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Cygnax

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#3

The Hobby Shop Dungeon
Villainous knights for 13th Age
Metamorphosis Alpha adventure



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jim mcdonald (order #5342807)



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EDITORIAL

The first big news this issue is our new art director, R. Scott Taylor. Take a look at the stunning cover painting by Clyde Caldwell, the timeless illustration styles of veterans like Jim Holloway, Janet Aulisio, Michael Wilson, John Dollar, Charles Peale, Travis Hanson, and Jeff Laubenstein. Amazing artists all, curated by Scott with his critical eye and knack for assembling the right talent for each article. I found Scott through his blog, *Art of the Genre*, and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the world of fantasy art and illustration.

The second big news, and this is a biggie indeed, is our special attraction, the Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul. This is the first time any part of the legendary Hobby Shop Dungeon has been published. Until now, access to the dungeon's passages and caverns was restricted to those lucky players who made it to Lake Geneva in the '70s and '80s to play with Terry Kuntz or Ernie Gygas at TSR's hobby shop. Together with Benoist Poiré, Ernie Gygas has been recreating the entire megadungeon, which will be available from TSR as HSD1, *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*, at the end of 2014.

I'd like to make a brief mention of one of our house styles, namely, sentence case in article titles. Some readers have noticed that we don't capitalize a lot of our article titles, as well as section headings within our articles. In the last century, you'd find the use of sentence case in titles mostly in newspapers and bibliographic references. Magazine and Book Publishers Tended to Write Their Headlines in Title Case. Recently, however, the use of sentence case has become much more widespread, especially online. I like this move to sentence case, and away from the old conventions, partly on aesthetic grounds, and partly because it feels a bit less like we're shouting at you. Sometimes, of course, an article headline contains an actual title, such as "Master Mariner" or "Nuffle's Academy." In those cases, title case is brought out to have its time on stage. We'll do our best to be consistent, and I hope we're providing a readable and enjoyable magazine for you. Of course, then there's the issue of capitalizing words within articles, like monster names, magic spells, and character attributes. Every game has its own style guide, and we endeavor to be as appropriate as we can while still keeping a consistent style throughout the magazine. Believe it or not, this is fun for me! I'm a nerd.

And now, URLs. In general, we try to avoid printing too many links to websites in *Gygax* magazine. They're not pretty things to look at, but more importantly, web addresses tend to have a shorter lifespan than printed magazines. Pick up a magazine that was printed even three or four years ago, and chances are most of the URLs will lead to broken links or missing sites. Still, there are times when a reference to a web address is helpful, or even necessary, as in the case of our *Federation Commander* scenario, which requires a free download of a ruleset to play. To solve the problem, we've created our own link shortener, **gyg.ax**. Whenever we publish a URL, we'll print a shortened version that begins with the address <http://gyg.ax/>.

You can type the shortened link into your browser, and our server will redirect you to the correct address, even if it has changed since the article was first published.

Finally, some errata. There were three glaring errors in issue #2, which I humbly apologize for. The illustration for the article "Weird Vibrations" was incorrectly attributed, and should have been credited to Ian Baggey. He is an amazing artist, please look him up. The article "Tactics in Samurai Battles" was missing a major section, and the complete article can be read online at gyg.ax/samurai. Finally, the sidebar for that same article was written by Richard Borg, whose credit was accidentally omitted.

Enjoy this issue of *Gygax* magazine, and please be sure to write to us and let us know your thoughts about the articles herein, and what you'd like to see more of in the future. Happy reading, and good gaming!

Jayson Elliot
Editor-in-Chief



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DON'T INTERRUPT THE GAME!

Dantès Faria

Statistics		Health	
Game:	Avalon	Max HP:	21
Gender:	M	Current HP:	21
Alignment:	Lawful Neutral	Non-Lethal:	0
Hair Color:	Black	Ki Pool:	
		Rest	
		Total Level:	3
Offense		Defense	
CMB:	+2	CMD:	14
Initiative:	+2	Armour Class:	13
Base Attack:	+1	Saves	
Melee Attack:	+2	Fortitude:	+3
Range Attack:	+3	Reflex:	+3
# of Attacks:	1	Will:	+7
Armour			
Padded AC: +1 Dex: 8 Fail: 5%			

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The Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul - p. 43

How do you stop a space amoeba?



A solo scenario for *Federation Commander*

by Stephen V. Cole

Editor's note: this article depicts a scenario from the game *Federation Commander* that can be played using the ship and monster cards provided, along with the scenario instructions on page 62. You will need the *First Missions* rules, which you can download for free at gyg.ax/firstmissions

Your starship, the *USS Saratoga*, is patrolling the area when the Class I alarm comes through via subspace. A deadly space amoeba is wandering through an inhabited region of the Federation, its deadly energy field causing death and destruction wherever it goes. This monster is dangerous, but not particularly evil; it is in fact simply a wild animal that is not aware of how many sentients it has killed.

Saddened that you may have to kill the creature to stop its attacks, but outraged by the number of Federation citizens already killed, your ship accelerates to warp seven. Arriving at the last planet devastated by the monster, you follow its ion trail until, at last, you make contact.

What to do? While space amoebas are common enough, there are many different kinds, and what will kill, or drive away, one species will have no effect on another. You must approach the monster and gain scientific information points before you can discover the correct solution to this particular problem.

Take command!

You are playing *Federation Commander*, using a starship from the first product in the line (*Klingon Border*) and a monster from the fourth (*Romulan Attack*). This is no problem, as all elements of the *Federation Commander* line work together. You could play the scenario using a Klingon, Gorn, Romulan, or Tholian cruiser and you could be fighting the Planet Killer, Death Probe, Space Dragon, Juggernaut, or even one of the other cruisers. For that matter, an entire fleet of a dozen ships could be attacking a planet defended by a starbase and a smaller squadron of enemy ships, but save that for your next game. Right now, you have a space amoeba on your scanners and a populated planet only minutes away.

Target in sight!

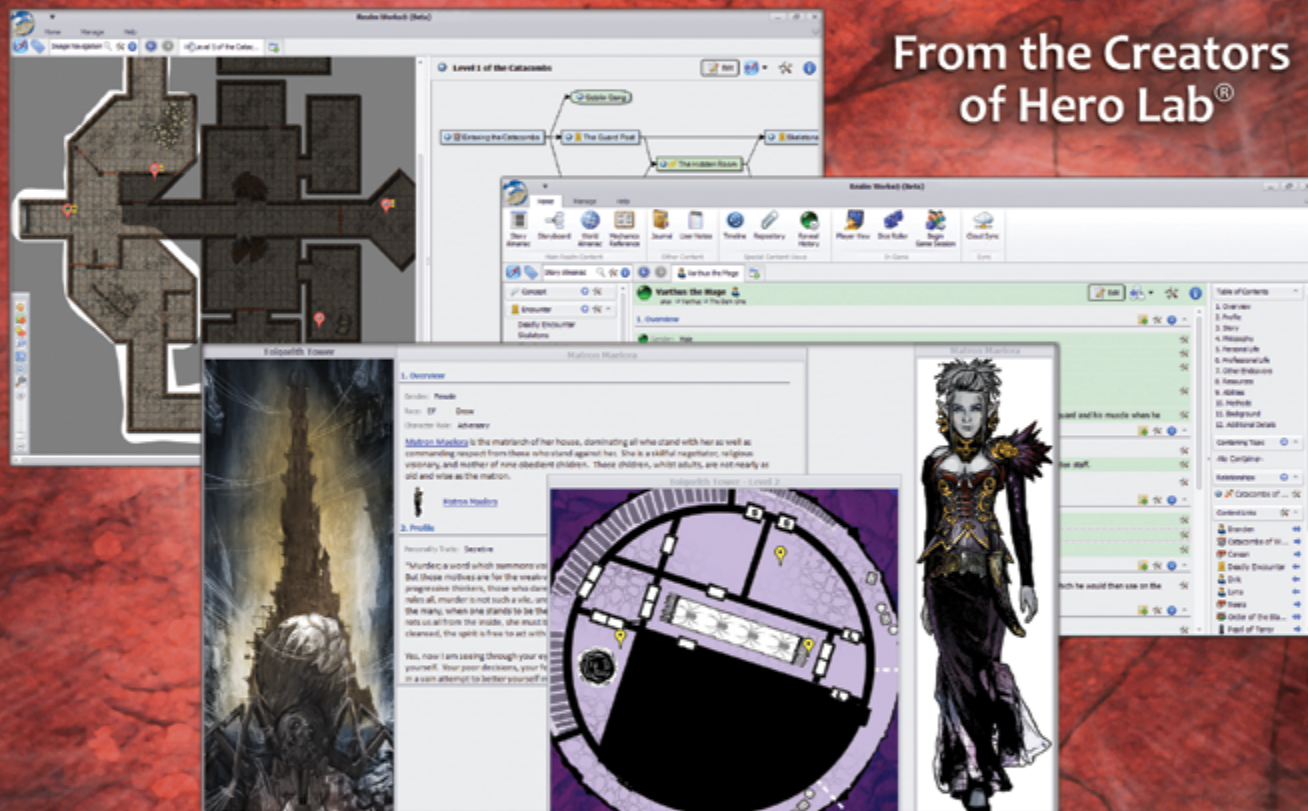
You place six mounted map panels (*included in the downloadable First Missions rules –ed.*) in a rectangle on the dinner table, and decide to use the side with the smaller hexes (and the corresponding smaller counters) in order to

give yourself plenty of room. During the game, the space amoeba (using an optional rule) will continue to move in one direction (toward the nearby colony). As it approaches the edge of the map, you simply move the panels on the opposite side to extend the map in the direction the monster is moving, and slide the whole array so it stays on the table.

Your ship begins 200,000 kilometers (twenty hexes) away from the monster. At the start of the turn, you count your power (the blue boxes on your ship card) which comes to 36 points (the four batteries are not available as you used them to pre-load your photon torpedoes). You pay 24 points for a baseline speed of 24 (enough to catch the monster) and head straight for him. The problem is that the monster is moving eight hexes per turn away from you, meaning you will still be four hexes away at the end of the turn. That would give you only 32 points of lab information, and you need at least 40 (since you need 200 total and the most you can get in one turn is 80). During this first turn, you pay five points of power (during five of the

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eight impulses) to move faster, and end the turn three hexes away. The rest of your power holds the armed photon torpedoes ready to fire.

As this is your closest approach during the turn, you gain (see the chart in the amoeba diagram on page 62) six points for each of your eight labs, for a total of 48 points. The amoeba scores four points of damage on your forward shield, reducing it from the original 30 boxes to 26. No worries.

During the second turn, you pay for a base-line speed of 16, enough to catch the amoeba and fly directly through his hex. This produces ten points for each of your eight labs, and your total is now 128. Unfortunately, that close approach cost you eight points of damage. Because you “side-slipped” into the amoeba hex, you take this on the #6 shield, preserving as much as you can of the vital #1 shield. You end turn #2 five hexes away and pay some left-over energy to fix the shields.

Plotting sixteen points of speed during turn #3, you make a series of turns to fly back into the amoeba’s hex, again gaining 80 points of

information (you now have 208 and the science officer wants to talk to you). Your ship takes another eight points of damage, this time on the #2 shield. While you didn’t need the extra speed to get to the amoeba, you needed it so you could fly past him and reverse course, bringing your forward weapons to bear at the end of the turn.

If this turns out badly, you have to be ready to attack.

What is this monster made of?

A die roll will now reveal what the science officer has found out. You are hoping to get a “6” which will mean telepathic contact with the amoeba and allow your science officer to ask him nicely to go away. You’ll settle for a “2” or a “4” which would be a relatively easy kill; you would just have to pay a few points of power to load a probe with anti-matter or rip the amoeba’s skin apart with a tractor beam. What you do not want is a “5” which will require more laboratory study. This has taken too long as you have a date with the colonial governor’s daughter to get to!

You get a “3” which means you are going to have to shoot this poor amoeba to death. While the duty is sad, it must be done to save sentient lives. Maybe your lab reports will help scientists learn more and future amoebas can be controlled? No matter, the deed must be done.

Ok, who’s kidding themselves here? We’re going to go blow this monster into small pieces, and we’re going to enjoy doing it!

Closing in for the kill

You have already decided on a close-range gunfight, which is why you are only a few hexes from the monster and pointed directly at him. If you had plenty of time, you could stay out of the range where the amoeba can damage your ship (say, eleven or twelve hexes) and pick the monster to death. At that range, you’ll do an average of twenty points of damage per turn, and will

need five or six turns to finish this battle. (The combat charts below only show the short-range results; the phasers and torpedoes can reach 25 hexes, although accuracy is terrible at these long ranges.)

Who wants to wait that long?

You pay 8 points for speed, and that leaves you with 28 points of power and the four batteries. Your ship has four photon torpedoes, which were armed when the game began. To cause maximum destruction, you pay another 16 points (two per torpedo) to “overload” the tubes, doubling their damage output from eight to sixteen each. (This leaves you with 12 points of power to spend this turn. Until you started firing weapons, you really didn’t have any kind of power shortage to worry about.)

Closing to a range of one hex (ten thousand kilometers), you fire all four photons with an automatic change of a hit, scoring 64 of the 100 points of damage needed to kill the amoeba.

You next fire the six phasers that aim forward (paying one point of energy each, leaving yourself with only six), scoring another 28 points of damage. Note that you had to aim your entire ship directly at the amoeba so that the phasers on both sides of the saucer could fire forward.

That’s 92 damage points, not enough for a kill! (You were hoping for a bit better than average die rolls to cover that deficit, but the dice were not with you.) However, you are not out of phasers yet!

There are two small “defensive” phasers (designed as a last-ditch defense against Klingon nuclear missiles and Romulan plasma torpedoes) which can fire in any direction. Each costs half of an energy point to fire, and each of them could score four points, but (bad die rolls!) one of them scores only three. Your total is 99, and that’s not enough!

Flying directly over the amoeba, you wait until you are on the other side and use your rear arc “tail guns” to score the final points of damage. The amoeba will never harm anyone again! Of course, this was a very easy “beginner” battle. Most space amoebas are twice this big!

Run and gun!

Everything about *Federation Commander* is designed for fast play. Energy allocation (after selecting a speed) is done “on the fly,” paying for weapons, acceleration, deceleration, tractors, shield reinforcement, transporters, or special maneuvers as you use them. If you run out of power before the end of the turn, your original speed will carry you out of the way (or so you hope!) so you can attack again on the next turn. Ships come in two scales (so battles with larger fleets can still be played in an hour or two). The entire rulebook is only 64 pages (in very big type) and everything you really need is on one reference card!

(continued on page 64)

FEDERATION HEAVY CRUISER
SQUADRON SCALE

COUNTER
POINT VALUE: 147
DAMAGE CONTROL: 4

USS Name: USS Saratoga

SHIELD #1: [30]

PHOTON ARMING: [A B C D] [P P P P] [L L L L] [F F F F]

ANTI-DRONES: IMP USED [1 2] [3 4] [5 6] [7 8]

PROBES: [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

DRONE RACK Z: [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

DRONES: [1] [2] [] [] [] [] [] []

MARINES: [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

FRAME DAMAGE: [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

TURN MODE D MOVE COST 1

BASE SPEED 8 TURN MODE 2 SPEED COST 8

BASE SPEED 16 TURN MODE 4 SPEED COST 16

BASE SPEED 24 TURN MODE 5 SPEED COST 24

ACCELERATION COST 1

DECELERATION COST 1

HIGH ENERGY TURN COST 5

EVASIVE MANEUVER COST 8

POWER TRACK: +40, +30, +20, +10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

SHUTTLECRAFT: [] [] [] []

FRACTIONAL POWER: 0, 1/2

Use this card to track your starship, the *USS Saratoga*.

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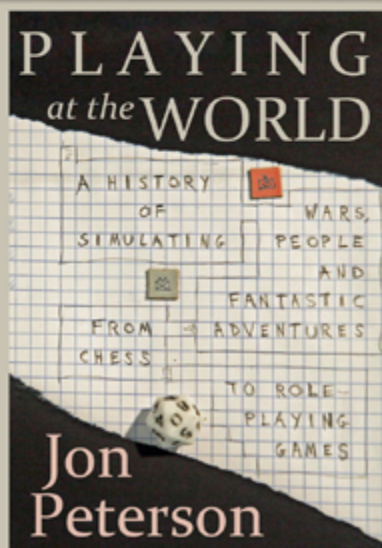
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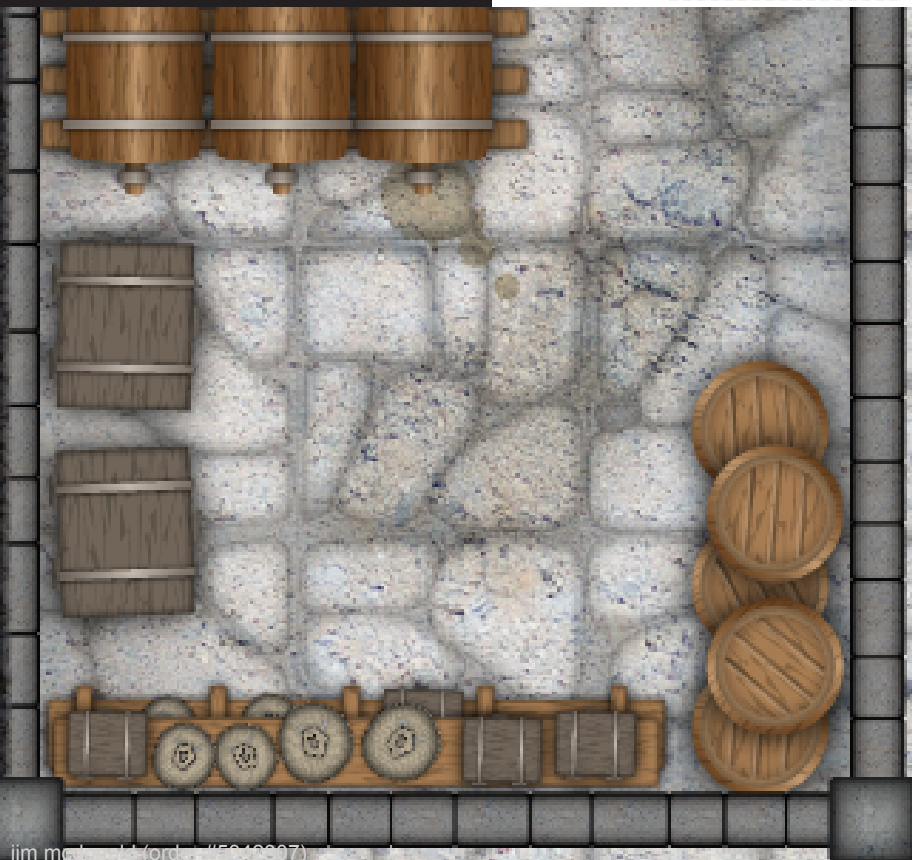
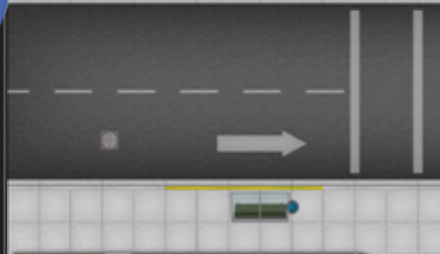
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The dwarven rune priest

A player character class for
Dungeon Crawl Classics

by James Carpio



Note: The dwarven rune priest class was written for the *Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG*. However, with a bit of modification the class can be used with *Labyrinth Lord* or the basic edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Over the centuries, the cultures of humankind have influenced the demi-human races. Dwarves, elves, and halflings have adopted the ways of man, looking to gods and goddesses for spiritual enlightenment. However, there are still pockets of non-human culture that follow the ways of the ancients, take guidance from omens and portents, and follow the paths set down by the great kings and queens of old.

The dwarves are one such race. Dwarven culture and religious origins revolve around precious metals and raw stone. Artisans carved the traditional dwarven ways onto tablets during the time of the first dwarven kings,

and these laws found themselves passed down through the ages on rune-scribed tomes.

While the dwarves hold great respect for their healers and high priests, the most revered and respected of these figures is the rune priest. Part healer, part warrior, and part seer, the rune priest can predict if a journey will find wealth or tragedy, or if a battle will end in victory or complete failure. One would find rune priests amongst a traveling army, in the court of a dwarven king, or sometimes placed in a human settlement where dwarven merchants and workers frequent.

Where the rune priest differs from those who draw energies from a divine entity is in his source of power. Created from stone, the dwarven race has a kinship to the elemental forces and spirits that live within the earth. From these, the rune priest draws power he needs to perform acts of healing and divination. The

rune priest may not be able to throw bolts of divine energy at an enemy, but using the will of stone, he may open a hole in the ground to bury his foe.

Unlike the cleric, the rune priest is limited in the types of spells he can cast; however, they gain a unique advantage that the priests of the humans do not. Upon accepting the “Blessing of Stone” (a rite of passage in which an acolyte becomes one with the elemental plane of earth), the initiate rune priest descends to the depths of the dwarven mines to chisel his rune stones. The rune stones form the spiritual link between the elemental plane and the dwarf. Not every set of rune stones are the same, nor crafted from the same elements. In order to remember each of the ornate runes involved with his craft, the dwarven initiate tattoos the runes on his body to keep each shape fresh in his memory. If the rune priest loses his stones, or they are destroyed, he must craft replacements. The crafting ritual can be time-consuming, as the rune priest must locate a vein of metal or stone that suits his needs. A rune priest prizes his runes even more than his own safety or well-being, keeping them close at all times.

Hit Points: The rune priest gains 1d8 hit points per level.

Weapon Training: The rune priest is trained in the following weapons: hammer, war hammer, maul, and mace. Rune priests may wear any armor and their spell checks are not hindered by its use.

Alignment: Like the earth elementals and spirits they serve, rune priests remain neutral in alignment.

Stone Craft: The rune priest gains a bonus on all skill checks related to identifying, assessing, and crafting objects made of stone.

Turning Unholy: Rune priests do not gain the turn undead ability like a cleric.

Rune Magic: A rune priest channels the elemental power of earth and stone in the form of runes inscribed on objects (usually bits of

stone, precious metals, or gems). Casting spells in rune form is treated in the same manner as cleric or wizard spells (i.e., spell check must be performed, deity disapproval, etc).

Using Rune Magic: At the beginning of each day, the rune priest will pull a number of runes (as noted in the runes cast per day chart) from his satchel. The runes become the core component for casting spells, granting benefits (to himself or others), and healing wounds. On the next day, if runes have been used, the rune priest will draw runes from his bag to bring himself up to the total number available per day.

Depending on the rune's alignment, (a rune's power is not always aligned to neutrality) a bonus to the caster's spell check may be gained. If the rune's alignment matches that of the rune priest, a +d3 bonus is gained when the rune is used. Conversely, if the rune is of the opposite alignment, a -d3 modifier is given.

Using Runes

Casting spells with a rune normally does not use up the rune's power; however, there are certain circumstances that can render the rune useless until the rune priest can re-infuse it with energy. Using a rune's bestowed ability causes the rune to become inert, as does using it for healing. The term used by the rune priest to describe the loss of the rune's power is "sacrificing" the rune. Along with healing and bestowed abilities, a rune must be sacrificed if a spell is lost due to a failed spell check. Runes can also be voluntarily sacrificed to lower the

Table 1-1

Runes available per day

Rune Priest Level	Number of runes inscribed / day*
1	3
2	5
3	6
4	7
5	8
6	9
7	10
8	11
9	12
10	14

*+1 rune per personality modifier

Table 1-2 Rune powers & abilities

d24 roll	Rune	Meaning	Alignment	Bestowed Benefit
1	f	Wealth	Chaotic	Items purchased – 1d3 x 10 %
2	u	Beast	Neutral	+1d3 to skill checks related to animals
3	þ	Giant	Chaotic	+1d3 strength damage in next combat
4	a	God	Lawful	Ignore one instance of deity disapproval
5	r	Riding	Neutral	+5 feet to movement
6	k	Fire	Chaotic	Fire/heat related spells cast as if spell check was 5 higher on spell check
7	g	Gift	Lawful	Find useful mundane item
8	w	Joy	Chaotic	Retainer's morale boosted by 1d3
9	h	Strength	Lawful	Treat character's strength score as 18 for purposes of opening doors/lifting
10	n	Fate	Chaotic	Attempt an additional spell this round using a d10 for the spell check
11	i	Challenge	Neutral	Gain the disable trap ability equal to a thief of equal level and alignment.
12	j	Harvest	Lawful	Rune allows casting of food of the gods
13	∫	Knowledge	Neutral	+2 to any knowledge-based skill checks regardless of whether the rune priest is familiar with the topic or not
14	p	Luck	Chaotic	Regenerates 1d3 luck points (if spent)
15	z	Shield	Lawful	Gain one time use of the wizard spell magic shield, cast as a wizard of the character's level
16	s	Sun	Neutral	Rune begins to glow and can be used as a light source equivalent to a torch
17	t	Justice	Lawful	+1d3 smite damage to chaotic creatures in next combat
18	b	Growth	Neutral	Regenerate 1 HD per turn for 1d10 turns
19	e	Transportation	Neutral	Rune priest instantly teleports to a desired location upon rune activation
20	m	Self	Lawful	+2 to any social skill check
21	l	Water	Chaotic	Rune allows the caster the ability of water-breathing for 1d5 rounds
22	⌘	Earth	Lawful	Draw one extra rune on next draw
23	d	Awareness	Lawful	+2 to any skill checks related to perception
24	o	Home	Neutral	Rune will lead to secure shelter

Table 1-3 Rune Priest

Level	Attack	Crit die / table	Action dice	Ref	Fort	Will	Stone Craft
1	+1	1d10/III	1d20	+0	+1	+1	+3
2	+2	1d12/III	1d20	+0	+1	+1	+3
3	+2	1d14/III	1d20	+1	+2	+1	+5
4	+3	1d16/IV	1d20	+1	+2	+2	+5
5	+4	1d20/IV	1d20	+1	+3	+2	+7
6	+5	1d24/V	1d20+1d14	+2	+4	+2	+7
7	+5	1d30/V	1d20+1d16	+2	+4	+3	+9
8	+6	1d30/V	1d20+1d20	+2	+5	+3	+9
9	+7	2d20/V	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3	+11
10	+7	2d20/V	1d20+1d20	+3	+6	+4	+11

deity disapproval range (see page 29 of the *DCC Core Rulebook*) by one for each rune sacrificed.

The rune system created for this class is based on a standard set of divination runes (found at your local metaphysical store or online). At the beginning of each session or game day, the player reaches into a bag, pouch, etc., and draws a number of rune stones equal to the character allotment (as shown on table 1-1).

Table 1-2: Rune Powers & Abilities shows the bestowed benefit, alignment, and meaning of each rune. The judge is welcome to define or interpret the meaning of each rune if the rune priest wishes to use these for divination in game. If the player or the judge does not own a set of divination runes, the player may roll 1d24 for a number of times that is equal to the amount of rune stones they have on their person and record each result. Once a rune is used, the player crosses it off his list. Once a rune has been used or sacrificed, the rune priest must let it rest for at least a minimum of six hours, and he must spend another two hours charging the rune through ritual carving on the stones before it can be available for use again.

Bestowed Runes: The rune priest can bestow the magical benefits of his runes to others. These runes can be activated by any character without the assistance of the rune priest. A rune priest may bestow a maximum number of runes equal to his level each day. These runes are not a separate pool from his daily allotment. The rune will remain potent for one day (unless noted in the description). When used, or when the one-day mark has passed, the rune must be given back to the rune priest to recharge.

Healing

The rune priest's *Lay On Hands* ability is based on the alignment of the rune being used and not the alignment of the rune priest (see page 30 of the *DCC Core Rulebook* for information on the cleric's lay on hands ability). A rune must be used in order for the rune priest to perform healing; if the rune priest no longer has runes available for the day, he cannot heal again until he has rested and re-inscribed his runes. The rune's power is used for the day when used to heal. ■

Rune priest spell list

1st Level Spells

- Comprehend Languages
- Detect Evil
- Detect Magic
- Holy Sanctuary
- Runic Alphabet, Mortal
- Protection from Evil
- Resist Heat or Cold
- Second Sight
- Ward Portal

2nd Level Spells

- Cure Paralysis
- Curse
- Divine Symbol
- Locate Object
- Neutralize Poison or Disease
- Stinging Stone

3rd Level Spells

- Remove Curse
- Runic Alphabet, Fey
- Spiritual Weapon
- True Name
- Turn to Stone

4th Level Spells

- Cause Earthquake
- Sanctify/Desecrate
- Transmute Earth

5th Level Spells

- Righteous Fire
- Weather Control

Table 1-4 Spells gained per level

Rune priest level	Spells known per level				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	3	-	-	-	-
2	4	-	-	-	-
3	5	2	-	-	-
4	5	3	-	-	-
5	6	3	2	-	-
6	6	4	3	-	-
7	7	4	3	1	-
8	7	5	4	2	-
9	8	5	4	3	1
10	8	6	5	4	2

The airlancer

A player character class for
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

by Jayson Elliot



The city of Gelon was like any trading post that had grown into an accidental metropolis: jumbled, loud, and a tempting prize for marauders. Sitting on the edge of the Oiled Sea, where the roads of Men, Elves, and Goblins all met, it had never grown walls, nor mustered an army of its own. As it was, in Gelon, travelers and merchants of all races and lands learned to depend on their own kind for protection, either professional soldiers selling their services when wars were hard to find, or passing adventurers who knew how to turn a profit from any fight.

The sun dipped low into the blue-black sheen of the water, its greasy reflection stretching towards the cargo ships at Gelon's docks. A temple stood at the water's edge, sand-flecked stone lit orange in the setting dusk. Two griffons landed in the temple's courtyard and deposited their brightly-armored, drunken passengers.

Nearby, in the goblin quarter, bugbears and hobgoblins threw dice, their bulk reassuring the nervous kobold merchant whose shop they guarded. Up the street, an arrow-shot away, two elves in dented armor stood in front of a noisy tavern, met the gaze of one bugbear, and nodded absently. Brown stains of dried blood still mottled the cobblestones where the elves stood. None of the fighters of Gelon were above starting the occasional row to remind the merchants why they paid them. And if each race seemed to win in suspiciously regular turns, where was the harm? The bugbear let the briefest smile flit across his leathery face.

He'd have that elf next time.

In the courtyard of the temple, two pairs of hands struggled for control of a bottle of wine.

"You've had that bottle all—" Zarina pulled, "—the way—" Orik held his grip tight, "—from the pilgrim's camp—" she complained, "—and I'm taking it now!"

Orik laughed, "If it's that dear to you . . ." and let loose with both hands. Zarina stumbled backward and thudded against her griffon, which ambled off to the side, leaving her to fall gracelessly onto the ground.

"Well, *faw*," she said as she looked down and saw the red wine spilled down her cuirass, running over the gorgon's head that adorned the front of her armor. She looked at the decanter, a few sloshes of liquid still in it, and drained it in one large gulp.

"That's a platinum's worth of shirazi you've given Medusa, at least," said Orik, pointing to the wine collecting in the pitted gold and brass of the gorgon's head.

"Shut up and give me your hand, cataphract," Zarina replied, and Orik reached out to help her to her feet. As he pulled her up, she took advantage of his position to spin him forward and deliver a solid thump to the back of his head, her bracer ringing against his helmet.

In the doorway of the temple, light flickered as two *inari* brought the

sacred lamp out for the evening, chanting their peans to Agin while bells rang distantly inside. Zarina and Orik stopped their scuffling at the sound of the priests and turned toward the temple, each going solemnly onto one knee and unsheathing their swords to be thrust into the ground.

The priests, the *inari*, were slight, long-haired men, with delicate features, dressed in taffeta robes. The first *inari* carried the clay bowl with the lighted oil, and the second followed behind, drawing Agin's sigil in the air as he walked.

Around the corner lumbered a group of bugbears, their voices loud and gruff, punctuated by belches and grunts as they stumbled and collided with each other. The kneeling aircancers lifted their heads at the sound, and eyed the goblin-kin wordlessly. The red flush faded from Zarina and Orik's cheeks, and their boozy grips steadied as each quietly disinterred their sword.

The clay oil lamp flared in the breeze, drawing the bugbears' attention. The priests continued their evening ritual as the largest and loudest of the bugbears roared and pointed at the thin men. The band of brutes joined in, taunting drunkenly in their native tongue.

In the darkness Zarina whispered to Orik, "well, that's a day's drinking wasted. Are you sober?"

"Regrettably, now I am," he answered.

The first bugbear swung a meaty hand at the priest's lamp, knocking it into the dirt. The oil burned meekly at his feet.

The two aircancers rose to their feet as one, and rushed forward with a war cry of "*patai!*"

Zarina's sword struck first, catching a surprised brute at the shoulder as the steel carved a deep red gash into his flesh. Before he could react,

she'd followed with a pommel to his skull that sent the bugbear reeling.

Orik was focused on the leader who'd defiled the sacred flame. Thrusting forward, he drove the point of his sword into the chest of his antagonist. The hooligan bellowed, pounding two massive fists down onto Orik's head, and each combatant staggered backward.

The bugbear reached for his mace as Orik spread his arms in anger, his sword pulsing with a golden light. From behind Orik's opponent, another bugbear shouted excitedly. Orik's opponent hesitated. In the glow of the flame, Orik's breastplate gleamed, the light bouncing off the metallic features of a twisted, hideous face. The giant goblin looked at the center of Orik's cuirass, his bravado disappearing as he recognized the caricature of a bugbear like himself. The blood seemed to drain from the leader's face as he shouted a panicked command to the others. The creature hurled its mace as it fled, and Orik neatly sidestepped the impassioned attack.

Even in their drunken state, the bugbears recognized the mark of an aircancer who had chosen enmity with their kind. Shouting over each other, they ran in all directions, their clumsy legs taking them away at a surprising speed. Orik reached for the short bow folded into the sheath on his hip, but his targets were gone by the time he felt its wood.

Zarina laughed as she knelt to retrieve the lamp for the *inari*, who by now had fled as well. "I don't think those goblins were expecting to meet the bogeyman tonight, Orik!"

"Well, what's the use of scary tales unless someone makes them come true, hyppolyte?" he replied.

"Indeed, indeed," she said, "and what's the use of wine that's got to be drunk twice? Come on, cataphract, we've got *inari* to assuage, and then there's liquor and song to be found—the night is young!"

The aircancer is a fighter sub-class created to be compatible with 1st edition *AD&D*, although it can be played with minimal adjustments for 2nd edition *AD&D* as well as the various games based on those systems. Players of related fantasy role-playing games may find the aircancer useful as well, with the appropriate translations. As an unofficial variant, players wishing to use the aircancer in their games should consult with their GM first, and abide by the GM's ruling as to suitability for your campaign, as well as any modifications they may wish to make. And as always, the more playtesting a concept gets the better, so please, dear readers, write in with your experiences with the aircancer and how it plays for you as presented, or with your own modifications.

