



DICING WITH DRAGONS



AN INTRODUCTION
TO ROLE-PLAYING GAMES
IAN LIVINGSTONE



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DICING with DRAGONS

An Introduction to
Role-Playing Games

Ian Livingstone

Illustrated by Russ Nicholson



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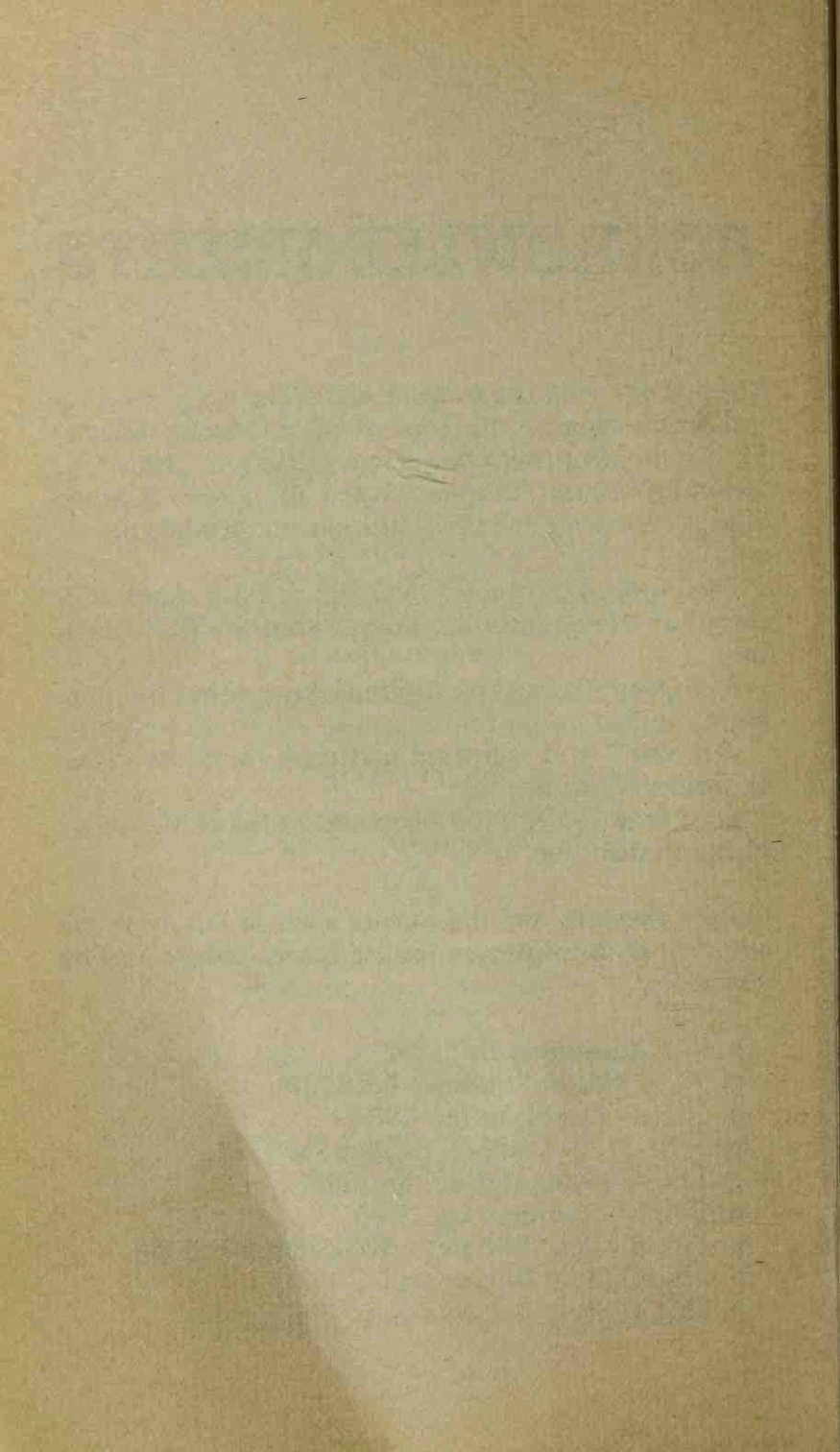
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INTRODUCTION



After what had seemed like an eternity, the tunnel at last widened, and torches sprouted from the cracks of the chiselled walls to cast strange shadows around the four walking figures. The cold air smelled dank and unpleasant. Droplets of water echoed eerily down the passage, and ahead a thick iron doorway stood half open.

'Stop!' whispered Morri the cunning old dwarf, whose age was hidden behind a great bushy beard, 'I hear footsteps.'

'Orc patrol,' rasped the coarse voice of the barbarian, Ragnar.

'Just what we need when we are tired and hungry.'

'How many of them?'

'About ten, and there are only four of us left. We're done for. Let's go back.'

'And face the Medusa again . . .?' said Mephisto, butting in again with yet another of his annoying reminders.

'Alright wizard, if you are so smart, what do you suggest we do? Politely ask the orcs if they would like to go camping with us?' sneered Morri.

'Stand up when you are talking to me,' laughed Mephisto.

'I'd rather be small than be a useless, one-spell charlatan.'

'Now you two, behave yourselves. Don't you think we've got enough trouble on our hands without you two tearing each other apart?' came the soft voice of Lorrietta, the elven princess for whom this expedition meant so much. It was probably these orcs who had dragged her brother Lorrimar in chains to the dungeons of Iron Mountain for the evil amusement of their master, Horrig the sorcerer.

'We fight,' growled Ragnar.

'Well, let's at least ambush them,' said Morri.

'Yes, I agree,' Mephisto said quickly. 'Ragnar, get behind the door. Lorrietta and Morri hide in the shadows on either side of the tunnel, and hold this rope taut and low to the ground. I will lie down and moan as if injured. As the orcs rush forward to deal with me, hopefully they will not see the rope and will tumble down on top of each other. But we will have to be quick to finish them. If things go wrong, I can always cast a sleep spell on

INTRODUCTION

you all—and I promise only to slit the throats of the orcs!’

‘Sleep spells, sleep spells, doesn’t he know anything else?’ mumbled Morri as he shuffled off to his position.

The first thing Mephisto saw from his prone position was the black hairy feet of the foul orcs as they ran towards him through the doorway. He faked a loud groan, and watched the orcs’ faces change from glee to confusion as they tripped over the rope into a pile of shouts and curses. Then there was Ragnar, his blade cutting through the air to land on the stricken foe, and at his side were Lorrietta and Morri. Four were dead before the orcs had drawn their swords, and two more went quickly silent as Ragnar picked them up with his bare hands and smashed their skulls together with a dull crunch. Morri lost his axe deep in the thigh of the leader whilst Lorrietta lunged with her sword to find its mark. The two orcs left standing rushed to the aid of their leader, hurling their spears at the defenceless Morri. The warning cry came too late from Mephisto, and he could only watch the surprised and then agonized look on the face of his dwarven friend as a spear plunged into his side.

‘Ingo Fax Extingo!’ roared Mephisto with his arms raised, and all before him fell down to sleep amongst the dead and dying. He ran forward to the sleeping orcs, and shuddered as his dagger drew dark green blood from their throats.

Ragnar and Lorrietta awoke to see Mephisto with Morri’s head cradled in his arms. ‘I’m sorry, old friend, for being such a useless old wizard.’

‘It’s not your fault, Mephisto,’ said Lorrietta quietly.

‘Come, let’s search the bodies. They may have keys or a map of this infernal place,’ snarled Ragnar, as unemotionally as ever.

* * *

What's going on here? You would be forgiven for thinking that the above was an extract from a fantasy novel or film. It was, in fact, an extract from a game—a role-playing game. In games like this, the players assume the roles of characters, almost their alter egos, who live out their lives in the specially designed game-world of another player known as the referee. The characters usually have totally different personalities and existences to the people who control them, being wizards and heroes in worlds full of monsters and magic, or star troopers about to go into battle on the frontiers of space.

In 1974 a game entitled *Dungeons & Dragons* quietly appeared in Wisconsin, USA. It was the first of the role-playing games and, beyond the wildest dreams of its inventors, would sell over a million copies during the next six years. And yet it is still in its infancy on a global basis, with translated versions going to press at the same time as this book. This and the games that soon followed it are now far more than a cult.

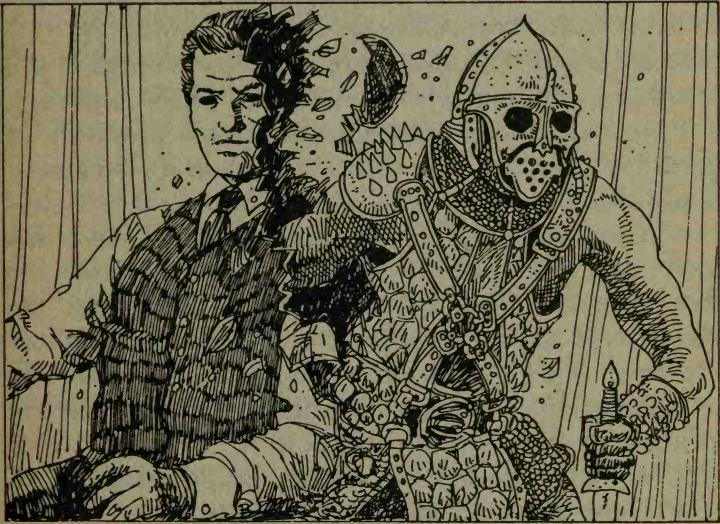
This book attempts to explain the popularity and appeal of role-playing games. It describes all the main games available, together with their accessories, which by their nature have resulted in the games becoming a hobby for many people. It shows how and where to get started, and how to make contact with other players.

But be warned, these games are addictive, and are the most serious alternative yet to reality. I have been playing them for the last seven years, and things don't look like changing now. If the idea of action and adventure in the comfort of your own home appeals to you, then I can suggest no better way to achieve it.

Good luck on your adventure, and, when the going gets tough, may you always make your saving throw. . . .

CHAPTER 1

MIND GAMES



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a world where dragons breathed fire and magic really worked? Or what it would be like to travel in a starship to distant planets with aliens and robots as friends? Sure, you can imagine what it would be like, or you could read a science fiction or fantasy novel, or go see a film. But that is

usually associated with somebody else's adventures. What about your own?

A role-playing game (RPG) is a sophisticated form of make believe in which each player creates a game persona, and verbally acts out the part of that persona in a specially designed game-world controlled by a referee. Game personas are usually referred to as player-characters, to distinguish them from the non player-characters operated by the referee.

During a game, players will interact with other players to direct their characters as they see fit, playing the roles ordained for their personas much as actors in a play, and it is this aspect from which the term 'role-play' derives.

In the short term, players will act co-operatively in pursuit of some common objective, such as the accumulation of wealth and power for their characters, in a risk-filled adventure run by the referee. Only the referee knows the content and logistics of the game-world, and it is up to the players to explore and discover. In so doing, the players will attempt to improve their characters' abilities and develop their personalities during the adventures by performing certain actions and achieving certain goals. For example, a player whose character is a wizard would receive experience and reward for, say, casting a spell which slays a creature guarding a treasure.

Ultimately there is no end to a game, as long as characters survive, nor will there be a winner or loser. Instead of competing directly with other players, in most games players measure their success against some form of experience point system. Players gain satisfaction from progressing up the experience ladder, and in simply staying alive. Indeed, far from competing, the players have to co-operate to make the best use of the combined skills and abilities of their player-characters. This is an important difference from most other types of game, and it contributes considerably to the appeal of role-playing. During a gaming session an adventure will have taken

place, and a series of connected adventures forms a campaign game without end. The gaming sessions last as long as the players wish, and the adventures can continue next time.

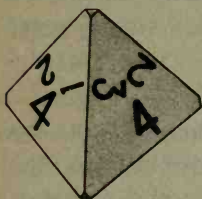
The rules of the actual games are used only to determine the outcome of a decision—some degree of success or failure—and reflect the chances of that success or failure as realistically as possible. During their adventure the players will inform the referee of their proposed actions, and the referee will inform them of the outcome by reference to the rules. Imagine a player-character who, during his adventure, becomes locked in a dungeon and is chained to a wall. He informs the referee that he will try to break free from the wall by pulling at his chains. The result of that action can be determined by the referee who, by reference to the rules, will compare the strength of the player-character with that of the bolts holding the chains to the wall. There will be no absolute result shown in the rules, but rather a table which will reflect the possibilities of such an action taking place. The chance factor is then usually decided by the roll of dice. However, the chance factors are modified in order to reflect the given situation. Thus a physically strong character is more likely to break his chains free from the wall than a weak one. Similarly, in combat it is more likely for a player-character to slay an orc than a dragon.

Reference to tables and die-rolling conventions are commonplace in role-playing games to determine actions such as combat, treasure finding, or even opening doors. The mastermind of the whole game-world is the referee, and it is his duty to prepare, design and run an interesting and well-balanced adventure through which the player-characters will journey. The more effort that is put into the preparation and design, the more fun and interest will be generated for the players. Before any adventure can begin, the referee must have his game-world fully designed and equipped for action. This can be a very time-consuming task, but the fun

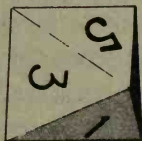
and creativity involved usually result in a labour of love. The design is carried out with strict reference to the rules. In a fantasy role-playing game, for example, the simplest design will consist of a network of rooms, traps and passageways, and this whole complex will be populated with monsters such as orcs, goblins, zombies, dragons, etc. and treasure such as gold, silver, magic weapons, potions, scrolls, etc. This design can be continually added to as parts become explored, so as to give the player-characters new tasks and objectives. The referee need only design slightly ahead of the adventurers, although he may have the whole game-world conceptually mapped out in his head or in notes. In play, the referee will control the non player-characters which are encountered during an adventure by the player-characters. The referee has a great responsibility to remain neutral and unbiased, and if the player-characters out-smart him with some ingenious idea to overcome a problem, they should be rewarded rather than be subject to some arbitrary decision made on the spot by an infuriated referee.

As will now be realized, role-playing games are totally different in concept to other games. The physical components are also different, and can be off-putting to the first-time buyer, for the box contents appear more like design-a-game kits than ready-to-play games. And this is exactly what they are. For a start there is no board in the box! That is because RPGs cannot be constrained by a board: a totally free-form playing system is used. A scenario is the section of a game-world wherein a particular adventure takes place, and is designed by the referee within the framework of the rules. (Ready-to-play scenarios are manufactured for certain games for those referees short on time and/or ideas.) The fact that scenarios are unique to each group of players is intentional, and central to the appeal of role-playing games.

Another strange aspect to the components of the box can be the type of dice found within. The game mechanics of RPGs make a lot of use of dice to determine random or chance events. Initial character generation, encounters of all descriptions, combat systems and the success or failure of player-characters to perform various activities all usually require some form of dice throwing. Some games restrict themselves to using the most common form—the six-sided dice invented centuries ago. But now a whole variety of polyhedral dice are available to the game designer and player, to yield different spreads of numbers and chance ratios.



D4



D8



D20

The individual types of dice are usually named according to the number of sides they possess. In the list below, the abbreviation given in brackets is the usual descriptive term of each type of dice (in this book and RPGs generally).

- 4-sided (D4), numbered 1 to 4
- 6-sided (D6), numbered 1 to 6
- 8-sided (D8), numbered 1 to 8
- 10-sided (D10), numbered 1 to 10
- 12-sided (D12), numbered 1 to 12
- 20-sided (D20), numbered 0 to 9 twice
- 20-sided (D20), numbered 1 to 20

The D20 showing 0 to 9 twice is usually used to yield percentage results by throwing two dice and calling one of them the *tens die*, and the other the *units die*. (Double zero equals 100.)

The notation given to the number of dice to be rolled for a particular throw is given by placing the number thrown before the dice type; thus 3D6 means three 6-sided dice. The last, but by no means least, potentially disturbing component of the box is the rulebook. There are a lot of pages in it, with some games having rulebooks exceeding 100 pages in length. However, most of the text is reference material, i.e. description and statistics of monsters, magic items, spells, etc., and the rules which have to be learnt in order to play are surprisingly few. More important, it is usually only the referee who must know the rules—the players learn by experience. They simply react to information given to them by the referee, who uses the rules to determine the outcome of the players' actions.

But the real difference between RPGs and other conventional games is the unmatched sense of adventure into the unknown, a believable experience of magic and monsters which the referee and players create together. Games playing historically, whilst being a source of fun in a social setting, has nevertheless been a competitive recreation. Again, RPGs are different in that they require cooperation between players for them to explore the game-world of the referee. Competition does not really exist between the players and the referee as the players' objective is to overcome the inhabitants of the referee's game-world rather than the referee himself.

In a passive and often routine society, RPGs can help break the monotony by creating an atmosphere of heroic adventure without the slightest possible danger to the players themselves. And it is the player's own adventures, not those of the heroes of novels and films. Collective imaginations creating a spontaneous adventure of magic and monsters, treasure and glory. An alternative reality in which players will act out the roles of their characters within the constraints of their personalities and abilities. Role-playing games are, without doubt, a gaming revolution.

BUT HOW DO ROLE-PLAYING GAMES WORK?

Let us now return to the story in the Introduction concerning the four adventurers and their confrontation with the orcs. But this time it will be told in gaming language, with actions, conversation and explanations of the play method.

Pete, Mike, Dave and Susan have gathered at John's house (the referee) to play a session of *Dungeons & Dragons*. They have already played a number of sessions together as an adventuring party which have linked up to form part of their campaign. They are currently in the depths of Iron Mountain in search of Lorrimar, the elven brother of Lorrietta.

John the referee, or Dungeon Master (DM for short) as he would be entitled in a game of *Dungeons & Dragons*, is in control of the game-world, and in this particular instance the orc stronghold in the underground caverns of Iron Mountain. John will have already mapped out (drawn out on graph paper to scale) the section of the 'dungeon' (i.e. the *Dungeons & Dragons* game-world) relating to the orcs' stronghold, with its inhabitants and treasure. John's friends will be sitting around a table with paper, pens, dice and, perhaps, miniature figures to represent their characters. Pete will be taking the role of the wily dwarf, Morri. Mike will be the strong barbarian, Ragnar. Susan will be the elven princess, Lorrietta, and Dave will play the magic user, Mephisto. With John at the other end of the table surrounded by concealed maps, charts, rules, dice and groups of miniature creature figures, the stage is now set for the next part of the players' adventure, and the game continues from where it left off the last time they played together.

The game begins with John (DM) giving his players a description of their surroundings so that they may make a decision as to which direction to move down the tunnel. He would mention rough dimensions (in feet) to enable the

players to map the dungeon on paper as they explore it. He would describe it thus:

DM: 'You keep on walking north, and after another 200 feet the tunnel widens out to 10 feet across. There are torches on the wall here, and you notice that the air is dank and unpleasant. Some 30 feet ahead you see an iron doorway standing half open.'

At this point John has rolled a six-sided die to determine whether or not any wandering monsters are nearby. He does this every three turns, each turn representing ten minutes of adventure time. He rolls a six which means that some have appeared (1 in 6 chance). He then throws the die again whilst referring to the Wandering Monsters table in the rules to determine the type of monster encountered. The table in this instance shows orcs as monsters encountered, and there are ten of them. Further die rolls decide the location of the orcs, and whether or not the players have heard and identified them. John decides that Morri (Pete) has heard the orcs' footsteps before they come into view due to his inherent abilities:

DM: 'You hear footsteps, Morri.'

John also tells all the players that they can now hear voices (although he hasn't yet told them that it is in orc language). The conversation continues:

Ragnar: 'Do any of us understand the language? I speak hobgoblin and orc. A barbarian gets around, you know!'

DM: 'Yes, you recognize it as orc.'

Morri: 'Just what we need when we are low on hit points.'

Ragnar: 'Can we estimate how many there are from the number of footsteps?'

DM: 'Yes, about ten.'

Morri: 'And there are only four of us left. I suggest we go back the way we came.'

Mephisto: 'To face the Medusa again?'

Morri: 'Alright Mephisto, if you are so smart, what do you suggest we do? Politely ask the orcs if they would like to go camping with us?'

Mephisto: 'Stand up when you are talking to me.'

Morri: 'I'd rather be small than be a useless, one-spell charlatan.'

Lorrietta: 'Now you two, I hate to bore you with trivia, but there are 10 orcs on the other side of that door who are about to rip us to pieces.'

Ragnar: 'Let's fight them.'

Morri: 'Well, let's at least ambush them.'

Mephisto: 'Good idea. OK, DM, this is what we are going to do. Lorrietta and Morri are going to hide in the shadows on either side of the tunnel and hold a piece of rope taut and low to the ground.'

DM: 'Lorrietta and Morri will have to roll percentile dice to see whether or not they are completely hidden.'

Lorrietta: 'I've thrown a 15.'

Morri: 'And I've thrown a 17.'

DM: 'OK, you are both virtually invisible.'

Mephisto: 'Good. Now I will lie down about 10 feet in front of them and groan as if injured. With a bit of luck those dumb orcs will trip over the rope in their eagerness to finish me off.'

DM: 'Not a bad plan. I'll just roll a few dice to see if it works, though.'

Mephisto: 'By the way, if it doesn't I'm going to cast a sleep spell at everybody and slit the throats of the orcs.'

DM: 'OK.' (He now assesses the percentage chance of the players' plan succeeding, based on its likelihood, intelligence of the orcs, the fact that Lorrietta and Morri are well hidden in the shadows, and predetermined information in his design notes. He concludes that the plan has a high chance of success, with a failure rate of only 15%. He secretly rolls the percentile dice and comes up with 27.)

DM: 'The orcs fall for the trap, literally! They are now lying in a confused heap, cursing loudly.'

Ragnar: 'Let's get them! I'm jumping out from behind the door to attack the nearest orc.'

Lorrietta: 'I'm letting go of the rope and attacking the orc nearest to me.'

Morri: 'Me too.'

Mephisto: 'I'm lying here enjoying the fun!'

DM: 'Well, you have certainly surprised them. You can fight this round of combat without retaliation.'

Combat now follows, with each player rolling a 20-sided die to determine if they have hit their targets. The level of the attacker (fighting ability) is cross referenced with the armour class (defence factors) of the target on the combat matrix. This shows a number from 1 to 20, which must be equalled or exceeded in order for the attacker to hit his target.

DM: 'Your throw first, Lorrietta.' (Lorrietta is 3rd level, and the orc she is fighting is armour class 7. She needs to throw a 14 or more.)

Lorrietta: '17. Great! Is the orc dead?'

DM: 'Certainly is.'

Orcs are relatively weak monsters, and this one can only take 4 points of damage before dying. The DM rolls a 5 on an 8-sided die to determine the effect of Lorrietta's blow, thus killing the orc outright. An 8-sided die is used because a sword does 1—8 points of damage in combat. Hit points reflect the amount of damage or wounds that can be sustained before death results. A roll of 5 points of damage exceeds the 4 hit points possessed by the orc, hence death.

Before the next round of combat commences between the survivors, the DM will throw dice to determine whether the orcs or the players have the initiative.

The battle continues in the players' favour.

Ragnar: 'I drop my sword and, in true barbarian fashion, try to pick up two orcs to smash their heads together.'

DM (referring to the Grappling Table): 'OK, you pick up two orcs, crunch their heads together and soon see that they are not going to wake up again.'

Lorrietta kills another orc, whilst Morri decides to throw his axe at their leader. He rolls a 20, a very solid hit.

DM: 'Good throw, Morri. You do (rolling dice) 6 points of damage, but you haven't killed him. The leader is tough.'

Morri: 'What? What a waste of a good axe! I'm now drawing my dagger.'

DM: 'The two remaining orcs are going to the aid of their leader this round. Let's throw dice for initiative for the next round. (Pause.) Too bad, the orcs have the initiative this round, and they are going to throw their spears at

Morri: They need 13 or more to hit him because of his leather-armor. One throws 11 and the other 15, a hit! A spear thuds into your side, Morri, doing (pause for die roll) 6 points of damage.'

Morri: 'Oh no, I've only got 3 points left. Looks like it's curtains for me.'

DM: 'Well, I'm afraid you fall to your knees and prepare yourself for the great dwarf kingdom in the sky.'

Mephisto: 'I'm casting my sleep spell.'

DM (rolling die): 'Everybody alive is now snoring heavily.'

Mephisto: 'I'm slitting the disgusting green lumpy throats of the orcs.'

DM: 'OK, they're dead.'

Mephisto: 'Sorry it didn't quite work out as planned, Morri old chum.'

Lorrietta: 'That's the way it goes.'

Ragnar: 'I'm searching the bodies of the orcs. What do I find?'

Thus the adventure continues with Morri now out of the game. The DM would probably allow Pete to dice up another character which the party would conveniently meet further down the tunnel. The party would continue their search for Lorrimar through the passageways of Iron Mountain, encountering different monsters, finding treasure, gaining experience or maybe death for all at the hand of a fire-breathing dragon. Who knows? Anything can happen in role-playing games.

CHAPTER 2

A SOLO ADVENTURE



Whilst most role-playing games are best enjoyed by a group of players who together create a spontaneous and often amusing narrative, some games have evolved to cater for the solo player (*Tunnels & Trolls* is a particular example). It is not always easy to find a group of people whose spare time conveniently coincides to play an RPG, espe-

cially as gaming sessions are often quite long. Whole weekend sessions have been known when the players only stop to eat and sleep. Therefore, although the experience is not as rewarding, solo adventures nevertheless fulfil an important function. They are by nature, however, a lot more restrictive in play as choice of action is more limited. Solo adventures are really part novel and part game. The player simply starts an adventure at the beginning of a scenario and is given a series of multi-choice options. Usually a specific objective is to be achieved, e.g. you must rescue a prisoner locked in a wizard's tower, or find the treasure hoard of a mighty fire-breathing dragon. The options given are usually straightforward, e.g. 'You arrive at a junction in the passage. If you want to turn left, go to reference X. If you want to turn right, go to reference Y.' The outcome of your decision will be found at the chosen reference. If a creature is encountered and you elect to fight it, then combat ensues using the rules relevant to the particular game you are playing.

It is not strictly role-playing, but it is a good introduction to the concept. Consequently I have designed a simple solo fantasy RPG system especially for this book, so that readers may at least savour the taste of role-playing by creating a character and sending him or her on an adventure. The system is entitled *Fantasy Quest*, and the scenario included in this book is *FQ1: Eye of the Dragon*.

PLAYING FANTASY QUEST

Before an adventure can commence, a character must be generated. By rolling dice for certain attributes (you will need 3D6 for this purpose), you will create a character and

record those attributes on a Character Sheet copied from Figure 1 on p. 25. These attributes will change as the adventure unfolds with the discovery of certain items and with success or failure. Whether or not your character succeeds in his quest is a question of your skill and a little luck. Remember it is *you* who make the decisions. Try to put yourself in your character's shoes to evaluate each situation as it arises. Do not casually decide that your character will fight a dozen dragons armed only with a toothpick. Chances are *he* would end up as a toothpick for the dragons.

CREATING A CHARACTER

First, your character must be given a name. This is purely for atmosphere, and can be as serious or as silly as you like. If you don't like Morgan the Mighty or Cedric Sparrow-Killer then you can always resort to Gandalf or Conan.

It will be noted from the Character Sheet that there are three basic characteristics that make up an adventurer. These are Combat, Strength and Fortune.

The Combat Factor (CF) measures the ability of your character in combat both in attack and defence. This factor will be increased with the discovery of certain magic armour, e.g. a +2 magical shield will increase your Combat Factor by +2, and this new total must be written into the space provided on the Character Sheet marked Current Combat Factor (CCF), but may never exceed your CF by more than 2, and never exceeds 18. It may also be decreased by the use of harmful magical weaponry. The initial Combat Factor is obtained by rolling 3D6 and add-

ing their total. This number is recorded in the space provided on the Character Sheet.

The Strength Factor (SF) measures the physical strength of your character in terms of how many wounds he may receive before death would result. This factor will be increased each time your character rests to eat and drink rations, or eat or drink some magical food or liquid discovered on his quest. It will decrease as a result of being wounded in combat or being injured by some trick or trap. The changes in your character's Strength Factor must be recorded on the Character Sheet in the space marked Current Strength Factor (CSF), but may never exceed your initial SF by more than 2, and again never exceeds 18. The initial Strength Factor is obtained by rolling 3D6 and adding their total, recording this number in the space provided on the Character Sheet.

The Wound Factor (WF) is a measure of the severity of a wound once inflicted. This varies according to type of weapon and creature. A player-character starts his adventure with an ordinary sword which inflicts 1D6 wounds to be deducted from a monster's SF. He might, however, find a magic weapon during his adventure which would increase his Wound Factor, e.g. a +2 magic sword would change his Wound Factor to 1D6 + 2 for all future combat. Note that only one weapon may be used by a player-character during combat, so the plusses are not cumulative. A creature's Wound Factor will vary according to type and is given in the text. Changes to the player-character's WF are recorded on the Character Sheet in the space marked Wound Factor Adjustments (WFA).

The Fortune Factor (FF) is a measure of your character's good luck and fortune in certain actions. For example, if your character entered a room to discover a sleeping monster, he might be required to roll dice against his Fortune

Factor to determine if fortune is with him and the monster does not waken. This factor will increase by +1 for each successful roll against your character's Fortune Factor, and will be decreased by -1 for each unsuccessful attempt. The Current Fortune Factor (CFF) must be recorded in the space provided on the Character Sheet, but may never exceed your initial FF by more than 2, and never exceeds 18. The initial Fortune Factor is obtained by rolling 3D6 and adding their total, recording this number in the space provided on the Character Sheet.

Now that the characteristics of your adventurer have been decided, a picture of him or her will be building up. Good with a sword, strong but unlucky perhaps? Remember to exploit his best characteristics. It's no good relying on luck if your character is just not lucky. As in the real world some people are lucky, others aren't. Some are strong, others weak.

Next he must be equipped for his adventure. It is assumed that your character will already own a sword and a shield together with a leather backpack in which his rations are kept and future treasures found may be stored. He will also own a certain amount of Gold Pieces which can be used to buy certain items and information. The amount of Gold Pieces will vary with expenditure and acquisition, and the Current Gold Pieces total should be recorded in the space provided on the Character Sheet. The initial total of Gold Pieces that your character owns is obtained by rolling 3D6 and adding them.

As the adventure progresses, it is likely that your character will incur some wounds, thus reducing his Strength Factor. Your character starts his quest with 6 Rations which can be consumed before or after combat, but not during. The effect of eating 1 Ration is to restore +2 to your character's Current Strength Factor. Each time Rations are consumed

the balance remaining must be recorded in the space provided on the Character Sheet headed Current Rations.

