echoed with the roars of the frustrated cave lion.

Milton was going to scream, but it got stuck in his throat and nothing came out. He just clutched his Dwarvish buddy tighter with his little Hobbit fingers.

Below them the body of the elven maid was tumbling like a leaf. Suddenly a white flower sprouted from her body, a long ribbon of cloth unwound in the wind and flapped open until it looked like a giant puffball. Her headlong plunge toward doom slowed abruptly, and then she was just floating gently down toward the welcoming earth.

Milton and Oscar continued to fall. The ground a thousand feet below them was coming up to meet them, but it was as if it was a dream. In reality they had only been falling for a couple of seconds and still had over 900 feet to go.

"Oscar," whimpered Milton. "What are we going to do?"

But Oscar was grinning from ear to ear. He thrust one of the two packs into the Hobbit's hands. "Relax and fly!" he ordered his little friend. "It may be the only chance you ever get." He was

quickly but deliberately thrusting his arms through the straps of the pack. The panicky Hobbit, not falling freely and no longer able to hold onto the Dwarf, yet retained enough presence of mind to imitate him (made his second level saving roll on luck).

They hurtled past the slow-moving, gently swaying elf girl. "Pull the cord!" she screamed at them.

Oscar pulled the cord. The pack blossomed; there was an abrupt jerk, and then he found his progress mostly halted, and he was coming down no faster than a brisk walk. A second later and 100 feet further down, Milton's parachute also opened.

The landing was a jolt, but they had all taken far worse. A strange group of elves were waiting for Tamara on the ground. She joined them at once, and was about to ride away without a word, when a thought occurred to her. She stopped and returned to the disconsolate pair of little guys.

"We may never meet again," she said gravely. "Here is something to remember me and Arch by." She opened one of her treasure pouches and handed each of them a large sparkling diamond. "Farewell!" She caused her steed to rear and wheel, and then spurred it into a gallop. In a few minutes she and the entire party had vanished.

Oscar and Milton waited for 2 more days, but no one else came out of Gristlegrim. Along with their guide, they took all the riding animals and headed back for Khosht.

THE END

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"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" cried the Dwarf. "Has it occurred to any of you that we're leaving the bodies of our friends unburied in the heart of monster country? They could get eaten!"

"Very likely," squeaked Gorgo. "Why waste meat?"

"But what can we do?" asked Alaric.

"There's a whole room full of quicksand here," observed Robert. "That's at least a form of burial." All nodded.

And so Merlin the Fair, Frankroth the Hulk, and Justin found their last resting place at the bottom of a quicksand trap on the third level of Gristlegrim.

"Now that's finished, I'm for joining our companions on the fourth level," declared Alaric.

"Hmm," said Fineous. "I had another plan, but we'll wait here and see how yours works. How do you plan to get up there? That climb in the corner looks treacherous."

"An arrow and some rope," said Alaric.

"Sorry," Faelin interrupted. "You don't have that much rope. We only have 10 feet."

"Then I'll climb!" vowed Alaric. "If a wounded Dwarf can do it, and maybe even a wounded Hobbit, then I know I can make it."

Faelin, Gorgo, Fineous, and Robert Funck watched in silence as Alaric pulled himself up by fingertips and toes toward the trapdoor 50 feet above them. Just as he reached it a tremendous roaring reverberated through the ceiling and the trapdoor.

"Our friends are in there!" cried Alaric. "I've got to see what's going on." He slammed the trapdoor open.

"Be care—

A great tawny paw arced down through the opening and claws like curved daggers sliced through the man's face and throat. (Missed his third level saving roll.) The savage growling of a mighty cave lion momentarily deafened the four below.

Billowing blood, throat slit from ear to ear, the corpse of Alaric fell in a long arc to splash out of sight. A few drops of blood fell like a dark omen on the survivors. Spike was barking crazily and leaping frantically at the wall, only to fall back every time. The demoniac visage of a huge cave lion appeared in the opening and thundered roars at them. Had it been able to squeeze through the small opening it would have leaped among them without a second's hesitation.

The dog had gone wild. All it could think of was of coming to grips with its feline foe. The delvers began to edge out of the room. Gorgo tried to pull Spike along with them and got badly bitten for his effort (8 hits). Reluctantly they left the animal behind them.