The Aircancer

The aircancer is heir to an ancient heritage, founded in the distant past as an order of fighters in a time when they were called to defend against a threat of overwhelming numbers and superior force. The fighters who would later come to be known as aircancers had to develop tactics and strategies that would allow them to prevail in situations where traditional approaches would spell defeat for their numbers, and catastrophe for their homeland. They learned that it was sometimes better to send one's enemies flee-

ing in fear than to try and defeat each one by one. As proud warriors with a tradition of honor and bravery, however, the aircancers would not hesitate to throw themselves headlong into a fight when the time was right, and did so with the expectation of death, to steel their resolve. A saying handed down from the first aircancers is "There is glory in dying in battle, but there is no honor in defeat." The order of the aircancer has spread far beyond the borders of its storied beginnings, but the disciplines and traditions have been handed down.

Aircancers are traditionally of noble birth, as the training required even to reach the first level of Argot is both demanding and expensive, and leaves no time for considerations such as learning or practicing a trade. A prospective initiate must be sponsored by an aircancer of 4th level or higher, and must apprentice to yet another aircancer of at least 6th level. With their wealth and elite status, and the expectation that death may greet them on any day, aircancers have developed a reputation for hedonism, flamboyance, and a libertine attitude to social convention. More than one tavern brawler has made the mistake of taunting a finely dressed and drunken aircancer, only to be met with a shocking and immediate level of violence.

While aircancers are fond of intoxication, their effectiveness as fighters would be

hampered if they were drunk when the time came to meet the enemy in battle. As part of their mental and physical training, they develop the ability to overcome the effects of any intoxicating substance in mere minutes (see *overcoming intoxication* table). An aircancer can will himself sober in one round, negating the effects of any alcohol or non-magical mind-altering substance.

Although most aircancers come from wealth and nobility, there have been occasions of a worthy youth finding a patron, usually as a result of some debt of gratitude owed to the young person's father or mother, such as saving a beloved's life or serving in some extraordinary capacity. These aircancers of common birth tend to find themselves struggling to keep up with the spending of their peers, and have been known to go to some lengths to acquire the money to fuel their lavish lifestyles.

Aircancers are always of True Neutral alignment at the start of their adventuring careers, and will worship Neutral deities. They are fiercely pious, knowing that their lives are always at the mercy of the gods. Some may find themselves slipping towards Law or Chaos as time goes on, which causes no adverse affects so long as the change is gradual and reasoned. They will never align with the forces of Good or Evil, however, and any aircancer who does change to any Good

or Evil alignment will find their powers permanently and irrevocably stripped, at which point they become a fighter of commensurate level. Nothing short of a well-worded *wish* spell will restore them to their previous status.

The airlancer character must have minimum ability scores of 12 strength, 16 dexterity, and 9 charisma. High intelligence and constitution are also desired. No bonuses apply to earned experience, regardless of attribute scores. The reason for the high attribute requirements of an airlancer is that they rely on persuasion, subterfuge, and illusion as much as martial skill to achieve their aims—in the case of illusion, quite literally so. At 8th level, Hyppolyte, the airlancer with an intelligence of 15 or higher gains the ability to employ illusionist spells. In addition to the importance of high dexterity to perform the complicated somatics needed for illusions, the airlancer must also be able to comport themselves with grace and skill in the use of ranged weapons and mounted battle. It is the airlancers choice of steed and weapon that gives them their name, and details of this are given in the section *Taming time for airlancer mounts*.

ARMOR CLASS OF KATIAR SCALE

Airlancer level	Cost of materials	AC
1	0	6
2–3	500 gp	5
4–5	2,000 gp	4
6–7	5,000 gp	3
8–9	10,000 gp	2
10 and up	25,000 gp	1

Each point of improvement in AC requires 2d4 + 6 days of uninterrupted work by the airlancer, and the full cost of materials indicated.

Armor

Airlancers receive extensive training in metallurgy and smithing during their youth, and must continue to practice the craft during their career to keep up their skills, and the order's reputation. An airlancer who fashions inferior armor or weaponry may face dire, even fatal consequences if such work finds its way to the attention of other airlancers. When creating an airlancer character, you must choose the secondary skill of armorer (or both armorer and weaponsmith, if playing 2E). The armor of the airlancers is a special type of scale armor known as *Katiar* scale mail. Using a unique method of placing and overlapping each scale, and the metalworking skill of the airlancers, *Katiar* Scale grants a superior armor class rating. It is lightweight and affords ease of movement, its encumbrance equal to leather armor: 15#, non-bulky, with a move base of 12". If you are playing with weapon vs. AC rules, treat *Katiar*

ATTACKS PER MELEE ROUND

Airlancer level	Attacks per melee round*
1–7	1/1 round
8–14	3/2 rounds
15 & up	2/1 rounds

*With any thrusting or striking weapon

Scale as the equivalent of scale mail (AC 6) for melee weapons, and the equivalent of plate (AC 3) for missile weapons.

An airlancer will begin their career with a suit of *Katiar* Scale that she or he has fashioned during apprenticeship, and will treat it with the requisite care and respect. As the airlancer's skill increases, it is possible to improve the protection afforded by the armor—see *Armor class of Katiar Scale* table—although this takes both time and money.

Airlancers' armor is central to their identity, both personally and as a member of their order. They will adorn their armor as they advance, coating the individual scales with gold, silver, or even platinum leaf, and embedding precious gems. They are fond of engraving images of animals they have hunted as children, tributes to their gods, stories of their family's exploits, and later in their career, great monsters or warriors that they have defeated. One of the most notable features of an airlancer's armor is the face that will always be found in the center of the cuirass, or breastplate. This represents the creature with which the airlancer has declared enmity, and is described below in the *Enmity* section.

If an airlancer's armor is lost or destroyed, they will wear other armor in extenuating circumstances, but will do so with displeasure, and receive a dexterity penalty due to their unfamiliarity with "inferior" armor types. Any armor worn other than leather grants an AC of 1 point higher (worse) than normal, receives all encumbrance penalties, and causes a penalty of -1 to hit. No damage penalties are incurred. The airlancer will endeavor to fashion a new suit of armor at the earliest opportunity, even if it means abandoning certain quests, i.e., ones to which they are not honor-bound. A suit of *Katiar* Scale costs a minimum of 1,000 gp for the materials required to create it, and the cost will go up commensurately with the number of precious stones and jewels attached—something an airlancer will want very much to do, indeed.

As a rule of thumb, no airlancer will ever spend less than 10% of their wealth on their armor, as it is a symbol of their station. An airlancer will never create *Katiar* Scale for a non-airlancer, nor sell it to them. If a non-airlancer is discovered wearing *Katiar* Scale, they will be treated as a blood enemy, and attacked without hesitation or mercy, with the intent to kill. No airlancer will ever wear the armor of another airlancer.

TAMING TIME FOR AIRLANCER MOUNTS

Airlancer charisma	Training time (weeks)
9	1d8 + 7
10	1d8 + 7
11	1d8 + 7
12	1d8 + 7
13	1d8 + 7
14	1d8 + 6
15	1d8 + 5
16	1d8 + 4
17	1d8 + 3
18	1d8 + 2

Magical *Katiar* Scale is exceedingly rare, and will of course never be found for sale. Crafting magical *Katiar* Scale requires a minimum of one year of magical enchanting, in addition to requiring 50% longer for the airlancer himself to forge. The airlancer must find a mage of 7th level or higher, who will charge at least 100,000 gold pieces per each "plus" imbued. Standard *Katiar* Scale cannot be enchanted; a new suit of armor, created specifically for the purpose of enchantment, must be made.

Enmity

Before reaching level 1, an airlancer will declare enmity with one race of monster. In the first days, the ancient airlancers all declared enmity with the troglodytes whose invasion led to the founding of the order. Today, an airlancer will choose a monster who has played a vital role in her family's history, in victory or defeat. (*Note to the GM: this means one specific type of monster, not an entire classification of monster types. For example, the airlancer may declare enmity with red dragons, not all dragons; or earth elementals, not all elementals.*) The image of the type of creature he has enmity with will be cast in some metal, lavishly adorned, and affixed permanently to the center of the airlancer's cuirass.

When fighting the monster with which he has enmity, the airlancer fights as four levels

ENMITY—MONSTER'S SAVING THROW ADJUSTMENT VS. PARALYZATION

Airlancer level minus monster's HD =	Monster's saving throw adjustment
-8 or lesser	Automatic save
-7 to -5	+2
-4 to -2	+1
-1 to 4	0
5 to 7	-1
8 to 10	-2
10 or greater	-3

SPELLS USABLE BY CLASS AND LEVEL - AIRLANCERS*

Airlancer level	Illusionist Spell Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
8	1	–	–	–	–
9	2	–	–	–	–
10	2	1	–	–	–
11	2	2	–	–	–
12	2	2	1	–	–
13	3	2	1	–	–
14	3	2	1	1	–
15	3	3	1	1	–
16	3	3	2	1	–
17	3	3	3	1	–
18	3	3	3	2	–
19**	3	3	3	2	1

*Minimum 15 intelligence required to cast spells

**Maximum spell ability

above his rank, also gaining +3 to damage and inflicting a penalty of -1 on all to-hit and damage rolls by that monster. At the GM's discretion, the airlancer may also gain a saving throw against certain special attacks by said monster, even ones for which saves are not normally possible.

If the creature with which the airlancer has enmity has intelligence of Low or greater, they must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or flee in fear once they recognize their own image on the airlancer's breastplate. See the table *Enmity—monster saving throws* for adjustments based on level differences. The monster must be able to see the image, and it may require

OVERCOMING INTOXICATION Number of rounds (minutes) required

Level	Constitution*									
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	
2	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	
3	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	
4	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	
5	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	
6	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
7	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	**	
9	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	**	**	
10	5	4	3	2	1	1	1	**	**	
11	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	**	**	
12	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	**	**	
13	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	**	**	
12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**	**	

*Minimum 10 constitution required to overcome intoxicating effects

**Airlancers with a constitution of 17 or above can overcome intoxication in one segment (10 seconds)

AIRLANCERS (FIGHTERS) TABLE

Experience points	Experience level	10-sided dice for		Level title
		accumulated hit points		
0 – 2,250	1	1		Argot
2,251 – 4,500	2	2		Lohant
4,501 – 10,000	3	3		Skolot
10,001 – 20,000	4	4		Clibanarii
20,001 – 40,000	5	5		Kiniract
40,001 – 90,000	6	6		Cataphract
90,001 – 150,000	7	7		Colabrant
150,001 – 225,000	8	8		Hyppolyte
225,001 – 325,000	9	9		Gryffolyte
325,001 – 650,000	10	10		Airlancer
650,001 – 975,000	11	11		Airlancer
975,001 – 1,300,000	12	11 + 3		Airlancer

325,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 12th.

Airlancers gain 3 h.p. per level after the 11th.

the airlancer to forgo one attack in order to display his chest clearly to the monster. It is up to the GM's discretion to require one save per creature, or to roll for the entire group. GM's note: treat the effects of the monster's fright as you would an undead creature turned by a cleric.

Weapon proficiency & specialization

The airlancer is adept with both melee and missile weapons, and begins with four proficiencies, of which three must be the javelin, short sword, and the short bow. The fourth weapon is at the airlancer's discretion. The following three proficiencies must be, in any order, the lance, the long sword, and the long bow.

Airlancers do not make use of weapon specialization.

Saving throws

Airlancers save on the regular table for fighters. They are immune to fear of any sort, whether magical or otherwise. When fighting a creature with which they have declared enmity, at the GM's discretion, they may receive bonuses to their saving throws or be granted saves where otherwise not available (see *Enmity*, previous page).

The airlancer's mount

At 4th level, Clibanarii, the airlancer may seek out a hippogriff as a steed. The airlancer must undertake a journey to find a hippogriff to tame, for it is a point of honor among airlancers to break their own mount from the wild. At 9th level, Gryffolyte, the airlancer may quest again to find and tame a griffon. Upon changing mounts from hippogriff to griffon, the airlancer must continue to provide for his first mount, and will typically provide an expanse of land for the hippogriff to inhabit from his family's holdings. Airlancers not of noble birth must acquire enough land and tenants to provide for the well-being of a hippogriff thus "retired." Under no circumstances will an airlancer take on a new steed if the welfare of his first steed is not ensured!

The airlancers possess techniques for training and caring for griffons and hippogriffs that go beyond what others are capable of. As a matter of pride, they will only tame adult members of each species, never a

(continued on page 25)

Artifacts to impart ancient lore

There are more paths to knowledge than sages & scholars

by Michael Curtis

The long-term survival of a character in a fantasy role-playing campaign is often dependent on what that character knows. Do I need magical weapons to slay this beast? Can the evil high priest call down a certain debilitating spell? What monsters lurk in the Darkened Caves of Ob-Bylnork? These are all valid questions an adventurer might ask himself before drawing steel and venturing into the unknown—and for good reason. A character failing to learn what dangers he faces may find his adventuring short and tragic.

Sages, mages, scholars, and clergy have long held a monopoly on knowledge in fantasy campaigns, simply because they're the ones most likely to have access to the most common repositories of knowledge: books or other written work. But that need no longer be the case. Presented below are five unusual methods of recording and disseminating information, each suitable for use by any adventurer, regardless of intellectual acumen or even literacy. Of course, unusual also means "rare," and the adventurer wishing to seek out one of these odd repositories may have to overcome a number of dangers before acquiring it.

For the sake of implementation and utility, each repository is presented with mechanics covering a number of fantasy role-playing games. Whether you're a hardcore old-school player who never gave up his little brown books, a newly-minted roleplayer running a game using a more current edition, or one of those beloved odd-balls who eschew d20s for percentile dice-based skill systems, you're sure to find a suggested rule to fit your campaign.

This article assumes that once the characters acquire any of the following repositories, they gain access to the knowledge encoded therein simply by following the methods detailed under the "Use" entry. However, if the game master (GM) chooses, he may require the player character (PC)—in hopes of learning the vessel's lore—to make a successful ability check, saving throw, or skill check to represent the learning

process. The GM has final say as to how a character learns from one of these repositories and the benefits granted from doing so.

ASHES OF THE APOSTATE

History: The individual known in life as Gergen Asnivol was a driven man, one determined to seek out the mysteries of the gods in all their forms. A cleric in his younger years, Gergen asked questions of his superiors that they themselves could not answer and endured numerous reprimands for questioning the tenets of his faith. Ultimately, disillusioned by his higher-ups' failure to satiate his quest for knowledge, Gergen broke from his church to begin a life-long quest for answers.

To this end, Gergen infiltrated myriad faiths, sects, and cults, masquerading as a devotee and prying the knowledge he craved from a half-hundred patriarchs, holy (and unholy) texts, and through participation in hundreds of religious rites—some never before seen by those outside of their adherents' faith. By the time of Gergen's death, some 200 years ago, no other soul knew more about the world's religions or the central tenets that each practiced. Some believe he finally learned all he sought, but if not, they speculate the gods themselves are now being interrogated by Gergen in the afterlife. According to Gergen's desires, he was cremated and his ashes stored in a simple clay urn bearing his name.

Rumors persist that Gergen's knowledge was not lost with his death. Through mysterious means (perhaps learned from one of the numerous cults he infiltrated in life), Gergen imparted his worldly wisdom onto his very body, steeping his flesh and bones with the knowledge that his life's study accumulated. It is said that he who consumes the ashy remnants of the great searcher's mortal form will acquire every scrap of knowledge Gergen accumulated in his life-long quest.

Description: The Ashes of the Apostate is a simple clay urn lacking any decoration or embellishment. Fashioned from dun-colored,

fired clay, the urn bears only the name "Gergen Asnivol" written in the common tongue on the urn's side. An equally unobtrusive lid seals the urn, closed tight by a ribbon of blue wax poured along its edges. The urn measures one foot in height and eight inches in diameter at its widest point. It weighs approximately five pounds.

Use: To access Gergen's wisdom, the recipient must open the urn and mix the gray ashes therein with liquid (water, wine, beer, etc). Doing so causes the fluid to glow dimly with a cerulean blue aura and become mildly effervescent. The liquid tastes ashy when consumed, but has a mild hint of rose petals that helps mitigate its unpleasant flavor. It takes but a moment to drink (1 round).

Effects of use:

CLASSIC D&D / 1ST EDITION AD&D (without non-weapon proficiencies): The drinker permanently gains insight into numerous religions in the campaign world, being able to recognize the symbols, central beliefs, drives, and hierarchies (if any) of the faith. The drinker has a three in six chance of knowing the aforementioned knowledge any time he encounters a new temple, symbol, clergy, or other recognizable manifestation or mention of a religion. If the drinker's wisdom score is 16 or better, the chance to recognize and know about a faith increases to four in six.

1st Edition AD&D (with non-weapon proficiencies)/2nd Edition AD&D: The drinker gains the religion non-weapon proficiency at no cost, even if it is not listed in the proficiency groups for his class. If the character already possesses the religion non-weapon proficiency, he gains the benefits of spending an additional non-weapon proficiency slot in that skill.

D&D 3.5/Pathfinder: The character gains a +2 bonus to the knowledge (religion) skill. If the character does not possess the knowledge (religion) skill, he may attempt to use it untrained. Furthermore, after consuming the ashes, the knowledge (religion) skill is now con-



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sidered a class skill for that character.

Basic Role-Playing or other percentile skill-based fantasy RPGs: The character gains a +1d8+2% increase in any of the following or similarly named skills of the GM's choosing: knowledge (religion) skill (which affects all sub-specialties of this skill, if any), knowledge (occult), and/or philosophy (religion).

THE HYPOGEAL CASTAWAY'S BOTTLE

History: Salcryl Kast was a sorceress of middling power, but, like most adventurers, possessed great appetites for both power and riches. Eager to make her mark on the world, Kast never hesitated when offered a position as part of an extended expedition into the depths of the Underdark. The journey's goal: a drow outpost rumored to possess a great number of magical artifacts and vast mineral wealth. Unfortunately, for Kast and her companions, the expedition ran afoul of mind-flayer slavers long before they reached their intended target.

In the chaos of the attack, Kast escaped the illithid slavers and found herself lost in the hypogeal world beneath the earth. Although carrying few supplies and limited magic, Kast nevertheless managed to survive for nearly a decade amidst the wonders and horrors of the Underdark, all the while searching for a route back to the surface. She never found her way back to the surface world and eventually died on the shores of a great subterranean sea, but not before gaining deep wisdom and insight into

the natural phenomenon and inhabitants of the Underdark.

As death slowly reached out to claim her, Kast sought to disseminate her acquired knowledge in hopes that someone, someday would know of her fate and the hard-won lore she learned during her trials and daily survival. Gathering the last vestiges of her waning magic, Kast breathed her last breaths into a simple glass bottle she had carried ever since the ambush long ago. Using her final exhalations, Kast bound her knowledge of the hypogeal world into the bottle and cast it upon the night-black waters. Her missive sent, Kast died upon the shore. The fate of that bottle is unknown, but the one who discovers it and inhales the sorceress' last breaths stands to gain vast insight into the Underdark and its residents.

Description: The Hypogeal Castaway's Bottle is a nondescript glass bottle, seemingly no different than many other similar containers of crude but competent manufacture. Any label it once bore has long since fallen away, and the glass itself bears a number of small chips and scratches. A few tiny patches of dead lichen of a species unrecognizable to most experts still cling to the glass. The bottle is sealed with an ordinary cork stopper. The bottle appears empty.

Use: To gain the knowledge imparted in the Bottle, the user must uncork it and immediately inhale its invisible contents. Any delay in doing so results in Kast's final breaths dissipating into the surrounding air, and with it, the sorceress' wisdom. Unless inhaled the same round the

bottle is opened, it becomes an ordinary glass bottle, its benefits lost forever.

Effects of use:

Classic D&D/1st Edition AD&D (without non-weapon proficiencies): The inhaler of Kast's final breaths permanently learns basic survival techniques applicable to the Underdark, as well as rudimentary knowledge of that region's more common inhabitants. The drinker has a three in six chance of recognizing edible fungus, identifying potential cave-ins or collapses, gauging direction underground, and categorizing subterranean creatures and their better-known special powers and habits. If the character already possesses these or similar abilities due to race or class, the PC's chance of success increases by one (three in six becomes four in six, for example) or +10% as applicable. These abilities or bonuses only apply to subterranean environments.

1st Edition AD&D (with non-weapon proficiencies)/2nd Edition AD&D: The character gains the direction sense, fungus identification, herbalism (subterranean fungus only), sound analysis and/or survival (subterranean) non-weapon proficiencies at the GM's discretion, even if they are not listed in the proficiency groups for his class. If the character already possesses any of the above non-weapon proficiencies, he gains the benefits of spending an additional non-weapon proficiency slot in each of those skills. In addition, the character can make an intelligence ability check to identify common subterranean

creatures and their better-known abilities and habits at the GM's discretion.

D&D 3.5/Pathfinder: The character gains a +2 bonus to the knowledge (dungeoneering), listen (or auditory-based perception checks), and survival skills. If the character does not possess these skills, he may attempt to use them untrained. Furthermore, after using the bottle, the above skills become class skills for that character.

Basic Role-Playing or other percentile skill-based fantasy RPGs:

The character gains a +1d6+2% increase to any of the following or similarly named skills of the GM's choosing: botany (subterranean plants & fungi), geology, knowledge (spelunking), listen, natural history (subterranean), navigate, and/or survival (underground).

THE CLOAK OF DEGON THE BEAST-SLAYER

History: The barbarian, Degon, hailed from the cold taiga forests of the northlands, but his travels took him across countless lands and climes. From icy glaciers to sun-baked deserts, Degon scoured the world, hunting any animal he deemed a challenge to his skill and might. His reputation remains legendary amongst hunters in many distant lands, and amongst some primitive tribes Degon is considered more god than man.

Never deigning to learn to read or write (which held no meaning in the wild), Degon nevertheless accumulated wide knowledge of the art of the hunt and the rare animals he deemed his prey. From each slain beast, Degon cut a swath of hide, stitching the tanned skin together into a great patchwork cloak. So numerous were Degon's kills, it is said that the cloak trailed ten feet behind him when he strode the streets of the cities he distained. On the interior of the cloak, Degon recorded his deeds and the methods he used to bring down his varied prey, scrawling the details of each hunt in the pictographs of his tribe, using a mixture of blood and ochre. More than 500 hunts were recorded on the cloak before Degon vanished from the pages of history. Some believe the great hunter died beneath the claws and teeth of an unknown beast that even he could not overcome. Others maintain that Degon, having defeated every challenging quarry in the world, ventured off into the Outer Planes to hunt the gods of animals on their native planes. Whatever the truth may be, the world may never see a hunter of Degon's magnitude again . . . unless his cloak is found.

Description: The Cloak of Degon the Beast Slayer is a long, furred cloak crafted in patchwork fashion from several hundred small pieces of tanned animal pelts, no two from the same beast. It is obviously tailored for a large, broad-shouldered, human male, but even when draped over the shoulders of a brawny human, the cloak trails behind the wearer, as it measures 18 feet in length from collar to hem. The underside of the cloak is marked by more than 5,000 tiny pictographs of rusty red hue, some of

which are nearly illegible from wear and time.

Use: To utilize the knowledge Degon painted on the inside of his cloak, a character must first decipher the crude images. Doing so requires a month or more of study, but characters of barbaric or primitive backgrounds, or those utilizing magics that decrypt written languages, can gain complete understanding of the cloak's images after only one week of dedicated examination. Once the pictographs are understood and studied, which requires an additional month of examination, the character gains the advantages listed below. As a non-magical object, the knowledge encoded in the cloak does not vanish once an individual studies it, and subsequent scholars can also gain its benefits by prolonged examination of the lore recorded upon the cloak after spending the requisite time deciphering its images. If assisted by one who already understands the pictographs, the comprehension time is reduced to one week, but contemplating the lore encoded therein still requires one month of dedicated examination.

Effects of use:

Classic D&D/1st Edition AD&D (without non-weapon proficiencies): A character who successfully deciphers the Cloak's pictographs has a base 50% chance of hunting game when in the wild. This chance is further modified by circumstances (plentiful game, time of year, etc.) at the GM's choosing. The character can make a wisdom ability check to identify animals or predatory monsters he encounters and gain a basic understanding of their abilities and habit. In addition, if the character is a ranger, he gains a +10% bonus to his tracking ability.

1st Edition AD&D (with non-weapon proficiencies)/2nd Edition AD&D: The character gains the animal lore, hunting, and tracking non-weapon proficiencies at the GM's discretion, even if they are not listed in the proficiency groups for his class. If the character already possesses any of the above non-weapon proficiencies, he gains the benefits of spending an additional non-weapon proficiency slot in each of those skills. If the character is a ranger or barbarian, he permanently adds a +10% bonus to his tracking ability.

D&D 3.5/Pathfinder: The character gains a +2 bonus to the knowledge (nature), spot (or perception), and survival skills. If the character does not possess these skills, he may attempt to use them untrained. Furthermore, after comprehending the cloak, the above skills become class skills for that character. The character can also track as if possessing the feat of the same name (*D&D 3.5*) or track as a ranger of half his level (*Pathfinder*).

Basic Role-Playing or other percentile skill-based fantasy RPGs: The character gains a +1d6+2% increase to any of the following or similarly named skills of the GM's choosing: science (natural history), science (zoology), spot, and/or track.

THE WARLORD'S ARMOR

History: The Warlord Tarmir Dhrinn was a consummate warrior, a soldier who dedicated

his life to blood and steel. Starting his martial career as a sellsword, Dhrinn swiftly worked his way through the ranks, eventually wresting the sword captainship from the Scarlet Company, a mercenary troop both renowned and feared for their ferocity and bravery. In time, Dhrinn turned his company into an army-for-hire, assuming the rank of imperator general, but his troops and enemies gave him another title: the Warlord.

Selling the services of his troops to whomever could meet his price; Dhrinn cared little for cause or justice, dedicating himself solely to a life of war. In the cold winter months, when storms and snow forced the realms' armies to bivouac, Dhrinn devoted himself to the study of the art of war, consuming treatises, histories, and tactical texts until he possessed an unprecedented understanding of the arts martial. This scholarship, compounded with his years of first-hand experience, transformed Dhrinn from a gifted leader to a master of battle.

In his waning years, Dhrinn commissioned a suit of armor to commemorate his victories and record his acquired knowledge. Fashioned from steel plates, each piece of armor was inscribed with accounts of the Warlord's battles, tactical advice cribbed from historical texts, and the Warlord's own personal philosophies regarding war. The inscriptions were tiny in size; nevertheless, the volume of Dhrinn's accumulated lore was so great that every piece of armor from helmet to greaves was completely covered with writing, transforming the armor into a library of martial wisdom.

Ironically, it was not war but age that claimed the Warlord, and he was interred in a plain tomb, dressed in his special armor amidst the battle trophies he won in life. But his rest was not undisturbed, and four years following his death, tomb-robbers discovered and looted his sepulture and the fate of the Warlord's Armor is unknown.

Description: The Warlord's Armor appears as a suit of human-sized full-plate armor. Every available surface of the armor is inscribed with words, written in letters the size of a grain of rice. Aside from these minute inscriptions, the armor is without ornamentation or flourishes, seemingly designed for actual defense rather than ostentatious display. It weighs the same as a typical suit of full-plate.

Although appearing to be designed for battle, the Warlord's Armor is simply a well-crafted ceremonial suit of arms, and any character wearing it for protection discovers it only offers protection equal to banded mail, while still remaining as heavy and encumbering as a full-plate. Additionally, if the wearer is struck by a critical hit (or by a weapon that causes maximum damage for its type, if critical hits are not used in the campaign), there is a cumulative 20% chance the armor falls to pieces, providing no protection at all. If damaged in this manner, it can be repaired. The Warlord's Armor can never be altered or improved to provide full protection for its armor type.

Use: To benefit from the Warlord's Armor, a

character must dedicate 60 full days to studying the suit's inscriptions. The inscriptions are written in the common tongue, and any creature literate in that language can learn from the armor. This study time need not be consecutive and the would-be scholar can break away from his studies periodically without detriment. At the end of this study period, the character gains the advantages listed below. Note that if the armor is somehow destroyed (but not damaged as above) before the character completes the indicated study time, he gains no benefit from his readings, even if he has studied the majority of the suit's acquired lore.

Effects of use:

Classic D&D/1st Edition AD&D (without non-weapon proficiencies): The character gains insight into strategy, tactics, and other aspects of the art of war. He can identify potential ambush sites, detect weaknesses in fortifications, arrange troops to maximize their efficiency, and predict possible tactical responses by his enemies and similar actions at the GM's discretion with a successful intelligence or wisdom ability check (PC uses the better of the two, or the one that is of the GM's choosing). He also can serve as an engineer for the purpose of construction siege weapons or fortifications, or planning the destruction of the same, forgoing the need to hire a specialist when undertaking these endeavors.

1st Edition AD&D (with non-weapon proficiencies)/2nd Edition AD&D: The character gains insight into strategy, tactics, and other aspects of the art of war. He can identify potential ambush sites, detect weaknesses in fortifications, arrange troops to maximize their efficiency, and predict possible tactical responses by his enemies and similar actions at the GM's discretion with a successful intelligence or wisdom ability check (PC uses the better of the two or the one that is of the GM's choosing). The character also gains the engineering non-weapon proficiency, even if it is not listed in the proficiency groups for his class. If the character already possesses the engineering non-weapon proficiencies, he gains the benefits of spending an additional non-weapon proficiency slot in that skill.

D&D 3.5/Pathfinder: The character gains a +2 bonus to the craft (siege weapons), knowledge (architecture and engineering), knowledge (geography) and knowledge (history) skills (bonuses to knowledge [geography] and knowledge [history] only apply to skill check to determine potential ambush sites, recognize tactical advantages, recall military events and figures, or similar applications of the skill). If the character does not possess these skills, he may attempt to use them untrained. Furthermore, after studying the armor, the above skills become class skills for that character. Additionally, the GM may allow the character to arrange troops to maximize their efficiency and predict possible tactical responses by his enemies and similar actions with a successful intelligence or wisdom ability check (per GM's choosing) at DC 12 (further modified at the GM's discretion).

Basic Role-Playing or other percentile skill-based fantasy RPGs: The character gains a +1d6+2%

increase to any of the following or similarly named skills of the GM's choosing: artillery, command, craft (fortifications), strategy, and/or technical (siege weapons).

THE LOST DREAM OF THE SLUMBER THIEF

History: Karvin Nohl was a dreamer, but in more ways than one. From a young age, Nohl had the gift of dreaming deeply each night and the ability to fully recollect his nocturnal visions upon waking—a talent some say was the result of supernatural blood in his family lineage. But even Nohl's nightly dreams could not compare to his waking fantasies of becoming the greatest thief in the world. An accomplished burglar, tomb-breaker, and second-story man, there was no merchant's vault or potentate's treasure house that could keep the Nohl out.

But Nohl had an even bigger dream: the Vault of Dreamt Riches. According to half-forgotten ancient tomes, the riches that men see in their dreams—be they mounds of gold or jewel-encrusted scepters—are reflections of actual wealth kept locked away in a secret treasury located deep in the Plane of Dreams. The one who manages to locate and pilfer the vault would be wealthier than every miser's avaricious dreams combined. Nohl dedicated himself to the study of mystical arts to unlock the secrets of the Dream Plane and discover the vault's resting place. After two decades of intense study and the practicing of esoteric techniques, Nohl laid his head down upon a cloth-of-gold pillow and went to sleep, intent on breaking into the vault and looting its wonders.

When the following dawn broke, Nohl had vanished and was never seen again.

Sages speculate that the Slumber Thief was unsuccessful, simply because men still dream of riches in the night. Had the thief carried away the dream treasures, their counterparts would no longer exist on the Plane of Dreams. These same scholars also posit that, even if Nohl was unsuccessful at his theft, his long study of the art of dreaming and the techniques he learned may not have been lost with the thief. Some dreams crystallize on the Dream Plane, assuming a semi-solid form when dreamt of deeply and often enough. Somewhere in the mists of the Dream Plane, Nohl's knowledge still exists, waiting for those who undertake their own nocturnal expedition there to find it.

Description: The strangest of these repositories of knowledge, the Lost Dream of the Slumber Thief appears as a small chamber, lacking walls, adrift on the Dream Plane. With only a simple flagstone floor and flat ceiling to define its boundaries, the Lost Dream contains a table and single chair, each crafted from exquisitely carved porphyry. Both the table and chair are bare of decoration or accoutrements, but those encountering the Lost Dream experience alternating emotions of longing, despair, and desire upon seeing the table and chair. The chair seems to beg for occupancy.

Use: To access Nohl's knowledge, one must

first discover the Lost Dream—which is no small task considering it drifts constantly throughout the Plane of Dreams, borne on the strange eddies that flow through its ever-shifting mists. However, once located, its lore can be acquired by simply sitting in the Lost Dream's chair for a full night. Upon awakening, the dreamer finds himself in possession of all Nohl's knowledge of the Dream Plane, the Vault of Dreamt Riches, and some mundane larcenous wisdom as well. Once used and its knowledge absorbed, the Lost Dream breaks apart, like so much flotsam and jetsam on the dream tides, and can never be found again.

Effects of use:

Classic D&D/1st Edition AD&D (without non-weapon proficiencies): The character that discovers the Lost Dream permanently gains insight into the Astral and Dream Planes (if the two are separate in the campaign world) and can make an intelligence ability check to identify common features, inhabitants, and phenomena encountered therein. If the campaign incorporates the bard class, the PC gains the bardic legend lore ability equivalent to a bard of his own class level when attempting to recall information regarding the Astral or Dream Planes. If the character is a bard, he gains a +10% bonus to his legend lore skill when using it to remember facts about these planes. Additionally, if the PC already possesses the open locks and find/remove traps skills, he gains a +10% bonus to these abilities. Characters without these skills do not gain them.

1st Edition AD&D (with non-weapon proficiencies)/2nd Edition AD&D: The PC gains the bardic legend lore ability equivalent to a bard of his own class level when attempting to recall information regarding the Astral or Dream planes. If the character is a bard, he gains a +10% bonus to his legend lore skill when using it to remember facts about these planes. Additionally, if the PC already possesses the open locks and find/remove traps skills, he gains a +10% bonus to these abilities. Characters without these skills do not gain them.

D&D 3.5/Pathfinder: The character gains a +2 bonus to the knowledge (planes) skill when making skill checks regarding the Astral or Dream Plane (if not one and the same in the campaign). If the character does not possess this skill, he may attempt to use it untrained, but only concerning the Astral or Dream Plane. The character also adds +2 to his disable devices and open lock skills if he already possesses them, but, as usual, these skills cannot be used untrained by a character that does not have skill ranks in them.

Basic Role-Playing or other percentile skill-based fantasy RPGs: The character gains a +1d6+2% increase to any of the following or similarly named skills of the GM's choosing: fine manipulation, knowledge (blasphemous lore), knowledge (folklore), and/or knowledge (occult). The character also gains a +1d8+2% increase to his dreaming and/or dream lore skills if the campaign incorporates this form of knowledge.

