

OD&DITIES

The Original Dungeons & Dragons Fanzine

EDITORIAL

Hello, and welcome to OD&DITIES, a fanzine dedicated purely to Original Dungeons and Dragons, the first role-playing game of TSR, continued until the 1990's even though more attention was being given to it's successor, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons. Whilst it was still supported by TSR for fifteen years after the release of AD&D, OD&D was gradually phased out until finally no new supplements were released, nothing new was presented in Dragon or Dungeon magazines, and in the minds of TSR the game died.

However, in the minds of it's many loyal fans, the game never died. Like many of you, OD&D was the first RPG I ever played, and although I now use many of the AD&D supplements for source matter (conversion between the two systems is incredibly simple), I have nevertheless stayed with OD&D (although I admit a brief flirtation with Alternity when it was released). The reason : it's simplicity. Whilst AD&D DM's have to work with dozens of tables and charts, an OD&D DM is free to concentrate on the storyline. The rules can be picked up in ten minutes, but are sufficient to cover most contingencies.

I'm afraid that this issue will probably mostly consist of my own work - but that must change. The only way it can, of course, is for you to send in contributions. Our writer's guidelines are simple - just make sure your piece reads reasonably well, that there are no glaring errors, that it relates to OD&D, and that it is not too long (less than 3 sides for now please, but if you have longer pieces send them anyway - they could well be used - more on this next issue). Then, just send your piece to Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk, and with luck you will find it in the next issue, or soon after. Well, enough of this for now - on with the magazine. Enjoy!

Richard Tongue

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By **REB Tongue**

I'd like to begin this reviews column by requesting that, in the next issue, I am not the only one writing reviews. All manner of contributions to OD&DITIES are required, but reviews would be especially helpful, especially considering I don't have access to every OD&D product.

This column will review OD&D material, with the goal of building a review database which can be used to review items before purchase - if you have to spend £15 on an auction to buy a product sight unseen, you want some idea of it's quality. Naturally, if there are any disagreements with a review placed here, then you can complain all you will. Write a letter for the letters page, or even better, write your own review, to put forward your own opinion - it will probably be accepted.

This issue I include reviews of the first three modules written for the OD&D game, in the early years of TSR's development - still valuable tools for a DM. Without further ado, on with the reviews!

Module B1 : In Search of the Unknown

Mike Carr

'In Search of the Unknown' was the first adventure to be released for Dungeons and Dragons, as it's code would indicate, but the lack of experience TSR would have had in publishing these adventures does really not show. The layout of the book, like other early TSR Modules, is in two column, and whilst the text is small, it is remarkably easy to read. Illustrations dot the pages with reasonable frequency, and they are also of a fairly high standard.

The content might, at first, seem basic - a standard dungeon crawl with the PC's exploring the home of two long dead heroes, Zelligar and Roghan, with no real surprises. The map is simplistic, with mostly square or rectangular rooms. There is also one glaring feature - no monsters and treasures are given for any of the rooms. Instead, the DM is expected to select them himself from a list.

Experienced gamers may be recoiling in horror from this, but then this module is not intended for experienced gamers. It is excellent at it's described purpose - as an introduction for beginning DM's and players, who will find this module easy and quick to run through, will little work required. The descriptions cover everything needed, there are a wide variety of monsters and treasures provided, and there are some useful features included - such as information on retainers, random tables for henchmen detailing personality and even equipment (useful for any DM caught by his players demanding a henchman).

All in all, Module B1 is an excellent indicator of the quality of D&D at this point. It serves it's task well, and beginning gamers will probably find this of more use than Module B2 (reviewed below) in starting their adventures. However, experienced gamers will probably have less use for this module, due to it's simplistic nature.

Score : 7½ out of 10.

Module B2 : Keep on the Borderlands

Gary Gygax

This Module, created by the founder of TSR and the father of D&D, is very similar in appearance to B1, with the same layout and quality of pictures, but it's focus is quite different. Far from describing one dungeon, it describes several, all in a wilderness area and inhabited by a collection of monsters, inhabiting the Caves of Chaos, an area near a Keep which can be used as the players' base.

Like B1, this module is advertised for use by beginners, and indeed was included with the D&D basic box for a time, but in my opinion it is more use for DM's and players who have already had their first adventure - it can serve as more of a campaign. The Keep makes an ideal place for interaction with various NPC's, and indeed several examples of this are provided. There are a collection of dungeons that will keep the PC's in the area for some time, while they advance in levels, and there are even encounters of various sorts indicated on the map.