As Funck put it, "Let's get out of here before that demon up there finds a way to get down to us."

As Gorgo put it, "Stupid dog!"

They went back into the room where they had fought the Orcs and closed the door. Neither Spike's barking nor the lion's roars could any longer be heard. The walls of Gristlegrim were remarkably soundproof.

They continued on into the room with the two trapdoors. "Well, what now?" asked the Elf. "Shall we try the dangerous exit or Monster Control?"

"I didn't enter this dungeon to turn tail at the first sign of danger," vaunted Fineous. "I mean to see what lies beyond Monster Control! What say you others?"

"We'll cover you," they said. They prepared smoke bombs and spells.

"FOOLS! O SPLENDID FOOLS!" came a great deep voice that they had last heard in the elevator. "YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE!"

The door to Monster Control slammed open and out came nothing that they could fight. It was a swarm, a cloud, a miasma of glittering gem-like insects. Robert Funck managed to

explode a smoke bomb, but it did no good, as the rue-bees stung them scores and hundreds of times apiece. As they sank into crimson oblivion they felt the pain of a thousand red-hot needles piercing their flesh.

○○○

"It was a fine catch of slaves," said the largest troll.

"Yes," replied the Balrog, duty officer of Monster Control that day, "the finest to fall into our hands in many months. Two rogues and two wizards, one of them a Goblin."

"Good monster stock, the Goblins," said the Troll. "Not much power but a lot of cunning. Do you think they have any chance of escaping?"

"Not a prayer!" answered the Balrog. "It has never been done. By this time they won't even remember who they are. Stripped of all weapons, treasure, and clothing, as well as their memories, and kept in magic-proof cages — HA! If they're lucky they may be purchased by other delvers in a year or two. If not, they'll be with us for a long long time."

Monster Control was filled with the sound of fiendish laughter.

THE END

● ● ●

TREACHEROUS TRAJAN'S TRAP

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Currently, there are 99 characters running around in TTT. Following is a list of those characters which at the moment have the most experience points. (If any get 1000 e.p., they become 2nd level characters and have a much better chance of continued survival.) None are yet close to the door leading to the lower levels . . .

BULLARD (Bruce Duffy) 90
DORCO (Greg Lowry) 60
ANGUS HARDHEAD (Robert Murphy) 53
KIRA (Rod Zumstein) 51
SINBAD I (George Kinney) 47
ELDO (Stanley Dunn) 43
PUGGINS THE POINT (M. Matsuoka) 43
IRON HAND (Maurice McLey) 41
ARVID THE PALE (M. Desmond) 41
EGGNOTIC YAMAMOTO II (Mike Lester) 40
QUTAIL (Stanley Dunn) 37
BRISSA (Stan Berdinka) 37
BANZAI BILL (Dave Butler) 37
ARAGORN (Robert Bumala) 35
RAPSKULLEON (Greg Courter) 36
SCORCH THE SECOND (M. Matsuoka) 35

**For a more complete description of TTT, and information on how to get started in a game, see the ad on the inside back cover.*

● ● ●

Letters

Ken,

SA2 looks great! FBI's entry into the field of quality publishing is by far the most worthwhile of the lot. You're the best. You and Liz can do anything... If only I could get my ass in gear and do some drawing worthy of reproduction in those pages.

—Robert P. Barger
Evansville, TN

(Well, somebody likes us. Bob's letter was typical of a great many we've been receiving since SA2 came out, but I printed his because he's a talented artist whose illustrations have appeared in nearly every other major gaming magazine so far. It's only a matter of time, Bob — and if you'll take a look at the first page of the Dragon Overview by Bear Peters... —Ken)

Mr. St. Andre,

... Latching onto the Poul Anderson article was a real coup, and you are to be congratulated for it. Art, as usual, was of extremely high quality. The only criticism I have at present is that the *Seven Ayes* solitaire was a bit less varied in scope than the first mini-dungeon adventure in SA1. Still very nice, though.

I have one more book you should add to your basic bibliography for dungeon designers — Robert A. Heinlein's *Glory Road*, for inventiveness, internal consistency, colorful description, and for Heinlein's true feel for fantasy heroes and heroines which he, unfortunately, has not indulged much since this book. If you haven't read this one, pick it up, and you'll see what I mean.