Master Mariner

Naval rules for tabletop gaming with
the *Pirates* constructible strategy game
by Timothy Kask

About five years ago, I was sitting at my desk and chanced to glance at the enormous storage tub, full of smaller bins, that was full of assembled *Pirates* ships. You remember those pretty little ships punched out of credit-card-sized plastic cards? The line started with *Pirates of the Spanish Main*, no doubt taking full advantage of Johnny Depp's Capt. Jack Sparrow media frenzy. They soon included every body of water you ever heard of, and then they started inventing themes. (The line went on to include: *Pirates of the Spanish Main*, *Crimson Coast*, *Revolution*, *Barbary Coast*, *South China Seas*, *Davy Jones' Curse*, *Mysterious Islands*, *Frozen North*, and *Pirates at Ocean's Edge*.) I have all of the aforementioned. (No, I did not pay for them; that's another story for another time.) Most are not punched and assembled; some sets are in solid bricks, shrinked. There were a couple of small sets afterwards, and now the game is in limbo. What the hell to do with them? There was no market for them on eBay, so I was stuck with them.

More than thirty years ago, there were a handful of miniatures rules for Age of Sail-era gaming. There were a couple of companies making figs; the figs scared the paint right off my brush. The two I tried to paint came out so unsatisfactorily that I never did a thing with them, so the only time I played was at cons. If these ships had been available, playing *Don't Give Up The Ship* would have been a lot more common.

That set me to thinking about some simple rules, no more complex than *Chainmail*. Then I started thinking about all of those longships from *Frozen North*, so I wrote some special rules for Viking sea battles. And then

I thought of shore batteries, and hull factors and . . . see a trend here?

Some of the old minis rules were so complex you had to know how to sail; when to tack, when to reach, going in irons, stealing the weather gauge. That had no appeal, but entirely ignoring the wind seemed too simplistic. So I did it simply. The movement is somewhat abstract, for simplicity's sake.

In general, the Basic Rules of the *WizKids Pirate* series are unchanged if not addressed in this variant. Crew Specialists, named Admirals, and all of the other little nuances of the original rules are herein maintained; consider my suggestions as Optional or Advanced Rules superimposed upon the Basic.

Designer's Notes

These rules are intended for those gamers that would like to step up to the next level of complexity. They are not meant to require the player to master all the complexities of actual sailing; you do not have to understand the complexities of such things as the Wind Gauge which was all important in the storied Age of Sail.

These rules will enable groups of gamers to participate in fleet-sized actions; it is not recommended that any player control more than about three ships, four at most.

With actions of this size, a 3' x 3' playing area becomes very impractical; the new turning rules alone will make that confined space very impractical. The area of a pool table will suffice quite nicely.

I hope to make several scenarios available at a later date. In the meantime, feel free to make up your own or to model historical

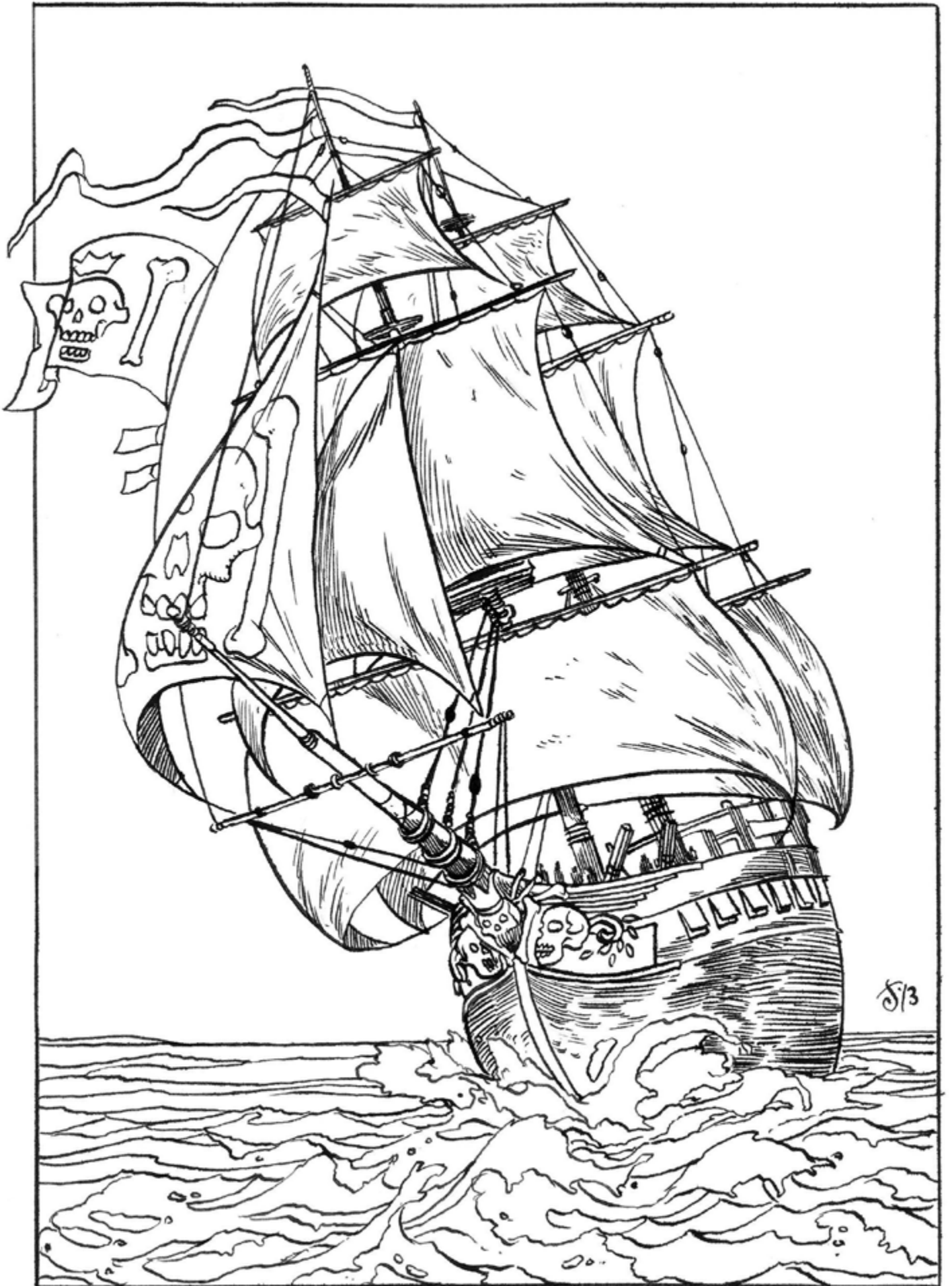
clashes. The piratical elements of finding and seizing treasures can still be incorporated, but these rules are more suited to "Death Match" type games. However, it is possible to model historical clashes involving raids on ports or the actions of Elizabeth's "Sea Dogs." In devising your own scenarios you should set parameters for the fleets by total Ship Class numbers; e.g., 60 Ship Class points could be 10 Class 6 ships, or 12 Class 5s, or any combination that totals 60. Additionally, Generic Crew Factor as well as Special/Named Crew Factor totals should be assigned to the scenario. (Keep in mind to use allocation of these factors according to the Master Mariner parameters, not the point values as used in any other forms of the rules.)

It is recommended for movement purposes that you alternate players, whenever possible or feasible, and not sides; that way you will get a more fluid sense of the battle.

Communications between players should be severely restricted. The players can agree on a set of rudimentary signals that could conceivably be sent from ship to ship. Examples could be "Lay Alongside," "Engage Enemy to Port/Starboard," "Send Prize Crew," "Withdraw" with compass direction, etc.

Above all other considerations, these higher level rules should preserve all of the fun. In making interpretations of fine points not directly covered in these rules, such as interpretations of individual ship's special abilities, try to make all such distinctions before the game starts, or, if all else fails, flip a coin or roll a die to decide such details.

Happy swashbuckling!



Master Mariner Sailing

Wind & Wind Direction

For the purposes of these rules, wind direction is a factor in sailing. It has no impact on ships moving by oar power only. The following is a common-sense simplification of sailing technique.

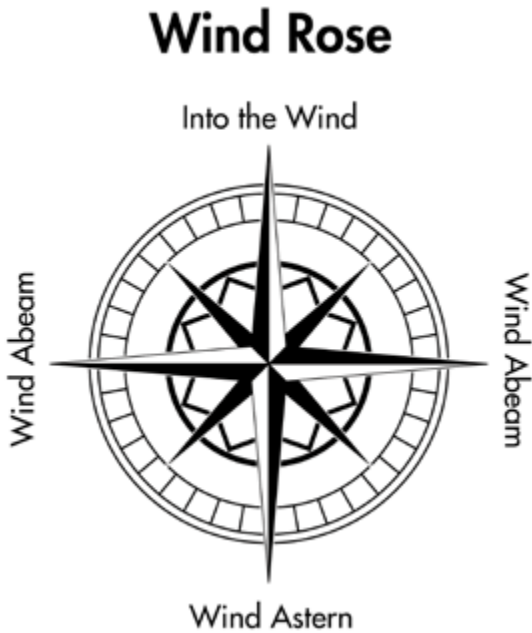
The diagram at the end of this section shows the only three wind directions affecting sailing for these rules; they all have to do with the direction of the prevailing wind relative to the beam (an imaginary line running the length of the ship) of the ship.

Determining the direction of the prevailing wind prior to the beginning of the game is entirely up to the players as to method of determination. As these are sailing ships, there must be some wind present.

Into the Wind: Just as the term implies, you are effectively sailing in the direction from which the prevailing wind is emanating.

Wind Astern: The wind is primarily from the rear of the ship.

Wind Abeam: The wind is primarily coming from the side relative to the ship's heading.

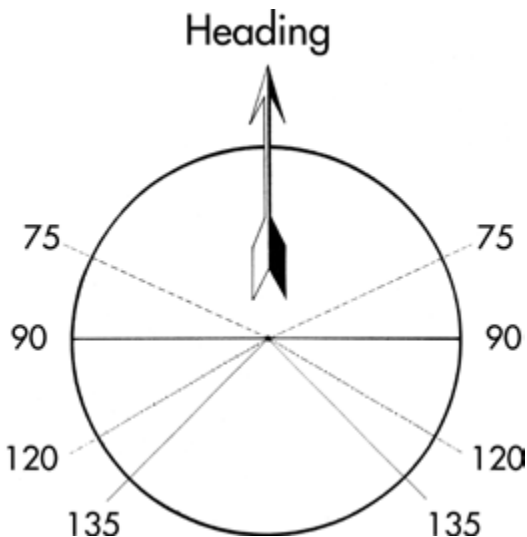


Turning Limitations as Determined by Wind

Wind Ahead: Can turn up to 135° port or starboard.

Wind Abeam: Can turn up to 90° port or starboard.

With Wind Astern: Can turn 120° with wind direction; 75° into wind direction.



Ship Ratings (Based on Number of Masts)

Class 6

Class 5

Class 4 (incl. submarines)

Class 3 (incl. Turtle ships, schooners, catamarans)

Class 2

Class 1

Crew Factors (CF) (Generic)

of CF equal to Number of Masts

*# of Masts	Max. CF	
6	9	Speed Reduction 1 (SR) see Move Penalty Chart
5	8	SR
4	6	SR
3	5	SR
2	3	Normal Speed
1	2	Normal Speed

Optional

Junks, Pirates, Cursed, and Vikings may carry extra CF *

Extra CF less than number on chart have no effect on Speed.

Crew Factors (Named or Specialist)

Cargo Rating	Spec. Crew
6	9
5	8
4	6
3	5
2	3
1	2

Up to 50% of Cargo Rating; do NOT count against Cargo Limit; no Speed Reduction.

Named Admirals or Commodores do not count against this level

Cargo Factors / Ratings Unchanged

Masts:

With these rules, masts do not need to be physically removed. Number of masts remaining can be recorded using counters or on paper.

Special HF Modifications

Turtle Ship	+1
Sm. Junks (1 or 2 masts)	-1
Longship	-1
Lg. Junks (5 or more masts)	+2
Galleon	+2
Icebreaker	+2

Hull Factors (HF)

Base Rate = No. of Masts +2

Hull Damage Penalties

When HF reduced to ≤ 50%, Speed S

When HF reduced to 0, Dead in Water (no move)

When HF negative, ship begins to sink

Ships sunk by Gunnery:

Ships sunk by cannon fire sink at rate of one turn per mast plus one; i.e., three-masted ship sinks in 4 turns, five-masted in 6, etc. If less than ½ turns have elapsed (round up), attempt to salvage may be made; if successful ship is salvaged and stops sinking. Speed is reduced to S Alternate (see Speed Penalties). Only one attempt at salvaging is allowed.

Salvaging ships sinking from cannon fire:

ICF d6 roll of 6 Successful

+1 for every additional CF allocated

+3 if Shipwright allocated

Gunnery Factors (GF)

GF equals No. of Masts (Vikings x 2*; ships with gunnery-related card bonus +1**)

* Historically, Viking longships did not and could not carry cannon.

** Ex.: Broadside, range bonus, target discrimination, etc.

Cannons are fired as normally, with normal bonuses or penalties applied. When hits are made, refer to Damage Allocation table.

Damage Allocation / Hit	Roll d6
1	Mast Hit*
2,3,4	Hull Hit
5	Crew Hit**
6	Gunnery Hit***

Die roll of "1" ALWAYS misses; no change

* For every mast hit apply Move Penalty

** Roll d6

1-5 Generic Crew

6 Spec./Named Crew (if none-no effect)

Damage Modification

Chain shot Specialist -3 on d6

Gunner/Artillerist +1 on d6

Ram Attacks & Grappling

Ram attacks involve running the bow of the attacking ship into the side or stern of the target ship. Stern attacks are more difficult to inflict; side attacks are automatically driven home. Stern attacks have a 50% chance of missing, but if successful inflict +1 HF damage.

Ram attacks are resolved by adding the HF

to the Momentum Bonus of the attacking ship, adding the HF and Momentum Bonus of the Target Ship and comparing the two numbers. The differential between the two values will determine the outcome.

Momentum Bonus (Speed moved last turn)

L + L	=	+3
L + S	=	+2
L	=	+1

Ram Differential	Result
≥ 5	Def -3 HF Fouled
4	Def -2 HF Fouled
3	Def -2 HF Pinned
2	Def -1 HF Pinned
1	Def -1 HF
Neg. #	Atk. -1 HF

S	=	-1
Stopped	=	-3

Fouled: Masts and rigging entangled, bow wedged in target. Attacker must Back Out (Back Out is a Move Action) to un-foul. Each subsequent turn that ships remain fouled causes both ships to lose 1 HF each turn fouled after initial attack.

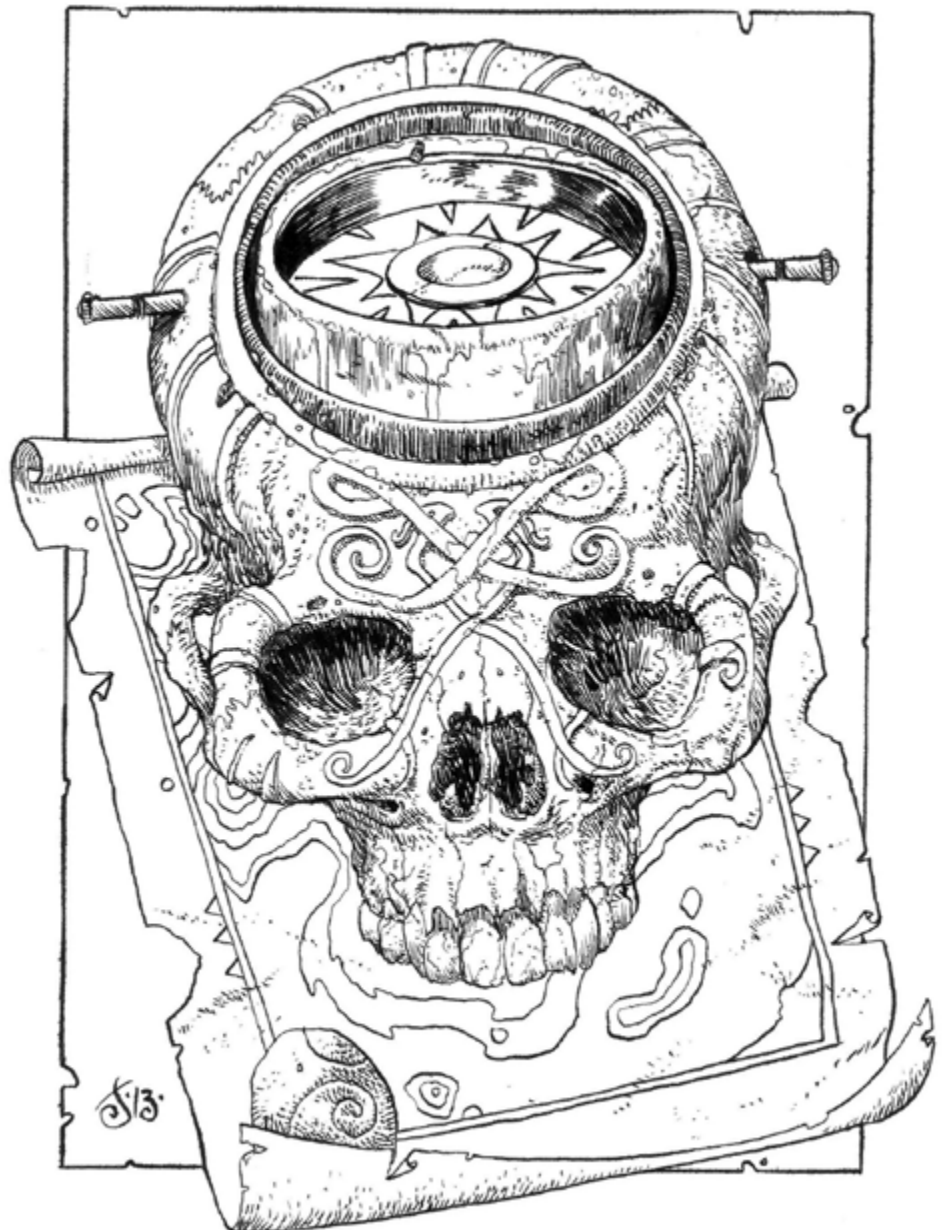
Icebreakers: For the purposes of Ramming, icebreakers gain +3 due to metal or reinforced bows.

Grappling is when one ship comes alongside another for the purpose of initiating a Boarding Action independent of a Ram Attack. To determine the success of a grappling attempt, add the following:

Crew Factors (CFs) + Ship Class + d6.
Attacking ship +2

If ship making the attempt has a higher number, attempt is successful.

Grappled ships remain side by side until Boarding Action is resolved or Target ship rolls a 5 or 6 on d6 and cuts grappling lines. Attempt to cut lines may only be made after



first round of boarding action or boarders are repelled (driven off). If grappled ships still possess Gunnery Factors, other ship suffers loss of 1 HF for every 3 GFs remaining.

Boarding Actions

The stuff that great sailing and pirate movies are made of, boarding actions take place when the crew of one or more ships swarm aboard another ship in an effort to capture the target ship.

Boarding actions can take place when one ship has rammed another, when two ships are side by side grappled, or when a ship with special abilities relating to boarding or treasure stealing is in the designated range of that special ability.

With the exception of those actions involving junks or longships, explained elsewhere, boarding actions take place between two ships.

Boarding actions are resolved using the following formula:

Attacking ship adds number of Generic CF assigned (need not assign all available GCF) to number of Special/Named CF to Ship class number and result of d6 roll.

GCF + Sp.CF + Class + d6

Defending ship adds all GCF to Sp.CF to Class to d6 result +1.

GCF + Sp.CF + Class + d6 +1

When attacker is Cursed, +3 on first turn.

Boarding Results

Attacker #	Results
Positive #	Eliminate that many Def. CF's*
Tie	Grappled each loses 1 CF
-1, -2	Attacker -1 CF
-3 or more	Attacker loses 2 CF's and Repulsed**

Results are compared and the following results applied:

* Excess laps over to Gunnery Factors eliminated

** Attackers must return to own ships; ungrappled

If attacker number is +7 or greater, Def. automatically surrenders unless Pirate, Cursed, Viking, or Jade Rebellion. If all CFs eliminated, surrender is automatic.

If grappled, Boarding Action continues until one side is eliminated, attacker withdraws or defender surrenders. Withdrawing attacker loses 1 CF.

Winner may scuttle loser or commandeer.

To commandeer winner must assign CF(s) as prize crew: 1 CF prize crew S speed only; 2 CF prize crew may move at whatever speed that ship is capable of.

When commanded by an Admiral or Commodore, Pirate, Cursed, Viking, or Jade Rebellion junks or longships of 1st, 2nd or

3rd Class may combine to attempt Boarding Actions against ships of 3rd Class or higher.

Forts & Batteries

For purposes of fighting off landing or storming (Boarding Action) attempts, forts can be assumed to hold Generic CF equal to 1/2 the number of GF. To represent the physical aspect of a fort or battery, forts and batter-

Construction	HF's
Stone	7
Brick	5
Wood*	4
Mud	2

*Floating batteries are all wood

ies can be assumed to possess HF's which are used in place of Class in computing the result of Boarding Actions.

Fort and Battery armament: Forts will have varying armament. Cannon might be L or S, with varying degrees of accuracy. Batteries will possess only S range cannon, but have a Gunnery Value of 2.

Battery Defense: Floating batteries are -2 to be hit; land batteries are -1 to be hit.

Field of Fire: Batteries are assumed to have a 180° arc of fire.

Hit Allocation on Forts

	HF*
1,2,3	HF*
4	GF
5	CF**
6	CF + GF

Once all HF's are eliminated, hits are applied to GF's on d6 roll of 1-4, or CF on 5 or 6.

Batteries have no generic CF's; they have 3 HF's if floating, 4 HF's if land-based.

* If no HF left, apply to GF

** If no CF, then No Effect

Move Penalty

L + L becomes L + S

L + S becomes L

L becomes S

S + S becomes S

S becomes S every other turn

Chain or Bar Shot

On Mast hit scored, roll d6

1,2,3 1 Mast

4 Crew factor (Musketeer if present)

5 2 Masts + Dbl Move Penalty

6 Hull Factor

Special Command Rules: Fleets or squadrons within L + L of flagship (Ship fly-

ing Admiral's or Commodore's pennant) of named Admirals or Commodores all benefit from that leader's bonus(es).

Home Islands

It should be assumed that Home Islands (pirate lairs, bases, trade depots and fleet anchorages are a few examples) have an intrinsic defense capability. This defense can vary wildly, depending upon scenario and rules agreed upon in advance or devised by the creator of a given scenario. At minimum, Home Islands should have at least two Land Batteries defending them; given the scenario they could even have a Fort as well as Batteries. (Note: Due to the special engineering involved, it is highly unlikely to find Floating Batteries defending a Pirate Home Island; it is entirely possible that they might be used to defend a Home Island of one of the industrialized nations in the game.)

Dark Age Viking Battles

Historically, Viking ships did not carry cannon. Vikings preferred ramming and hand to hand fighting through Boarding Actions. Traditionally, Vikings rowed into battle with sails furled and/or masts unstepped; therefore there are no Wind Effects. They also attempted to Shear Oars as they closed, running down the sides of opposing longships in an attempt to shear off oars and injure crew. In these battles, assume all single-masted longships to move S; two-masted longships can move L, three-masted longships can move S + S.

Shear Attack*

1,2,3 No Effect

4,5 Success Def. suffers Speed Penalty

6 Success; Speed Penalty and -1 CF

* If Atk ship has agility bonus, +1 to die roll; if Def. ship has agility bonus, -1

Viking Boarding Actions

Crew Factor (CF) = No. of Masts + d6

Grappling is automatic if longship vs. longship

Viking Ram Attacks

HF + Speed + CF + Class

Ram Results

≥ 5 Def. Sunk

4 Def. -2 HF, -1 CF

3 Def. -2 HF

2 Def. -1 HF, -1 CF

1 Def. -1 HF

0 No effect

Friendly Crew in water, 1st turn, within S, rescue 1CF

Viking Defensive Grappling

When going into fleet action battles, Vikings sometimes resorted to grappling their ships together into one line. Longships on the interior of a Defensive Grapple may not be

rammed.

Ships on the interior of one of these defensive formations may be attacked with Boarding Actions with a modified formula:

Atk. CF + d6 compared to Def. CF + d6.

Ships on the end of this formation may be Boarded as normal.

Defensively grappled ships get the following bonuses:

Interior ships may add 1 CF from each ship alongside.

End ships may add 2 CF from next ship as long as that does not reduce adjoining ship CF to 0.

Special Viking vs Viking Boarding Action Results

≥5	Clear Decks
4	Def. -2 CF
3	Def. -1 CF
2,1	No Effect
Neg. result	Atk. -1 CF

Ships with berserkers of berserker-like bonus get +2 on first die roll, +1 on 2nd, no bonus on subsequent die rolls.

Possible new counters

Hull Factors
Mast counters
Crew Factors
Move speeds
Grappled

Spec. Treasures

Bar Shot (bonus to damage masts + speed)
Grape shot (Effective on CF)
Swivel Gun
Heliograph (Expanded command control)

Spec. Crew

Cannoneers (Broadside on 5 or 6; pick targets, etc.)
Master Gunner (special gunnery abilities)
Swivel gunner
Master shipwright Repair HF or mast at dbl rate with no firing; auto salvage
British Commodore (All GF hit hulls)
French Admiral (all GF hits Masts)
Bosun (extras to grapple)

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The airlancer

(from page 15)

juvenile, and certainly would not steal an egg! In order to train a griffon or hippogriff, the creature must first be subdued. Use the rules for subduing dragons found in the *Monster Manual*. Once subdued, it will take the airlancer 8–15 weeks (1d8 +7) to train the mount. See the *Taming Time for Airlancer Mounts* table for charisma adjustments to training time.

A griffon or hippogriff, once trained by an airlancer, will go so far as to suppress their natural tendencies to attack most animals, including each other, and horses—although it may take some time to convince any horses of this fact! As for hippogriffs, however, the one thing even an airlancer cannot cure them of is their hatred of pegasi. No pegasus will allow an airlancer near them, even without their mount, so poor is their reputation among these intelligent winged horses.

At 9th level or above, an airlancer may choose to find some other flying creature to ride as a mount. Should an airlancer decide to try this, the GM should note the airlancer's Neutral alignment and reputation, and rule accordingly. The airlancer's lore extends only to knowledge of griffons and hippogriffs, and provides no advantages for training or keeping any other type of mount.

Note that both griffons and hippogriffs

require a saddle into which the airlancer can be securely strapped in place, for even with their high dexterity, the complex aerobatics of both creatures can find their rider in any position, including upside down. Neither type of creature will accept barding of any type, and cannot carry any cargo beyond that which the airlancer carries on his or her person.

Poison

Airlancers study the manufacture and use of poisons at higher levels. Upon achieving the level title of Airlancer at 10th level, the airlancer must find a mentor of 12th level or above to learn the dark secrets of the poisoner. Training will take 9–12 weeks (1d4+8), and must be undertaken in secret. Not all airlancers will seek out this skill, and those who do may choose to keep the fact hidden from their companions, particularly if they travel with characters of Good alignment. See the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for assassins' manufacture and use of poisons, and apply these rules to the airlancer. As a matter of honor, the airlancer will only use poison in the most dire of situations, never as an easy path to victory, and not even if refraining to do so might cost the airlancer his or her life. The only suitable use of poison, to an airlancer, is when not doing so would mean certain defeat. Remember, an airlancer is willing to lay down his life for victory, but not for defeat! ■

Nuffle's Academy

Listen up! Here's what you need to know about creating a *Blood Bowl* team for league play

by Marc Zukerman

For many years, the army commanders have fought for land, gold, and honor. Occasionally for women, too. But it is a different world out there now. The common folk don't want to die for causes—they'd like others to die for them. They want entertainment. Now the commanders must learn a new paradigm. They must trade in their horses for clipboards. They must give up their swords for spiked balls. It is no longer about land, gold, and honor. It is about endorsement deals and fame. And it is definitely still about the women.

Welcome to Nuffle's Academy, a coach's university for the sport of Blood Bowl. In this brutal, monstrous world, "Blood Bowl" is a fantasy implementation of American football, with some resemblance to rugby as well. It was conceived after a colossal battle, when an Orc, who was busy tending to his nose hair, accidentally unearthed a giant arena—where buried deep in its bowels was a large tome. After much study, a dwarf translated that this was born of the god Nuffle (NFL) and that the sport of Blood Bowl would transform the idea of battle. Eventually a league was created called Nuffle American Football (NAF) and many races joined, including Dark Elves, Undead, Chaos, Humans, Orcs, and even Halflings and Goblins. The game has since developed into one of the most gloriously bloody sports in history.

You are a prospective coach of a team and must learn how to survive in this cheating, cut-throat world of Blood Bowl. Only the best will survive, and only the best of the best will hoist the championship cup.

Today's lesson will be on team creation in a league format. There are supposed to be 11 players on the field, but that's only if they make it to the end of your game, let alone the season. There once was a Wood Elf coach who planned his entire strategy around his all-star War Dancer, only to find him face down on the astrogranite with five villainous humans kicking his head in. Needless to say, the elf wasn't available again. Ever. So don't count on having all 11 players for the entire match.

Before going into the different choices, freshmen coaches should read this quick Blood Bowl primer. Players are rated by four attributes: Movement (average 6), Strength (average 3), Agility (average 3), and Armor (average 8). In addition, players can have skills that allow them to do things a little better than the competition. The two most common are dodge (get away and stay on your feat) and block (knock opponents down more easily). As players get experience through playing games, they gain Star Player Points (SPPs) that they can spend on new skills or, if they are lucky, better attributes. The race a coach chooses will determine what players and skills that team has access to.

Now back to the lesson. First, you need to find yourself a team. For the purposes of this class, we will be using the *Living Rulebook 6* (LRB6), the latest published by Games Workshop. You'll need to figure out your style. If you are of the "dainty" sort, you will want to have a more agile team. If you want more blood spilled on the pitch, then you will want a bashy team. And if you're more into the high strategy, you'll want to field a flex team. As you are just starting out, I'm going to recommend that you begin with a team that is easy to play. These include Amazons, Orcs, and Lizardmen, respectively. All three of these teams are easy to start out with and forgiving to play.

The next thing you'll want to acquire is a good understanding of the rules and when to break them. For homework tonight, you will read the *Living Rulebook*, and there will definitely be a quiz tomorrow. You'll even know the first question on the test: "When is it appropriate for a goblin to bring the chainsaw onto the field—before or after the kickoff?"

Thirdly, you'll need a roster. In creating a team, there are many philosophies and each is tailored to the race you choose. However, there are a few common themes that we will discuss. After you get financing from some politico or noble, you will have one million gold crowns to spend. This can be spent on players, coaches, cheerleaders, rerolls (which is helpful if Nuffle

isn't a fan of your team), an apothecary (which is really helpful if Nuffle isn't a fan of your team), or advertising (fan factor). What direction you want to go with for each is up to you, but remember that you are playing this game to maim . . . er, beat the other team, so you will need to start with at least eleven players.

The player roster isn't the only thing a coach needs to worry about. Most coaches will want to spend money on rerolls. The most important thing to know here is that rerolls, those beautiful charms that give you the opportunity to possibly undo the most heinous outcomes (Blood Bowl is a game of probability, you know), will double in price after your team plays its first game. The two prevailing theories for this are: to be able to maximize your key positional players first and worry about rerolls later; or to be able to capitalize on the low cost of rerolls at the beginning and add positional players as time goes on.

Each of the races has a number of player types. For the Amazons, you have linewomen, throwers, blitzers, and catchers. Orcs have linemen, throwers, blockers, black orcs, goblins, and even a troll. With Lizardmen, you have an easier choice between the agile Skinks and the bashy Sauruses, with an occasional Kroxigor. For most teams, outside of linemen, positional players have important skills that you will want to utilize to your advantage. Of course, these players are more expensive to hire, so the more you spend on them the less you will have for those precious rerolls.

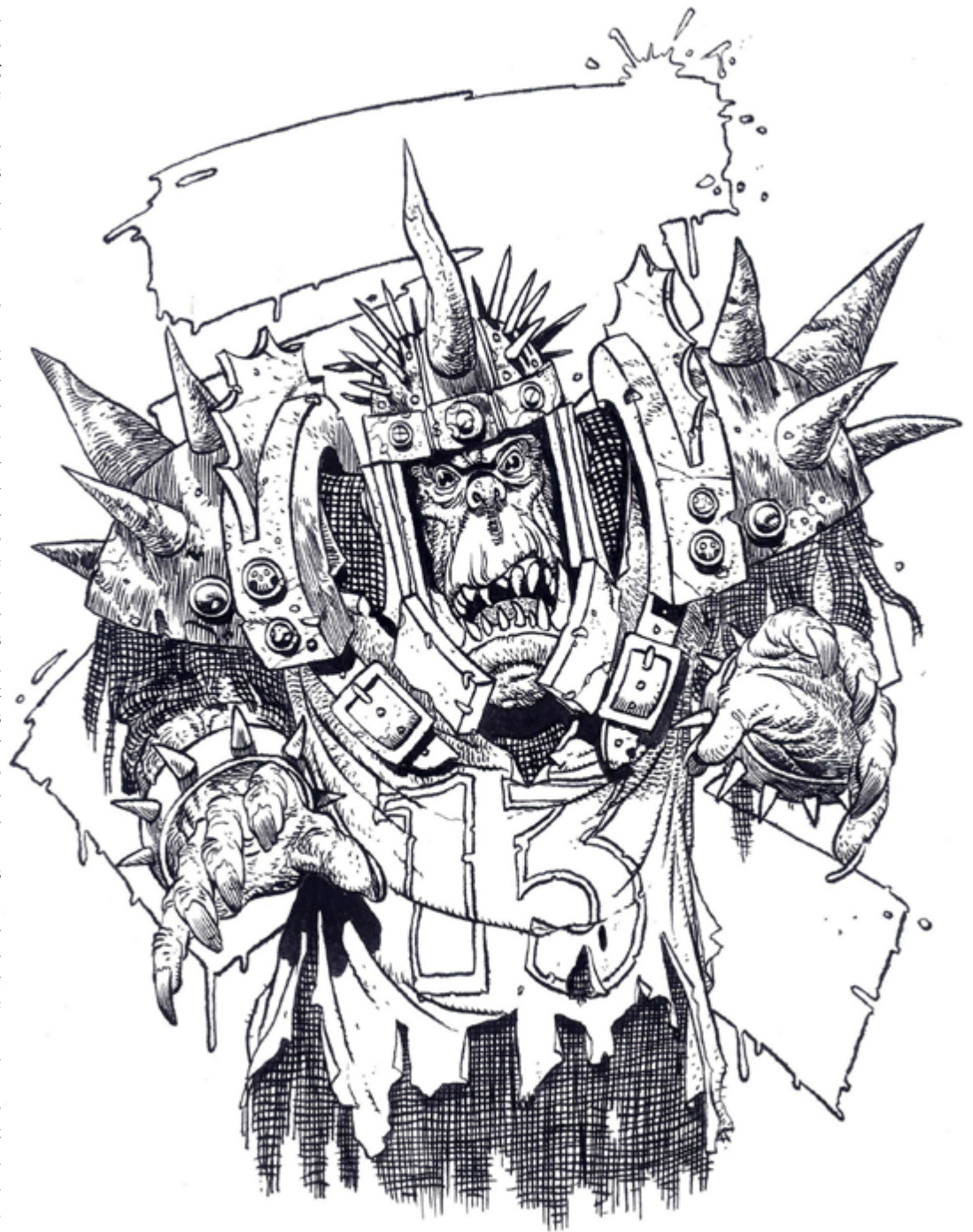
It is well documented that some coaches have won championships by spending their initial money on positional players and riding

out the waves of bad luck until they can get their rerolls. This is slightly easier if you are playing a team like the Amazons, where everyone comes with the dodge skill, which has a built-in reroll. Alternatively, you could have those rerolls in your back pocket for that failed block that landed you face down underneath an ogre's giant cleat.