A record of weapons, armour and treasure found during the adventure should also be recorded in the spaces provided on the Character Sheet as these might be required later during the adventure. Only some of the treasure items found will be of use. Some will be totally useless. Most ingestible treasure items are usable only once, e.g. a potion of healing which might restore +3 to your player-character's Current Strength Factor can only be drunk once. Of the armour and weapons found, some will be magical, others nonmagical. Again, only some will be of use to your player-character, some might even be of harm, but all are re-usable.

COMBAT

Combat can take place any time a monster is encountered. All battles are decided by reference to the Combat Factor, Strength Factor and Wound Factor of your player-character and those of the monster(s) being fought.

In combat, the following procedure must be followed:

- 1 INITIATIVE
- 2 COMBAT
- 3 WOUNDS

Instructions will be given as to whether your player-character or the encountered monster has the initiative to fight first, i.e. make the first blow. Combat now follows with you rolling 3D6 for either your player-character or the monster encountered, depending on whose initiative it is. If the total

is the same or greater than the CF of the opponent, then a wound has been inflicted. Dice are then rolled again according to weapon type or creature to determine the severity of the wound. Combat will continue to alternate between your player-character and the monster until either's SF has been reduced to 0, in which case death has resulted. Occasionally, more than one monster of a particular type will be encountered together. In this instance the monsters will always attack two at a time until such time as they are reduced to one who will fight on alone. Note that during a combat round your player-character will only be allowed to attack one of his adversaries even if he is being attacked by two.

As an example of how the combat procedure works in play, let's assume your player-character has encountered an Ogre (CF:9; SF:6; WF:1D6+2). Your player-character has surprised the Ogre and has the initiative.

- *Roll 3D6.* If the total is 9 or higher, then a wound has been inflicted on the Ogre. The severity of the wound is determined by rolling 1D6 for the sword of your player-character. The number rolled is deducted from the Ogre's SF. (Paper and pencil may be required to keep an accurate record of the battle.)
- Now it is the turn of the Ogre to try to inflict a wound on your player-character, whose statistics are CCF:13; CSF:7; WF:1D6.
- *Roll 3D6.* If the total is 13 or higher, then a wound has been inflicted. The severity of the wound is determined by rolling 1D6 and adding +2 to the total (Ogres are mean and nasty). This number is subtracted from your player-character's Current Strength Factor. This procedure is repeated until either the Ogre or your player-character's SF has been reduced to 0, i.e. either has died from his wounds.

If your player-character is killed during the adventure it is quite a simple matter to start again. Additional Character Sheets can be drawn up or copied, on which new characters can be created. Hopefully one of them will finally get through the adventure. . . .

GUIDE TO ADVENTURING

An adventure will consist of your player-character walking down passageways, corridors and tunnels into caverns and rooms with a specific objective in mind. Some of the passageways, corridors and tunnels will contain traps, as will some of the caverns and rooms. The latter will also contain monsters, but not always. If the monsters are killed it is probable that something of interest will be found in its lair. The objects found might, however, be of no use at all.

There will be choice of direction given to the player-character, and not all directions will lead him to his ultimate goal—some in fact could lead to disaster. It is, therefore, recommended to make notes and draw a map of your player-character's exploration as an aid.

TWO-PLAYER OPTION

Alternatively, if you would prefer to play through the adventure with a friend, this is also possible. One person, after having read out aloud the following background information relating to *Eye of the Dragon* and para. 1 (p.

CHARACTER SHEET

NAME	
COMBAT FACTOR: (3D6) 15	CURRENT COMBAT FACTOR: 16
STRENGTH FACTOR: (3D6) 13	CURRENT STRENGTH FACTOR: 15 13
WOUND FACTOR: (1D6) 6	WOUND FACTOR ADJUSTMENTS: 9
FORTUNE FACTOR: (3D6) 13	CURRENT FORTUNE FACTOR: 15
GOLD PIECES: (3D6) 12	CURRENT GOLD PIECES: 15 30
RATIONS: 6	CURRENT RATIONS:
ARMOUR FOUND:	
WEAPONS FOUND:	<i>Magic Sword +2 W/F#</i> <i>Shield +1 W/F#</i>
TREASURE FOUND:	<i>Garlic Pig's +1 W/F#</i> <i>Cross</i>

Figure 1

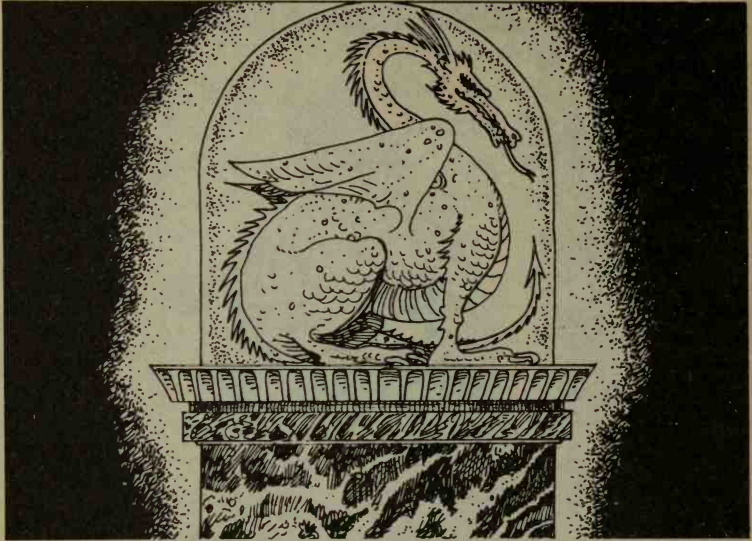
31), simply gives the other person the two or three options written in the text. This other person playing the part of the adventurer then states his option and the reader turns to the appropriate new reference to find the outcome. For example, the reader might tell the other person that there is a closed wooden door on the left-hand side of the corridor with a Keep Out sign written on it in blood. He then asks if the other would like to open the door or continue walking up the corridor. After the reply is given, the new reference would be turned to. When combat ensues, the reader would roll the dice for the monster(s). Note that there is more realism in a two-player game, as the adventuring player cannot read how potentially powerful a monster is, being unable to see its statistics, and must react purely on the physical descriptions given by the reader.

EYE OF THE DRAGON

Like any adventurer worth his salt, you are always interested to hear rumours about gold, diamonds and hidden treasure hoards. Unfortunately, you have been down on your luck recently, and have had to resort to wrestling with bears in the village square in order to earn a few copper pieces for food and a bed. You sleep somewhat uneasily in the attic of the Black Swan Tavern, and share the room with miscellaneous wayfarers and travellers, or others passing through who have fallen on hard times. You always keep your sword under your pillow. One night a stranger enters the room and slumps down on the bed opposite you. In the pale moonlight coming through the single window you see that he is dressed in dark robes and all but his eyes



are hidden. His elbows rest on his knees and his hands support his lowered head. He can't have rested in days, and the dirt and dust on his clothes tells you he has recently travelled far. Eventually you sit up and offer him a drink from your flask, which he readily accepts with a grunt. You begin to talk and soon he tells you of his recent journeys, and how he had almost lost his life in search of a legendary item of treasure. Naturally, you are excited to learn of treasure, and offer him another drink in the hope of gaining more information. The man goes on to tell you of his five year search for an 18 inch high, solid gold



dragon with jewelled eyes. How he had finally found the underground labyrinth that led to the golden dragon. He tells of all the monsters he has slain in the labyrinth to reach the dragon, and how he has even entered the room in which it has been hidden for years. He smiles as he explains the pleasure of first sighting the dragon, but how it had turned to dismay as he noticed that the jewelled eyes were missing. He had been told that without the eyes the dragon could not be touched, for to do so would mean instant death. He was not sure if this was true or not, but dared not find out for himself. He had left the room without touching the dragon, and began to search the labyrinth in the hope of finding the two emerald eyes. The search had almost cost him his life, for he entered a room and had been attacked by a two-headed troll some 8 feet tall. Having survived the battle, it was then that he had decided to give up his quest, for his life meant more to him than all the gold in the world.

You tell him that you are an adventurer like himself and how you would dearly like to continue his quest. You ask him to tell you where the labyrinth is. He replies that he will, on condition that if the dragon is recovered, you will bring it to him so you will share the wealth from its sale. To ensure that you do come back with the dragon he asks you to drink a small potion from a phial in his pocket. On asking what it is he replies that the liquid is a slow-acting poison and unless you return to him for the antidote within fourteen days, you will die. You take the phial from his hand, stare at him coldly, and drink the liquid in one gulp. Then from out of his robes he produces a small map. The map shows a path through a forest leading to a woodcutter's hut, and he tells you that there are stairs below the floor in the hut that lead directly into the labyrinth. He says that there are many passageways underground, with many rooms off them, most of them inhabited by hermits and fearsome creatures. He is unable, however, to give you an accurate map of the labyrinth and its inhabitants for it was snatched from him by the two-headed troll. He then bids you goodnight, lies down on his bed and advises you to rest well for the woodcutter's hut is a tough, five-day walk. You lie down to sleep but are restless and have vivid dreams of monsters and treasure. In the morning the strange man gives you a small black pouch. You look inside to see an inch-long beautiful emerald in the shape of an eye.

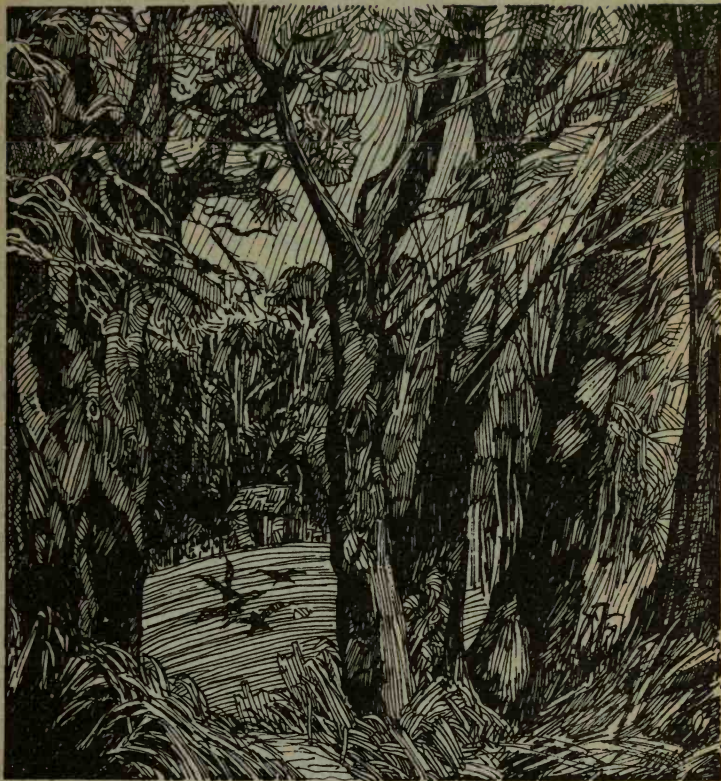
'I found one. I hope you find the other.'

You put the emerald back in its pouch and ponder the journey ahead. The man tells you he will wait for you at the Black Swan Tavern and wishes you luck. 'Remember two things,' he says. 'First, you have fourteen days and no more. Second, find the other emerald in the shape of an eye and place both eyes in their sockets before you touch the dragon itself.'

DICING WITH DRAGONS

You shake hands and wave goodbye. You check your rations and put them in your backpack. With your sword in its scabbard and your shield slung over your arm you walk out of the village towards the distant forest. You glance quickly over your shoulder to see the stranger leaning motionless against the oak doorway of the tavern. Is there a golden dragon? Are you being slowly poisoned? Only time will tell.





1

Your walk to the woodcutter's hut is long and tiring. Wasteland, hills and finally the forest which is dark and dense. You are very relieved to see the hut and begin to have faith in the tale told to you by the man at the Black Swan Tavern almost six days ago. It seemed like an age since you left there for you are tired, dirty and hungry. The woodcutter's hut is made of the local oak and is quite small. The door hangs open. You poke your head through the doorway in the hope of seeing the woodcutter, but the

dirt and rubbish inside the hut tells you that he is long gone. On the floor in the far corner in front of the stove you see the handles of a trap door. You walk over and lift the handle. Wooden stairs lead down into the gloom. If you want to search the hut for something which may be of use, go to 40. If you want to go straight down the stairs, go to 69.

2

After turning sharply to the left, the corridor continues straight on. On the right-hand wall a door appears. There is a painting of the sun on the door. If you want to enter the room go to 50. If you wish to continue walking up the corridor, go to 107.

3

The voice continues, 'I'm pleased, friend, that you wish to stay for I am lonely and in need of company. I am a wizard trapped in another dimension, but as to how I got here I shall not tell for it upsets me deeply. Glad I am that I am able to speak and as a token of my gratitude, please accept this gift.' A silver goblet appears before you containing a clear liquid. If you want to drink the liquid, go to 24. If you would rather leave the room, go to 5.

4

The two-headed Troll (CF:13; SF:12; WF:1D6+2) picks up his mighty axe and walks slowly towards you. You are prepared for battle and have the initiative. If you win, go to 81.

5

You soon arrive at a junction in the corridor. If you want to turn left, go to 46. If you want to turn right, go to 60.

6 (see next page)

You open the door into a room furnished with rough wooden tables and chairs. In the far corner a straw mattress is covered by a dirty sheepskin. Sat at the centre table eating a huge dinner of roast pig is a Barbarian (CF:12; SF:9; WF:1D6+2). He sees you and belches. Slowly he rises to his feet, wipes the grease from his mouth with the back of his hand and reaches for his two-handed sword. He is slow and you have the initiative as the combat begins. If you win, go to 108.

7

You tell Vigdis that she is beautiful. Her eyes turn to slits and she says, 'Not only are you a fool, you are also a liar and a cowardly one at that. I am very ugly and I like it that way. I hate beauty. Now you will give me all your gold otherwise you will never escape from this room.' You reach into your backpack with your free hand and give her all your Gold Pieces. The hand loosens its grip on your arm. You want to attack Vigdis but think better of it and walk out of the room. Go to 111.

8

Your hopes rise as you think you have finally reached your destination, but as you touch the door handle you hear

DICING WITH DRAGONS



See para. 6

loud clicks on either side of the corridor. Too late you see the 12 iron spikes flying towards you, each with a poison tip. You try to jump out of the way, but 5 plunge into your side with a sickening thud. As you sink to the floor, you manage an ironic smile for having got so close, yet so far. Your adventures ends here.



See para. 9

9 (see above)

As you enter the room you hear a shuffling noise and see some of the leaves of the plants move. You draw your sword. Suddenly a little green Gremlin (CF:7; SF:4; WF:1D6) pops up from behind one of the plants. He is small yet looks strong and his bald head and pointed ears almost make you want to laugh. He has a dagger in his hand. He crouches down and then leaps high into the air to

land beside you. You still have the initiative and if you win the battle, go to 20.

10

This is a magical breastplate which adds +1 to your CCF. You leave the room. Go to 77.

11

You wipe the blood from your side and begin to search the kitchen. On the top shelf of a cupboard you find a corked bottle containing a colourless liquid. If you want to drink the liquid, go to 54. If you do not want to drink the liquid and would rather leave the room and continue up the corridor, go to 61.

12

You stand on the foot marks and the room appears to spin before your eyes. You lose your sense of balance and fall over feeling sick. You stand up again and the room stops spinning. However, you find yourself standing in the woodcutter's hut with only your sword, shield, empty backpack and the emerald in the black pouch you started with. The teleportation was also bad for your constitution, reduce your CSF by -5. If you survived the shock, go to 69.

13

On the right-hand side of the corridor you see a black iron door, and ahead the corridor ends with another door with the motif of a dragon painted in gold in its centre. If you

want to open the door on the right, go to 42. If you want to open the door ahead, go to 8.

14

The corridor widens out slightly and ends with two doors. If you want to open the door to your left, go to 62. If you wish to open the door to your right, go to 80.

15

You reach up and pull down the key. It fits the padlock and with one turn it springs open. You lift up the lid of the chest and are disappointed to find nothing in it apart from an old piece of brown parchment. In faded ink a message on it reads, 'You are in the time acceleration chamber of the grand wizard Orlok. You are privileged to witness a live experiment in the concept of time. I am Orlok but when you read this I will have been dead for decades. My life was short because of my own great invention. Before you is my time accelerator which I cunningly disguised as a chest. Unfortunately, I could devise no real use for my invention and used up most of my life trying to do so. If you can think of some use for it, please accept it as a gift. To operate it, simply lift the lid of the chest. For every minute that the lid is open, one day will have elapsed in real time for all those people within 5 feet of the chest. Farewell and good luck.' You slam down the lid in horror, remembering the slow poison given to you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern. You guess the lid to have been open about 8 minutes. You begin to panic. A pain starts in your stomach and spreads to your chest and then to your limbs. You fall paralysed to the floor and your last thoughts are those of the irony of it all.

16

As your skin tightens and your muscles harden, you realize there is no hope. It is the end of the adventure for you. The Medusa has turned you to stone.

17 (see opp.)

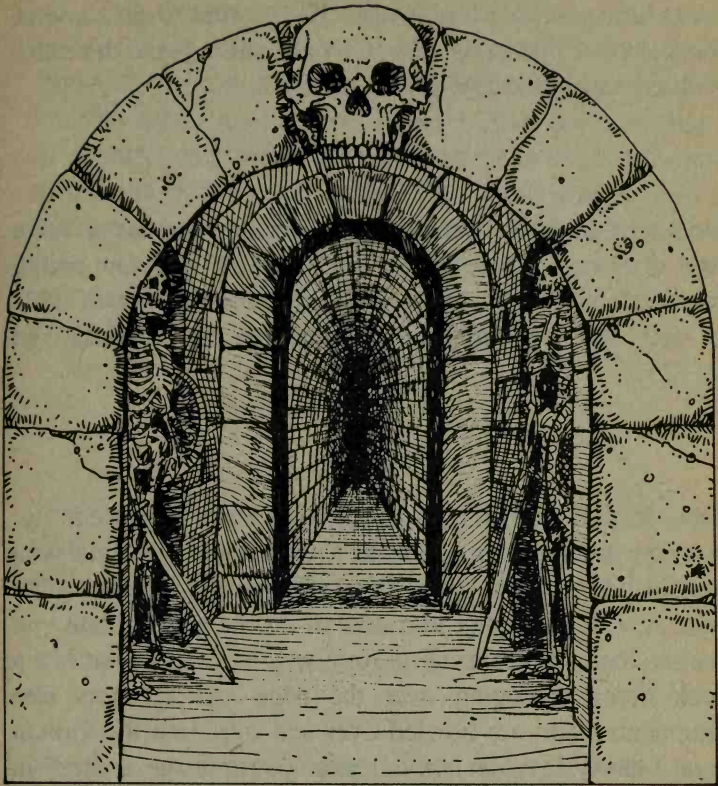
The corridor ends with a stone archway. The centre stone is carved in the shape of a human skull. You peer through the archway and see another archway some 20 yards ahead leading you back into the corridor. There are two alcoves between the archways in which stand two motionless skeletons with swords in their hands and shields on their arms. As you step through the archway the two heads of the skeletons crane towards you. If you want to run through the archways into the corridor beyond, go to 95. If you want to fight the skeletons, go to 121.

18

You stand back from the now motionless Wolf and look around you. The old man is gone. You search the room and see a highly polished iron helmet that the old man was using is a brush holder. As you place it on your head you feel a surge of bravery rush through your body. Add +2 to your CCF. You leave the room with your new armour. Go to 47.

19

You make a wish but nothing happens. This is not a wishing pool. If you want to put your hand into the pool to collect some of the gold coins and recover your Gold



See para. 17

Piece, go to 129. If you want to walk directly to the door opposite, go to 53.

20

At the back of the plant room you find the Gremlin's bed and few possessions. The only item of interest is a jar containing a green paste. It smells like crushed leaves and is possibly what the Gremlin ate and was perhaps what

made him so strong for his size. If you want to eat some of the leaf paste, go to 65. If you would rather leave the room without eating the leaf paste, go to 17.

21

On the right-hand wall of the corridor you see a large oak doorway. There is a small animal skeleton nailed to the door. If you wish to open the door, go to 131. If you wish to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 125.

22

The channel narrows and the flow of the river speeds up. You are soon in a tunnel with a very low ceiling and you are forced to lie flat in the boat. Ahead, you hear the great roar of water crashing into unseen depths and too late you realize that you are heading for a waterfall. The boat hits a rock before plunging over the edge and splinters into fragments. You are bowled over and over into the violent pool below. In your last thoughts you manage a smile in the knowledge that at least you didn't die as a result of poison given to you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern.

23

Remembering the instructions given to you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern, you remove the two emeralds from the pouch and carefully place them in the empty eye sockets of the statue. They fit perfectly and you breathe a sigh of relief. Slowly you take hold of the statue and close your eyes as you begin to pick it up. It moves. You lift it

up carefully expecting some fatal trap at any moment. Suddenly you hear a noise and you drop the dragon in fright. A section of the rear wall of the room starts to lift and daylight streams into the room. You see trees bathed in sunlight and realize that your quest is over. You reach down and pick up the dragon and walk happily outside. Still smiling, you start your journey back to the tavern safe in the knowledge that you have time to spare. Congratulations on completing your quest for the Eye of the Dragon.

24

The liquid is a magical healing potion. Add +3 to your CSF. You put the goblet in your backpack and leave the room saying thanks to the unseen wizard. Go to 5.

25

The door opens into another dimly lit, stone-walled corridor but soon ends again with another doorway. Fortunately the door is not locked and entry through it is somewhat easier than the previous door. You find yourself in a small, circular room of which most of the centre is taken up by a shallow pool with just sufficient edge to enable you to walk round either way to another door opposite. At the bottom of the pool are several gold coins. If you want to throw one of your Gold Pieces into the pool and make a wish, go to 19. If you want to put your hand into the pool to collect some of the gold coins from the bottom, go to 129. If you want to walk directly to the door opposite, go to 53.



26

Just as you are about to touch the emerald it disappears in a puff of smoke and the hand tries to grasp your arm. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than our CFF, you are lucky and manage to pull your arm away. Needing no further encouragement you decide to leave the room. Go to 111. If the total is greater than your CFF, the hand grabs hold of your arm in an iron grip. Go to 57.

27

As you pull on the rope, the door through which you entered slams shut and the door on the far wall disappears in a shimmering haze. You hear a click above and look up to see the ceiling start to lower. You run over to the door through which you came but cannot open it. The ceiling continues to drop inch by inch. Soon you are on your knees trying to use your sword to wedge the stone vice. The sword snaps and your last thoughts are of golden dragons. Your adventure ends here.

28

After a sharp turn to the left the corridor continues straight on, but soon, on the right-hand wall, you arrive at a door which is closed. There is the sound of humming coming from the other side. If you want to enter the room, go to 117. If you want to carry on up the corridor, go to 47.

29

You raise your sword and bring it down hard on the padlock. It flies off the chest and you lift up the lid. You are disappointed to find nothing in it apart from an old piece of brown parchment. In faded ink a message on it reads, 'You are in the time acceleration chamber of the grand wizard Orlok. You are privileged to witness a live experiment in the concept of time. I am Orlok but when you read this I will have been dead for decades. My life was short because of my own great invention. Before you is my time accelerator which I cunningly disguised as a chest. Unfortunately, I could devise no real use for my

invention and used up most of my life trying to do so. If you can think of some use for it, please accept it as a gift. To operate it, simply lift the lid of the chest. For every minute that the lid is open, one day will have elapsed in real time for all those people within 5 feet of the chest. Farewell and good luck.' You slam down the lid in horror, remembering the slow poison given you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern. You guess the lid to have been open about 8 minutes. You begin to panic. A pain starts in your stomach and spreads to your chest and then to your limbs. You fall paralysed to the floor and your last thoughts are those of the irony of it all.

30

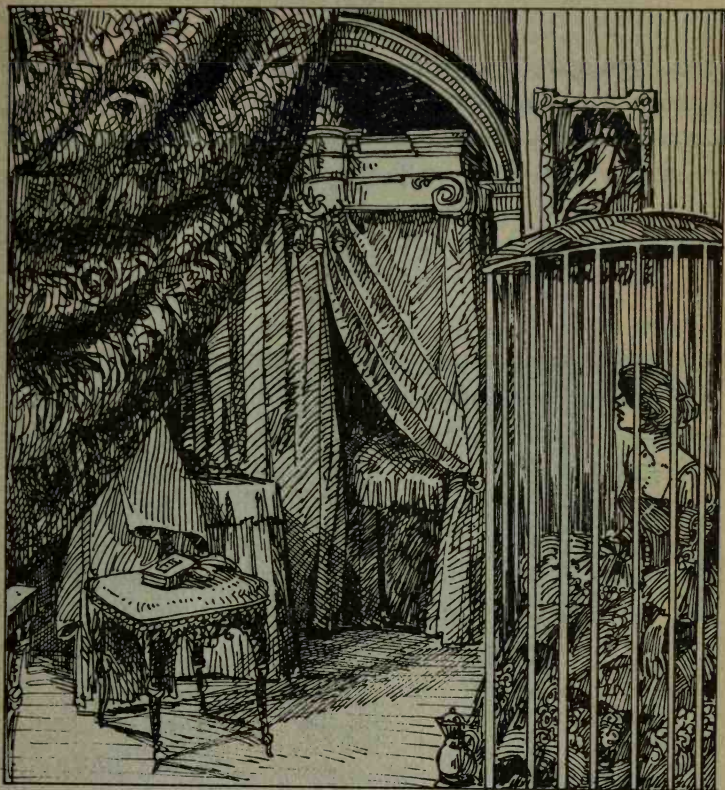
You walk into a large room with lavish furnishings. A beautiful four poster bed with silk sheets catches your eye, but you ignore everything after seeing a young woman locked in a cage in the far corner. If you want to try to rescue her, go to 70. If you wish to leave the room immediately, go to 123.

31

As you walk back to the rope ladder, you trip over something unseen. You reach down and pick up a shield. It is heavy and well made. Add +2 to your CCF. You climb back up the rope ladder with your new shield and cross the bridge. Go to 76.

32

The corridor makes a sharp turn to the right and around the bend you are forced to stop because of a deep pit covering

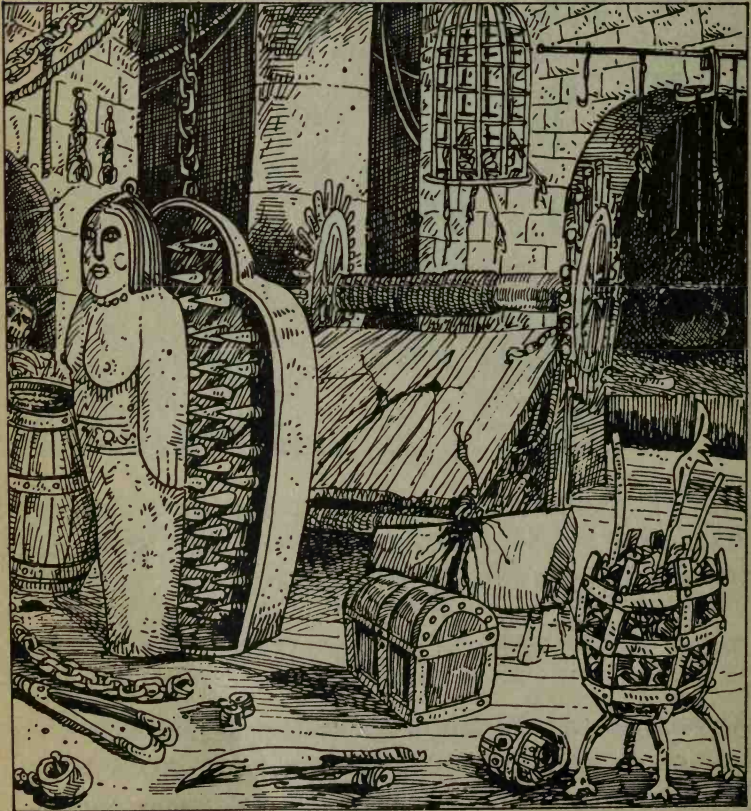


its width. A rope hangs from the ceiling above the centre of the pit. If you want to try to jump over the pit, go to 36. If you want to try to swing over the pit on the rope, go to 128.

33

As you look into the mirror a terrible pain grips your body but you are unable to look away. Reduce your CSF by -1. If you wish to try to cover your eyes with your hands, go to 64. If you wish to attempt to smash the mirror with your sword, go to 104.

The door opens into a disused torture chamber. An iron maiden hangs open on the floor and a rack fills the far corner. Various implements of pain litter the floor. There is an iron chest lying on the floor. If you want to open the chest, go to 102. If you want to leave the room without opening the chest, go to 115.



See para. 34

35

There is nothing of interest in the alcoves but you are attracted by the magnificent etchings on the shield of one of the Skeletons. You decide to take it. Add +1 to your CCF. You walk on into the corridor. Go to 95.

36

You run up to the edge of the pit and jump. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and land on the other side. Go to 93. If the total is greater than your CFF, your jump is short and you tumble down the pit some 20 feet below. Reduce your CSF by -2. Unfortunately, in a recess at the bottom of the pit lives a Giant Spider (CF:9; SF:7; WF:1D6 + 1) who would like to eat you for dinner. Hunger gives the spider the initiative. If you win, go to 84.

37

You say hello to the woman but she still does not look round. You walk slowly up to her and tap her on the shoulder. Suddenly she twirls around, eyes wide open and an evil laugh coming from her mouth. Then you notice the tiny snakes in the front of her hair and realize with horror that she is a Medusa, and try to shut your eyes to avoid her stare which could turn you to stone. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and avoid direct contact with her eyes. If you have a piece of mirror with you it will be possible to reflect her stare back at her. Go to 118. If you do not have a piece of mirror, you run out of the room with your eyes shut and up the corridor. Go to 73. If the total is greater than your CFF then you

are unable to avoid her stare and you feel your limbs stiffen. Go to 16.

38

The door opens into a small room and as you enter you are immediately attacked by a Goblin (CF:9; SF:2; WF:1D6) who has the initiative. If you win, go to 83.

39

You step over the body of the Knight and walk slowly towards the glass dome containing the golden dragon statue. You hold your breath as you carefully lift off the glass dome. As you do so the black iron door through which you entered slams shut. If you have both of the dragon's emerald eyes, go to 23. If you only possess one of the emerald eyes, go to 41.

