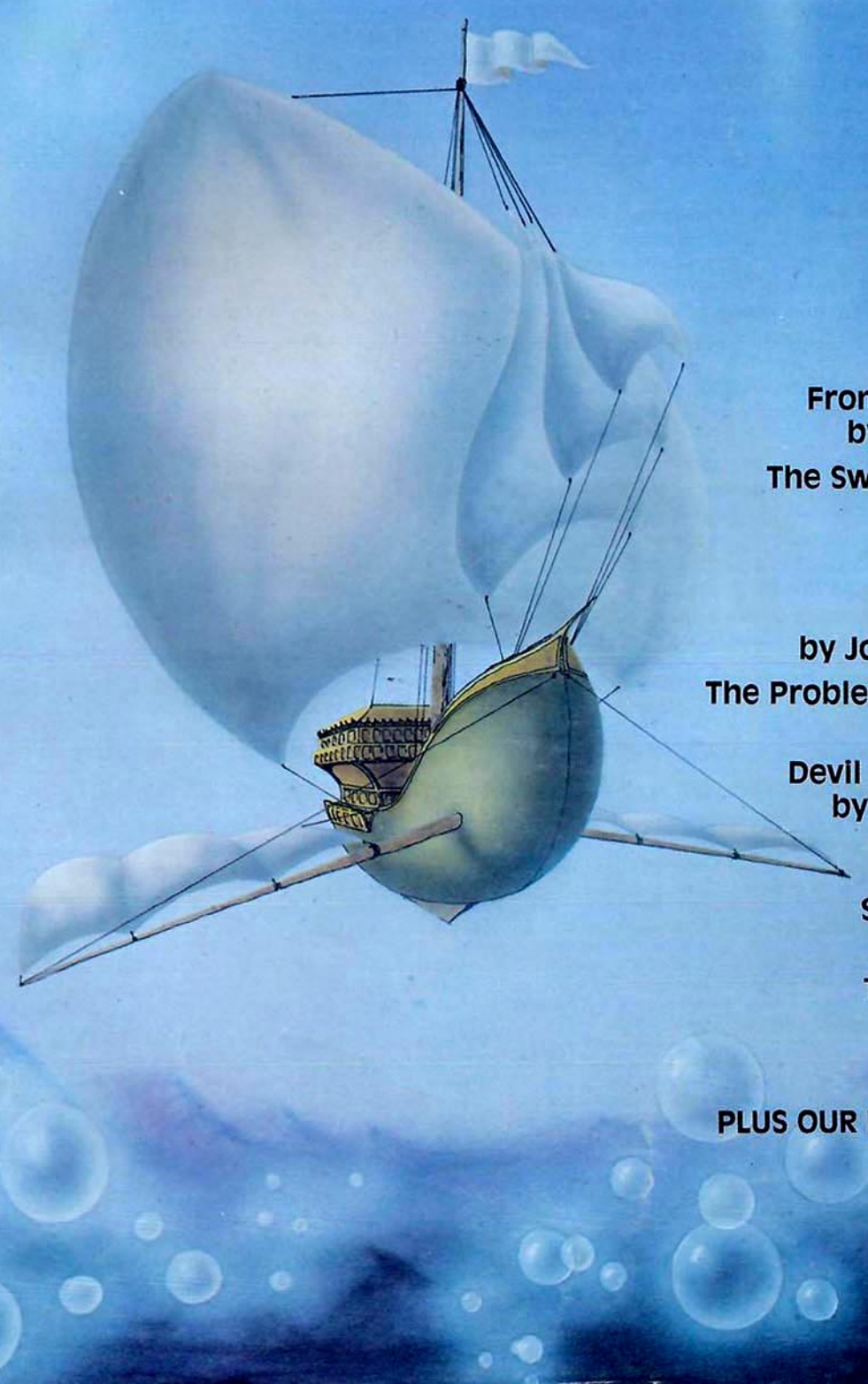


SORCERER'S APPRENTICE



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**SPRING '82
ISSUE 14**

FICTION

From the Tree of Time
by Fred Saberhagen

The Sword and The Curse
by Lee Duigon

ARTICLES

Ships of the Skies
by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

The Problem with FRP Games
by Colin Wheeler

Devil Games? Nonsense!
by Michael Stackpole

GAMING

Spiders and Snakes
by Roy Cram

The Emerald Dome
a GM adventure
by Paul O'Connor

PLUS OUR REGULAR FEATURES

TROLL TALK

Boy, is my face red ... and it isn't from sitting on the sunny side of Khazan's arena, either. (There is no sunny side to Khazan's arena, if you know what I mean...). All the solo dungeons, published and unpublished, I've ever read, critiqued, or edited — and I make the most blatant, avoidable, *terrible* mistake that a person can make ... If you missed my grand pratfall, I forgot to mention that the solo in the last issue of SA started at paragraph 8C. My fault, all my fault. (However, a little praise is due Pat Mueller, who came up with the idea for the fill-in-the-blanks solo, and who deleted her credit-line from the title! She is, however, in no wise responsible for my mental lapse in not telling you readers where to start playing with it!)

The Reader Survey from last issue is bringing in lots of replies, but lots more are needed! I can't urge you strongly enough — if you haven't filled out one of the surveys in SA #13, please do so and send it in. We need to hear from you! A photocopy or postcard will do.

Also, the post office is returning a number of subscription copies of SA as "not deliverable". Please be sure to give us your address changes as early as you can — and don't hesitate to ask if you don't get an issue you're scheduled to receive.

The assortment of letters we receive leaves me wondering if there's a subtle time/space warp between Scottsdale and the rest of the world. Some letters say all we print is stuff about T&T; other letters praise us for printing so little T&T-specific material; yet other letters condemn us for not printing enough T&T stuff. I give up! One of the principles behind what appears in SA is *variety*. A story to read (not exactly game-specific material) ... an article of

history or mythology (rarely does the writer know any games) ... reviews (very game specific, but every company that sends us material is reviewed) ... and either a GM or a solo adventure for T&T. (That's it! Everyone is reading the solos or the GM adventures!

Well, I'll be ... and I thought that was just a page or three out of the whole magazine...). I think what's happening is that so little material is game-specific *at all*, that when something is game-specific (like the solos, or the occasional T&T Variant article), that's all that is being remembered. I don't receive articles about *Runequest*, or *Chivalry & Sorcery*, or *The Fantasy Trip* (though I would like to!). The one or two articles I've received about TSR's games usually have the rejection slips still attached ... understandably.

But nothing living is contrary to change, and SA is probably going to be looking a little different as it grows. Gripes or accolades aside, everyone who writes in says they enjoy the magazine. The reasons they give may be mutually exclusive, or merely contrary, but we must be doing our primary job of providing a good read or two. I can't count on why you like SA, but I'm glad to hear that you do. We'll all be working to keep it that way.



Illustration by Liz Danforth

Liz Danforth

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Spiders & Snakes

"Mad" Roy Cram, pharmacist and dungeon designer, offers this compendium of the poisonous technicalities of the venomous residents of many an FRP setting: spiders (of normal size) and snakes (of ordinary proportions). Easily overlooked, these critters are more dangerous than many players might assume, to their dismay — and to a diabolical GM's delight!

The tremendous advantage of having poison on a weapon in T&T combat is abundantly obvious to anyone who has played the game for very long. The extra damaging and debilitating effects of toxic substances applied to weapons (or possessed naturally by a monster) often decides who will survive to fight another day.

The T&T rulebook describes four types of poison available to delvers. This is a fine system and plays quite well; however, there is one point that needs to be examined.

According to the rules, Curare "doubles the effectiveness of any edged weapon before personal adds are computed." As a pharmacist, I am familiar with Curare and its mode of action. Curare is a generic term for a large number of different plant substances which have a similar mechanism: they all interfere with the transmission of nerve impulses to muscles. This causes a very rapid induction of paralysis to all skeletal muscles, including those responsible for breathing. The victim, fully conscious and aware of his predic-

by
**Roy
Cram**



illustrations by Stephan Peregrine

ment, is unable to move or breathe, and suffocates. The action of Curare is also sufficiently prolonged that its victims nearly always are asphyxiated before the effects wear off.

Thus it seems clear that the second poison described by the rulebook, Spider Venom, more closely approximates the action of Curare. I simply delete the term "Curare" (which I think is used here inappropriately) and substitute the term "Viper Venom", for reasons which will be clear when you have read the rest of this article.

What brave delver has adventured in dungeons dark and dire, and never faced giant poisonous serpents, gigantic spiders, or immense scorpions, who leap from their foul lairs and attack with fangs or stings dripping with venom? Too often, as players grow ever stronger and better, the GM feels he must resort to bigger and more terrible monsters and threats. For variety's sake, I often use creatures that occur "naturally"; players who encounter such monsters treat them with respect, despite the fact that most of these monsters are too small to even merit a MR of 1. Players fear (with good cause) my Kraits, Adders, Mambas, Cobras, Vipers, Rattlesnakes, Black Widow and Brown Recluse Spiders, and Scorpions. Handling these creatures in an effective manner in a role-playing situation merely requires an understanding of their habits, and their natural weaponry.

Poisonous snake venoms fall into two major classes: *hemotoxic* (affecting the blood and body tissues), and *neurotoxic* (affecting the nervous and respiratory systems).

The families of *Crotalidae* (which includes Pit vipers, Rattlesnakes, Bushmasters, Fer-de-lances, Palm vipers, Copperheads, and Water Moccasins) and *Viperidae* (including True vipers, Russel's viper, Sand vipers, Puff adders, Gaboon vipers, etc.) have hemotoxic venoms. The family *Elapidae* (of which Cobras, Kraits, Mambas, Tiger snakes, Death adders, and Coral snakes are members) possess neurotoxic venoms. Snakebites vary in deadliness according to many factors: size and health of the victim, the type of snake, its size and state of health, and how much venom was injected (0-75% is the rule), and so on. Toxicity varies widely with species type, as the look at

the LD/50 (the lethal dose, or amount of venom needed to kill 50% of a test population) chart below will show.

Snake	mg venom / Kg body weight
Tiger snake	0.01
Russel's viper*	0.08
Krait	0.09
Cobra	0.40
Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake	1.68
Western Diamondback Rattlesnake	3.71

*Russel's viper has both hemotoxic and neurotoxic components in its venom.

From this table, it is easy to see that the Tiger Snake is almost 370 times as poisonous as the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, and thus much more dangerous.

Snakebite seldom causes a rapid demise; in fact, the victim may continue to function a fairly long time before he succumbs to the cumulative destructive effects of the toxin. *Viperid* and *Crotalid* bites, with a few notable exceptions, are hemotoxic, and their effects are due to the breakdown of blood vessels and subsequent damage to body organs and tissues. The first symptoms are pain and swelling at the bite site; within 10-20 minutes, severe bruising and hemorrhage, nausea, vomiting, and weakness occur. The bite site may necrose and become gangrenous; some viper bites cause severe hemorrhaging, with bleeding from the nose, mouth, stomach, kidneys, and bowels. The victim usually dies from shock and interference with circulation to vital organs.

Elapid venom affects the nerves and respiration centers. These bites are more painful at the start; the pain spreads and becomes quite agonizing in a very short time. The victim becomes drowsy, salivates excessively, and may experience paralysis of the tongue, lips, and larynx. Symptoms progress to headache, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, violent abdominal pain, incoordination, and tremor. The final stages are convulsions, coma, and death from respiratory failure.

Some cobras are able to spit a stream of venom 8-12' through the air with amazing accuracy. If it hits the target's eyes, it may cause blindness.

Despite their lack of a conventional Monster Rating and combat dice, these creatures have a reasonable chance to poison delvers. For one, they are small, and their natural coloration makes them difficult to see in dark, cluttered places like dungeons. They frequently hide in holes, boxes, or

other likely places of concealment that delvers are fond of searching for loot.

Although armor provides excellent protection to the upper parts of the body and the arms, it frequently leaves the hands and face unguarded, and these are the parts most often bitten. Many types of armor leave the backs of the legs open to a strike as well. When characters are exposed to the attack of a serpent, I require them to make a Luck saving roll, the level of which is usually determined by the armor they are wearing and other extenuating circumstances. To kill the snake (once a character is aware of it), he must make a DEX-SR; if he misses that, he must make another saving roll on his Luck to see if he got zapped by the snake in the melee.

Venom damage for *Crotalids* and *Viperids* is assessed against CON. For weak-venomed snakes, 10-60% of the normal undamaged CON points will be assessed; for really big (and extremely toxic) members of these species, from 20-120% of CON is not unreasonable. Persons who have already been wounded, and are down 40 or 50% are obviously in trouble. Of course, these are the individuals who are most likely to die from snakebite; healthy persons, while incapacitated, usually survive.

Damage from *Elapid* species affects ST and DEX, rather than CON. I assess 50-100% (40% + 10-60%) of each, using two dice rolls. 100% loss of Strength results in death; 100% loss of Dexterity results in total paralysis. These losses accumulate over one to six turns; characters without access to a *Too-Bad Toxin* spell sweat blood as they wait to see how bad the snake got them. A sadistic GM can really put the heat on delvers as he describes the slow and terrible progression of their symptoms.

Characters bitten by *Viperids* and *Crotalids* heal at half the normal Constitution rate, unless they get *Poor Baby* spells to help them along. Losses of ST and DEX from *Elapid* bites are recovered at a % rate equal to the victim's Constitution, but never greater than 25% a day. *Too-Bad Toxin* spells given after six turns are ineffective, and this spell will not reverse damage already inflicted on the victim by poison, even though it will stop it from doing any further harm.

As if the snakes weren't enough of a hazard, spiders are smaller, and even harder to see and avoid in dark,



musty dungeon rooms and passageways. I use two venomous species of spiders: the Black Widow (or Hourglass) spider, and the Brown Recluse (or Fiddleback) spider. Both arachnids are web builders, and will rush out of concealment to attack any creatures that brush against their home. Here again, hands and faces are the sites most frequently bitten, though the creatures, if unnoticed, may seek an opening and get inside the victim's armor to bite. When characters are exposed to spiders and their webs, I again use Luck saving rolls to see whether or not they have been bitten. Any attempt to kill a spider is usually successful, unless the spider is inside the victim's armor. In this case, the character may be bitten several times before he can effectively reach the spider to eliminate it.

Once for ounce, Black Widow Spider venom is more potent than Cobra venom. Fortunately, only a very small amount of the toxin is injected. A bite feels like a pin-prick; the site first blanches, then begins to swell. Pain rapidly increases and spreads from the site. Within a short time, the victim begins to sweat and drool; he experiences muscle tremors and twitches, and his eyelids droop. Later, the character becomes nauseated, feels numb or tingles all over, experiences violent muscle or joint pains, abdominal rigidity, and shortness of breath. Victims are characteristically very restless, and breathe with a grunting noise. While healthy adults seldom die from these bites, wounded or ill characters are another matter. In my games, I treat Black Widow bites in the same way as *Elapid* bites: both are primarily neurotoxic in the effects. Black Widow webs are very fine and hard to see in the dark, which makes them especially dangerous.

The Brown Recluse's bite is initially painless, but soon begins to hurt, and progresses to a large, very painful, necrotic lesion from which large amounts of tissue may die and slough away. (Five or six inch lesions are not uncommon.) If systemic effects occur, within 2 to 8 hours the victim becomes cyanotic, has fever or chills, weakness and malaise, breaks out in a hemorrhagic rash, has nausea and vomiting, and a headache. These symptoms may progress to delirium, coma, and death. I assess constitutional damage of 20-70% of normal undamaged

CON for Fiddleback bites. Victims with systemic effects may take 48 hours to die. The lesion at the bite site takes a long time to heal.

Scorpions also like dark, gloomy places to lair in; like the Brown Recluse, they are especially fond of creeping into boots, shoes, and those inviting dark holes in clothing and armor. Characters are likely to be stung (or bitten) while taking a break. Poisonous scorpions have a convulsant neurotoxin in their venom. The sting is painful; the victim feels a tingling or burning sensation at the site which rapidly spreads. The pain becomes progressively more severe, and is accompanied by muscle twitching, abdominal or muscular cramps, extreme restlessness, and laryngeal spasms with paralysis of the tongue and lips. Late stages of severe poisoning involve loss of bladder and bowel control, convulsions, paralysis, and (finally) death from respiratory failure. I treat scorpion stings the same as *Elapid* bites.

In nature (thank heaven for small favors), these venomous creatures seldom cause problems for man, except in areas like India and Africa where Cobras and Kraits are common and may cause thousands of deaths each year. I like to think that in the world of FRP the snakes and spiders are somewhat larger, more aggressive, and more dangerous than their real-life counterparts, biting more effectively and always injecting large quantities of poison when they do score a hit. Still, even with these advantages, encounters with spiders and snakes should probably be limited, and characters should always get all the breaks possible. When used to spice up an adventure and keep people on their toes, they should be the exception rather than the rule.

Incidentally, spiders and snakes are very useful when one needs to put obnoxious players in their place. Instead of zapping the turkey with a bolt from the blue, or dropping a ten-ton block of lead on his pointy head, sneak a large specimen of *Centruroides gertschii* (the common Bark Scorpion) into his iron longjohns. Believe me, that will occupy his attention for a good long time. However you decide to use it, I hope that this system — and the creatures described in it — will liven up your adventures, and add to your enjoyment of the game. ■

CITYBOOK™ I

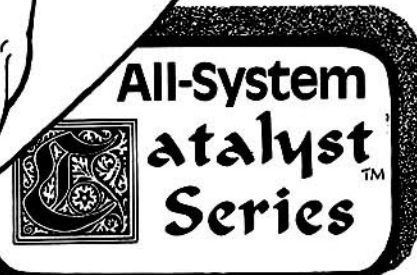
Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker

If you liked **Grimtooth's TRAPS** —
you'll love **CITYBOOK**!

CITYBOOK I is what almost every Game Master has dreamed of: a compendium of 25 establishments that adventurers would be likely to find in a fantasy city. Each establishment is completely mapped out, fully described, and replete with detailed non-player characters for the players to interact with. In addition, several scenario suggestions for each separate establishment are given, enabling a GM to run a variety of city-based adventures with little difficulty. First in a series of related books, **CITYBOOK I** features a Butcher, a Baker, and a Candlestick-Maker, plus a Jail, an Armory, a Stable, a Tavern, a Taxi Service, a Clocktower, and more!

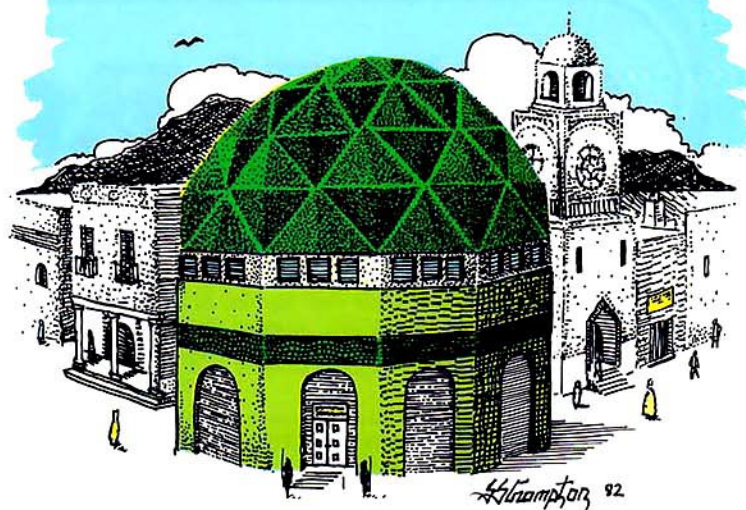
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Spring 1982

The Emerald Dome



—Paul O'Connor

A Game Master Adventure for **ANY** Role-Playing System

The Emerald Dome is a sneak preview, a sample of what CITYBOOK I: Butcher, Baker, and Candlestick Maker will offer the city-running Game Master of any fantasy role-playing system. Like Grimtooth's TRAPS, there are no system-specific instructions in CITYBOOK. As GM, you have all the descriptions, the story-lines, the layouts needed; you must only plug in the dice or armor class or hit points or power used in your game system.