As a beginning adventure it is good, but it may be wise to mark another module, such as B1, on the map somewhere, and use that as the first adventure, moving on to the campaign which B2 provides when that module is finished. Some fleshing out by a DM is needed, obviously - none of the NPC's are given names, and this task must be accomplished right away by a DM, and more outside encounters would be useful, but this is an excellent aid for a DM, providing a base and an area for players to explore in their early days as adventurers.

Score : 8½ out of 10

Module B3 : Palace of the Silver Princess

Jean Wells

Before I begin, this is not the adventure that was published by TSR (a review of that would helpful - I don't have access to a copy), but instead the original version that was recently released on their website, and that I am sure most OD&D fans have downloaded by now. In layout, it is similar to the first two Modules, but there seem to be many more pictures included, of a high quality.

However, the adventure itself is of varying quality. Some of it is very useful for a DM - it provides a full campaign setting, better than that of B2 (but not as easy to use), with several villages and areas detailed to be used by DM's in future adventures. This aspect of the module is extremely useful, and recommends it's download just to have access to it.

The remainder, however, is slightly more at question. The adventure resembles B1 in that no set monsters and treasures are given, but a list of both is provided at the back. The adventure itself is another dungeon hack - nothing wrong with that of course, but with the wilderness setting presented it seems to be a bit of a waste. There are a few interesting twists - some of the NPC's presented are interesting, and the fate of the Silver Princess is especially so. The adventure does have it's bad points, however. When TSR pulled this module, it spared us from some bizarre monsters - bubbles (just bubbles, floating on the water), and the ubue, a three headed humanoid with two sexes on one body(!). Some interesting monsters are presented, however, such as the Baric and the Purple Moss, which can easily be pulled and used. However, this module is free. Download it now!

Score : 7 out of 10.

By R.E.B.Tongue

Part One in a series for beginning OD&D players.

This article will attempt to answer a question often asked - how can you get started in OD&D. With most games, like AD&D, the answer is simple - just get a handful of friends together, buy the basic rulebooks, and use them to begin. OD&D is simpler than this is one sense, that it is much easier to begin, but more difficult in that the materials are not readily available.

The first step, then, is to obtain your materials. At this stage, it is unwise to load yourself down with too much, and so you need only the basic items. There are two main versions of OD&D that are available at this point - the 'Basic Set' in the famous red box, and the black box 'Challenger' edition. Both are designed for beginners, but there are differences. In the Basic Set, you get three books, a Player's handbook, DM's handbook, and (in most editions) Module B2 : Keep on the Borderlands (See Reviews). In the Challenger set, you get one rulebook containing all information, and a map sheet with a selection of cardboard pieces, and an introductory adventure to start the PC's.

Your choice of boxes should depend on your long-term interest. The Challenger box set takes you from Level One to Level Five, but has less material in it for the long-term player (though there are some useful items, such as the Dragon Cards which explain the rules simply and fit in a simplified DM's Screen). The basic set will only take you from level 1 - 3, but it does give you more material, and in a better form. If you are just go-

ing to use it a few times, then the Challenger box is probably best, but for long-term gaming, the Basic Set is more useful.

The problem, of course, is obtaining them - they are after all out of print. However, this problem can actually be something of a benefit, as it means when you do find them, they will likely be less expensive second-hand. There are many sources for this material - Internet auctions such as Ebay have OD&D material available almost all the time, and there are several shops specialising in such material, such as the Hit Pointe, or the Sages' Guild, who again usually have the required material available.

Next comes getting a group. With luck, you should be able to find interest amongst your friends, in which case just get them all in one place and follow the instructions in the rule book. However, if you cannot get interest that way, then you must actively seek players. Placing an advert in your local gaming store will help, or in a local newspaper. Alternatively you can place ads in fanzines such as this one, or more professional work such as Dragon magazine, which again will likely get results.

With all of this assembled, you are now ready to begin playing and gaming. However, there are also some items that you will find useful, if not essential, even in the early stages of your campaign - graph or squared paper for mapping, a selection of pencil and pens (I've lost count of the times players forget such things, even when they have been gaming for years), and most important polyhedral dice, of all varieties. The set you get with the basic sets is all right once, but you should get as many as you can, of each type - at least 10 is probably essential to avoid problems in this area. There are other options as well - miniatures, for example, which will be covered in the next issue.

Next Issue : Where do you go from here? After finishing the Basic Set, what next?