40

You open drawers and look in cupboards, but find little more than broken crockery and general rubble. You walk over to the stove and beside it you see a pile of logs and a large axe with a broken handle. There is a strange inscription etched into the axe head which you do not understand. Your curiosity gets the better of you and you decide to put the axe head in your backpack, hoping that it may be of use later. You walk over to the trap door and walk down the stairs. Go to 69.

41

You run over to the iron door, but are unable to open it. You look around the room in search of a secret passage

A SOLO ADVENTURE



See para. 42

through which to leave the room but find nothing. You walk back dejectedly to the golden statue and stare at the solitary emerald eye in the palm of your hand. After carefully lifting the glass dome you place the emerald in the right eye socket of the dragon. It fits perfectly. If you want to try to lift the dragon from the plinth, go to 88. If you would rather throw the Knight's helmet at the dragon to knock it off the plinth, go to 120.

42 (see previous page)

You walk up to the door and turn the handle. You enter a brightly lit room with a marbled floor. On a marbled plinth in the centre of the room stands a statue of a golden dragon some 18 inches high encased in a glass dome. In front of the dragon statue wearing black armour from head to foot stands a Knight (CF:13; SF:12; WF:1D6 + 3). You cannot see the Knight's face because of his huge black helm. His hands hold a shimmering black sword which he slowly cuts through the air. He utters one word in a deep voice which seems to echo around the room: 'DEATH'. He walks towards you and has the initiative. If you win, go to 39.

43

You sit down and immediately fall into a long deep sleep. On waking you are horrified to find that your backpack is empty and your sword is gone. On the floor is a dagger with a broken blade obviously abandoned by the thieves who stole your possessions. Reduce your WFA to 1D6 - 1. Fortunately, the black pouch given to you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern is still in your pocket. Breathing a sigh of relief you walk up to the corridor eyeing ruefully the broken blade of your new inherited weapon. Go to 71.

44

As you reach the door it disappears before your eyes in a shimmering haze. You turn to see the door through which you entered slam shut. You run over to the door but cannot open it. As you pull on the handle you hear a click from above and look up to see the ceiling start to lower inch by inch. Soon you are on your knees trying to use your

sword to wedge the stone vice. The sword snaps and your last thoughts are of golden dragons. Your adventure ends here.

45

The door opens into a storeroom with shelves crammed with tins, jars, boxes and objects of all shapes and sizes. Behind a counter on the left of the room stands an old man in a white apron. He bids you good day and reaches down behind the counter and reappears holding a small chalk-board on which is written:

Today's Special Offers

Woollen Gloves	.....	1 Gold Piece
Garlic	.....	1 Gold Piece
Silver Cross	.....	3 Gold Pieces
Carved Wooden Duck	....	2 Gold Pieces
Pickled Pigs' Tails	.....	1 Gold Piece

If you wish to buy any of the items, you pay the old man his money and leave the room. Go to 79. If you do not wish to buy anything, you politely refuse and leave the room. Go to 79.

46

The corridor turns sharply to the right, but soon on the right-hand wall a door appears. If you want to open the door, go to 68. If you want to carry on walking up the corridor, to go 127.



47

Another door soon appears on the right-hand wall and above it a sign reads 'Thomas Cornpepper, Pawnbroker'. If you wish to open the door, go to 45. If you want to continue up the corridor, go to 79.

48

Further up the corridor on the right-hand wall you find another door from which you can hear scratching sounds

52

on the other side. If you want to enter the room, go to 92. If you wish to carry on up the corridor, go to 61.

49

You lift the wooden chest out of the sand. The hinges and lock are made of iron and are well rusted. One blow from your sword sends the lock flying. You lift the lid and see a pile of Gold Pieces. There are 23 in total. You gleefully put them in your backpack and leave the room. Go to 101.

50

You enter a white room with white furniture and objects. In the corner of the room sits a white porcelain cat with jewelled eyes. If you want to inspect the cat, go to 124. If you would prefer to leave the room without inspecting the cat, go to 107.

51

You find nothing of interest in the debris and so look behind the curtain. There is a rough wooden bed covered with bits of rag. A wooden box lies next to the bed. If you want to open the box, go to 130. If you wish to leave the room without opening the box, go to 13.

52

You stand back and charge the door. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CSF, the door will fly open. Go to 86. If the total is greater than your CSF, the door will not budge and all you succeed in doing is injuring your shoulder. Reduce your CSF by -1. If you wish to try



See para. 50

again, go to 52. If you wish to return to the junction in the corridor, go to 109.

53 (see opp.)

The door opens into the corridor again and after walking along it for a few minutes, another door appears on the left-hand wall. There is a tiny glass window in the door, through which can be seen a candlelit room with a woman



See para. 53

sat on a bench with her back to you. You knock on the door, but she does not move. If you want to enter the room, go to 37. If you wish to continue walking up the corridor, go to 73.

54

The liquid seems to burn your throat, but the feeling turns to a glowing sensation followed by a surge of strength. It

55

is a potion of strength. Add +2 to your CSF. Feeling good you leave the room and continue up the corridor. Go to 61.

55

The door opens into a marble-floored room in the middle of which stands an ornate stone table. Two shining breastplates lie on top of the table, one made of bronze, the other made of iron. If you want to try on the bronze breastplate, go to 113. If you want to try on the iron breastplate, go to 10. If you do not wish to try on either, you leave the room and continue up the corridor. Go to 77.

56

You hear the word 'granted' and the man disappears. Add +4 to your CSF. Feeling good and strong you leave the room. Go to 67.

57

The grip is so strong that you think your arm is going to break. Reduce your CSF by -1. If you are still alive, go to 114.

58

You feel invigorated as you drink the water. You are drinking at the fountain of youth. Add +3 to your CSF. With renewed energy you walk up the corridor. Go to 103.

59

As you lunge at the old man, the painting seems to assume an extra dimension, and from it leaps a huge, grey Wolf (CF:10; SF:6; WF:1D6 + 1) straight at you. The Wolf has the initiative. If you win, go to 18.

60

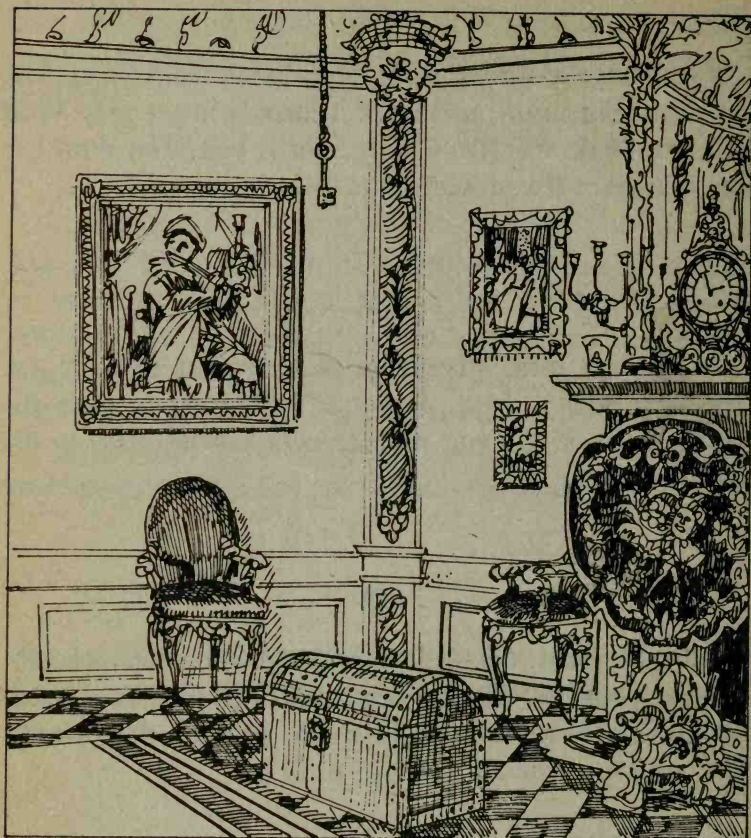
The corridor turns sharply to the left, but soon on the left-hand wall a door appears. If you want to open the door, go to 75. If you wish to continue walking up the corridor, go to 101.

61

On the left-hand wall of the corridor you soon come across another doorway. The door is made of iron and is closed. If you want to try to enter the room, go to 38. If you want to continue up the corridor, go to 112.

62

You enter a room adorned with splendid objects and fine paintings. A beautiful rug covers most of the floor. There is a large chest in the centre of the room locked with an iron padlock. Suspended from the ceiling out of your reach hangs a silver key. On the right-hand wall of the room you see another door. If you want to stand on the chest in order to reach the silver key, go to 15. If you want to try to smash the padlock with your sword, go to 29. If you want to open the door on the right-hand wall, go to 119.



63

You hear the word 'granted' and the man vanishes. Around your chest appears a shining bronze breastplate. Add +4 to your CCF. You leave the room with renewed confidence. Go to 67

64

You try with all your might to raise your hands to your eyes but are unable to do so. The pain increases.

58

Reduce your CSF by -1. You draw your sword and attempt to smash the mirror with your sword. Go to 104.

65

The leaf paste tastes disgusting and almost makes you sick. The nausea however soon passes and is replaced by a feeling of exhilaration. Add +4 to your CSF. You search the room for more of the leaf paste but without success and decide to leave. Go to 17.

66

As you touch the card it springs out of your hand and on landing on the floor there is a sudden flash of light: before you stands an old woman dressed as the Queen of Spades. She smiles and says, 'Thank you, here's 5 Gold Pieces for your trouble.' She hands you the coins and walks slowly out of the room. With a puzzled look on your face you put the coins in your backpack and continue up the corridor. Go to 48.

67 (see over)

In the right-hand wall of the corridor a small alcove appears in which stands a carved stone chair. Above it a sign reads, 'Rest Ye Well Stranger'. If you want to sit in the chair, go to 43. If you would rather carry on walking up the corridor, go to 71.

68

The door opens into a room full of water: you have to cling to the door handle to stop yourself from falling in.



See para. 67

The water appears to be about 6 feet deep. On the bottom you see the shimmering shape of a sword. If you want to dive into the water to recover the sword, go to 78. If you want to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 127.

69

The stairs lead down to the stone-walled corridor dimly lit by flickering torches some 50 feet apart. You walk down

60

the corridor and arrive at a junction. If you want to turn left, go to 97. If you want to turn right, go to 28.

70

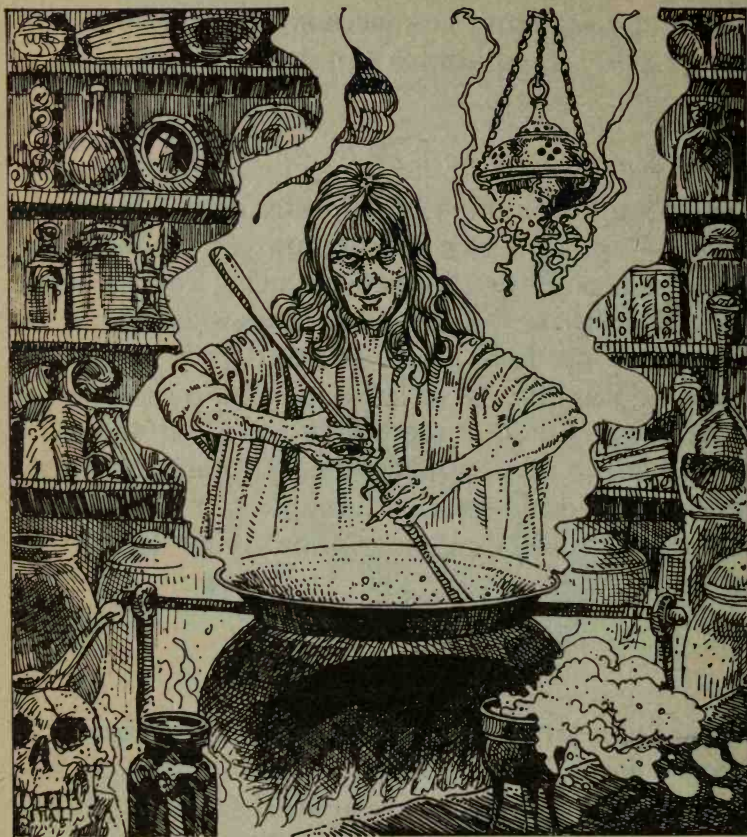
You walk up to the cage and pull on the door. Surprisingly it opens. The young woman walks towards you and as she smiles you notice two long teeth extending from her upper jaw. As she reaches you her mouth opens wide and you see now clearly the fangs of a Vampire (CF:11; SF:8; WF:1D6+2). You have the initiative and time to reach for the garlic or silver cross if you have them. Either will cause the Vampire to retreat and cower in the corner of the cage. Go to 98. If you do not have either garlic or a silver cross you must fight the Vampire with your sword. If you win, go to 98.

71

Ahead on the left-hand wall of the corridor you see a large wooden door. There are strange symbols written on it in chalk which you do not understand. If you wish to enter the room, go to 105. If you would rather carry on walking up the corridor, go to 13.

72 (see over)

You enter a small, cluttered room lined with many shelves holding bottles and jars of all shapes and sizes. There is a huge fire burning in a hearth and an old woman is stirring a foul smelling liquid in a cauldron suspended above the fire. She turns to face you and smiles. If you want to talk to her, go to 89. If you would rather leave the room without talking to the old woman, go to 111.



See para. 72

73

Walking up the corridor you soon find another door on the right-hand wall. The door is made of old oak and hangs open. If you want to enter the room, go to 100. If you wish to continue walking up the corridor, go to 48.

74

You cough and the old man puts down his brush to look at you. He asks if he can be of assistance and you ask him if he knows the whereabouts of an emerald in the shape of an eye. He scratches his beard and shakes his head, and tells you that his brother who lives in the room next door might be able to help. He asks if you would like to buy a painting of an owl for only 5 Gold Pieces. If you wish to buy the painting, you pay the old man his money, put the painting in your backpack and leave the room. Go to 47. If you do not wish to buy the painting, you politely refuse his offer and leave the room. Go to 47.

75

You open the door of a room full of sand. All the furniture is covered with it and it appears to be at least 2 feet deep on the floor. A shovel leans on the wall to your left. If you want to dig in the sand, go to 91. If you want to leave the room and carry on walking up the corridor, go to 101.

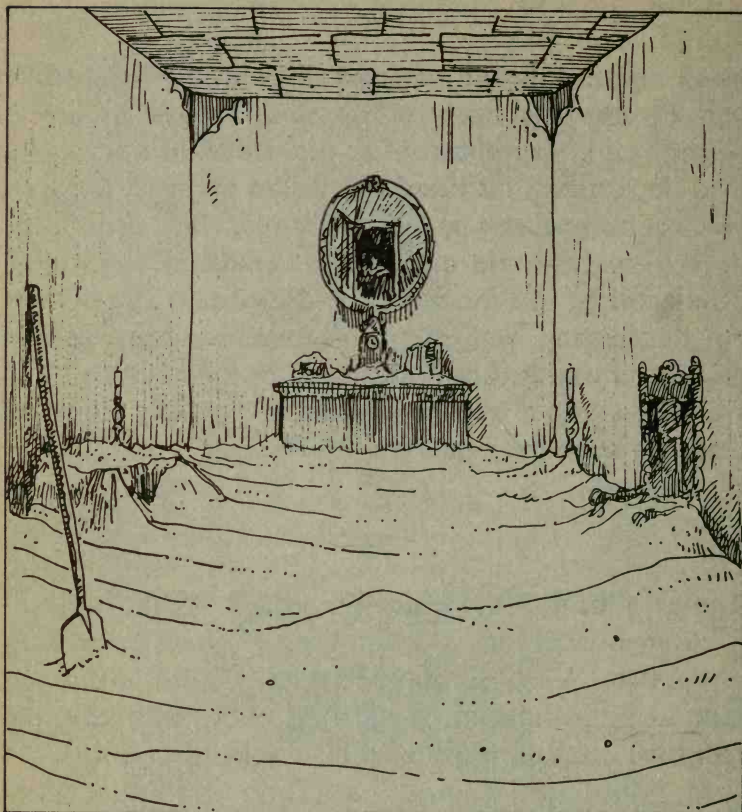
76

The corridor ends with a junction. If you want to turn left, go to 132. If you want to turn right, go to 116.

77

On the left-hand wall of the corridor you see another doorway from the other side of which you hear a woman's voice crying for help. If you want to enter the room, go to 30. If you decide to ignore the cries and continue up the corridor, go to 123.

DICING WITH DRAGONS



See para. 75

78

You grab the sword and swim up to the surface. Back in the corridor you examine the sword and are astounded by its craftsmanship. It has magical properties which add +2 to your WFA. You walk up the corridor cutting the air with your new weapon. Go to 127.

79

As you walk along the corridor you step on a floor stone which gives a little under your weight. You hear a click and an arrow is released from the left-hand side of the corridor wall. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and the arrow misses you. Go to 122. If the total is greater than your CFF, the arrow (WF:1D6) plunges into your leg. If you are still alive, you pull the arrow from your leg, curse loudly, and limp up the corridor. Go to 122.

80

You enter a room adorned with splendid objects and fine paintings. A beautiful rug covers most of the floor. There is a large chest in the centre of the room locked with an iron padlock. Suspended from the ceiling out of your reach hangs a silver key. On the left-hand wall of the room you see another door. If you want to stand on the chest in order to reach the silver key, go to 15. If you want to try to smash the padlock with your sword, go to 29. If you want to open the door on the left-hand wall, go to 119.

81

You search through the tough hide clothing of the Troll, but find nothing. You walk over to a wooden cupboard and find three silver goblets which you put in your backpack. You walk back to the Troll and look at his axe. You pick it up and feel its weight and power in your hands. You decide that it will be your new weapon. Add +2 to your WFA. You leave the room and continue up the corridor. Go to 125.

At last you reach the bottom of the pit. It is difficult to see in the gloom. You hear a shuffling sound behind your back and from out of the shadows lopes a Ghoul (CF:10; SF:9; WF:1D6+2) towards you. It has an anguished look on its face and its flesh seems to be hanging from it. If you have a wooden cross the Ghoul will retreat back into the shadows. Go to 31. If you do not have a wooden cross, you will have to fight the Ghoul and you will have the initiative. If you win, go to 31.



See para. 82

83

A search of the room reveals nothing and so you decide to examine the body of the Goblin. You remember landing some good blows on his chest during the fight which seemed to have no effect. You see that the chainmail coat that he is wearing is made of a metal unknown to you. It looks about your size and you put it on. Add +1 to your CCF. You leave the room and continue up the corridor. Go to 112.

84

You crawl into the Giant Spider's nest in the recess and find bones, rusted weapons and debris. In the debris you find a leather belt with a pouch attached to it. Inside the pouch a strange-looking flower, dried and withered. You smell the flower and your lungs seem to burst with energy. Add +2 to your CSF. Slowly you climb out of the pit and continue up the corridor. Go to 93.

85

Inside the box you find a silver bracelet which you place on your wrist. It is a bracelet of weapon skill. Add +1 to your WFA. You leave the room and walk up the corridor. Go to 13.

86

The door opens into a small room with another door on the opposite wall. On the left-hand wall hangs a large mirror. If you wish to walk over to the other door without looking in the mirror, go to 25. If you wish to look in the mirror, go to 33.

87

The laughing gets louder and closer but you cannot locate it. With your sword drawn and your back to the wall you prepare yourself for the unseen adversary. The laughing stops and is replaced by a hissing sound. To your right you see a cloud of gas beginning to fill the room. The door through which you entered slams shut. With your eyes watering and your lungs on fire you try but fail to open the door. Deduct -3 from your CSF for gas poisoning. If you are still alive, you may stand on the foot marks in the middle of the room. Go to 12.

88

As you lift the dragon it begins to crack all over and becomes hot in your hands. You let it drop to the floor and are horrified to see a yellow gas escape from the cracks. You start to cough and fall to your knees. You realize the rumours were true about needing both eyes before touching the dragon. Or were they? You will never find out for the gas is lethal.

89

You begin to speak but before you say a word you hear a fluttering of wings behind you. Swooping down on you from out of the windows is a large Vampire Bat (CF:9; SF:8; WF:1D6). You are surprised and the Vampire Bat has the initiative. If you win, go to 99.

90

As you uncork the bottle, a cloud of gas escapes quickly from it. From it a quivering shape materializes. It is that of

a fat man sat on a silk cushion with his arms folded. He smiles and says, 'Before I leave, I shall grant you one wish for releasing me. Do you wish strength, armour or gold?' If you wish strength, go to 56. If you wish armour, go to 63. If you wish gold, go to 134.

91

You grab the shovel and begin to dig. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and your shovel uncovers a chest. Go to 49. If the total is greater than your CFF, you are unlucky and dig in vain. You give up and leave the room. Go to 101.

92

You enter a room full of cupboards, tables, pots, pans and crockery. It is a disused kitchen and everything is in a mess. In the far corner 2 Giant Rats (CF:7; SF:4; WF:1D6) and (CF:6; SF:5; WF:1D6) are gnawing on old bones. They are too involved with eating to notice you. You have the initiative if you decide to fight them and if you win, go to 11. If you wish to continue up the corridor without fighting the Giant Rats, go to 61.

93

The corridor carries straight on and there soon appears a doorway on the left-hand wall. If you want to enter the room, go to 55. If you wish to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 77.



See para. 92

94

As you tiptoe into the room you tread on a nutshell. The noise stirs the Ogre. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and the Ogre does not wake up. Go to 126. If the total is greater than your CFF, the Ogre (CF:13; SF:11; WF:1D6+2) wakes up, sees you, and reaches for his club. He is still groggy from his sleep and you have the initiative. If you win, go to 126.

95

On the left-hand wall of the corridor you see a door from which you hear laughter coming from the other side. If you wish to open the door, go to 133. If you want to walk on down the corridor, go to 5.

96

As you sit down you feel a surge of power through your body. You are sitting in a *chair of strength*. Add +2 to your CSF. You bound out of the chair and continue up the corridor. Go to 21.

97

The corridor soon makes a sharp turn to the right, and around the corner it ends with a large oak door which is firmly shut. If you wish to try to force the door open, go to 52. If you wish to return to the junction in the corridor, go to 109.

98

Around the neck of the Vampire your eyes light up at the sight of an emerald hanging on a chain. You rip the jewel from her neck to examine it and are ecstatic to see that it is in the shape of an eye. You place it in the black pouch in your pocket and leave the room. Go to 123.

99

By the time your battle is over, the old woman is gone. A mouse runs past your feet and disappears through a tiny

hole in the far wall. Unattended, the cauldron starts to boil over on to the fire and you see the image of the old woman laughing at you in the flames. Then a hand slowly rises from out of the cauldron and as it unfolds you see a small emerald in the shape of an eye on its palm. The old woman's image in the flames continues to laugh at you. If you want to grab the emerald from the outstretched hand, go to 26. If you want to leave the room immediately go to 111.



See para. 100

100 (see opp.)

You enter a small empty room. On the floor you notice a playing card. It is the Queen of Spades and there appears to be a smile on her face. If you want to pick up the card, go to 66. If you want to leave the room and continue up the corridor, go to 48.

101

The corridor ends with a door which is slightly ajar. You peer round the door to see a room empty apart from a rope hanging from the ceiling. There is another door on the far wall. If you want to pull on the rope, go to 27. If you want to open the door on the far wall, go to 44.

102

The lid of the chest is heavy and you struggle to lift it. Inside you find 15 Gold Pieces, a small silver box and a magnificent sword. It has magical properties. Add +1 to your WFA. You leave the room with your findings and walk up the corridor. Go to 115.

103

In the right-hand wall of the corridor you see another alcove in which stands a stone chair. If you want to sit in the chair, go to 96. If you wish to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 21.

104

The mirror shatters and the pain in your body fades away. You search the room but find nothing of interest. You

may put a piece of the mirror in your backpack if you wish to take it with you. You leave the room by the door opposite to the one through which you entered. Go to 25.

105 (see opp.)

You enter a small room full of filth and debris. All the furniture is old and broken, and dirty pots and pans litter the floor with their foul smelling contents spilled out. A torn curtain is draped across a corner of the room from ceiling to floor. As you walk towards the curtain you hear a violent scream and from behind it leaps an Orc (CF:7; SF:4; WF:1D6) with sword flashing. His skin is green and lumpy, and his little snub nose and sharp teeth make you shudder. He attacks you immediately and has the initiative. If you win, go to 51.

106

You tell Vigdis that she is disgustingly ugly. She smiles and says, 'Thank you. Nobody has paid me such a compliment in years. You are obviously a better person than I thought. You are free to go.' She snaps her fingers and the hand loosens its grip on your arm. You feel like attacking Vigdis but think better of it and walk out of the room. Go to 111.

107

On the left-hand wall of the corridor you see a wooden door. If you want to enter the room, go to 34. If you want to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 115.



See para. 105

108

You search the room and find a flask of wine, two Gold Pieces and a corked bottle made of frosted glass. Put those items you wish to keep in your backpack. If you wish to uncork the bottle, go to 90. If you wish to leave the room without uncorking the bottle, go to 67.

109

You are soon back at the junction and looking down the corridor to your right you see the stairs leading back up to the woodcutter's hut in the dim distance. You realize this is not going to be an easy quest and are tempted to turn right. Thoughts of the golden dragon dictate otherwise and you walk straight on. Go to 28.

110

The channel narrows and the flow of the river speeds up. You are soon in a tunnel with a very low ceiling and you have difficulty in keeping your head above water. Ahead, you hear the great roar of water crashing into unseen depths and too late you realize you are heading for a waterfall. You hit a rock and are bowled over the edge into the violent pool below. In your last thoughts you manage a smile in the knowledge that at least you didn't die as a result of the poison given to you by the stranger at the Black Swan Tavern.

111

On the right-hand wall of the corridor you see the chiselled-out entrance to a cave. You peer into the cave and see a table and four chairs made of stone. Asleep in one of the chairs and snoring loudly is an Ogre. He is about 9 feet tall and is wearing animal skins. A huge wooden club leans against his chair. There is a leather pouch attached to a belt hanging on the back of the Ogre's chair. If you want to creep into the room to steal the belt and pouch, go to 94. If you want to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 14.



112

After a long walk, the corridor ends again with a doorway. The door is closed. Suddenly, behind you, you hear a grating of metal followed by a crashing sound. You turn round to see that your way back is now barred by an iron gate which has dropped from the ceiling. You have no choice other than to enter the room. In the middle of the room is a strange design surrounding a pair of footprints. A sign on the wall says: 'Please stand on the foot marks

provided.' From nowhere you hear the sound of thunder and then the sound of evil laughter coming closer. If you want to stand on the footmarks, go to 12. If you want to wait to meet the owner of the evil laugh, go to 87.

113

Unknown to you, this is a magical breastplate made by an evil sorcerer. Reduce your CCF by -1 and leave the room. Go to 77.

114

Still locked in the iron grip of the hand you see the mouse come back into the room through the tiny hole in the wall. The image of the old woman in the flames fades away and at the same time the mouse transforms itself into the old woman. She smiles and says, 'Only a fool such as you would hope to barge into my room and expect to steal an emerald and get away with it. My name is Vigdis and I am the most beautiful witch in the world. Do you not agree?' You look at her and are repulsed by her hideous face covered with warts. Her nose is long and hairy, and her mouth houses just one solitary black tooth. If you wish to agree with her, go to 7. If you do not wish to agree with her go to 106.

115

Ahead of you the stone flooring narrows to a thin bridge over a deep pit. A rope ladder descends into the depths of the pit from the bridge. If you want to walk over the stone bridge to the corridor on the other side, go to 76. If you want to climb down into the pit, go to 82.

116

The corridor turns sharply to the left and around the corner in the left-hand wall you see an alcove. Water gently trickles from the stone mouth of a fountain in the shape of a young boy. If you want to drink at the fountain, go to 58. If you wish to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 103.



117

The door opens into a small room with many paintings of animals on the walls. In the middle of the room an old

man is busy painting a wolf on a large canvas. He is humming happily to himself and is unaware of your presence. If you want to leave the room and continue up the corridor, go to 47. If you want to talk to the old man, go to 74. If you want to attack the old man, go to 59.

118

You take the piece of mirror from out of your backpack and point it at the Medusa. You hear an anguished scream and then silence. Slowly you open one eye and then the other to see the rigid features of the Medusa turned to stone by the reflection of her own stare. After putting the mirror piece back in your backpack you search the room. Under the Medusa's bed you find an ornate shield much heavier than your own and decide to take it: add +1 to your CCF. You leave the room and walk up the corridor. Go to 73.

119

You reach the door but cannot open it. There is no handle on the door and it is firmly locked. You look back at the chest. If you want to stand on the chest in order to reach the silver key, go to 15. If you want to smash the padlock with your sword, go to 29.

120

You swing the helmet with all your might and hurl it at the dragon. There is a loud clang of metal hitting metal and the dragon is knocked to the floor. As you walk over to it you notice cracks appearing all over it. A yellow gas starts to escape from the cracks. You start to cough and fall to

your knees. You realize the rumours were true about needing both eyes before touching the dragon. Or were they? You will never find out for the gas is lethal.

121

The Skeletons (CF:7; SF:2; WF:1D6) and (CF:6; SF:3; WF:1D6) are slow moving and you have the initiative. If you win, go to 35.

122

Another junction appears ahead. If you wish to turn left, go to 32. If you wish to turn right, go to 2.

123

Walking on up the corridor you see an iron gate in the right-hand wall. Through it can be seen a green-painted room containing green tables and chairs and hundreds of plants. If you want to enter the room, go to 9. If you prefer to carry on walking up the corridor, go to 17.

124

As you look at the cat, its eyes seem to sparkle. You become transfixed by the sparkle and are unable to look away. A gnawing pain starts in your eyes and spreads to your brain. It becomes unbearable and you pass out. Deduct -2 from your CSF. On waking you find the cat turned to dust. You leave the room. Go to 107.

125 (see opp.)

Ahead of you, you hear the noise of rushing water and soon the corridor ends on the bank of a fast-flowing underground river. Tied to a stake on the bank is a small wooden boat. If you want to get into the boat and row downstream, go to 22. If you would rather jump in the river and swim downstream, go to 110.