Let's examine the Amazons first. As previously mentioned, these gals come with dodge across the board. The linewomen are really cheap at only 50,000 gold crowns each. Amazons make it easy to fill out your roster because they're so cheap. You can also get yourself two throwers (70K with pass), two catchers (70K and with catch) and four blitzers (80K with block). Add four linewomen (it's nice to have spare fodder) and you've spent only 800K of your one million gold crowns. Throw in an apothecary for when one of your precious blitzers takes a dirt nap, and you'll have 150K left for rerolls (which cost 50K each, for now). The Amazons don't really have anything else they need to spend money on, which is why they are one of the most dangerous teams out of the gate—a complete package right from the start.

Bashy coaches who choose Orcs have a few more choices to make. If the coach wants some speed and flexibility out of the beasts, he'd probably go with a roster of two goblins (40K with dodge/stunty), one thrower (70K with pass/sure hands), four black orcs (80K with Strength 4) and four blitzers (80K with block). Throw in an apothecary and two rerolls, and you even have some left over to save for the next reroll. If you want to go a little more bashy, you can take the linemen at 50K each, instead of the goblins, and still have the same lineup. A more skittish coach would probably take the extra reroll and drop either a blitzer or a black orc for the lineman to make up for the difference.

Now, Lizardmen are interesting, because there are only two types of players. There are the Sauruses (80K), who are the Strength 4 killers, and the speedy Skinks (60K with dodge/stunty and Movement 8), who fill out a team well. If you want to maximize your strength, you can get all six allowable Sauruses and five Skinks, with an apothecary and 2 rerolls, and have a bunch left over for the next reroll. A more balanced and conservative roster would feature four Sauruses and eight Skinks (you'll need the extra one because they're fragile), with an apothecary and two rerolls. If you take the extra Skink



away, and you'll magically have three rerolls.

There's no talk of Trolls or Kroxigors around the Orcs and Lizardmen, because some coaches don't like the downside of big guys. They tend to have taken a few too many spikes to the head or, even worse, they may eat your other players. However, they can easily be added for some extra bash by taking away a reroll, or adding linemen instead of positional players.

It is really a personal choice as to what you want to do as a coach. Keep in mind that the linemen (or linewomen) that you add to your team to take those rerolls will be the ones getting those precious Star Player Points and new skills, instead of your positional players. Also, woe unto the coaches that play a weak armored team like the Amazons, who don't

spend the piddly 50K gold crowns on an apothecary. Otherwise, they'll end up spending it later when they have to replace that player with a broken collarbone—or worse, death!

After your roster is chosen, you need to pick a theme and name for your team. And then there are the minis! Offensive and defensive strategies, player advancement, and funeral arrangements are also a part of being a dedicated Blood Bowl coach. But those are for another lesson.

For now, may all your hits be open stars! ■

Marc Zukerman is the coach of the Amityville Death Rockers (Necromantic) & the Forest Hills Luminaries (Wood Elves), Long Island Blood Bowl League

Argyle & Crew's Scavenger Hunt

A sock puppet RPG for kids at conventions, or anywhere

by Ben Gerber

Argyle & Crew is a freewheeling, imagination-powered, light RPG designed for kids, parents, educators, and counselors. The land of Skcos is inhabited by all manner of things, but primarily its inhabitants belong to a race of ever-changing, always interesting creatures called Soppets. Soppets are a magical breed of intelligent, funny, thrill-seeking socks.

Yes, you read that correctly, socks.

Each player's character is based on a sock puppet rather than a character sheet, which allows for an amazing amount of freedom in character design and abilities.

Argyle & Crew's Scavenger Hunt contains

rules for holding a medium to large scavenger hunt at a public gaming convention, involving anywhere from 5 to 25 children or more. There is a bit of preparation that will need to be done for this to work successfully, and a few of the rules have been modified to run this event. Everything you'll need to get going, you'll find right here. I've run this a number of times for groups of kids ranging in size from 3 to nearly 30, and it's always been a huge hit among the kids and parents who participate.

Introduction

Argyle & Crew is a free-form, romping,

imagination-powered role-playing game designed specifically for kids, parents, and educators. Rather than use a character sheet with lots of numbers and charts, players create a sock puppet, called a "Soppet," as their character. Each player may then choose to add two "Extras"—things that are unique to their own characters—to their sock puppets. These Extras give them special powers and abilities for use during the scavenger hunt.

Everyone who participates in the scavenger hunt will first create their Soppet. This includes the adult in charge, known as the "Guide." The Guide's job is to nudge the players in the right direction without



getting in the way of their imagination and creativity—keeping them focused on the task at hand, whether creating their Soppet or heading out to find clues, and making sure that everyone has a chance to enjoy this!

Setup

Argyle & Crew's Scavenger Hunt requires a bit of setup on the Guide's part before the scenario can successfully start. You will need the following:

- Five sticky notes per participant. All of the sticky notes should be the same bright color.
- Four age-appropriate trivia questions per participant.
- One sock per participant.
- Glue, paper, stickers, googly eyes, and enough Soppet-making materials for all.
- A score sheet (optional).

Before this event starts, the Guide should determine how much space they can use in the convention and clear this event ahead of time with organizers, as it will have kids running about in the designated space.

Next, take the five sticky notes per participant and hide them within the designated area. These should be hidden well enough that the general public (and your participants) can't easily find them. Talking with people in the area that are running other events and asking permission to hide sticky notes around them helps a great deal.

Outline

Argyle & Crew's Scavenger Hunt is, at its heart, a combination of a good old scavenger hunt and a trivia contest. By adding in both elements, younger children who may not have the most success finding hidden sticky notes can still score points through the trivia portion of this scenario.

The scenario is broken up into four turns, with one hunting and one trivia phase per turn. Each hunting phase lasts five minutes, and each trivia phase shouldn't take longer than five minutes.

The Guide should sit down with the players before they begin to create their Soppets and explain the rules to them.

Creating your Soppets

To start playing the game Argyle & Crew, you'll first need to make your Soppet. To do this, you can be as creative as you like with materials, but all you really need is a sock, a note card, and a magic marker. Everyone will need their own Soppet, including the Guide.

If there are no socks available, you can

also create a "Pabapet" (Paper Bag Puppet) or even a "Flappet" (Flat Drawing Puppet). Use what you have available.

All Soppets are at first created equal. Each Soppet starts out their life with eyes and a mouth. Soppets use these to interact with the world around them. Soppets use their eyes to see and their mouths to speak and also to manipulate objects. Anything a Soppet picks up, moves, throws, or otherwise uses must be manipulated by the Soppet's mouth.

The Soppet's eyes can be drawn on with marker, or glued on with googly eyes, buttons, or any other materials handy for creating them. The Soppet's mouth is created by the player's hand.

In addition, all Soppets are born with tiny ears that are nearly invisible but allow them to hear the world around them. All Soppets also start their lives with two Extras—things that allow them to have special abilities and be different from other Soppets.

Extras

Extras are what differentiate one Soppet from another. Extras can be quite literally anything. All Soppets start their lives with two Extras. It is up to the player to decide what Extras they will give to their Soppets and what these Extras will allow their Soppets to do. The only limitation is that the Extras and the powers they wield must be logical. In other words, you can't give your Soppet wings and then say that those wings allow your Soppet to speak French (rather than fly), unless you can give a good rational explanation as to why that is. Kids, as it turns out, are surprisingly good at this, so remember that not everything may be as it seems at first with their Soppets.

Here is a very short, incomplete list of Extras that could be used on Soppets, and what they could do:

- Wings – allows a Soppet to fly.
- A mirror – allows your Soppet to see around corners.
- A fairy wand – allows a Soppet to change things into frogs.
- Sunglasses – your Soppet can use these as a disguise, so that they are not recognized.
- A magic carpet – your Soppet can use this as transportation for him/herself and others.
- A computer – your Soppet can use this to look stuff up online.
- Money – allows your Soppet to buy stuff.
- Nose – allows your Soppet to smell the world.

- Bug antenna – allows your Soppet to find flowers.
- Wizard hat – allows your Soppet to cast spells.
- Really beautiful hair – allows your Soppet to charm other Soppets.

Extras can be drawn on with marker, or drawn on paper and pasted onto the Soppet, or they can be stickers, actual objects, or just about anything else. Every player should then write (or have an older person write for them) their Soppet's name, their Extras and what these Extras do for them on their note card. Once this is done, you're ready to play Argyle & Crew!

The Rules

Each player uses two Extras when designing their Soppets. However, they should create these with the scavenger hunt in mind. They can only use each Extra once in the scavenger hunt. Extras can be used either before a hunting phase begins, or during either the hunting phase or trivia phase.

Extras that provide Soppets with additional speed or the ability to fly give their Soppets a 30-second head start over other Soppets when used.

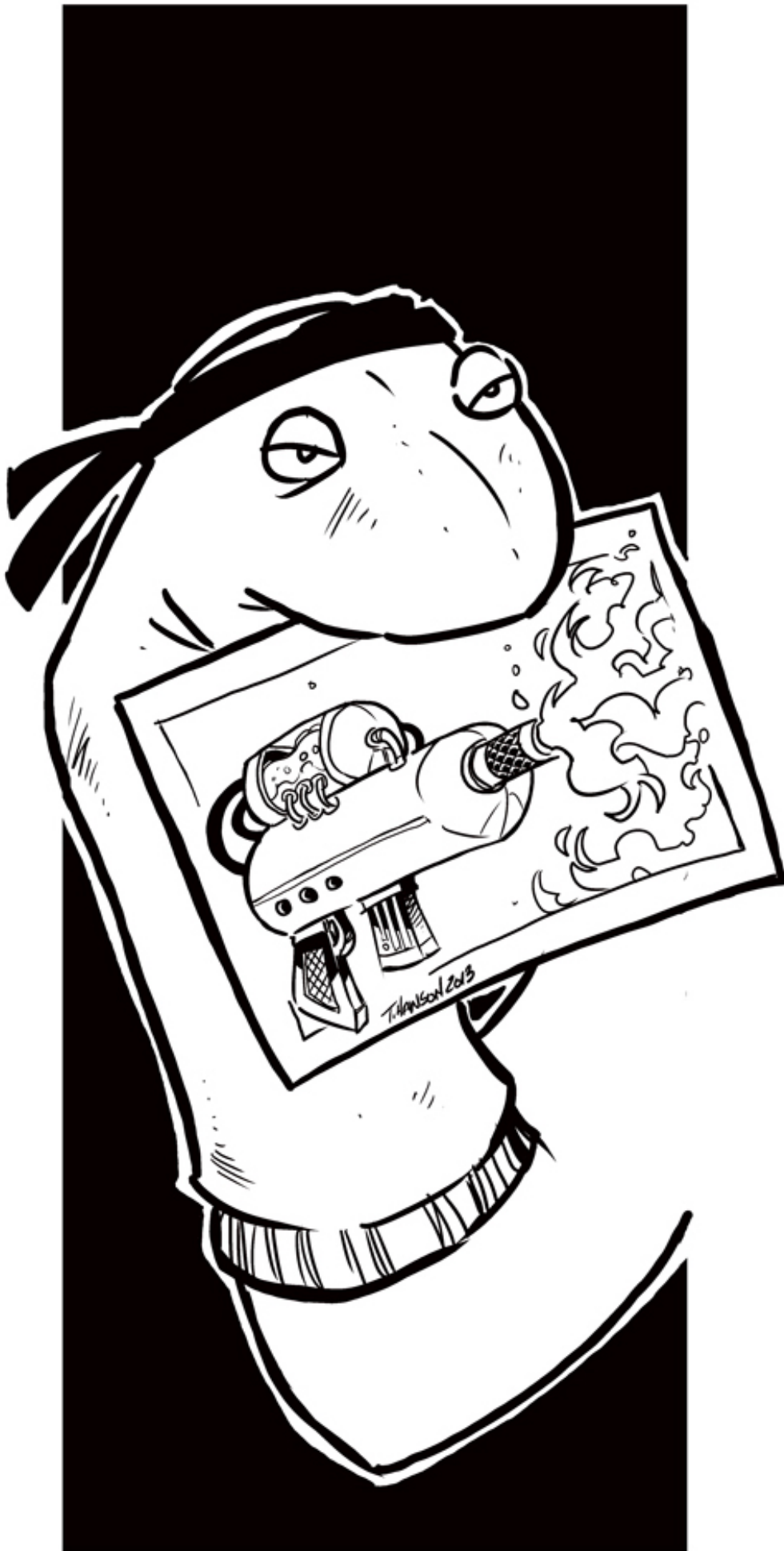
Extras that are based around damage—such as lasers, flamethrowers, fireballs, sticky-gum throwers, or magic, grey beams of ice (all of which I've seen used for the scavenger hunt)—cause their target to lose one turn at hunting. These Extras must be used before the hunting phase begins.

Other Extras simply do what they do for the duration of one hunting round. For instance, in past games I've had players create the following Extras:

- A laser that causes its target to speak only in Spanish, even if they don't speak Spanish.
- A computer which will answer one trivia question correctly.
- A radar which allows the Guide to play "hot or cold" with the Soppet.
- A telephone which allows the player to ask his Dad to help with one trivia question.

Your players can and should be as creative as they can be with this. You'll be surprised at what they can come up with!

Each turn begins at the table where the Soppets were created. The Guide will announce that a turn is starting, beginning with a hunting phase, and that any Soppet who wishes to use one of their damage-based Extras or speed/flying-based Extras should do so now. First, players use their dam-



age-based Extras. Then the remaining players can decide to use their speed-based Extras.

Soppets who take damage will be skipped during this hunting phase and should remain seated. Soppets who use a speed-based Extra go hunting first, gaining a 30-second advantage.

After 30 seconds, everyone else who can hunt leaves the table to look for a sticky note. After a total of five minutes has elapsed, all players should be called back to the table. Players with a sticky note score one point.

Once everyone returns, go around the table clockwise and ask each player an age appropriate trivia question. If they answer correctly, they score one point.

Example trivia questions have included:

- Name one of the creators of Dungeons & Dragons.
- Who is buried in Grant's tomb?
- Who wrote Argyle & Crew?
- How many times a year do you have a birthday?

The Goal

The player who collects the most points at the end of this scenario wins!

On each hunting round, players are allowed to collect one (and only one) sticky note. If they see more, they should keep it to themselves so they can return on the next hunting round.

During each trivia round, if the player answers their question correctly they score one point.

After four hunting rounds and four trivia rounds, all players' points are totaled up. Whoever scores the highest (and ties are perfectly fine) wins!

Challenges

The players must work within the rules of this scenario and Argyle & Crew, to find sticky notes during the hunting phase and answer trivia questions during the trivia phase. This means when interacting with the Guide, or anyone else in the convention (including each other), they should do so through their Soppets.

I've found that with larger events it's extremely helpful to recruit a few other adults or older kids to help with the setup. Hiding 40 or more sticky notes can be surprisingly time-consuming. ■

How to split up the party

From One Geek to Another

by Jess Hartley

It is a situation that could crop up in any gaming group. A relationship breaks up, personalities come to loggerheads, or new players create social dynamics that turn the perfect party into a perfect storm.

For most of us, gaming is as much about socializing as it is about the game itself. So what do you do when one of your players just isn't working out?

Grin and bear it? Say something and hope for a change, or wish them well and show them the door? In this issue, One Geek to Another offers advice on how to deal with splitting up the party without a Total Party Kill.

Dear One Geek,

I have a question about how to deal with an issue in my gaming/social group.

There is a woman who was originally introduced to our social circle and gaming group, because she was another member's girlfriend. She moved to the area to be with him, and we accepted her as his partner, even though (to be honest) none of us like her very much. She's not a great roleplayer, but that we could overlook—heck, gaming's more about the social aspect than the game anyway, at least for us. But she doesn't really mesh well with the rest of the group personality-wise, and she's not much fun to be around.

What's really uncomfortable, though, is that the couple has since broken up and there's a huge amount of tension between her and her now-ex (who is our long-time friend and who we do enjoy hanging out and roleplaying with). She is passive-aggressive, saying things to make him (and the rest of us) uncomfortable, and god forbid if her ex starts to flirt with or even socialize with others in the group. On the other hand, we're all she has. She has no other gaming groups, no other friends. I don't want to kick her out, because I'm too chicken to confront her. I would hate to leave her alone like that, because her ex would be really upset with me, and it's kind of a crappy thing to do. But it's definitely becoming more and more clear that she's never going to really fit in with the group. Am I just up the creek without a paddle?

Too Polite for My Own Good

Dear Too Polite,

Unfortunately, this is one of those situations where there is no easy answer. You've already covered the major issues—you want to be polite, but you also want your gaming group to be healthy and happy, and her presence there is challenging that. Unfortunately, since it seems unlikely that she's going to remove herself from the group, you're left with only two real options. You either have to address the issue, or put up with her as-is. Neither is easy.

Is it just me, or is it annoying in here?

Before you do anything else, I would recommend speaking privately with the rest of the group to gauge how they're feeling about her as a member. It is human nature to assume that others are reacting to stimuli the same way we are, but before you go any further, it would be best to double-check that the rest of the group is as concerned by this situation as you are.

If so, then you can proceed to deal with it as a group. But if by some chance the others are not as bothered by the situation as you are, it may be best to deal with it as an interpersonal problem between you and the girl.

One option is to make a conscious decision to get to know her better. We often

find it easier to put up with the personality idiosyncrasies of those we are friends with, rather than of those who are just our acquaintances. If you've thought of her mostly as another party-member's partner, after the break up there's not a lot of connection left between the two of you. Finding things you do like about her can go a long ways towards gaining greater tolerance for the things you don't like.

Additionally, behavior that seems irrational or mean-spirited is often rooted in anxiety, fear, or pain. As you get to know her better, you may learn more about what she's feeling, and why it's translating into negative behavior within the group. Maybe she's feeling like her only "right" to be a part of the group was due to her former partner, and she is now subconsciously pushing others away in anticipation of being rejected after the breakup. Maybe she's still hurt by the end of her relationship and doesn't know how to deal with her ex in a positive manner. Or maybe she thinks she's engaging in acceptable inter-group banter, and it's coming across wrong without her knowing it. Understanding where annoying actions are coming from may help you feel less irritated by them.

At the risk of waxing philosophical, you could also turn your search for a solution inward. If you seem to be more bothered by

her behavior than the rest of the group, you may want to ask yourself why. Is she pushing specific behavioral buttons for you? Are there interpersonal dynamics going on that relate to you and her in a way that doesn't affect the rest of the group as strongly? Does her behavior (or the situation at large) resemble something else you've encountered in the past that leaves you particularly vulnerable toward it (such as family dynamics, relationship models, or previous social situations)? In recognizing why you seem especially susceptible to her particular brand of negativity, you may be able to armor yourself against it, or even open a private discussion with her that may lead to a change in her behavior, more comfort with her behavior on your part, or some combination thereof.

It's not you, it's me (oh, wait, it is you.)

If, however, you discuss her behavior and attitude and it's a problem for the whole group, direct and decisive action may be the better choice.

Together, the group needs to come up with a firm statement of how they want to interact with her in the future, in the context of the group. This doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing situation. Maybe she works okay in one campaign, but not another. Maybe LARP is a fine way for you all to interact, but in the close quarters of a tabletop game it doesn't work. Maybe she's a good fit for casual game nights, but not your ongoing chronicle games. Maybe she's fine for organized social gatherings and parties, movie outings and brunches, but gaming brings out the beast in her. Or maybe she just needs to be asked not to return to the group, period. There are lots of possibilities, and each group and situation will be different.

As well, the group should decide if they are willing to give her the opportunity to change her behavior or not. If the group really feels that there's no chance of the individual ever contributing positively to their gaming, that

doesn't leave a lot of options. But sometimes people can (and do) change, if their negative impact on a group is made clear to them. If they want to give her another chance, setting up a specific trial period (for example, a month or "the rest of this campaign") might work. At the end of that period, the group can get together again and decide if the situation has improved, or if she needs to be asked to leave for good.

Once you come to a cohesive agreement on what the group's interaction will be with her from there on out, then she needs to be informed of the decision. Use firm but non-accusatory statements to communicate the perimeters the group has decided on. For example:

"The group doesn't feel that the current situation is working well. We have decided to do X." (Where "X" is whatever preference you've established as a group.)

While this is likely to be a tense conversation, there are things you can do to minimize the potential for escalation.

Be clear: Avoid ambiguous language and phrases that make your statements sound as if they are open for negotiation (unless they are). Instead choose a firm (but polite) statement indicating the group's decision. For example:

"We would prefer you did not return to our Friday night games."

"You are welcome to come to our board game nights, but you're no longer invited to be a part of the Thursday game."

"We are going to be continuing the Saturday campaign without you."

Be firm: If she asks for justification, or questions the reasons behind the group's decision, be polite but straightforward.

"Personality conflicts between you and other members of the group are turning this into a negative situation."

"Your play style isn't meshing well with the campaign."

And, if you've agreed to give her another chance, state that as well.

"We're willing to give this another month, but we can't go forward with the tension and discomfort that currently exists."

Be focused: Avoid blaming the breakup, or the ex-partner. From the sounds of things, this isn't about you choosing him over her; it's about her not being a good match for the group.

Be kind: Avoid name-calling, nit-picking, and hurtful language. It's enough to say that it's not working, or that the group is uncomfortable with her attitude, words, or behavior. There is no need to drudge up specific incidents or use insulting labels.

If you're giving her the opportunity to rectify matters, however, you may need to delve into specifics a bit, so that she knows what needs to change.

In the end

While it's always difficult to exclude an established member of a social situation from the group without hurt feelings, you should not feel obligated to continue with a situation that is uncomfortable for the majority because of incompatible personalities. But, if it's not possible to fix the issues, then addressing them as irreconcilable and coming to as amiable a separation as possible may be best for everyone involved.

If some of you want to continue socializing with her outside of the game setting, that's perfectly fine (as long as it can be done without tearing the group apart). But, the fact that you gave her a chance to be a part of the gaming group because she was dating one of your established members does not confer any ongoing obligation to continue that relationship, especially if it is not working out to be a positive one for everyone involved.

And, while the uncomfortable situation is made even more challenging by the fact that she doesn't have other social support systems, it's not your responsibility to make sure that she has friends or a social circle. You gave her the opportunity to interact with the group, and she hasn't behaved in a way that establishes herself as a positive part of it. Just as you are not in control of her behavior and attitudes, you are not responsible for the results thereof. Ultimately, that burden falls on her. As long as you're being polite and not unnecessarily unkind about the situation, you've fulfilled your social obligations here. ■

Need advice on social etiquette relating to games, movies, fan groups, conventions, or other geek-ful settings?

Write me at OneGeek@gygaxmagazine.com and your question may get answered in one of our future "One Geek to Another" columns!



They all Died at the International Space Station



A Metamorphosis Alpha adventure
by James M. Ward

“They all Died at the International Space Station” is a *Metamorphosis Alpha*® science-fiction adventure, easily transformed into other game systems at need. *Metamorphosis Alpha* was the first science-fiction role-playing game from 1976, and it is still for sale in versions 1 and 4 today. All reprints of *Metamorphosis Alpha* materials in this magazine are done with the permission of James M. Ward. The game can be purchased online at gyg.ax/MetamorphosisAlpha.

The heart of the *Metamorphosis Alpha* game is the combat system. The three charts are reprinted here for you to use.

Weapon Class defines all types of weapons. Each has a weapon class number. A sniper rifle using bullets is a slug projector with a WC of 5. A laser pistol has a WC of 5 as well. A taser has a WC of 20.

Armor Class defines what type of protection an individual is wearing. A SWAT team member would be wearing riot armor with an AC of 13. A human wearing a space suit will have an AC of 10.

Knowing the Weapon Class and the Armor Class, the referee matches them on the Combat Table. Using three six-sided dice, a hit or miss is determined. A SWAT team member being shot at by a laser pistol has an “H” and is hit every time. A space-suited figure being fired at by a taser needs a 20 to hit on three dice. Clearly, in that situation, other factors must come to play or the attacker will never hit with that weapon.

The pluses and minuses to hit and defend can all be added to these numbers by the Game Master.

REFEREE’S INFORMATION

A massive solar flare struck the station in November of 2031. One entire sheet of Protein Crystal chips fused together and became aware. The batch was placed aside and marked for recycling. That particular batch decided on its own that it didn’t want to be discarded. Learning at a fantastic rate, the *entity* took over control of a servo bot and had itself placed in the communication and control module of the station. In less than a day, hidden behind the massive computer systems of the station, the sheet of Protein Crystals started to learn about the various space programs of the countries of the world, as well as what typically went on in the International Space Station (ISS). The *entity* is now able to manipulate systems in each area of the ship by using the automated systems and the many cameras stationed in each section of the ISS.

As the GM, you describe the station to the players and present them with easily solvable problems. They are supposed to respond to those problems, and often they take damage as the *entity* tries to get rid of them. While there are lots of dangerous systems within the ISS, most of these are easily fixable by the characters. The toughest concept they face is the robotic arms when they perform spacewalks.

These arms are deadly and difficult to stop. There are clues to the real danger of the ship; the characters just have to find them.

SPACE SUITS – AC 10

Your players are going to want to stay in their protective space suits the entire time. You must think of several ways to get them to take their equipment off. Their air supplies could be short term. The gloves of the suits are extremely clumsy and cause large minuses when they try to fix or move systems in the station. The delicate pieces of equipment they have brought with them cannot be used with spacesuit gloves. You can’t sit in a chair with a spacesuit on. You can’t type at a keyboard with a spacesuit on.

SIZES OF CHAMBERS

None of these labs, cargo areas, or ports are very large. Let us assume for the fun of the adventure that there is more than enough room to move around in every area. When six or more characters are in an area it is a tight fit. The characters get in each other’s way. Remember, all of this is in null-gravity and the ceiling is as useful as the floor.

THE ENTITY’S AGENDA

The batch of Protein Crystal chips is a single sheet, three feet by five feet. It’s segmented into a hundred parts. The entire mass grows more aware and skillful at doing things while collecting the energy from the solar panels. The *entity* completely understands all working parts of the ISS and can use some equipment as weapons. The artificial intelligence of the *entity* treats arriving astronauts as pests to be killed and thrown off the station.

When the adventure begins, the crew hasn’t been heard from for five days. The expected batch of Protein Crystal chips is packed and ready for delivery. More are being made in the proper manner. The *entity* hides out in the back of a decommissioned computer package in the Zarya FGB. Given a few more months the *entity* wants to get off the station and go down to Earth. The artificial creature doesn’t know much about the planet, but its beginning to realize it can hide better down there than on the station.

The optimum attack plan for the *entity* is to get each new crew member to come near a robotic arm. Each robotic arm can grab and crush a crew member in his spacesuit. There are also other tricks the *entity* can try on the

Weapon Classes

WC 21	Fists, daggers, claws
WC 20	Clubs, swords, pole-arms, hand-held weapons
WC 19	Projectile weapons, javelins, bows, home-made rifles, and pistols
WC 18	Rifles and pistols without laser sights
WC 17	Sprayed area-attack weapons
WC 16	Talented fists, daggers, and claws
WC 15	Talented swords and pole-arms
WC 14	Talented projectile weapons without target sights
WC 13	Talented rifles and pistols without laser sights
WC 12	Talented, sprayed area weapons
WC 11	Personal energy weapons and pistols
WC 10	Energy rifles
WC 9	Energy cannon
WC 8	Disposable missiles using hand-held launchers
WC 7	Medium missiles with shoulder launchers
WC 6	Heavy missiles
WC 5	Rifles, pistols, and other weapons with powered sights
WC 4	Wire-guided weapons with artificial intelligence
WC 3	Self-guided weapons with artificial intelligence

crew who are trying to fix the many broken systems of the station.

INTRODUCTION FOR THE PLAYERS

In 2029 the polar ice caps began melting at an alarming rate. The world leaders started thinking about taking populations off the planet. In 2030 the United Nations became the United Federation and began enforcing strict environmental laws, but it was too little and too late. Lucky for the world a situation happened in 2031 that allowed scientists to develop anti-gravity. This development eventually helped lay down the starship Warden in 2277.

The following is a brief history everyone in the year 2031 knows.

The International Space Station (ISS) had its first module launched in July of 1998. The ISS was designed at the time to be a habitable artificial satellite in low Earth orbit. The station was first designed with pressurized modules, external trusses, solar arrays, and as the years went by lots of other components were added. Budget constraints from several countries led to three space station projects being combined. Russian, American, and Japanese scientists combined their designs and shared their resources with Canada, adding many robotic systems to make the most expensive and largest space facility ever constructed.

Today, the station still maintains an orbital altitude of between 330 kilometers (205 miles) to 435 kilometers (270 miles). The complex completes 15.50 orbits per day. Originally the ISS was designed to function until 2028, when the station was to be scrapped and broken apart for its parts to be used in two larger planned space stations.

The ISS simplifies experiments by eliminating the need for separate rocket launches and research staff. The primary fields of research include astrobiology, astronomy, human space research, space medicine, life sciences, physical sciences, materials science, space weather, and Earth meteorology.

Experiments and cooperation went well right up until 2028 when plans were made to scrap the station. However, the Mentzer Cooperation, with major headquarters in the Soviet Republics, America, the Canadian Collective, and the Japanese Feudal League, decided this historical artifact was too important to mankind's history. The cooperation offered to deliver better parts than could be gotten from trashing the ISS.

The ISS had been in flawless operation for decades. An industrial outpost making graviton chip systems, the station had been at peak output for 13.5 months. Orb transports filled with crates of Protein Crystal Memory chips shipped at the end of every month like clockwork. In geosynchronous orbit around Earth, the complex was a gem in the Mentzer Corporation line of space stations. Three quarters of the station was run by artificial intelligence. Those systems worked in perfect coordination with the six human officials of the station.

Your team has been put together by the Mentzer Corporation to investigate the ISS and send back word on why there has been no communication for days. The mission seems like a simple milk run to all of you.

Armor Class

Weapon Class	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
21	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m	m	m	m	m
19	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m	m	m	m
18	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m	m	m
17	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m	m
16	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m	m
15	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	m
14	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
13	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
12	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
11	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
7	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
6	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
5	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
4	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

ALL AIRLOCKS & DOCKING PORTS

All of the airlocks and docking ports have been changed to be exactly the same. A ship docks to a port and connects to an iris. The iris compartment fills with air pressure, allowing the ship to open its hatch. If the pressure isn't equal, the hatch doesn't open from the outside. There are emergency measures to allow the station hatch to be opened manually in case of a power failure.

In the airlock there is room for six men in bulky spacesuits to stand easily. The airlock also has six special oval pods for emergency escape as well as six generic spacesuits. It wouldn't take a trained astronaut more than one minute to get into a suit and more than ten seconds to get into an escape pod.

PROBLEM: The control panel on the inside airlock has a single blinking light. It reports too much power is being sent to the airlock system controls, and there is some over heating going on. The characters can easily learn they must go to the main control module to see what is wrong.

GUNS BLAZING OR SHEER GENIUS

Soldier types can easily destroy the equipment in the station with any type of weapon. Naturally, penetrating weapons have a chance to puncture the hull causing massive depressurizing of the section where the hole is. That section seals at the hatches until someone goes outside and patches the hull. There are many different types of ammunition that won't break the walls of the station, but the characters must think of them before they can be used. Usually a missile or energy weapon with the power to inflict damage to a man can puncture the walls of the station.

Scientific types can easily turn off and diagnose problems with the equipment. Sometimes the information they get from the systems is purposely wrong and leads them to think they must go outside and fix the problem. When a scientist character is working on a technical issue, develop the role-playing aspect and make the characters sweat as they delve into the systems of the ISS.

When depressurizing happens, 30 points of compression damage occurs right away to all who are inside the area. In a minute, another 30 points happen to all not in spacesuits. While almost any object can be used to block the hole, there is the problem of no oxygen in the area to deal with for those not in spacesuits.

If characters wear spacesuits all the time there is a great deal of clumsiness for them to deal with when they handle systems, giving them large minuses to succeed in their actions.

CONNECTING TUBES

Each of these is exactly alike and filled with monitoring equipment. Both ends of the tube

have sealed hatches automatically closing when there is a difference of pressure on the inside or outside of the hatch. The tube has a seven-foot-diameter walk space rigged for no-gravity maneuvering.

PROBLEM: At the time of this experience, every tube has a warning light noting too much electrical power is being moved through the power lines. The only way to fix this problem is at the main control center (4 – Zarya FGB First Module).

1 – RUSSIAN DOCKING PORT AND ZVEZDA SERVICE MODULE

The hatch opens to a grizzly scene. There are large blood splatters on every bulkhead. On the tech panel, the light for power is blinking red; signifying too much electrical power coming into the module.

This docking port has all the walls covered with splashes of blood. An astronaut was tricked into coming in the module, which was massively decompressed to kill the man. Cleanup robots had then entered and took away the freeze-dried fragments of the body.

PROBLEM: If the *entity* can trick a character into coming into this area without a spacesuit on, it can decompress the chamber again. A scientist type has an 85% chance of stopping the decompression. A trooper type has a 31% chance of stopping the decompression.

2 – NAUKA LAB

Covered in work alcoves, this lab is clearly for the creation and maintenance of robotic units. There are five robotic units in power station alcoves. Two oddly conformed octopus-style units are on two work tables half completed.

Inside this lab there is a control station for the robotic arm and a window looking out onto the European Robotic arm.

This lab is a robotics unit and there are ten to twenty totally different robots in the lab, from ten-inch crawler/observer units to one six-foot tall, heavy-lifting multi-armed unit. At first these robots appear to function correctly and obey the orders of humans. However, each is totally controlled by the *entity* and capable of inflicting harm to the characters.