By R.E.B.Tongue

This is the start of a regular column that, each issue, will detail a website with information useful to OD&D, either directly or indirectly. Each site will be rated and described, along with full information on how to access it and what is available at the site. Suggestions of sites to be reviewed. or even reviews of sites, are welcomed.

www.wizards.com/dnd/

This issue we look at the website of the company that started it all, the TSR (now Wizards of the Coast) website, detailing each product currently supported by TSR, from AD&D to Alternity. At the moment, the site is concerned with the impending release of 3rd Edition D&D, and a considerable amount of information is being present to detail that - this of course is of limited use for OD&D. The site overall is a good one - it loads quickly, is well presented, and easy to navigate. It is quite obvious that TSR put a good deal of work into supporting this website and the material on it, and it is a good sign that they are now beginning to create 'web-exclusive supplements'.

The real interest however, and the meat of the site, is in the download section. When you first enter it, be pre-

pared to spend considerable time downloading files. Whilst much of the material is for AD&D, most of it is easily convertible. For a start, the original version of Module B3 : Palace of the Silver Princess, is available free for download (here's hoping they release other OD&D supplements for free). There is a wide selection of other material. The 'Castle Guide' has now been posted as available to download, and this is a valuable resource for anyone planning to run a campaign in a feudal setting. 'Legends and Lore' is now available for free, and this is a valuable resource for those creating a pantheon of gods for their campaign.

Of course there is also a complete Gazetteer for OD&D, number 13, dealing with the Shadow Elves and giving a complete run-down on their history and culture, as well as new spells and instructions on how to create and play a Shadow Elf PC (I have a Shadow Elf in my campaign at the moment, thanks to this source-book.)

In addition to these complete source-books, there are other items. Adventures such as

I11 : The Needle, and L1 : The Secret of Bone Hill are easily convertible to OD&D, and there is a special treat for fans of the Mystara setting - works detailing the Savage Coast setting, including a Monstrous Compendium and a sourcebook on the Orcs' Head Peninsula, valuable downloads for the Mystara setting.

A selection of other data is available, from maps of various setting to adventures for Ravenloft, all convertible to OD&D. Magical items, new races, and a whole variety of other useful downloads, including a selection of treasure maps which can spark off adventures or even small campaigns.

The links page, on the other hand, is unfortunately quite limited. Only a small selection are available, and this is strange. Most other sites have huge links pages - there certainly are enough OD&D sites around out there, to say nothing of the thousands of AD&D sites. If there was one place some sort of compendium of these sites, or even the cream, would be expected, it would be the TSR website. Still, this is a well-executed resource for any OD&D player, and you could do far worse than to go here to gather material for your campaign.

Score : 9 out of 10

COMPENDIUM OF CHARACTERS

By R.E.B.Tongue

This column is intended to be a regular selection of NPC's to be used in your campaign, using the basic statistics (no proficiencies or languages, but they are easy to add). This issue, a small, four-man NPC party is presented, all at first level. This could have three uses. They could be spilt up and used as individual encounters, or retainers. The party could meet them when you roll for an NPC party on the random encounter tables, or they could be used as pre-generated PC's, if you run out of time at the start of a session.

Vondar (Lawful Fighter, 1st Level)

Vondar was raised in a castle, the second son of a rich noble. He knew that he would never inherit his father's estate, so he put all his effort into combat training, hoping to become a great warrior some day. When he was eighteen, he left his home, his father gifting him with a small purse of money and a Ruby, and set off, in search of adventure.

Telamus (Neutral Magic - User, 1st Level)

Telamus was always a weak and sickly boy when he was growing up, and he spent a great deal of his time pouring over old books in his village's dilapidated library. He learned some of the minor magical arts by himself, but discovered there were limits - the books made references to otherwise unmentioned formula, and he lacked knowledge of some of the fundamentals. Finally, he decided to leave his village and set off, to find a tutor to give him the knowledge he craved.

Deona (Lawful Cleric, 1st Level)

Deona was always deeply interested in the faith as a child, but her interest turned to total faith when her father was possessed by an evil spirit. The town priest managed to drive the beast from him, and since that day she felt an undying love for the Church. As soon as she could, she joined the church, going to a seminary in the city. Excelling in her studies and showing obvious potential, Deona finished her

required training a year early, and was sent off as a wan-

dering priest, to take the faith to the Godless.

Cren (Neutral Thief, 1st Level)

Cren was raised in the back streets of Barnacus, an orphan when his father was killed in a border squabble (his mother died in childbirth). He picked people's pockets, for fun at first, to survive later. One day, he attempted to pick the pocket of Shadan, a Guildmaster in the Thieves' Guild. When he almost succeeded, Shadan made him his apprentice, and taught him everything he could. When Shadan was killed in an internal Guild dispute, his apprentice was forced to flee the city, leaving most of his ill-gotten gains behind.