... Meanwhile, best of luck with SA3 (3 months is a long time to wait for #3)...

—Guy W. McLimore, Jr.
ABC Hobbycraft
Evansville, IN

(Oh ye of little faith, of course I've read Heinlein's *Glory Road*! It's one of my favorite books, but I had to draw a line somewhere, and Heinlein doesn't have much of a body of heroic fantasy the way the other authors mentioned did. Rest assured that Liz Danforth and I are doing everything we can to make each issue of SA better than the one before it. Look for a complete *GameMaster's Dungeon* in this issue, just as a change of pace from solitaire mini-adventures.)

Dear Ken,

... I hope the mini-solo dungeons will be a permanent part of SA as I thoroughly enjoyed going through *Seven Ayes*. Since I received SA yester-

day, I have run five characters through it. Four died, and the first one will escape Frogbeard the Pirate's ship in forty-seven years. I never did have much luck with saving rolls...

—Douglas "Troll" Adair
Abilene, TX

(47 years!!! Hoo hah! Try walking out, Doug. And what do you think of Liz's *GameMaster's* dungeon in this issue?)

(Sorry! Space doesn't permit us to run any more letters this time. Perhaps SA4 will have the room for a good long letters-page from a lot of readers. We do love to hear from you. Among others, we also heard from: Rob Carver, Mark Desmond, and Dean Simmons.) ●●●

ERRATUM — SA2

"The Basics of T&T Combat"

Liz Danforth & Ugly John Carver

Page 27, 1st paragraph, Column 1 should read:

"A monster will regain his lost MR points 5 per regular (not combat) turn if he remains undisturbed."

Not 1 point per turn as stated in the article. Our apologies.

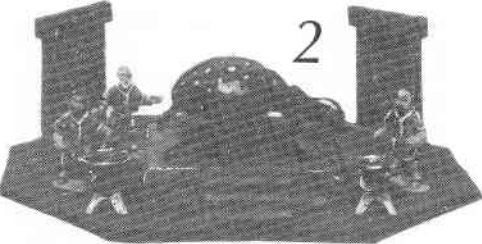
—Liz & Ugly John



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- TT6. CHAINED DEMON from *Dungeon of the Bear*, Level 2 (not pictured) \$1.75
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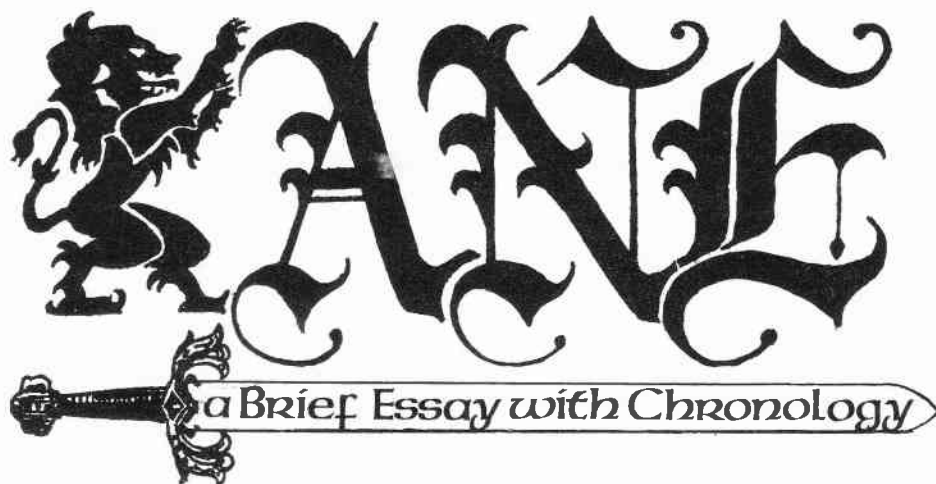
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KANE

a Brief Essay with Chronology

by Steve Trout

Perhaps the most fascinating single character in all of heroic fantasy is Karl Edward Wagner's Kane. Cursed with immortality, Kane has wandered the earth for centuries. Death and destruction follow in his wake. No mindless barbarian, Kane is an accomplished scholar and sorcerer, as well as a deadly foe. Though naturally left-handed, he is a lethal swordsman with either hand — in fact, he often fights with a weapon in both hands.