The Emerald Dome is an establishment run by an enigmatic businessman named Willard Charles who buys and sells gems and jewelry. Thus, the Dome is a place where adventurers would come to exchange for cash their ill-gotten gains from tomb-robbing. The Emerald Dome is fully detailed as a setting — and provides a ready catalyst for further adventure!

The Emerald Dome is similar to the establishments in CITYBOOK. However, for simplicity's sake, none of the characters in the Dome have been given specific magic powers. CITYBOOK itself contains a very simple coding system that can be adapted to any FRP magic system. On the Emerald Dome map, the locks on doors and chests are coded in a similar, simple fashion which you can easily adapt to your game system.

Deep in the heart of the City's richest quarter lies the Emerald Dome, the home and business of that mysterious gem merchant, Willard Charles. The Emerald Dome is patronized by those who would acquire rare gems or fine jewelry, as well as those who would trade the same for a measure of the more mundane coin of the realm. The splendid opulence of the Emerald Dome has also attracted the attention of more than one aspiring thief, but nothing more is known about the fate of those few who dared assault the place.

So long as they have legitimate business to transact, the public is always welcome at the Emerald Dome. Vagrants and other "knights of the road" will be swiftly escorted from the Dome area by its staff of guards.

LAYOUT

The Emerald Dome itself is a two-story octagonal structure, roughly 44' on a side. The first floor of the building is secure mortared stone; the second story is a perfect geodesic dome of beautiful emerald-colored glass (from which the building earns its name). The glass of the dome is very thick, and has been sorcerously treated (a process performed by one of Charles' magical associates as payment for a debt) and will not shatter or crack under any influence. The dome is opaque; those outside cannot see what goes on within.

The Emerald Dome has no windows. Ventilation is provided by a series of

cunning shafts, undetectable from without and too small to admit even the most famished of midget thieves. The only gates to the Emerald Dome are great 15' affairs of bronzed iron. The gates stand open to the street during regular business hours, but are closed and securely bolted from within at dusk and remain so until dawn of the next day.

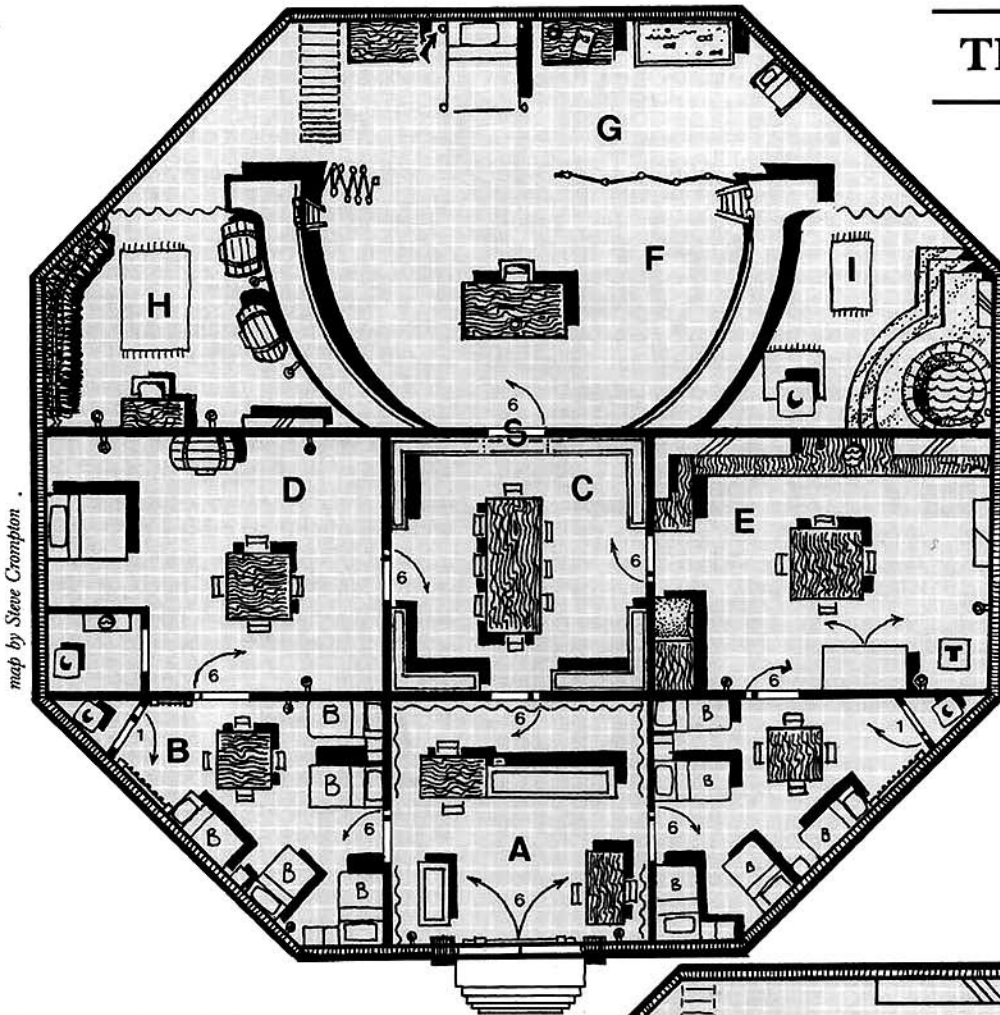
GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor of the Emerald Dome is used as living quarters, and as the "storefront" for Willard Charles' business. All doors on this floor (with the exception of the entrance gates described above) are of stout oak and are locked unless otherwise noted. Willard Charles and Manfred Winklecock have keys to all the doors on this floor. All rooms on this floor are lit by candles.

A. Public Room.

It is here that the Emerald Dome transacts its business with the rank and file of its clientele. The walls of this room are hung with fine green tapestries. These tapestries hide the door in the north wall, but are tied back to reveal the doors in the east and west walls, one of which will be open (see the description of Room B for details). The room is neatly set with comfortable chairs, varnished tables, and several locked display cabinets containing gems and jewelry of moderate worth. A locked iron cashbox is secured to one of the display cabinets. The cashbox is emptied daily, so the amount of gold it contains at any given time depends on (continued on page 10)

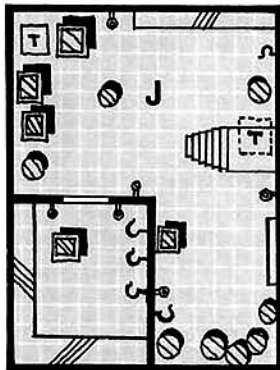
The Emerald Dome



KEY

Scale: one square = 2'

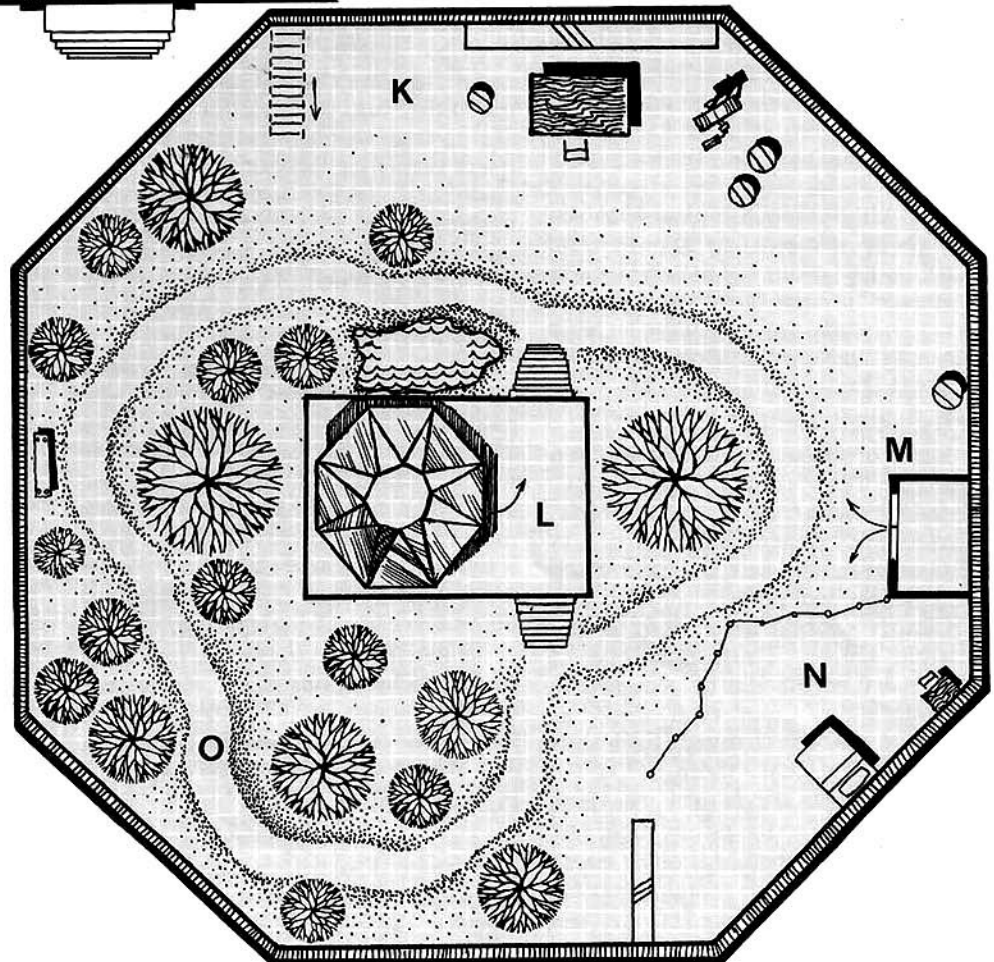
outer wall	weapon rack
inner wall	foldable screen
lockable door	curtains
secret door	water
double door	easy chair
concealed stairs	toilet
ladder	chest
table & chair	candle holder
display rack	tree
cupboard	oven/stove
bed	barrel
bunk bed	dirt path
rug	barrable lock
shelf	wall hook



CODES FOR LOCKS

- 1. Poor.** An orphan with a hatpin could open this lock. (01 - 40%)
 - 2. Average.** A little tougher to jimmy, but hardly adequate (41 - 50%)
 - 3. Fair.** Will take time and effort to open (60 - 70%)
 - 4. Good.** Particularly tough, will probably require special tools (75 - 84%)
 - 5. Very Good.** Will take anyone but a master-thief a long time to open (85 - 95%)
 - 6. Excellent.** Could require magic or a howitzer to open (96 - 100%)
- Lock Codes are used on the map.

NOTE: Many of the symbols used in this map were chosen because they are immediately recognizable to a modern-day GM. They are not historically accurate, and should not be taken "literally".



how well business has been going recently.

Unlike the rest of the Dome, the floor here is of wood and is covered with delicately woven brown rugs. The wooden floor of this room is of the "nightingale" variety. The floorboards have been carefully warped to squeak and creak when stepped on. While this noise is merely an annoyance when encountered during a busy day, it serves as a highly effective burglar alarm in the dead of the night. Squeaks coming from this room after the Emerald Dome is closed for the day alerts the guards.

During business hours, a number of armed guards inobtrusively lounge in around this room. The full details of how the guards operate is explained under Room B.

Characters who enter this room during business hours will be greeted by Willard Charles' trusted retainer, Manfred Winklecock. Manfred will trade for gems and jewelry the characters have to offer by paying gold equal to approximately 90% of the object's worth. Manfred will also sell the gems and jeweled objects on display in this room's cabinets to the characters for whatever the market will bear (but never for less than 95% of the piece's actual worth). Items commonly for sale in this room include stones of garnet, topaz, and turquoise; relatively modest jewelry; jeweled daggers and hat pins; and similar items of moderate worth.

The purchase of highly valuable goods and transactions involving large sums of gold must be negotiated directly with Willard Charles. Manfred will gladly arrange an appointment with Charles for any characters wishing to engage in such business. Appointments are always arranged for an hour following the public closure of the Emerald Dome.

B. Guard Rooms.

Each of these rooms houses ten guards. The rooms are simply furnished with plain bunk beds, footlockers containing valueless personal gear, and weapon racks. Each room has its own privy.

Guards do split-week shifts at the Emerald Dome. Thus, only one of these guard rooms will be occupied at any one time. Once each week, at dawn, the guard is changed. Each shift uses a different guard room.

When guards are on duty, the door from their room to the public room (A) is unlocked and open. All other doors from the guard rooms remain locked.

During the day, six of the ten

guards present will be on active duty in and around the front of the Dome, the public room, and the guard room itself. The four other guards form the night shift, which is posted exclusively within the guardroom and the public room.

Areas of the Emerald Dome other than their guard room and the public room are off-limits to the guards. Occasionally, Willard Charles will request that one or two of the guards be present when he deals with characters in the transaction lounge (C), but this is rare. Under no conditions are the guards ever allowed to enter the kitchen, Manfred's quarters, Willard Charles' area, or the second floor of the building.

Willard Charles pays his guards the best wages in the City to insure their loyalty. Still, the gates to the public room are key-locked from within at night, to help the guards resist temptation. The unused guard room is also locked to safeguard whatever goods the off-duty guard shift may have left behind.

Willard's guards are all very good or excellent fighters. When on duty they carry broadswords and wear leather armor or light mail. They are reasonably loyal to Willard Charles and Manfred Winklecock (from whom they receive most of their orders) — at least as loyal as a hired guard ever is.

C. Transaction Lounge.

This opulent room boasts rich red carpeting, fine display cabinets on all the walls, and a beautiful varnished dining table with several chairs. At the north end of the table is a padded, red-cushioned chair with inlaid gold designs. Three silver candlesticks stand on the table. The locked display cabinets contain diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and exquisitely fine jewelry and jeweled items of great worth.

It is in this room that Willard Charles wines, dines, and otherwise entertains important clients. Charles always sits in the fancy red chair. He will sometimes request that one or two guards accompany him here when he is making business deals, but this is rare. If the characters have made an appointment with Willard Charles, then it is here that they will meet him.

Willard Charles comes and goes from this room by means of the secret door expertly hidden in the cabinets on the north wall of this room. Only Charles and Winklecock know of this door.

D. Servant's Quarters.

These are the spartan quarters of Manfred Winklecock, the trusted retainer and manservant of Willard Charles. The room is very simply

furnished with a bed, a table, a trunk for storing clothes, and a privy with a wash basin. The great size of this room, coupled with the lack of furnishings or carpets, makes the place seem very lonely. What little there is in this room is spotless and neatly arranged.

E. Kitchen.

This is about as modern a kitchen as one is likely to find in a medieval setting. It is here that Manfred Winklecock prepares meals for the guards and his master, Willard Charles.

The kitchen contains a spotless woodburning stove; considerable counter space; rows of neat pots, pans, and other cooking utensils; a wash basin; and numerous cupboards. The room is kept impeccably immaculate.

A trapdoor in the southeast corner of the room opens upon a spiral staircase down to the cellar (J). The trapdoor is in plain sight, and is stoutly bolted shut from the kitchen side.

F. Library Area.

This is the library area of Willard Charles' quarters. A folding screen separates this area from the rest of Willard's room.

The flanking bookshelves of this area are stocked primarily with books concerning gems and jewelry, but there are also several volumes on art in general as well as a few works on architecture. An oak table and chair stand in the center of the library area, illuminated by an elaborate gold candleholder. This library area shows signs of frequent use.

G. Sleeping Area.

This is Willard Charles' bedroom area. The bed is an elaborate four-posted affair with expensive silk sheets. Turning the top of the northwest post on the bed causes the stairs to the second story to drop to the floor on counterbalanced ropes. Turning the post again returns the stairs to their original position, and the bottom of the stairs blends perfectly with the ceiling.

The bed is flanked by two low tables, one of which has a candle and a book of poetry upon it. Nearby is a gilded cat bed, and an aquarium full of bloated goldfish.

H. Closet.

This area is a walk-in closet for storing Willard Charles' clothes and other personal items. The entire west wall is taken up by a clothes rack that is hung with twenty-nine identical, high-necked plain gray garments. The numerous trunks in this closet contain a somewhat better variety of clothing.

I. Bath.

This is a disgustingly luxurious bath of marble and gold, featuring running water and a sanitary toilet. On the east wall of this room is a tall rack of rare, expensive bath oils and soaps. The tub here is quite large, and could easily hold more than one person at a time.

J. Cellar.

This is a storage area for kitchen foodstuffs. Crates of grain and such are piled to the ceiling; several wine barrels are stacked against the south wall. There is also a separate cold storage area for meats. Quite a few rare and expensive foods and spices are stored here.

Hidden under a crate of blowfish meat in the northwest corner of the room is an iron hatchway which leads out into the City sewer system. The hatch is securely bolted shut from the cellar side. Willard Charles' more notorious underworld clients come and go from the Emerald Dome by this hatch to avoid being seen.

A spiral staircase in the southwest corner of this room leads up to the kitchen. The trapdoor at the top of the stairs is always bolted shut from the kitchen side when the cellar is not in use.

SECOND FLOOR

The walls and ceiling of the second floor are formed by the perfect geodesic dome. The color of the dome casts an eerie green glow over everything on this floor. The dome is opaque, so the outside world cannot be seen beyond it.

K. Work Area.

This area of the Emerald Dome is used exclusively by Willard Charles. Here he cuts gems and does light jewelry repair work. Occasionally he also crafts original pieces of jewelry.

This room has a work table, two cabinets, a grindstone, a chair, and a few barrels. The cabinet is full of uncut gems and broken jewelry. The table is cluttered with gemworking tools.

L. Terrarium.

This is a raised wooden platform that contains a magical terrarium of living emerald which glows with an eldritch light. The terrarium has a hinged section upon its face, allowing access to its hollow interior.

Inside the terrarium are three small trees. The branches of each tree are laden with two to twelve tiny, near-perfect gems. One tree grows emeralds, another diamonds, and the third buds with rubies. A tree produces about twenty gems in a year's time.

Removing the trees from the magical terrarium will destroy them. The trees

are magical specimens from a far-off land that Willard Charles paid handsomely to acquire. The trees are very sensitive and require constant care. This is provided by Sellers, the gardener.

M. Gardening Tools.

This is where Sellers stores his gardening tools: rakes, wheelbarrow, shovels, hand trowels, watering cans, etc. There is a basin with running water here so Sellers can water the garden and the terrarium.

N. Gardener's Quarters.

These are the simple living quarters of Sellers, the gardener of the Emerald Dome. The area is separated from the rest of the dome by a folding screen. Within the gardener's quarters is a simple bed, a chair, and a cabinet of picture books on all subjects.

O. Garden.

This is a garden of beautiful flowers and ferns, kept alive by Sellers' green thumb. The place is quite restful, and Willard Charles often comes here to relax.

