Alternative Attributes

A Variant Character Generation Method for **Mazes & Minotaurs**

by Charles E. McManus (1976)

The system used to roll up a character's attributes in M&M was (probably) designed with simplicity in mind : once they have been rolled, a character's six attribute scores can be distributed by the player as he wishes. Thus, a player has the possibility to assign his character's best score to the prime requisite of his class.

Unfortunately, this « free distribution » approach can also lead to pernicious results, since all attributes do not have the same importance or usefulness in game terms. Luck, for example, influences several key scores (Danger Evasion, Mystic Fortitude, Defense Class and Missile), while Grace is mainly an 'ornemental' attribute : as a result, most players generally assign their worst score to Grace (except, of course, if they intend to create a Nymph or Lyrist)… which not only tends to create stereotyped characters but also has the absurd side-effect of making the typical M&M hero a quite ugly bloke.

To avoid this kind of 'system abuse', Maze Masters may want to use the following alternate method to roll up attributes.

This variant system tries to reach a middle-ground between player control, game balance and randomness. It also allows players to create suitably competent and heroic characters, in keeping with the spirit of the stories that inspired the game in the first place.

A M&M character has six attributes : one prime requisite (determined by his class), two favored attributes (selected by the player) and three standard attributes. Once these choices have been made, the six attributes are rolled up in order.

To determine the score of the character's **prime requisite**, roll 2d6 and add the highest one to 12.

To determine the score of a **favored attribute**, roll 3d6 and add the two best results to 6.

To determine the score of a **standard attribute**, roll 4d6 and add up the three best results.

Newly-created character mullng over the merits of the McManus method

This method allows players to create competent yet diversified characters : rolling up the attributes in a fixed order avoids the excessive optimization of scores and tend to result in more varied characters than the standard approach.

The MacManus Method

Like most other variants and optional rules, the MacManus Method had its fervent supporters (« Best thing since cavern geomorphs ! ») as well as its ardent detractors (« Standard Method rules ! »). Beyond its inherent merits (or flaws), its publication in *Griffin* magazine is considered by present-day hobby historians as something of a milestone. Why, you ask ? Because it was the first gaming article to pinpoint the issue of « min / maxing » players (so okay, it's not a very big milestone, but hobby historians just *need* this kind of stuff).