The Group

The group met up through circumstance. They were all captured in a small village by a briber innkeeper, who sold them as slaves to an Orc tribe. They managed to escape after a short time, and set off together, at first to get revenge on the innkeeper, but now as friends. Although still very new to adventuring, they are fairly able, and a quite well-balanced party, though each has his or her separate goals.

<u>Vondar</u> (Lawful Fighter, 1st Level)			
Strength	15 (+1)	THAC0	19
Dexterity	10 (0)	Armour Class	4
Constitution	14 (+1)	Hit Points	(8)
Intelligence	9 (0)		
Wisdom	12 (0)		
Charisma	14 (+1)		
		Saving Throws	
		DR / P	12
		MW	13
		P / TTS	14
		BA	15
		R / S / S	16

Equipment: Normal Sword (1d8), Short Bow (1d6), 12 Arrows, 1 Silver Arrow, Chain Mail, Shield, Backpack, Small Hammer, 12 Iron Spikes, Rope (50'), Torch, Wolfsbane, 4 gp, 12 sp, Ruby (Worth 35gp)

<u>Telamus</u> (Neutral Magic-User, 1st Level)			
Strength	8 (-1)	THAC0	19
Dexterity	13 (+1)	Armour Class	8
Constitution	7 (-1)	Hit Points	(4)
Intelligence	16 (+2)		
Wisdom	13 (+1)		
Charisma	10 (0)		
		Saving Throws	
		DR / P	13
		MW	14
		P / TTS	13
		BA	16
		R / S / S	15

Equipment: Dagger (1d4), Silver Dagger (1d4), Spellbook, Clove of Garlic, Small Bag, Tinderbox, Lantern, 2 vials of Oil, Signet Ring, 13 gp, 4 sp

Spell: Charm Person (1)

(continued on page 6)

By R.E.B.Tongue

If you examine the various missile weapons in OD&D, you can see that aside from differing ranges, the various missile weapons (except for heavy crossbow) are the same. Little consideration for the different types of bow, or for different types of arrows, is given - one of OD&D's few handicaps. To begin with, take the various missile weapons. Some sort of basic damage level should be set, different for each weapon. The levels used in my campaign are :

Short Bow	1d4 + 1 damage
Longbow	1d6 + 1 damage
Light Crossbow	1d8 + 1 damage
Heavy Crossbow	2d6 damage

Of course, if you use the weapon mastery rules in your campaign then you will have to modify the damage for each skill level up somewhat.

This deals with basic damage, and provides sufficient variation for most gamers. However, there are other options available - different types of arrows. This is probably only really useful if one of your PC's uses the bow commonly, such as an Elf, but there are a wide variety of arrows and bolts available. To begin with, the silver-tipped arrow or bolt is probably a useful items for many adventurers. Although more expensive than normal at 3 gp / arrow or 4 gp / bolt, they harm creatures such as Lycanthropes as only silver daggers can, and come highly recommended for killing such creatures from a distance.

Armour-piercing arrows or bolts, at 1 gp / arrow or

15 sp / bolt, are also of some use. These could work by reducing the effective armour class of a target by 4, so long as the original armour class was lower than 5. Such arrow-heads are specially designed to pierce armour, although they are harder to aim. (Either a penalty of -2 to the hit roll, or if the Weapon Mastery rules are used, Skilled proficiency required to use.)

Arrows can also be modified to carry fire, either by igniting the end of the arrow (although this should produce high penalties to hit depending on the situation, or by using specially designed arrows, with a small cage in the tip, designed to carry the flame. These are not only expensive, at 4 gp / arrow, but also difficult to fire (to hit penalties of -3, or Expert level required.)

Arrows can also be specially designed to carry ropes. Built with a hole to tie a light rope onto, they can be fired up or across a short distance (say 6 + d10 feet), to either get a rope to someone or try and attach it to something - although climbing such a rope can be highly dangerous. These come at 25 sp / arrow or 3 gp / bolt, and have a -3 penalty to fire (or Expert level if weapon mastery rules are being used.)

Although this does not quite fit into this, it should be remembered that arrows can be tipped with poison, to provide extra damage - although using such weapons is not a very heroic act, they could be used by villains.