126

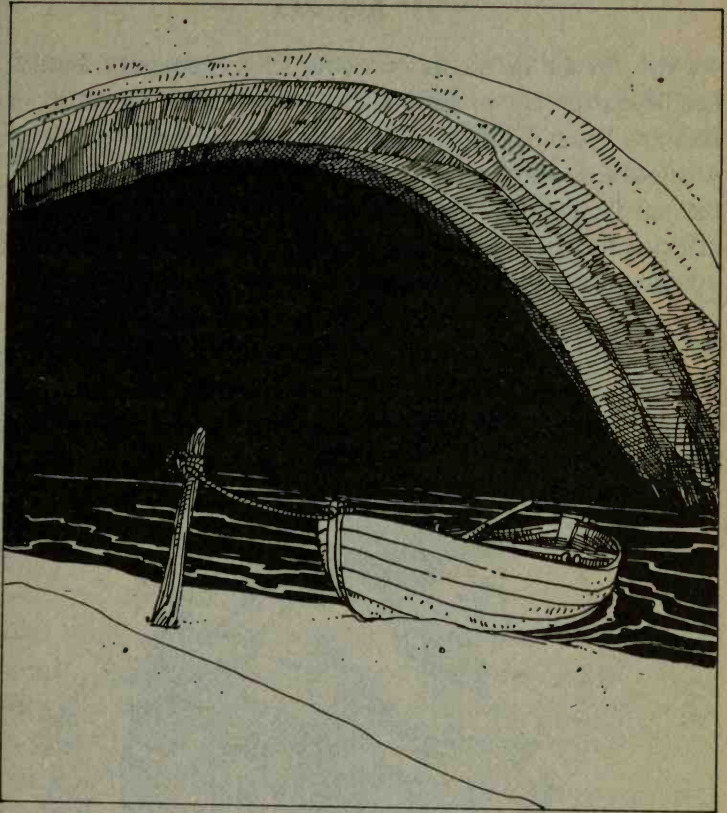
You open the pouch and find a gold ring inside. It fits your middle finger. It is a *ring of protection*. Add +2 to your CCF and leave the room. Go to 14.

127

A door appears in the left-hand wall of the corridor. You hear sounds of gnawing and belching. If you want to open the door, go to 6. If you would rather walk up the corridor, go to 67.

128

You grab hold of the rope and walk back as far as you can. You run up to the edge of the pit and swing across it. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky, you land on the other side of the pit. Go to 93. If the total is greater than your CFF, you lose your grip on the rope and fall into the pit to the bottom some 20 feet below. Reduce your CSF by -2. Unfortunately, in a recess at the bottom of the pit lives a Giant Spider (CF:9; SF:7; WF:1D6+ 1) who would like to eat you for dinner. Hunger gives the spider the initiative. If you win, go to 84.



See para. 125

129

As your hand lowers into the pool it becomes gripped by an intense burning and you quickly draw it out. The liquid in the pool is acid and you must reduce your CSF by -2. You grimace with pain and rush to the door opposite, eager to leave the room. Go to 53.

As you lift the lid of the box your finger touches a hidden needle on the catch. Roll 3D6. If the total is the same or less than your CFF, you are lucky and it does not pierce your skin. Go to 85. If the total is greater than your CFF, the needle pierces your skin and you feel the immediate effects of poison on the tip. Deduct -3 from your CSF. If you are still alive, go to 85.



See para. 131

131 (see opp.)

You enter a rough stone cavern and see a large two-headed Troll sharpening his axe on a revolving stone wheel. One of his heads looks up at you and growls. If you want to fight the Troll, go to 4. If you want to slam the door and rush on up the corridor, go to 125.

132

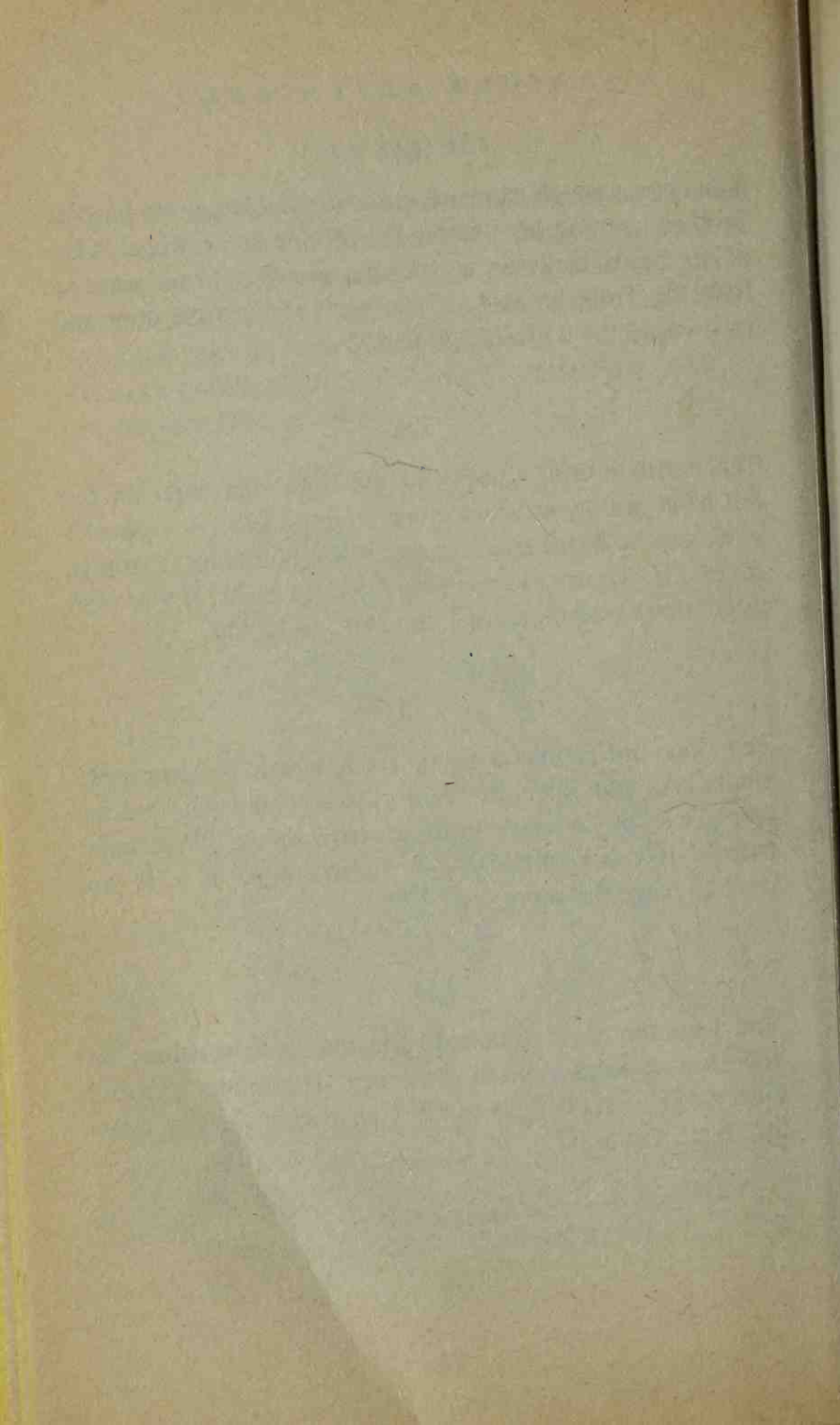
The corridor turns sharply to the right, but soon on the left-hand wall you see a door slightly ajar. A woman's voice can be heard from the other side mumbling a strange rhyme. If you want to open the door, go to 72. If you wish to continue walking up the corridor, go to 111.

133

The door opens into a small room which is completely empty. As you enter, the door closes behind you and the laughter stops. A voice from nowhere shouts, 'Welcome, friend.' If you wish to stay in the room, go to 3. If you want to leave the room, go to 5.

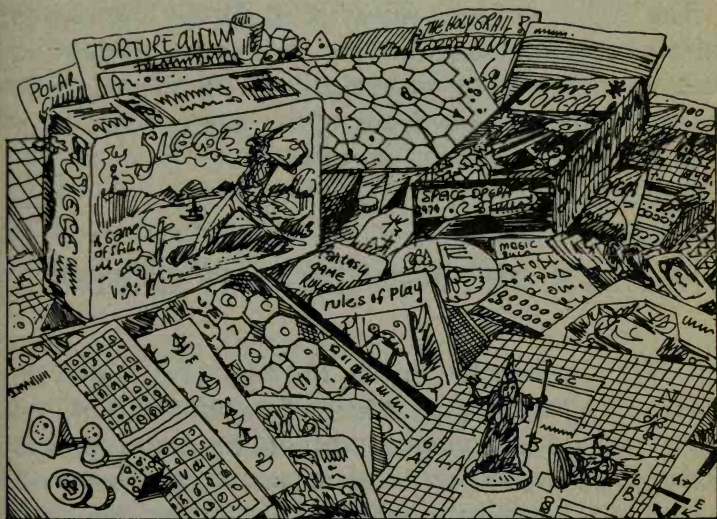
134

You hear the word 'granted' and the man vanishes. At your feet appears a small cloth bag. Inside are 35 Gold Pieces which you happily put in your backpack. You leave the room. Go to 67.



CHAPTER 3

GAMES YOU CAN BUY



Since its beginnings in the early 1970s, the RPG industry has experienced tremendous growth. There are now dozens of RPG systems, covering almost every conceivable subject from the Bronze Age to the Far Future; some of the systems cover the same subjects—others offer players the chance to explore unique areas of history or fantasy. Again,

some systems rely on simplicity or 'playability' to attract adherents; others attempt to cover every possible eventual-ity within their chosen subject.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss something of how an RPG achieves its aim of allowing players to enter a world of the imagination, and interact with the situations he or she finds there. Taking four of the most popular game systems—*Dungeons & Dragons*, *RuneQuest*, *Traveller* and *Tunnels & Trolls*— each is investigated objectively to discover what methods are used to enable players to role-play, and how events are controlled.

This is followed by a survey of all the RPGs known to be in print at the time of writing. It is not the intention to endorse or criticize any particular game, but to give, as far as space allows, a description of the subject material for each, the components and the approach.

A NOTE ON LEARNING THE GAMES

An RPG is a complex animal; the rules have to provide referee and players with a code of conduct on how the game is played, and provide systems to regulate events and activities that will occur in the game setting. They have one advantage over most other types of game—they need not be specific about what can and cannot be done, as the participants themselves do this.

Imagine trying to develop a set of rules to cover any possible event that might happen to you in your daily life. The rules would have to cover everything from how much a meal costs, through the kind of jobs you could do and how much you would be paid, and how long it would take and what your chances of success are if you chose to learn

to play the violin, to what would happen if you ran someone over in the street or murdered (or were murdered by) a total stranger. Now enlarge your set of rules to cover all the actions everyone else could conceivably do!

A single RPG can't hope to cover all this, and doesn't need to. It is limited partly by the setting it chooses to portray, which will rule out some possibilities, and partly by the use of a referee, who can determine the outcome of unusual or rare events not covered by the rules. Ever so, the rules to an RPG are a mass of numbers, tables, charts, explanations and assumptions. How is a new player to make sense of it all?

This note is primarily a look at the different methods used to aid players to understand role-playing in the games themselves, as many designers recognize the need to integrate the learning process into the game rules.

Basically, there are three methods adopted by game designers: the programmed learning technique, learning by example, and the familiarity assumption.

1 *Programmed learning*

The theory behind this method is to introduce the player to a complex rules system in a series of easy stages. The player is encouraged to study each section carefully and ensure he understands it before moving on to the next section.

2 *Learning by example*

Games using this system provide examples of how the rules are used, interspersed amongst the tables and text. A clearly written and relevant example is—like a picture—worth a thousand words.

3 *The familiarity assumption*

Strictly speaking this is not a learning method at all. Some RPGs prefer to avoid explanation by assuming a basic familiarity with role-playing.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Oldest yet still the most popular of the fantasy role-playing games, *Dungeons & Dragons (D&D)* has evolved from its early days to keep pace with developments in the hobby. The accent is on playability—whenever a conflict arises in design terms between ‘realism,’ (if such a concept can be said to apply to a fantasy situation) and playability, the latter is generally chosen. This is because a high degree of realism usually entails complicated rules systems, and more of them.

Three official versions or rules collections exist for *D&D*: the *Basic Set* and its companion extension, the *Expert Set*; the *Original* or *Collectors Edition*; and the *Advanced D&D* series. This makes matters rather confusing to newcomers, as the various supplements and playing aids apply to different versions of the game. In practice, however, the *Original* edition is obsolete, and only of interest to veteran players and collectors. Players generally familiarize themselves with the *Basic Set* and then progress to the *Expert Set* (though the *Expert Set* is often by-passed), eventually moving to *Advanced D&D*, where the full scope of the game system is realized. The following description of the game concentrates on *Advanced D&D*, although most of the comments are applicable to other versions.

For *Advanced D&D*, five rulebooks exist. Three are

absolutely essential to play the game: *The Players Handbook*, the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. The other two are *Deities & Demigods* and the *Fiend Folio* (a *Monster Manual* extension), also highly desirable to play the game.

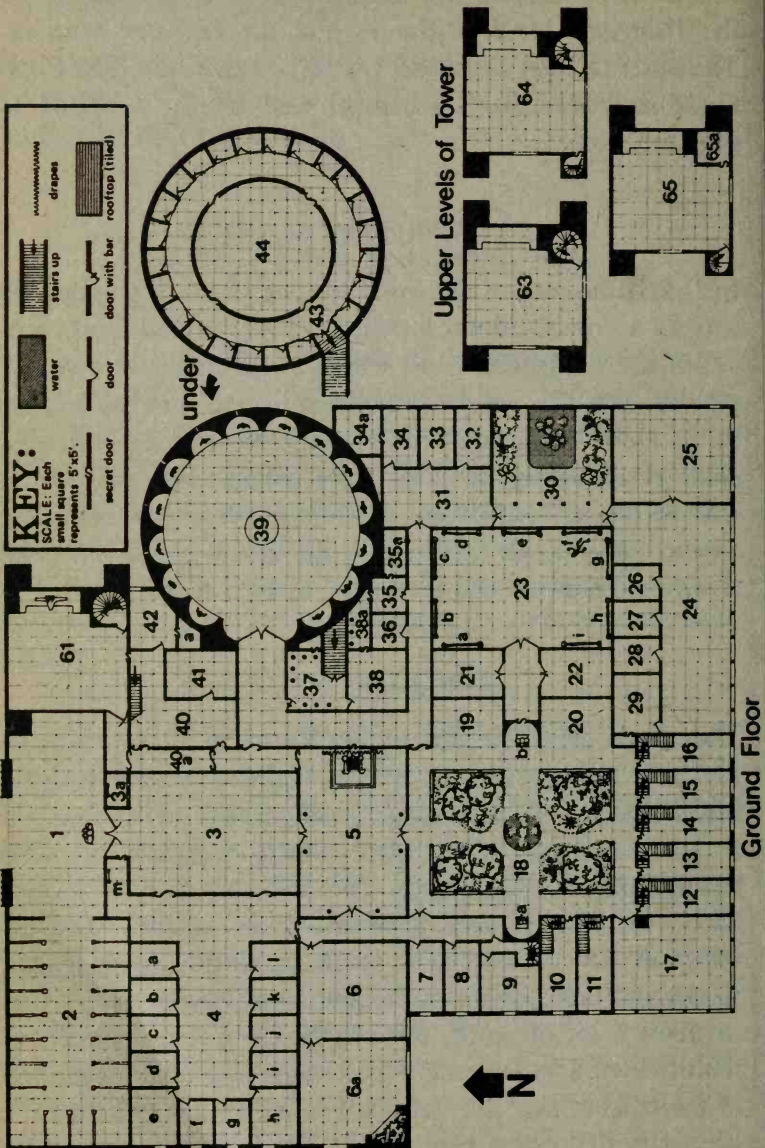
THE DUNGEON MASTER

In *D&D*, the role of Dungeon Master (DM) is pivotal. He acts as a combination of referee, designer and God, providing the background and setting to the game, overseeing players' activities and generally keeping the game on course. Some *D&D* enthusiasts always take the role of DM (and some prefer always to be players), while others swap from DM to player in different adventures. However, the DM cannot be a player as well in the same game, since he knows the dangers and rewards and their locations.

BACKGROUND

The roots of *D&D* are to be found in heroic fantasy literature transposed into a semi-medieval economical/political system. There is no set background, rather the DM is given rules/guidelines with which to create his own world along the above lines. The DM must himself formulate cities, nations, races, religions, towns, villages, outdoor/dungeon adventures, etc., set in a world where magic works and monsters from literature and legend roam. This involves a lot of work, but can be enjoyable in itself. A multitude of supplementary material is available (described in the chapter on 'Accessories') to aid in the task. It isn't necessary to create a complete world straight away, but the DM has to keep ahead of his players' explorations! (See Fig. 2.)

DICING WITH DRAGONS



CHARACTERISTICS

Once the milieu is set, the players must generate the characters through which they will participate in the game. Six characteristics are diced for on 3D6.

These are Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity and Charisma. Once rolled they are permanent and unchanging, unless exceptional circumstances arise, e.g. decreased due to disease or increased by the acquisition of some great magic.

A character's specifications are the basis by which a player's 'class' will be chosen (see 'Classes and skills', below), and will affect the success or failure of any actions taken. For instance, a Fighter with great strength will find it easier 'to hit' an adversary, and will inflict more damage if he does.

RACES

A large number of races appear in D&D, but only a few may be used as player-characters. These are mankind, hobbits, elves, dwarves, half-orcs and gnomes. A player might choose to be a dwarf (if his characteristics allow for it) and will gain commensurate racial advantages, e.g. the ability to see in the dark, but will be penalized by a level limitation (see 'Experience levels'). Because of this, players in campaign games generally prefer mankind.

CLASSES AND SKILLS

The concept of classes is one of the cornerstones of the *D&D* system, defining the options open to a player in any given situation—classes could also be described as areas of specialization.

DICING WITH DRAGONS

The classes available in *D&D* are the Fighter, Cleric, Thief, Magic User, Druid, Ranger, Paladin, Illusionist, Assassin, Bard and Monk. More are to be found in the magazines and supplements that cover the *D&D* system. Basically, a player's race and characteristics largely determine which class he chooses. For instance, a high strength indicates a greater probability of success in the Fighter classes, and wisdom in the Cleric class. Some classes are harder to qualify for and are correspondingly more powerful in some areas.

Each class has its own set of skills and abilities; a Magic User may choose and cast a selection of spells but is deficient in physical skills. A thief would have a good base percentage chance of succeeding in various actions peculiar to his own class, such as picking pockets, opening locks, etc.

Each class has restrictions as well. For instance, The Magic User may wear only leather armour or no armour at all, and is restricted to the use of staves or daggers as weapons. Conversely, a Fighter is not limited in his choice of armour and weapons but may never cast spells.

Multi-class characters are possible, e.g. a Fighter/Cleric, but only one may be played in any one adventure until a certain level (see 'Experience levels') has been reached, when the player may use both class skills at the same time, with some restrictions, e.g. a Fighter/Magic User may use weapons and cast spells, but wears only leather armour.

EXPERIENCE LEVELS

This system is used to monitor a player's success in improving his character's skills and abilities. A progression in levels signifies an increase in knowledge/ability/skill. (For instance, a Thief's base chance to move silently, etc.,

increases as his level rises, while a Magic User will acquire more spells.) A new level is achieved by obtaining the required number of 'experience points' for the class. Experience points are awarded to the player by the referee according to rule specifications; usually, these are for slaying opponents and monsters, gaining magic items/monetary treasure and successfully practising class skills.

The theory behind awarding points for gaining items and money is that to do so a player must have been successful in practising his class skills. The greater the task or find, the greater the reward. As a player's level rises, the easier it becomes to succeed, but the experience points required to 'go up' another level are proportionally higher. Most classes have unlimited levels, others, like the Druid and Monk, have level limits (14 and 17 respectively). Some races also have level limitation, e.g. an Elven Fighter may only progress to 4th level and no further (unless exceptional strength is evident).

Thus a player is 'winning' the higher his level is, and the longer he survives in the referee's world.

THE COMBAT SYSTEM

In *D&D* combat, realism is subordinated to flavour and playability. The system is relatively simple. Combat is organized around melee rounds divided into segments, to regulate combat actions and spell casting (see 'Magic'). Surprise and Initiative dice are thrown for a combat encounter between participants. If a player is surprised then his opponent(s) will gain a number of segments in which to act, i.e. get free blows in. Initiative determines who acts first. Spells used in combat vary in the time taken to cast (in segments).

A player, in physical melee, will have a base chance 'to

hit' (rolled on 1D20) which is dependent on the player's level. The higher the level the lower the number required to hit. Armour class also affects the basic hit chance; the lower the armour class, the harder it is to hit. Hit chance will also be modified by the weapon vs armour class table. To hit an opponent in plate mail and shield (armour class 2) a player wielding a broadsword would have a -3 penalty on his 'to hit' roll. If a Military pick was used instead, then a bonus of +2 would result. Thus the efficacy of various weapons used against different types of armour is taken into account.

Missile weapons are covered in the same way, with the same table, with dice modifiers for close, medium and long ranges.

Different classes use different 'to hit' tables. Therefore, the Fighter, trained in combat, will find it easier to hit, as opposed to the Magic User, untrained in combat.

The 'to hit' throw is not to determine if a combatant has successfully landed a blow on an opponent as such (a running melee of strikes, parries, etc. is assumed to be going on) but rather to determine if a blow has successfully penetrated an opponent's armour or defences to inflict damage (see 'Weapons' and 'Wounds').

WEAPONS

A large number of weapons are available for use in D&D, all based on medieval weaponry. Each weapon has a particular range of damage that it inflicts upon opponents, measured in hit points (see 'Wounds'). Thus a sword will do 1 to 8 points of damage when it hits, modified by any high strength bonuses or magical effects. Classes are limited to the use of certain weapons; a rise in level usually meaning proficiency in another weapon usable by that class.

WOUNDS

Each character is assigned a number of hit points which reflect his physical ability to assimilate wounds, and his ability to lessen/minimize the damage taken from a blow.

A number of hit dice are assigned per character level, usually on a one-for-one basis. The type of dice thrown are different according to character-class. A Fighter uses D10, a Magic User uses D4. Thus, a fifth-level Fighter will have from 5 to 50 hit points. Once a character's hit points are reduced by damage to zero, that character is unconscious and will lose one further point per round until -10 is reached, when he is judged to be dead. This 'period of grace' is to enable the last minute healing/binding of wounds of the stricken character by others in an attempt to save his miserable life.

The theory behind the increase of hit points with level is that as a character becomes more experienced, so his ability to lessen damage taken from a blow increases (like turning his head at the last moment to avoid losing an eye). An increase in hit points is not a strange increase in bodily health or size, but rather an increase in skill. Health is catered for by a high or low constitution, giving hit dice bonuses or penalties.

ARMOUR

This is covered by the use of armour classes (ACs). Each type of armour worn by a character will be given a class from AC10 to AC -10. AC10 represents no armour, AC2 represents plate and shield. The lower the AC the better protected is the wearer.

AC2 is the lowest that can be reached by normal means for player-characters. A character with high dexterity can

more easily avoid blows, so a high dexterity will reduce the armour class further. Magic armour, depending on its effectiveness, is given plusses, e.g. a + 1 (or +2, +3, etc.) shield will further modify the AC.

A man in plate with a +1 shield would have an AC of 1 (or less if high dexterity was evident). NB: giving defensive measures a plus value can cause confusion among beginners, since they are really minuses on the armour class. Some monsters may have very low armour classes reflecting very tough and resilient skins or a highly magical nature.

In D&D, armour does not reduce damage taken, but it is harder to be hit whilst wearing armour. Sometimes, a character with magic armour with high plusses and dexterity will find himself virtually invulnerable in physical melee. Again, there are character class restrictions on the use of armour.

POISON, OIL AND ACID

Poison may be used only by certain character classes and must be bought or made (if that skill is known). There are five general types, from A to E, E being the most virulent. If a player is poisoned by whatever means, a saving throw must be made (see 'Saving throws'), and if failed, either hit points will be lost or death will result, depending on the poison type.

The use of flaming oil is restricted to certain classes, as acid. Acid may be made by Alchemists, a supplementary class.

SAVING THROWS

Various occurrences require the player or monster involved to save against the effects of that occurrence, such as spells, death, magic, paralysis, dragon breath and poison. This is done by throwing a D20 and equalling or exceeding the required number (which is dependent on class and level) found on the relevant table. Usually, a successful save means that half damage is taken; an unsuccessful save, full damage from whatever is coming.

If poison is saved against, usually the poison has no effect. This might appear unrealistic, and to some extent it is. The theory is that a successful save means the failure of the poison to enter the system and, if ingested, only some damage will be taken, i.e. the character's system manages to survive and overcome the poison.

The saving throw is supposed to reflect the fact that player-characters follow a heroic vein, and should be allowed that last minute stroke of fortune that happens to all heroes of fantasy literature. The discretion of the DM is called for in this area.

MAGIC

Magic exists in the D&D world in magical planes which spell-casters tap for energy. A character who can use magic and rises in experience levels, gradually gains access to more powerful spells. A number of classes have special spells. These spells are arranged in order of potency, around a level system; thus a first-level Cleric will be able to utilize one spell from the clerical first-level spells and so on. The magic system is comprehensively catered for, with a great range of spells, well-described, and with much flavour and adequate justification for its

workings. Spells are described in terms of duration, area of effect, casting time, components, whether or not a saving throw is applicable and the spell effects. Magic is central to *D&D* and, at high levels, the Magic User class is the most powerful.

Spells are learned from the character's spell book, and retained in memory for use. Magic User/Illusionist spells may be used only once per day, as it is deemed that once cast a spell is lost from memory and must be re-memorized; a process which takes many hours. Clerical spells are received through prayer to the relevant gods who empower the Cleric/Druid with spells, and these must also be renewed each day. This might seem somewhat arbitrary, but the width and comprehensiveness of *D&D* spells makes up for this.

ALIGNMENT, GODS AND RELIGION

The manner in which a player will play his character is guided by alignment, another cornerstone concept. Alignment can be seen as a player-character's outlook on life, and he can choose to be Good, Neutral or Evil. The way in which he behaves as a Good, Neutral or Evil character is constructed by choosing to be Lawful, Neutral or Chaotic. Lawful means a methodical and structured approach; Chaotic, an anarchistic, individual, and law-less (not necessarily in the criminal sense) approach. A player may be Lawful Good, Chaotic Good, Neutral Good, Lawful Neutral or any such combination of the two types. Thus a Neutral Good character would be unconcerned with matters of the 'cosmic balance', but behave in a benevolent manner to those around him.

Certain character classes have alignment restrictions—a Paladin must be Lawful Good; a Druid, Neutral Neutral;

the Ranger, Chaotic or Neutral Good, and so on. A Thief doesn't have to be Evil (he may be Good) but is certainly not Lawful.

Alignment is important in religion too, and strict alignment behaviour will be necessary for success as a Cleric. All deities in D&D are strongly aligned, especially in the Lawful/Neutral/Chaotic area, and worshippers will follow a similar if not identical alignment.

The DM will find it necessary to use either the religious system found in *Deities & Demigods* or create one of his own, with a number of gods covering a wide range of alignments. Religion plays an integral role in *D&D*, not only in terms of clerical necessity, but also because alignments regulate the interaction of characters; hatred between radically opposed alignments will explode into murderous violence.

This aspect of *D&D* is often criticized as being arbitrary and unreal, but again it works if played well and provides a useful structural framework on which not only characters but governments and worlds can be moulded.

MONEY

The monetary system is divided into platinum, gold, electrum, silver and copper pieces, in that order. Thus 10 cp = 1 sp; 10 sp = 1 ep; 2 ep = 1 gp and 5 gp = 1 platinum piece. Prices of various items are found in the rules, but are to be used only as a guideline by the DM.

Taking into account the recommendation for payments to workers, an economic system based on the rules could never work! As a game system it works well enough though.

MONSTERS AND TREASURE

A major goal for players in *D&D* is to acquire treasure, but to do so invariably requires a lot of effort, such as killing monsters. 'Monster' in *D&D* is a generic term covering all hostiles to the players and their group. The rules list a great many of these creatures, all of which are graded, as in character levels, by hit dice and have differing attack and defence abilities. There are humanoid creatures (orcs, goblins, etc.), and dragons and reptiles, right through to exotic and strange creatures such as Ochre Jellies and Slime Molds. No other RPG has such a wide range of monsters, each clearly explained, as *AD&D*.

Treasure is mostly monetary, but magic items are the prime goal of treasure-seeking players. Again, the list of magic items is huge, outnumbering other RPGs. The commonest items are weapons, armour, potions and scrolls. Magic weapons and armour are given plusses (or minuses if cursed). Thus a +1 sword will give a +1 die modifier to hit. (See 'Armour' for magic armour effects.) Potions and rings will endow the imbiber or wearer with various abilities, e.g. flying, invisibility, etc. Scrolls will usually have spells scribed upon them. A sort of 'Finder beware' effect is inherent in such items, as players probably won't know what they have found without using it—it may turn out to have unpleasant effects on the user!

Miscellaneous items will have all sorts of powers, e.g. Broom of Flying, Helm of Telepathy, Gauntlets of Dexterity, etc. Magic items can range from minor powers up to incredibly powerful artifacts. The DM is also free to create his own items—the only limit is imagination.

SUMMARY

D&D has remained the most popular RPG ever since its first appearance back in 1974. This is due to its flexibility, scope for infinite possibility and general playability.

Its flavour as a swords and sorcery/heroic fantasy game is undeniable, but those players who place realism at the head of their list of game traits may find *D&D* a little *too* fantastic.

People coming into the role-playing hobby for the first time usually don't want to be burdened with hosts of complicated tables; they are attracted to *Dungeons & Dragons* because of the simple approach in *Basic D&D*. Thereafter a sort of 'inertia trap' operates; players are unwilling to write off the time and effort (and expense) they have invested to want to switch to another game system. This is not to say that the game does not do all that it sets out to do; its inventor has always stressed playability above realism. Individual DMs are encouraged to develop the game along their own lines, and there is certainly no shortage of published material relating to *D&D* in playing aids and magazines to help with this aim. Therefore, it is unlikely that *D&D* will ever be superseded in popularity. And its designer must be congratulated for initiating the concept of role-play and deserves all the success of the game. It must be remembered that all other RPG systems were written with the benefit of hindsight. *D&D* was the daddy of them all.

RUNEQUEST

Recent surveys and awards in the UK have suggested that *RuneQuest* is, after *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* and *Traveller*, the third most popular role-playing game system. The setting for *RuneQuest* has its roots in the myths and legends of the ancient Bronze Age world of Greece, the Middle East and the Celtic Kingdoms, though it does not borrow directly from such tales. It is a fantasy setting complete with its own world, peoples, events and religions, but the rules can also be used to suit a campaign of the players' own devising set in the same era.