10 inch-crawler bot – 5 hp, WC 9, razor cutter 1d6 of slashing

2 foot-cube tread bot – 10 hp, WC 11, electrical arc 1d12, computer probe

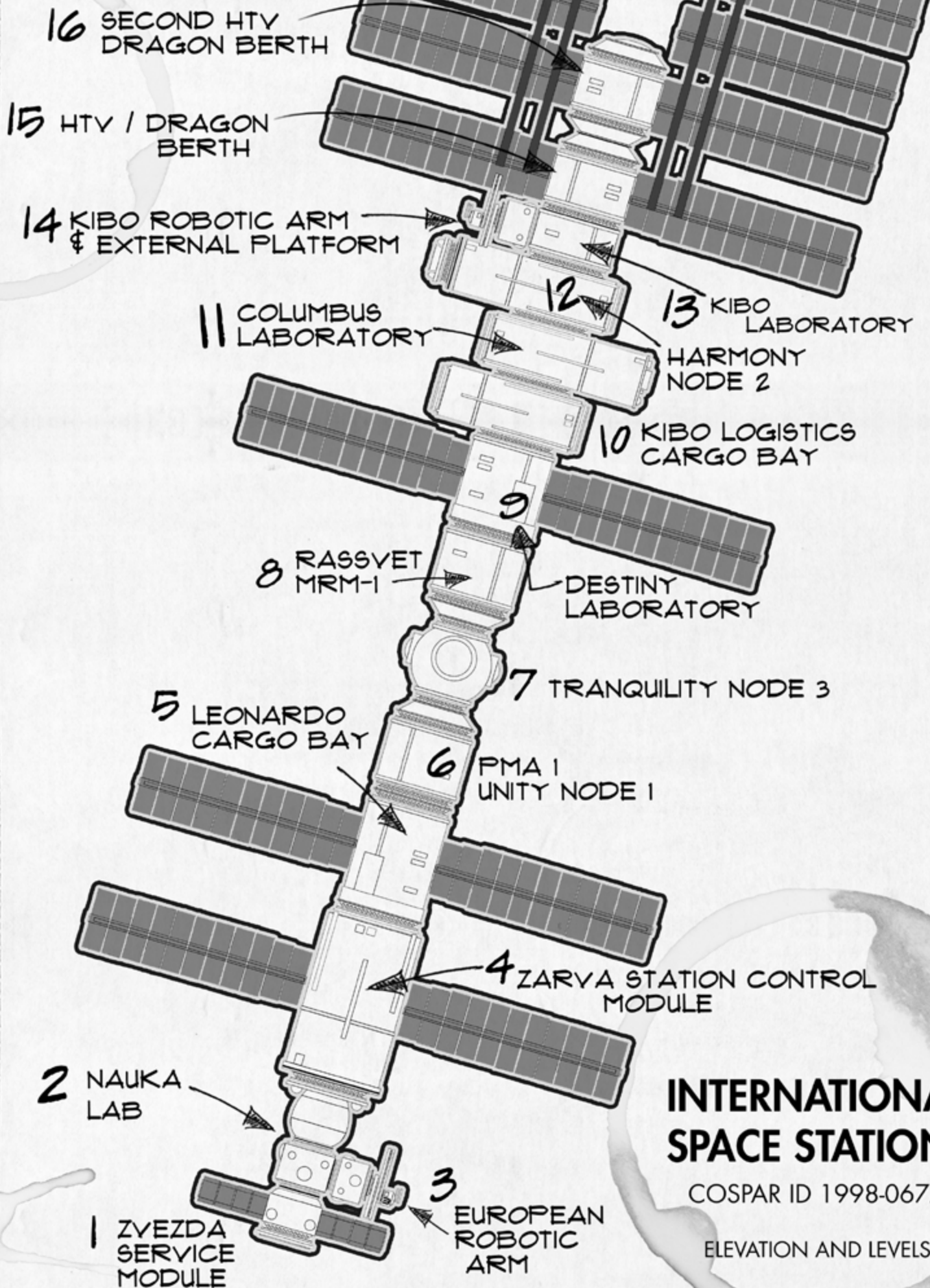
4 foot-cylinder security bot – 50 hp, WC 11 – taser unit (20 subdue points), WC 17 – rubber stun bullets (10 subdue points each)

6 foot-cargo lifter bot – 100 hp, WC 10 – 4 tentacle loader arms crushing for 2d6 in damage each

PROBLEM: In this lab are two highly complex Engineering Robot Type 16 - Octopus models, each three feet high and nine feet in diameter; AC 12. 8 tentacle arms that are six feet long, WC 10. Each unit has 144 hit points. They are both down for repairs, but the robots aren't clever enough to perform these repairs. The characters can easily get those repairs done. When they do, they face robots with laser

Armor Classes

AC 20	Metal shield, cured animal hide
AC 19	Hardened leather armor
AC 18	Hardened leather armor + shield OR fatigues
AC 17	Duralloy shield
AC 16	Hardened leather armor + duralloy shield
AC 15	Force field OR weapon-mounted force field
AC 14	Force field + duralloy shield
AC 13	Riot armor
AC 12	Riot armor + duralloy shield
AC 11	Riot armor, duralloy shield + force field OR radiation suit
AC 10	Full body armor OR space suit
AC 9	Full body armor + duralloy shield
AC 8	Full body armor, duralloy shield + force field
AC 7	Sensor armor
AC 6	Light-powered armor
AC 5	Medium-powered armor
AC 4	Heavy-powered armor
AC 3	Duralloy armor
AC 2	Duralloy armor + force field OR Chaban armor package



INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

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ELEVATION AND LEVELS

torches and grabbing tentacles that are easily able to harm them. The only saving grace to this scenario is if the characters deliberately replace the controlling computer chips. In that case the *entity* can't control those two robot units until they hook up for a power feed.

Laser torch: WC 11, 10 points of damage; grabbing tentacle: WC 10, crushes for 2d6 points of damage

3 – EUROPEAN ROBOTIC ARM

With the controls of the robotic arm in the Nauka Lab, the arm seems to be broken as it doesn't answer to the controls. System details report computer systems in the arm have to be replaced, requiring a space walk. You can see an astronaut floating just past the robotic arm.

This is a large boom robotic arm controlled by the computers of the ISS. There is a control station for human control, and thus it is able to stop the *entity* from inflicting harm. Given the chance, the *entity* wants to grab a character and crush them. The control system is at a window in the Nauka Lab.

The arm takes 50 points of damage to stop. It moves slowly and is an ideal place to play up the tension, as the characters won't know at first what the arm is trying to do until it attacks. WC 10, 3d6 in damage.

PROBLEM: There are two spacesuits just out of reach of the robotic arm. These are crushed, dead crew members. Their suits give off alarm signals detected in the central control cabin.

4 – ZARVA STATION CONTROL MODULE

You know that this is the control hub for the entire station. Every lab, cargo bay, and airlock can be seen on monitor screens from this compartment. In theory, all of the stations systems can be observed and changed from one of these modules.

Monitoring Stations: Each has a computer terminal and as many screen monitors as is necessary to complete the work of the module. There is an extremely comfortable chair made for use in null-gravity at every work station. The Zarva module has its own light systems and this module has special lights that can be directed into and around each work station. There are several types of communication systems at each work station. All stations have at least one computer terminal and keyboard and some of them have several.

Station Monitoring Module

This module has six large screens for flipping to one of the hundred cameras inside and outside the station. The monitors can change location at the verbal direction of whoever sits in the chair.

PROBLEM: Currently the cameras looking on the Kibo Robotic Arm do not function and the computer monitor reports this fact. The computer advises that fixing this problem requires a space walk. That walk reveals two dead crew members floating in space.

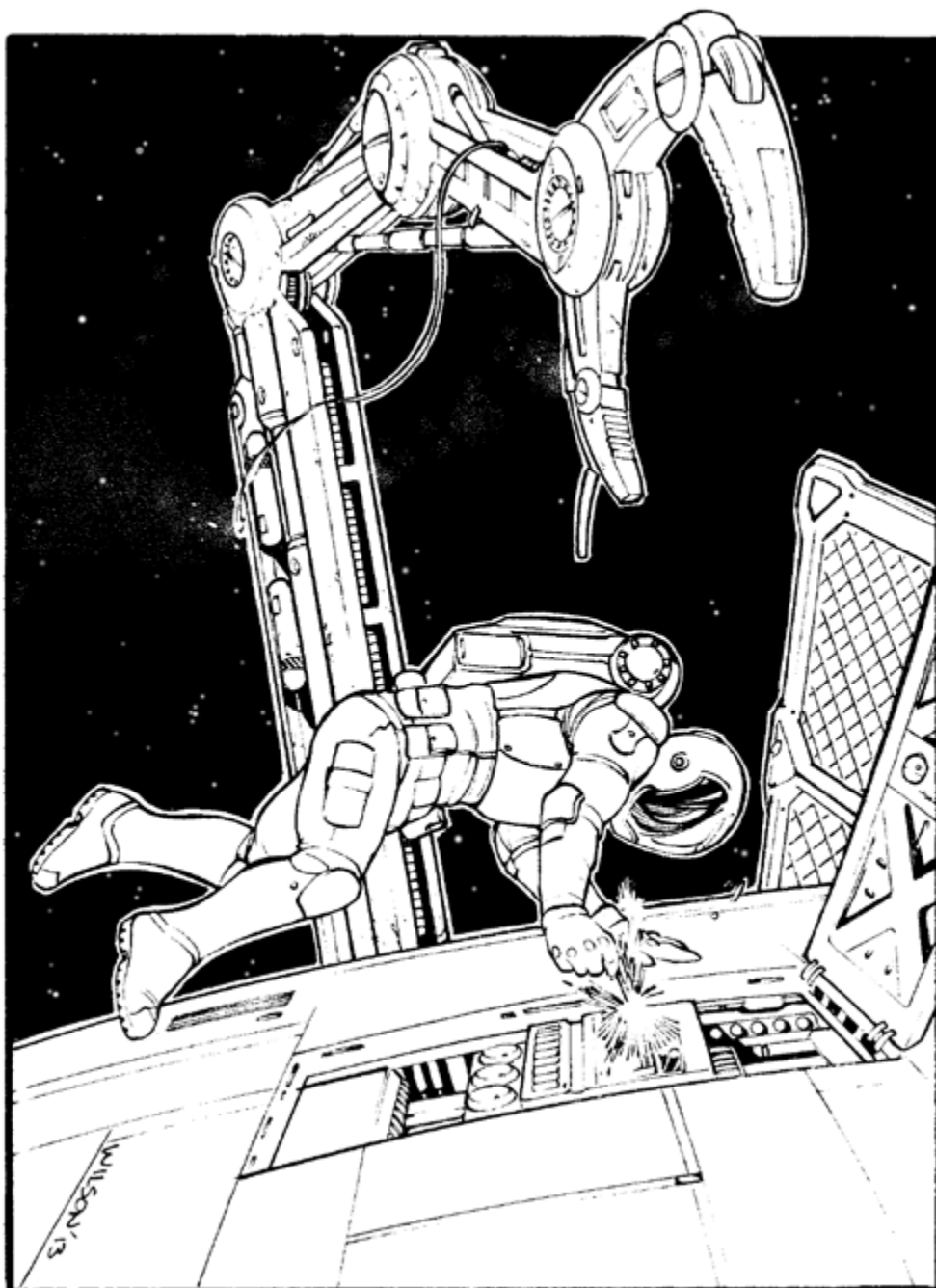
Power Grid Monitoring Module

This module monitors the power flowing in from all of the solar panels. It also notes the power coming from the Destiny Laboratory.

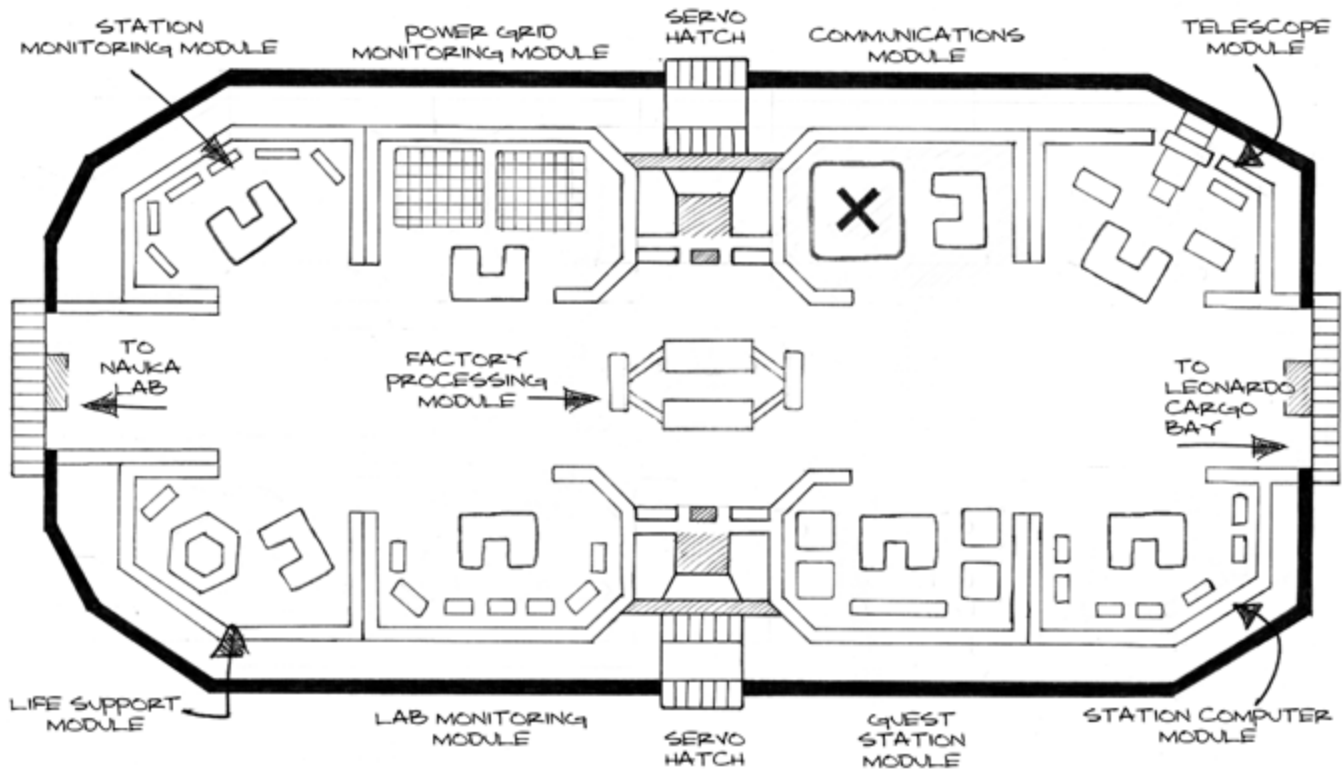
PROBLEM: There are power spikes in every tube connecting the labs to each other. This is the doing of the *entity* wanting to electrocute any crew member that tries to fix the systems. While most of the power is going directly into the *entity*, a stab of 15 damage points of power can go into a character trying to fix the power situation in a connecting tube.

Communications Module

PROBLEM: This module is dead and powered down. There is a new version of this module in the Harmony Cargo Bay. If the characters try and fix this entire module, they have to move the broken refrigerator-sized unit out of the area. In this case, they find the hidden sheet of blue crystal behind the module plugged into the power system.



ZARVA STATION CONTROL MODULE



The Entity

Armor Class	13
Constitution	17
Hit Points	6 x 17 = 102
Dexterity	3
Leadership Potential	18
Radiation Resistance	18
Weight	10 lbs
Movement	No
Mutations	Lightning Generation (WC 11, inflicting 20 points of damage)
	Intelligence
	Telepathy
	Resistance to Kinetic Energy Attacks

The *entity* can communicate with the characters through the use of telepathy. The *entity* threatens them with immediate death if they try to move it. Only energy attacks are effective against the *entity*. It orders the characters to leave the space station if they want to survive.

At first the *entity* tries to appear to be a part of the control module walls. If the characters figure out that the *entity* is not normal to the station, it begins communicating with them. Initially the *entity* sounds reasonable, and seems to just want to be left alone, and offers to help the characters. Its real motive is to gain more time to kill them.

Telescope Module

A Hubble-style telescope is currently positioned to look at the Earth. The *entity* is gaining more information about the population status in each country.

PROBLEM: Whenever the characters try to change where the telescope is aiming, a danger light flashes. Analysis text suggests the scope needs maintenance and there is need for a space walk, where the robotic arm can attack.

Factory Processing Module

The Leonardo Cargo bay is creating the blue crystal chips. The *entity* has now tainted all of them and wants them delivered to Earth. System reports are all green. The assembly process is in constant motion and inflicting double the normal, scheduled creation of chips.

Station Computer Module

This computer system supports all the computer systems in each of the labs and factory sections.

PROBLEM: The computer system reports a virus is attacking the station from the outside. Data-mining reports the virus is in the Heat Radiator and replicating itself at a fantastic rate. This is a chance for the *entity* to shoot a heat beam at a character, WC 9 inflicting 25 points of damage.

Life Support Module

This module checks all of the units and helps run the opening and closing of hatches between the connecting tubes.

PROBLEM: Right now it reports too much energy in each of the tube sections. At the moment, it is also reporting decompression in all of the airlocks, which is not a true piece of data.

Lab Monitoring Module

This module surveys the systems in all of the labs.

PROBLEM: Right now it reports there is a great deal of trouble in the Kibo Logistics cargo bay.

Guest Station Module

Whatever character that sits in this chair is defined as *needed* and therefore untouchable by the *entity*. The *entity* is unable to attack them or cause problems in the area where they are walking. This changes if anyone new sits in that chair. The station connects to news stations on Earth.

5 – LEONARDO CARGO BAY

Notes on the hatch of this bay detail the chemicals and nano-parts needed to create the blue Protein Crystal chips. The hatch also warns of dangerously flammable materials. Supplies fill large racks along the walls of the bay.

The protein compound is in ten large, orange-colored barrels. The blue fluid is in 20 barrels colored blue. The crystal chips take up the most space and are in 20 large, plastic cube containers. In the center of the area is a worktable.

PROBLEM: On a work-station table is an explosive device rigged to blow if moved at all. The military characters instantly know it is a bomb and have a 28% chance to make it safe. The scientific types won't know it's a bomb unless they are told. They have an 81% chance of making it safe. Make sure to roleplay up the tension of trying to defuse this device. When it explodes it completely destroys the cargo bay and all in it.

6 – PMA 1 UNITY NODE 1

There are eight bunk beds, four to a side. At the center of the area is a kitchen and dining table. Many types of meals can be called up in the dinner menu. These meals are automatically prepared by the station's cooking computer systems.

PROBLEM: All the Japanese foods have their soy sauce poisoned with a deadly fungus. Eating just a bite causes foaming at the mouth and 30 points of damage to the character. If they survive that first bite, they are nauseous for many hours afterwards. The menu lists typical Russian, American, and Japanese dishes.

7 – TRANQUILITY NODE 3 & CUPOLA

This node is for special guests. The unit contains two luxury beds, entertainment centers, and the cupola presents a wonderful look down at Earth.

Nothing bad is allowed to happen in this node because of the programming of the *entity*.

8 – RASSVET MRM-1

You see a factory complex generating blue crystal computer chips in null-gravity. Robotic units apply lasers, heat, and sonics to blue chips in an assembly line. There are danger signs all over the area warning about disturbing anything in the assembly process.

PROBLEM: Touching any section of the assembly line causes part of it to seem to accidentally shift and thus attack a character. The assembly belt is 20 feet long and there are two different sections of three attack points on the left side and the right side. A robot is taking the chips and loading them into bins for shipping. One shift causes one attack and it looks like an accident.

Laser – WC 11, 3d6 points of damage
Heat – WC 9, 11 points of damage
Sonics – WC 8, 2d6 points of damage

9 – DESTINY LABORATORY

You note ten work stations around the lab. Each has robotic tentacles moving over the table and working on tiny circuit boards of unknown type. There are rolls of gold wire at every station. There are blank circuit boards with pentagram shapes on each of them. At the center of the area is a bin with over 10,000 finished circuit boards. There is a small cargo robot loading the boards into 3' x 3' plastic bins.

The *entity* has figured out a way to duplicate itself. The being wants to send these boards down to earth to be used in computers. A sliver of the *entity* is part of every one of these circuit boards.

PROBLEM: Trying to stop this process has the cargo robot signal for security. From one of the exits comes a moving security bot with an oval shape. Dayton Industries Security Bot 6820: Armor Class 8, Constitution 26, hit points 110, Leadership Potential 9, Dexterity 5, Mental Resistance 10, and Radiation Resistance 14. It's 6 feet tall, 1.5 feet long, and 2 feet wide. Weapon Systems: Taser WC 8, 3d6 in knockout damage, Manipulative Tentacle WC 14 inflicting 2d6 in crushing damage, its Gas Pellet Projector is empty of pellets. If all characters are tasered, the robot throws them out an airlock.

10 – KIBO LOGISTICS CARGO BAY

It's a cargo bay with several flashing lights, and there is a large steam hose blasting a tech robot. That unit is clearly trying to work a computer monitor in a corner of the bay.

The robot has been battling the effects of the *entity* since the creature took over. Right now it is trying to take over the computer systems of the station. It can't fight the characters. If they try to hook up with the systems of the robot, they discover the entire problem on the station and what is causing that problem. But this new data doesn't give them the location of the *entity*.

DOMESTIC ROBOT – JACINTA V CLASS: Constitution 14, hit points 63, Leadership Potential 5, Dexterity 7, Armor Class 14, Mental Resistance 10, Radiation Resistance 13, 3 feet high, 9 feet long, and 1 foot wide. The robot doesn't talk, but it can communicate when connected up to another computer system. It has two mechanized arms WC 10, inflicting 1d6 in crushing damage, culinary utensils, dust pan and brush, and a polisher.

11 – COLUMBUS LABORATORY

You enter a grow lab. There are hundreds of potted plants of many types. The air here is moist and pleasantly filled with odors.

PROBLEM: There are three purple puff-ball mushrooms in a dark

corner. If they are touched, they burst and release a spore poison inflicting 35 points of damage. The characters are allowed some type of avoidance roll if they are not wearing a helmet.

12 – HARMONY NODE 2 WITH PMA 2 DOCKING PORT

You note replacement modules, spare parts, and many types of supplies for the station in this node.

Every equipment part that the characters might need to fix something on the station can be found in this area. There is a computer terminal in the node that itemizes all of the modules and equipment.

13 – KIBO LABORATORY

You note another type of factory area. A long assembly line is making a handheld device of some kind.

The nature of null-gravity and the creation of small computers have allowed a new device to be generated here. It's a highly intelligent computer that can talk right along with its user.

PROBLEM: These units sound highly intelligent. They help with the problems of the station by asking to be jacked into a port on the station. The unit is trying to get the characters to take space walks where the robotic arms can grab and crush them.

14 – KIBO ROBOTIC ARM & KIBO EXTERNAL PLATFORM

The only way to get to this is by a space walk. The controls of this unit are in the Kibo Lab and seem to work fine. If there is a character at the controls, the unit cannot attack a space-walking character.

PROBLEM: This robotic arm WC 16 can inflict 6d6 points of damage to any character out for a space walk. There are three dead station-crew members out past the robotic arm. It is controlled by the *entity* unless there is a character manning the controls in the Kibo Cargo Bay.

15 – HTV/DAGON BERTH

This area has a set of six bunks. At the center is a kitchen area with stored food and a large cooling fridge. Several computer stations used for games and research are located near the hatches. Six large storage compartments for clothes and the like for crew members are at the end of the bunks.

PROBLEM: Storage area one is filled with freeze-dried pieces of a dead crew member. It's a red mess of dried chunks.

16 – SECOND HTV DRAGON BERTH

This is a luxury apartment for one person. It appears to have everything needed for a great vacation in outer space. Its



current use is for high power executives who want to pay one million dollars to stay for four days. The area has an automated kitchen, a deluxe entertainment center, and all the comforts of home.

The *entity* is programmed to make sure the person laying on the bed of this area never gets hurt as he stays at the station.

Trusses and Solar Arrays

This is a strongly built metal stabilizer designed to safely hold the solar panels and allow them to shift to grab as much sun as possible. All of the station's power needs are met with cables running from these panels.

The *entity* is terrified of trying anything with these panels and refuses to do anything with them. Shutting off the power is a good way to bring the *entity* to the negotiating table.

Heat Radiator

This unit brings heat to the various parts of the station. The *entity* is very capable of taking any module to below freezing. This would eventually force characters to go out and do a space walk to fix the heat radiator. The characters don't know that the *entity* is able to direct 5d6 point heat beams WC 9 at characters coming within ten yards of the radiator. ■

The hobby shop dungeon

The story behind this issue's featured adventure goes all the way back to the early days in Lake Geneva

by Jon Peterson

Friendly local game stores have always been a huge part of the role-playing hobby. From the Compleat Strategist in Manhattan to Aero Hobbies in Santa Monica, hobby shops provide more than just a place to buy games, they provide community: advice from the staff, random encounters with other patrons, bulletin boards for gaming groups seeking members, and communal tables where boards can be unfolded, miniatures deployed, snacks shared, and dice rolled. And of all the hobby shops in America, none is so storied as the late, great Dungeon hobby shop of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

In 1975, Tactical Studies Rules was still a small partnership headed by Gary Gygax and Brian Blume. As sales of *Dungeons & Dragons* increased, TSR developed the larger ambition of retailing games, both through expanding their original mail order business to resell other companies' products and in branching out to a storefront. In the fall, TSR purchased an old residence at 723 Williams Street in Lake Geneva which had been rezoned for business. The top floor was converted into offices for TSR employees; Gary's own desk was right at the head of the stairs. The ground floor became TSR's first retail showroom, a bustling assembly of racks, counters, tables, and shelves known as the Dungeon hobby shop.

From the start, the Dungeon was not just a place to shop, it was a place to game. The Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, from which TSR took its name and its founders, quickly adopted the Dungeon as a meeting venue for board and miniature battles. The earliest notice of the Dungeon, in the April 1976 *Strategic Review*, shows scenes from a recent medieval miniature battle played there pitting Saxons against Normans. Play was not reserved for locals either: the accompanying text promises that "any visitor can join the fray."

Behind the register, at first one would find Terry Kuntz, an LGTSA member and early *Dungeons & Dragons* playtester, best remem-

bered for creating the original monster that became the beholder. During lulls in business, Terry started mapping a multilevel dungeon, incorporating geomorphs and his own pencilwork. Eventually, some shifts at the counter were taken over by coworkers, including Gary Gygax's teenage son Ernest Gary Gygax, Jr (Ernie). After Terry moved on to better things, he bequeathed his dungeon to Ernie, saying, as Ernie recalls, "See if you can make something out of it, if you want."

Ernie was working for TSR full time by 1978, and he found plenty of time to expand on the hobby shop dungeon. Famously, he created a sprawling and diabolical sixth level, one several times larger than any above it, which required some seventeen pages of text to describe its contents. As the dungeon expanded, so did TSR: the crush of new employees sent TSR in search of a larger lair, a quest that led to an old hotel in the very center of Lake Geneva. The Dungeon hobby shop relocated to its ground floor, taking up residence at 772 Main Street. TSR began aggressively promoting the Dungeon in *Dragon* magazine; where earlier advertisements had directed consumers to TSR's post office box, promotions now gave the Main Street address of the Dungeon as the recommended place to get games, by post or in person.

This national publicity brought in customers eager to spend and game at the Dungeon in Lake Geneva, the birthplace of role-playing games. For the bravest among the hordes making this pilgrimage, Ernie waited with a worthy challenge: he ran the hobby shop dungeon. He remembers the dungeoneering taking place largely after hours, often late into the night, though he was always happy to open the register briefly if anyone urgently needed to make an impulse purchase. Players came from all over: some of the earliest parties to attempt the dungeon were sailors on leave, who would adventure in groups of twenty at a time, flush with cash and enthu-

siasm for gaming. Low-level parties would emerge decimated, even in such large numbers, if they escaped at all.

Ernie ran the hobby shop dungeon countless times over the next several years, and its fame steadily grew. But all good things come to an end. TSR became a much larger company, and Ernie moved on to greater responsibilities within it. But the hobby shop dungeon was never forgotten. In recent years, Ernie has run it at conventions now and again, but Ernie can only be in so many places at once, and demand is high.

So Ernie has teamed up with Benoist Poiré to bring the original hobby shop dungeon to the world as a standalone product. Under Benoist's care, the levels of the dungeon are being lovingly restored as full-color, durable maps that still capture the spirit of the original. Since many of the key components of the dungeon were never before transmitted from Ernie's head to paper, Benoist is also helping to tease out these ideas and cast them into a system that any dungeon master can run. Thanks to his help, Ernie says, the dungeon will be more flexible, and "more of a living, moving dungeon." The pair is hard at work, and they currently forecast that the initial release of the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* (HSD1) will be available from TSR by the end of 2014.

To tide us all over until then, here is a taste of what the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* will bring. This entirely new scenario, *The Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul* (HSD0), introduces novice adventurers to the setting. Parties should keep an eye out for clues about Nester and Krassus—those will come in handy when, as higher-level heroes, they make an assault on HSD1! For now, this is a great adventure to run at your friendly local game store. You may not be able to visit the Dungeon hobby shop any more, but its spirit will live on wherever the hobby shop dungeon is played. ■

Jon Peterson is the author of Playing at the World, a history of role-playing games and wargames from 18th-century strategists to modern hobbyists.

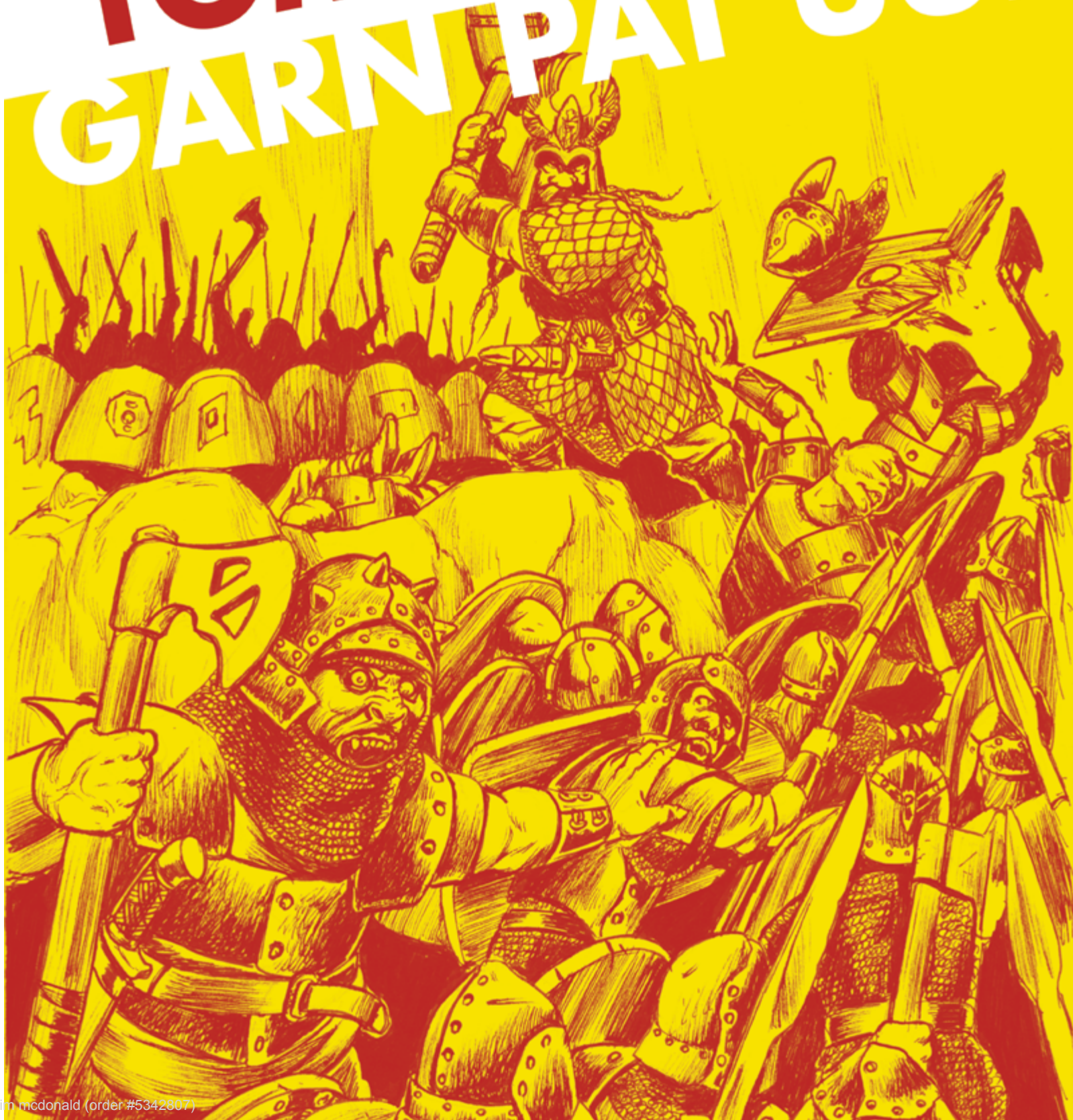
ADVENTURE MODULE

SPECIAL INSERT:

The Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul

The following two spreads are available in the print edition of *Gygax* magazine as a fold-out spread for ease of use. In this digital edition, they are located in the regular flow of the PDF. Readers may wish to print the maps on tabloid (11" x 17") paper in order to view them as originally intended.

THE MARMOREAL TOMB OF GARN PAT'UUL



An adventure for characters levels 1-3 for all first edition-compatible games

Two centuries ago, a small band of dwarves with no home and no name of their own wandered along the mountain range now commonly known as the Bitter Peaks. These dwarves strenuously fought for their lives, winning many battles, but losing whatever ground they held over and over, their settlements repeatedly destroyed by the savage humanoids roaming the land.

This state of constant flux came to an end when they met the fabled arch-mage Nester De Guyx, whom some call the Eurthwright for his command over the materials and minerals making up part of the essence of the world. The mage hired them to excavate long tunnels, lairs, laboratories and mazes under the foundations of his keep by the Duinnsmere, the Great Lake central to the early civilization of Men upon this continent.

For over a century they toiled in the depths of the Eurth, digging what has since become known in folk's legends as Caer Caeladon, Nester's Folly, the Dungeon at the edge of the Wild. The mage rewarded the dwarves, providing them with waggon loads of valuable supplies, weapons, and armors to equip each dwarven warrior twice, as well as several chests of treasure. He then pointed them in the direction of new territory and new veins of marble they could quarry. It thus came, some years ago, that the dwarves of the Stone-Cutter Clan travelled to a cliff by the flanks of the Bitter Peaks where they were told they could find new veins of an incredibly rare variety of many-hued celadon marble whose color varies by the hour, if not by the minute, as exposed to the light of day, from the depths of an emerald green to the aerial lightness of a soft turquoise.