Adding these types of arrows to a campaign could be difficult - they do add a level of complexity. Either make sure the player fully understands the article before beginning to play, establishing his character as an archer right from the beginning, or use an NPC to demonstrate these or other arrows in a campaign. He could be a retainer, hired from a village or bandit gang, or the lackey of a villain, whose specialist weapon is the bow, which he can use to astound PC's. The method used should vary on whether you want the players to use the new arrows, or to fear them.

By R.E.B.Tongue

Ways to bring PC's together for a prolonged period.

When starting a campaign, one of the first problems a DM has to face is that of giving the PC's a rationale to work together. Take an average group for example - a thief, cleric, fighter and magic-user. Each of these PC's is going to have conflicting goals and ideas, in line with their character class. If the Cleric is of Lawful alignment and is role-playing well, then he or she should be constantly fighting the Thief to prevent him from carrying out his occupation. There is no reason for such a disparate party to work together, so why would they. If they met in a tavern, they would probably not sit around a table and all simultaneously shout 'Let's go adventuring!'.

There are, however, options. One may be to restrict the types of player-characters allowed, so that they would have a reason to work together - no thieves and clerics in the same party,

for example. A group of four fighters or dwarves, with a cleric or an elf thrown in, could make an excellent party.

There other, less restrictive options, available however. One commonly stated idea is that the PC's are all members of a family. However, this itself poses questions of realism. In an average D&D world, how many families breed four (or more!) adventurers? Again, it interferes with the ability of PC's to decide their own backgrounds. In addition, it all but eliminates the introduction of non-humans.

One idea which can work is for the PC's to be summoned by their ruler to perform some task. However, again, this has it's problems. Whilst they are under duty to perform the first task, why stay together afterwards? This is similarly the case for being captured together. If the PC's even come from different places, they are liable to just go their separate ways, rather than staying together.

There are really two main options for starting PC's. One is to have them facing some powerful enemy. They cannot fight it right away, but must build their strength, defeat some of the enemy's minions, foil some of his schemes, before facing him. This campaign could easily last for years, and has the additional advantage of effectively confining the players to one geographical area. The

PC's could be, for example, the only survivors of a barbarian village, or of a small town, or be the chosen defenders of a community.

The other option is to give the PC's no choice but to work together. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. One is the 'military' campaign, where the PC's are all under the direct control of a superior, perhaps in a war, but this does not fit with some of the character classes, and does not fit easily into the fantasy genre. A seafaring campaign could be the answer - the PC's may be crewmen on a ship, the senior staff, and may eventually inherit the ship when it's Captain moves on.

Still another option is the 'Outlaw' campaign. This comes in two varieties. One is a variation on Robin Hood, where the PC's roam about a area in hiding, attempting to survive and the clear their name. The other is potentially more interesting, and easier for a novice DM - the 'Fugitive' type of campaign. The PC's have been framed for some crime, murdering the Prince or something of equal stature, and must stay ahead of the pursuit forces chasing after them, until they can reach some safe point, maybe the border, or a seaport where they can leave the area. Along the way, they can get involved in several adventures to gain money, stop advancing forces, or to help citizens of towns they are passing through. Well, which-

ever option you choose, good luck to you with your campaign.

(continued from page 4)

Cren (Neutral Thief, 1st Level)			
Strength	10 (0)	THAC0	19
Dexterity	15 (+1)	Armour Class	3
Constitution	10 (0)		
Intelligence	13 (+1)	Hit Points	(4)
Wisdom	8 (-1)		4
Charisma	15 (0)		
		Saving Throws	
		DR / P	11
		MW	12
		P / TTS	14
		BA	16
		R / S / S	15

Equipment: 3 Daggers (1d4), Short Sword (1d6), Short Bow (1d6), 12 Arrows, Thieves' Tools, Rope (50'), Sprig of Wolfsbane, Leather Armour, Small Mirror, 3 gp, 17 sp, 1 ep

Deona (Lawful Cleric, 1st Level)			
Strength	14 (+1)	THAC0	19
Dexterity	10 (0)	Armour Class	3
Constitution	12 (0)		
Intelligence	14 (+1)	Hit Points	(6)
Wisdom	15 (+1)		6
Charisma	10 (0)		
		Saving Throws	
		DR / P	11
		MW	12
		P / TTS	14
		BA	16
		R / S / S	15

Equipment: War Hammer (1d6), Sling (1d4), Scale Mail, Shield, Holy Symbol, Holy Book, Vial of Holy Water, Backpack, 35 gp, 12 sp

By R.E.B. Tongue

Each issue, this section will detail a shop that can be slotted into any city or town in your campaign world, for your players to use or abuse as they see fit. They should fit anywhere from Specularum to Thyatis City, and provide useful and unusual services for the PC's.