THE GAME

RuneQuest is available in two forms. The *RuneQuest* rulebook is sold as an item in its own right, or the player may purchase the Boxed Set, which includes the rulebook, an introductory rules booklet entitled *Basic Role-Playing*, a selection of non-player character enemies, an introductory scenario booklet, and dice. The basis of the game is further developed in a range of accessories, although it should be stressed that the rules system is complete in its one rulebook; the accessories are devoted to scenarios, playing aids and expansions of the background to the world it is set in.

BACKGROUND

In *RuneQuest*, the Game Master (as the referee is known in this rules system) need not create his own fantasy setting. *RuneQuest* provides the world of Glorantha woven into the fabric of the rules, for players to explore in the



A Tusk Rider from RuneQuest

personas of their player-characters. Such a system, apart from saving a good deal of effort on the part of the Game Master (or GM), has several advantages. Expansions of the background can be provided in a rational and consistent manner, building on what has gone before. Players can feel they have a definite place within the game as their characters develop, enhancing the feeling of the role-playing. Lastly, players who are complete strangers at the start of a game but know the rules and background will be able to interact more readily, since they are approaching the game with a similar 'education' or viewpoint. Glorantha is briefly described with regard to geography (including map), history and religions in the beginning of the basic *RuneQuest* rulebook. It is a Bronze Age 'flat earth' world, in which magic is extremely common; most beings have at least a few spells. All the traditional monsters—elves, dwarves, trolls, etc.—plus a few new ones are present, but the dominant force is mankind, whose technology and social organization are roughly those of a romanticized Heroic-era ancient Greece.

CHARACTERS

Players usually take the part of human characters in *RuneQuest*— new players are advised to do so—but there is a possibility of playing a character of some other race.

Adventuring is assumed to be a perfectly natural means of earning a living, especially for young characters—the equivalent of finishing school. Guilds of adventurers and religious cults will advance funds to such characters (in return for various commitments) to train and equip themselves. Each player-character has 7 basic characteristics, rolled on 3D6, and a percentile social status. The characteristics are: Strength, Constitution, Size, Intelligence,

Power, Dexterity, and Charisma. These are all the same, roughly, as in *D&D*, except Size—a character's mass and height, and Power—which combines the favour of the gods with magical ability. Most of these can be increased, with the exception of Size and Intelligence, by later training on the character's part. This is usually too expensive for most people, but the option remains. However, successful use of magic may result in an increase of Power, and therefore in an individual's magical prowess.

SKILLS

Instead of a system of experience levels and character classes, a character has numerous skills. These cover weapon use and other skills; each is rated as a % chance of success, and each such % chance may be improved by experience separately. Thus it is possible to become a master of some skills while others are never improved.

An individual has a chance of successfully using each of his skills, expressed as a percentage. This starts at a basic % chance, usually about 20% for weapon skills and 5% for others, with modifications for good characteristics (or bad ones). Each time a character wants to (say) hide in shadows, he consults his character sheet to look up his percentage chance, and rolls % dice. A score less than or equal to this chance indicates success.

When a character successfully uses a skill on an adventure, this may improve it. Whenever he has a week off (literally) to reflect on what happened, the character may dice to see if he has learned from his experiences.

He subtracts his current % chance of success from 100; to this number he may add 1% per Intelligence point over 13. He rolls % dice; if the score is less than or equal to

the number just derived, his % chance of success is increased by 5% for that skill only.

Chances of success must be improved by alternately learning by experience and learning by instruction; consecutive 5% increments of skill may not be learned by the same method.

A character with the money may take time off and attend a course run by a guild or cult in which one of his skills is increased by 5%. This is automatic if the money and time are allocated to it.

COMBAT

A character's combat prowess is measured by his weapon and shield skills. These give a basic % chance of hitting, which is rolled for each time the character attempts to hit. The defender may use shield or weapon skills to parry an incoming blow; these give a % parry chance which is diced for separately.

A character's Size, Strength and Dexterity give him a basic strike rank; each weapon has a strike rank also. The two are added together, and the number so generated determines in which of the 12 strike ranks of the combat round the character may attack. A character may make two attacks, two parries, or one of each in a combat round; however, the second attack is 5 strike ranks later. Thus if the character/weapon combination used has a strike rank over 7, the second attack is delayed until the next turn.

A character may opt to delay his attack, in which case it is launched in a later strike rank; in this case, the attacker may modify his hit-location die roll if his blow connects.

If a hit is scored, a D20 is rolled to determine the area hit, which then takes damage accordingly. Strength of the attacker can affect damage if it is extreme. A character's

hit points are basically equal to his constitution; each body area is assigned a number of hits it can take, and the effects of exceeding this amount of damage are detailed. Limbs may be rendered useless or in extreme cases amputated; if the abdomen, chest or head are damaged over their limit the character is incapacitated and dies unless he can be healed magically in two turns. In the case of an abdominal wound he may heal himself.

If a character rolls an exceptionally low % for an attack or parry, it is said to be critical; it does extra damage or is especially effective. If the roll is exceptionally high, it is said to have fumbled; in this case a range of hilarious mishaps may occur, a table being consulted with % dice to determine which has happened—these include accidentally hitting friends or yourself, breaking weapons or armour, falling over, etc.

MAGIC

RuneQuest departs from traditional RPG coverage in that every character—player and non-player alike—has the use of magic. There are those who specialize in it, but most creatures have at least one or two spells.

A character has a number of power points equal to his Power characteristic available to him. Spells cost from one point upwards to cast, cost increasing with effectiveness and damage caused. Many require a focus in the form of a symbol carved on some appropriate object for the character to cast them.

If cast, a spell is assumed to strike or activate. A character automatically remembers a spell if he has specified it as being 'ready'. However, unwilling targets are allowed a saving throw determined by comparing your current power with your target's. Casting most spells re-

duces your own current power by the number of points used to fuel them, and characters of exceedingly low powers are easy targets. Other advantages accrue to keeping your power high, so spell casting is not as widespread as might be feared.

Power used to cast most spells can be recovered by rest, and it is possible to acquire familiars and friendly spirits upon whose Power you may draw.

Battle magic is the common everyday magic for adventurers; it may heal damage, increase hit probability, etc., and most thinking beings know some of it. Battle magic is available for the asking, since anyone will teach it to you for a price. It tends to consist of the minor combat spells. New battle magic spells may be researched by Rune-level characters.

Rune Magic is rather more sophisticated, and only Rune-level characters may learn Rune magic, since these are the powerful spells kept secret by various cults. In addition, Rune magic always takes effect before other attacks—whereas battle magic may come in at any strike rank. Further, casting Rune spells does not use up Power points. Thus Rune magic is very powerful.

There are two classes of Rune-level character: Rune Lords and Rune Priests. Rune Lords are fighter-specialists, and Rune Priests magic specialists.

Only Rune Lords may attempt a Divine Intervention. However, using this ability reduces one's Power characteristic (which may be increased in the same manner as improving skills by experience) and since a character must have at least 15 Power to be a Rune Lord, this is not tried lightly. A Rune Lord of a cult gains other advantages: He may increase his base chances of success over 100%, which ensures success even if the referee gives minuses for difficult tasks; he is supported more or less completely by

the cult's other members, getting free board and lodging; and so on. In return, he must give most of his loot to the cult and do quests and tasks for it.

Rune Priests are the most powerful characters in the game. They must have increased their Power over 18 and met other requirements. In return, they get the same benefits and responsibilities as Rune Lords, and in addition may learn Rune Magic. This is done by sacrificing points of Power to their god (which is what the gods get out of it), being careful to retain at least 18 points, in return for which the god teaches the character a Rune spell.

CULTS

These are the organizations which hold the secret Rune spells and train Rune-level characters. They are religions, and also perform the same functions as alignments in D&D, that is, they lay down standards of character behaviour. These cults are detailed in *Cults of Prax* and other sources, and though they are intended as guidelines only, most Game Masters use the 'official' cults.

Cults also perform functions to the medieval guilds of Europe, and are normally embroiled in some sort of power struggle with other cults or political units.

The way to think of them is as a combination religion, guild and union for a member character.

MONSTERS

Monsters in *RuneQuest* are treated in the same way as characters; each has its own characteristics and skill percentages. This means that—although average values are provided in an appendix—rolling up monsters is a lot of work, and so *Foes* and other pre-generated monster lists

are useful to the referee. Most of the monsters will be familiar to role-playing gamers, but a few are unique to Glorantha and *RuneQuest*. Of these, baboons, dragonewts, ducks, morokanths and broos are the obvious ones.

TREASURE

Treasure is mostly coins and jewellery, with a few magic items. Magic items usually are focuses for spells and basically allow a character to use spells without having learned them. Also available are maps, secret technique scrolls—which allow the reader to increase a skill by 5%—and other goodies. *RuneQuest*, like most other RPGs, has its own monetary system: 10 copper Clacks to one silver Lunar, 20 Lunars to one golden Wheel. Lunars are the most common coinage.

SUMMARY

RuneQuest has a different approach to role-playing than the majority of game systems, and therein lies its success. Whilst the system is capable of covering any type of role-playing in other times, as the publishers have demonstrated with other games using the same basic design, its main attraction is the way a comprehensive background has been invented and integrated into the game. The character generation and other rules systems are also illustrated throughout by sample characters being put through the procedures, and this is a very useful learning aid. Despite the thickness of the rulebook, much of it is taken up by background material, and descriptions of spells, monsters and so on; the actual rules content is surprisingly small for what is really a sophisticated role-playing system.

In places the systems are detailed—combat for example—

though still fairly simple. The designers have tried to build the system up in layers so as not to overburden the learning process at any one point. It is possible to stop part way and play a truncated version of the game, without Rune magic for example, but the game will mainly appeal to those who want a wholehearted, logical role-playing framework rather than a game to play at odd moments with little effort. Even with the detail, RuneQuest is eminently playable and represents a middle road between simplicity/playability and complexity/realism.

TRAVELLER

Traveller is a science-fiction RPG set in the distant future, when humanity has made the leap to the stars and interstellar travel is as common as international travel today. This means that *Traveller* is set against a background drawn from adventure-oriented science fiction literature, and the scope and breadth of the game are limited only by the imagination and skill of the players and their referee. Players are not restricted to any location or style of society: in *Traveller* there is an entire universe to be explored—giant star-spanning empires (good, evil or both), huge starfleets, wily interstellar merchants (or pirates, depending on the role you want to play), strange places and alien beings, complex diplomatic manoeuvres, larger than life heroes, heroines and villains.

THE GAME

Traveller is available in two forms. *Basic Traveller* is a boxed set containing the three main rules booklets (Book 1, *Characters and Combat*; Book 2, *Starships*; Book 3,

Worlds and Adventures). *Deluxe Traveller* is also a boxed set and also contains Books 1 to 3, but adds extra material—Book 0, *An Introduction to Traveller*, applies itself to guiding the novice *Traveller* player and referee through the initial stages of understanding role-playing in general and the *Traveller* system in particular; *The Imperial Fringe*, a simple introductory adventure which also serves to show the type of information required to construct a *Traveller* adventure; and a mapsheet of the Spinward Marches, which is the setting for *The Imperial Fringe* as well as a lot of official supplementary material.

BACKGROUND

A science fiction background for *Traveller* has been worked out in considerable detail—mainly in supplementary material—and is continually being added to. Nevertheless, players are not restricted to this background and may choose any science fiction or science fantasy rationale on which to base their play—either from specific literary, film or TV themes, or from their own imagination. Space-faring humanity plays a large part in the official campaign which chooses to assume that, even in the far future, mankind's basic character will be largely unchanged. Several different types of humans exist, though they are broadly similar in playing terms. A few major alien races also exist around and amongst the human-dominated regions, and experienced players who are seeking a new challenge can utilize these as player-characters. Many more alien races, mostly confined to a single planet, are also assumed to exist.

An important part of the game concept is that no instantaneous travel or communication system has been invented by the time the campaign takes place—so communication is

limited to the speed of travel. It's something like the old days of sailing ships; it can take weeks (even years) for news to travel from the central administration of the empire to the frontiers. The campaign therefore assumes that some form of feudalism prevails in the empire which gives the players many more opportunities for advancement than if the setting had been one of total political control.

The campaign background to *Traveller* aims at giving a realistic social and political framework in which science fiction adventures take place. It attempts to explain not merely what, but why events and general trends in the campaign happen. This type of material may be uninteresting or irrelevant to many players, but it provides the necessary foundation on which believable adventures are set.

CHARACTERS

Six characteristics—Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education, and Social Standing—are the basis of character construction in *Traveller*. In the case of human characters these are rolled up on 2D6, and this will cover the majority and certainly the earliest of game personas used by players. Alien racial types and human variants may have modified characteristics in order to reflect their relative abilities.

In many role-playing games the main characteristics develop through time. Except in a limited sense this does not happen in *Traveller*. A player-character might gain one or two extra points, but his or her characteristics will stay more or less the same—in human characters, no characteristic can exceed 15, for example. Instead, the characters gain an assortment of skills varying from expertise in various weapons and equipment to such things as the

ability to survive in a hostile environment, and the amount of influence you are likely to have in dealing with officialdom. Finally, characteristics actually decrease; once the character reaches a certain age, the player must make saving rolls against the effects of aging.

CAREERS

Once the basic characteristics are rolled up, characters do not, as in most RPGs, proceed straight into play. First they undergo training in a career—Army, Navy, Scouts, Merchant Service and so on—the main purpose of which is to gain skills and an amount of cash in the form of savings and a pension. Adventuring actually commences when the character has ‘mustered out’ of a career.

ALIENS AND ANIMALS

Any type of alien (or known) creature can be incorporated into *Traveller*. Living creatures are classified as intelligent or nonintelligent. In the case of intelligent aliens, the standard character system applies—with perhaps some modifications to give different characteristic values. This would reflect, for example, lower strength or higher dexterity as measured against the average human attributes.

Animals are handled on an ecological basis, being classified according to type, size, natural weapons, wounds taken and wounds caused, natural armour, speed, and the likelihood of fleeing or attacking. The type classification is by feeding behaviour—the standard ecological terms such as herbivore grazer, carnivore chaser. Rather than attributes, animals receive a single wound allowance, giving the number of hit points before the animal falls unconscious, and a further allowance to the animal’s death.

PSIONICS — extrasensory

Psionics—telepathy, telekinesis, clairvoyance and so forth—form a self-contained optional rules system in *Traveller*. This is because a character with strong psionic powers has a huge advantage in his or her adventuring. Characters can check for psionic strength, then attempt to learn individual skills. The types of activity require different psionic strength allowances to complete.

PERSONAL COMBAT

A simple combat system is used in *Traveller*, based on the type of weapon being wielded. Even alien creatures are classified by weapons type for combat purposes—claws, teeth, hooves, and stingers, for example.

The heart of the combat system is a simple two-dice throw; achieving a score of eight or more is a hit, and damage is taken according to the type of weapon. To this basic throw are added various 'Die Modifiers' or DMs, to cover such things as the user's skill with the weapon, the range and the armour of the target. Such DMs may be positive or negative, making it easier or harder to achieve a hit.

Hits are taken as points of damage; in the case of characters, as wounds reducing the physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance), and animals have a single wound allowance depending on their size. Inanimate objects too (walls, for example) can also be defined in terms of the number of points needed to destroy them. Rules for surprise, range at which the combat takes place, and group morale all serve to regulate proceedings.

STARSHIPS AND INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL

If you are so inclined, it is possible to design, build and operate your very own starship—cast off and set into space, and with a trusty crew roam the space lanes in search of trade and profit. The starship design system allows the designer—within certain restrictions—to arm and equip a vessel to his or her own specifications. The rules cover hulls, drives, computers and controls, accommodation, fuel, weapons, and auxiliary ship's vehicles, and allow many different types of vessel—warships, merchants, scout ships and asteroid miners, as well as smaller vessels capable only of moving within a stellar system—shuttles, cutters and fighters.

Interstellar travel is based on a typical science fiction device, the jump drive. Depending on the model of drive fitted, a starship can travel between one and six parsecs ($3\frac{1}{4}$ to $19\frac{1}{2}$ light years) in one jump with an apparent time lapse of a week. There is no instantaneous communication in *Traveller*, and so messages only travel as fast as a starship can carry them; rules also cover the economics of starship operation—how many passengers or loads of cargo are available for shipment, how much fuel, maintenance and other operating expenses cost.

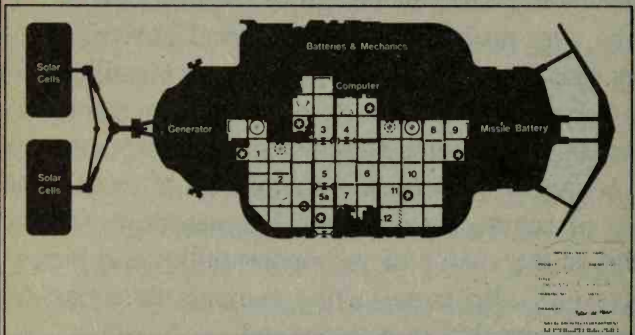
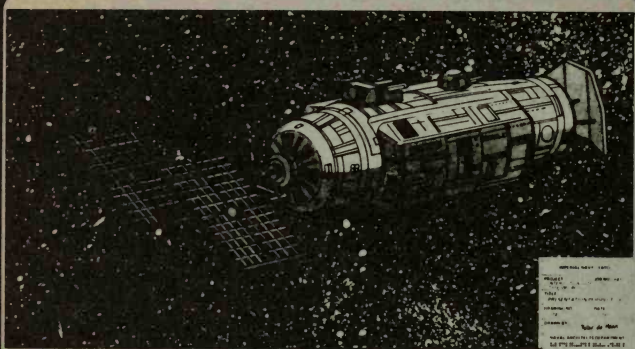
Within a star system, the normal rules of physics apply (albeit with technology much advanced on the present—such as the everyday use of fusion drives, for example), and starships move via realistic vectors and escape velocities. But *Traveller* is not a 'science heavy' game system; it isn't necessary to have an astrophysics degree, and anyone can captain his own armed merchant or sleek pirate corsair.

RUMOURS, PATRONS AND LIBRARY DATA

The *Traveller* referee has several means at his disposal to impart information to the players—either specific information to start or carry forward the adventure, or background material suitable to convey the general surroundings that the adventure is taking place in. This last point is particularly important in *Traveller*, where the players are likely to find themselves in environments totally alien to them—only in the general body of science fact and fiction, and in the referee's powers of description, can the players gain a good picture of the situations they are role-playing. Two major methods are used—encounters and library data.

Encounters, either incidental or central to the adventure, may be with prospective patrons, local government, military or customs officials, criminals, Imperial military forces, your average alien-in-the-street, or any number of other characters. The referee administers such encounters, using them to guide—or mislead—the players towards a specific course of action, for example. Patrons are especially important as the source of job opportunities and hence pay. Players may also come across rumours that may lead to adventures, wealth, or a sticky end.

Library Data is a term used to cover the extraction of information, particularly background material, from (mainly) computer sources. Such things as descriptions of ship types, historical and political background, and descriptions of alien races are to be found. Library Data is mainly supportive material in *Traveller* supplements and adventures—very little of the background is explained in the basic rules. Such a course of action allows the purchaser either to invent his own 'universe' game setting, or go on to delve into the supplementary material set in a consistent background.



DECK PLAN LOCATION KEY

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Generator Access. Floor hatch to sensor array. Ceiling hatch for fusion gun turret inspection. | 5a. Airlock. |
| 2. Workroom. | 6. Store. |
| 3. Machinery Access. Fibre optic backup computer system in this area. | 7. Life Support Systems. |
| 4. Computer Access. | 8. Store. |
| 5. Circulation Space. Floor hatch for | 9. Missile Battery Access. Magazine is loaded externally. |
| | 10. Stateroom. |
| | 11. Galley. |
| | 12. Fresher. |

ventral laser turret inspection. Ceiling hatch for dorsal laser turret inspection.

Imperial Standard Automated Interdiction Satellite, Type SMU-4C/D

Many hundreds of worlds throughout Imperial space are — for one reason or another — subject to interdiction; that is, the complete prohibition of civilian contact with the planetary surface and its inhabitants. However, the number of worlds interdicted far exceeds the capacity of the Imperial Navy and the Scout Service to maintain a continuous manned presence. In all but the most important cases, therefore, both services rely on automated satellites to carry out the interdiction role.

The Type SMU-4C here described was first placed in service in 1035 and is still common throughout the Spinward Marches. Several type variants exist to cater for specific or unusual requirements, but the 4C can be taken as typical (it is a Navy model; the 4D is a Scout Service model identical except for the computer and sensor packages). A number of similar types without the heavy armament can be found on observation missions or as information/marker buoys.

SPECIFICATIONS

Tonnage:	300 tons standard; 4200 cubic metres.
Crew:	None.
Dimensions in Metres:	39.0L x 16; 5W x 10.5H
Acceleration:	0.25G (orbital correction only).
Jump:	None.
Power Plant:	Not Applicable.
Engineering:	One Torvald NN2000 electric generator linked to battery storage. Solar cell derivation. Ten attitude thrusters.
Gravitics:	1G floor field in manned modes only.
Electronics:	IECC 4.4/LLJ computer with integral fibre-optic backup and fire control.
Range:	Theoretically unlimited manoeuvre and time-on-station provided a suitable solar power source available. Pressurised area contains supplies for 20 days.
Armament:	One missile rack with a magazine of 40 missiles. Three turrets: Two of two beam lasers and one sandcaster, and one of two fusion guns.
Screens:	Level 5 nuclear damper.
Configuration:	Cylinder. Unstreamlined. Level 6 hull armour.
Capacity:	Two persons may 'live in' to carry out maintenance and recalibration.
Ship's Vehicles:	None.
Special Features:	Meteor/debris shield and solar cell vanes.

BUILD DETAILS

Constructed by various yards over the period 1035 to 1064. 275 examples of the Type 4 were built, 100 model 4C going to the Navy and 100 model 4D going to the Scouts; the remaining 75 being special models for both services. Navy models use the number range SMU-107701 to 107960, Scout models SMU-66001 to 66199.

A MULTITUDE OF WORLDS

Any science fiction role-playing game requires a system to generate and describe a variety of locations—earthlike planets, moons, suns, giant hydrogen worlds such as Jupiter, asteroids—an endless number of possible sites for adventures to take place on, in or around. Our knowledge of the possible arrangements and constituents of solar systems is patchy, based on the incomplete observations we have so far managed to gain from our own solar system, and neighbouring suns. Hence any world generation system must shoot off into unknown territory—as SF literature has been doing for many years—and that used in *Traveller* is no exception. Those interested in planetology can argue about the pros and cons of the probabilities represented. For the referee and player, the main thing is how easy to use the system is—that is, the quickness and simplicity in generating worlds, and the ease and scope of extracting relevant material from it.

Traveller uses a simple alphanumeric string to represent various factors—size, atmosphere, hydrology, population, government type, law level, starport type, bases present, location. The methods used provide as simple a method as is probably possible on the complex matter of complete worlds. Obviously the burden of fleshing out this information, to make each world a unique experience to the players, is with the referee.

TRAVELLER PLAYING AIDS

Traveller playing-aids published by the designers of the game are a lot more organized than in most other role-playing systems, and fall under the following categories:

BOOKS are extensions of the basic rules system. Those

so far published deal in greater depth with specific areas of the rules; thus in Book 4, *Mercenary*, a more detailed generation system for the Army and Marine careers is given, together with general background on the use of mercenaries in the official campaign and comprehensive rules on setting up and using mercenary units in *Traveller*.

SUPPLEMENTS are booklets dealing with the official campaign background, or general playing aids. An example of the former is Supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches*, which gives maps, statistics and some general information on one sector of space—sixteen subsectors, over 400 worlds. Supplement 1, *1001 Characters*, gives ready-made statistics for non-player character encounters of the various *Traveller* careers featured in Book 1 of the basic rules, and is an example of the latter type of supplement, being a playing aid for the referee.

ADVENTURES and *DOUBLE ADVENTURES* are comprehensive scenarios, or a linked series of scenarios set in the official campaign. They contain background material, ready for use player characters (if the players do not have their own characters already), notes for the referee, and various maps, diagrams and descriptions, sufficient for the referee to play the adventure with minimal preparation.

GAMES compatible with *Traveller* also exist. Some, such as *Snapshot*, *Mayday* and *Azhanti High Lightning* could almost be called rulebooks, as they utilize all the basic character or starship combat systems with additional material. *Invasion Earth* and *Fifth Frontier War* use the same campaign background for largely independent games systems, although *Traveller* players can use the games to moderate adventures for individual characters.

SUMMARY

If the function of a role-playing rules system is to act as a vehicle to permit referee and players controlled use of their imaginations, then *Traveller* succeeds in the science fiction area of the hobby. Most of its component parts—characters, personal combat, starship design, world generation and so on—are simple and rational, yet comprehensive. Some restrictions have been imposed in order to make the system workable, but at worst these only rule out a few of the wilder science fiction inventions. Some scientific grounding is desirable on the part of the participants in order to get the most out of the game, but presumably anyone with an interest in SF should expect this. There are also some doubts expressed about the way the designers have approached the problem of getting participants into the process of making up adventures to play through. However, there is a range of ready-constructed adventures that serve as examples, or as a means of avoiding the problem.

More so than the fantasy genre, science fiction is a complicated subject to design a role-playing system for. It involves more technical subjects at a more basic level. *Traveller* owes its popularity to the fact that, so far, it offers the best compromise between realism (the imagined realism of science fiction literature and films, that is) and playability.

TUNNELS & TROLLS

This game is firmly set in an alternate world where fantasy is alive and magic works (a world something like, but not identical to, J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth as portrayed in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and other stories).

Within this world are numerous enchanted tunnel complexes that are liberally strewn with many types of treasure guarded by every imaginable form of monster, magic and trap. The rules system does not attempt to explain every last detail of the world—the accent is on simplicity, fun and playability. It is much less complex than most other role-playing systems dealing with the same type of quasi-medieval fantasy world.

If *Tunnels & Trolls (T&T)* did not have one special feature (apart from the general ease of play), no doubt it would have achieved little in the way of popularity—indeed, its author claims that it was originally designed purely for his own entertainment and that of his friends. Role-playing is generally a gregarious pastime—one person is the referee and designer of the locations to be explored, and several more are needed as players. However, many people are keen to engage in role-playing but for one reason or another cannot participate in groups of like-minded enthusiasts. An isolated geographical location or the lack of free time or transport, or work involving unsociable hours can all conspire to produce the solitaire role-player. In common with some other RPGs, *Tunnels & Trolls* has a considerable number of ready-for-use adventures, but, unlike most others, which are generally designed for normal group play, most of the *Tunnels & Trolls* adventures are specifically designed for solitaire play, and thus fill a distinct need in the role-playing market.

The inventor of the game does not suffer fools gladly, and the overall trend in the pre-generated adventures—particularly the solitaire dungeons—places a high premium on players making the right decisions. Even then, a certain amount of good dice rolling is required to get out alive, and generating new characters is a fairly frequent occurrence!

THE GAME

Tunnels & Trolls comes in two versions. One is the rulebook on its own; however, it does contain all you need to play the game (except for dice, paper, pencils and imagination). There are no supplementary rules booklets or other additional impedimenta required for 'advanced' or other versions of the game. The second version is the Boxed Set containing the above mentioned rulebook; a separate booklet entitled *Buffalo Castle*, which is a solitaire dungeon for novice players; a map, key and room descriptions for a 'game master' (i.e. refereed) dungeon—*Dungeon of the Bear, Level 1* for novice players; and six pre-rolled *Tunnels & Trolls* characters. Whilst not providing any elaborations on the rules themselves, the Boxed Set includes enough material for new players to get on with a *Tunnels & Trolls* game straight after they have digested the rules, without the need to think up a game situation.

The rulebook in both versions is (at the time of writing) the Fifth Edition, first published in August 1979. The First Edition was published in 1975.

CHARACTERS

Obviously a game with a possibly high turnover of characters requires a simple and fast generation system. *Tunnels & Trolls* provides such a system. Six 'prime attributes' are rolled on 3D6 for each: Strength, Intelligence, Luck, Constitution, Dexterity, and Charisma. These determine most of the character's innate abilities—which weapons can be used most effectively, how many languages may be spoken, how much punishment can be taken in combat. The type of character is chosen (mostly warriors, but also magicians and so on), and its race (human, elf, dwarf,

etc). From these characteristics and prime attributes, several other features are determined—height, weight, the amount of equipment and so on that may be carried, which languages are known, and a feature called Combat Adds, dealt with more fully below under 'Combat'.

For magicians, Strength, Intelligence and Dexterity are the important attributes—certain minimum levels of Intelligence and Dexterity are required to cast spells, and the spells also cost varying amounts of Strength to cast. Beyond the basic spells, they also cost increasing amounts of money to learn, as well.

One further roll of 3D6 is now made and multiplied by 10. This determines the amount of gold pieces that the character starts the game with; required for purchasing weapons, equipment and armour.

NON-HUMAN CHARACTERS

Although a majority of characters will be human, the rules permit players to try out other fantasy races as player-characters. This is done by adjusting the prime attribute scores. These are rolled up normally on 3D6, and then modified according to a Character Kindred chart. It is possible to be a dwarf, elf, fairy, hobbit or leprechaun, or even a werebear or weretiger.

For example, an elven character multiplies his or her Intelligence and Dexterity scores by 3/2, Charisma by 2, and Constitution by 2/3. Strength and Luck are unmodified. The various kindreds have a few other abilities—for example, fairies can fly provided they don't carry too much luggage around with them—and they also have modified weights and heights. In the case of a dwarven character, height is multiplied by 2/3 and weight is multiplied by 7/8.

ARMS, ARMOUR AND EQUIPMENT

The *T&T* rules provide comprehensive lists of items for characters to use in combat—both for attack and defence—and equipment for general adventuring purposes—torches, lanterns, rope, boots, packs and so on. A simple weight and price system is used: weights are measured in (what else?) weight units, one unit weighing one tenth of a pound. Money is priced on the scale where one gold piece equals ten silver pieces and one silver piece equals ten copper pieces. Each coin of whatever denomination is minted to weigh one weight unit.

General supplies simply have a cost and weight, while the arms and armour charts are a bit more complex. Each weapon gives its combat value (discussed further under 'Combat'), Strength required to use, Dexterity required to use, cost and weight. Throwing spears, daggers, bows and other projectile weapons also have their maximum range in yards—remember to buy the ammunition as well! Any special or additional effects or requirements are also listed. There are even a few types of poisons with which to customize blades, arrows and darts. For armour, each type is defined as to hits taken (also discussed under 'Combat'), Strength needed to wear, cost and weight.

TYPICAL *T&T* NOVICE CHARACTER

Once arms and equipment have been chosen, unless the character is to be a magician, it is ready for use. Let's look at a typical written out record for a newly-generated character complete with adventuring supplies and weaponry chosen to match his prime attributes.