PERSONALITIES

Willard Charles.

Human. Height: 5'8". Weight: 145 lbs. Age: 64. Fighting prowess: none. Magical ability: none.

Willard Charles is the owner of the Emerald Dome. He has plain, wooden features, close-cropped silvery hair, and a high brow. He always wears a simple one-piece high-necked gray garment that buttons up the front. He



suffers from a back problem, which accounts for his stiff upright carriage. At all times he carries a set of keys for every door in the Emerald Dome.

Willard Charles' ever-present companion is Peter, a spoiled, beautiful, long-haired white cat. Peter wears a collar studded with Willard's finest diamonds. Willard carries him everywhere, and has a nervous habit of stroking him. Peter is fed an exclusive diet of live fish from the aquarium in Room G. Willard Charles has the disconcerting habit of feeding his cat in front of company.

Willard Charles is a very private man. He is rarely seen outside of the Emerald Dome. He can almost always be found somewhere in Rooms F — O. He will deal with characters directly only as a result of the most important business. He has no true friends, though he gets along well with Manfred Winklecock and is very kind to Sellers.

Manfred Winklecock.

Human. Height: 6'1". Weight: 180 lbs. Age: 37. Fighting prowess: none. Magical ability: none.

Manfred Winklecock is Willard Charles' trusted servant. It is Manfred who runs most of the business, cooks the meals, locks up at night, and keeps the Emerald Dome gleaming and spotless. Manfred has no vices, and leaves the Emerald Dome only when he needs to purchase supplies or food.

Manfred is a sepulchral man with high arching brows and a curiously springy walk. He wears his short black

hair greased back tightly over his skull. He is always very polite, but when talking to Manfred one can't help but feel that he's being just a bit insincere.

Most characters who visit the Emerald Dome will transact their business with Manfred Winklecock. Manfred is a shrewd businessman who knows his trade well. He can accurately judge the value of almost any gem or piece of jewelry merely by looking at it.

Manfred has access to all areas of the Emerald Dome, although he'll only enter the second floor for cleaning when his master isn't using it. He will most commonly be encountered in Rooms A through E.

Sellers.

Human. Height: 4'9". Weight: 120 lbs. Age: unknown. Fighting prowess: none. Magic ability: ?

Sellers is the gardener at the Emerald Dome. He is a hunchbacked man of indeterminate age, although he looks to be closer to the end of his life than to the beginning of it. He wears drab work clothes and usually has dirt under his fingernails.

Sellers is a simpleton. He has no memories of who he was or where he came from before he began work in the

Emerald Dome. To his simple mind, all the world is encompassed by the Dome, Willard Charles, Manfred Winklecock, and his plants (though not necessarily in that order of importance).

Sellers has a green thumb. He could probably make an oak grow from a rock. Plants respond very well to his care, as is shown by the beautiful garden that is his pride and joy (O) and the thriving trees in the terrarium (L).

Sellers' only other entertainment is his picture books, which he carefully keeps in his quarters. When Sellers isn't tending the gardens, he'll be in his quarters, looking at his books with wonder. Sellers is always very excited when Willard Charles brings him a new book from his library (F).

Sellers is a harmless individual who doesn't know how to hurt anyone. If someone were to start tearing up his garden, he could only cry.

SCENARIO SUGGESTIONS

SCENARIO 1. The characters might decide to rob the Emerald Dome, either by storming the place or by using the secret hatchway in the cellar (J). For an interesting twist, Willard Charles might have had a falling-out with the

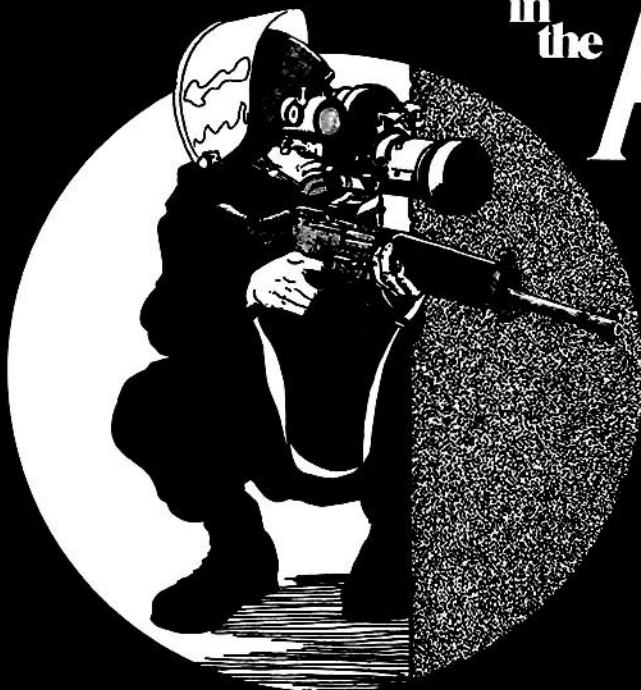
Thieves' Guild of the City, who might then organize a raid to clean out the place. Much can also be done by spreading a rumor or legend about the gem trees in the terrarium (L).

SCENARIO 2. Sellers could turn out to be the long-lost, magic-befuddled father of one of the richest lords of the City. Willard Charles would be unwilling to release Sellers, for fear that his gem trees would die. The lord could hire the characters to break into the Emerald Dome and rescue his father.

SCENARIO 3. A rival gem merchant could hire a character to cause the downfall of Willard Charles. One way this might be done is to have the character work his way into the Dome by joining the guard. Another might be to arrange a private meeting with Willard, and then take the opportunity to kidnap or kill him.

The Emerald Dome provides the perfect opportunity for characters to exchange their ill-gotten gems and jewelry for ready cash. If the players are more interested in acquiring yet more booty, they might try to infiltrate the Guard and pull off an "inside job" on the Emerald Dome!

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON SURVIVAL in the AFTERMATH!



Aftermath! is a role-playing excursion into a post-holocaust world for 2 to 6 players and a referee in search of a different kind of adventure.

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Devil Games? Nonsense!

Religious groups like the "Moral Majority" are questioning (and sometimes soundly denouncing) many facets of modern living — including FRP gaming. Tracts, magazine articles, and pressure groups target the "satanic" nature of fantasy games. As a kind of farewell "Queries & Quandaries", Michael Stackpole answers a few of these charges with a bit of reasoned argument.

Once again a tract from a religious organization has come to rest on my desk. This particular leaflet indicates that all FRP games are: 1) occult primers, 2) moral erasers, and 3) diabolical time-eaters. The author of this tract has done some research, for I see that Dave Hargrave has been quoted here, and FRP games are likened to the war games used to train the Hitler Youth. That last point is one they never miss.

The tract is flung onto my growing collection of such material, while I attempt to calm myself enough to write this article/editorial about FRP gaming and devil worship. Being calm about such a thing is not easy — the accusations made against FRP gaming are often loaded with inaccuracies and emotional statements designed to distort the truth. Since I do not wish to sound like the fanatics who have made a target of the fantasy role-playing field, allow me to digress into an explanation of my background and qualifications for addressing this issue.

I was born, baptized, schooled (K-12), and confirmed a Catholic. As I grew up, I participated in youth groups, was an altar boy who served with the Bishop of Vermont, and read in church on many occasions.

My FRP experience began in 1976, when I first began to play T&T. In 1977 I began part-time work for FRP gaming, and in 1979 I went to work full-time for Flying Buffalo.

My knowledge of the occult began when the Catholic Exorcist for Vermont allowed me to read portions of his files. Since that time, I have obtained and read books on magic and the occult. I have a fine collection of mythologies and folktales. I have also obtained copies of books used to instruct witch-hunters and the like back in the days when destroying witches was a national pastime. Many of these books were written by ministers or bishops.

This latest tract is much like the others

I have seen. It speaks about the secret dangers of FRP games; at one point, the author states, "Any serious student of the occult can see how these games are based upon the occult." This is not unique to this particular tract, but does beg the logical question, "If the author is a serious student of the occult, why should we listen to him? And if the author is *not* a serious student of the occult, how does he know that the games are based upon the occult?" That statement seems to smack of False Witness to me.

Fantasy role-playing games, of course, were originally inspired by the fantasy world of J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien was the Christian who converted the agnostic C.S. Lewis to Christianity. Even someone like me, who would at best consider himself a not-quite-casual student of the occult, can see that the games are *not* based on the occult. Rather, they are based on *imagination*, and are set in a fantasy universe which borrows elements from many sources (some of which deal with occult matters). In the six years that I've played FRP games — and I've played in London, Ottawa, and all over the United States — I have yet to see a Black Mass even hinted at in a game. Demons do appear at times, but not to be worshipped — indeed, they are often attacked and driven off or slain!

Of course, there is the charge that FRP games are the great Moral Solvents of our day. It seems to me that a game where the object is to defeat evil for the causes of good can hardly be accused of destroying the moral values of a nation. Finding a scapegoat is often very easy for people, because it prevents them from searching for what they might be able to do to change things. Plato complained about the same problems with the youth of his day, and they didn't have FRP games back then.

The games do have a violent element, but violence serves a purpose. In Phoenix, there is a rehabilitation program for Vietnam veterans that uses

T&T solo adventures as a tool for draining off excess aggression. Whenever a veteran feels himself getting tense, he plays one of the games for a while and it helps him ease up. I would imagine this is a better way to let off steam than a fight or a three-martini lunch.

In addition, violence does not have to be a part of the game. If the characters in an adventure learn early on that violence will get them nowhere, they'll soon be using their heads and *thinking* about the situation. The amount of violence in any game is dependent upon the Game Master and his objectives in the game.

Anyone who has played FRP games knows that the game system does not matter — it is the Game Master who makes all the difference. If a GM has opinions and attitudes that offend you as a player, change him or your game group. Persecuting the game of golf because one golfer has killed another with a putter is as irrational as persecuting all FRP games because of the opinions of one Game Master.

It seems that one of the nastiest charges that has been levelled at FRP games is that the games are time-consuming. This is true — they eat up so much time that many children turn off the television while playing. They also read, and do research. They design and think. And they imagine! Perhaps there is the real problem: they imagine.

The real pity of this whole furor is that the adults are missing — in fact, perverting — a golden opportunity to reach their children and teach them the values they desire the children to learn. Instead of using the games in a form where players are called upon to act in a Christian manner, the adults show unchristian attitudes of intolerance and suppression of freedom in their persecution of the games. They ignore the fact that they could map out the Holy Lands and allow their children the experience of living when Christ did, hearing Jesus speak, watching him die and rise again. A smart GM could set up characters as people from the Bible who figure in the gospels. Values learned in that way become so much more real to a person.

I would never dare presume to speak for Christ, but his words are fairly specific when speaking about persecution and prejudice. The need to strike out at fantasy role-playing games merely points to an insecurity in their beliefs, the hedging of a bet that Christ might not be able to handle all and might need the help of mortals. Let actions — Christian actions — manifest through the games and speak for you.

Censorship and book burnings. Now who's playing with the devil's games? ■

Arcane Graffiti

— news, clues and reviews —

— MICHAEL STACKPOLE —

News for the fantasy and gaming world — upcoming events, club announcements, the latest games and playing aids, conventions — are featured, reviewed and discussed in Arcane Graffiti. Personal ads and trade enquiries will be printed also, at 10¢/word (20 word minimum). Mail your news to: Michael Stackpole/Arcane Graffiti, Flying Buffalo Inc., P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, Arizona 85252.

The Flying Buffalo projects-in-the-works I've mentioned in past AG's are progressing quite nicely at this point. *Mercenaries*, *Spies*, and *Private Eyes* has undergone a number of playtest sessions; everyone seems to enjoy playing it (of course, I must be modest). *Citybook* winds ever closer to publication; it has all but finished being typeset and the maps are complete. *Berserker*, our tactical space combat game, is also almost ready for publication and already seems to have something of a following.

Christmas 1981 saw the advent of *Electronic D&D* and *Dark Tower*. COLECO, the large electronic game company, is now taking orders for a game for its upcoming *ColecoVision* game computer: *Tunnels & Trolls*! This is a home video game that one can actually role-play. It ought to be good!

Scot Rhoads was selected the winner in the *Grimtooth Traps* contest. Scot will have the choice of FBInc. merchandise, a piece of original *TRAPS* artwork, or having himself drawn into the second book, *Grimtooth's TRAPS II*, due out sometime this fall.

Of possible interest to the readers of SA: Ken St. Andre and I have succeeded in selling stories to *ORACLE Magazine* (P.O. Box 19222-SA, Detroit, MI 48219-0222; one issue costs \$3, a 4-issue subscription is \$7.20). "Mandrikor", Ken's story, is a rousing tale of a Prince and a Barbarian and their adventures. My story is called "God of Thieves", and is set in Gull about three hundred years before *City of Terrors*. *ORACLE* should be worth looking into; Dave Lillard, the editor, is trying hard to turn out a good magazine. Check it out.

There are a lot of games to be mentioned this time, so descriptions are very likely to be sketchy. If anyone

out there wishes to do a more in-depth review of any of these products, we'd be interested in seeing them.

Task Force has released two games since the last issue of SA. *Power Play* is a fast-paced card game where players attempt to gain control of a third-world nation without triggering a civil war. There are seven areas (such as the Press or Police) that a player tries to control. Once a player thinks he controls enough of these areas, he can try a "Power Play". To succeed is to win; to fail is to be kicked out of the game.

The second game is the long-awaited *Federation Space*, a strategic game set in the *Star Trek* universe. It can be played alone or used as the basis for a campaign game where *Star Fleet Battles* and the expansions are used to fight tactical battles.

Task Force is also starting a magazine called *Nexus* that will contain articles on all Task Force games. The magazine is slated to contain new material on *Star Fleet Battles*.

Steve Jackson Games has released five new sets of *Cardboard Heroes* and a set of bases for the figures. The bases are sold in 7" strips that can be cut to the length deemed necessary to hold the *Heroes* up. The new sets are: #5: *Undead*, #6: *Monsters*, #7: *Monsters 2*; all of these look very good (the art is by Denis Loubet), and well worth the money. The fourth new set is of *Traveller* figures, scaled to 15mm, and painted by Paul Jaquays. They also look very nice and are a logical alternative to trying to paint 15mm figures. The last set is of *Villains and Vigilantes* characters, and the art for these was beautifully done by the game's designer, Jeff Dee. With *Superhero* figures so impossible to find, these *Cardboard Heroes* are a godsend.

GDW (P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701) has released three new *Traveller*-related products. *Broadsword* is Adventure 7, and requires *Basic Traveller*, *High Guard*, and *Striker*. Double Adventure 5, *The Chamax Plague/Horde* requires only *Basic Traveller*. *Striker* is the long-awaited 15mm combat rules for *Traveller* figures. This boxed set includes Basic and Advanced rules, as well as a booklet of equipment. All of the vehicles described in *Traveller* and *Mercenary* are in *Striker*; the advanced rules allow you to design your own vehicles as well as giving you air-to-air and air-to-ground combat rules. Looks like good stuff for *Traveller* fans.

Speaking of good stuff for *Traveller* fans, FASA (P.O. Box 6930, Chicago, IL 60680) is a small company that produces *Traveller* adventures and aids. They have four adventures out so far: *Ordeal by Eshaar*, *The Legend of the Sky Raiders*, *Action Aboard Adventures on the King Richard*, and *Uragyad'n of the Seven Pillars*. Each of these adventures has the organization and quality you would expect from GDW itself. They are good.

FASA has also produced *Star Port Module #1: Hotel Complex*, which is a beautiful collection of five double-sided map sheets of a hotel complex plus a booklet describing the hotel. Their *Adventure Class Ships: Volume 1* contains ten ships mapped out like *Azhanti High Lightning* was. Each ship is exemplary of an entire category of ships, and all are excellently done. FASA does an exceptional job in game design and production, and you won't go wrong buying any of these products.

Berkeley Game Company (2039 Shattuck Ave., Room 206, Berkeley, CA 94704) sells Vinyl *Battlemats*. The *Battlemats* come in 21mm or 25mm squares or hexes, and provide a beige floorplan that can be drawn upon with water-based markers. Any GM can draw the floorplan of his adventure on the mat and then erase it as the party moves on. These mats are 23½" x 26" and look great. If you constantly burn through many large sheets of paper drawing out your adventures, buy one of these and save yourself money (and aggravation when someone spills Pepsi all over your map). The *Battlemats* are worth more than the \$7.98 they cost; look for them at your local game store.

Tadashi Ehara has complained to me that he could not understand the wording of my review for *Thieves World*, so I'll try and phrase my comments on the two latest boxed-game releases from *Chaosium* more concisely, precisely, and carefully.

Call of Cthulhu is a role-playing game based in the universe described by H.P. Lovecraft. The box includes rules, dice, maps, and a background guide for players. It looks like a good game and is a must for Lovecraft fans. (Translation: buy it!)

Elric, Battle at the End of Time is a re-release of the previous *Elric* game. The map has been redone, as have the counters. The new map looks good, but the counters were not printed well and the color scheme for the Vilimir counters (yellow on white) makes them hard to read. If you are interested in fighting for the Young Kingdoms, this is the game you should buy.

Metagaming (Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761) has released two new Microgames and two new Microquests. *HellTank* (MG#19) is a tactical game of armor combat with basic and advanced rules. Movement of units alternates between players, with each unit having a tactical option chosen for it and then implemented. In combat, the weapons system is cross-referenced with the target, yielding a "to hit" number. If a hit is scored, weapon system and range determine the damage. The counters are a bit flat as artwork goes, but quite readable. *Trailblazer* (MG#20) is a game of space exploration and mercantilism. Players travel from world to world, buying and selling goods. Players determine what turn will end the game, and the player with the most cash at the end of the game wins. Both these Microgames look interesting.

Microquest #7, *Master of the Amulets*, is a game in which players search a Lost Valley for amulets of power. It requires only the *Melee* and *Wizard* rules, though the advanced rules may be used. Microquest #8 is *Orbquest*, which tosses the characters back into the service of Thorsz, the master of the Death Tests. It seems that the first Thorsz (the one that started this empire) created and distributed powerful Orbs when he sent out wizards to conquer far regions of Cidri. A bunch of the Orbs were never accounted for and you're being asked to go after one. Good luck!

Adventure Games (1278 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104) won "Best of HIA Show" for the box design of *Rails Through the Rockies*. The box looks nice — and the game is excellent. You won't be able to finish a game in a few hours, but you'll enjoy it. Each player forms a railroad company, and attempts to get through the Rockies while keeping his company alive. Players can call injunctions down on others as well as dilute the economic base of each

other's companies by running tracks into the same towns or mines. The game is great fun and should be interesting to both railroad buffs and regular gamers alike. Look for it.

Ernest Thomas Hams (12385 Rose St., Seminole, FL 33542) has come out with two products for FRP gaming. His best effort is *Dungeon Floor Modules*, cut-apart floorplans with interchangeable parts that allow a GM to map out a dungeon. Aside from an assortment of rooms and corridors, he offers pits, trapdoors, pools, and spiral staircases which add color to rooms that can be designed with his modules.

Ernest also designed *KABAL (Knights and Berserkers and Legerdemain)*. *KABAL* is a role-playing game that suffers from a lack of definition in terms and organization of the rules. It uses 6d20 for rolling attributes! You might want to take a good long look at a copy of *KABAL* before thinking about buying it.