Thaldor's Pawnshop

This shop is easily recognisable by the three gold balls, hanging in front of the shop window. The shop itself is somewhat dilapidated, and filled to bursting with items gathered from near and far. Piles of merchandise litter the floor, from some worn-out magical items to ancient robes. The shop has been here for thirty years, ever since Thaldor, an adventurer in his youth, retired with some money and chose to become a trader. A hoarder of items, he decided to start a pawnshop using his own useless items as a start, and the shop quickly developed into a viable business. Over the years, he established connections with the Thieves' Guild, who use his shop as a safehouse and employ his skills to value objects, sometimes disposing of 'hot' items that prove to be of little value.

Almost anything can be found in this shop - that isn't valuable. Thaldor carefully inspects any item and if it has any possible worth, he sells it on to one of his contacts in the merchant business, or in the Thieves' Guild. However, mundane items, empty potion bottles, old clothes, damaged musical instruments, can be found within these cramped walls. The limit is only imagination. If a patron is looking for anything in particular, then they should ask Thaldor - he might have something hidden away that could be of use, or he might be able to get hold of something. However, Thaldor will undoubtedly raise the price if he believes someone is truly interested in an item.

Usually, Thaldor himself is in the shop full time, but occasionally, if he is ill or visiting his 'friends' in the Thieves Guild, his son Landle will run it in his place. Landle is somewhat younger, but shares his father's savvy to a large extent. However, he might be a bit more generous to adventurers - he himself aspires to be one someday.

Thaldor's Pawnshop is a place with several uses. Beginning adventurers may be able to purchase equipment here, at lower than normal prices - substandard probably, but this may give PC's a chance to exercise skills of weapon maintenance, for example. It can also be used to propel PC's into quests - a 'worthless old parchment' might contain a treasure map, or an old signet ring might be part of a famed dragon's hoard. Finally, Thaldor has many contacts within the merchant's district and the Thieves' Guild. PC's, particularly if they get to know Thaldor, might be able to make use of these contacts, or Thaldor might approach the PC's with an assignment on behalf of one of these clients.

There is also the question of Landle. The boy is almost old enough to leave the shop, and he does desire adventure. If a party of PC's become regular patrons of the pawnshop, then Thaldor may ask the PC's to take Landle on an adventure, to allow him to see if the adventuring life is for him. Landle could even become a retainer, or possibly even a replacement adventurer. He has had scant opportunity to learn magic or study the clerical arts, and should be either a fighter or a thief - the choice is up to the DM. Thaldor was a fighter, who rose to 5th level, but he will avoid a fight at all costs, knowing his friends in the Thieves' Guild will gladly settle any scores for him.

STREET OF A THOUSAND ADVENTURES

By R.E.B. Tongue

*A OD&D Solo Adventure for a Level 1 Fighter,
Cleric or Dwarf*

Each issue, it is my intention to run one solo adventure, in the style of the Fighting Fantasy books. The first five or six (assuming the magazine lasts that long!), will be designed for first-level characters, of varying types. Their use - to give starting PC's some background, before the beginning of the adventure - to provide them with some treasure, experience, and stories to tell their fellow players. A copy of the D&D Basic Rules, or at least access to one, is of course essential. See what you think.

(NOTE - if at any point you die, turn to 29.)

Introduction

You are travelling down the King's Highway, heading for the small village of Highgate to be apprenticed to your uncle, when you come across a man wearing a suit of chain mail, three arrows piercing his leg and back. At first you think he is dead, but he calls out to you, summoning you to his side.

"Listen.", he says. "I am a Guardsman of the King, part of a patrol that was ambushed further up the road. My commander sent me with a message to take to the fort - we learned that the Goblins of this area are planning an ambush. If you are a true and loyal citizen of the king, please take this message to the fort, a day's journey down the road. There will be danger and peril, but the fort must be saved. Here - take it!"

He thrusts a piece of parchment into your hand, bound with the seal of the King's Guard. Will you are looking at it, the guard breathes his last. You look at him, the scroll, and the long road ahead, and decide to honour his last request. Pulling some stones over the guard's dead body, to prevent him from being taken by scavengers, you quickly leave him, and hasten down the road. *Proceed to 1.*

1 After a hour of no encounters, you begin to get thirsty, and decide to take a drink from a nearby stream. While you are at the stream, you notice a small path that seems to be a more direct route down the road. It leads through some woodland a few hundred meters ahead, which the road avoids. If you take the path you could save valuable time, but the danger would be increased.