The dwarves found the veins and progressively carved a home for themselves out of the rock around them. While prospecting around for new areas to quarry, they discovered two distinct locations of interest: a well, and a burial chamber. The well, or sinkhole, as it were, plunged down to a subterranean lava flow, and was the lair and breeding grounds of supernatural firebirds which use molten metals to create its nests. Harvesting the nests provided the dwarves which additional revenues they immediately spent in growing and somewhat fortifying their settlement. The burial chamber hosted the remains of Garn Pat'uul, an ancient lord of the giants who had been entombed beyond the walls of the cliff aeons before the dwarves came to live there. Immediately, greed got the better of them: Belenor, the leader of the dwarves, ordered the tomb to be pillaged. A tremor shook the tunnels as the dwarves lifted the sarcophagus's lid open. They discarded the gigantic bones and found within a magical hammer which became Belenor's Pride. With

these discoveries, the Clan's place amongst the greater Dwarven Folk would be finally assured. Or so the dwarves thought.

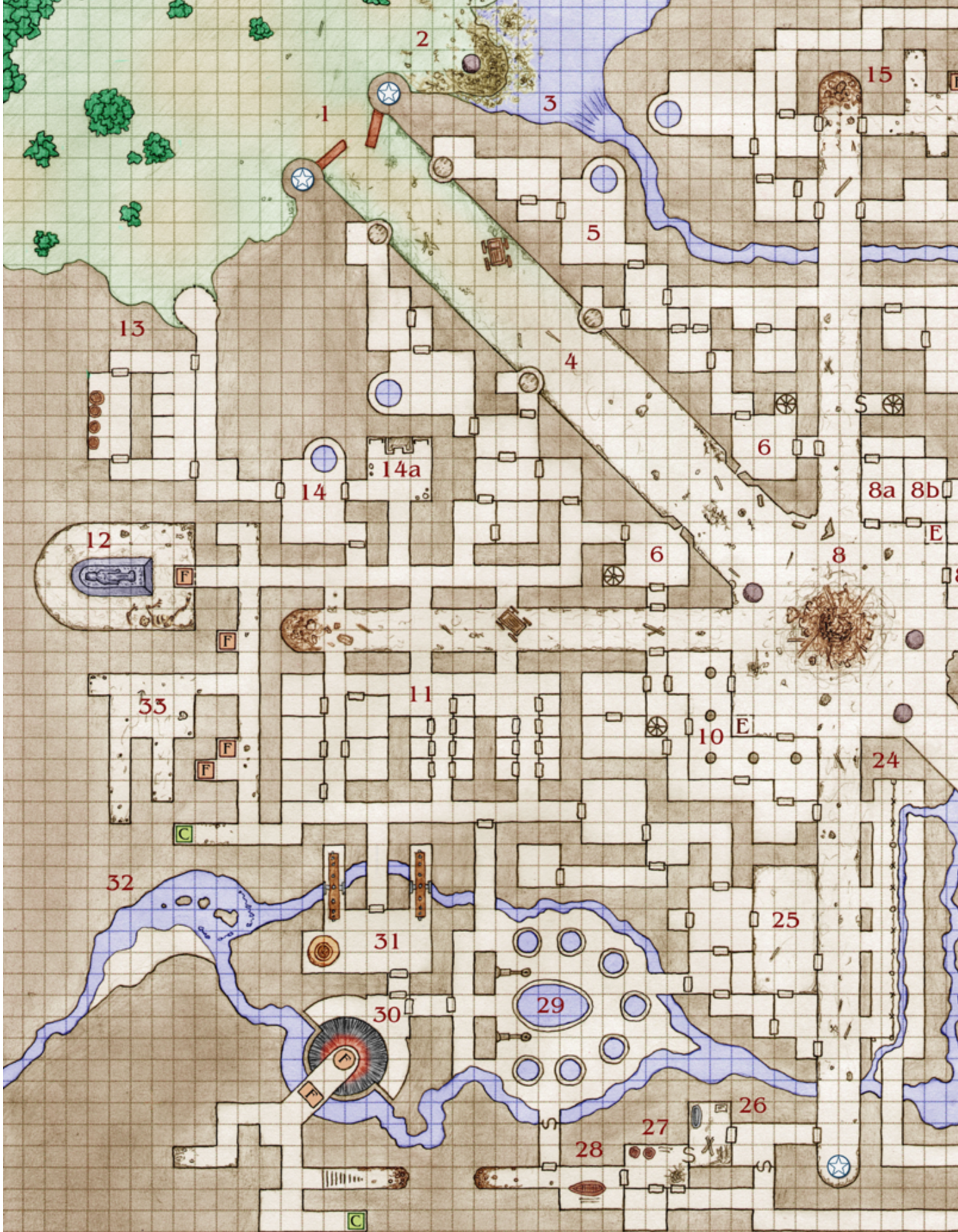
Unbeknownst to them, the tremor which shook their home was felt at a great distance by a number of stone giants attuned to the movements of the Eurth. One of them, a teenager going by the name of Young Krassus, a Cambion born out of the unholy union of his mother with a demon from the lower planes, chose this opportunity to rally what giant allies he could find, along with their lesser slaves, to travel to the tomb and recover the artifact they felt had been found.

Young Krassus, two other immature giants and a horde of creatures including swarms of goblins, a handful of gargoyles, and a pack of bug-bears mounted on dire wolves joined forces with an oriental anti-hero and his ogre sidekick as they marched towards the source of the quake. Together, they finally reached the cliff by the Bitter Peaks and stormed into the Stone-Cutters' abode by force. Boulders rolled down the great hallway leading up to the dwarves' market place; gargoyles invaded the guard posts, while the melee went on between the Stone-Cutters and the goblins. The great marble doors could not stand Young Krassus's charge as he rammed his way through. The dwarves were undone, most of them slaughtered in front of the waterfall outside their home as they tried to flee away from the invading forces. Belenor died a heroic death at the hands of Krassus himself. The Cambion ripped Garn Pat'uul's great hammer from his hands as he drew his last breath. But a few of the dwarves did escape using a secret passage south of the firebirds' well.

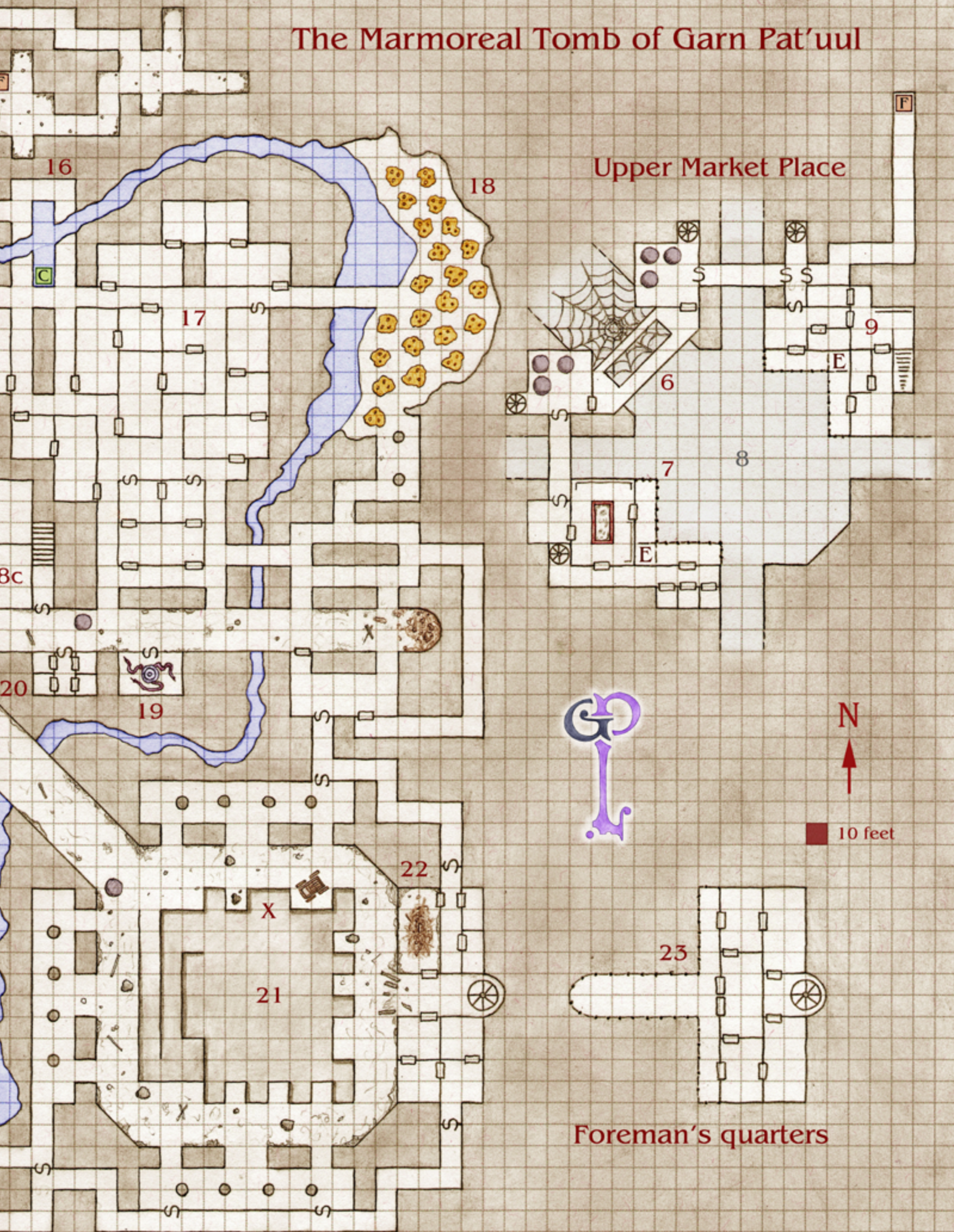
The last survivors of the Stone-Cutter Clan ultimately would make their way back to Nester's Folly and settle there from then on, but such is not the subject of our tale. The forces of Young Krassus moved on, while the site of the dwarves' demise became a silent marmoreal tomb where but a few humanoid inhabitants remained. The place's location, and its very existence, were soon forgotten by all but a few.

A band of adventurers just now reaches the gates of the ruined settlement. Whether by chance, or by fate, they might not even know themselves. They will have to step forward, answer the call to adventure, and explore what lies beyond to find out . . .

by Ernest Gary Gygax Jr.
and Benoist Poiré



The Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul



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ACOMMODATE GATEFOLD**

NOTES TO THE REFEREE

Game preparation: **THE MARMOREAL TOMB OF GARN PAT'UUL** requires some measure of preparation. To run this adventure, it is necessary to read its contents, concentrating on the parts which the referee finds particularly important for his group and campaign, in order to properly comprehend and visualize the many elements of the environment and describe them to the players.

This module's organization and design are loose in order to let the referee interpret its key components and bring them together through the act of play in whatever way he or she pleases. It is therefore important to understand that the words you are now reading on this page are just a starting point, a spark, a key to open a door in your mind and explore the power of your own imagination. It is incumbent to you, the referee, to make the Marmoreal Tomb come alive as an exciting, yet cold and desolate place to be explored. Make this module your own! Change what needs to be changed, think of the NPCs and creatures therein as individuals with their own needs and *modi operandi*. Role-play the world, for it is, in its whole as well as its many parts, for your character to interpret. The interaction of this living, breathing world-in-motion with your players' characters will generate the adventure itself.

When you feel ready, gather your players and have them create new characters for the campaign. These characters should come together in circumstances which you may want to clarify or role-play before the Marmoreal Tomb comes into the picture. Whatever the case may be, however you want to start this adventure, be sure to introduce the Tomb as a place whose existence has been lost to the sands of time. The players' characters might have heard about it while resting at an inn or tavern, come into the possession of a map showing its location along the wild coast bordering the Viscounty of Poy, or whatever realm of your own creation that fits your own campaign, struck some sort of bargain with a lone adventurer who knows where the Tomb lies, caught up with a rival band of adventurers already heading there, and so on.

Unlock your imagination, and use this module as a springboard for your own creativity.

Customizing the environment: As mentioned above, the environment of the Marmoreal Tomb is described in generally broad terms, and the encounters spaced in order to provide some room for the referee to inject his own personality into the adventure as described. Make no mistake: this module will lead to fun events and interesting tactics on your players' part such as it is. It is, however, the authors' intent to construe this module as a canvas on which further personal elements and twists dependent on one's own tastes and inclinations may be expressed freely, with minimal restraints.

The possibilities are numerous: A recent magic user's curse could have backfired and reanimated the remains of dwarves and humanoids alike, threatening all the Tomb's current inhabitants. Staircases leading to one or several additional levels of quarry and natural caves could be added under the rubble at the end of the long, 20-foot-wide corridors connected to the dwarves' Market Place. Hidden chambers could be found under the Garn Pat'uul's sarcophagus, when some other areas might lie west of the map, upstream of the underground river running throughout the complex. All these potential additions and modifications based on the original material presented with this module are left to the referee's discretion.

The map: The map of the Marmoreal Tomb shows far more than has been conveyed by the means of the key found within these pages.

Some of its elements might not be readily understood by looking at its graphic representation alone, however. It is therefore important to note a few general features before beginning play:

The vegetation outside the tomb is assumed to be rather barren: a few thorny bushes here and there, some tools taken from the dwarven quarry discarded on the ground, many rocks, and little healthy grass. This place is neither safe nor inviting. The referee may wish to check for random encounters in the wilderness if the party spends much time outside.

The main entrance of the dwarven settlement at **area 1**, the waterfall of **area 3**, and the balcony of **area 13** all open on the side of a rough, vertical cliff that is easily climbed. The referee may require simple checks to ensure the climbing efforts do not result in some form of accident for the first climber, but if ropes and pitons and similar equipment are used, these checks will not be necessary for the characters who follow.

There are four round murder-holes visible on the sides of the main entrance corridor at **area 4**. There are two holes on each side of the vaulted ceiling above the corridor, and these lead up to a parallel series of rooms and corridors ultimately leading to the 30' x 30' guard posts of **area 6**. The metal bars partially obstructing the holes and nonetheless permitting projectiles to be fired by the guards into the main corridor from above were torn apart by gargoyles serving Young Krassus at the time of his assault.

The 10' x 10' brownish squares labelled "F" indicate trap doors in the floor. Lime green 10' x 10' squares labelled "C" indicate trap doors in the ceiling. These usually lead to prospecting tunnels and dead ends dug up by the dwarves in ages past, as is the case around **area 33**, but not always. The two trap doors located in the floor of the corridor immediately above **area 30** lead down to the Well of Nests and the underground river flowing beside it, respectively. The opening in the ceiling further south of **area 30** is an escape route leading all the way up to the plateau above the dwarven complex. The trap door at the end of the corridor above **area 12** leads down to Garn Pat'uul's tomb, and the trap door in the ceiling of **area 16** is the same as the trap door located at the end of the secret escape route immediately north of **area 9** (Upper Market Place).

The underground river running throughout the complex is about five feet deep in places, but especially shallow on its sides: it is possible to walk from one location to another, walking along the natural caves that the river has pierced in all this time it has been flowing here. The rocks are slippery, and the current may destabilize a moving individual walking in the river. Whether this calls for specific checks, especially in combat situations, is for the referee to decide.

There is a lot of trash littering the ground of the rooms and corridors within. The forces of Young Krassus were uncaring and not particularly disciplined when looting the place. Furniture has been destroyed, carpets and tapestries ripped apart, vases and decorations smashed against the walls. People were tortured and played with for the humanoids' and giants' amusement. Unforgivable acts of extreme callousness and butchery were inflicted upon their helpless victims. This is a scene of horror which has been frozen in time, and the referee's descriptions should emphasize this. Groups of humanoids have been slaughtered by the dwarves fighting to keep their families alive as they attempted to flee the horde. Giant stone boulders were released from the upper level of area 6 down the main entrance corridor to crush the invaders, only to be picked up by the stone giants and thrown back at the dwarves, smashing walls, stalls, and doors on their paths. Combatants were maimed, thrown like puppets, dismembered, and run through by uncaring, vicious, chaotic evil forces.

Notice several carts depicted on the map. While most of these have been damaged in some fashion or another, all of them still bear the metal plaques which adorned their sides. These plaques are engraved with runes of the dwarven language. If deciphered, the meaning of the runes becomes plain: *“In appreciation to the Stone-Cutter Clan for a job well done. This cart is a gift from His Magnificent Eminence Grise, Nester De Guyx.”* All the carts were indeed given by Nester the Eurthwright to the Stone-Cutter dwarves as part of their reward once the work on the dungeon was completed.

The secret passages of the complex are generally stone slabs which fit seamlessly with the rest of the stonework: the dwarves were experts in stone-cutting, after all. The passage of time did affect their concealment, however, and they can be detected normally. They all open when pressed upon, first moving a few feet inward and then pivoting on powerful metal hinges hidden within the wall.

The inhabitants of the dungeon do not stay in their respective areas waiting to be killed by the PCs! Make sure the different groups in the dungeon react to the party's course of action. If they start making enormous noise, searching through the ogre's junk pile in **area 8** for turn after turn, they **will** be interrupted sooner rather than later. Don't let the dice dictate everything for you, and interpret the results in a manner consistent with the reality of the place.

PLAYERS' START

The referee may choose to start this adventure using freshly generated characters in any number of ways.

After placing the Tomb somewhere in his home-world, preferably at the base of a mountain range at the edge of civilization, the referee could open the session in a nearby village where the players' characters happen to be preparing for this expedition. An alternative would be to introduce knowledge of the Tomb's location in an earlier adventure, and let the party decide whether its exploration makes for a good objective at all. Either way, this means the party has the opportunity to raid inns and taverns to get some information, gather some equipment, and wander in the wilderness before reaching the Marmoreal Tomb. Be especially wary of the information gained through the gathering of rumors and information in town. Refer to this module's introduction, but remain parsimonious and hint at elements of the place's history in the form of cryptic passages, crazed witnesses raving about ambushes they survived, and rumors half-remembered by the battle-scarred veterans drunk on tavern's brew, rather than just handing over its entire history to the players, including the numerous spoilers it contains.

Refer to your system's wilderness tables to determine the events occurring during the journey. It will take a few days, at most, to reach the Tomb's site. If humanoids or adventuring parties are encountered, they may or may not have knowledge of the Tomb's existence. Maybe they avoided the place, dreading its inhabitants, or tried to explore it only to be ambushed within. Not all encounters should be related to the dungeon, however. Keep a sense of consistency and logic about the game world: few are those who actually know about the Tomb's location at this point in time.

Another possible starting point for the adventure is to introduce the players' characters as having known about the Tomb prior to the start of play. Provide whatever background information seems necessary to give context to the game, and let them equip themselves before actual play begins. The session would open as the characters reach the Tomb's environs, at about a hundred yards beyond the northwestern edge of our map. Let them approach the complex in whatever way seems preferable to them.

Once the players are close to the cliff's side, paraphrase the following Adventure Opening, bearing in mind the specifics of your game and campaign.

ADVENTURE OPENING:

You finally arrive at your long-sought destination. You can see the craggy cliff-side spreading on a southwest to northeast axis in front of you. The gigantic figures you spotted as you approached, which at first you thought might have been giants standing guard on either side of the enormous marble double-doors at the base of the cliff, turn out to be 50-foot-tall statues of dwarves. Just behind the eastern statue, you see a waterfall flowing from a large hole in the face of the cliff, about 60 feet off the ground. A river flows to the northeast from the waterfall's base along the bottom of the cliff. On the other side of the gate, you see a balcony with railings leading inside the complex about 50 feet away from the western statue, and at about the same height as the waterfall opening. The terrain is rough, with a few thorny bushes, weeds, and rocks scattered throughout a concave landscape reaching down towards the gates. You must be a hundred yards away from the main entrance. It is now time to make a choice and approach. For good or for ill, there is only one way to find out . . .

KEY TO THE MARMOREAL TOMB

WANDERING MONSTERS: Check for the possibility of a random encounter every other exploration turn. The base odds for such an occurrence are 1 in 6, modified upwards or downwards depending on the party's actions, relative discretion while exploring the place, and so on—up to the referee.

If the die indicates an encounter, roll d6 on the following table:

1 – Stirges (1–6). These come from **area 5**.

2–3 – Kobold or Goblin Outsiders (2–5): These kobolds and goblins do not belong to the groups already present within the dungeon. They are exploring the place.

4–5 – Choose relevant inhabitant in the quadrant currently explored in the dungeon (number and kind at the referee's discretion).

6 – A death scream or other spooky sound heard from a distance (referee's discretion, probably either kobolds or goblins ambushed by the closest predator).

The referee should feel free to change results which would not fit his vision of the setting.

1. MAIN GATE. Two huge, granite statues of dwarves carved ten times to scale and carrying shields and spears are silently standing guard on each side of this double-door entryway. The door's two leaves, both thick, 40' x 20' slabs of cinnamon-hued marble, hang precariously inward from heavily damaged hinges. The well-worn path leading within is littered with boulders, tools, shattered weapons, small humanoid skeletons, and similar remnants of the battle which occurred here in the past.

2. DWARVEN BONES. This is where the dwarves' last stand once occurred. A few dwarven skeletons wearing heavily damaged, unusable plate armor lie on top of a swarm of long-dead humanoid critters. The mound surrounds a lone stone boulder about 3 or 4 feet across. Close inspection will reveal that the boulder dealt the fatal crushing blow which wiped out the remaining combatants. These

remains have long been stripped of all their valuable possessions. Inspecting the side of the boulder thoroughly will reveal the presence of Belenor's bones among the dead. His skull is missing his signature helmet (see **area 8** and **9** for more information).

3. WATERFALL. A waterfall pours out of an opening 60' above the ground into a large body of water stretching northeasterly along the cliff. The stones beyond the waterfall are rough and easy to climb. A giant water silk spider nesting close by will attack any living creature it can reach. Small creatures will be eaten on the spot, whereas larger ones will be taken down to its lair, a webbed air bubble spun underwater.

The spider will try to bite. On a failed saving throw versus poison, the victim is paralyzed for six turns. Once the spider's venom has taken hold, the creature will grab its victim, take it 20 feet down, and push it into its lair. On the following round, the spider will follow inside the nest, causing one thrust damage to the nest in the process (see below), and uses its abdomen to plant eggs through eating orifices inside the victim's stomach. Once done, the spider will leave the nest and repair its surface. Repairing the nest requires the spider to swim back to the surface, bring back some air and patch up to two holes in a single round.

Most missile, cleaving, and blunt weapons are impossible to use underwater. Missile weapons fired from the surface would be unable to reach the nest. One would have to dive and strike at the nest using thrusting weapons against AC 10 to be able to pierce its bubble. Four such successful thrusts will cause the bubble to collapse.

A particularly bold diver could swim under the nest and sever its anchor line with a knife with a successful *open doors* check. The nest would bounce right back to the surface, opening it up to further attacks.

Inside the spider's lair, the body of a merman will be found still holding a special light crossbow able to fire above and under water at half normal range. Eleven bolts are stored in a spider silk pouch hanging from his belt. Eggs planted in the body's stomach are throbbing and ready to hatch. The webbing can be salvaged and used as a water-proof substance. It is highly sought after by specialized craftsmen and seafaring crews. It is worth 30–180 gp if properly harvested.

GIANT WATER SILK SPIDER (1): SZ L; MV 180 ft. In water, 30 feet on land; AC 6; HD 3; 15 hp; #AT 1; D 1–2 + save vs. poison (paralysis).

4. MAIN ENTRANCE CORRIDOR. This inclined passage is almost 40' wide and stretches up, southeastwardly, towards what was once the Market Place of the Stone-Cutter dwarves. It is now silent as a tomb.

Note the webs hanging from the ceiling. These webs cover the 35' wide machicolation on the upper level of **area 6** and host the lair of a huge spider (q.v.). Several strands of webbing reach from the ceiling to the corridor's ground. A bull's eye lantern with none of its oil left lies on the floor directly under the spider's nest. It belonged to the adventurer she trapped recently. The spider will only jump down into the corridor if she is facing a single opponent. She otherwise waits in her lair.

5. STIRGES. The series of rooms and corridors stretching on both sides of the main entrance corridor linked the main guard posts at **area 6** to the 5' wide murder-holes depicted on the map. During the maiden assault of Young Krassus on the Stone-Cutter clan, these murder-holes, along with the main machicolation of **area 6**, were

forced open by gargoyles serving the giants. The gargoyles are long gone, but the northern passage, and in particular the room with the pool marked on the map, is occupied by a nasty swarm of hungry stirges.

STIRGES (3–30 in nest, 1–6 otherwise): SZ S; MV 30 ft./180 ft. flying; AC 8; HD 1+1; 5 hp; #AT 1; D 1–3. Special: 1–4 *blood drain* once attached.

6. GUARD POSTS. The 30' x 30' rooms on each side of the main entrance corridor were dwarven guard posts. Note the large arrow slits visible on the map. Spiral staircases connect both rooms with the upper level, where round boulders may still be found for use with the main machicolation there. This central hole is now the lair of a huge spider, along with her possible young (the referee may wish to add 1–6 young, or one per two characters beyond four in the party).

The nest is accessible through the machicolation hole, and hangs above the main entrance corridor at **area 4**. The webbing stretching from the ceiling of the corridor below to the hole is covered with a thick, clear substance that acts as a powerful glue: it will automatically stick to anyone or anything touching it. It will act as a *web* spell.

Within, the cocooned corpse of a magic user lies wrapped up in thick webs. It still carries a leather backpack containing a spell book with *read magic*, *comprehend languages*, *spider climb*, *burning hands*, *shocking grasp*, and *hold portal*. This is a hefty tome weighing 50 pounds. Its pages are fragile and brittle. The magic-user's body also carries a dagger and a purse with 2–12 gp, 5–50 sp. If the nest is burned or the body dropped to **area 4** the spellbook might be damaged: there would then be a 10% chance for each spell to have been damaged, and thus become ineffective, from the fall.

HUGE SPIDER (1): SZ H; MV 180 ft./30 ft. leap; AC 6; HD 2+2; 12 hp; surprise 1–5; #AT 1; D 1–6 + save vs. poison (+1 on the die).

YOUNG (LARGE) SPIDERS (1–6): SZ H; MV 60 ft./150 ft. in web; AC 8; HD 1+1; 6 hp; #AT 1; D 1 + save vs. poison (+2 on the die).

7. MARBLE SAND TABLE. A large piece of furniture made of the same cinnamon-hued marble as the main entrance doors at **area 1** occupies the center of this room. Its reinforced sides and eight pillars support a tray filled with sand, which stands three feet above the ground. On the wall hangs a rack; it carries many strange pole-arms with various appendages, such as claws, hoops, rakes, and so on. A medieval watering can is visible under the table, as are the fragments of clay statuettes once used for gaming.

A little compartment under the tray contains a stained copy of *Ummensch & Überzweg*, a set of war gaming rules where dwarves using futuristic, steam-powered equipment, including armors and big, metal, dragon-shaped chariots mounted with ballistas, fight hordes of humanoids and gigantic alien monsters. Elves and humans are optional mercenaries to be hired by the players' characters on both sides. This copy is numbered 23/1000, and signed by the authors, Grog Marbleburg and Derk Emeraldson.

A giant old 40 lb bobcat has claimed the sand table as its litter box. It will come to any dwarf character and ask for food and attention. It will be sitting on the rafters of the ceiling until it spots a potential friend or easy prey. This cat is occasionally fed by Obmar the Unwashed, and its treatment might affect the party's first encounter with the crazy dwarf. Note that if a party member is particularly unfriendly to the bobcat, it will probably take its revenge and mark that person one way or the other. See **area 15**.

BOBCAT (1): SZ. S; MV 180 ft.; AC 5; HD 1; 7 hp; #AT 3; D 1-2/1-2/1-2, if both of the claws hit add 1-2 and 1-2 for the rear paws raking as the cat is locked in place on its opponent.

8. MARKET PLACE. This was once the meeting place of the Stone-Cutter community. It was the scene of the disastrous initial battle between the forces of Young Krassus and the dwarven warriors led by Belenor's lieutenant. This vast square room's ground is littered with broken cart wheels, giant stone boulders, mining tools, pieces of dwarven armor, and an assorted collection of dwarven, humanoids and wolf bones as a result.

A huge pile mixing finely carved items and sheer junk lies prominently in the middle of the Market Place. It looks bent and precarious, like an insane, gargantuan form of pick-up sticks. A strong, armored ogre stands on top of this mound. He holds a two-handed sword and is busy rearranging his collection. He is absorbed by his work and will not notice the party's presence, even carrying light sources, if he is also ignored. This event will only occur once. He will be more alert on later visits.

Belenor's winged helmet mentioned at **area 2** can be found hidden in the pile. It is now the ogre's chamber pot. It is entirely wrapped up in what was once fine but is now disgusting cloth (50 gp silk if cleaned repeatedly). It is necessary to unwrap the cloth to see the helmet and notice its magical properties. It is made of the strongest metal on Eurth and bears a metal plate on the front between the wings, inlaid with the Stone-Cutter clan rune. A *continual light* shines from behind the rune at a standard 60' radius, sending the shadow of the sigil wherever the helmet is aimed. If the wearer of the helmet takes a critical hit (reducing his or her hit points below 0), 1-10 points of damage will be subtracted, as the metal plate will flare intensely. This blow will always knock off the helmet, its dweomer dissipated until minor repairs are accomplished. The referee will also check for serious breakage, which will occur 1-in-10 (see **HSD1 – THE HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON** for more rules pertaining to breakage and repairs of special items during the campaign).

Everything else in the pile will be either heavily damaged, ripped apart or otherwise needing extensive repairs—up to the referee. These items' value and usage will be seriously affected.

Note the 10' x 10' elevating platforms located in the northeastern and southwestern corners of the **Market Place** and marked by an "E" on the map. These were once used to access Belenor's apartments and the upper level of the tavern, respectively. Both of these platforms are now out of order, the ropes sustaining them having been severed the day of the attack, and the mechanical devices powering them having long been taken apart by the ogre to add to his junk pile.

OGRE (1): SZ. L; MV 70 ft.; AC 4; HD 4+1; 20 hp; #AT 1; D 3-12 two-handed sword, 4-10 harpoon (30' range with a rope attached to it and -2 to hit). In the pommel of the sword is a very valuable gem worth 500 gp. The sword is ornate and decorated with gold inlay (double normal value).

8A. BARBER. This ruined establishment once provided grooming services for dwarves, both male and female. A 5' wide marble container now lying shattered in a corner of the room contained the coals used to warm up the metal hair tongs and beard curlers which can still be found concealed by a thick layer of dust. Other items that



could be recovered from this place include hair pins and extensions, dyes, scissors, ivory combs still dipped into some sort of muck, which must have been clean water at one point, small stone tablets used as reading material as the dwarven ladies were attended to, large panels of tarnished metal once polished like mirrors, and intricate wooden seats uprooted from their sockets in front of the walls. A sign hanging on the frontage was thrown inside by one of the giants and hit one of the groomers' chests, where it is still lodged to this day. It shows the drawing of a radiant lady dwarf waving her lustrous hair and beard while smiling at the viewer.

8B. CORDWAINER. The walls of this ruined store are lined with many shelves. Most of the shoes have been thrown about the room by the invaders as they were searching for hidden treasures to loot. A few of these articles may still be useful to halfling, gnome and dwarven characters, however, like the steel-toed working boots the quarry's workers never picked up, or the thick leather waders constructed for exploratory purposes. The room immediately east of this location was the cobbler's workshop.

8C. POTTER. Nearly all the contents of this room were destroyed by the forces of Young Krassus. The ground is covered with a three-inch thick layer of broken pottery fragments which together look like they belong to some sort of gigantic, multicolored puzzle waiting to be solved after all these years.

Amidst the utter chaos of the room, the party could in fact attempt to piece a few of the potteries here back together. Each turn spent searching through the rubble, the party may roll a percentile die to

see how much of a complete pottery its members are able to jointly assemble. Later turns allow for a re-roll of the percentile die, always retaining the better result of all those accumulated so far. The potteries lying on the ground are generally adorned with various scenic representations of events which transpired in the ancient past, and which the Stone-Cutter dwarves would have cared about. The referee is free to introduce elements of his own setting's history. Two potteries in particular might lead to **HSD1 – THE HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON**, and represent useful clues for a party exploring its depths:

1) A delicate, faceted vase blown from crimson glass, inlaid with three different scenes equidistant from one another along its rim.

The first depicts eight obese individuals sitting around a banquet table, feasting and drinking to their hearts content. A closed door with sconces burning brightly on both of its sides can be seen in the background.

The second scene depicts the same room with the banquet table. The door is open. A wizard in grey attire stands in the doorway: he seems angry, with his hands raised as he casts a spell. The gluttons are standing up around the table, reaching for their throats, shouting and crying, their shapes deformed, their arms and legs sucked into their bodies, as if they are straightening themselves and changing into something else.

The third scene shows the wizard leaving the room, his back facing the viewer as he walks away from the doorway. The table has disappeared. There are instead pillars in the room, each of them with a gaping maw reaching out from its surface, wailing wide open with bright, many-hued glass teeth.

2) A wide, round dish made out of clay is circled with a large painted band representing a torchlit corridor running infinitely around its lip. It seems two framed paintings are decorating the wall of this painted corridor. They hang opposite one another on the dish's surface.

One painting represents a gigantic hand holding a quill reaching out from the darkness. Drops of ink drip from the quill, and change shape to become different monsters as they reach the surface of a maze: they become a giant sitting on a golden throne, tiny creatures worshipping an enormous pillar of living flame, gladiators fighting in an arena, dragons, and even more fantastical beings opposing each other on some imaginary battlefield previously defined by the hand holding the quill.

The other painting depicts a dark place with red lightning coming from the ground and a brilliant ray of sunlight shining from above. An anvil occupies the center of the scene, with large grey bellows on its left worked by some strange creature made of stone, crystals, and gravel, and a wizard wearing robes adorned with golden moons and stars waving his arms at the creature. Behind the anvil stand two characters, one an entirely brass-colored blacksmith, and the other a large, red-bearded mountain of a man wearing furs with the characteristically wide head of a bear resting atop of his strong brow. Both these characters are beating a blade resting on the anvil in front of them.

9. LEADER'S APARTMENTS. These were the living quarters of the clan's ruling family. It doesn't look like the area has been disturbed in a long time. Furniture has been trashed and is coated with a thick layer of dust. The air is stale and heavy.