Chronologically, Kane first appears in the story "Undertow". Here, we see him as the master sorcerer of Carsulyal, a city of sorcerers, as well as the first city built by mankind. In "Undertow" Kane plays a villain's role, as the sorcerer who has held the city in thrall for generations, and who has kept prisoner the woman he loves, refusing to release her even to death.

In "Two Suns Setting" we find Kane shortly after he has been driven from Carsulyal by a coalition of lesser magicians. Apparently he could have defended himself successfully and reasserted his dominance — at least *he* feels so — but he didn't see the point of doing so. Having lived there for over a century (probably closer to two) Kane was simply bored with the place; he considered it to have grown stagnant. In fact, throughout the saga, boredom is referred to as Kane's constant nemesis. In this story Kane joins in the quest of one of the last surviving Giants for the tomb of their last great king, merely because the venture intrigues him.

In *Bloodstone* Kane has his first really meteoric rise and fall from power, aided by a giant sentient crystal, a

holdover from an alien pre-human civilization. Kane rebels when he realizes the crystal is using him as its tool, and as Kane and Bloodstone come under attack from both armies and sorcery, Kane breaks the alliance. He flees the massive destruction that ensues, using the ancient magic/technology of the crystal. This pattern — Kane forming some sort of alliance, rising to power and then having the alliance collapse while under outside attack as well — recurs in *Darkness Weaves* and *Dark Crusade* as well.

Next, "Dark Muse" shows us some of the scholarly side of Kane's nature. He serves as advisor and critic to a gifted poet of the macabre, Opyros — a poet of dark visions reminiscent of Justin Geoffrey or Abdul Alhazared.

"Sing a Last Song of Valdase" has Kane merely in a bit part; he serves as the necessary final link in a wizard's revenge. Current events are illuminating, however, since the characters in this story make reference to the Duallist heresy for the first time, this being a religious question which is later credited with destroying the vast Serranthonian Empire. This is also the same empire whose foundations Kane helped to lay in "The Dark Muse", when he was not coaching Opyros at poetry. In the rise and fall of this empire, though never documented by a novel, the familiar pattern emerges, though rather mistily. However, we know from the history given in "Last Song" that Kane helped Halbros-Serranthos to create an empire, ruled for a time in the Halbrosn mountains as a feudal lord, and was finally forced to flee as his former ally turned on him.

Next comes a slightly different war story — "Lynortis Reprise". The siege of Lynortis lasted for two long years, until even Kane grew weary of the senseless slaughter and betrayed the city to its foes. Thirty years later, Kane returns — and makes an end.

Next, in *Dark Crusade*, the familiar story unrolls once more. Kane and Orted ak-Ceddi, a man possessed by a malevolent god, join forces to build an empire. As their foes unleash a desperate counterstroke, Orted insanely turns on Kane in vengeance for an earlier doublecross. His men butchered, trapped between two foes, Kane's only escape avenue is through a dimensional warp haunted by a deadly demon — or perhaps a demonic ghost. By all rights Kane should have died there. While he is hard to kill and heals rapidly, Kane can be killed by weapons or any other natural means — it is only the passage of time that has no effect on him.

Here, not really for the first time either, it is suggested that death is exactly what Kane is after. After living for so many centuries, he would like to die. Perhaps he is not even aware of his death-wish, but even if he is, his nature is such that he will never submit peacefully, or simply kill himself. Instead, Kane manipulates his surroundings, playing complex and dangerous power-games, ostensibly to reach wealth or power — or simply to dispel his boredom, a more powerful motive still. Always in these stories, however, there is one slip-up, one fatal flaw in Kane's plans, that causes his power-structure to collapse around him, and causes him to end up in a death-trap.

In *Bloodstone*, for example, Kane's mistake there is in not realizing the extent of the crystal's power and hate, nor its eventual plans for mankind, until virtually the last minute, when Teres risks her life to bring him an ancient book that opens his eyes.

The reasons and circumstances of Halbros-Serranthos' attack on Kane are not fully explained, but it seems likely that, too, was caused by Kane's inexplicable misreading of the situation. How else can you explain Kane being successfully taken by surprise by a man hundreds of years his junior?