Gamelords, Ltd. (18616 Grosbeak Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD) has released two products worthy of note here. *Thieves Guild V* continues their excellent line of scenarios for thieves. This booklet includes things from Bandit and Highwayman adventures to some tomb-robbing.

Their other new release is *The Phantastical Phantasmagorical Montie Haul Dungeon*, a fun collection of anachronisms and situations to shame any self-respecting barbarian. This is one you should take a look at, for it will provide a change of pace from your average gaming aid!

Fantasy Games Unlimited has four new releases for *Space Opera*, plus a new fantasy role-playing game. *Bushido* was formerly published by Phoenix Games in a digest size; FGU picked it up when Phoenix Games went out of business, and has re-issued it in a full color box. Now FGU has both of the Japanese role-playing games on the market (the other being *Land of the Rising Sun*). It should be added that FGU did redo some of the game so it is consistent with their quality and general game philosophy.

Seldon's Compendium of Starcraft I is a booklet filled with scale deck plans of twenty-one starships. This is a very good-looking product, and the designs can be easily converted by those who play systems other than *Space Opera*. *Probe NCG 8436* is a scenario package detailing the survey of a system and first contact with the natives. Eight planets of the Procyon starsector are detailed as well as ship Outreach and the fauna of several of the worlds.

Vault of the Ni'er Queyon is a quest for a vault filled with *objets d'art*. The players adventure around and track down the location of the Vault, facing danger and security devices designed to keep the artwork where it is. *Alien Base* is first in a series of adventures. A starship has detoured through a sector to finish up some survey work and has not been heard from. You are sent on a rescue mission. Don't worry, a follow-up crew will be sent if you don't return...

Here's something interesting: *Runes and Digits*, a small fanzine from England devoted to FRP games and reviews of such things. Each issue features a continuing T&T solo, as well as a fun editorial style and some logical reviews of games. It's published by S.G. Pursey (3 Leigh Furlong Road, Street, Somerset, UK BA16 0LE; write for US rates). ■

CONVENTIONS

(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. A ■ beside a listing means Flying Buffalo plans to attend.)

□ May 21 - 23. **CWA Con 82**. Chicago. Info: Chicago Wargamers Assn., P.O. Box 10397, Chicago, IL 60612.

■ May 21 - 24. **CanGames**. Ottawa, Ontario. Info: Bruce Knight, 20118 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa Ontario K1G 1A2.

□ May 28 - 30. **Conquest III**. Continental Hotel, Kansas City. *SF con*. AD&D and TFT tournaments, open 24-hour game room. Info: P.O. Box 32055, Kansas City, MO 64111.

□ May 28 - 31. **GrimCon IV**. *F&SF gaming con*. Oakland Hyatt House, Oakland CA. Info: P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley CA 94704.

□ May 29 - 31. **LaserCon**. Griswold's Inn, Fullerton CA. Fantasy gaming, costume contest, etc. \$8 pre-registered, \$10 at the door. Info: Fantasy Events, Box 987, Campbell CA 95009.

□ May 30. **M.I.G.S. III**. *A free day of wargaming*. Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, Ontario Canada. Tutorials, seminars, painting contests, boardgame and miniatures tournaments. Presented by the Military Interests and Games Society. Info: Les Scanlon, President M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ontario L9A 4T6, Canada.

□ June 5 - 6. **Genghis Con IV**. Auraria Student Center, Metro State College, Denver CO. Info: Denver Gamers Assn., Box 2945, Littleton CO 80161.

■June 11 - 13. **Michigan Gamefest.** Detroit, MI. Info: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.

□July 2 - 5. **WesterCon 35.** SF con. Adams Hotel, Phoenix AZ. Info: WesterCon 35, Box 11644, Phoenix AZ 85064.

□July 9 - 11. (**Wargame Con.**) Presidential Hotel, Atlanta GA. Tournaments; game demos and seminars; sf, fantasy, and war movies; computer demos; dealers' room. Info: ASGAR Committee, P.O. Box 90952, East Point, GA 30364.

■July 16 - 19. **Flying Buffalo PBM Convention.** Info: Flying Buffalo Con, P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252.

■July 23 - 25. **Origins '82.** Info: Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220 (include self addressed stamped envelope).

□July 24 - 25. **Kommand Con 82.** Army National Guard Armory, Mansfield Ohio. Info: KWC, Box 2235, Mansfield, OH 44905.

□July 30 - Aug.1. **Fantasy Faire.** Griswold's Inn, Fullerton CA. Guests, panels, talks, slide shows, fantasy films, filksinging, FRP gaming, costume events, much more. Info: c/o Fantasy Pub. Co., 1885 W. Main St., Alhambra CA 91801.

■Aug. 19 - 22. **GenCon 15.** Kenosha. Info: Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

□Aug. 27 - 29. **Dragonflight '82.** Campion Tower, Seattle University. Wargames, historical miniatures, RPGs, art show and auction, military and fantasy miniature show and painting competition. Info: Dragonflight, P.O. Box 417, Seattle WA 98111.

■Sept. 3 - 5. **Pacificon '82.** San Mateo, CA. Info: Box 5548, San Jose CA 95150.

■Nov. 12 - 14. **WinterGamefest.** Detroit MI. Info: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.

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□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

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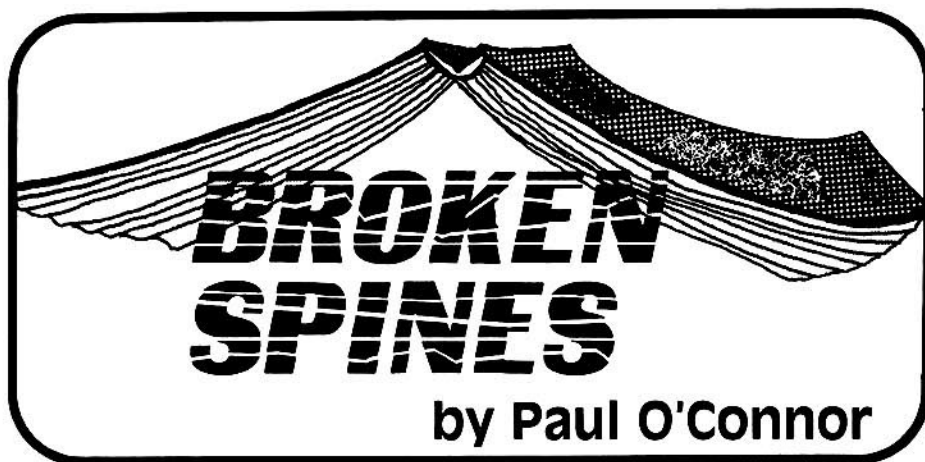
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To get your classified ad in the summer issue of *Sorcerer's Apprentice* (#15), send in your ad and check for \$10 by May 1st. Mail to:

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BROKEN SPINES

by Paul O'Connor

- *The Warhound and the World's Pain*, by Michael Moorcock. (Timescape Books, \$12.95, hardcover)
- *Elfquest Book I*, by Wendy & Richard Pini (The Donning Company/Publishers, \$9.95, a Starblaze edition)

Broken Spines is going to explore some new territory this time around. My previous two columns concentrated exclusively upon new fantasy paperback releases. This month, I'm going to look at a new "graphic novel" and a very special hardback publication. Despite their formats, I found the spines of both of these publications to be quite breakable.

The hardback is *The Warhound and the World's Pain*, the latest offering from one of this world's finest fantasy authors, Michael Moorcock. By strictest definition, *The Warhound and the World's Pain* can be considered an addition to Moorcock's "Champion Eternal" cycle, but there are enough new twists and turns here to make this an excellent stand-alone novel.

The Warhound and the World's Pain is set during the Thirty Years War, one of the blackest periods in European history. The novel details the strange odyssey of Graf Ulrich von Bek, nicknamed *Krieghund* or "Warhound." Ulrich is a mercenary, and realizes that there is neither honor nor humanity in his position. The horrors of war have given Ulrich a deep distrust of idealism, as well as a contempt for "any of unthinking Faith." Ulrich is, by his own admission, without conscience.

The Warhound and the World's Pain begins with Ulrich deserting the soldiers in his command following the sack of Magdeburg, one of the most apocalyptic operations of the war. Ulrich is amazed when his flight takes him to a land apparently untouched by the war

or its bedmistress, the plague. Ulrich suspects that the land may be enchanted, but continues to explore it nonetheless.

Soon, Ulrich comes upon a beautiful and well-provisioned castle, completely abandoned. There are no signs of war about the place. Ulrich pays this ominous sign no heed, and partakes of the castle's luxuries for several days.

Then Ulrich discovers that the Lord of the castle is none other than Satan himself.

Moorcock's Lucifer is a tragic figure: a fallen angel who wishes to return to God's grace. Lucifer believes that if he were to cure the "world's pain," then he could gain forgiveness in God's eyes, and be allowed to return to heaven.

The cure to the world's pain is nothing less than the Holy Grail.

Lucifer is prohibited from retrieving the Grail himself — he must have it brought to him. Lucifer asks Ulrich to be his agent on this quest.

Ulrich is, of course, quite stunned by this — and with good reason. The thought of Lucifer sending a murderer on a quest for the Holy Grail is indeed a strange one. This is just the beginning of a very strange tale indeed.

Ulrich's quest is a remarkable one. His journey through many dimensions and lands sparks a civil war in Hell, and leads ultimately to the end of the earth.

The Warhound and the World's Pain is a treat for both the casual fantasy fan and the hard-core Moorcock junkie. For the old hand, a good time is to be had trying to recognize the expected Moorcock themes and characters (and I warn you now — the results aren't always as cut-and-dried as you'd like). For those who have never had the good fortune to experience Moorcock before, this is a rich fantasy reading experience that

should hook you on all of Moorcock's many mind-bending tales.

The Warhound and the World's Pain takes itself far more seriously than many of Moorcock's previous works. But this does not detract from this truly exceptional novel. *The Warhound and the World's Pain* is the best reading I've had out of Moorcock in several years. As a richly detailed fantasy set in a fascinating period of man's history, *The Warhound and the World's Pain* is an excellent novel. I give it my absolutely highest recommendation. Don't wait for the paperback.

Next is *Elfquest Book I* by Wendy and Richard Pini. This is an 8½ × 11, 160-page "graphic novel," a collection of the first five *Elfquest* magazines in full color. Gathered here is the story of the Quest's first step: from the Elves being forced out of their Holt by the dread Humans, to the adventures of the Elves in the desert city of Sorrow's End.

Although the *Elfquest* magazine series began its successful run back in 1977, this book provided my first real exposure to the series. I was pleasantly surprised by the uniformly high quality of this "graphic novel" (which may be just a euphemism for "comic book," but in this case accomplishes far more than you'd expect). *Elfquest* isn't only a good comics series — this is a good *fantasy* series. In a world where most "mainstream" comics have become little more than narrow-scoped recycled garbage, *Elfquest* is a very rare thing indeed.

Elfquest Book I is a tale of characters, not events. This is an important distinction — and something that is all too often lost in today's publishing world of production-line writing. There's something overwhelmingly sincere about this book that makes it a very special work. There's something for everyone in *Elfquest Book I*. Read it.

Also received this month but not reviewed are: *Neptune's Cauldron* by Michael G. Coney; *Noonblaze* by Milan Chiba; Book 4 in the "War of Powers" series, *The Fallen Ones* by Vardeman and Milan; *Century's End* by Russel M. Griffin; *Mortal Engines* by Stanislaw Lem; *Frankenstein Lives Again!* by Donald F. Glut; *The Dawning Light* by "Robert Randall" (Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett); *The Dark Between the Stars* by Poul Anderson; *The World and Thorinn* by Damon Knight; and another "Living Planet" book from Susan Coon, *Chi-Y-Una*.

That's it for this time. May you find the cure to your own world's pain. ■

QUERIES & QUANDARIES

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In the last issue of SA, we turned "Queries & Quandaries" over to you, the readers. After all, there is no true "right or wrong" way to play Tunnels & Trolls; once you have the rulebook in your hands, T&T becomes YOUR game. This column gives you the chance to help others understand the game better, and to play better because of your insights.

Do you allow solo characters and GM-developed characters to participate in the same adventures?

I do think that characters developed during face-to-face play are more important than solo characters. In the course of a game with other players, a given character is forced to respond to a greater variety of challenges, must interact with others, and faces more options than in programmed solo play. I feel that this causes each character to become more rounded and to develop a personality that is uniquely his or her own.

So far, I have not allowed characters developed in solo adventures to take part in my regular campaign. This is not a matter of sheer, irrational discrimination; solo characters just don't fit in my world. Solo characters are necessarily developed to meet the challenges of the world envisioned by the solo's designer, and would have trouble adjusting to life in a different society on a totally different planet.

Also, characters that make it through solos are generally quite well-equipped with magic and treasures that may not be compatible with a given GM's established world. Rather than totally revamp an item, re-equip a character, or risk unbalancing a campaign, it is much easier to simply ban such a character from the party. Since all my parties start off at first level anyway, this does not present much of a problem.

The only exception to the above is in the case of one of my solo characters meeting an untimely end to their dungeon-delving careers, such as becoming lunch for something nastier than they are. If this was a character I

had been running for a long time, on occasion I revived them, reworked them, and used them as minor NPCs. Generally such reworking involved removing from them most of the major magical items, talents, etc. What I carried over were name, description, family background, personality, etc. (i.e. things which generally were of little importance in solo play anyway).

— Dorothy V. March

I favor characters developed through actual play, as the person who created them has a more varied experience in dungeon situations. I find that if a character is developed exclusively through solos, he tends to be a bit unreal (possessing tremendous powers and fantastic weapons which conventionally-developed characters normally do not have). As GM, I like to run my characters through my dungeons as NPCs that can give the party clues and lead them into traps. A solo or three can be good, but can't/won't make up for good live dungeon experience.

— Wayne West

When you design a trap and know "The Solution", how do you react if another workable solution is presented?

If a party can find a way out of one of my more fiendish creations, more power to them! I never pretend to know the *only* way out. I might design a trap with a particular solution in mind, with perhaps a few kinks to prevent use of the most obvious "ways out", but I will give full credit to someone who can find another solution that is *reasonable* and *in keeping with the character persona*. I will not give credit if the solution comes up with depends upon knowledge the character would not reasonably have access to (such as technological know-how) or if it is not likely that a given type of character would be in a position to know something within the system (i.e. a warrior suggesting a certain spell to the mage in the party).

— Dorothy V. March

There truly is more than one way to skin a cat, and in these parts, we do a

lot of cat-skinning. It is nice because it shows that the party takes initiative and thinks, rather than using the same old methods upon every trap they happen upon. I will give them a reasonable bonus when it comes to e.p., but I will sometimes throw in a hitch. If it was really an outlandish solution, I will sometimes require a saving roll on IQ.

— Wayne West

Thinking about some of the motives behind how and why we do things in FRP gaming can often be more rewarding than wondering exactly how many dice a horseshoe gets in combat. Thus, in selecting "quandaries" for the new Q&Q, I'd like to get questions that allow for a "philosophical" as opposed to "game mechanics" answer.

Questions were asked concerning how to handle Magic Scrolls, Literacy, and Swimming — if anyone out there wants to, feel free to draft us an article on any of these subjects! If we receive several such related articles, we might group them together like the trio of combat variants printed in SA#13.

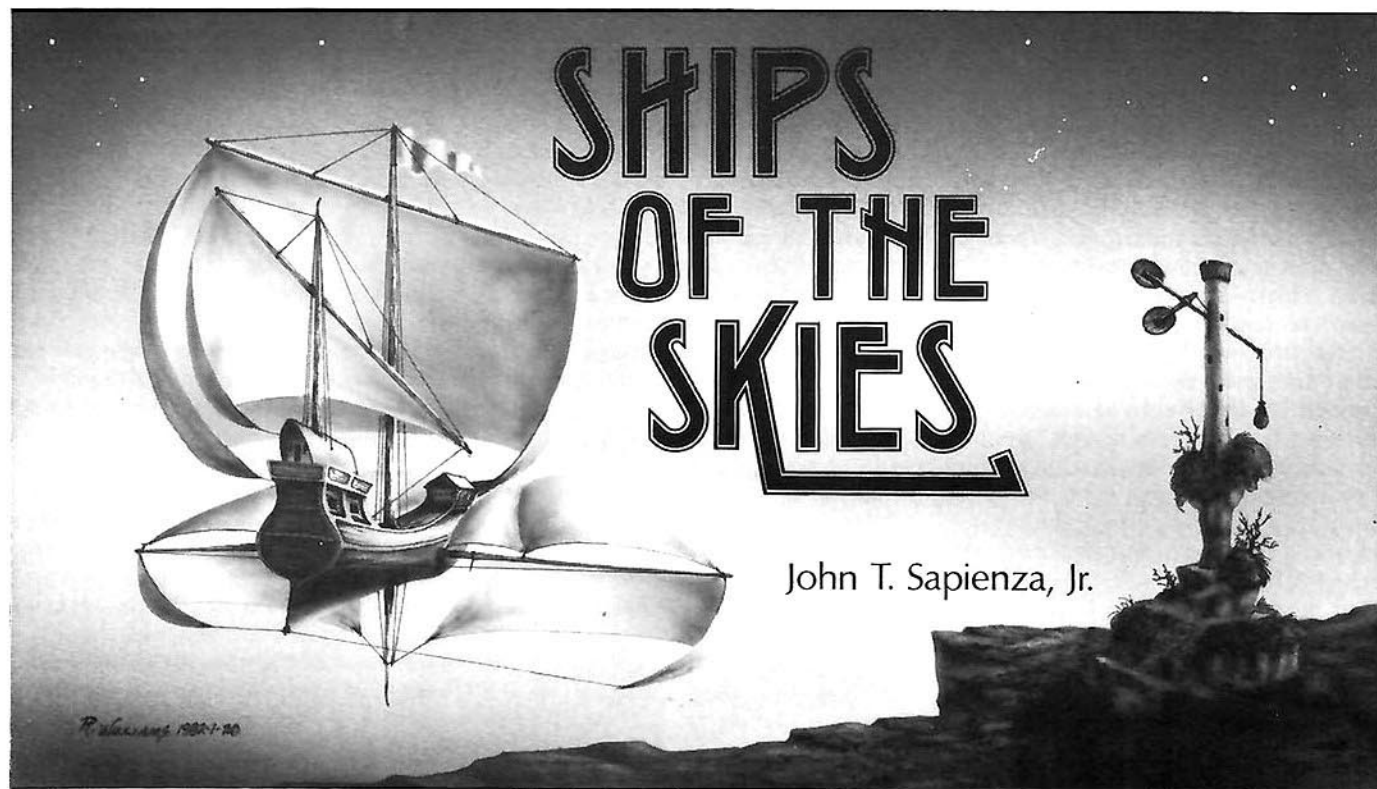
Here are two new questions for discussion:

1. Does religion play a part in your FRP world? How do you handle it? Does it drive your game, or is it merely a background feature to provide color? Have you designed Priests, Shamans, and such for T&T, and how do they work?

2. Both answers to the solo character question mention the proliferation of magical items from solo adventures. How do you handle the design and distribution of magical items in your game? What do you do if someone gets his or her hands on something that is more powerful than you imagined it might be?

If you have any questions you'd like answers to, send them to us — and likewise if you have answers to any of the questions here! Any and all responses, at any length, are openly solicited. Each will be read, and those printed will be paid our standard contributor's rates. If you'd like your response to Q&Q returned to you in the event it is not used, please include a SASE.