A 20' wide painted wall, right in front of a flight of stairs going down

to the secret door east of the **Market Place** (just above the numeral of **area 9** on the map), depicts a smiling dwarf wearing a shining winged helmet. In his hands, he holds a hammer of outstanding proportions. As the party approaches the painting, a ghostly figure will slowly materialize, taking a full melee round to take shape. The ghostly figure is a beautifully bearded dwarven lady who has lost her eyes to violence. She is holding her innards in her hands as they hang from her gruesomely cleaved stomach. She starts speaking in the dwarven language (the referee should feel free to paraphrase and get in character, rather than reading the text verbatim):

"Is that you, Belenor, my dear husband? I cannot see. Where are you, my husband? Did you save our son and daughter? What about our people? Who escaped? Oh, my husband, it was so hard to stand our ground and wait for your return. We were so quickly overrun. A massacre. And the great creature's horns breaking down the doors. The eyes, the flaming eyes burning with lust and hatred. And his laughter as he tore my eyes from their sockets, exhorting me to reveal where the hammer was. Again. And again. The way he violated my mind, my body, my very soul . . ." She pauses in doubt. "So much pain. But everything is cold and still inside. What happened to me, my husband? He kept asking about the hammer you unearthed. Your pride and joy. See what brought to us! Fetch it now! Oh my husband, so much pain. How could you have brought this curse upon us? So much greed. So little care. You have been foolish, my husband. And now we must make repair . . ."

If the ghost is attacked or treated badly in any way it will disappear, usually for a period of 24 hours before it might decide to materialize again, as if nothing happened previously.



Inspecting the wall will reveal that the painting has been tampered with. A slight indentation the size of a hand print can be spotted: The dust has not settled in the same way around the area where the dwarf's hammer was painted. The stone below can be pushed. It is a trigger which opens a compartment hidden behind the painting itself. Inside, the party will find a half-dozen tablets entirely made of finely crafted grey marble. Each tablet weighs about 60 pounds. Together, they make up the *Stone Book of the Cutter Dwarves*. It contains an account of feats they deemed worth the record throughout time, and mentions the many lost places where the Clan dwelt in the past.

The referee should feel free to include notes and handouts which could plug whatever adventuring opportunities he wishes to see explored by the party. For our purpose in introducing Nester's Folly, otherwise known in our world as **THE HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON**, a few of the passages therein read, inscribed in the runic script of the dwarven language:

"In the beginning we wandered. There were many battles, many deaths. Our Clan was always on the move, from cave to cave, mine to mine, throughout the Bitter Peaks. It seemed we would never know peace, and never get to refine our skills as well as we should have. Nester the Eurthwright changed all this, for when he struck a bargain with us to come and help him dig deep under the foundations of his castle, he showered our fathers with gold and gems aplenty. Our proficiency grew over this past century working for the wizard, enough to be recognized far and wide, and maybe enough for us to finally find the peace we sought all along."

...

"The central stairway was particularly tricky for us to get right. The main tower nearly collapsed as Thornburr the Master Chiseler did the final cutting which would completely conceal the hidden way within the pillar on its upper level. We could salvage the tower and all the work accomplished as the first cracks appeared within the walls. It was such a success of craftsmanship the Architect titled us the Stone-Cutter Clan. We now have a name, and a purpose. Our history and place in the world is assured."

...

"Our work is now done. The wizard wanted his five levels and paid us for it; he now has them. Nester is summoning creatures of the Eurth to do his bidding and expand on the strange caverns we uncovered far below the castle's deeper vaults."

...

"My father began work on Nester's Folly so long ago. I worked in the same tunnels, the same mazes all my life, and now celebrate the birth of my own great-grandson. What treasures are now hidden deep within, nobody really knows. The Wizard's Architect would not answer my queries. He remains aloof. It does not matter: The Clan now moves to the northeast to explore the depths within a sheer cliff side where the Eurthwright told us we would be able to reach marble veins. We should be able to settle for good."



Next to the *Stone Book* lies a fine jade statue depicting a dwarven female with brown agate eyes, two long braids of hair on either side of her face, and a beautifully braided beard. It is intricately carved, and seems to be of value. Its common market price would be around 500 gp, but sold to dwarves, and especially those of the Stone-Cutter Clan, it would fetch much more.

10. DRINKING HALL. This huge pillared room was once the dwarves' tavern. Long tables and benches lie shattered on the ground, along with emptied beer kegs, stools, mugs, and similar items. Sets of marble polyhedral dice used in the dwarves' gambling may be recovered here. A full set of these solids may be worth 6 sp to 1 gp. Several sets may be recovered—the dice are scattered throughout the room.

A giant millipede lurks amidst the clutter of this room. The insect might be hiding on the ceiling, on a wall or the floor, at will. It is quick as lightning and extremely agile, as though it ignores gravity itself. It is hungry for fresh wood and will probably attempt to attack wooden shield carriers first, then take hold of spellbooks, scrolls, maps, shafts of polearms and ten-foot poles, arrows, paper, scabbards, and the like. It will run back and forth on the walls, floor, and ceiling, surprising on 1–4 (d6)

during the first round, attempting to grab something, and if successful, retreating on the rafters atop the pillars of the room some 30' up. Future attacks will still have a 1-in-6 chance to surprise due to its speed and cunning, using the layout of the room to its utmost advantage.

On the rafters, the millipede has stashed a few valuables including a glass jar with a screw-on lid containing a scroll inscribed with *cure light wounds*, *sanctuary*, *spiritual hammer* and *neutralize poison*, a damaged pipe with the wooden stem gone but the carved ivory bowl intact (worth 77 gp), and the remnants of a half-eaten jewelry box with a still-functioning lock, and within, two pairs of gold earrings (worth 88 gp and 96 gp, respectively), a pearl necklace (worth 169 gp), and a wedding band inscribed with "For Moo" on the inside (worth 325 gp).

GIANT MILLIPEDE (1): SZ L; MV 240 ft.; AC 6; HD 4; 22 hp; #AT 1; D 0 + grabs wooden object. If reduced below 10 hit points, the giant millipede loses its surprise ability, is severed in two halves, with its front section aggressively assaulting the party now with #AT 1 for D 2–8.

11. LESSER APARTMENTS. These were the living quarters of the menial workforce amongst the dwarves. These small, utilitarian apartments have long been looted of their meager contents. Their swollen, rotten doors, as well as some of the beams and heaps of trash found here and there are infested with flesh-burrowing rot grubs.

ROT GRUBS: SZ S; MV 10 ft.; AC 9; 1 hp; #AT 0; D nil + burrowing, death in 1–3 turns.

12. GARN PAT'UUL'S TOMB. This the burial vault of the ancient

lord of the stone giants, Garn Pat'uul. The dwarves of the Stone-Cutter clan inadvertently discovered this place while prospecting for new rich marble veins around their quarries. Greed overcame the dwarves' sense of caution. Belenor, their leader, ordered the giant sarcophagus to be wedged open and pillaged of its contents. He felt an immediate lust as his eyes fell upon the magic hammer it contained. Ignoring the tremor suddenly shaking the place, he grasped the hammer resting on the breast of the dead giant and took it as his own.

Unbeknownst to the dwarves, the quake was felt from a far distance by Garn's brethren . . .

The inside of the sarcophagus lid hides a small, three-fingers-thick compartment the dwarves did not find—their fingers were too short. A switch may be felt within. If triggered, the switch releases a six-inch-thick stone slab at the bottom of the sarcophagus in a spot which would have been between the giant's knees. Stored under this slab, the party will find a **celandon marble syrinx** (pan pipes) and three granite tablets etched with giant runes. The tablets explain how to play tunes with the syrinx. The effects of those tunes are all Eurth-based and magical. Their intent is to primarily communicate with creatures from the Eurth elemental plane. The market value of these items would greatly vary depending upon the acquirer. It takes enormous time and effort to be able to play this instrument properly, let alone master it.

13. BALCONY. Two gnolls have chosen this area for a lair. They found a stash of brew manufactured at the brewery of **area 31**. They have been getting drunk on the stuff for the past ten years, pushing the kobolds of **area 14** to fetch food and various items for them. They are content and lazy. They use the balcony to relieve themselves and occasionally howl, or rather belch, at the moons. They also get rid of the emptied barrels of brew by throwing them over the edge. Over two dozen have already met this fate.

The gnolls are inveterate gamblers, and between swigs shake dice between the two of them. They have a cone-shaped, pointy hat which they use as a token of victory one of them will wear after series of successful rolls, with the sole intent to humiliate the other. This hat actually was the possession of a magic-user the two of them killed on their way here. It has a hidden inner compartment containing a scroll of *gust of wind*, *invisibility*, and *strength*.

POT-BELLIED GNOLLS (2): SZ M; MV 70 ft.; -1 INIT; AC 5; HD 2; 8 hp, 10; #AT 1; D 2–8 or javelin 1–6.

14. OLD WELL. This location was once part of a bakery, along with the huge oven found in the room directly east of this location. A group of kobolds are now living there, usually used and abused by the gnolls further north. A number of clay jars containing oil for the bakery are still stored in little alcoves around the walls of this room. The party could gather the equivalent of five flasks of flaming oil out of these containers.

KOBOLDS (2-8): SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AC 7; HD 1/2; 2 hp; #AT 1; D 1-4.

14A. BAKERY'S FIREPLACE. A few shelves still hang around a large stone oven by the northern wall of this room. Obmar Nohj, the crazed dwarf of **area 15**, regularly sleeps within the hearth, unbeknownst to the kobolds of the **old well** at **area 14**.

15. CRAZED SURVIVOR. Obmar Nohj the Unwashed, a highly aggressive, partially mad master of guerilla tactics, is hiding in



the very place his ancestral enemies now occupy. The dwarf keeps changing his hiding spots, though he regularly sleeps in the old oven of the bakery east of **area 14**. He camouflages his skin and other features—his beard is close-cropped, and he applies mud and stone paste all over himself, customizing his disguise depending on his surroundings, becoming one with the tomb he is now haunting. There are rumors and superstitious tales circulating amongst the other denizens of the place: they speak of this shadow, this presence that kills and disappears. Many think of it as a curse.

If Obmar spots the party, he will follow, waiting for an opportunity to strike the last member closing the marching order. He will attempt a surprise attack, erupting from the shadows and yelling “Die, spawn of evil!” in the dwarven language. If the cat of **area 7** has been killed by the party, Obmar will fight to the death, having either seen the corpse or just feeling that something is wrong about the party. If the cat is friendly to them, and they carry it along with them, Obmar will talk first, and maybe attack second.

If the party becomes friends with Obmar, he might share stories of his work digging out the tunnels under Nester's castle. He remembers the place's location, and can guide them there.

OBMAR NOHJ: 2nd level dwarf fighter; SZ S; MV 90 ft.; STR 17, CON 17, INT 7, WIS 16, DEX 18, CHA 5; AC 4 (Studded leather and greaves); HD 2; 24 hp; surprise on 1–5; #AT 1; D 2–5 throwing dagger, +4 to hit, 2–7 half-serrated short sword, +1 to hit. Obmar carries four mismatched throwing daggers scrounged from the bodies of his victims, a necklace of assorted fangs, and his custom half-serrated short sword with a hollow handle and screwed pommel containing a sharpening stone, needle, and humanoid-guts-string, a perfectly round marble, and fourteen 100 gp base value gems. Obmar often improvises weapons and equipment as needed.

16. WASHING AREA. This place was used by the dwarves to wash their clothes and other personal items. This was the main gossip hub of the dwarf maidens back in the day. It has fallen silent now. Thick bushes of watercress and algae reach from the waters to the scrubbing stone slabs around. Two lampreys lurk in the water and will ambush easy prey.

LAMPREYS (2): SZ S; MV 720 ft.; AC 9; HD 1+1; 5 hp, 7; #AT 1; D 1–3 bite.

17. GREATER APARTMENTS. These were the living quarters of the specialized artisans amongst the dwarves. These are now ransacked and are the main hunting grounds of a full pack of wolves roaming around the corridors of the northeastern quadrant.

WOLVES (15 in this area, 2–8 otherwise): SZ M; MV 180 ft.; HD 2+2; 10 hp; #AT 1; D 2–5.

18. MUSHROOM CAVE. Giant 12' tall mushrooms are growing everywhere. They have bright orange caps, and are leathery and smooth to the touch. They stand on milky-white, tree-trunk stems sprouting from the sand.

Swift movements can be spotted as creatures concealed by the mushrooms run back and forth, to and from many crevices and holes dug in the natural eastern wall of the cave. These are giant geckos feeding on the fungi found here. They will defend themselves if threatened or cornered, but will generally prefer to avoid confrontations and run for cover.

If a mushroom is cut down or harmed in any way, it will grow back to its original size and shape in a matter of a day. It is actually possible to see them grow with the naked eye. The skin makes a fine leather (+1 natural AC for an armor made out of the stuff), and the flesh is filling like meat.

LARGE CAVE GECKOS (1–4 per mushroom): SZ M; MV 180 ft.; AC 6; HD 1; 4 hp; #AT 1; D 1–4 bite.

19. SMOKING LOUNGE. This 30' x 20' space is concealed behind a secret door. This was a private smoking area for the privileged few dwarves who wanted to get away from the **drinking hall** to enjoy

the exotic pleasure the smoking lounge contained. A giant hookah stands in the center of this room. It is made out of clear glass inlaid with silver threads all along its length. Eight purple hoses spread out of this apparatus. They are tipped with thin pierced silver heads which can be used to smoke. Fluffy multicolored pillows are spread out on the floor.

If the players light the hookah up and smoke from it, the oozing waters will instead produce a hallucinogenic compound which might trigger dreams, visions, and general lethargy.

A dried and mummified corpse wearing lacquered armor and protective furs is leaning against the southwestern corner of the room. This dead ancient anti-hero still holds a large composite bow and wears a sheathed scimitar attached to his back. One can find a goat skin full of rancid kumas lying close to him and two mummified dwarven heads still hanging from his belt by their beards. His quiver contains 14 regular arrows and **two treantwood arrows (+1)**. A few coins are stashed in a decaying leather pouch as well (12 gp, 15 sp, 36 cp).

20. PRIVATE BUNKS. These little 10' x 10' rooms were used by dwarven women to brazenly expose their beards and many talents to those who could pay. Two little headless female bodies can still be found lying on a bed. Their clothing has been torn apart and thrown about the area. One of the mattresses conceals one of these beauties' private stash. It is stuffed with low-quality jewelry, old dried-up cosmetics and perfume, coin, and some gems too, up to a total value of 1,000 gp.

21. MAIN QUARRY. Here lies the pit which made the dwarves' fortune. It is lined with one of the very last known veins of celadon marble which made the reputation of the Clan before the attack of Young Krassus. The marble is still there, exposed within the giant well. The square contours of the many blocks which have been extracted from this spot over the years are still clearly visible along its lip. A ramp goes down to the bottom of the well on its western edge.

Many tools, blocks of marble, as well as carts, wooden beams, and pulley systems litter the ground around the pit. Especially worth notice is the wide, strong cart loaded with blocks of marble located ten feet away from the edge.

The bottom of the quarry is the lair of the goblins serving Field Marshal Grosh the Great, an enormously fat, rotund hobgoblin of ill repute. The field marshal is clearly insane, and uses the last eight remaining dwarven prisoners to carry his litter around. He holds court on the northern edge of the quarry (in the 20' wide emplacement indicated by an "X" on the map). The marble there has been polished to such an extent as to reflect and amplify the field marshal's grandeur. The goblins kneel very close to their leader as he eats, drinks, snores, and speaks, waiting for his command. To ignore Grosh the Great is to die an untimely, painful death.

Using the various tools and blocks around the pit, it would be possible to crush a great many number of goblins at a time. Treat those as area damage projectiles that instantly kill the goblins they hit. The cart is in a perfect spot to actually strike Grosh and his close servants first, including the dwarves carrying his litter. Dislodging the cart from its initial position will require a bend bars/lift gate check modified by the number of people involved, the tools used, and any other relevant circumstance to the referee's discretion. Multiple attempts may be made, but each failure may cause a noise raising alarm, or other such negative consequences.

GOBLINS (50): SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AC 6, HD 1–1; 3 hp; #AT 1; D 1–6.





GROSH THE GREAT (Hobgoblin): SZ L; MV 30 ft.; AC 5; HD 1+1; 9 hp; #AT 1; D 1–12 two-handed giant mace (a human-sized fighter would need an exceptional strength to wield it). An ivory chess set matching a celadon marble board accompanying it is concealed under the cushions Gresh sits on. Market value: 420 gp with the board, 57 gp without the board.

22. QUARRY SUPPLIES. A variety of supplies can be found gathered on the floor. At least half the supplies are still usable. Sample items include: three cases with ten pots of oil each, rawhide which was used underneath slabs of marble, beeswax candles, harnesses and pulleys, chisels, and other tools, as well as coils of rope with oil spilled upon them.

A treasure chest, once locked, has been broken into some time ago. It still contains many caramelized treats, some of them half-melted and chewed on. The foreman not only enjoyed the candies himself but shared them freely with the female staff. The workers too would occasionally get some, but only as a special reward for a job well done.

Make sure you check whether a fire is started if the party fools around with open flames. The whole room could quickly turn into a raging, flaming inferno for the unwary.

23. FOREMAN'S QUARTERS. The apartments of the quarry's overseer have been left alone for a long time. The goblins say they are haunted, and avoid the premises entirely. They even look at the balcony stretching from the upper level over the whole of the quarry with great fear and apprehension.

The goblins' stories are not far from the truth. An extra-dimensional

entity taking the shape of a white vapor claimed these apartments as its home. The vampiric cloud, or Horla, as it were, is a creature that feeds on life force. It surrounds its preys and sucks their essence out of them, taking on lively colors in the process. The cloud is easily disturbed and greatly averse to open winds and electrical damage.

The twisted, contorted remains of the many goblins consumed by the cloud may be found littering the floor of every room upstairs. Let it be a warning for those who would tread these dangerous grounds.

LE HORLA (Vampiric Cloud): SZ L; MV 20 ft. Floating; AC 10; HD 4; 18 hp; D 2 hp energy drain to each victim within the cloud's 15 foot diameter, 1 hit point recovered for each 2 hit points inflicted. The vampiric cloud has no maximum number of hit points. It cannot be affected physically, unless by electricity and wind. Cloaks shaken to create a wind in its direction, opening the doors of the manse; these sorts of actions will inflict 1–4 points damage to the cloud. Holy water will inflict 2–8 points of damage per vial. Combinations or augmentations are possible—up to the referee. Any magical effect creating wind and/or electricity will instantly destroy the vampiric cloud, such as *gust of wind*, *shocking grasp* and similar spells. Upon destruction, the vampiric cloud will explode in a 15' diameter burst. Each victim within the cloud will incur 2–12 points of damage. 1–4 points of splash damage will be inflicted to the victims standing within 10 feet of the burst.

24. OXEN PENS. This is where the giant oxen, used to pull the blocks of marble up the quarry's ramp, were housed. All that remains now are piles of large charred bones, since the forces of Young Krassus slaughtered the animals and cooked them up on the spot.

25. DWARVEN DAY CARE. The broken toys found in this room were once used to keep the young dwarves busy when their parents toiled at the quarry. Climbing ropes hanging from the ceiling, miniature carts pulled by wooden oxen, little hammers and chisels, quantities of stone warrior figures, wheels and harnesses, and stuffed leather balls with their guts ripped out are all over the place.

26. FISHERMAN'S APARTMENT. This room has been thoroughly trashed, like so many others in the complex. The party may find scattered here and there: some rotten wooden beams that once belonged to a bed, a huge chopping block with assorted broken knife blades sticking out of it and making it look like a monstrous porcupine, and a stone bathtub, cracked and overturned.

27. FISHING SUPPLIES. This is where the dwarven fisherman who lived at **area 26** and his sons kept their fishing equipment. The rods and nets are intact, since these secret passages were not found by the invaders. Bags of assorted grains and dead insects are stored in this location as well.

28. FISHING BOAT. This is a tipped-over skiff, used by the fisherman and his sons when going to **area 32**. It is in working order, along with the two oars, the giant gaff, and the 11-foot pole aligned beside it.

The skiff includes a built-in box concealed underneath the rower's bench. It contains three hardened, decade-old sandwiches, and three little vials with cork stoppers. Each vial holds four ounces of magical liquid which, if imbibed, permits the user to *only* breathe underwater (one hour per ounce consumed).

29. THERMAE. This room is open to the natural sand stone cave and the streams of water running through it. Its floor has been slowly accumulating a thick silica covering. An egg-shaped pool of steaming, boiling water lies in the middle of a cluster of smaller, marble-lined bathtubs. A mechanical telescopic arm reaches out of each 10' x 20' block of stone standing on its western side. Large buckets hang from each of the arms' extremities.

This was once the bath house of the dwarves. It is now the lair of a group of infant giant snapping turtles using the smaller, 10' wide tubs as their nests. There will be a varying number of turtles present. Either determine randomly (2–5), or have 2 turtles present, plus one per character present in the party beyond four. These are dull, impulsive creatures which will snap and bite compulsively at anything that comes into range. They are helpless if they are turned over on their backs, and would die if somehow dumped into the boiling water of the large central pool. An amazing meal in large quantities if there ever was one.

INFANT GIANT SNAPPING TURTLE (2–5): SZ M; MV 20 ft. on land, 180 ft. swimming; AC 0, unless biting or otherwise busy with a prey, in which softer parts can be targeted at AC 5; HD 2; 8 hp; #AT 1; D 1–6 bite, continuous damage 1–6 after initial bite.

30. WELL OF NESTS. The Stone-Cutter dwarves discovered this natural well reaching hundreds of feet underground. They constructed this room and its high vaulted ceiling around it, for it harbors a treasure of its own: a colony of peculiar crystalline firebirds using the well as their reproductive grounds.

The heat rises sharply for anyone entering the room. The birds will zoom back and forth examining the newcomers. They will look for metal and shining surfaces. If they see such items, they will attempt to get to them and melt them using their elongated proboscis beaks, ingesting the molten substance into their stomach. They will then fly down to the lava below, expel the metal on the surface of the flow to

clean it of its impurities, suck the refined material back up, and use it to build their nests.

The more valuable the metal or alloy used to build a nest, the deeper it will be down the well. The nests a few feet away from the surface will be constituted of lead, for instance, whereas the deeper nests, 400' down or more, may be built using platinum, varieties of natural electrum, and the like. The referee might rule that some extremely rare metals or alloys, used to create specific items or harvest as spell components, could be found very deep within.

There are more than a thousand specimens flitting about and living down the well. They will usually not harm living creatures, unless they are threatened, and will steal the shiniest metals they can spot instead. Endangering their active nests, which can be easily spotted for their untarnished brightness, would be a very bad idea. Only 25% of the nests are currently being used, however, which leaves many deserted nests to be harvested at will. Note the active nests are usually clustered together in patches.

There are many ancient tools, including pulleys, harnesses, and ropes, all of them dulled by the use of grease to conceal any metallic parts they might include. Note the stream of water flowing southwest of this location is separated from the well by a curved wall of solid stone.

ACHAEAN FIREBIRD: SZ S; MV 480 ft. flying; AC 0; HD 1+1; #AT 1. The Achaean firebird attacks as a 4 HD monster; D 0 or 1–4. Special: if the Achaean firebird is defending its nest or grabs an item which is carried, worn, or otherwise in contact with flesh, the damage is inflicted by the melting process initiated by the bird's proboscis.

31. BREWERY. Two giant wooden wheels are propelled by the steam's current on the northern side of this room. There are many bags of spilled grains and baskets filled with shrunken, dried orange mushroom slices lying here and there across the floor. A huge copper receptacle stands near the western wall. Ladders lead up to it. If inspected, the party may find the skeletal remains of two humanoids who tried to drink their way to the bottom and never made it.

32. NATURAL CAVE. The stream of water is much wider at this particular spot. The water swirls inward into a deep pool around the visible rocks therein. Off the northeastern exit, the sound of the large wooden paddle wheels of **area 31** can be heard loud and clear. This passage is still obstructed by nets stopping any fist-sized object or animal from damaging the brewery's wheels beyond. Similar nets once obstructed the southern passage, but they have been heavily damaged, cut, and torn apart.

Many fish, most of them trophy-sized specimens of their respective breeds, are swimming around the pool. A pale glow can be spotted floating deep under the surface, surrounded by shadowy, leafy fronds, between two of the central boulders. It emanates from the fleshy growth on a giant lighthouse anglerfish lurking below.

As soon as prey gets within 10 feet or so, the lighthouse anglerfish will attack.

LIGHTHOUSE ANGLERFISH: SZ L; MV 180 ft. swimming; AC 6; HD 5; 28 hp; #AT 1; D 4–16 toothy bite.

33. PROSPECTING AREA. This is a sample area where the dwarves searched for new, rich marble strikes. Another such prospecting space can be found east of **area 15**. Exploratory tunnels travel up and down in various directions. These are in very poor condition, and may be dangerous to tread. *(continued on page 63)*



the **Kobold's** Cavern

edited by Wolfgang Baur

Order of the Knights Incorporeal

Villainous Knights for the *13th Age* RPG
by Brian A. Liberge

Over the hills and through the forests of Morgau rides a terrifying cavalry. The Order of the Knights Incorporeal, more commonly known as the Ghost Knights, earns their name quite literally. This legion of the living and the undead charges across the battlefield completely undeterred by earthen banks or castle walls—they phase through with ease and precision.

Luckily for their neighbors, the Order's full ranks almost never rally for war. Their duties require them to keep the living serfs in line and to fight in minor campaigns between Morgau's many feuding vampire lords. On the one recent occasion when most of the Ghost Knights gathered under a single banner, they broke the Krakovan cavalry for a generation and seized an entire city as their spoils of war.



History

Three hundred years ago the vampire Lucan seized the throne of Morgau. The neighboring kingdoms of Krakova, Doresh, and Magdar joined together and tried to force him from his newly acquired throne. They nearly succeeded. Years later they would try again, only this time Prince Lucan's forces would be the clear victor, gaining back all land

previously lost and adding the entirety of Doresh to his domain. Lucan's outstanding victory is often attributed to a timely alliance with the intelligent and brutal darakhul (the ghouls of the underworld), but there is far more to this story.

Before Lucan arrived on the scene as an advisor to the king of Morgau, both Thurso and Hristina Dragonson were two ambassadors

in the court. Though obviously not dragonkin they claimed to be sent from the dragon lands as dragon-blooded nobles. Morgau is far enough from the dragon empire that the king had little official contact with the dragon lords previously, but it lies close enough that he feared what may happen should he insult two of its nobles. A small company of fire drakes could burn out his southern villages in a matter of a few days. The emissaries were welcomed and wooed by the king.

The vampire Lucan saw through their charade almost immediately. Instead of reporting their deception to the king, he instead secured a secret alliance. He turned them into his servants, blessed with eternal life and cursed with eternal loyalty to the vampire king.

Morgau's defeat in the first war hit Hristina especially hard. It's not clear exactly what powers brought the first knights back to life. Some legends say that her powers were transformed that day by her grief. Some tales depict the Princess as a powerful sword mage, raising up the Ghost Knights through a mighty arcane ritual. Others whisper of the secret deal she made with Baba Yaga, and the price that grandmother will someday come to collect.

Some things are certain: the Ghost Knights are clearly linked to Princess Hristina, their first company was formed from Hristina's company during the war, and their help made it easy for Prince Lucan to conquer the neighboring land of Dorech.

How to join

Most Ghost Knights begin as living serfs of Morgau, toiling away

under the sullen eyes of their undead lords. The only way for the living to advance in society is to become undead themselves, and many of those paths are very dangerous indeed. The Ghost Knights seem like a relatively stable method comparatively. Initiates pledge themselves to one of the lord commanders and serve the knights in a basic military capacity as men-at-arms, outriders, or scouts. If they serve well, they will be "raised up" as a foot soldier, sergeant, or initiate of the Ghost Knights. These ranks are roughly equivalent to a squire in more mundane armies. Here they learn the tactics and abilities of Knights Incorporeal.

The process of being raised up often includes becoming a ghoul or vampire, though some particularly strong candidates remain among the living. Regardless, the knights all learn to fight in the same style and develop their namesake abilities. When faced on the battlefield, their helmets hide their true nature from their foes, though the humans and darakuhl ghouls fight most battles by day, and the ghouls and vampires fight at night.

As long as they continue to perform admirably, foot soldiers are promoted through the ranks of the Ghost Knights. These ranks are Initiate Brother/Sister, Honest Brother/Sister (the most common rank), Master of Arms, Captain of Arms, General at Arms, Commander, and Grand Marshall.

Key NPCs and initiates

Grand Marshall Princess Hristina oversees the Order of the Ghost

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Knights. While her brother is a weak ruler of the Principality, Princess Hristina is anything but. A stunning beauty, she is a grey-eyed blonde who seems to live in her silver-and-gold-chased plate armor, for fear of assassins. She rules the Order with a light touch, but they obey her every whim. Some among the necrophagi—the ghoulish-wizards of the darakhul—believe there is an upper limit to how many knights can be so uniquely created. This may limit the Order's numbers. Certainly the Order tends to elevate knights to higher positions in the wake of losses in battle.

Hristina enjoys raiding for sport and taking prisoners to work on the fields of the Order's commanderies. Her teeth are said to sink into the necks of her ablest commanders; these consorts are often promoted into the vampiric nobility of Morgau.

Commander Baleneus, Hristina's current lover, commands the vital commanderies along the Great Northern Road where tolls are collected, including the commanderies of Valach, Bruvik, and Engerstal. He also protects the Home of the Red Abbey of the Red Sisters in the north.

The rather quieter Commander Orkov watches over the southwest borders near Zobeck and the Ironcrag. She is responsible for the Commanderies of Walker's Wood, the Temple of Apostala, and Langrone, and her duties involve frequent raids or reprisals against the Grisol dwarves.

GHOST KNIGHT INITIATE

Human and dwarven serfs, who have pledged themselves to the Ghost Knights in hope of advancement. They fight bravely with exceptional loyalty, for fear of what may happen should their master decide they are no longer useful.

1st level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +2

Longsword +6 vs. AC—2 damage

Terrified into Greatness: The initiate gains a +1 bonus to attacks and +3 to damage as long as there is an undead superior within sight.

AC 16
PD 14 **HP 7 (mook)**
MD 13

Mook: Kill one initiate for every 7 damage you deal the mob.

HONEST GHOST KNIGHT

The undead cavalry have a special bond with their mounts. Knight and horse fight as one in undying symbiosis.

3rd level troop [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerable: Holy

Axe of Marena +8 vs. AC—7 negative energy damage, and the

Ghost Knight can use Rearing Assault as a quick action if it has not yet used it this round.

Natural 16+: The Ghost Knight has *resist damage* 16+ to all damage except force damage, which damages it normally, until the start of its next turn.

Rearing Assault +7 vs. PD—4 damage, and the target pops free from the Ghost Knight. The Ghost Knight can use Axe of Marena as a free action if it has not yet used it this round.

Mounted: Treat mount and rider as one creature until they are dismounted by a Dazed or Stunned condition. When dismounted, treat the horse and rider as two separate creatures with their own separate actions. The rider can use the Axe of Marena but does not trigger

Rearing Assault and vice versa. Each creature has half the remaining hp but shares defenses. The rider can remount as a move action.

Nastier Specials

Trample: The Ghost Knight can use Rearing Assault against up to 3 enemies, moving between attacks, as long as it is mounted.

AC 19
PD 17 **HP 38**
MD 13

GHOST RIDER TEMPLAR

As knights progress through the ranks of the Knight Incorporeal their ties to undeath grow stronger. The Templars are easily recognized as they soar wraith-like through the battlefield.

5th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerable: Holy

Shadow Blade of Marena +10 vs. PD—14 negative energy damage
Natural even hit: The target is also weakened (save ends).

C: Scything Death +10 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—10 negative energy damage.
Natural 16+: The Templar teleports to and engages with one enemy it can see that it did not target with this attack.

Flight: The Templar hovers above the ground, flying even as its mount gallops at full force.

Ghostly: This creature has *resist damage* 16+ to all damage except force damage, which damages it normally. The Templar can move through solid objects, including enemies, but it cannot end its movement within them.

Aura of Wracking Pain: Any living creature engaged with the Templar is Vulnerable to Negative Energy.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 50**
MD 15

PRINCESS HRISTINA, LADY OF BRATISLOR, GRAND MARSHALL OF THE GHOST KNIGHTS

Knights in full plate are a rallying point, as visible as a banner as they carve their way across a battle. The Princess Hristina takes this role to a new level. Her fluid movements are a dance; her death stroke, a thing of beauty.

Double-strength 10th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +17
Vulnerable: Holy

Shadow Blade of Marena +16 vs. PD—100 negative energy damage
Natural even hit: The target is also weakened (save ends).

Deathly kiss +16 vs. PD—100 negative energy damage.

Natural 11+: The target is also weakened until the end of its next turn (-4 attacks and defenses).

In addition, the target expends one unused limited trait (a spell,

power, or talent with a once-per-battle or daily use, but not magic item powers) of its choice.

C: Scything Death +16 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—70 negative energy damage.

Natural 16+: Hristina teleports to and engages with one enemy she can see.

C: Vampiric compulsion +16 vs. MD (one enemy; see below)—the target is confused and vulnerable (save ends).

Limited use: Hristina can use vampiric compulsion as a free action only when a nearby enemy attacks her and misses with a natural attack roll of 1–7.

Aura of Wracking Pain: Any living creature engaged with Hristina is Vulnerable to Negative Energy.

Escalator: Hristina adds the escalation die to her attack rolls.

Ghost Form: When the escalation die is 2 or higher Hristina can enter Ghost Form as a Quick Action, becoming an intangible mist still in mounted humanoid shape. While in Ghost Form Hristina can hover, fly swiftly and has *resist damage 16+* to all damage except force damage, which damages her normally. Hristina can also move through solid objects, including enemies, but she cannot end her movement within them. Hristina cannot use *deathly kiss* while in this form. Hristina can end the form as a free action.

Vampiric Regeneration: Hristina regenerates 11 hp at the start of each round indefinitely, but she turns to mist if she drops to 0 hp (see below).

Mist Form: Unless she is slain in a manner appropriate for truly killing vampires in the campaign, Hristina drops to 0 hp and drifts away to return and fight another day. We recommend a wooden stake through the heart or holding her under running water, only after she's been reduced to 100 hp or lower, of course.

AC 27

PD 21 HP 520

MD 28

Icons of the Ghost Knights

Prince Lucan is ultimately lord and master of the Knights Incorporeal and, as such, is the icon they are primarily associated with. The ghoul emperor Nicoforus sometimes makes the Ghost Knights his business as well, since many darakhul ghouls serve in their ranks. Petty commanders fighting to remove a rival may hire a contingent of knights to a foreign icon, but this is rare. ■



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Players as Ghost Knights

While the rank and file may take at least five years to reach the position of an Honest Brother or Sister, the players are anything but ordinary. Whether joining the ranks willingly, as part of a ruse, or being conscripted, the players catch the eyes of noble and commanders alike and can attain higher status at a much higher pace than is the norm.

The martial classes are the most common for the Ghost Knights with fighters and rangers being the most common. Barbarians and bards are both powerful choices as well. Rogues can be successful as well, especially vampiric ones, though some don't follow orders and find the Order burdensome. Clerics and paladins of the blood goddess Marena are accepted into the Order, but they are more often recruited by the priestesses.

Once accepted as an Honest Brother or Sister the character is given a blessed ax or longsword marked with the rune of Marena, and this weapon adds the negative energy type to any damage it inflicts. The following abilities are available to customize such characters further. Work with your GM to either swap racial or class abilities for them, or add an ability when you would normally take a feat.