GAMES YOU CAN BUY

Rufus the Redneck started with 130 gold pieces—above average—for the purchase of equipment. Even so, players never seem to have enough money to buy everything they want—just like real life!

T&T NOVICE CHARACTER RECORD

NAME: *Rufus the Redneck*

TYPE: *Warrior*

KIN: *Human*

male

LEVEL:¹ *1st*

STRENGTH: *13*

INTELLIGENCE: *13*

LUCK: *9*

CONSTITUTION: *15*

DEXTERITY: *10*

CHARISMA: *8*

COMBAT ADDS:² *+1*

HEIGHT: *5'3"*

WEIGHT *180 lbs*

FULL LOAD

POSSIBLE *(in Weight Units):*
1800

CURRENT LOAD *(in Weight Units):*
580

GOLD: *4 gp*

ADVENTURE
POINTS:¹ *nil*

WEAPONS:²

*Sabre (3D + 4).
Dirk (2D + 1, throwing range 10 yds).
Common sling (2D + 0, range 100 yds).*

ARMOUR:²

*Leather jerkin (takes 1 hit).
Buckler (small shield, takes 3 hits).
All armour × 2 hits for warrior.*

LANGUAGES: *Common, elven.*

MAGIC: *None.*

OTHER ITEMS:

Boots, calf high; pack and clothing; 1 day provisions; 40 foot hemp rope; 10 torches; pouch of 100 slingstones.

NOTES

¹*Explained under 'Character levels'.*

²*Explained under 'Comba.'*

CHARACTER TYPES

T&T employs four types of character, each clearly described. Characters are not usually allowed to change from type to type.

Warriors are assumed to have been trained in the use of weapons and armour. Because of their long experience in parrying and deflecting hits from weapons, they get twice the normal protection from armour and shields they carry. They are completely unable to practice magic, though they will cheerfully utilize any magical item that comes their way.

Wizards have a similar dedication and training from an early age, but to the forces of the mind that power the arcane world of magic. Apart from the basic spells, which every wizard knows, all other spells are purchased from the Wizard's Guild. Wizards are not allowed to use any weapon larger than a dagger, except for the quarterstaff.

Rogues are a sort of half-and-half character type. Without the intensive training in either weapons or magic, they nevertheless are able to use both. Rogues do not get the double bonus for armour protection, nor will the Wizard's Guild teach them spells: they must find and pay a Wizard willing to do this. Rogues are not allowed to invent their own spells, which wizards may do once they reach a certain level. Rogues are also limited in the overall level of spells they can master.

Warrior/Wizards are a rare and potent character type, only available to a player if all six prime attributes when first thrown for are 12 or more. This amounts to a 1 in 360 chance that a character can become a Warrior/Wizard. They do not get every bonus from both character types,

however. The rules assume partial knowledge in both fields. Thus they only get a +1 bonus on armour protection instead of twice the protection a full warrior gets, and once beyond basic spells must find a teacher to progress further; nor can they invent spells.

CHARACTER LEVELS

Characters in T&T do not remain at their basic prime attributes forever. Assuming they manage to survive a trip into the nearest dungeon (whether a refereed dungeon or a solitaire adventure), they have a means of measuring their progress and developing their attributes. This process is the accumulation of experience points (also referred to as adventure points) and rising through successive 'character levels'.

To gain experience points, the character must participate in various forms of activity—penetrating various levels of dungeon (on the basis that the further a character dares to go, the more he or she should be rewarded) and other daring deeds, engaging in combat, casting magic, making saving rolls (see the next section), and any other bonus points the Games Master may see fit to award for outstanding efforts.

Characters don't get experience points for finding treasure, since this usually entails defeating monsters or making saving rolls which have already added to the character's experience point total, and also because treasure is its own reward; if it's a magical item, or some form of valuable object that can be converted to cash which is in turn used to buy better weapons and equipment or more spells, the next time the character goes adventuring (and hence has the chance of acquiring more experience points) will have been made that much easier.

Experience points aren't just squirreled away in a sort of Swiss bank account, for the character's old age. They have a decidedly practical use. When certain totals are reached, the character advances to the next higher level. All new characters start off at the first character level, with no experience points. Each time they do something that earns them points, these are added to their total—experience points are cumulative. To achieve the second character level, a character needs 1,000 experience points, for the third level, 3,000 points and so on, as far as you can go; a character needs no less than 1,000,000 experience points to make the 16th level, for example!

The main purpose of character levels is the improvement of attributes and, for spell-using characters, the ability to utilize more complex spells. Each time a character advances to a higher level, he or she may choose one (and only one) option to improve prime attributes—add the new level number to Strength; add half the new level number to Intelligence; twice the new number to Luck; the new number to Constitution; half the new number to Dexterity; half the new number to Charisma; or half the new number to Strength and half to Constitution. Thus if Rufus the Red-neck (our typical novice character) makes it to second level, he might decide to add four to his Luck (twice the new level number, which is two) or perhaps one to his Dexterity (half the new level number). Characters that survive long enough can therefore gradually build up their prime attributes, and hence wield larger weapons, cast more complex spells, gain friends and influence people, and so on.

SAVING ROLLS

No rulebook can cater for every eventuality that will occur in the course of a game, even if it's the size of the

Encyclopaedia Britannica, so a variety of means are used to give guidance or procedures for dealing with 'one-off' situations. Chief of these is, of course, the Games Master's own common sense, but every so often a situation arises where the player should check against the character's abilities to see if the danger can be avoided; this is the purpose of saving rolls. Typical uses of the saving roll are to avoid a trap, attempting to dodge something or attempting to hide and avoid discovery. There are different levels of saving roll to cater for increasingly difficult situations—obviously avoiding drowning thirty feet underwater is a little more difficult than avoiding tripping over a door jamb! In *T&T*, saving rolls are usually made against the Luck attribute, and indeed this is the main use of Luck in the game. Occasionally a saving roll against some other attribute—Intelligence, Dexterity or Charisma are also used—is required if that is more suitable.

MONSTERS

Naturally characters will have to do battle with creatures of fantasy in such a world as is recreated in *T&T* if they wish to gain wealth and experience; they can't just walk into a dungeon and haul out sacks of gold pieces for free! Virtually any kind of monster that you care to invent or adapt from mythology, legend or fantasy stories can be fitted into the T&T system.

Most monsters in *T&T* use a simple classification known as the Monster Rating (MR) consisting of a single number. This number determines its attack ability and how much damage it can take before it is dead. Fighting monsters (and how the MR is used) is explained in the later section on combat.

Monsters created under the MR system are extremely

quick and easy to create and use in combat, but it can be rather unrealistic to fight something which is essentially just a numerical value. The rules therefore give guidelines and examples for creating monsters using the same prime attributes as normal characters. This also makes magic-using monsters easier to play, by making them conform to the standard character magic use requirements.

MAGIC

In *T&T*, magic works. There are two distinct types of magical effect; the major type is the spell system, limited to the character types who can practice magic; but there are also magical items, which are either created by certain spells or found as treasure. Any character can use magic items.

The various magic systems in role-playing games probably cause more discussion (and heated argument) than any other rules section; and cause much bafflement amongst new players. This is due to the fact that any magic system is totally fictional, with no basis in fact (or has it, I wonder?). Everyone has their own idea how magic might work, but in order to be playable, using magic must 'cost' the character in some way, and be restricted in terms of effects and graded to match the level of ability of the user. For example, an apprentice wizard should not have access to the whole range of magical abilities straight away, nor should even the most accomplished wizard be able to blast all and sundry without exhausting himself in the process. If this were not the case, an experienced wizard would become well-nigh invulnerable, and there wouldn't be much point in playing the game, let alone being some other type of character.

T&T accomplishes these aims through a series of restrictions. Firstly, even to contemplate casting a spell requires a certain level of Intelligence and Dexterity. For basic (first level, see below) spells an Intelligence of at least 10 and a Dexterity of at least 8 are required. Once past the basic spells (and even these if the character is a Rogue), higher level spells also cost money to learn.

Secondly, spells are graded in levels, equating with the character levels discussed earlier. The many spells given in the rulebook go up to Level 20. Spells generally get more powerful or complex in their effects at each level, and many spells can be cast at higher levels to give larger effects or longer duration.

Thirdly, spells require the user to expend Strength, when cast. Each spell has a given cost in Strength, and the caster must have this available in his Strength attribute (otherwise he would burn himself out). When a spell is cast, the cost in Strength is immediately deducted, though the caster gets this back at the rate of one per turn provided that nothing else in the way of strenuous activity is attempted. The cost in Strength also generally goes up for higher level spells. To pull all these strands together, let's look at a couple of typical spells:

Level 2 spell (costs 500 gp to learn, requires Intelligence of 12 and Dexterity of 9 to cast): *Whammy*—Triples the dice roll for any weapon for the combat turn—costs 10 Strength.

Level 9 spell (costs 4000 gp to learn, requires Intelligence of 26 and Dexterity of 16 to cast): *Medusa*—Changes flesh to unliving stone—costs 30 Strength.

Some people find the spell names to be juvenile and irksome. Those who object to this feature are of course at liberty to invent their own names for the spells.

Magic items pose something of a problem in the rules, as apart from one important type, they aren't discussed at all, nor is there a list to start you off with. However, some of the *T&T* dungeon adventure products do contain a few. The one exception is the magic staff, which comes in three grades and is virtually essential to any self-respecting wizard. Staffs may also be considered to be globes, crystals or rings at choice. The prime function of a staff is to aid in spell casting, by reducing the cost in Strength for each spell.

Magic in *T&T* has an internal logic and consistency and is well explained apart from the magic item problem for novice players. Its scope is well matched to the needs of the game system, which is all that one can ask of any individual section of a rules set.

COMBAT

So at last we come to the exercise that occupies a large part of a player's time in running a *T&T* character in the depths of a dungeon—beating up defenceless and not so defenceless monsters.

T&T has one of the easiest of all role-playing combat systems to understand and play, and this is aided by comprehensive examples in the rules.

Though monsters have a simpler descriptive system in terms of combat characteristics, both player-characters (and those monsters that use the attribute-type rating system) and monsters use the same mechanics in actually fighting.

Simply stated, each opponent, for each round of com-

bat. compares a numerical value known as the Hit Point Total. The lower Hit Point Total is subtracted from the higher Hit Point Total, and the remainder is known as Hits of Damage, which are applied to the loser. For monsters with a Monster Rating, damage comes directly off the Rating, and for characters and attribute-rated monsters, it comes off the Constitution. Armour and Shields absorb Hits of Damage, and continue to do so round after round—only if the Hits of Damage exceeded the total hit protection would the excess be applied to Constitution. Combat continues until one or the other participant is dead (that is, Constitution or Monster Rating is reduced to zero), succeeds in running away, or surrenders.

Suppose Rufus the Redneck gets into a fight and loses one round of combat, and the Hits of Damage is ten. His total armour can take 4 hits, doubled for being a Warrior to 8. He would therefore lose two points from his Constitution, lowering it to 13. If he keeps on losing so that his Constitution becomes zero, he is dead.

The Hit Point Total is made up of several factors. Weapon-using combatants use the factors for the weapon, plus any Combat Adds. For attribute-using characters and monsters, Combat Adds are a function of their Strength, Luck and Dexterity—each of these attributes gets plus one point for every point above twelve—Rufus has a strength of 13, and so he gets a Combat Add of 1. Minus scores are also possible; if any attributes are lower than 9, one point is deducted for each such point.

Rufus the Redneck using his Sabre in combat would therefore get a Hit Point Total of the score of three dice (anywhere from 3 to 18) plus 4, plus his Combat Add of 1. His worst score would be 8, his best would be 23.

Monsters with a Monster Rating are even quicker to work out. They get a number of dice equal to one plus one

tenth of their MR, and Combat Adds equal to half their MR. Thus a Goblin, for example, with a Monster Rating of 30 would get four dice plus 15 Combat Adds; this makes his possible score anything from 19 to 39.

The T&T combat system also allows for such things as fighting more than one opponent, weakened monsters, missile fire, magic combat and so on, all in a system designed to be kept simple—even so, a couple of reasonably powerful and evenly matched opponents can take quite a while to come to a decision. Combat in T&T is not particularly realistic because of this aim of simplicity, but again it suits the overall tenor of the rules. Compare with the combat system in *Rune Quest* to see how much complexity is required to cater for such things as hit location.

SUMMARY

These, then, are the major rules components in *T&T*. The designer, according to his own notes in the introduction, set as his objectives the need for a simple, easy to play game of dungeon raiding. The rules are generally (though not totally) clear and well illustrated with examples, and the different rules sections seem to harmonize—no one section appears to be of a different degree of complexity. The game is not a detailed treatment of such things as combat (and does not set out to be), so would not suit every taste, but it is a very cost-effective package for those who do not want to burden their imaginations with a lot of statistics, and would rather just get on with the fantasy. It has certainly acquired a reputation for solitaire role-playing which is probably as much to do with the simple rules system as the range of solo adventures that can be played with it (see Fig. 3 opposite).

8A You have passed through the magic red door. If you are carrying any gold coins, go to 10K. If you have no gold, go to 13A.

8B If your quest is over (you should have the Blue Frog Amulet) open the door and go to 16G. If your quest is not over, why are you trying the door? Take one point off your intelligence. Quartz is mad at you for wasting time. Go back to 12G.

8C As you start to walk across the room, you have the strange feeling that you are shrinking. You look down at the floor — and your feet have disappeared! When you look at Quartz, you see that he's standing on the floor, happy as a clam — he didn't sink into the floor one inch! If you came in through the north door and wish to return to it, go back to 4C. If you came in through the south door and wish to return to it, go back to 12L. If you would rather continue across the room to the opposite door, go to 16D.

8D If you are wearing black leather armor and boots with silver spurs, go to 16C. Otherwise, you must go to 21G.

8E If you leave by the west door, go to 2E. To leave by the south door, go to 16B.

8F There is an eyehole in the center of this door. You peek into it and see piles of gold and jewels, and stacks of glowing magic arms and armor. However, Quartz says he won't go into the room. He has what he came for, and wants to go back to the pier before the dragon wakes up. If you want to enter the room, go to 21C. If you would rather leave the treasure alone, go back to 14A.

8G There is nothing under the rug. Quartz tells you to stop fussing with the rug because it's getting late. Go back to 17B.

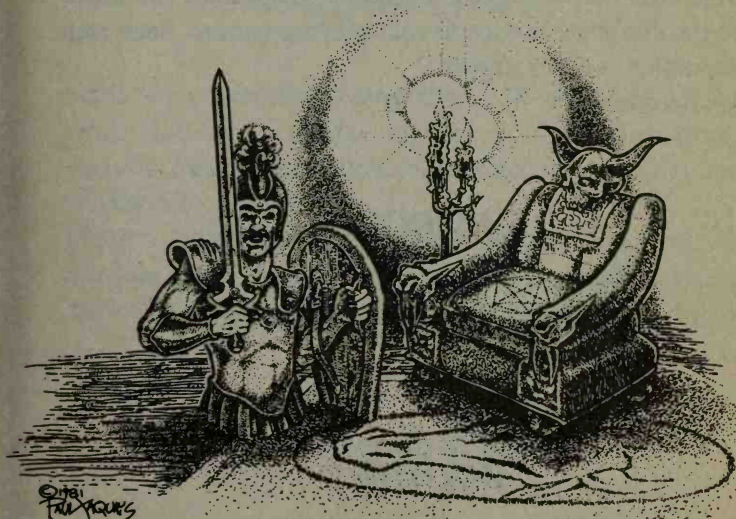


Figure 3: Sample page from T&T solitaire dungeon, Blue Frog Tavern

OTHER GAMES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

AFTERMATH!

Adventure amongst the ruins of a post-Holocaust world. Rules for modern weaponry, mutations, survival and options on the precise nature of the disaster causing it all.

Boxed: Three rules booklets, charts and tables.

BASIC ROLE-PLAYING

Simple role-playing system designed especially to introduce the complete novice to role-playing games. Each step is illustrated with examples.

Rules booklet only.

BIFROST

British fantasy RPG by a plethora of authors.

Four rules booklets.

BOOTHILL

Wild West role-playing set in the latter part of the 19th century. Players can be outlaws, lawmen, rustlers, gamblers and gunslingers.

Boxed: Rulebook, introductory adventure, dice, maps and playing counters.

BUSHIDO

Role-play in feudal Japan, where players take the roles as members of the various professions in the Land of Nippon. Uses special attribute system which allows a character to be tailored to a player's specifications.

Boxed: Rules, players' guide and referee's guide.

CALL OF CTHULHU

RPG set in the threatening horror fiction of H. P. Lovecraft and his Cthulhu mythos. Player characteristics include Sanity, and there is background material on the 1920s era.

Boxed: Rules booklet, background booklet, Basic Role-Playing rules booklet, introductory scenarios, character sheets, character markers, map, plans and dice.

CHAMPIONS

The world of comic book heroes and villains is the setting for role-playing superhero and supervillain characters. Highly detailed combat and character generation.

Rules booklet only.

CHIVALRY AND SORCERY

Highly detailed treatment of the medieval era—fact, myth and alchemy. Characters of varying social background. Allows individual role-playing and the more general aspects of the feudal system, including mass pitched battles. New, revised version of the rules, boxed.

COMMANDO

Military role-playing in the modern era—daring missions against impossible odds based on actual military raids. Boxed: Two rules booklets, maps, charts and tables, dice.

DAWN PATROL

Players assume the roles of Allied or German World War One pilots, and attempt to become an ace and perhaps earn the Blue Max or the Victoria Cross. Boxed: Rulebook and scenarios, map and playing counters.

DRAGONQUEST

Fantasy role-playing game with particular attention paid to combat and magic use systems. Range of playing aids and adventure supplements available. Boxed: Three rules booklets, map, playing counters and playing aids.

ENGARDE!

Set in the 17th and 18th centuries, a game of swordsmanship and cunning drawn equally from history, the world of Errol Flynn movies and the literature of such authors as Alexandre Dumas.

Rules booklet only.

FIGHTING FANTASY GAMEBOOKS

A series of paperback books using the same introductory-level solitaire RPG system in each book. First in the series is entitled *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*. The others are *Citadel of Chaos*, *Forest of Doom*, *Starship Traveller* and *City of Thieves*.

GAMMA WORLD

Post-Holocaust role-playing; combat mutated plants and animals, berserk machines and roving bands of humans.

Boxed: Rules booklet, map, dice.

GANGBUSTERS

Set in the Roaring Twenties, players take on the roles of private eyes, reporters and other characters in the era of bootleggers and mobsters, and investigate crimes and attempt to deduce those responsible.

Boxed: Rulebook, introductory adventure, dice, sheet of playing counters and maps.

GANGSTER

Role-playing in the murky underworld of big crime. Bootleggers, racketeers, mobsters and the G-men fight it out to control the city.

Boxed: Rules booklet and playing aids.

HEROES OF OLYMPUS

Take the part of crew of the Argo—Jason, Castor, Polydeuces, Hercules, etc., or create your own heroes to go in search of the Golden Fleece. Battle the characters and creatures of myth and legend, and enlist the aid of the gods.

Boxed: Rules booklet, maps, introductory adventures, playing counters and dice.

HIGH FANTASY

Simple fantasy role-playing. Solo adventures and adventure scenarios available in separate books.

Hard- and soft-cover rule book.

KABAL

Fantasy role-playing.
Three rule booklets.

LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Highly detailed role-playing game of medieval Japan—the Age of War and the high point of the Samurai's powers. Boxed set of rules.

MAN, MYTH AND MAGIC

Role-playing set in the Ancient World, with emphasis on the world as seen through the eyes of those that lived in it—magic and sorcery, demons and monsters; the mysteries and secrets of the past.

Boxed: Three rules booklets, introductory and advanced adventures, Game Master's guide, maps, charts, tables, character sheets and dice.

MERC

Modern mercenary role-playing in historical or hypothetical missions. Referee represents 'the Corporation', or employer. Boxed: Rules booklet and introductory adventure, reference charts, plans and playing aids.

ODYSSEUS

Role-playing in the Homeric age, with the religious beliefs of the period and rules covering nautical adventuring. Rules booklet, plans, charts and reference sheet.

PIRATES AND PLUNDER

The golden age of piracy in the Caribbean. Hold a letter of marque from a European power, be a swashbuckling buccaneer out for personal glory, or a degenerate scoundrel out for whatever is going.

Boxed: Three rules booklets, adventures and dice.

SKULL & CROSSBONES

Adventure, plunder and buckling of swashes on the Spanish Main. Includes ship movement and combat, and the types of fortification found throughout the Caribbean.

Boxed: Rules booklet, maps, ship plans, playing counters, charts and tables and dice.

SPACE OPERA

Pursue your favourite science fiction themes. Concentrates particularly on hardware-weapons, equipment and ships. World generation and complex character generation systems.

Boxed: Two rules booklets, charts and tables.

STAR FRONTIERS

Characters equip themselves with advanced technology and survival skills, and then set forth to the stars on dangerous assignments and explorations. Human and alien player characters are available.

Boxed: Basic rules, expansion rules, introductory adventure, dice, map and playing counters.

STORMBRINGER

Set in Michael Moorcock's fantasy world created for the Elric stories, players may become warriors, priests, nobles or others who roam the Young Kingdoms in search of fame and fortune.

Boxed: Rules booklet, map, record sheets, dice.

SUPERHERO 2044

Pick your superpowers and become a crime-busting superhero in 2044 AD. Includes rules for solo play.

Rules booklet only.

SUPERVILLAINS

Places the players in a modern day New York City terrorized by villains with superpowers. Players may choose to

be superheroes or supervillains, each with a choice of the type of powers they will use.

Boxed: Rules booklet including scenarios, maps, playing counters and dice.

SWORDBEARER

Fantasy role-playing system in modular format, concentrating on general rules systems in an easy to use format. Expansion kits take the general *Swordbearer* system into specific fantasy areas. Components not known at date of press.

THE FANTASY TRIP

Fantasy role-playing system usable in any fantasy setting, though a game background (the world of Cidri) is provided. Players may be human or inhuman characters. The rules are modular, each element being available separately to allow players to choose the most suitable level of complexity:

Melee—Boxed microgame: rules booklet, map, playing counters and dice.

Wizard—Boxed microgame: rules booklet, map, playing counters and dice.

Advanced Melee—Advanced character and combat rules booklet.

Advanced Wizard—Advanced magic rules booklet.

In the Labyrinth—Game Master's rules booklet.

TOP SECRET

Re-creates the world of espionage and international intrigue. Players are secret agents who have to undertake dangerous missions against agents from other powers, terrorists and the like.

Boxed: Rulebook, introductory adventure, dice and map.

UNIVERSE

Science fiction role-playing in local space, the game includes an accurate display map of worlds within a few light years of earth. Detailed space combat based on true vector movement. Boxed: Gamesmaster rules booklet, Adventure guide and introductory adventure, space combat rules booklet, maps, playing counters, dice.

VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

Superhero role-playing system designed to be simple and easy to play. New boxed version including rules booklet and introductory adventure. Rules booklet also available separately.

WILD WEST

Sun, sand and bullets in the Old West. Be a gunfighter, lawman, rancher or railroader. Fight for law and order or a life of crime.

Boxed: Rules booklet, maps, playing aids.

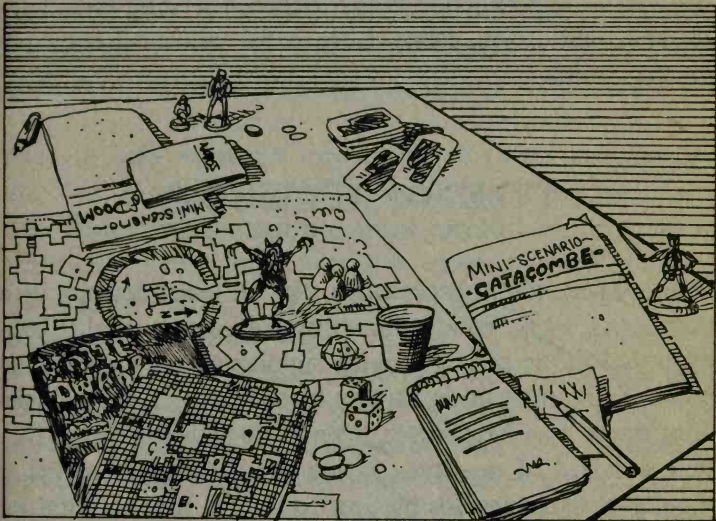
WORLDS OF WONDER

Four simple role-playing systems in one box. Starting with *Basic Role-Playing* (qv), players can develop their characters in the *Magic World* fantasy setting, the *Superworld* of comic heroes and villains, or the *Future World* of aliens and blasters.

Boxed: Four rules booklets and introductory adventures, character silhouettes, character record sheets, playing aids and dice.

CHAPTER 4

ACCESSORIES



If the choice of role-playing game systems is bewildering, the range of expansions, supplements, scenarios, playing aids, miniature figures, magazines and other accessories available for them is nothing short of staggering. However, the items that may be purchased to increase a player's understanding or enjoyment of a game are not spread

uniformly across the range of game systems—understandably, the most popular games have the largest choice of accessories. In fact, a type of ‘chicken and egg’ situation seems to apply nowadays: popular games have a lot of accessories, and a lot of accessories make a game more popular than one without.

Many companies now exist that cater solely to the accessories market—it has become almost an industry within an industry—and the total output of such items per year is phenomenal. The one categoric statement I can make without fear of contradiction is that between writing this chapter and publication, many more items will have been put on the market.

TYPES OF ACCESSORY

Role-playing game accessories can be characterized in a number of ways. Firstly, most companies who publish one or more RPG generally provide supplementary material for them. Such material is usually known as ‘official’. Other companies may be granted licenses (which implies a certain standard of quality), paying the copyright holders a royalty in exchange for placing ‘approved for use with’ or some similar terminology on their products, and hence are known as ‘approved’ products. Other products (mainly magazines) may include general role-playing material, designed to be used with any role-playing system or broad category of systems, such as any fantasy RPG or any science fiction RPG, or deal with several specific game systems. A professional magazine, for example, might in a sample issue deal with three or four popular RPGs, one or more articles to each, a few items of general interest or on

the lesser known games, and news and reviews of new items.

A second way of classifying accessories is by function; that is the way they are used by the referee or players. The following classifications exist:

Rules Expansions add further detail and complexity or alternative methods of resolving certain situations. Increasing detail and realism generally creates more work for the participants, but as they get to be more experienced with the game this is not a particularly difficult problem to overcome; indeed, in some circumstances the expanded version of the game becomes the most popular form.

Playing Aids come in a variety of forms with one common aim—to speed up or clarify the playing of the game system. Role-playing requires a lot of record-keeping, making maps and plans, and referring to charts and tables. Most playing aids address themselves to easing the burden on participants in these areas. Typical playing aids are: a booklet containing ready generated characters, treasure, monsters, or spells and so on, relieving the referee of much work making these up; record sheets for characters, non-player characters or monsters (and in science fiction and other 'hardware' type games, record sheets for vehicles and starships, or—also in science fiction games—whole planets and star systems); mapping supplements, either in blank sheets of hexagons or square grids for participants to make up their own maps and plans, or ready-drawn countries, towns, buildings, spaceships, etc., with or without descriptions; sheets of the main charts and tables used in a particular game system, often arranged so as to form a screen behind which the referee can keep his secret notes and hidden dice rolls from the prying eyes of the players.

Background Supplements help to give a credible basis to a referee's game-world. Most RPGs deal with fantasy, historical or future environments. Often, this environment does not exist even in other forms of fictional literature beyond the confines of the game system. In all these cases it is desirable to channel participants' imaginations to make the best use of the game system, and when the environment is unique to the game, it is essential to do so. Background supplements fill this need, by setting out the parameters of the designer's creation—they may indicate the types of geography or social/political nature of the environment, its peoples, animals and plants, technological achievements, history, religion, even such minutiae as the chance of a certain type of weather or natural event occurring. In effect they flesh out and give life to the game setting. Few background supplements attempt to deal with all these factors in one publication—most deal in detail with one or two, or a limited physical area.

Scenarios are referred to by several different names, depending on the type of game and its manufacturer. The most common names given to scenarios are modules, quests or adventures. They all fulfil the same function, however. A scenario is a ready-to-play game action/setting designed specifically for a referee who might use it in isolation or incorporate it into his game-world. Whilst it is always more rewarding for referees to design their own scenarios, lack of time can often prohibit it. Also, new ideas for a referee's game-world can be obtained from scenarios, and valuable information regarding play-balance, construction and themes can be found therein. Many scenarios are linked together to form a campaign game-world, usually becoming more difficult in play with each additional publication in the series.

ACCESSORIES

As there are literally hundreds of accessories currently available on the market, only the more useful and popular are included in this book, and then only with the briefest description. Under each game title an accessory is named, categorized by type and described. For example, an entry under *Dungeons & Dragons* would include:

In Search of the Unknown (S/TSR/O)

A beginner's module which allows the referee to add his own choice of treasure and monsters.

The abbreviations in brackets refer to type of accessory/manufacturer/status as follows:

Type of Accessory

RE = Rules Expansion

PA = Playing Aid

BS = Background Supplement

S = Scenario

Manufacturer

C = Chaosium Inc.

F = Fasa

FB = Flying Buffalo Inc.

FGU = Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc.

GDW = Game Designers' Workshop Inc.

G = Gamelords Ltd

GW = Games Workshop Ltd

H = Hero Games

JG = Judges Guild Inc.

M = Metagaming Inc.

P = Paranoia Press

S = Standard Games and Publications Ltd

SJ = Steve Jackson Games

TSR = TSR Hobbies Inc.

Status

O = Official

A = Approved

G = General (GF = General Fantasy; GS = General Science Fiction)

ACCESSORIES FOR SPECIFIC GAMES

AFTERMATH

Into the Ruins (S/FGU/O)

The first adventure in which the city of Littleton and the surrounding communities are featured.

BOOT HILL

Mad Mesa (S/TSR/O)

Solo or multi-player adventure in the wild west.

Referee's Screen (PA/TSR/O)

Reference tables and charts in one accessory with a mini-module included—*Shootout in Northfield and Other Famous Gunfights*.

CHAMPIONS

Enemies (BS/H/O)

A booklet of 35 supervillains complete with characteristics, skills and powers.

Enemies II (BS/H/O)

A booklet of additional supervillains complete with characteristics, skills and powers.

The Island of Doctor Destroyer (S/H/O)

Players must penetrate the launch complex and destroy the satellite of Doctor Destroyer to stop him dominating the world with his hypnoray.