Orted ak-Ceddi's devastating betrayal also comes because of Kane's mistake — Kane thinks him a mere fanatic, or a clever man capitalizing on the fanaticism of others. Instead, Orted is no longer a man, but a demented god inhabiting a man's shell, and not at all sane by any human standards. Again, this mistake of Kane's comes very close to costing him his life.

"Play the game to the end, Kane.
"Maybe this time."

(from *Dark Crusade*)

Maybe this time *what?* Maybe Kane will finally be killed, obviously. But as it turns out, he escapes through the deadly Lair of Yslsl, emerging at the other end of the world. After recovering from his wounds, he spends four years tracking down Orted, and kills him with an arcane poison. He is forced to flee from Orted's followers into the northern wastes, at which point we find him in "Reflections for the Winter of My Soul." Evingolis, the albino minstrel who is much more deadly than he seems, gives us enough background about Kane to make it obvious he shares much with the biblical Cain. When Kane, strangling his enemy to death, mutters, "Thus died Abel," the truth is even more apparent.

In "Cold Light", Kane is hunted by a fanatical do-gooder and his band of experienced killers through the all-but-deserted streets of Sebbei, in plague-ravaged Demornte. The story opens with Kane depressed and seeking peace, until sudden attack arouses him to fight — an interesting play on who is "good" and who is "evil".

But it is in "Mirage" that Kane comes closest to death. He finds himself seduced by a vampiress, who drains his life force to its lowest possible ebb, intending for him to join her as a vampire. Kane's inhuman vitality draws him back to life, however. Having had a taste of death, Kane is distinctly less interested in that particular solution afterwards.

Next, he wanders into the Southern Combine and becomes a bandit chieftain for at least ten years. "Raven's Eyrie" finds him foiling the plans of bounty-hunters and the Devil himself to save his own life and that of his bastard daughter.

In *Darkness Weaves*, Kane again plays a power game again, but this time he seems sincere — "I almost had this place in my grasp once before, and I don't mean to let it slip away again." His failure this time is not due so much to an error on his part as to an unexpected and clever move on the part of his enemy, the sorceress Efre. She tricks Kane's then-ally Lages into turning on him, by appearing to him wearing another woman's body. Even so, militarily Kane does fairly well this time. Though he is unable to achieve his objective, he has no difficulty leaving the island with a shipload of men after escaping Efre's sorcery.

So what next? There are two more Kane books coming out this year, hopefully: *In the Wake of the Night*, a very long novel, and another collection of short stories. Hopefully they will move the story further onward, or at least fill in some gaps in the present chronology.

○○○

○○○ CHRONOLOGY ○○○

::: The pre-human civilizations (the Scylredi, Tuhchiso, Brveen, and others) rise and flourish for many centuries . . .

::: The coming and subsequent defeat of Bloodstone and its Krelran slaves . . .

(centuries pass)

::: The prehuman civilizations decline and all but die out.

(eons pass)

::: The creation of man.

(between thirty and forty years pass)

::: Kane, grown to manhood, slays his brother and is cursed with immortality.

(about two centuries pass)

::: The discoveries of Kethrid, rise of Carsultyal and human civilization.

(about one hundred fifty years pass)

::: Events of **Undertow** occur.

(about fifty years pass)

::: Events of **Two Suns Setting**. Carsultyal declines to a shadow of its former glory over the next two centuries . . .

(about two centuries after **Two Suns** . . .)

::: Events of **BLOODSTONE** occur.

(one or two centuries pass)

::: Events of **Dark Muse** occur, followed by the rise and spread of the Halbros-Serranthonian Empire.

(about fifty years or so)

::: Halbros-Serranthos turns on Kane, driving him from his fortress in the Halbros mountains.

("centuries" pass)

::: Empire begins to collapse, split by the Duallist heresy. The events of **Sing a Last Song of Valdase** occur.

::: Eventually, the empire crumbles and falls . . .

("centuries", probably only two or three)

::: Lynortis is besieged by Masale, and finally falls.

(thirty years later)

::: Events of **Lynortis Reprise** occur.

(seventy or eighty years pass)

::: Events of **DARK CRUSADE** occur.

(four years later)

::: Kane, recovered, tracks down Orted ak-Ceddi and kills him.

::: Events of **Reflections for the Winter of My Soul** . . .

(unknown)

::: Kane terrorizes the islands of the Thovnosian Empire as the leader of a pirate fleet.