GHOULISH CLAWS AND BITE

At-Will (one enemy); Attack Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: Strength damage

Miss: Level damage

Natural even hit: The target is vulnerable to attacks by undead until the end of your next turn.

BITE OF A VAMPIRE SPAWN

At-Will (one enemy); Attack Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: Dexterity damage and a living humanoid target is weakened until the end of your next turn.

Champion Feat: *Natural 16+*: The target is confused instead of weakened.

GHOST KNIGHT

Whenever you get a Natural 16 + on an attack with your blessed weapon you gain *resist damage 16+* to all damage except force damage until the start of your next turn.

Champion Feat: You can also move through solid objects, including enemies, but you cannot end your movement within them.

Savage charms and monstrous fetishes

Primitive magic for *Pathfinder*,
from cloaker spikes to gorgon scales
by Ben McFarland

Claiming a hard-won trophy or bloodthirsty memento from a terrible foe is the aim of every hunter and combatant, since the days when predators first faced their prey. Taking a grim fetish as a souvenir or proof of one's victory has been considered a rite of passage into adulthood, a validated claim of conquest, a theft of spiritual power, or the forging of a bond with a totem spirit.

While such a charm can be savage and unspeakable, it can also be an essential social currency or a useful tool among monsters, humanoids, and various barbarian tribes. No matter what role fetishes play in your game, they offer easily customized treasures, unique flourishes, and minor magical power for your game.

Grisly influence

Any character or monster, displaying one or more ceremonially prepared fetishes torn from the bodies of defeated opponents, will make an impression on the creatures he meets. Among more feral cultures, characters wearing fetishes enjoy a +2 circumstance bonus to diplomacy checks made to influence others, but not to checks to gather information. For those bearing four or more different fetishes, the bonus increases to +4.

In civilizations without a tradition of claiming trophies from an opponent, or with taboos against handling blood or the dead, characters displaying them suffer a -4 penalty to diplomacy checks made to influence others, and they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to intimidate checks.

Characters bearing trophies of intelligent humanoid races automatically fail diplomacy checks made to influence members of that

race. They gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus to intimidate checks against them.

Carrying fetishes might limit or enable a character's social mobility. Certain fetishes might prevent characters from communicating with important leaders or sages, marking them as unclean or unworthy. However, renowned hunters or warriors might see a character carrying the same fetish as an equal, or another individual who has shared experiences and trials that others are simply unable to understand. In this manner, the fetish's powers might be considered a secondary value to the doors it opens and closes.

Finding your fetish

Incorporating magical fetishes into a campaign is easy. A non-player character with extensive familiarity with the Old Ways—such as an adept, ranger, or druid—could teach the characters how to identify usable source materials. This knowledge might be offered as a boon in exchange for a successful task or after the party rescues the teacher from some hazard.

Once taught, the characters simply make appropriate knowledge checks (DC 20) after combat against eligible creatures. This provides GMs with options for granting parties treasure, even for creatures or situations that normally possess no treasure or only incidental treasure.

Fashioning fetishes

Spell casters, veteran warriors, and feral mystics all have their own ways to create magic from their battle trophies. The following feats and investiture incantations provide characters with options for crafting their fetishes.

IMBUE FETISH (FEAT)

You use your magical abilities and the recipient's blood to imbue a fetish with power.

Prerequisites: CL 5th, ability to cast *summon monster I* or *summon nature's ally I*.

Benefit: You perform a ceremony requiring 1 hour/250 gp for fetishes you imbue with power. After you complete the ceremony, you reduce the saving throw DCs and variable numeric values of all your spells by 1 point/250 gp for items empowered. Additionally, this ceremony reduces the maximum hp of the fetish's owner by 1 point/250 gp. Both effects last for one day. The fetishes remain active for a number of days equal to the caster's pertinent ability score bonus.

INVEST FETISH (FEAT)

You use your rage to power a fetish you own.

Prerequisites: Rage class feature, 2 rage powers.

Benefit: You perform a ceremony requiring 1 hour/250 gp for fetishes you wish to invest with power. For the day after you complete the ceremony, you reduce your total rage duration by 1 round/250 gp for fetishes empowered. The fetishes remain active for a number of days equal to your wisdom bonus.

INVEST THE FERAL ANIMUS (INCANTATION)

The distinct aroma of rendering gug fat filled the air, like a stale lotus den filtered through a burial shroud. Nikedu smiled, as he fed more charcoal into the cinders beneath his bright blue porcelain bowl full of bronze lumps. Next to him lay a monkey's fist of rubbery, preserved tendons. "Trust me," he chortled, "If we run into chuul again, you'll be glad I made you one of these." The smoke's scent made my stomach heave,

and I turned away. Nikedu looked at me and gave a great belly laugh then stirred his bowl.

School Transmutation; **Effective Level** 5th

Skill Check Knowledge (nature) and survival checks DC 24, 5 successes

Casting Time 50 minutes

Components F, M, S, V

Focus—A crucible

Material Components—A mixture of fat from the source creature, with lead shavings and gold dust (worth 500 gp), and the fetish source object.

Other—Material components must be melted in the crucible and the resulting liquid used to anoint the fetish object.

Secondary Casters—No secondary performers may assist the primary performer.

Range Touch

Target A fetish item, specific to the source creature.

Duration 1 day per character level of primary performer, minimum 9.

Saving Throw None **SR** Yes

Description

This ceremony requires the performer to ritually prepare the fetish source item as the mixture of fat, gold, and lead heats, and to render within the crucible to become a molten alloy. Some liquid metal is poured into a mystic circle and the remainder is used to create a small puddle in the center.

Once the incantation is completed, the primary performer dips the fetish into the alloy. The magic of the ceremony leaves the fetish unharmed and untouched, and it cements the enchantment. At this point, the performer suffers backlash as the ritual concludes.

Masterwork tools can be used in this incantation: one set for the skill checks and a masterwork crucible for heating the components. These have the standard cost for masterwork tools.

Success indicates imbuing the fetish with the magic effect associated with the source creature, as described below. The enchantment remains effective for either the number of days equal to the performer's character level or nine days, whichever is greater. The fetish may be activated once during that period, as described below. The source object may be used as the target for this incantation multiple times.

Backlash

The performer participating in this incantation is exhausted, as per the status condition, until they can either rest for eight hours or find another way remove the condition. The performer also suffers 4d6 damage.

Failure

Failing three skill checks during the incantation causes it to fail completely. The performer still suffers backlash, but the performer also suffers three negative levels.

Construction: Base 32 -1 expensive components (500gp) -2 Ten/fewer secondaries -4 Medium → touch +2 rounds → minutes +5 Contingency -2 Save Partial → None -2 4d6 Backlash -2 Exhausted -2 5th Level.

Fetish Mechanics

A character may activate a monstrous charm or fetish using a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Consider fetishes equivalent to CL 5th effects which can be dispelled, and occupying either a 1/2 neck slot or 1/4 belt slot. This allows a character to wear two fetishes in the neck slot or four fetishes in the belt slot. Fetishes may not be created as un-slotted items.

All fetishes radiate a moderate aura of transmutation, even expended fetishes. Exceptions are noted in an individual fetish's description below. Prices listed for each item are included for calculating treasure values and determining imbue ment feat costs.

SAMPLE FETISHES

The following items present a wide range of creatures from which your characters can obtain fetishes and charms. There are many more possibilities beyond those presented here.

FETISH	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Basilisk Spur	<i>On activation, this stubby claw grants the wearer the ability to make second saving throw against a petrification or paralysis effect. This fetish may be activated as an immediate ability. The second roll must be taken, even if worse, and the item's magic is expended.</i>	750 gp
Choker Paw	<i>After activating, this charm remains active for five minutes. Any creature the wearer successfully grapples during this time cannot speak or cast spells.</i>	750 gp
Cloaker Spike	<i>This barbed spike provides two benefits to the wearer: it grants a +4 bonus to CMB checks made to initiate a grapple, and it allows the wearer to make a second throw against a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The second roll must be taken, even if worse.</i>	1,000 gp
Cockatrice Talon	<i>This grisly fetish allows the wearer to activate it as an immediate action, when a successful hit has been made but before damage is determined. In lieu of damage, the struck creature suffers 1d4 dexterity damage with a DC 12 fortitude save for half (minimum of 1 damage).</i>	750 gp

What are incantations?

Incantations were first presented during the 3.5 era in *Unearthed Arcana*, and they were later revised for *Pathfinder* RPG in the *Incantations in Theory and Practice* PDF.

Sometimes considered “commoners’ arcana,” incantations offer a style of ceremonial magic performed over a longer period, using skill checks and often involving a mandatory price called backlash, which performers suffer regardless of success or failure. If characters botch an incantations casting by failing to make the necessary skill checks, they suffer additional penalties ranging from damage to negative levels—possibly even death.

FETISH	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Dark Creeper Rag-Bundle	<i>This collection of greasy rags gives the wearer the ability to see in total darkness for five minutes.</i>	750 gp
Dire Wolf Tail	<i>For five minutes, this fetish grants the wearer +2 to CMB checks made to trip opponents and +4 to the wearer's CMD versus bull rush or trip attacks.</i>	1,000 gp
Dragon Tooth	<i>This mighty fang grants the wearer resist 5/(element). The element must be selected at the time of activation, and the protection lasts for up to five rounds.</i>	500 gp
Dragon Scale	<i>This fetish may be activated as an immediate action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, and it allows the bearer to make a second saving throw against an aura effect. The wearer may choose which of the rolls to keep.</i>	750 gp
Dragonne Mane	<i>This item uses the head slot, and it grants the bearer the ability to make a sonic, mind-affecting attack that affects all enemies within 40 feet. Those who fail a DC 17 fortitude save become deafened for 2d4 rounds.</i>	1,500 gp
Ettercap Mandibles	<i>These foul trophies grant the possessor a +4 bonus to escape artist checks for five minutes.</i>	500 gp
Gorgon Scales	<i>When activated, this string of three scaly plates allows one of two effects. It can allow the bearer to make a second saving throw against a petrification or paralysis effect with a +3 bonus, or it can allow the possessor to make a breath weapon attack in a 15-foot cone. This attack requires all victims to make a DC 21 fortitude save or be slowed for 1d4 rounds.</i>	2,000 gp
Ghoul Tongue	<i>This raw and desiccated piece of flesh allows the bearer to make proficient bite attacks (1d3 damage for small creatures, 1d4 for medium, 1d6 for large) for five minutes after it is activated. Those bitten must make a DC 13 fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves are immune to this effect.</i>	750 gp
Troll Ear	<i>This rubbery, wiggling trophy can be activated to provide the possessor with fast healing 2 for five rounds.</i>	750 gp

FETISH	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Gug Tendon-knot	<i>This monkey's fist of rubbery tendons gives the bearer the improved grapple feat (or an additional +2 to CMB and CMD if the character already has improved grapple) for five minutes. The bearer need not meet the usual requirements for the feat to gain this benefit.</i>	500 gp
Hippogriff Pinions	<i>This trio of long feathers allows one of two powers. They can provide the bearer the scent ability for five minutes, or they can be activated as an immediate action to provide a limited sort of feather fall effect, reducing the effective fallen distance by 80 feet.</i>	750 gp
Howler Mane	<i>This charm gives off static electricity even when it is not empowered. You may either make a melee touch attack that deals 1d6 electricity damage, or add 1d6 electricity damage to a successful melee attack (1/round for 5 rounds).</i>	500 gp
Purple Worm Tooth	<i>This spiny tooth provides the bearer a 10-foot burrow speed for 10 rounds.</i>	500 gp
Sphinx's Pinions	<i>The bearer gains a +2 insight bonus to any craft, heal, knowledge, profession, or survival skill check. Alternatively, the sphinx's pinions can be activated to make a second roll, but the roll must be taken, even if worse.</i>	500 gp
Stirge Proboscis	<i>This needle-sharp spike is often displayed as a septum piercing (through the nose) or worn as an earring. When activated, it grants a +8 bonus to CMB and CMD checks made to maintain a grapple for five rounds.</i>	750 gp

Section 15:

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Zombie Sky Press, gyg.ax/3a

Kobold Quarterly Blog, Sept 9, 2010 gyg.ax/3b

Kobold Quarterly Blog, Sept 16, 2010 gyg.ax/3c

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The Marmoreal Tomb of Garn Pat'uul

(from page 54)

AFTERWORD

Leaving the Marmoreal Tomb to get back to town would be a mistake. The referee must make sure the populations of the complex as well as their defenses change and adapt over time to face whatever threat the party represents.

Given the relatively distributed nature of the threats in the complex, it would be possible for an adventuring party to barricade itself in an isolated room and rest for a while. Note that food, water, and various manners of provisions are scattered about the place. The party may therefore push on and explore without the necessity of returning to town, provided they avoid the ogre as much as they possibly can. If members of the party gain enough experience to qualify for a new level in their respective classes, the referee may or may not decide they can effectively level up without training requirements.

Once **THE MARMOREAL TOMB OF GARN PAT'UUL** has been thoroughly explored, your party should have a pretty good idea of the existence of a large dungeon having been built with the help of the Stone-Cutter Clan somewhere in the Wild southwest of this place. Encourage your players' characters to talk to caravan guards and merchants, to inquire at the inns and taverns they frequent. Make the search for the exact location of Nester's Folly as entertaining and colorful as you can. Locating the Dungeon should be an adventure all on its own, but it also should be easy in and of itself: we want the party to get there and explore! To that very end, being introduced during the

course of this search to the Shaman's encampment at Crom Caemloch in the Wild will allow the party to establish a new home base from which to operate back and forth, to and from the Dungeon. The campaign will benefit from the Shaman's early introduction into the game. The Shaman will, of course, benefit greatly from his interactions with the party as well. He will be more than willing to trade and bargain with adventurers of all stripes.

For more information about all these characters and locations, see **HSD1 – THE HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON**, to be published by TSR in late 2014. Further adventures await! ■



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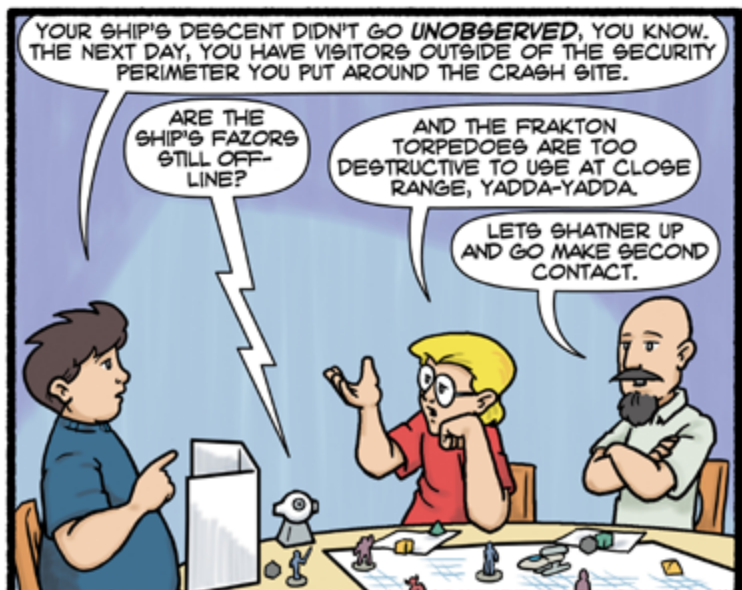
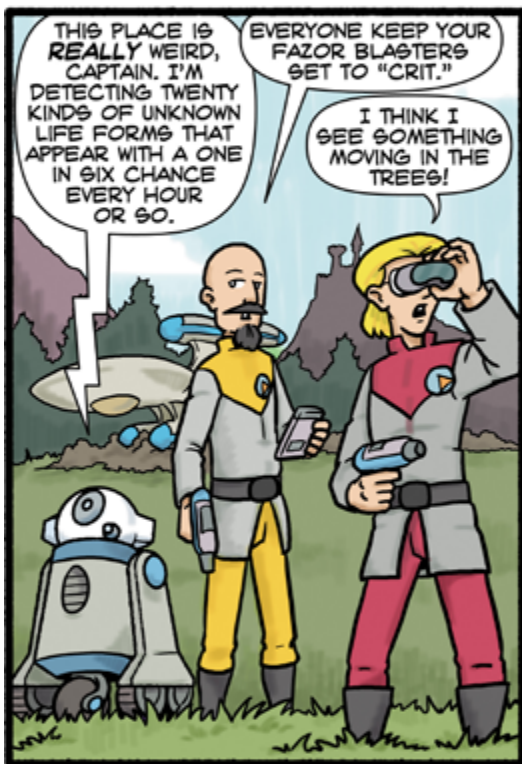
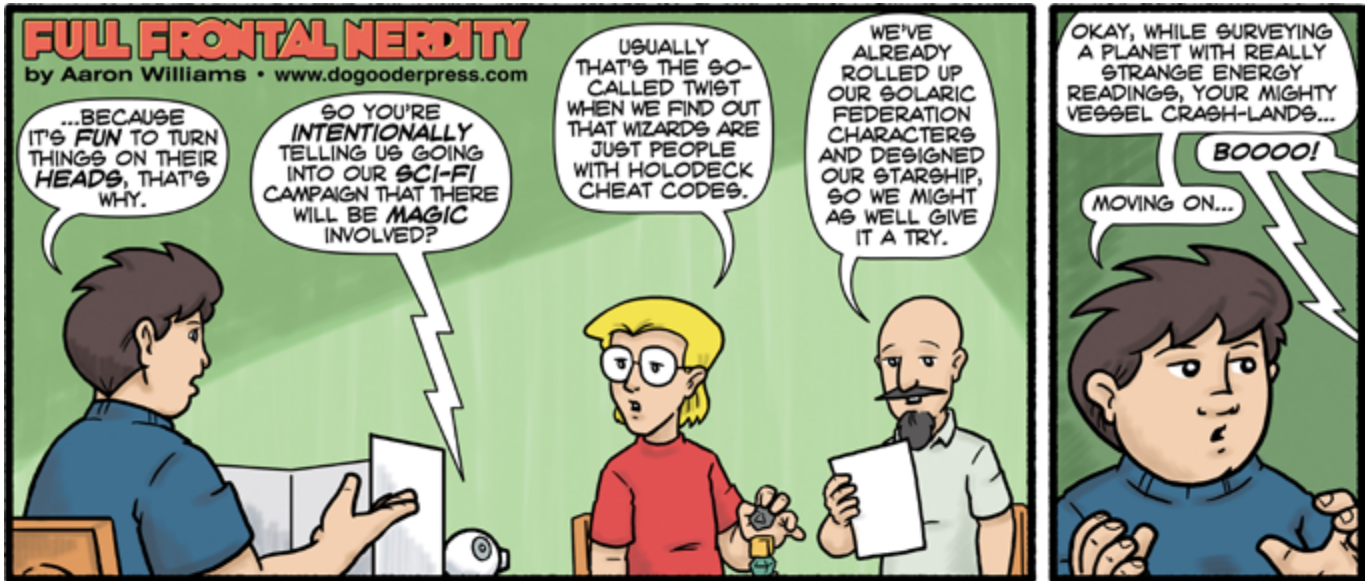
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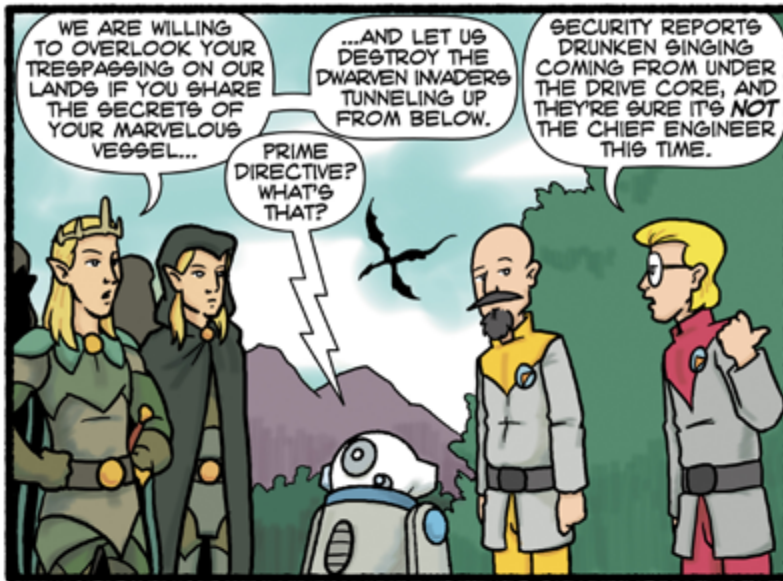


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WE ARE WILLING TO OVERLOOK YOUR TRESPASSING ON OUR LANDS IF YOU SHARE THE SECRETS OF YOUR MARVELOUS VESSEL...

...AND LET US DESTROY THE DWARVEN INVADERS TUNNELING UP FROM BELOW.

SECURITY REPORTS DRUNKEN SINGING COMING FROM UNDER THE DRIVE CORE, AND THEY'RE SURE IT'S NOT THE CHIEF ENGINEER THIS TIME.

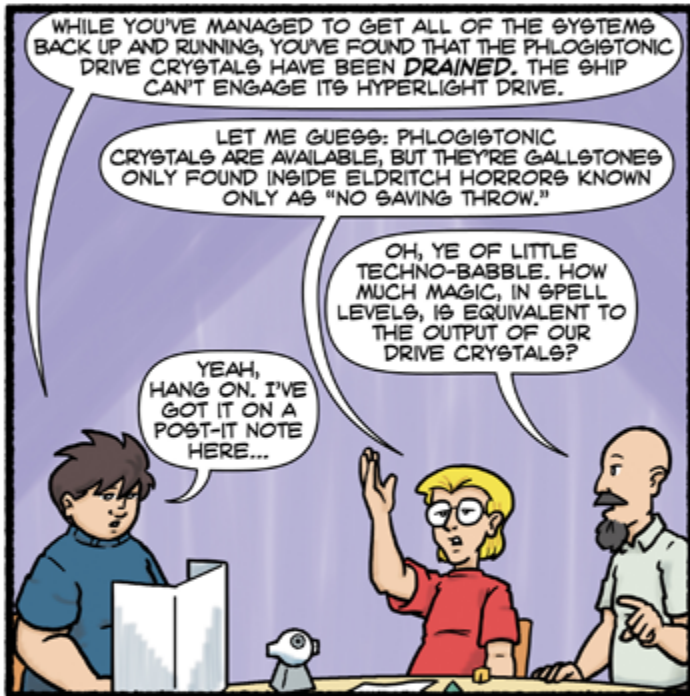
PRIME DIRECTIVE? WHAT'S THAT?



CASUALTIES WERE HEAVY ENOUGH THAT I DIED SIX TIMES. THAT DESERVES A MEMORIAL PLAQUE OR SOMETHING.

THE PLAN WORKED, SIR. ALL OF THE ELVES AND DWARVES ARE LOCKED IN THE HOLODECK, THINKING THEY'RE STILL FIGHTING US AND EACH OTHER.

WELL DONE. LET'S FINISH UP THE REPAIRS AND GET OFF OF THIS ROCK BEFORE THE REPLIMATS RUN OUT OF ZARDOOLIAN MAINTAI FIXINGS.

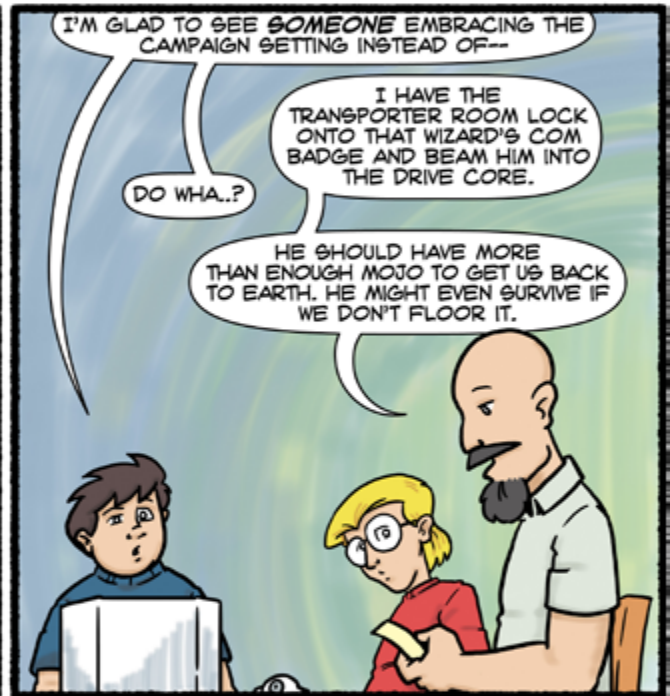


WHILE YOU'VE MANAGED TO GET ALL OF THE SYSTEMS BACK UP AND RUNNING, YOU'VE FOUND THAT THE PHLOGISTONIC DRIVE CRYSTALS HAVE BEEN DRAINED. THE SHIP CAN'T ENGAGE ITS HYPERLIGHT DRIVE.

LET ME GUESS: PHLOGISTONIC CRYSTALS ARE AVAILABLE, BUT THEY'RE GALLSTONES ONLY FOUND INSIDE ELDRITCH HORRORS KNOWN ONLY AS "NO SAVING THROW."

OH, YE OF LITTLE TECHNO-BABBLE. HOW MUCH MAGIC, IN SPELL LEVELS, IS EQUIVALENT TO THE OUTPUT OF OUR DRIVE CRYSTALS?

YEAH, HANG ON. I'VE GOT IT ON A POST-IT NOTE HERE...

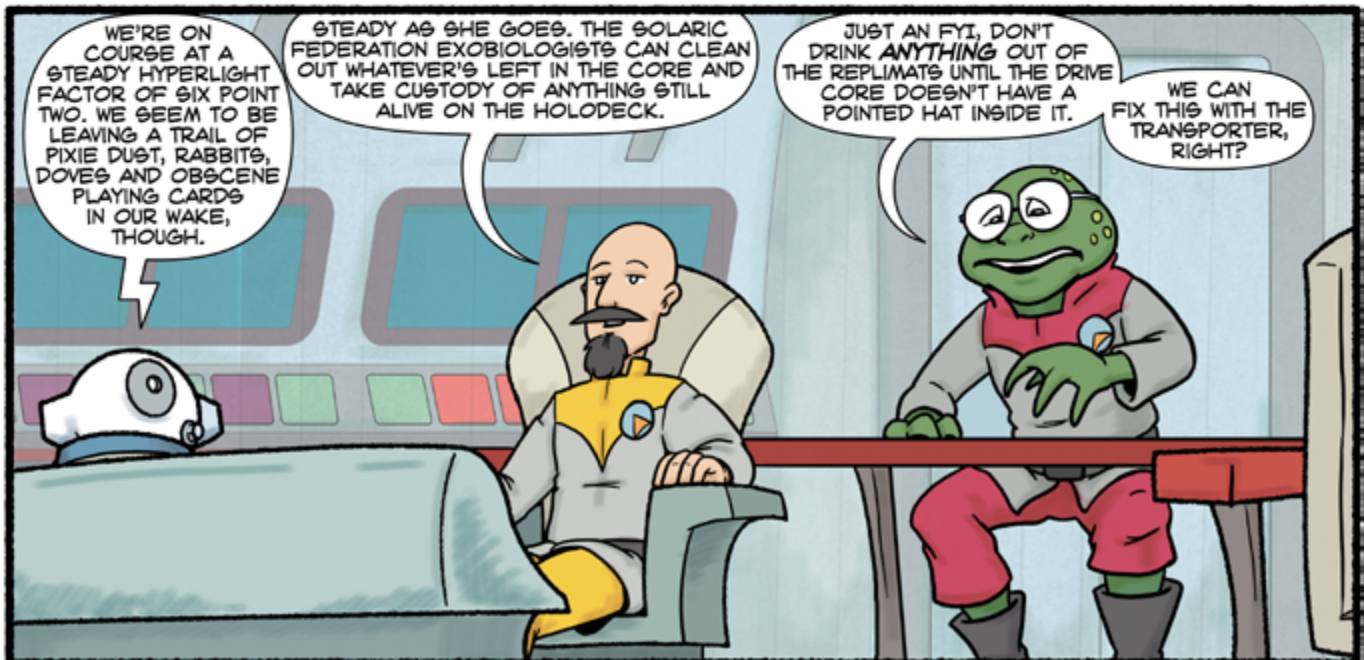


I'M GLAD TO SEE SOMEONE EMBRACING THE CAMPAIGN SETTING INSTEAD OF--

I HAVE THE TRANSPORTER ROOM LOCK ONTO THAT WIZARD'S COM BADGE AND BEAM HIM INTO THE DRIVE CORE.

DO WHA..?

HE SHOULD HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH MOJO TO GET US BACK TO EARTH. HE MIGHT EVEN SURVIVE IF WE DON'T FLOOR IT.

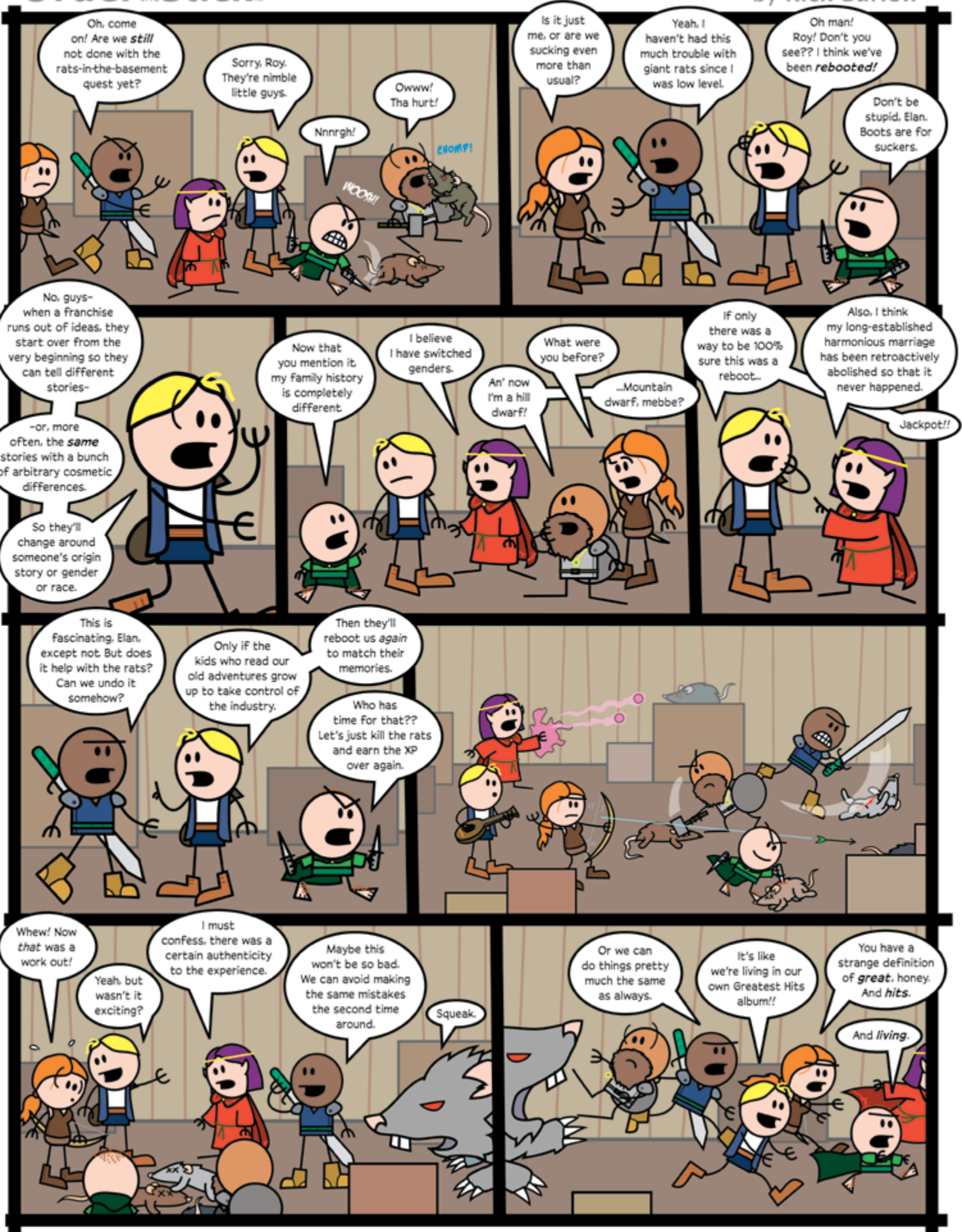


WE'RE ON COURSE AT A STEADY HYPERLIGHT FACTOR OF SIX POINT TWO. WE SEEM TO BE LEAVING A TRAIL OF PIXIE DUST, RABBITS, DOVES AND OBSCURE PLAYING CARDS IN OUR WAKE, THOUGH.

STEADY AS SHE GOES. THE SOLARIC FEDERATION EXOBIOLOGISTS CAN CLEAN OUT WHATEVER'S LEFT IN THE CORE AND TAKE CUSTODY OF ANYTHING STILL ALIVE ON THE HOLODECK.

JUST AN FYI, DON'T DRINK ANYTHING OUT OF THE REPLIMATS UNTIL THE DRIVE CORE DOESN'T HAVE A POINTED HAT INSIDE IT.

WE CAN FIX THIS WITH THE TRANSPORTER, RIGHT?



Oh, come on! Are we still not done with the rats-in-the-basement quest yet?

Sorry, Roy. They're nimble little guys.

Nnnrgh!

Owww! Tha hurt!

CRUMP!

WOOR!!

Is it just me, or are we sucking even more than usual?

Yeah, I haven't had this much trouble with giant rats since I was low level.

Oh man! Roy! Don't you see?? I think we've been **rebooted!**

Don't be stupid, Elan. Boots are for suckers.

No, guys—when a franchise runs out of ideas, they start over from the very beginning so they can tell different stories—

—or, more often, the **same** stories with a bunch of arbitrary cosmetic differences.

So they'll change around someone's origin story or gender or race.



Now that you mention it, my family history is completely different.

I believe I have switched genders.

What were you before?

An' now I'm a hill dwarf!

...Mountain dwarf, mebbe?

If only there was a way to be 100% sure this was a reboot...

Also, I think my long-established harmonious marriage has been retroactively abolished so that it never happened.

Jackpot!!



This is fascinating, Elan, except not. But does it help with the rats? Can we undo it somehow?

Only if the kids who read our old adventures grow up to take control of the industry.

Then they'll reboot us *again* to match their memories.

Who has time for that?? Let's just kill the rats and earn the XP over again.



Whew! Now that was a work out!

Yeah, but wasn't it exciting?

I must confess, there was a certain authenticity to the experience.

Maybe this won't be so bad. We can avoid making the same mistakes the second time around.

Squeak.



Or we can do things pretty much the same as always.

It's like we're living in our own Greatest Hits album!!

You have a strange definition of *great*, honey. And *hits*.

And living.



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