Escape from Stronghold (S/H/O)

Multi-choice scenario booklet located in a specially constructed prison.

Gamemaster's Screen (PA/H/O)

Provides all the most frequently used tables and charts in one accessory.

DRAGONQUEST

The Palace of Ontoncle (S/SPI/O)

A mission to search the palace of an evil magician and his henchmen—and kill them.

The Blade of Allectus (S/SPI/O)

A mission to journey to a lonely island to rescue a duke enslaved by an evil lord and his witch-daughter.

The Enchanted Wood (S/SPI/O)

Six different missions are offered to characters venturing into the dense forest with its unkillable trees and stalking creatures.

Magebird Quest (S/JG/A)

An adventure to the rugged crags of the Rookeries in search of the Azure Sea Falcon.

Heroes and Villains (S/JG/A)

The Frontiers of Alusia are open to adventurers with a chance to encounter the Lone Huntress and her sabretoothed tigers.

Star Silver Trek (S/JG/A)

A long journey into the Barren Hills in search of the fabled Star Silver Lode.

Frontiers of Alusia (PA/SPI/O)

A 22'' x 34'' full colour wilderness map.

Gamemaster's Screen (PA/SPI/O)

Provides all the most frequently used charts and tables in one accessory.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

In Search of the Unknown (S/TSR/O)

A beginner's scenario which allows the referee to add his own choice of monsters and treasure.

The Keep on the Borderlands (S/TSR/O)

A low-level introductory scenario which leads into the forces of chaos from an outpost on the frontier of law.

The Palace of the Silver Princess (S/TSR/O)

A low-level scenario concerned the legends surrounding a ruined castle, a red dragon and a ruby sword.

The Lost City (S/TSR/O)

A low-level scenario in which the only hope of survival lies in a ruined city rising out of the sands.

The Isle of Dred (S/TSR/O)

A medium to high-level scenario set on a mysterious tropical island divided by an ancient stone wall.

Castle Amber (S/TSR/O)

A medium to high-level scenario based on a castle surrounded by a strange grey mist.

City State of the Invincible Overlord (S/JG/A)

A massive high-level scenario covering shops, taverns, inns, temples and barracks of the City State.

City State of the World Emperor (S/JG/A)

A massive high-level scenario covering the history and background of the 4300-year-old City of Viridistan to the west of the City State of the Invincible Overlord (see above).

Wilderlands of High Fantasy (S/JG/A)

A high-level scenario concerned with the wilderness surrounding the City State of the Invincible Overlord immediately to the north, south and east.

Fantastic Wilderlands Beyonde (S/JG/A)

A high-level scenario concerned with the wilderness to the north-west and south-west of the City State of the Invincible Overlord.

Wilderlands of the Magic Realm (S/JG/A)

A high-level scenario extending the wilderness further south of the City State of the Invincible Overlord.

Wilderlands of the Fantastic Reaches (S/JG/A)

A high-level scenario completes the wilderness areas to the south-east of the City State of the Invincible Overlord.

Thieves of Fortress Badabaskor (S/JG/A)

A multi-level wilderness scenario based in the stronghold of a band of brigands carved out of the side of a mountain.

Tegel Manor (S/JG/A)

A medium-level scenario based in a huge haunted house detailing over 240 rooms and chambers.

Modron (S/JG/A)

A scenario concerning the village of Modron and its surrounding waters.

Citadel of Fire (S/JG/A)

The ancient stronghold of Yrammag with six tower levels and five dungeon levels is a scenario for high-level characters.

Frontier Forts of Kelnore (S/JG/A)

Border forts populated by fearsome monsters.

The Dragon Crown (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon in which characters must recover a stolen crown.

Of Skulls and Scrapfaggot Green (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon in which characters must find the key to Akbeth's Tower, enter and find an ancient skull, then journey to close an inter-dimensional doorway.

Under the Storm Giant's Castle (S/JG/A)

A unique adventure set inside a magic cloud in which characters must rescue the kidnapped son of a storm giant.

Caverns of Thracia (S/JG/A)

A multi-level scenario set in four main levels of dungeon, one minor level and a lost city.

Verbosh (S/JG/A)

Micro-campaign set in the three-level sewers and dungeons below the city of Verbosh and the nine-level Schawang-Nau Tower.

Spies of Lightelf (S/JG/A)

A scenario set in the wilderness villages of Lightelf and Palewood plus the area of the Wood of the Gnomes.

Mines of Custalcon (S/JG/A)

A detailed scenario set in the wilderness areas surrounding the villages of Byrny and Trollstore, plus a three-level mini-dungeon in the mines beneath Trollstore.

Sword of Hope (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon in which characters must recover the Myrlani Sword from the depths of the cavern of Gar.

Tower of Ulission (S/JG/A)

A tournament wilderness quest through dead cities to the dead village of Ulission and its Black Tower.

Gencon IX Dungeon (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon in which characters are sent to Baldemar Castle to win the Staff of Albalon.

Survival of the Fittest (S/JG/A)

A solo dungeon for 1-4 low-level characters.

Book of Treasure Maps I (S/JG/A)

Five complete mini-dungeons.

Book of Treasure Maps II (S/JG/A)

Five complete mini-dungeons.

Character Records (PA/TSR/O)

A pad of sheets on to which a character's abilities and information can be recorded by a player.

Unknown Gods (PA/JG/A)

A booklet containing descriptions and statistics of 83 gods.

Pillars of Pentegam (S/TSR/O)

First in series of solitaire 'Endless Quest' books in which an evil lord must be overcome.

The Mountain of Mirrors (S/TSR/O)

Second 'Endless Quest' book with a journey to find an elven village.

The Dungeons of Dread (S/TSR/O)

Third 'Endless Quest' book with a mission to overcome an evil wizard.

Return to Brookmere (S/TSR/O)

Fourth 'Endless Quest' book with a mission to destroy castle invaders.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Dungeon Masters Guide (RE/TSR/O)

Detailed information on how to run single dungeons and campaign games. Includes combat tables, monster lists and encounters, treasure and magic item tables and descriptions, random dungeon generation and suggestions for the referee.

Players Handbook (RE/TSR/O)

As with the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, the *Players Handbook* is an integral part of the *AD&D* series. Written for the use of the players, information needed for play is outlined and explained, including character generation, their classes and abilities, equipment and weapon costs and a description of over 300 magical spells.

Monster Manual (BS/TSR/O)

Illustrated volume of over 300 creatures, individually listed and described together with a full listing of each creature's gaming abilities.

Fiend Folio (BS/TSR/O)

Second volume of the *Monster Manual* with over 200 creatures listed and described. Also features an appendix of monster and treasure tables.

Deities & Demigods (BS/TSR/O)

Gods, heroes and legendary monsters from 15 different mythologies described with statistics and background information.

The Village of Hommlet (S/TSR/O)

A beginner's scenario starting in a village and leading to a nearby dungeon.

The Secret of Bone Hill (S/TSR/O)

A low-level scenario concerned with evil creatures prowling the unexplored reaches of Bone Hill.

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh (S/TSR/O)

A low-level scenario set in evil alchemist's abandoned mansion with rumours of hauntings and treasure.

Danger at Dunwater (S/TSR/O)

A low-level dungeon scenario carrying on where *Saltmarsh* leaves off.

Slave Pits of the Undercity (S/TSR/O)

The first in a series of medium-level scenarios with a mission to track down maurauding coastal raiders.

Secret of the Slavers Stockade (S/TSR/O)

Second in the series, this scenario leads to a lost fort where slaves are being kept for fattening.

Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords (S/TSR/O)

Third in the series, this scenario continues the search for the slavers deep under the Drachensgrab Mountains.

In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords (S/TSR/O)

Fourth in the series, this scenario concerns the escape from the dungeons of the Slave Lords.

The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan (S/TSR/O)

A medium-level scenario concerned with locating an ancient temple in a dense jungle.

Beyond the Crystal Cave (S/TSR/O)

A medium-level scenario set in a strange garden.

The Ghost Tower of Inverness (S/TSR/O)

A medium-level tournament scenario with an objective to find a stolen gem in a haunted castle.

Dwellers of the Forbidden City (S/TSR/O)

A medium-level scenario set in a steaming tropical jungle.

Against the Giants (S/TSR/O)

A medium-level scenario of three linking mini-adventures concerned with Hill, Frost and Fire Giants.

Descent into the Depth of the Earth (S/TSR/O)

A high-level scenario which continues underground after *Against the Giants* with two linked adventures against dark elves, the Drow.

Vault of the Drow (S/TSR/O)

A high-level scenario continuing the fight underground against the dark elves.

Queen of the Demonweb Pits (S/TSR/O)

A high-level scenario which is the climax of the *Giants* and *Drow* series with a final battle against a Demon Queen.

Tomb of Horrors (S/TSR/O)

The first in a series of high-level scenarios with a foray into a wizard's deadly crypt.

White Plume Mountain (S/TSR/O)

Second in the series, this scenario takes the adventure inside an active volcano in search of magic items.

Expedition to the Barrier Peaks (S/TSR/O)

Third in the series, the scenario takes the adventure into the realms of science fantasy.

The Lost Cavern of Tsojcanth (S/TSR/O)

Fourth in the series, the scenario concerns the taking of magic from a dead archmage.

Dark Tower (S/JG/A)

An ancient evil has overtaken a once holy shrine and a mountain hamlet begins to experience disappearances.

Operation Ogre (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon which details the capture of an elven princess by a band of Ice Ogres.

House on Hangman's Hill (S/JG/A)

An exploration inside an old and deadly fortress.

Portals of Torsh (S/JG/A)

The first in a series of scenarios only reachable by teleportation devices known as 'portals'. *Torsh* is a medium-level adventure set in a town of Lizardmen.

Portals of Irontooth (S/JG/O)

Second in the series, this scenario deals with a new world of humans and gnomes.

Portals of Twilight (S/JG/A)

Third in the series, this scenario is located on a moon-like planet.

Inferno (S/JG/A)

A high-level scenario based on Dante's *Inferno*.

The Tower of Indomitable Circumstance (S/JG/A)

A low-level scenario set in a six-level tower with an underground complex.

Trial by Fire (S/JG/A)

A beginner's scenario providing fully-equipped player-characters for use.

The Illhiedrin Book (S/JG/A)

A mission to recover a fabulous book and find a wizardess.

The Maltese Clue (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon with a mission to find a key to a magic book hidden in a castle based on Hedingham Castle in Essex.

The Book of Ruins (S/JG/A)

A set of 10 mini-dungeons designed to be used in isolation or incorporated into a campaign game.

The Treasure Vaults of Lindoran (S/JG/A)

An adventure to obtain the treasure of an elven king.

Dragon's Hall (S/JG/A)

A solo dungeon for treasure-seeking adventures.

Zientek (S/JG/A)

A wilderness scenario involving a trek to a ruined wizard's domain.

Quest for Lara's Tower (S/JG/A)

A mission to recapture a magic user's tower from a horde of evil creatures.

Temple of Ra Accursed by Set (S/JG/A)

An Egyptian-style temple desecrated by evil forces is the setting for a treasure quest.

Escape from Astigar's Lair (S/JG/A)

A tournament dungeon with a mission to rescue a comrade trapped in a mage's stronghold.

World of Greyhawk (BS/TSR/O)

A fantasy game-world setting including maps, background history and geographical information on which TSR Modules are sited.

Dungeon Masters Screen (PA/TSR/O)

Commonly-used tables and charts combined into one quick reference accessory.

Rogues Gallery (BS/TSR/O)

A booklet of non-player characters.

Player-Character Record Sheets (PA/TSR/O)

A booklet of perforated sheets by character type for record-keeping and reference.

Non-Player Character Records (PA/TSR/O)

A referee aid on to which information and statistics regarding non-player characters can be recorded.

Dungeon Masters Adventure Log (PA/TSR/O)

A referee aid on to which details of characters in play can be recorded.

Fighting Wheel (PA/TSR/O)

A player aid in the form of a slide calculator wheel to help determine combat statistics.

Monster Cards (PA/TSR/O)

Four different sets of 20 cards illustrating and detailing creatures from the *Monster Manual*.

CHIVALRY & SORCERY

C&S Sourcebooks I & II (BS/FGU/O)

Supplemental game mechanics and strategic warfare system.

Swords & Sorcerers (BS/FGU/O)

Details of how to create characters and armies of Vikings, Mongols, Celts, Picts and Gaels.

Bireme & Gallery (PA/FGU/O)

Ship plans and rules for ancient, medieval and renaissance naval combat.

Castle Plans (PA/FGU/O)

Four plans of medieval castles to 25 mm scale.

Fortification Plans (PA/FGU/O)

Four plans detailing ancient and medieval forts to 25 mm scale.

C&S Gamemaster's Shield (PA/JG/A)

Combined tables and charts in one accessory.

THE FANTASY TRIP

Fantasy Masters Codex (PA/M/O)

Computerized guide to *The Fantasy Trip* including index of items, equipment and monsters.

Fantasy Masters Screen (PA/M/O)

Essential tables and charts combined into one accessory.

Death Test 1 (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play in a labyrinth beneath a palace.

Death Test 2 (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play and a sequel to *Death Test 1* with further encounters beneath the palace.

Treasure of the Silver Dragon (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play concerning a quest for fabled treasure.

Unicorn Gold (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play and a sequel to *Treasure of the Silver Dragon*.

Grail Quest (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play based on the legendary Holy Grail.

Master of the Amulets (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play concerning a quest in a lost valley.

Orb Quest (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play with hired hands on a secret mission.

Security Station (S/M/O)

Programmed adventure for solitaire or group play in a science fantasy post-Holocaust world.

ACCESSORIES

Tollenkar's Lair (S/M/O)

Multi-level dungeon scenario located beneath a ruined hall.

GAMMA WORLD

Legion of Gold (S/TSR/O)

An introductory/intermediate scenario concerned with a barony under attack by glowing creatures.

Famine in Far-Go (S/TSR/O)

An introductory scenario concerned with a perilous journey and encounters with adversaries and robots.

Referee's Screen (PA/TSR/O)

Reference tables and charts in one accessory with a mini-module included—*The Albuquerque Starport*.

GANGBUSTERS

Trouble Brewing (S/TSR/O)

Characters must investigate the crimes and criminals of a gang war in Lakefront City. Designed to help referees set up a campaign game.

Murder in Harmony (S/TSR/O)

A special scenario in which the crime must be solved by gathering the right information, talking to the right people and putting the facts together.

RUNEQUEST

Cults of Prax (BS/C/O)

Surveys 15 major religious cults in the Dragon Pass area.

Cults of Terror (BS/C/O)

Nine of the deadliest deities of Glorantha plus history, new spells and skills.

Gateway Bestiary (BS/C/O)

92 non-Glorantha monsters drawn from legend and stories.

Foes (BS/C/O)

An encyclopaedia of 600 intelligent and bestial characters with statistics given for each.

Plunder (BS/C/O)

640 pre-generated treasures for creature lairs, plus 43 special magical treasures.

Apple Lane (S/C/O)

Two detailed and humorous beginning scenarios in one book.

Snakepipe Hollow (S/C/O)

A unique section of Dragon Pass with high-level scenarios sited in wild and dangerous places.

Griffin Mountain (S/C/O)

Gigantic scenario book covering Balazar and the Elder Wilds of Glorantha. Over 400 non-player character and monster statistics are given together with hundreds of possible adventures.

Duck Tower (S/JG/A)

A quest to find the legendary fallen citadel.

City of Lei Tabor (S/JG/A)

A detailed city with inhabitants, shops, cults, inns and temples in which adventures can be sited.

Duck Pond (S/JG/A)

A small fishing and trading village destroyed and now the residence of Frwack the Duck.

Broken Tree Inn (S/JG/A)

Three scenarios concerning the struggle between the Aldryami Elves and Dryads of Tall Seed Forest and the encroaching Men from the City of Whom.

Hellpits of Nightfang (S/JG/A)

An introductory adventure in which the Hellpits (limestone sinkholes) are infested by various monsters, notably the vampire Nightfang.

Under the Red Moon (S/C/O)

More adventure in Apple Lane against the Lunars.

Borderlands (S/C/O)

Scenario pack set along the River of Cradles in Prax including information about the Morokanth and Agimori.

Dorastor (S/C/O)

The most dangerous place in Glorantha wherein a Zombie town is situated.

Trollpack (BS/C/O)

History and anatomical views of trolls and trollkin.

DICING WITH DRAGONS



A map of Prax

Rune Masters (BS/C/O)

45 non-player character Rune Lord, Rune Priest and High Priest statistics for use in high-level adventures.

SPACE OPERA

Ground & Air Equipment (BS/FGU/O)

Concerns heavy weapons and equipment.

Star Sector Atlas 1 (BS/FGU/O)

Describes 66 planets of the Terran Sector giving a complete history together with a route map showing the major starship lines.

The Outworlds (BS/FGU/O)

A Star Sector atlas mapping a dozen worlds with scenario ideas, a history of the sector, and a route map for starship lines serving the sector.

Seldon's Compendium of Starcraft 1 (BS/FGU/O)

A book of starships detailing deck plans and statistics of 21 ships, ships' boats, standard compartments and standard medical facilities.

Martigan Belt (S/FGU/O)

An adventure in the asteroids.

Probe NCG 8436 (S/FGU/O)

A survey and contact mission.

Alien Base (S/FGU/O)

A first-contact adventure.

Vault of the Ni'er Queyon (S/FGU/O)

A sector-spanning quest.

STAR FRONTIERS

Kdikit: The Cartel (S/TSR/O)

Characters are assigned a journey to a strange planet to capture alien criminals. Designed as a series of small adventures for learning game techniques.

In Search of the Star Spawn (S/TSR/O)

Characters must endeavour to recover the Royal Egg of Aurax from hostile plants, animals and natives on an alien planet.

TOP SECRET

Rapidstrike (S/TSR/O)

A Mission to rescue a Nobel Prize-winning scientist.

Lady in Distress (S/TSR/O)

Terrorist hijackers of a cruise ship are in possession of a deadly virus and must be overcome.

Administrator's Screen (PA/TSR/O)

Reference tables and charts in one accessory with a mini-adventure included.

TRAVELLER

Mercenary (RE/GDW/O)

Details treatment of army and marine characters, small-unit military tactics, soldiers of fortune, and military weapons and equipment.

High Guard (RE/GDW/O)

Details space navy character treatment, individual and squadron naval combat, and design of space vessels of 1 to 10 million tons.

1001 Characters (BS/GDW/O)

Pre-generated characters for each of the 6 character types listed.

Animal Encounters (BS/GDW/O)

Over 100 animal encounter tables of planetary and atmosphere types.

The Spinward Marches (BS/GDW/O)

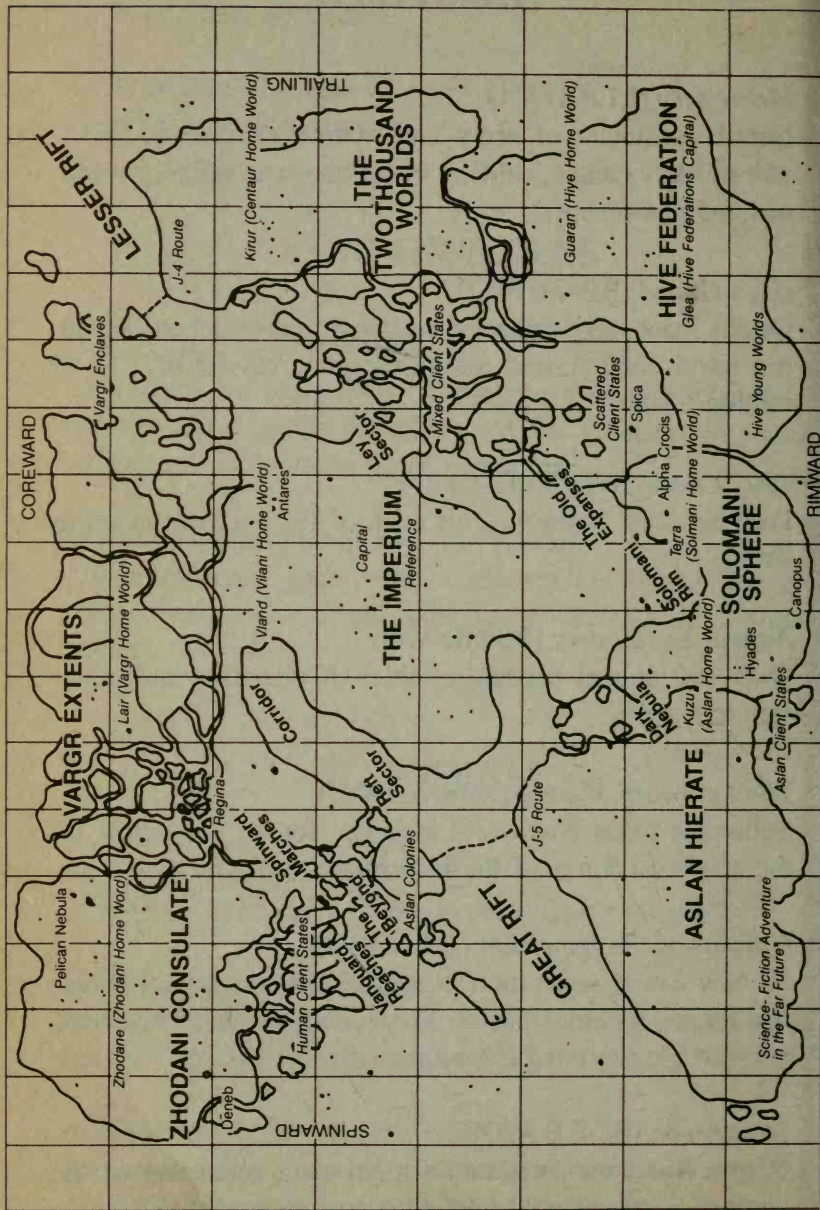
Subsector maps and world statistics for 16 subsectors on the spinward fringe of the Imperium.

Citizens of the Imperium (BS/GDW/O)

12 new career generation procedures including wet Navy, Air Force, Asteroid Miner, Pirate, Rogue and Bureaucrat, all with pregenerated examples.

76 Patrons (BS/GDW/O)

60 patron-encounter situations, grouped according to the number of characters in the adventuring party.



ACCESSORIES

Traders & Gunboats (BS/GDW/O)

Statistics, deck plans and descriptions for 12 different types of spacecraft.

Library Data (A-M) (BS/GDW/O)

Background material on the *Traveller* universe.

Fighting Ships (BS/GDW/O)

Statistics for 20 ships in the Imperial Navy service within the Spinward Marches.

Kinunir (S/GDW/O)

Details for adventures involving a search for the lost battlecruiser Kinunir.

Research Station Gamma (S/GDW/O)

A mission to infiltrate and escape from an Imperial orbital laboratory.

Twilight's Peak (S/GDW/O)

From an ancient book and a rumour in a starport bar, adventures lead across the Spinward Main in search of treasure.

Leviathan (S/GDW/O)

A journey to the unknown worlds of the Outrim Void on a voyage of exploration and trade.

Trillion Credit Squadron (S/GDW/O)

War erupts in the Old and New Islands subsectors and huge starships go into battle.

Expedition to Zhodane (S/GDW/O)

Working on Utoland can be a risky affair, and characters will either have terrible jobs or fantastic, well-paid ones.

Broadsword (S/GDW/O)

Adventure involving the Broadsword class mercenary cruisers.

Shadows/Annic Nova (S/GDW/O)

Two separate adventures in which characters explore a mysterious pyramid in *Shadows*, and investigate a derelict alien starship in *Annic Nova*.

Across the Bright Face/Mission on Mithril (S/GDW/O)

Two separate adventures of which *Across the Bright Face* concerns a group of bodyguards who have just lost their client and may now lose their lives, and *Mission on Mithril* deals with the crew of a scout ship.

The Argon Gambit/Death Station (S/GDW/O)

Two separate adventures of which *The Argon Gambit* deals with the crew of a bankrupt free trader, and *Death Station* centres on an investigative expedition to an orbiting laboratory ship.

Marooned/Marooned Alone (S/GDW/O)

Two separate adventures of which *Marooned* deals with a band of adventurers in their efforts to cross a sparsely populated world, and *Marooned Alone* deals with a solitary adventurer in a similar setting.

Chamax Plague/Horde (S/GDW/O)

Two separate adventures of which *Chamax Plague* deals with a survey mission in danger on an unexplored world, and *Horde* deals with a group of adventurers striving to save a planet from alien invasion.

A C C E S S O R I E S

The Trojan Reach Vol 1 (BS/GW/A)

Subsector maps and world statistics for the sector immediately rimward of the Spinward Marches.

The Trojan Reach Vol II (BS/GW/A)

Detailed information for the referee concerning background history and politics of the sector.

IISS Ship Files Vol 1 (BS/GW/A)

6 different types of starships fully described with deck plans, descriptions, crews and statistics.

Adventure Class Ships Vol 1 (BS/F/A)

10 different types of starships fully described with deck plans, descriptions, crews and statistics.

Starport Module 1: Hotel Complex (BS/F/A)

A modular designed hotel with 10 floors each drawn and described in detail.

Aslan Mercenary Cruisers (BS/F/A)

Detailed plans for 2 Aslan Mercenary Ships complete with two scenarios.

Merchant Class Ships (BS/F/A)

Detailed plans for 6 Merchant ships including crew lists and 6 scenarios.

Freedonian Consumer Report (BS/F/A)

Detailed descriptions, availability and reliability of technological items and equipment.

Merchants & Merchandise (BS/P/A)

Alternative character career procedure for merchants plus items of equipment for trade or use.

Scouts & Assassins (BS/P/A)

Alternative character career procedure for scouts and assassins plus plans and descriptions of a Serpent Class Scoutship.

SORAG (BS/P/A)

Referee's guide to a Zhodhani cultural surveillance organization, including full career and equipment details.

Beyond (BS/P/A)

Map, world statistics and background material for the sector immediately spinward-rimward of the Spinward Marches.

Vanguard Reaches (BS/P/A)

Map, world statistics and background material for the sector immediately spinward of Beyond.

ISCV King Richard (BS/F/A)

Plans, descriptions and berthing list of a 5,000 ton luxury liner.

Maranatha-Alkahest (BS/JG/A)

Complete sector guide including stellar map and 8 planetary maps.

Cardboard Heroes: Soldiers of Fortune (PA/SJ/A)

15 mm stand-up card figures to represent player-characters.

Personal Data Files (PA/GW/A)

Pad of 50 sheets for recording player-characters' attributes, skills, weapons, equipment and background.

ACCESSORIES

Starship Lay-Out Sheets (PA/GW/A)

Pad of 50 sheets for designing deck plans of starships to 15 mm miniature figure scale.

Ship's Papers (PA/P/A)

Pad of 25 sheets for recording all necessary starship data.

System Data Sheets (PA/P/A)

Pad of 25 sheets for recording statistics and features of stars and planets.

Ordeal by Eshaar (S/F/A)

A mission to a dangerous and hostile world to secure the control of a mineral compound that could turn the tide of war.

Action Aboard (S/F/A)

Characters, incidents and life aboard the luxury liner King Richard.

Uragyad'n of the Seven Pillars (S/F/A)

Across the desert of a distant planet, the daring and tactical genius of a few adventurers alone can thwart a dictator's invasion.

The Legend of the Sky Raiders (S/F/A)

Search for the lost treasure of vanished pillagers in the swamps of an alien planet.

Piracy/Stardust (S/F/A)

Two separate adventures of which *Piracy* deals with pirates on the star lanes, and *Stardust* deals with drug smuggling in the Alsas subsector.

Wasp Winter (S/JG/A)

Adventure on a pirate starbase.

Marooned on Ghosting (S/JG/A)

Adventure on an unexplored planet with contact with an uncharted intelligent life form.

Rogue Moon of Spinstorme (S/JG/A)

Star commando raid on a fortress defended by alien battle machines.

Simba Safari (S/JG/A)

A safari adventure for the idle-rich, hunting strange creatures.

The following Traveller games, whilst complete in themselves, are games of tactical or strategical combat set in the same universe as Traveller and, as such, can be used with the Traveller system:

Mayday (Game/GDW/O)

Ship-to-ship combat with lasers, missiles and other weaponry utilizing the basic *Traveller* starship system. A simple system governs the use of shipboard computers in combat. Counters represent ships, ship's boats and missiles.

Snapshot (Game/GDW/O)

Man-to-man combat aboard *Traveller* starships. A number of scenarios simulate hijacks, boarding actions and alien creatures on the loose. Use the basic *Traveller* personal combat system with additional rules to limit the number of actions a player can perform each turn.

ACCESSORIES

Azhanti High Lightning (Game/GDW/O)

Continues where *Snapshot* leaves off—various scenarios featuring one huge starship, with multiple deck plans, and complete details of the *Azhanti High Lightning* and her sister ships in *Traveller* terms.

Invasion Earth (Game/GDW/O)

Far in the future, the inhabitants of Earth and the surrounding region of space have rebelled against the Imperium. The full campaign by Imperial forces to retake Earth is represented, with a map of the planet as it might look in 3500 years time.

Fifth Frontier War (Game/GDW/O)

Vast space fleets, assault and defence forces span the light years between stellar systems in this game of empires in conflict. Rules include the effect of admirals, the slowness of communications, and simulate grand strategy, deep space combat and planetary invasions.

Striker (Game/GDW/O)

Military combat between squads and platoons, with extensive and detailed treatment of weapons and fighting vehicles including full rules on designing and equipping the fighting forces. Designed around the combat systems in *Mercenary* and *Azhanti High Lightning*, for use with 15 mm miniature figures and vehicle miniatures.

TUNNELS & TROLLS

Uncle Ugly's Underground (S/FB/O)

Multi-player dungeon situated beneath an extinct volcanic crater.

Catacombs of the Bear Cult (S/FB/O)

Multi-player dungeon set in the territories of the Bear Cult with its shape-shifting highwaymen.

Naked Doom (S/FB/O)

Solo Dungeon in which a character must escape from the prison catacombs of the city of Khazan.

Sorcerer Solitaire (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon designed purely for magic-users.

Weirdworld (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon designed purely for fighters set in the granite Madhouse of Maximilian the Magnificent.

Buffalo Castle (S/FB/O)

The first of the *T&T* solo dungeons designed for first-level fighters.

Overkill (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon in which a character must perform a secret mission of destruction inside Overkill castle.

Sword for Hire (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon in which a character is hired as a mercenary to explore a wizard's tower.

Labyrinth (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon with a Grecian theme designed for low-level warriors.

Arena of Khazan (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon in which a character must fight creatures in a combat arena.