— Michael Stackpole



Most FRP games offer magical means of personal flight — but little or no thought has been given to the transport of large cargoes by air, even though quite a few fantasy tales have treated the subject of great flying boats. John Sapienza offers a few ideas and suggestions about the use and theory of Ships of the Air.

wants to go, would turn to sails. We may not necessarily be talking about primitive societies, either — there was a vigorous discussion of tacking airships in the atmosphere of Jupiter in the letter column of the October 12, 1981 issue of *Analog*. This requires an aerodynamically suitable shape, which rules out the spherical shape of the normal hot-air balloon but not the fat cigar shape of the blimp or the still smoother shape of the dirigible.

So a flying ship powered by sails is credible, even in the technically-constrained limits of the science fiction story. Two such stories, written by Poul Anderson, are set in a post-holocaust Earth when different nations are trying to survive as cultural entities in the face of attacks from pirates and barbarians. "The Sky People" first appeared in the March 1959 *FF&SF*, and was reprinted in *A Decade of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (ed. Robert P. Mills). The story compares three different cultures under stress, with a surprise ending full of irony. But the interesting part for present purposes is the fact that the Sky People are a scientific, progressive culture; several generations after the big war, they have discovered how to make hydrogen in sufficient quantities to float a fleet of dirigibles that use sails for horizontal motion. It is not clear why these people have no engines for their ships, since the

chemical industry implied by the hydrogen production might lead to chemical engines even if petroleum was not available. Perhaps the danger of fire made this impossible. In any case, the mental image of a slender dirigible gasbag supporting a long gondola studded with sails and rigging, high above the Grand Canyon, stirs the blood as much as that of a clipper ship plowing through the ocean's waves.

Anderson's other story, "Progress", appeared first in the January 1962 *FF&SF* and was reprinted in *The Horn of Time*, an Anderson anthology. It is set a generation later and halfway around the world, when the Sky People of North America have become traders and scientists. The Sea People, Polynesian seafarers, are the protagonists of the story. Their ocean-going ships have weak engines powered by solar capacitors, but depend primarily upon sophisticated sails. The aircraft of this age are still lighter-than-air dirigibles with sails, but limited engine power is now available.

Another author to use the sail-powered dirigible is B.R. Statham, whose *Banners of the Sa'yen* (DAW Books UE1636, \$2.25, with a completely misleading cover) is less hard science fiction (*a la* Anderson) and more science-fantasy. The novel features several aerial battles between ships and

There is something particularly romantic about a ship under full sail. Perhaps its appeal lies in the fact that such a ship is turning the forces of nature to the uses of humanity, and perhaps it invokes a picture of an earlier (and, we imagine, simpler) age. Whatever it is about sailing that attracts us, we continue to buy pictures of sailing ships of bygone centuries for our walls. Authors of novels set in the age of sail (such as C.S. Forester and Alexander Kent) continue to prosper in the Atomic Age. And, indeed, the Age of Sail may still be with us; only recently, sails were used to move the *Charles Rowan*, a floating oil rig, to its station in the North Sea, and sails may soon reappear on cargo ships to save fuel.

But, you may wonder, whatever use could sails be on a flying craft? Who would bother? The answer to that is simple: Anyone with the ability to lift his craft into the air, but who lacks engines to power it in the direction he

other ships, and between ships and the towers of a city. Written in the free-wheeling spirit of the E.R. Burroughs' John Carter of Mars books, this appears to be the beginning of a series.

Ray Williams' cover for this issue of *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, however, looks very much like a marine vessel, plucked from the ocean and given additional masts and rigging to hold sails that could only work on a sky-borne ship — and with no visible means of support. This may, indeed, be accepted as a flight of fancy by the artist, and given no serious consideration, or it may be considered to be supported by a limited magic capable of levitating the hull but unable to give it other motive power. The fact that the ship's hull is of a smooth shape may indicate a desire for aerodynamics, or the vessel may be designed to pull in its lower masts and land in the water for surface travel.

An idea parallel to this has also appeared in fiction. In *A Victory for Kregen* (Dray Prescot #22, DAW Books UJ1532, \$1.95), the hero has been struggling to acquire the technology that powers the flying craft of his enemies, but with only limited success. The best he has been able to do is build "silver boxes" that give lift to his ships, and to grip onto magnetic lines of force for direction. In order to move with or across the winds, sails are used. And so, here again we have aerial fleets of sailing ships, but this time they look more like ocean ships in the sky, much like our cover painting.

Any of these variants on the aerial sailing craft are adaptable for use in a fantasy role-playing campaign. Flying across the countryside should be faster than walking, and may be faster (and certainly more comfortable) than long-distance travel by wagon or horseback. Keep in mind that a sail-powered ship will go no faster than the prevailing winds, and will only go as fast as the wind when travelling in the direction of the wind. Tacking into the wind will be a slow process; the ship must move back and forth across the wind for great distances in order to gain a small net forward travel (that's what "tacking" means). Remember that ships in the air must worry about storms as much as ships at sea, and must be wary of crashing into trees, buildings, and mountains. They must also worry about aerial creatures — from flocks of birds to dragons — not to mention other airships crewed by pirates. So travel by air is not going to be easy or dull, regardless of the hopes of the travellers!

Of course, we don't have to limit ourselves to science-fictional restraints on ways and means of flight in a fantasy campaign. You don't even need very powerful magic to produce the equivalent of technological breakthroughs that would give you flying craft. Consider the hot-air dirigible given lift by a supply of heat from a captive fire elemental, for instance. Add a captive (or friendly) air elemental and your sails would not be limited by the need to tack into the wind to travel — you simply change the wind. Similar effects could be had by weather control spells, although the side effects of changing the weather on a broad front could be embarrassing or inconvenient if others object to your activities. ("Rain on my parade, will you?") So we could still have sailing ships of the skies, using limited magic in place of scientific means. You might even bump into a mage who specializes in spells useful for commercial air transport. ("This is your mage speaking, we will soon be levitating to a height of 5,000 dragonslengths for our flight to Atlantis. There will be a slight delay after liftoff until the tower clears us for horizontal travel. Please fasten your safety harness, and I hope you will enjoy your flight.")

Getting away from sail-powered craft opens up a wider variety of means. You could use an air elemental to simply push your airboat where you want to go, for example. A more colorful system would be to have your ship towed by flying creatures such as griffins, hippogriffs, pegasi, etc. The strength of the beast and the weight of the ship would determine the size of the team needed. Stagecoaches were routinely drawn by four- and six-horse teams, with the horses in pairs; teams drawing ship-sized craft might be four abreast with eight- and twelve-creature teams being common. (Or one dragon.)

The use of flying creatures to pull an aircraft need not imply large craft, either. Just as a team of two horses can pull a carriage, the chariots of the sky might be pulled quite easily by two pegasi or one griffin. These small-capacity craft would be used for military purposes, with a driver and one or two archers. In civilian use, they might be considered the sports cars of the sky. Other craft of similar size might be used to carry supplies to the scene of the battle, or to carry the mail in peacetime.

Of course, if flying creatures are available they will be used as mounts for riding, and thus provide the cavalry of the clouds, and a major source of

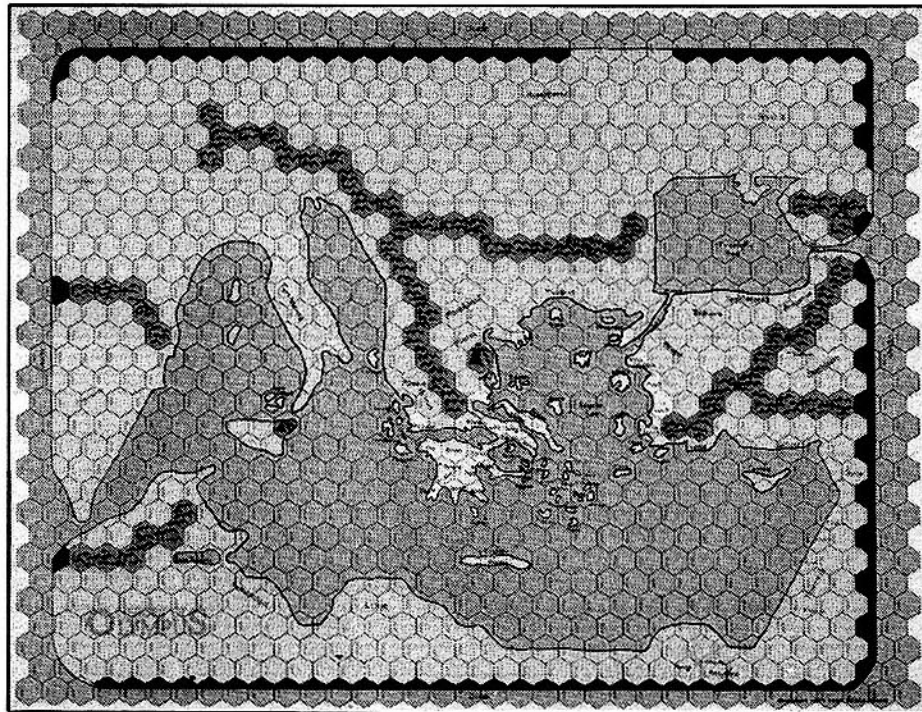
civilian sports. They would be essential for advance scouts by the military, and for fast messengers in both military and peaceful occupations. The larger creatures could even be used to haul groups of people, or a medium-sized weapon and its crew. The analogy in our world is the horse cavalry and the elephant; in both cases it is helpful to note that both animals were used to pull wagons of various sizes, in addition to their use as individual or multiple mounts.

By doing things this way, you can transport a larger quantity of goods or people in a wagon than you can on an animal's back. This is due to the physics of the situation — a horse collar or its equivalent places much less stress on an animal than a load on the animal's bones and muscles. It follows that if a culture has invented a means of levitating a wagon, it will be more efficient to put an animal in front to pull your load in the wagon instead of trying to use the same animal as a packbeast. And that means you will have a lot of aerial wagon traffic, probably more so than individuals riding flying creatures as they travel. Many commercial goods, especially luxury goods, will go by aircars. Given sufficient demand, there may even be the equivalent of flying trains of aircars, pulled along by teams of some of the larger flying creatures — dragontrains, perhaps. But the more beasts you use, the more it costs to operate, so there is a natural limit on what you can pull along. Once aloft, the larger your ship is, the more surface it presents to the wind to push it out of your intended direction.

Well, if you must contend with the wind, why not make a virtue out of necessity, and turn the wind to your own use? Put sails on your ships of the sky, and let the wind help you along, taking some of the load off your beasts when it is going the way you want to go, and relying entirely on the teams when you must go against the wind. A crafty merchant could calculate that the high cost of an air elemental, and the ruinous wages of a wizard to control windspells, might simply not be economical, while a sailing ship supplemented by a modest four or six pegasi could turn a tidy profit. "Let the rich nobility whiz around in their new-fangled flying cylinders at high speeds but at ridiculous expense, and let the magi fly their brooms and carpets. There's a lot to be said for the traditional flying ways, and the sound of the wind in the rigging in a good, solid, old-fashioned sailing ship, say I."

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TASK FORCE GAMES - THE NEW FORCE IN GAMING

FROM THE TREE OF TIME

by Fred Saberhagen

from an
idea by
Eric Saberhagen

“Very well then,” said Count Dracula. “If you wish a story with a touch of mystification, I can provide one.”

It was on a raw, rainy spring night, not long ago, and the two of us were standing on a streetcorner of a northern city. Folk far madder and perhaps less probable than either the Prince of Wallachia or myself walked those streets as well. But in the presence of my companion I scarcely gave them a thought.

“I will be delighted,” I replied (naturally enough), “to hear whatever tale you may wish to tell.”

Dracula halted at a curb, the wet cold wind stirring his black hair as he stared moodily across the street. He had doubtless paused only to gather his thoughts, but a quartet of youths swaggering along on the other side of the street interpreted our hesitation as timidity. They loitered in their own walk, and one of their number called some obscenity in our direction. My companion did not appear to notice.

“I am sure you are aware” (he began his tale to me) “that with vampires, as with the greater mass of the breathing population, the vast majority are peaceable, law-abiding citizens. We seek no more, essentially, than breathers do: bodily nourishment (any animal blood will do for sustenance); the

contemplation of beauty, and affection, as nourishment for the soul; an interesting occupation; a time and place in which to rest (some native soil being, in our case, very important for that purpose).

“It makes me laugh” — he laughed, and across the street four youths simultaneously remembered pressing business elsewhere — “yes, laugh, to contemplate the preposterous attributes that have been bestowed upon my branch of the human race by those breathing legendizers who have never known even one of us at first hand. Of course I am not talking about you, my friend. I mean those who have learned nothing since the last century, when the arch-fool Van Helsing could imagine that the symbols and the substance of religion are to us automatically repellent or even deadly. As you know, that is no more true of us than of — of some of the breathing gangsters who once made this very city legend.”

My friend paused, frowning, doubtless wishing that he had chosen some other comparison. I hastened to assure him that I would do all in my literary power to expunge from human thought the kinds of misinformation that he found so distasteful. He nodded abstractedly.

“Nevertheless” (he went on) “in our society as in yours, the rogue, the criminal, exists. I need not belabor the

point that the psychopath who happens also to be a vampire is infinitely more dangerous than his mundanely breathing counterpart. Even apart from the fact that very few of your breathing people truly believe that we exist, effective countermeasures against our criminal element, while not impossible, appear to be uncommonly difficult for you to manage. The Cross, as I have said, is no deterrent at all — except perhaps to vampires of such religious nature that their consciences would be painfully affected by the sight — such probably do not pose you a major problem in any event.

“Garlic? Even less efficacious than it would be against some breathing ruffian — surely useful, if at all, only against the more fastidious and less determined. Mirrors? Useful to detect and identify us by our lack of any reflection; but with no application as weapons, except as they might be used to concentrate our great bane, natural sunlight. The older and tougher among us can bear *some* sun, you know, at least the cloudy, tempered sun of the high latitudes.

“Fire? By daylight, through which period we are compelled to retain whatever form we had at dawn — and moreover are likely to be resting in lethargic trance — yes, by daylight fire can be effective, whereas by night we easily avoid it.

“Ordinary bullets, blades of metal, clubs of stone, all can cause us momentary pain and superficial injury, but do us virtually no real damage at all. Any trifling harm inflicted soon disappears. Silver bullets are only advocated by those who confuse us with werewolves, or certain other creatures of the night.

“The best practical defense is doubtless to remain in your own house, admitting no one suspicious. No vampire may enter a true dwelling unless invited — but once invited, he or she may return at any time.

“And, if we consider the offensive means that ordinary breathing folk can hope to use successfully against us, almost the whole truth is contained in one short and simple word.”

By now we were strolling again. My companion was of course impervious to the chilling effects of wind and rain, but I was shivering. Taking note of this, Dracula gestured as we were passing the door of a decent-appearing tavern, and gratefully I preceded him in. We were seated in a dim, snug corner with mugs of Irish coffee before us — his of course remained untouched throughout our stay — before he spoke again.

“That one word,” he said, “is wood. Ah, wood, that oh-so-nearly magical stuff, that once was living and now is not. Ah, wood ... and that leads me to the story that I wished to tell.”

It was (Dracula continued) almost a century ago, and in another great city, one grimmer and in some ways grander than this one, that I made acquaintance — never mind now exactly how — with a certain professional investigator, a consulting detective whose name was then even better known than my own. We were an oddly matched pair, yet on good terms; he understood my nature better than most breathing folk have ever been able to do. Still I was greatly surprised one day when I received a message from him saying that he wished my help in a professional consultation. Naturally my curiosity was much aroused, and I agreed.

My friend the detective and I traveled down by train from London to a certain country estate in Kent. The house was a great gloomy pile, built during Elizabethan times. Its owner, besides being a man of considerable wealth, was something of an antiquarian, and also much interested in what he still called natural philosophy. It was not he, however, who had invited us to the estate, but his only child. She was a grown woman now, and married for a year. And it was she — whose real name I cannot tell you even now, for at the time I swore that it would never pass my lips — she who conducted us on our arrival, with urgent speed, into a closed room for a private consultation. The room was large, and mostly lined with books, with new electric lights in its far corners, and on the huge desk an old-fashioned oil lamp, whose rays fell on a collection of curious items evidently brought together from the ends of the earth. I saw a whale's tooth, a monkey's skull, along with other items I did not immediately recognize. A small table at some distance from the desk held a microscope and various specimens. Along with their burden of books, the room's many shelves held stuffed birds and animals.

"And now, your ladyship," began my friend the detective, "we are at your service. You may speak as freely before Dr. Corday here" — he glanced in my direction — "as before myself."

The lady, whose considerable beauty was obviously being worn away by some overwhelming fear or worry, now appeared on the verge of collapse. "Very well." She drew a deep, exhausted breath. "I must be brief, for my father and my husband will both soon return, and I must save them, if I can..."

"The incident that haunts me, that has driven me to the brink of madness, occurred almost exactly a year ago, and in this very room. I must confess

to you that before I was married, or even knew Richard well, I was — acquainted with — a man, named Hayden. I have outlined to you already, sir, how that came to be—"

"You have indeed, your ladyship." My companion gave an impatient nod. "Since our time is short, we had better concentrate on what happened between you and Hayden in this very room, as you say it was. That is the aspect of the case in which I most value Dr. Corday's consultation."

"You are right." Our hostess paused again to collect herself, then plunged on. "I had not seen Hayden for many months. I was beginning to manage to forget him, when almost on the very eve of my wedding, he appeared here unexpectedly. I was alone in the house except for a few servants, my father being engaged on some last-minute business in London having to do with the arrangements."

"Hayden, of course, knew that I was alone. And his purpose in coming was of course an evil one. He had brought with him some letters — they were foolish letters indeed — that I had written him in an earlier day. The letters contained — certain things that could have ruined me, had Hayden given them, as he threatened to do, to my prospective husband. I protested my innocence. He admitted it, but read from the letters certain phrases, words I had almost forgotten, that suggested otherwise. Hayden would destroy me, he swore, unless — unless 'Here and now in this very room' was how he put it — I should — should—"

For a moment the lady could not continue. My friend and I exchanged glances, of sympathy and determination, in a silent pledge that we would do everything possible to assist her. It must be hard for folk with experience only of the late twentieth century to grasp what a threat such letters could represent, to understand what impact the mere suggestion of a premarital affair could have had at that time and place, on one in her position. It would have been regarded by all her contemporaries as the literal ruin of the young lady's life.

"I was innocent," she repeated, when she was able to resume at last. "I swear to you both that I was. Yet that man had some devilish power, influence ... I had broken free of it before, and as he faced me in this room I swore to myself that I would never allow it to gain the faintest hold on me again."

"Sooner or later you will have me," the villain said, sneering at me. "I have now been invited into your fine house,

you see.' Those were his words, and I have puzzled over them; alas, a greater and more horrible puzzle was to come.

"I retreated to the desk — I stood here in front of it, like this. Hayden was just there, and he advanced upon me. I cried at him to stay away. My hand, behind me on the desk, closed on a piece of stone — much like this one." With that her ladyship raised what would now be called a geode from among the curios collected on the huge desk. "I raised it — like this — and warned him again to stop."

"Hayden only smiled at me — no, he sneered — as if the idea that I might refuse him, even resist him, were a childish fantasy that only a childish creature like myself — a mere woman — could entertain. He sneered at me, I say. His handsome face was hideously transformed, and it seemed to me that even his teeth were ... were ... and he came on toward me, his hands reaching out."