If you take the path, *proceed to 2.*

If you take the road, *proceed to 3.*

2 The path quickly winds through the wood, twisting and turning. After a while, you notice the trees begin to grow so thickly that no light can reach through at all. Just as you begin to have doubts about the wisdom of your choice, you spy a small hut on the side of the path, with a horse pulled up outside. You can hear indefinite sounds coming from inside.

If you investigate, *proceed to 4.*

If you continue along the path, *proceed to 5.*

3 The road leads off in a straight line, and the stream

begins to parallel it. Obviously the builders took advantage of this, for the stream can be used for drinking, or watering horses. After a half hour's walking however, you see a bridge in the distance, where the stream makes a turn. It seems to be guarded by two short figures. The stream evidently gets considerably deeper at that point - there is no other way around it. *Proceed to 8.*

4 As you walk up to the door, the sounds cease, and you can hear footsteps coming up to the door. You place your hand on your weapon, and see an old man open the door, wearing a tatty robe.

If you attack, *proceed to 6.*

If you talk, *proceed to 7.*

5 You continue down the path, until suddenly your attention is diverted by a bird hooting above you. While you turn your head to look at it, the ground opens up beneath you and you find yourself in a pit. Take 1 point of damage. Three Goblins appear at the top of the pit, and climb down one at a time to fight you. You cannot escape. The Goblins have 4, 4, and 2 hit points each and are armed with short swords. If you survive, *proceed to 10.*

6 The old man points at you and utters a few words in a language you cannot understand. Make a Saving Throw vs. Spells. If you succeed, *proceed to 9.* Otherwise, you suddenly cannot understand why you are holding your weapon. The old man smiles, and politely asks to borrow some money. You gladly give him your coin pouch, and he empties it into his own. With a smile, you wave goodbye, and walk off down the forest. *Proceed to 5.*

7 "Hello to you adventurer. My name is Cathrax, a magic-user of some repute. I'm afraid I can't be too long, I have potions brewing, but I can give you some free advice - the forest is dangerous. I dug a pit to trap game a few years ago - now some Goblins are using it to trap people. Watch yourself further down the path. By the way, would you like to buy a potion - 10 Gold or an item of equivalent worth for a Potion of Healing?" If you take Cathrax up on his offer, he gives you the potion, and takes the item. Adjust your character sheet accordingly. *Proceed to 11.*

8 Two Goblins spot you as you approach the bridge, and seemingly decide that you are not the type to extract a toll fee from. They charge at you armed with spears, and you must fight them both at the same time. Their hit points are 4 and 5. If you survive, *proceed to 12.*

9 "Heathen Barbarian!", the old man cries, and dives back into his hut, slamming the door shut behind him. You try and pull it open, but it resists your efforts. If will not respond to force. "Magic!", you spit, and head down the path. *Proceed to 5.*

10 You search the goblins, and find they have 5 gold pieces and 34 silver between them, as well as their weapons. Two of them are damaged, but one short sword is intact. You continue on down the forest path. Gain 30 experience. *Proceed to 13.*

11 You easily avoid the pit Cathrax told you about, and continue on down the forest. Gain 30 experience points.

Proceed to 13.

12 The goblins have 3 electrum pieces and 20 silver pieces between them, and both spears are intact, though they are too small for proper human use. Smiling, you cross the bridge and continue on down the road. Gain 20 experience. *Proceed to 14.*

13 After a short while, you come to a clearing in the forest, inside which you can see the embers of a campfire, as well as the mangled corpses of three goblins, and a dead wolf. Before you take any action, you hear a howl from behind you, and turn to see a wounded wolf blocking your exit.

If you have some Standard rations and wish to throw them at the wolf, *proceed to 15.*

Otherwise, you must enter combat. *Proceed to 16.*

14 The road winds on for a short time, finally coming to a junction. You continue south as the guard instructed, and soon spy a figure moving up the road towards you, a human.