(ten years later)

::: Events of **Cold Light** . . .

(unknown, perhaps a century)

::: Civil war in Crosanthe, events of **Mirage** . . .

(maybe sixty years later)

::: Events of **Raven's Eyrie** occur.

(say, thirty years; at any rate,

190 years after the events of **Cold Light**)

::: Events of **DARKNESS WEAVES** take place.

○○○

Dear Ken,

The article looks good to me — quite flattering, in fact. My only point would be that the chronology is off in several places. This seems to bug quite a few fans, and I suppose I really ought to list the Kane stories in chronological order sometime. There are two problems here: First and foremost, the Kane episodes published to date represent only a very tiny fragment of the saga. Kane is immortal; the stories cover many different periods in time and take place all across the world. The saga begins with the creation of

man and ends . . . well, "Midnight Sun" takes place in the present day. Thus the problem is far more complex than, say, putting the Conan stories in order. I have been writing about Kane for twenty years now, and while I may have his geography and chronology in mind, there really hasn't been enough published to give a clear picture to most readers. At times an episode may follow closely on the heels of the one before, as with "Reflections for the Winter of My Soul" taking place a few years after **DARK CRUSADE** (although the former was published 3 years and written 8 years before the latter), but more often a gap of centuries falls between episodes. The second point — the stories are intended to be entirely free-standing and each to be read independently of the others. The casual reader should be able to pick up any Kane story for the first time and to read it without having had to "know what has gone before". Howard used this approach with his own work.

This is not to say that a chronological order does not exist — rather, that it's a far more complex pattern than most fans realize. The novels can be placed in order easily enough, again keeping in mind the gulfs of time and distance. Also, within the story collections (**DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW**, **NIGHT WINDS**, and the projected **SILVER DAGGER** volume) the stories are arranged in chronological order; but again there is a gap of time — about a century in **DAS**, over a thousand years in **NW** and **SD** — so that the stories straddle the novels and the stories of the other collections. The collections are gathered to center on a mood or theme, and not a specific connected period of events. Thus the novels would run **IN THE WAKE OF THE NIGHT** (still in progress), **BLOODSTONE**, **DARK CRUSADE**, **DARKNESS WEAVES**, with the stories scattered in between, from "Undertow" to "The Other One" — keeping in mind that the stories in each collection are in chronological order within that collection itself.

Simple, isn't it?

Sincerely,
Karl Edward Wagner

○○○

It isn't our purpose to promote an argument between author and fan about the exact chronology of the Kane stories. Trout has worked from the texts and they seem to support his time estimates, but as creator Karl always has the option of reworking the stories to eliminate any inconsistencies that may exist. Whether it is right or wrong, Steve's Chronology represents a tremendous accomplishment and indicates that he is a true fan. And now on to Death Angel's Shadow!

— Ken

DEATH ANGELS

I wander through a desolate land,
On a cold and barren day;
I wander beneath a shadow,
Under light so chill, so grey;
My thoughts beneath a shadow,
That will not pass away.

Death Angel's Shadow.

Faces that avert are pale,
Voices thin with fear;
Silent streets and alleys wind,
Windless skies so drear;
Wither beneath the shadow,
Writhing whispers that I hear,
Death Angel's Shadow.

What is this grisly visage,
That sears their souls with dread?
What demon constant follows me
And tints the sun so red?
What is this fiend whose shadow
Taints lands wherever I tread?
Death Angel's Shadow.

To turn and look upon its face,
Brought fear I'd never known —
The shadow has ever haunted me,
As I walk the earth so alone —
And when I turned, no face I saw,
For the shadow was my own.
Death Angel's Shadow.



SHADOW

by KARL EDWARD WAGNER

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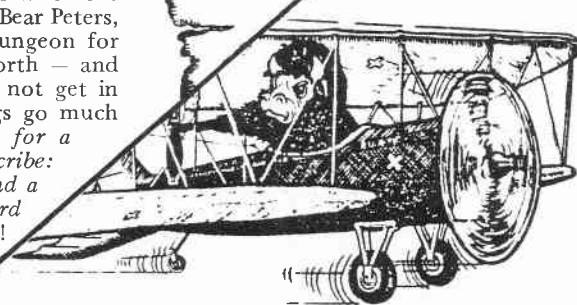
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