The lovely narrator raised her chin. "I — hit him, gentlemen. With the stone. With all my strength. And — God help me — I think it was as much because of the way in which he looked at me, so contemptuously, as it was because of anything I feared that he might do."

"I hit him, and he fell backward, with a broad smear of blood across his forehead. I have the impression that only one of his eyes was still open, and that it was looking at me with the most intense surprise. He fell backward, and rolled halfway over on the carpet, and was still."

"I was perfectly sure, looking down at his smashed face, that he was dead. Dead, and I swear to you that at that moment I felt nothing but relief. For a moment only. Then the horror began. Not an intrinsic horror at what I had done — that came to me too, but later — but horror at the fact that what I had just done was certain to be discovered, and at other discoveries that must flow from that. Even though I might — I almost certainly would — be able to plead self defense and avoid any legal penalty, yet inevitably enough information must be made public to bring ruin down upon me — and disgrace upon Richard, whom I loved ..."

"I suppose that in that moment I was half mad with shock and grief. Not, you understand, grief for the one who, as I thought, lay dead—"

My friend interrupted. "As you thought?"

"As — let me finish, and in a moment you will understand."

"Then pray continue."

"My eye fell on the door of the

lumber room — there." It was a plain, small, inconspicuous door, set in the wall between bookcases, some eight or ten feet from the desk. "I seized Hayden by the ankles — to take him by the hands would have meant touching his skin, and the thought of that was utterly abhorrent to me — and I dragged him into there."

"May I?"

"Of course."

Taking up the lamp from the desk, my friend moved to open the small door, which was unlocked. The lamp-light shining in revealed a dusty storage closet. Its walls and floor were of stone, its ceiling of solid wood; there was no window, or any other door. The chamber was half-filled with a miscellany of boxes, crates, and bundles, none larger than a bushel, and all covered with a fine film of dust that might well have lain undisturbed for the past year.

Our client joined us looking in. She said: "The room was very much as you see it now. My father uses it chiefly for storage of things he has brought back from his various travels and then never finds time to catalogue, or else judges at second thought to be not worthy of display.

"I dragged Hayden — or his body — in there, and left him on the dusty floor. Understand that this was not part of any thought-out plan for concealing what I had done. It was only a shocked reaction, like that of a child trying to hide the pieces of a broken vase. Hardly aware of what I was doing, I came back here to the middle of the room, and picked up from the carpet the stone that had done the deed. I carried it into the lumber-room also, and threw it on top of that which lay on the floor already. I then came out of the lumber-room and closed its door, and locked it — though it is rarely if ever locked — with a key I knew was kept in the top drawer of my father's desk.

"Then, with a mind still whirling in terror, I looked around. The letters, where were they? Still in Hayden's pocket, for now I remember distinctly seeing him replace them there. It might be wise to get them out, but for the moment I could not think of touching him again.

"And there was blood on the carpet. I had noted that already, in my first frenzied panic. But now, as my mind made its first adjustment back toward sanity, I saw that the spots were only two or three in number, and so small against the dark pattern that no one entering the study casually would be in

the least likely to notice them. Here, gentlemen, is where they were — over the past year they have faded almost to invisibility.

My companion had crouched down and whipped out a magnifying glass, with which he scrutinized closely the indicated section of the carpet. He stood up frowning. "Pray continue," he said again, his voice non-committal.

"I was still hovering near the desk, in a state of near-panic, not knowing what to do, when as in a nightmare I heard a brisk knock on the door to the hall, and the voice of my beloved Richard. A moment later, before I could say anything at all, the hall door opened and Richard came in. From the look on his face, I knew immediately that he was aware at least of something gravely wrong.

"My fiance evidently already knew much more about Hayden than I had ever suspected. Perhaps the duke, Richard's father, had employed investigators — to this day I do not know what had made my dear one suspicious of me. But he was full of suspicion on that day, and with cause — though not

with as great cause as he feared.

"Richard confronted me. 'He was seen coming in here, the man Hayden. Do you tell me that he is not here now?'

"I do not remember what I said in reply. I must however have looked the very picture of guilt.

"Richard looked quickly round the study, even peering behind pieces of furniture where a man might possibly have had room to lie concealed. It took him only a moment to do so; the furniture was then very much as it is now, and offered, as you can see, little in the way of hiding places.

"He tried the door of the lumber-room then, and I was sure for a moment that my heart had stopped.

" 'This door is locked. Do you know, Louise, where the key is kept?'

"I understood perfectly that he would force the door at once if no key were available. Silently I went to the desk, and got the key from the upper drawer, where, in my confusion I had just replaced it; I handed it to Richard, still without a word. At that moment I knew with certainty that final ruin was upon me, and I could not bear another





instant the horror of waiting for the blow to fall. I thought that after Richard had seen what I had done, then, in that moment of his greatest shock, I might appeal to him. I could only hope that he loved me as truly and deeply as I did him.

"But his gaze was black and forbidding as he took the key from my hand and turned away. He was in the lumber-room for only a few moments, but I need not tell you what an eternity they seemed to me. When he reappeared, his face was altered; yet even as I gazed at him in despair, a sudden new hope was born within my breast. For his new expression was not so much one of horror or shock, as one expressing a great relief, even though mingled with shame and bewilderment.

"For a moment he could not speak. Then 'Darling!', he said at last, and his voice cracked, even as mine had moments earlier. 'Can you ever forgive me for having doubted you?'

"Without answering, I pushed past Richard to the door of the lumber-room. Everything inside, with one great exception, was just as I had seen it a few minutes earlier before I had locked the door. There were the dusty crates and cartons, untouched, certainly, by any human hand in the intervening time. There on the floor, in lighter dust and hardly noticeable, were the tracks left by my own feet on my first entrance, and by the horrible burden that I had dragged in with such difficulty. There was the stone with which I had struck the fateful blow —

but the piece of stone lay now in the middle of the otherwise empty patch of bare floor. Of the body of the man I had struck down there was not the smallest trace."

My friend the detective emitted a faint sigh, expressing what in the circumstances seemed a rather inhuman degree of intellectual satisfaction. "Most interesting indeed," he murmured soothingly. "And then?"

"There is very little more that I can tell you. I murmured something to Richard; he, assuming my state of near-collapse was all his fault for behaving, as he said, brutally, made amends to the best of his ability. To make the story short, we were married as planned. Hayden's name has never since been mentioned between us. Our life together has been largely uneventful, and in all outward aspects happy. But I tell you, gentlemen — since that day I have lived in inward terror ... either I am mad, and therefore doomed, and imagined the whole gastly scene in which I murdered Hayden; or I did not imagine it. Then he was only stunned. He somehow extricated himself from that lumber-room. He is lying in wait for me. Somewhere, sometime ... neither of you know him, what he can be like ... he still has the letters, yet he has in mind some revenge that would be even more horrible ... I tell you I can bear it no longer ..." The lady sank into a chair, struggling to control herself.

The detective turned to me. "Dr. Corday, it is essential that we ascertain

the — nature of this man Hayden." A meaningful glance assured me what sort of variations in nature he had in mind.

I nodded, and addressed myself to the lady, who had now somewhat recovered. "At what time of day, madam, did these events occur? Can we be absolutely sure that they took place after dawn and before sunset?"

The lady looked for a moment as if she suspected that madness was my problem instead of hers. "In broad daylight, surely," she replied at last. "Though what possible difference..."

I signed to my friend that I must speak to him in confidence. After a hurried apology to our client we withdrew to a far corner of the study. "The man she knocked down," I informed the detective there, "could not possibly have been a vampire, because of the force of the blow that felled him was borne in stone, to which we are immune. Nor could he, even supposing him to be a vampire, have shifted form in broad daylight, and escaped as a mist from that closet under the conditions we have heard described; nor could he in daylight have taken on the form of a small animal and hidden himself somewhere among those crates and boxes."

"You are quite sure of all that?"

"Quite."

"Very good." My friend received my expert opinion with evident satisfaction, which surprised me.

For my own part, it seemed to me that we were getting nowhere. "My life has been very long," I added,

"and active, if not always well spent. I have seen madness ... much madness. And I tell you that the lady here, if I am any judge, is neither mad nor subject to hallucinations."

"In that opinion I concur." Still my friend did not appear nearly as disconcerted as it seemed to me he should. There was, in fact, something almost like a twinkle in his eye.

"Then what are we to make of this?" I demanded.

"I deduce ..."

"Yes?"

Again the twinkle. "That one of her father's trips abroad, before the wedding, took him to Arizona. But of course I must make sure." And with that, leaving me in a state that I confess approached speechlessness, my friend went back across the room.

He approached our client, who still sat wearily in her chair, and extended both his hands. When she took them, wonderingly, he raised her to her feet. "One more question," he urged her solemnly. "The stone with which you struck down Hayden — where is it now? Surely it is not one of those still on the desk?"

"No," the lady marveled. "I could

not bear to leave it there." Going back to the door of the lumber-room, she reached inside, and from a shelf took down a pinkish stone of irregular, angular shape, a little larger than a man's fist. This she presented to my friend.

He turned it over once in his hands, and set it back upon the desk. A confident smile now transformed his face. "It is my happy duty to inform you," he said at once, "that the man you knew as Hayden will never bother you again; you may depend upon it."

Dracula paused here in his narration. "In a moment I was able to add my own assurances, for what they were worth, to those of the famed detective. That was after I had walked over to the desk and looked at the weapon for myself. I knew then that the man struck down with it could indeed have been a vampire; nay, that he must have been. For when he died of the effects of the blow, there on the floor of the lumber-room, his body, as is commonly the case with us, had at once undergone a dissolution to dust, and less than dust. His clothing, including the letters in his pocket, had,

as would be expected, disappeared as well. No humanly detectable trace was left when the fiance opened the door a few moments later."

"A vampire?" I protested. "But, he was struck down with a stone..."

"I was looking," said Dracula softly, "at a choice Arizona specimen of petrified wood."

Fred Saberhagen is an amazing writer of both SF and fantasy. He may be best known for his Berserker stories, and for the Empire of the East fantasy/sf epic. His tales of Dracula and Sherlock Holmes (of which this story is one) have delighted readers with the unusual turn of viewpoint unique to his depiction of the famous characters. Saberhagen's full-length novels in this vein include The Holmes-Dracula File, The Dracula Tape, Thorn, and An Old Friend of the Family. Vampires may not be exactly what you think!

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ORIGINS '82

"You bought a WHAT?"



illustrations by Christine Mansfield



T&T play aided by a Personal Computer

by Richard L. Staff

With the bustling, carnival atmosphere of the game convention temporarily out of their minds, several groups of players are intently engaged in an imaginary life and death struggle. Each group has its own room and a Game Master to provide the structure for a tournament level *Tunnels & Trolls* fantasy adventure.

Two groups of players have maneuvered their intrepid adventurers into the same situation. The party has been ambushed in a dark and musty tunnel by three rather large and toothsome trolls. Describing the trolls as lumbering towards the party at a ground-eating pace swinging tree-sized clubs, the Game Masters must swing into action themselves and discharge their appointed duties.

In one room, a Game Master dumps a bagful of dice on the playing table, with dice rolling and scattering every which way. As players gather scattered dice, the Game Master states that the trolls get 30 dice and 135 combat adds (this GM happens to be an arithmetic wiz kid) and asks for players' combat stats to be totaled. After much mumbling, groaning and argument, the players provide the requested total stats. One player (a beginner to T&T) is chosen to roll and add up the 25 dice for the players; he does it, but forgets the players' combat adds. At the same time, the Game Master rolls 30 dice for the trolls, adds them up, and figures in combat adds. After the other players point out to the beginner the errors of his way, they compare their total combat roll with the Game Master's. The Game Master is surprised to see that

the trolls have the lower total; he must now divide the difference (assume 15) by the number of trolls (three), which yields five hits applied to each troll.

This method of combat resolution sounds like a pain, right?

Well, in the other room, the Game Master sits at a table with his fingers on a typewriter-like keyboard. His face reflects the eerie pale blue glow of a small color television screen — the reflection of a personal computer TV monitor.

Instead of juggling dice in his hands or arithmetic figures in his head, he types in each monster's rating, and possibly stats to a weapon that is ready to use. He then types in each player's combat stats. The computer resolves the first round of battle and assigns hits to the losing side. It then asks if there will be another round of battle and if there are any changes that should be noted. And so the battle would continue till final resolution (total elimination or flight of one side).

Sounds like an easier way of handling T&T combat for the harried Game Master, right?

Whatever, the above hypothetical situations demonstrate the potential for efficiency and an improved level of playability in a T&T adventure that a personal computer can provide.

Just What Is A Personal Computer?

There is nothing magical or monster-like to fear in a computer. The personal computer gives you computing power that only large companies could afford a few years ago. You communicate with a computer through its keyboard; it

communicates with you through a TV monitor; it can "write" or "read" information to or from a tape in a cassette recorder. Give it microprocessor chips (tiny pieces of silicon with complex electronic circuits etched on them) and internal memory units and you have a basic computer. But a computer needs coded directions (programs or software) before it will do anything useful. More on software later.

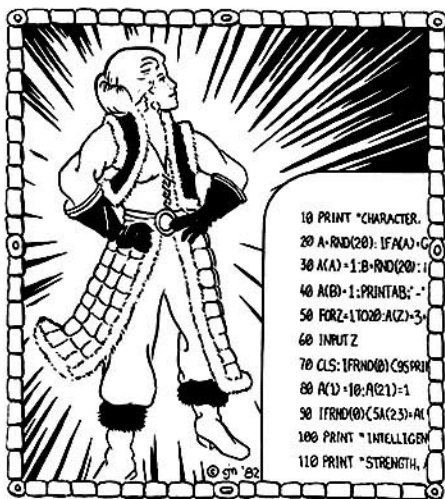
Computers for the Modern GM

What else can this modern-day wonder do? How much does it cost? Is it difficult to get it to do the things you say it can do? These are probably some of the questions you are asking yourself as you read this. At least they were going through my head when I first saw what a personal computer could do.

Cost of a personal computer system can range from a low of under \$300 to a high of over \$5,000. Commodore Business Machines offers both expensive and cheaper systems; their cheapest system is known as VIC-20 (it's the one under \$300). Commodore also has a moderately priced system called PET. The most popular, and the one that has been around the longest, is made by Tandy Corporation (better known as Radio Shack). Tandy has produced TRS-80 Models I, II, and III, as well as a Color Computer (their cheapest). Apple Computer's Apple II is fairly expensive, but has been around in some form or other almost as long as the TRS-80's. A relative newcomer to the block is Atari-Inc. with their 400 (low priced) and 800 (moderately priced) models. Although

the Atari 800/400 systems suffered from a lack of software for a long time, the past year has seen a software explosion for the Atari machines.

For those who plan to spend their life savings, please be assured that a personal computer can do more than just manage a T&T adventure. It can manage your budget, investment portfolio, and business related affairs. If you are looking for an ever-ready player of chess, backgammon, Othello, poker, cribbage, etc., then a personal computer is for you. There are even dungeon adventure programs (with and without graphic illustrations)!



A large body of commercial software is available at many computer stores across the United States. But if you can't buy it, you can make it yourself. With BASIC (a simple computer language), non-technical people can tell the computer what to do. It will probably take you two to six months of self-teaching (less in a classroom) to learn enough BASIC to develop a program that handles T&T combat. However, seeing your program up and running on a TV monitor gives you a great rush of self satisfaction despite (or maybe because) of all the work and time required.

Computer-Assisted T&T

Using a small computer only to handle T&T combat encounters is like taking off in a jumbo jet with no passengers. It is just the beginning in computerizing many of the GM's more mundane tasks. I would like to propose to you one possible "master" program that includes a combat handling section.

The first thing T&T players do is roll up the attributes for the characters they will be playing. All the computers previously mentioned have a random number generator function that can be

programmed to simulate six-sided dice rolling. The computer could be programmed to roll up two characters for each player and ask which one a player wants to keep. If players wanted the opportunity to be non-human, a "sub-routine" to determine race could be incorporated in the character-rolling routine which would automatically adjust the attributes. Along with the standard or "prime" attributes of Strength, IQ, Luck, Constitution, Dexterity, and Charisma, the computer would figure out each character's personal adds and starting amount of gold pieces. Specialized attributes could also be made part of this routine for those GMs who want to add detail to a character: for example, a magic ability based on IQ and DEX. (To do this, I choose two attributes that are most closely related to my special attribute and average them.) As a courtesy to beginning players, the computer may suggest a character type based on attributes rolled.

The program/computer would then lead the players to the "weapons shop" and "supply shop" routines. The "shopkeeper" (computer) would ask how much gold each player had. It would then ask how much each player wanted to spend on a weapon, the kind of weapon desired, strength and dexterity of each character, and if the player preferred a two-handed weapon or not. A list of weapons that met the player's needs would appear on the TV screen and the player would be asked to make a choice. The computer would then figure out the transaction and refer the player to the supply store just down the street if he still had some gold.

The "supply store" would ask a similar set of questions regarding armor and shields. If any player had any gold left, the "storekeeper" would inform the player(s) about the fantastic sales in general supplies that all adventurers need to be well equipped. The player would indicate what he wanted and the computer would quote a price. Game Master and player could haggle on prices and then record the transaction with the computer (I thought a little human involvement of the GM helps avoid the de-personalizing of computer-run T&T). Finally, the computer would tell each player how much gold he had left (if any).

Now it would be time for the GM to enter the tape (or disk) with dungeon room descriptions into the computer memory. As the players reach a location or room, the Game Master calls up the specific description. Hidden things and special surprises would be recorded separately among the GM's notes. Any time an encounter leads to battle, the

combat-handling routine would be used.

These are only a few of the options that could be included in a "master" program which would make a personal computer an invaluable assistant in T&T game mastering. They are suggested as ways to shorten the amount of time spent on non-adventuring matters, increasing the playability of T&T. Other T&T programs could be developed that would help a GM create and stock dungeons, determine weekly or monthly events in a town or kingdom, and so forth.

If the zest and fun of GMing a *Tunnels & Trolls* adventure/campaign has turned into an ungodly burden, then a personal computer can help ease that burden and bring back some zing in your life. Once you are skilled in BASIC programming, you can introduce the "20th Century" machine to the quasi-medieval game of T&T.

For Additional Ideas...

Excellent information and ideas are provided in the following recommended publications. There are many more publications available. Drop in at your local computer store and look at the book and magazine shelves. Ask questions, get demonstrations, and shop around.

Periodicals

- **Creative Computing**, P.O. Box 789-M, Morristown, N.J. 07960
- **COMPUTE!**, P.O. Box 5406, Greensboro, N.C. 27403. [For owners of Apple, Commodore PET, and Atari computers.]

Books

- **A Consumer's Guide to Personal Computing and Microcomputers**, by S.J. Freiburger and P. Chew, Jr. Published by Hayden Book Company, Inc. [Appears to be revised every two years.]
- **Basic and the Personal Computer**, by T. Dwyer and M. Critchfield. Published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. [Slightly out of date in regards to machines represented, but jam-packed with useful programming hints.]
- **Basic For Home Computers**, by B. Albrecht, L. Finkel and J. R. Brown. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. [Leads you by the nose in learning BASIC. They also have ATARI BASIC and TRS-80 BASIC books.]