Do you try to avoid contact, walking past him? If so, *proceed to 17.*

Do you approach and talk to him? If so, *proceed to 18.*

15 The wolf pounces on the meat, and begins tearing it to pieces. While it is busy, you quietly sneak away, down the path. Gain 50 experience points, and *proceed to 20.*

16 The wolf leaps at you, and you barely fend it off with your weapon. Combat has begun! The wolf is slightly wounded from its earlier attack, and so has only 10 hit points. If you survive, *proceed to 19.*

17 You walk past the stranger, and he apparently ignores you. After about five minutes however, you turned around, sensing something behind you, and you see the stranger, a dagger in his hand, ready to attack. You quickly dive out of the way, but he presses home his assault. The man is a 1st level thief, with 3 hit points, armed with a dagger. If you survive, *proceed to 21.*

18 "Hail, stranger.", you speak. "Well met, sir. My name is Arronay. I've been walking this road for hours, and I'm getting hungry and tired. Would you care to share my meal with me?" You quickly agree, and you sit down to eat under a tree. He tells you that he has seen a small force of goblins to the south, apparently heading towards a fort, but they are fairly slow. When you finish the meal, you shake hands to leave, but as you do so Arronay pulls out a dagger and yells, "Goodbye, stranger!". The man is a 1st level thief, with 3 hit points, armed with a dagger. If you survive, *proceed to 21.*

19 You manage to slay the wolf, and decide to carve him up for a meal. You quickly eat, mindful of the dangers of the forest. Gain 2 hit points, and 60 experience for slaying the wolf. Searching the campsite, you find a leather pouch containing a small ruby, and you make up your mind to have it valued at the next opportunity. You set off down the trail. *Proceed to 20.*

20 After a short while longer, the trail opens out into open countryside again, and quickly links back up with the road. You head off down the road, knowing you have saved valuable time through braving the dangers of the forest. *Proceed to 22.*

21 The man's dagger is lost, from an attempt to throw it at you as he died, but he had other items. You find a pouch containing 4 gold pieces, and a vial containing green liquid. (If you drink it at any time, *proceed to 28.*) Gain 44 experience points, and *proceed to 22.*

22 It is beginning to get dark outside, and the moon is beginning to rise, but you feel you are near your objective. However, one last task seems to lie before you. You see campfires along the side of the road, and realise the goblin force must have been ahead of you all the time. The goblins you encountered were merely stragglers. To attempt to plow through the main force would be suicide, but you have alternatives.

You could wait for night, and try to sneak around the camp. If so, *proceed to 23.*

You could leave the road now, and strike out overland. If so, *proceed to 24.*

Or you could run down the road as fast as you can, and try to beat the pursuit force the Goblins will surely send after you. If so, *proceed to 25.*

23 Sneaking around behind the camp has proven to be more difficult than you had hoped - it extends for quite a long way beyond the road. Finally you begin to work your way along the perimeter, when you spy a goblin guard, at his post. If you leave your present cover, he will see you and raise the alarm.

If you have a missile weapon, you can try to get him with hit. If so, *proceed to 26.*

Otherwise, you must strike out overland, on the other side of the road. *Proceed to 24.*

24 You quickly leave the camp far behind as you head in what you hope is a direct line. However, after you have been walking for about an hour, you hear guttural voices up ahead. A Goblin patrol! They quickly notice you and charge for the attack. There are four of them, armed with short swords, with hit points of 3, 3, 4 and 5. If you survive, *proceed to 27.*

25 You break into your fastest run, and sprint through the camp. You here cries from a dozen Goblins who see you, and they quickly strike out after you. Some drop out of the race, exhausted, but when you finally tire, there are still some left. Make eight Constitution rolls. For each one you fail, there will be one Goblin present. They have hit points of 5, 4, 2, 3, 4, 3, 4 and 3, and have no treasure. If you survive, take 10 experience points for each Goblin you kill, and *proceed to 30.*

26 You aim your weapon at the Goblin, and fire at him. Make a 'To Hit' roll. You may have two attempts, and must do 3 points of damage. If you succeed, then you run past the guard and away to the fort. Gain 25 experience points. *Proceed to 30.* If you fail, the guard raises the alarm and you are captured. When the goblins take the fort by surprise the next day, you are executed along with the

other survivors.

27 You search the bodies of the Goblins, finding 5 gold pieces and 43 silver. You also find a *Shield +1*, which you take. Gain 50 experience points, and *proceed to 30*.

28 The potion is a *Potion of Strength*. When drunk, this potion will increase your Strength by 1d6 for the next two paragraphs, which may help with combat modifiers.

29 You have died in your quest. Never mind. Roll a new character and try again.

30 You reach the fort and pass the message to the commander. Because of your action, the fort is warned, and the Goblins fail to take it. The grateful commander gives you a pouch containing 50 gold, and gives one weapon of your choice from his arsenal. You decide not to join your uncle, but to instead carry on down the road, in search of further adventure!

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