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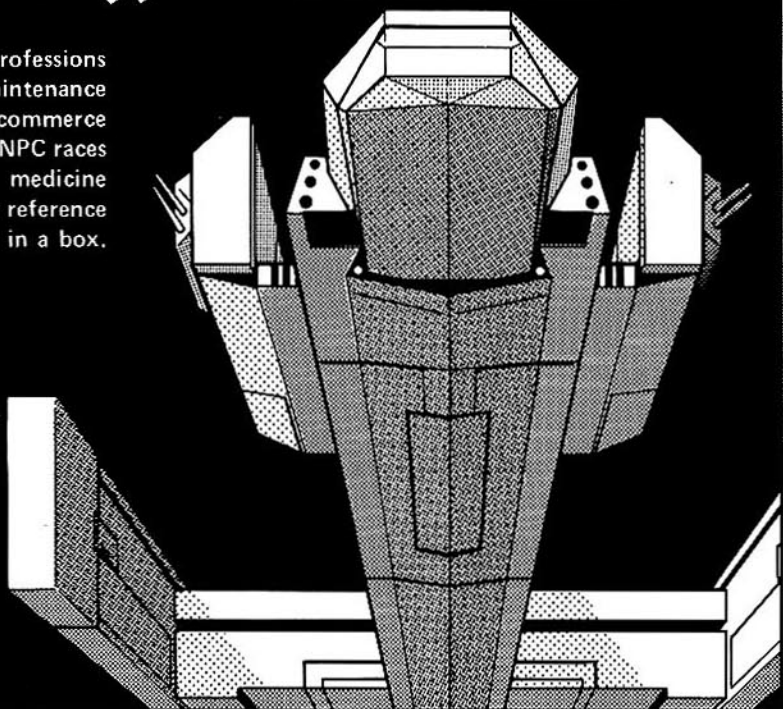
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Letters



illustration by Rob Carver

[Concerning the at-home monsters discussed in SA#12 . . .] You and Manly Wade Wellman might like to know that the Jersey Devil has been seen fairly recently. Sources of information include that old standby in such matters, hearsay; plus some newspaper clippings; and things my older brother has heard from people in the Pine Barrens. He is an entomologist and a specialist in Pine Barren species and thus sees a lot of the territory. Anyway, the Devil has been reported in just the past few years, often in the form Mr. Wellman describes, but sometimes closer to a more traditional devil: bipedal, non-flying, and bright red.

Not quite a monster, but closer to where I live, is the Headless Horseman of Paoli, the ghost of a Revolutionary War soldier who appears on the anniversary of the Paoli Massacre (a trivial engagement historically — but don't let him hear you say that) and offers people his head. If you take it, you die within the year. Why you would ever take it is difficult to fathom. I wrote a story about him which took great liberties with everything. But the Horseman hasn't said anything!

Darrell Schweitzer
Strafford, PA

Let's both hope he never does!

I enjoyed Samuel Davenport's article on sleeping champions [in SA#11]; some interesting things there that might well be incorporated into a dungeon situation. However, I noticed that one bit of lore about King Arthur's resting place was missing. This is from *History of King Alfred of England* by Jacob Abbott, copyright 1877 (Chapter II, pp. 54-56):

... On his return from one of his distant expeditions, he (Arthur) found that his nephew, Medrawd, had won her (Guinevere's) affections while he was gone, and a combat ensued in consequence between him and Medrawd. The combat took place on the coast of Cornwall. Both parties fell. Arthur was mortally

wounded. They took him from the field in a boat, and carried him along the coast till they came to a river. They ascended the river till they came to the town of Glastonbury. They committed the still breathing body to the care of faithful friends there; but the mortal blow had been given. The great hero died, and they buried his body in the Glastonbury churchyard, very deep beneath the surface of the ground, in order to place it as effectually as possible beyond the reach of Saxon rage and vengeance.

Arthur had been a deadly and implacable foe to the Saxons. He had fought twelve great pitched battles with them, in every one of which he had gained the victory. In one of these battles he had slain, according to the traditional tale, four hundred and seventy men, in one day, with his own hand.

Five hundred years after his death, King Henry the Second, having heard from an ancient British bard that Arthur's body lay interred in the Abbey of Glastonbury, and that the spot was marked by some small pyramids erected near it, and that the body would be found in a rude coffin made of a hollowed oak, ordered search to be made. The ballads and tales which had been then, for several centuries, circulating throughout England, narrating and praising King Arthur's exploits, had given him so wide a fame, that great interest was felt in the recovery and identification of his remains. The searchers found the pyramids in the cemetery of the Abbey. They dug between them, and came at length to a stone. Beneath this stone was a leaden cross, with the inscription in Latin, "Here lies buried the body of great King Arthur." Going down still below this, they came at length, at the depth of sixteen feet from the surface, to a great coffin, made from the trunk of an oak tree, and within it was a human skeleton of unusual size. The skull was very large, and showed marks of ten wounds. Nine of them were closed by concretions of the bone, indicating that the wounds by which these contusions or fractures had been made had been healed while life continued. The tenth fracture remained in a condition which showed that that had been the mortal wound.

Such are the tales which the old chronicles tell of the good King Arthur, the last and greatest representative of the power of the ancient aborigines. It is a curious illustration of the uncertainty which attends all the early records of national history, that, notwithstanding, all the above particularity respecting the life and death of Arthur, it is a serious matter of dispute among the learned in modern times whether any such person ever lived.

Grimtooth's *Traps* looks handy, but I've always had a problem with traps based on illusion; they always give themselves away because they give off magical vibes. The only solution I've

found — and I'm not even sure how kosher it is — is to build walls or doors of meteoric iron, thus hopefully foiling attempts to detect magic. Any ruling on feasibility?

Assassins will always be ethical and professional in my worlds. There is a good description of the working of assassin guilds in one of the early books in the John Carter/Barsoom series by ERB. And skilled assassin hit-teams are the most effective method I've found for dealing with obnoxious mega-characters (is there any other kind?).

Michael von Glahn
Iowa City, IA

Seems to me that Rick Wakeman's "The Myths and Legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table" (A&M Records) also mentions that piece of legend about Arthur. And whether he lived or not hardly matters any more, except among the most rabid scholars. He has passed into legend and myth, and THAT is a most-real immortality!

About meteoric iron and other such things: it's been done before, and is a suitable warning to the canny. Don't forget that a dungeon-maker might also have access to such higher-level magics as an *Anti-Magic Spell*, adjusted to last longer in a smaller area.

I was very impressed with SA#12 ... I thought Mike's article on his Vampire search was the most fascinating piece in the whole magazine — and I liked Wellman's article a lot. Mike's and Wellman's pieces seemed to fit together in the magazine so well.

I'm very impressed, as always, by your production quality. Without a doubt, SA is the finest fantasy game magazine in the field.

Bob Barger
Chattanooga, TN

SA continues to be excellent. The article on Vikings and their weaponry was fascinating and very useful from an artist's viewpoint. I'd hate to draw someone out of costume, such as a Viking with a spike shield. "Stormraven" was also very well-written and enjoyable. I recognize Stephan Peregrine's name and excellent illustrations from several other publications.

Barb Armata
Adams, MA

All of you are doing a good job with SA. For the last two years, I have been out of the country as a missionary and so I did not have much time for T&T. When I got back to the States, I was not that interested any more, but after reading through all the back issues I

regained my interest. I have found some players of FRP games and they are now trying to fight their way through "The Tomb of Axton" [SA#9/10]. Also, I want to say that I enjoy the fiction in SA and I hope that it continues to be published in future issues.

Richard D. Thomas
Roaring River, NC

Thank you. It's good to hear that a strong religious conviction and fantasy gaming aren't mutually exclusive; I don't believe they need be. As for fiction in the pages of SA: well, we've got the fiction mapped out through sometime next year, so don't plan on it going away any time soon!

Sorcerer's Apprentice occupies an important position in the RP'zine field, publishing as it does both gaming material and fiction. The inclusion of good short stories provides the best — for me — atmosphere in which to consume the T&T stuff; I am more aware of the role-playing aspect of games, less inclined to devote myself to heaps of rules. I feel that too many gamers are seduced by the attraction of a comprehensive rule set and the convenience of the dungeon as a place for adventure, thus ignoring the actual role playing. By combining game material, fiction, good artwork, and background material, SA blurs the artificial boundary between fantasy gaming and fantasy fiction.

On a more general note, please put in reviews — SF&F games, anything — stuff about other games apart from T&T, D&D, RQ. And what about some short sf stories, or sf game material? Keep up Troll Teasers, Q&Q, and if you can do all this and go monthly I promise at least a thousand new readers!

Roddy Graham
Hamilton, Strathclyde
United Kingdom

It's always a delightful surprise when someone recognizes what you're working towards! Fantasy fiction is the wellspring of fantasy gaming, and by offering the two in the same magazine, we hope to inspire you all to this kind of conclusion (without having to beat you over the head and shoulders to do it!)

As for science fiction material and such... well, little by little SA is going to have to broaden its lookout from straight fantasy. With the advent of WEB and Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes (both of which touch on time periods far afield of sword and sorcery), "SA" will come to mean a little bit of "Secret Agent" and "Space Adventure" as well. We'll not leave "Sorcerer's Apprentice" out in the cold to die, let me assure you! But the magazine will be growing in some new directions. Stick with us, and we might end up monthly, too!



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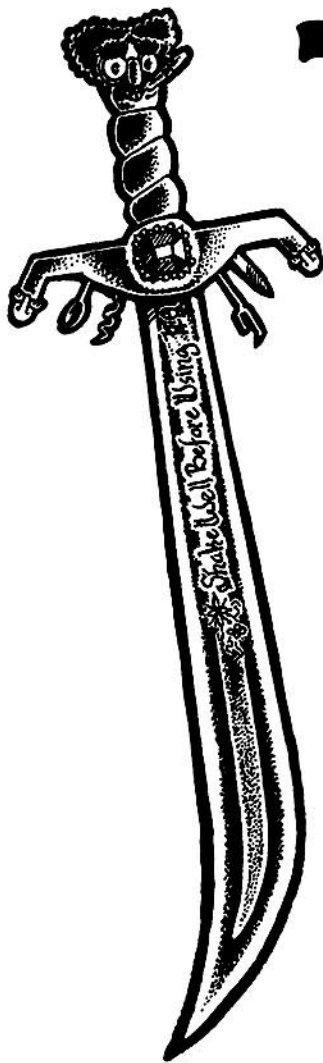
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illustrations by Michael von Glahn

The SWORD and the CURSE by Lee Duigon

According to the ancient songs, the tomb was hidden somewhere in the Mountains of the Mist, a good fifty days' ride south of the Westfjords. The roads passed through the Yastremskian Empire, so I wore an old but serviceable hauberk and made out that I was just another hard-bitten mercenary from the barbarian marches. The Emperor Sikander II was no friend to the House of Azkaz.

On the borders of the empire, I stopped at a roadside inn to refresh myself and stay the night.

It was a typical inn, crawling with half-naked serving wenches with big knockers, all of them crazy for barbarian mercenaries. The innkeeper, of course, was a shifty-looking rascal who spied for the emperor; and the requisite number of drunken imperial guardsmen was scattered throughout the room.

Like all heroes, I consumed enough ale to prostrate an elephant. If I tried the same thing today, I'd puke my guts out. But in those days, I never got sick from excessive drinking, and it never impeded my sexual powers. In fact, nothing ever impeded my sexual powers.

But forgive me — I didn't mean to wax nostalgic.

Naturally, I wound up in bed with a well-endowed serving wench, and we did things that would've made Masters and Johnson burn up their notes in despair. I should have known better, but we heroes always fall for the same old trick — a girl would get you worn out with drink and lust, you'd be

mother-naked without your armor, and the imperial guardsmen would crash into the room the moment you shut your eyes.

Well, that never worked out for the guardsmen. I dodged a dagger, rolled out of bed, and used a chair to parry a spear. Then I grabbed my ax and smeared the three guards, armor and all, against the walls. Without waiting to find out why they'd attacked me, I pulled on my clothes, snatched up my gear, and jumped out the window just in time to avoid five more guardsmen who had come up to reinforce their buddies. I found my horse and high-tailed it out of there.

So far, so good — a standard adventure, right? That's what I thought.

But let me tell you about the Yastremskian Empire, through which I was riding.

West to east, it stretches from the Ocean to the Great Tennacovian Desert. To the north, it's bounded by the Heboaribab Forest and the Inland Sea; to the south, it extends to the foothills of the Mountains of Mist. The capital city, Booskapopolis, is located on the west coast, just north of the delta of the River of Lost Souls.

I was traveling south through the center of the empire, passing through farm country inhabited by semi-nude milkmaids with Frazetta thighs and gargantuan lusts. Nuff said.

One day, about noon, I was riding down the imperial highway when I fell in with a wizard named Falstaf Long-

I am Brongor the Tall, son of Azkaz Priestrobber, King of the Westford Lands. But you can call me Harry Johnson. Of Stelton, New Jersey — wherever that is.

I know I'm not much to look at now, but I was once your typical sword-and-sorcery hero — over six feet tall, 240 pounds of herculian muscle; armed to the teeth, handsome as an Italian movie star, and hung like a bull. I had to beat the Elf-maids off with a falchion.

Sure, I know what you're thinking. I'm just another drunk you ran into in this dump of a bar, right? Well, listen up, varlet. Everything I'm about to tell you is true, and I can prove it.

Everything was rosy until I heard a legend about the tomb of Dendrobates the Witch-King, and the hoard of treasure it was said to contain. I saddled my destrier—that's a horse, bonehead!—slung my double-bladed ax over my shoulder, and set out to find it.

beard — better known, I discovered much too late, as Falstaf the Bumbler. He's responsible for my being here, and being only five-foot-six.

"Good day to you, wizard," I greeted him. I knew he was a wizard because he carried a staff, wore a long, white beard, and looked old and wise.

"Good day to you, warrior," he replied. "How fares thy quest for the tomb of Dendrobates?"

I wasn't surprised the wizard knew my business; where I come from, you learn to expect the unexpected. But I hoped he hadn't blabbed it about. I didn't want a company of Sikander's guards trailing me to the tomb, and robbing me when I came out with my treasure.

"I had thought my purpose was a secret, known only to myself," I told him. He winked and looked smug.

"I cast a little spell," he explained, "which revealed it to me."

To make a long story short, Falstaf offered to tag along and help me, in return for half the loot. It's always handy to have a friendly wizard nearby, so I agreed. From what I'd heard, there was plenty for both of us.

Later on, we hit a town named Vistrgardr and stopped at an inn, the Flaming Dragon. Again with the serving wenches, and again with the guardsmen. That's when things started to go wrong.

As I was knocking two of our assailants' heads together, while more came jostling through the door, Falstaf leaped out of bed and struck a commanding pose.

"Somm'oga Khana phuna!" he cried, and blue fire ran up and down his forearm.

The guards sprouted black fur and turned into bears, and we barely escaped with our lives.

"Why the hell," I demanded, when we were safely out of town, "did you turn them into bears?"

Falstaf seemed disheartened.

"It was supposed to turn them into small moths," he muttered.

At last we saw the Mountains of Mist rising in the distance, cloaked in clouds. Beyond them supposedly lay another empire, this one ruled by Phutatorius the Lisper. But that wasn't our concern.

"I don't suppose you know the way to the tomb," I said to Falstaf. My confidence in him had been shaken.

"No," he admitted. "But by dint of magical exertions on my staff, I shall find its door."

He led us into the foothills and we

struck an old trail which took us right to the spot. Along the way, I had to behead a few Orcs who took us by surprise, but it was no big deal. We'd found the tomb.

Carved into the face of the mountain was a huge door, which bore an inscription in cunieform. Falstaf translated:

"*'This door yields to mystic spells, or Lazarushian battle-yells. Beware the Guardian who waits for those who pass beyond these gates.'*"

"Hmph!" he grunted, rolling up his sleeves. "I think I've got just the spell for this!"

Falstaf reeled off a long, complicated incantation which brought a fall of rocks down onto our heads and damn near killed us. I told him that was enough of his spells; I'd try some Lazarushian battle-cries.

"Don't fire till ye see the whites of their eyes!" I bellowed. "No taxation without representation! Remember the Ozygardius!"

The last one did the trick. The stone doors slid open, and we strode boldly into the murk. As soon as we were inside, the doors crashed closed again; but Falstaf gave us some light with his staff while I fashioned a couple of torches.

Before us stretched a long passage-

way sloping down into the bowels of the mountain. We hadn't gone far when we were halted by an unearthly scream somewhere ahead of us.

"Quick!" I whispered. "What's this Guardian that's mentioned in the verse on the door?"

"By all reports," said Falstaf, "an ancient beast whose like has not been seen for many a long age."

Out of the darkness charged a lizard-thing as big as a rhino. Muttering a prayer to Grodin, the god of the House of Azkaz, I swung my ax and buried it deep in the monster's head. With a gush of black blood and a convulsive shiver of its scaly limbs, it died.

"I was just about to make it vanish," Falstaf grumbled.

We climbed over the carcass of the giant reptile and continued to follow the passage downward. Finally it emptied into a vast underground chamber — the fabled tomb of Dendrobates!

We couldn't see the ceiling, but the floor was ankle-deep in gold coins and precious stones. In one corner stood a life-size gold effigy of the Witch-King, brandishing a golden scimitar with a ruby as big as your fist for a pommel.

"That's mine!" I called, and trudged through the wealth to claim it.



Falstaf, who had knelt down to fill his hat with emeralds, came after me for a closer look.

I reached for the sword, then noticed that the blade was engraved with blood-red letters that seemed to glimmer with a light of their own. I hesitated, and asked Falstaf if he could read it.

Squinting, he studied the weapon for a moment.

"Ah, yes!" he exclaimed. "This is Elvish, Feanorian script of a bygone age. But I can read it, never fear!"

"It says that whoever uses this sword will conquer all his enemies."

"That's for me!" I said, and pulled it free of the effigy's grasp. No sooner had I done so than the effigy's mouth popped open, its lapis-lazuli eyes rolled, and a low, rumbling, evil laugh shook the chamber. With a start, I realized that the laughter was coming from the statue.

"Fool!" it chuckled, like a thunderstorm enjoying a nasty practical joke. "Fool! You have stolen the Accursed Scimitar of Dendrobates. There is no escape!"

The statue closed its mouth and fell silent. I gave Falstaf a dirty look.

"Maybe," I suggested, "you ought to read this again."

Swallowing hard, the wizard bent down to re-examine the blade.

"Uh-oh — I see my mistake," he said. "Sorry, it wasn't Feanorian after all. It's another kind of script — Middle Darklven, I believe. Yes, that's what it is. And oh! We've done a terrible thing!"

"What? What?"

Falstaf shuddered.

"According to the inscription," he began, "this sword was forged a thousand years ago by the Witch-King himself. As you may know, Dendrobates' plan to conquer the world was thwarted by a fellowship of Human, Elvish, Dwarvish, and Hobbit heroes. Although defeated, he still had power to enchant this blade before he died."

"And that enchantment is...?" I pursued.

"Nothing less," said Falstaf, "than the destruction of all clichés."

Before these horrifying words registered their full impact on my tortured brain, my head swam and everything went blurry. I swooned, and when I came to, I saw Falstaf sitting on a pile of ladies' lingerie. But I didn't recognize him.

Instead of robes, he was wearing what I now know was a powder-blue leisure suit. A briefcase had replaced his

staff and bag, and his beard was gone.

"Falstaf!" I cried. "Is that you? What happened?"

"Alas, I am Falstaf no more," he sighed, shaking his head. "My name is Rudolph Steinfeld. I'm a marketing consultant — whatever that is. Oh, woe is me!"

Then I saw that my armor and my ax were gone. I was wearing this drab, green work uniform I'm wearing now, and my arms and legs were like sticks. So much for Brongor's heroic musculature.



It came to me that my name was Harry Johnson, and I was a maintenance man for the Piscataukwa Township Road Dept.

"Let's get out of here!" I said, struggling to my feet. "Where's that magic scimitar?"

"Vanished," said Falstaf — or Steinfeld — ruefully. "The curse destroyed it as a cliché."

Wearily we made our way up the passage. It was no longer dark; little glass bulbs mounted on the ceiling emitted a dim, uncertain light.

We passed the spot where I slew the Guardian, but the lizard-thing's body was gone. In its place lay the corpse of a fat, elderly man clad in a dark blue uniform with a metal badge on his chest that said "Acme Security".

The magic doors were gone, and we emerged from the tomb, wondering what changes our rash action had wrought in the world. I never found my horse.

We hoofed it back to Vistrgardr, which is now called Pottsboro, and made for the inn where Falstaf had transformed the guardsmen into bears. We could use a drink, and a roll in the hay with some serving wenches.

Alas, the wenches were gone! A frowzy old woman with an evil face tended bar, and the only semblance to a serving wench was a skinny girl with pockmarked skin and a nose like a stiletto. But at least they still had ale. We ordered a pitcher apiece and proceeded to drown our troubles.

I had hardly drained the first pitcher when I felt an earthquake in my stomach. For the first time in my life, ale laid me low upon the table.

I woke up alone, in an alley, smelling of ale and covered with filth. I never did see that moron Steinfeld again. There was nothing to do but make the long trek back to the Westfjords.

Well, between one thing and another, I got lost and wound up here. After what I've seen of my world, I'm ready to give up on the Westfjords and settle for Stelton — if I can find it.

If you could only have seen my world before that curse was cast! It was paradise, and I wrecked it.

I wandered from one end of it to another, surveying the damage. There were still some serving wenches, but now they wore clothes and smacked you in the eye if you tried to get fresh. There were still barbarians, but they were a scrawny, underfed lot with no more sense than a bunch of codfish. The empire conquered them all, just by filling them up with liquor and buying their lands for a handful of cheap glass beads.

But the empire didn't fare too well, either. Last I heard, Sikander II had been kicked off the throne for tax evasion, and they were holding elections.

There were still a few wizards, but all they could do was play the old shell game on the hicks until the guardsmen ran them out of town.

The monsters got scarce, and had to be protected by endangered species legislation.

It's hardly worth going back.

You say you want proof? Well, get a load of this. See that ring? It's an official seal ring of the House of Azkaz, in the Westfjords. You won't find another like it anywhere.

But wait! That ring on *your* finger! That's the House of Mukimuk, or I'm a Troll! Holy cow, it's the real thing! Where did you get it?

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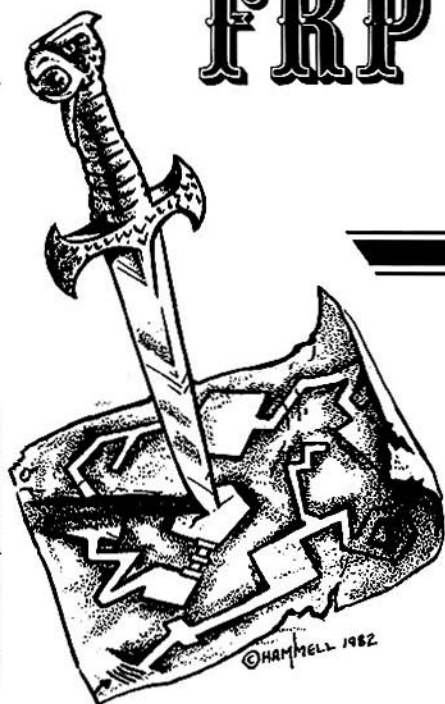
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THE PROBLEM WITH FRP GAMES...

by Colin Wheeler

illustrations by Tim Hammell



Probably the single most voiced comment I have heard on FRP games amongst British players (especially new players) is, 'it's difficult to get into one of these games'. (A variation is, 'I didn't feel comfortable and lost interest after a while.')

This is a great pity because FRP has truly great potential for expanding the borders of game-playing.

Behind comments of this sort lies a more ominous observation. Role-playing was specifically designed to provide complete involvement for all players — but why does it so often fail to deliver?

Now before all the hardened role-players who are reading this begin sharpening their +1 swords in preparation for a riposte, stop to consider this for a moment. For a game (or game system) to survive, the publishers must sell — and continue to sell — more copies of it. This in turn means encouraging new players to take part in the game. So far, so good. After all, you can persuade almost anyone to try something once.

However, unless these "virgins" come away feeling fulfilled, they will not follow through on the exercise and turn themselves from player into GM by going out and purchasing the game. Ergo, non-expansion of the game into ever-widening markets, and everybody suffers. So let's consider this: why do FRP games so often fall short of their potential?

Part of FRP's great appeal (for the person who owns the game, anyway) lies in the fact that you can create and control your own world. In effect, you can become God (at least for a while). And as God, anything you decree is universal law. Marvelous! At last, a game which will go exactly the way you planned it. This is fine, but as GM just how did you plan it?

If your criteria were: as many nasties and treasure as possible, make it impossible for players to get out alive without phenomenal luck, each room has treasure plus monster, don't give anything away, etc. etc., — well, it's quite likely that unless all your players share your feelings, someone is going to be very bored by the game. Furthermore, as you merrily kill off your adversaries, what do the unfortunate dead do for the rest of the session?

As God, the GM should remember that it is his responsibility to ensure his players have a good time. This probably means a total change in viewpoint when designing an adventure. Weird things like interest, mental challenge, flow of action, balance, and fun all start to assume a greater importance when planning a world. Each adventure should be carefully designed to cater to both the physical and mental attributes of your players.

For instance, plan for wizards in the adventure by supplying a magical conundrum or two to test the mettle, not only of the character, but of the *player* as well. Give a thief a three-stage lock to pick so that the *player* must make his character solve the problem. And if you find that during the course of play, one or more of the players is sitting around not doing much, nudge him and whisper that there is a bright shiny object in the corner of the room which *he* might like to inspect.

Of course, balance is important and there is no doubt that the occasional fight with a powerful nasty is very stimulating and in itself lends an air of achievement to the players' reactions. But it can so easily be overdone, which leads to a thoroughly predictable game. Unpredictability can be great fun for everyone.

I greatly applaud Flying Buffalo's recent publication of *Grimtooth's Traps*, not just because it was written in an extremely amusing style, but also because it contained so many ideas to actually make a party *think* about what they're doing, where they are, and who they are up against. Thematic traps and puzzles can also give subtle but valuable clues to parties as well. If the last three traps they encountered all involved tons of water potentially crashing down around them, sooner or later they might just get the idea that what they seek is a golden mermaid or something similar. Or, if the last big treasures they found were guarded by Greek gods, they might guess they are headed for a confrontation with Zeus himself (so they had better start boning up on their Greek Mythology).

Again, this is the GM's responsibility:

he must actually make his adventure an *adventure*. It should have a storyline, with a beginning, middle, and end. And within this framework many and varied things should be possible (and sometimes impossible). In short, the adventure must have some point to it. A criticism I have heard of SPI's *Dragonquest* is that it is so complex as to be almost unplayable except by the most dedicated fanatic. This, of course, is a matter of opinion. What cannot be in doubt, however, is the quality of the ready-made adventures SPI has published which use the system. Just reading these adventures is exciting because they are *good stories* which happen to have been written to be experienced rather than just read. Many a Game Master could take a leaf (or preferably several) from these particular books.

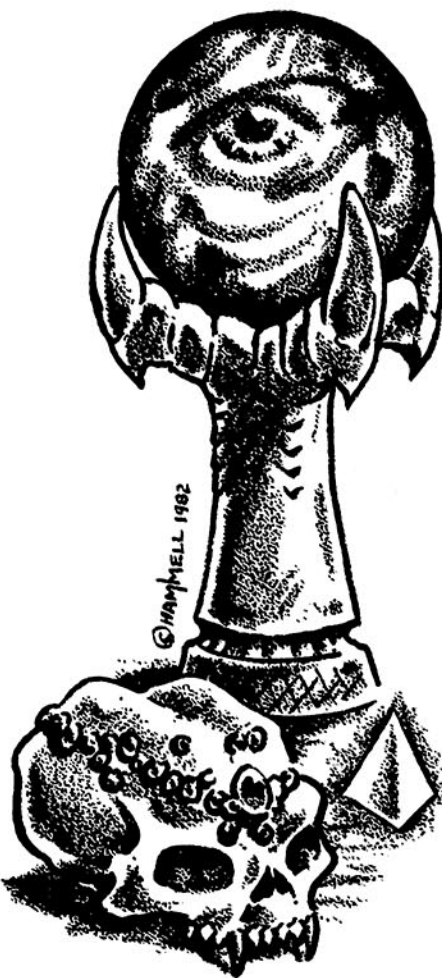
But what of the FRP game systems themselves? In the final analysis, the GM *will* decide whether any adventure is interesting or not. Still, I think the game systems (or at least the published modules for these systems) could do a lot more to improve matters. Take for example the visual aspect of role-playing. No matter what kind of game you're playing, it is very difficult to maintain a high degree of concentration without some form of visual focus. The mind needs some pictorial parameters to work with. It is one thing for the GM to tell you that you are in a dark corridor with cold stone walls which run straight ahead as far as the eye can see. It is quite another for the GM to lay down on the table a sheet of paper containing either a three-dimensional picture or a straightforward plan view of the immediate surroundings.

Of course, in the very early days of FRP it was expected that one member of the party would be mapping the entire labyrinth so the players could see from this where they were. However, there's still a time delay while the mapper is drawing — and again, the other players still aren't directly involved. How much better to simply present the party with a diagram containing the bare essentials (i.e. all those salient features which even the most ignorant character could be expected to notice) and invite them to examine the area, thus adding to their knowledge by practical experience.

To actually do this, the GM must first draw up the aforementioned diagrams — or worse still, spend more money on 'player aids'. It might make things easier on GMs and players alike if, in their dungeon modules and adventures, publishers included scale-plan views of dungeon sections, in black outline if necessary, which are immediately available for use with either stand-up cardboard figures (another possibility for

inclusion) or with the more common metal figures.

And what about monsters? Most of the FRP systems I have encountered will describe a room as containing 'such and such a monster' and leave the GM to simply announce to the party which enters that 'you see a Kobold'. In fantasy worlds, surely one man's Kobold is another man's Mimic. And are we to believe that these characters, never having seen a Kobold before, will immediately know what one is when they see it?



I venture to suggest that the GM and the players would find it much more satisfying if the GM were to simply lay down on the table a picture of the creature and say, "You see one of these". From the publisher's point of view, this would mean providing pictures of the monsters they create (in black and white outline only, if necessary), and also stressing to the GM that the full implications of combat with such a creature would not be known by the players until they experience it. Thus, with each encounter, the player actually feels that his character is becoming more experienced in this strange new world.

Of course, most of these suggestions only make sense when incorporated into pre-designed adventures. And why shouldn't they? Let's face it, most of us will probably be willing to play more — and thus buy more — if we know that we won't have to do a lot of extra work when we buy a packaged adventure.

As I mentioned previously, I have only come across a few pre-designed adventures which really qualify for the title, and that because they have been written as stories as well as games. I'm not talking about simply providing a rationale for the adventure. I'm talking about a *story* where the GM tells the players the circumstances leading up to 'the present time', describing certain characters and events which may or may not constitute the whole truth (or which may be a tissue of lies).

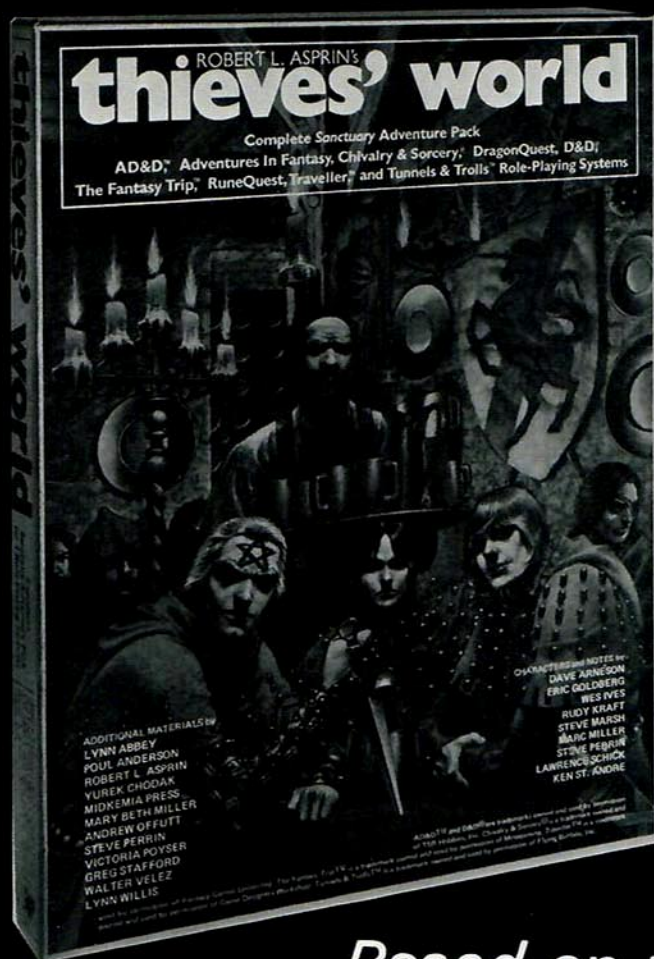
In a case such as this, characters are bound to come across situations which are anomalous with the information they were given. Suddenly, they must reconsider their whole situation. They may have to decide whether they really are fighting for a good cause, or whether they have been tricked into helping the evildoers. Their future actions within the game will be dictated by uncertainty. A revelation of such magnitude could have a marvelously unsettling effect on a group of players, almost guaranteed to reawaken interest in even the most bored people. In fact, the players will react just like the characters in the story could be expected to react, no longer feeling that this is just another game but really experiencing the feeling of being in the unknown.

A theatrical director I once knew had a philosophy of directing plays. He maintained that his job was to first ensure that his actors really *felt* like the characters they portrayed (by virtue of the lines they spoke and the moves they made), and then to provide the setting and the props to complete the image. The result: the audience is convinced that what they are seeing is really happening, and becomes involved.

In FRP games, the same should be true. The publisher and the GM are, jointly, the director. The players are both actors and audience. But only if everyone does their part can they enjoy the fruits of their labors. And let's face it: the more we as players and GMs enjoy what we're doing, the more likely we are to spread the gospel of FRP and entice more people to take part, thus helping to ensure the healthy continuation of FRP games.

Here's to improvement. Long may it continue. ■

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Lerotra'hh, the Death Empress of Khazan, has found a secret — and seemingly unending — supply of mithril. No one knows where the mithril comes from, but rumors are rife and several attempts have been made to steal chunks of the precious metal in its raw form.

To convert the mithril into a more manageable — and countable — form, Lerotra'hh and her minion Khara Khang have enslaved 100 dwarves, and they do nothing but make mithril bars. Every day, each dwarf is given 16 ounces of mithril to make a 1-pound bar.

Four months have passed. Suddenly, a rumor reaches Lerotra'hh that one of the dwarves has been using only 15 ounces of mithril in his bar and keeping 1 ounce of mithril a day for himself. The Death Empress is incensed, and demands to know which dwarf has been dishonest. None of them will confess.

From another dimension, Khara Khang summons a very large graduated scale (like a doctor's office scale) which registers pounds and ounces. However, the scale can only be used once before it will vanish, and Khara Khang isn't sure he can find another one fast enough to uncover the culprit and placate Lerotra'hh.

How can Lerotra'hh and Khara Khang discover whether the rumor was correct and which dwarf was guilty, by using the scale only once?

(ANSWER: Take one bar from the first dwarf, two bars from the second dwarf, three from the third, and so forth up to the hundredth dwarf, who supplies one hundred mithril bars. Weigh all 5,050 bars together — after all, it's a BIG scale. (If all the bars together weigh exactly 5,050 pounds, then all the dwarves are safe. If there are any ounces missing, however, the number of missing ounces will indicate which dwarf is cheating. And you know what happens to him....)

The following short verses are of a peculiar poetic form called the *clerihew*, named after the inventor of the form, Edmund Clerihew, who wrote the first one back in the mid-18th century. The first clerihew set the form forever after; it was 4 lines long, and in the first line appeared the name of the person being satirized. Meter is not important, though lines are usually kept short. This was the first clerihew:

Sir Humphrey Davy
Abominated gravity,
Lived with the odium
Of having discovered sodium.

The following clerihews were created by Ken St. Andre. We thought it would be rather fun to share them with gamers everywhere. Enjoy!

Mark Miller
Mans the tiller
Of G.D.W.
(That's the end of this clerihew)

They say Steve Perrin
Has been heard to swear in
The Gloranthan tongues
At the top of his lungs!

Scotty Bizar
Is Gaming's bright star.
SF games, he sells many,
But does anyone play any?

Champion Steve Peterson
Put woofers and tweeters on
His new superhero
Called Decibel Zero.

E. Gary Gyax
Survives all attacks,
And continues his braggin's
About Dungeons and Dragons.

Ken St. Andre
Was in quite a quandary.
He developed a good game,
But E. Gary Gyax had already pre-empted its name.

Grimtooth
Is far from uncouth.
That wily old troll
Is always in control.

We started an on-going "Limerick Contest" a coupla issues ago, and here's the latest offering. You too can get your limericks (a fine fantastical rhyming scheme, if ever there was one!) displayed here, and receive \$2.50 for each one used as well! We need new ones each issue, so send 'em in!

There once was a balrog from Bloo
Who sliced up old dwarves for his stew.

Along came a mage
Who exploded with rage
And he blasted the brute into two!
— Alan Packer

There once was a wizard named Foo
Who melted his gold into glue.

He said, "I adhere
To ideas much more queer
That come to me out of the blue."
— Pat Mueller

A nosy young delver from Zell
Was exploring a treasure-filled well
When he came on a scroll
Which blasted his soul
And sent his poor spirit to hell.

— Stefan Jones

There once was a dwarf from K'nookie
Who hassled and cheated a bookie.

The dwarf he fell dead
With a dirk in his head
For the truth was this thug was no rookie.
— Robbie Webber

There was a fair bard name of Moons
Who charmed all the Guild with his tunes.

He fumbled one day
He just couldn't play...
The wizards just left him in runes!
— Terrence M. Miller

There once was a thief from Fazoze
Who picked a lock with his nose.

He twisted his neck
And screamed "Ow!" and "Heck!"
He now walks in an awkward pose.
— Brant Bates

An aquatic young delver named Clark
While swimming, encountered a shark.

He said, "Please don't mind
If I leave you behind
As I set a new world swimming mark!"
— Roy Cram

An enchanted amphibian named Clide
Took a beautiful princess as bride

But the king divorced them
When the in-laws forced them
To do that ... or commit frogicide.
— Lee Russell

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