ACCESSORIES

Beyond the Silvered Pane (S/FB/O)

A solo dungeon into which access is gained by stepping through an old mirror belonging to a dwarf.

Sewers of Oblivion (S/FB/O)

A high-level solo dungeon set beneath the City of Terrors.

Dargon's Dungeons (S/FB/O)

A low-level solo dungeon designed by the wizard Dargon and set high in a cliff.

Sea of Mystery (S/FB/O)

A medium-level solo adventure which a character starts his perilous quest at sea.

Deathtrap Equalizer (S/FB/O)

A medium-level solo dungeon of Umslopagaas of the Shiny Teeth, proprietor of a house of horrors.

Blue Frog Tavern (S/FB/O)

A low-level solo dungeon which begins at a small country tavern run by a strange rock demon called Quartz.

Misty Wood (S/FB/O)

A high-level solo dungeon in which a character is chased into a creature-infested wood.

Goblin Lake (S/FB/O)

A short low-level solo dungeon in which a character must be a goblin.

Abyss (S/FB/O)

A short solo dungeon in which a character starts his adventure on the edge of a body-littered plain.

City of Terror (S/FB/O)

A large solo dungeon set in the City of Gull on the tropical island of Phoron.

Toughest Dungeon in the World (S/JG/A)

Solo dungeon in which a player-character has the option of being a monster.

Rat-on-a-Stick (S/JG/A)

Become the owner of a fast-food franchise and help keep monsters from starving to death.

VILLAINS & VIGILANTES

Death Duel with the Destroyers (S/FGU/O)

An adventure set in New York City.

Break in at Three Kilometer Island (S/JG/A)

Low-level scenario in which a group of villains, the Four Fiends, must be stopped from building an 'M' bomb.

Cardboard Heroes: Zap! (PA/SJ/A)

25 mm stand-up cardboard characters.

WILD WEST

Trouble on Widow's Peak (S/FGU/O)

Campaign base with a town, ranches, mine and lumber camp.

GENERAL ACCESSORIES

The following items are suitable for several role-playing games and not one specific title.

Dungeon Floor Plans 1 (PA/GW/GF)

Boxed set of 12 card sheets printed to represent wood and stone floors and passageways which can be cut out as desired to facilitate movement of miniature gaming figures.

Dungeon Floor Plans 2 (PA/GW/GF)

Boxed set of 12 card sheets printed to represent trees, grass, water and dungeon accessories.

Dungeon Mapping Sheets (PA/GW/GF)

Pad of 50 sheets of square-gridded paper on to which dungeon scenarios can be designed.

Wilderness Hex Sheets (PA/GW/GF)

Pad of 50 sheets of hexagonal-gridded paper on to which wilderness scenarios can be designed.

Thieves' World (BS/C/GF)

Multi-system adventure pack including player and referee guides, maps and personality descriptions of Sanctuary characters.

Card Warriors (PA/S/GF)

Two separate sets of stand-up creatures and characters.

Cardboard Heroes (PA/SJ/GF)

7 separate sets of stand-up cardboard creatures and characters.

Thieves' Guild (BS/G/GF)

6-part development of the thief as a player-character, with special rules and scenario ideas.

Prince of Thieves (S/G/GF)

Three mini-scenarios set in a world of crime.

The Free City of Haven (BS/G/GF)

Large city detailing temples, taverns, shops, homes and inhabitants.

The Compleat Tavern (BS/G/GF)

Description and plan of characters and activities of a medieval tavern.

Grimtooth's Traps (BS/FB/GF)

A compendium of magical and mechanical traps.

Wraith Overlord (S/JG/GF)

Scenario set beneath the City State of the Invincible Overlord.

MAGAZINES

No hobby worth its while is without its magazines, and RPGs are no exception. There are two types of magazine dedicated to role-playing games. These are the professional magazines published by established companies and, as might be expected, these magazines are published 6 or 12 times a year, are authoritative, colourful and carry advertising. The other type are published by the gamers themselves and are usually referred to as fanzines. They

are usually sporadic in publication, 'instant' printed, type-written rather than typeset, but are a labour of love by gamers wishing to express their views and feelings about the games they both like and dislike. There are so many fanzines published that it is almost impossible to keep an accurate record of them. Some are very obscure with minimal circulation and others come and go at the whim of their publishers. Nevertheless, they are an important part of the hobby and add an important contribution to it. First, though, the magazines:

WHITE DWARF (editor, Ian Livingstone)

It is not entirely with bias that I mention *White Dwarf* first. It is the only UK-published magazine specializing in science fiction and fantasy RPGs. It was first published in 1977 and has established itself as the British voice of role-playing. Games most usually featured in articles and scenarios are *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *RuneQuest* and *Tunnels & Trolls*. Reviews are, however, given of other RPGs, and a news column covers topics of general interest to all role-playing gamers.

DRAGON (Editor, Kim Mohan)

Unique in that *Dragon* was the first magazine to appear specializing in science fiction and fantasy RPGs: it has since maintained a dominant position in the USA despite its number of rivals. It first appeared in 1976 and quickly built up a large readership by restricting most of its editorial to *Dungeons & Dragons*. It has since extended its editorial coverage to include all of the major RPGs and related activities.

DIFFERENT WORLDS (editor, Tadashi Ehara)

Whilst there is an obvious concentration of *RuneQuest* material making up the contents (same publishers), *Different Worlds* does contain good material for other role-playing systems. One of its main attractions is the amusing and informative 'A Letter from Gigi' page, being a collection of rumours, gossip and comments from behind the scenes of the manufacturers.

THE SPACE GAMER (editor, Aaron Allston)

Bought from Metagaming by Steve Jackson Games, *The Space Gamer* has now progressed beyond its previous 'house-organ' status. Usually concentrates on one specific game per issue, but always includes other regular features, notably its Capsule Reviews which manage to keep abreast of the constant new releases from the industry.

ADVENTURE GAMING (editor, Tim Kask)

A new publication in the hands of the former editor of *Dragon*, *Adventure Gaming* has yet to find its place in the market. Benefits largely from the inclusion of 'The Adventures of Finieous Fingers', a popular comic strip character previously published in *Dragon*.

GAMEPLAY (editor, Jake Jacquet)

A new publication in the hands of the former editor, and later publisher, of *Dragon*, *Gameplay* covers all aspects of gaming but has a column and frequent articles devoted to role-playing.

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE (editor, Liz Danforth)

Essentially a *Tunnels & Trolls* gaming aid, usually containing a solo mini-adventure and a lot of fiction.

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY (editor, Loren K. Wiseman)

Well-respected and popular magazine despite being dedicated purely to *Traveller*.

HIGH PASSAGE (editors, William Barton and Ross Babcock)

Similar in content and appearance to the *Journal*, *High Passage* is a quarterly play-aid magazine approved for use with *Traveller*.

INTERPLAY (editor, Trace Hallowell)

A house magazine for all of Metagaming's products, but including a lot of material for *The Fantasy Trip*.

THE GAMER (editor, Nicky Palmer)

A general gaming magazine which includes news and reviews of RPGs.

PEGASUS (editor, Mike Reagan)

Resembles a *Dungeons & Dragons* play-aid rather than a magazine, but produced in an amateurish style with some text typeset and some typewritten.

NEXUS (editor, unknown)

A new magazine published by Task Force Games, unseen at the time of writing this book.

THE ORACLE (editor, unknown)

A new magazine published by Horizon International, unseen at the time of writing this book.

FANZINES

Most fanzines are relatively the same in style and content. Because of their sporadic appearance and availability no information apart from the title and editors of some of the most popular and regular fanzines is given.

Abyss (editor, Dave Nalle)

Alien Star (editor, D. W. Hockham)

Alarums & Excursions (editor, Lee Gold)

Beholder (editor, Nicholas Scales)

Doombook of Chaos (editor, Brandon Bennett)

Dragon Lords (editors, Mike Lewis, Marc Gascoigne and Ian Marsh)

The Wild Hunt (editor, Mark Swanson)

Palantir (editor Tony Ellam)

Planetside (editors, S. Basham, S. Baker and T. Bushell)

Quasits & Quasars (editor, David Hulks)

Secrets of Koan (editor, Trevor Mendham)

Stormlord (editor, Andreas Sarker)

Thunderstruck (editor, Tim Kalvis)

The Lords of Chaos (editor, Nicolai Shapero)

Wyrms' Claw (editor, Lazarus)

MINIATURE FIGURES



Whilst role-playing games were originally conceived as 'pencil and paper' games with atmosphere created in the imaginations of the players, it wasn't long before gamers looked to the model hobby shops for three-dimensional figures to represent their player-characters. In the early days when choice was limited, players would use all man-

ner of items as character figures and creatures, from plastic model train set personnel to large rubber dinosaurs and joke shop insects! However, unknown to most role-players in the mid-1970s there was already a range of metal fantasy gaming figures in existence. Miniature Figurines Ltd of Southampton produced a line of *Mythical Earth* figures which were loosely based on Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. They were, however, intended to be used in large-scale, mass-action table-top battles using wargames rules rather than for RPGs, which were very much in their infancy at the time. Role-players heard about the figures and snapped them up, and Miniature Figurines Ltd followed up with another range entitled *Swords and Sorcery* which was also very popular at the time.

Miniature Figurines Ltd then went another step further, in that they were the first figure manufacturer to produce an official licensed range linked to a specific game. In 1977 the first of their *Dungeons & Dragons* figures came on to the market and were an immediate success. Miniature Figurines Ltd, who were renowned for their wargame figures, had now created and established a new market for science fiction and fantasy figures.

But, as with all else, a good thing does not last for ever. New companies were to enter the field to try to capture part of the market, and were very successful in their attempts. Both in the USA and UK new companies started to pour out science fiction and fantasy gaming figures, and were later to dominate the field. That this happened is remarkable, as the skills and processes required to manufacture the figures are quite complex.

There are two scales of gaming figures currently in use, 15 mm and 25 mm, the latter being the more popular. The scale refers to the height of a typical human figure, and the detail found on such small figures is nothing short of

staggering. First, in the manufacturing process, comes the sculpting of the master figure. This is done by the application of modelling putty onto a wire frame bent into the basic shape of the intended figure. Whilst the putty is moist, fine detail can be sculpted on to the figure right down to the eyes and buttonholes. Then follows the almost sacrilegious act of totally destroying the master figure. When it is completely dried out and hardened, the figure is placed into a flat, two-part rubber mould which under heat and pressure inside a vulcanizing press crushes the master figure, leaving its outline etched into the mould. The mould is then transferred to a centrifugal casting machine. Fixed in its position, the mould is spun at high speed, and molten metal (a lead/tin based alloy) is poured into it. The centrifugal force ensures that the metal runs into all the figure recesses in the mould. After cooling, the mould is opened to reveal a solid metal figure in the same glorious detail as the original master figure, all ready for painting. Unlike plastic figures, paint will adhere to metal figures without flaking off, whether they are oil-based, water- or acrylic-based paints. Consequently, the painting of metal figures has become almost a hobby in itself, with miniature works of art being produced by skilled painters. It is relatively easy to become a figure painter of reasonable standard, and methods and guidelines to becoming one are given later in the chapter. The effort is well worth while, as a group of painted figures enhances a game so much more than a group of dull unpainted metal figures.

Since the original range of science fiction and fantasy figures of the mid-1970s, the industry has changed considerably. New companies now dominate the market and the standard and quality of figures has increased dramatically. Individual designers are now gaining recognition for their work. Arguably the best in the business today are Michael

and Alan Perry of Citadel Miniatures, Tom Meier of Ral Partha and Nicholas Bibby of Asgard Miniatures. Manufacturers making figures suitable for role-playing games are listed in Appendix 3.

FIGURE PAINTING

The prospect of bringing to life a 25 mm high metal figure by the application of paint in hours of painstaking effort must seem daunting to many people. However, the end result of the visual splendour of a well painted wizard or star trooper more than makes up for any effort involved.

The first consideration when painting a figure only 25 mm in height is the corresponding lack of depth in relief. This is important in regard to the effects of light and shade. If the colours are simply painted on, it does not really work. The figure will look flat and doll-like. There will be no character—just colour. Therefore we have to compensate by exaggeration. The way to do this is to make those areas which will be in shade much darker, and those features which stand out—the highlights—much brighter. Not only does the end result look far more realistic, but the figure ceases to be a mere coloured playing piece and becomes a work of art. The features of the best figures are already quite prominent. The object of the artist is to bring these out to the best advantage. Not only must parts be made lighter or darker, but it is also necessary to bring them out in outline for clear definition. The brush is a tool that can be used to bring out the flow of a wizard's robe, the glint of barbarian mail or the rough and revolting skin of a troll. The style is your own, but as a guideline exaggerate everything and you can't go wrong.

THE PAINTS

White undercoat spray

If water soluble paints are being used, it is essential that an undercoat is given to a figure. Undercoat should really be used as a key for oil- and spirit-based paints too. Matt white is recommended as the ideal colour. Humbrol, U-Spray and Hobby Paints are all quite suitable. Ordinary matt white paint can be used, but the advantages of a spray finish are considerable.

Enamels

Generally speaking these are readily available and are the simplest to use. They are also cheap and dry fast. They are not to be underrated on this account as, if mixed properly, they present a very practical medium and can produce excellent results, even in the most specialized applications. Ideally, they should be used in combination with more esoteric paints as highlighting agents. The chief disadvantage of enamels lies in their tendency to dull when mixed—so try to get a wide range of colours.

The most common makes are Humbrol and Airfix. Of the former, it is their range of *Authentic* colours that are the most obvious benefit to the figure painter. Apart from some of the Railway and Aircraft colours, they are a nice flat matt. They give the best possible covering power when judiciously thinned, and have a fine smooth consistency.

Their ordinary range of matts is rather too thick for fine figure work but the gloss pots can be most useful. Humbrol also do a rather convenient range of matt sprays including a matt white which is excellent for undercoating.

Airfix are more common in toyshops but tend to have a rather chalky consistency and are glutinous in comparison. However, the matt white makes a first class base undercoat for water soluble paints by virtue of these very qualities.

Neither of the two brands above are suitable for fine airbrush work, both having a tendency to clog. The paint for this is Hales' Pactra. It is of an entirely different consistency, being more transparent in application and flexible when dry. Best of all, it is ultra fine and does not clog airbrushes. Badger, one of the airbrush manufacturers, recommends it.

For thinners use white spirit which is cheaper than turps, but keep it out of the paint pot whatever happens. Enamels should be stored in a cool place and used in a cool room.

Oils

For the moment you can forget normal artists' oil colours. They take far too long to dry to paint 25 mm figures. There is an alternative. A range by Windsor & Newton called *Alkyd* has a relatively short drying time and is available from most good art shops. This gives you the best of both worlds. The range of colours in this is quite wide and you won't find yourself using much. These are still a paint for the expert, but their blending and transparent qualities are extremely attractive. The range of techniques and uses for oils are varied but, basically, thin with turps for a matt effect and linseed oil for gloss. When thin they are transparent and can be used very successfully for shading enamels; and for subtle blending on the figure itself they are unbeatable.

The only criticism that one can level at oils in general is that some types tend towards lumpy pigmentation and that even the experts when blending cannot avoid what is for 25 mm a very rough texture.

Acrylics

Many painters use acrylics exclusively. They are extremely flexible in use and are water soluble. Their brilliance makes them *the* paints for colour highlighting over enamels and very bright effects. On the adverse side they can be tricky in use and tend to be rather too awkward for general application, so experience is an advantage here.

Poster paints

Water soluble poster paints aren't really of much use to the miniatures' artist; they tend to be too thick with coarse pigmentation and a colourless medium. Even so, the fluorescent colours by Rowney can be recommended. These are fine pigment acrylic type compounds, and a wide range is available. They are ideal for torches, light sabres and monstrous eyes, as well as highlighting applications.

Inks

Artists' inks are almost indispensable when creating special effects, for they are really the only truly transparent colours available, exceeding anything else in this respect. Properly used inks can be truly amazing, but it does take experience to master the many possible effects. The best idea is to practice and experiment to see what effects can be achieved.

Designers' goache

Very good for horses, leather, and clothes with fine washes, but not used widely because thinned down oils or enamels are just as effective.

VARNISH

Available from Hinchcliffe Models Ltd in a spray can is a matt varnish which actually works. The wise painter will first cover his painted figure with a stronger and more transparent gloss polyurethane varnish, and then give it a thin spray of the matt varnish. This gives a good matt effect and is preferable because a thick layer of the spray does tend to dull and yellow the colour.

When using varnish it is possible to employ the thinnest washes and softest paints without fear of their rubbing off.

PREPARATION

For the sake of convenience, it is assumed that enamel paints are being used in the guidelines which follow. Whether colours are to be blended or used straight, a palette of some sort will be needed. A simple and inexpensive palette can be a piece of clean polythene as in plastic bags. Wax paper tear-off palettes can be purchased, but these tend to disintegrate, especially when using water-based paints. Also needed is a roll of kitchen paper for wiping brushes and for cleaning up paint spills. When it finally comes to painting, try to work in a dust-free room with plenty of light—the eyes can tire quickly when working on such fine detail as 25 mm figures.

The Mix

Stir the paint with the wooden end of the paint brush, or simply gouge out a bit of the sticky pigment in the bottom and deposit it on the palette. This is an operation that practice will make perfect. Too much pigment and not enough medium can make for a weak, flaky, finish. Too much medium can make the paint glossy and slow to dry. Obviously, wipe the end clean.

Thinning

Dip the brush into the thinners and add the liquid so acquired to the paint on the palette. When doing this always use the drawing motion described on p. 205 so that the hairs are kept straight and the paint flows in the right direction. When mixing don't push the brush, splay the hairs or drive paint into the root. When the mix is fairly liquid but of a usable consistency, wipe the brush, dip it in the thinners and wipe clean again. As a guide to the correct consistency remember that the paints will have to be thin enough to flow, but thick enough to give a good cover all over, unless you are using a wash. With a clean brush you will get exactly the amount of paint you want to take up from the mixture in the right place which is, of course, the tip. Remember: too little and you have to keep going back; too much and the paint will go where you don't want it. It is best, perhaps, to err on the side of caution as it's easier to get another brushfull than to go back to paint over your mistakes. Don't keep your mixes waiting too long as they get glossy and lumpy.

BRUSHES

There's only one kind of brush for miniatures' work—fine sable artists' water-colour brushes. Even for covering large areas, they give significantly better results. Obviously the choice of make is subject to local availability. Rowney and/or Windsor & Newton are just the job. Nylon brushes may be cheap and durable but they really aren't good enough.

Sable brushes cost money, but if you think of them in terms of figures not ruined by bodged paint jobs, they don't seem so expensive after all. When buying, go for a variety of sizes. The really small brushes (00, 000) don't carry much paint at a time, whilst a 0 or a 1 will carry plenty. Remember it is not the nominal size of the brush that matters so much as the size of the point on the tip. If you can only afford one brush go for a good quality size 1 or 2. The better the tools the better the work. When you've chosen the size you want, check the point by moistening the end, and by all means chat to the assistant.

Hallmarks of a good brush

- 1 A fine tip that will deliver a very precise amount of paint exactly where it's wanted. Again, you don't need an ultra small brush to do this.
- 2 Long, neatly bound hairs; a brush with scraggy bristles poking out in all directions is going to make a nasty mess of your tenth-level Paladin. Keep it for dry brushing chainmail.
- 3 Newness. When your faithful brush has become worn or splayed out from use, give the poor thing an honourable retirement. You can afford to be fussy, because a bad brush can ruin a lot of figures and often the artist thinks that it's his painting that's doing it.

Brush care

- 1 Always clean your brush with thinners between colours, and with soap and water after use. If you leave paint to dry on the brush it forms a deposit on the root that causes splaying, and will probably end up putting little particles of dried paint in the mixture which will give your masterpiece the subtle texture of a bomb site. Acrylics are notorious for clogging and are next to impossible to get out when dried.
- 2 Never leave your brushes in the thinners bottle, unless you like painting sideways.
- 3 Keep two jars of thinners, one dirty and one clean. The reason should be obvious.
- 4 When painting never push the brush forwards. Always draw it across the figure trailing the hairs so that the paint flows from the root to the tip. This needs a very light touch when painting into cracks. If you paint the wrong way the root will become irreversibly clogged, and you shouldn't ever have paint that far up the brush anyway.

The use of the brush

Whatever paint you are using, there is only one proper way to use a sable brush. Draw it lightly along the surface at an angle (Fig. 4) so that the properly thinned paint flows naturally off the brush on to the surface, in precisely the right place and quantity, without causing blobs or disturbing any paint that may be underneath. The necessity for care here cannot be overstressed.

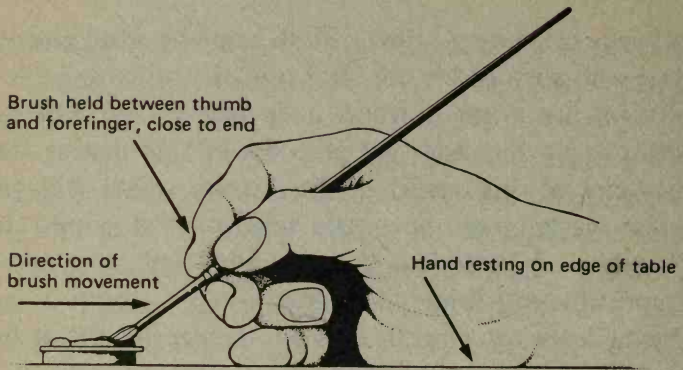


Figure 4: Using the brush

Holding the brush

This is very much a matter of personal style, but it is most important to have both hands resting on the table for steadiness and precision. By doing this, and holding the brush close to the bristle, one can do the most intricate work with these. Try to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

PAINTING

There are two basic ways to paint a figure. The first is simple and quick and only employs two coats apart from the undercoat. The second requires a great deal more attention to be given to shading, and many more blends. Both require a matt white undercoat and the use of black line shading before colouring.

Undercoat

To start, spray, brush or otherwise deposit a matt white undercoat. Take care not to lay it on so thickly that it obscures the detail, or so thinly that it will rub off when painted over. The most effective and economical way to accomplish this is to stand all your figures in a group and spray them from various positions at a distance of one foot. Short bursts are best here. Give the undercoat plenty of time to dry. If this isn't done, a spirit based paint will run, and a water soluble paint will form little globules covering the figure.

Black Outline

This stage is probably as important as any other. The basic object is to outline and separate the shape of the various different parts by painting a matt black into the recesses that separate them, and by blacking out those areas which would be in deep shade anyway.

No matter what sort of paint you are using, the best one for this particular purpose is a matt black Humbrol which flows easily, covers well and dries quickly.

Imagine that you are drawing a three dimensional line drawing—almost a cartoon. Obvious examples of those areas to be painted are described below and shown in Figure 5.

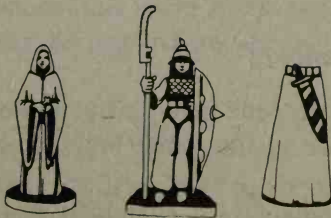


Figure 5: Black lining

- 1 The cuff of the robe where it meets the bare arm.
- 2 Either side of the belt.
- 3 Between the arm on the left and the body.
- 4 Between the legs.
- 5 Where the cloak folds over the body.
- 6 Around the buttons and belt plates.
- 7 Around the sword and its bindings.
- 8 Between the lips, under the hair and around the eyeball.
- 9 In the recesses of the helmet.
- 10 Between the fingers (unless using full technique).

Finally, black out all armour, especially chainmail.

This should pick out the relief of the figure and make different parts look separate, which they would not otherwise have done in a solid figure of this scale. This is the beginnings of a realistic 3-D effect.

Use a fairly thin mix for this because it flows into the cracks more easily. Also, unless dealing with really fine detail, it is best to err on the side of excess and make these black lines as bold as possible.

When you have done this, check to see that you haven't gone over areas that should stand out. If you have, just pick them out in white again.

You should now have a figure with clearly defined features and proper bordering. When dry, it is ready for the next stage.

'Painting by numbers'

This is the easy way, and here's why: at the simplest level you simply colour in the white areas with washes or a simple highlight.

Mix the first colour in a slightly darker shade on the palette than is wanted on the finished model. The reason

for this is that thinned out paint is rather transparent, which will mean that the parts in relief will be considerably lighter and brighter because of the white underneath. When darkening, refer to the mixing chart (Fig. 6) and remember that the thinner the blend the lighter the result. The right shade and consistency will enable the paint to run naturally into the creases and create its own shading effect. As always, keep the paint on the tip of the brush. Beware of swamping the wrong areas with too much or too thin paint.

Make sure that you paint in the white portions right up to the edge of the black lines. Do this with each successive area in its respective colour. Don't succumb to the temptation to soak the whole thing including the blacked out bits, to save time. If this is done, the lighter paint will form pools in areas which should be blacked out. The final touch to this quick method is the highlighting. To do this make a very pale mix of each colour you have used and use them in small but bold strokes on those portions of the figure which stand out the most, and would be brightest in a strong light from directly above, i.e. the tops of outer folds of cloth, tips of noses, upper cheeks and muscles. Do this lightly and take care not to brush up the previous coat.

Highlighting is one of the areas in which your own personal taste and style comes out most clearly. Bold highlighting looks particularly good on the playing board.

For the armour, simply brush a semi-dry mix of silver and black lightly over the parts where you want the effect to be.

Full shade and highlighting

This method uses the four basic elements of line, shade, normal colour and highlight originating from 54 mm painting technique.

Primarily, with certain exceptions, washes are not used, and the shading is done more gradually by careful blending of different hues (in oils the blending goes much further, as the paint is actually mixed on the model).

To begin with, put on the undercoats and outlines in black as described. However, in this case, the black outline should be used far more conservatively and not at all in the lighter shaded areas—between the fingers for instance. The lines should be thinner as they will be supplemented by the darker shading.

For the first stage of shading make a very deep, dark mix of the desired colour. Refer to the table (Fig. 6). Simply adding black to the mix is no way to do this. It is lazy and looks bad. The colour chart should in no way be taken as gospel. However, it does seem to work. Included are the different elements that will lighten or darken the colours listed. The quantities and proportions in which you add them are dependent on the exact hue and your own personal judgment. Generally, to shade any colour, use a

Base Colour	Deep Shade	Normal Shade	Highlight
Black	Black	Brown*/Grey/Black	Dark Grey/Light Blue* or Light Tan
Grey	Black	Black	White
Dark Blue	Black/Deepest shade of Blue	Deep Blue	Light Blue
Purple	Black/Dark Blue	Dark Red/Dark Blue	Scarlet/Dark Blue/White/Violet
Crimson	Black	Black/Dark Blue	White/Dayglo Pink*
Scarlet	Dark Red/Black	Dark Red	Orange/White/Dayglo Red*
Orange	Black/Scarlet	Scarlet	Yellow/White
Yellow	Orange/Scarlet	Orange/Light Brown*	White/Dayglo Yellow**
Light Green	Dark Green/Dark Blue/Black	Dark Green	Yellow/White
Dark Green	Black/Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Apple Green (Dayglo*)
Tan	Yellow/Red Brown/Black	Yellow/Red Brown	White/Lemon Yellow
Brown	Black	Black/Dark Red/Orange	Scarlet/White/Orange/Grey**
Flesh	Scarlet/Black/Dark Red	Scarlet/Orange	Yellow/White
Dark Flesh	Black	Dark Red/Black	Orange
Dark Leather	Black/Scarlet	Black/Scarlet	Orange
Ivory	Yellow/Brown	Yellow/Tan	White
Iron	Black	Gunmetal/Dark Blue	Silver
Brass	Black	Dark Brown (thinned)	—
Gold	Black/Dark Brown	Dark Brown/Orange(thinned)	—

*Optional depending on circumstances

**Dubious, depending on taste

Figure 6: Colour chart

deeper version of that same colour, at least in the case of red, yellow, blue, green, etc. Highlighting is rather more complicated, especially as something light and whitish—the universal colour of reflected daylight—should be aimed for. But again a straight mix with white isn't really on.

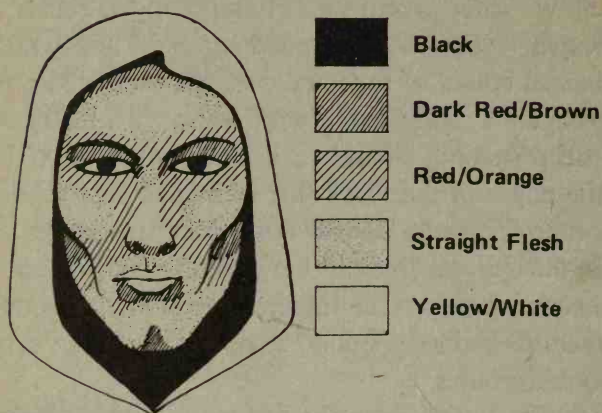
The deep shading should be a fairly strong mix. Use it along the edges of the black line in a thick strip where the edge is recessed and a narrow one where it is slight. Next, use it in the deepest folds of the clothing and—in the case of the hands—between the fingers. Use it to exaggerate the facial features and as a general cover for the lower surfaces close to the ground.

As a guide, stand your figure under a strong light and watch where the shadows fall. Just try to continue picking out the three dimensional qualities.

Next, use the plain shading—a lighter blend of course—and use it to blend in the edges of the deeper shade. Always paint slightly over the edge of the preceding, darker shading, in order to avoid white patches and also to give a more gradual effect. This is the shade you want to use to emphasize the lesser folds and as a general cover for the remaining lower or shadowed surfaces. It is up to you how many stages of shading you use, but in this scale you don't want to use too many. Obviously the unshaded colour will be over those areas that the shading has left out. When this is done, tidy up mistakes and leave to dry. (See Fig. 7.)

Highlighting

If you're in a hurry one stage of highlighting is usually enough to set the figure off, but it is preferable to build up an effect by the use of progressively paler mixes covering a smaller, more prominent area each time. The cumulative



effect of this is rather impressive, and works especially well on flesh. The best plan is to do a fairly dull highlighting on vertical areas and use a really light mix for features that would reflect the light such as on top of knuckles and cheekbones. Allow plenty of time for separate coats to dry. Care taken in this stage pays dividends.

Additional tips

These are just a few clues as to successful methods.

For eyes in 25 mm first of all paint out the whole eye in black and then put a spot of white each side of the pupil. This gives you eyebrows as well as whites and pupil.

For fur and hair, a thin wash of the desired colour and then a very dry light mix of white brushed lightly over the top works very well.

For metals, try painting on the metal paint straight out of a tin, allow it to dry very well, then paint over a thin mix of black and gloss varnish very carefully so as not to raise the previous coat.

For chainmail, paint black overall and then dry brush it with silver and black mix.

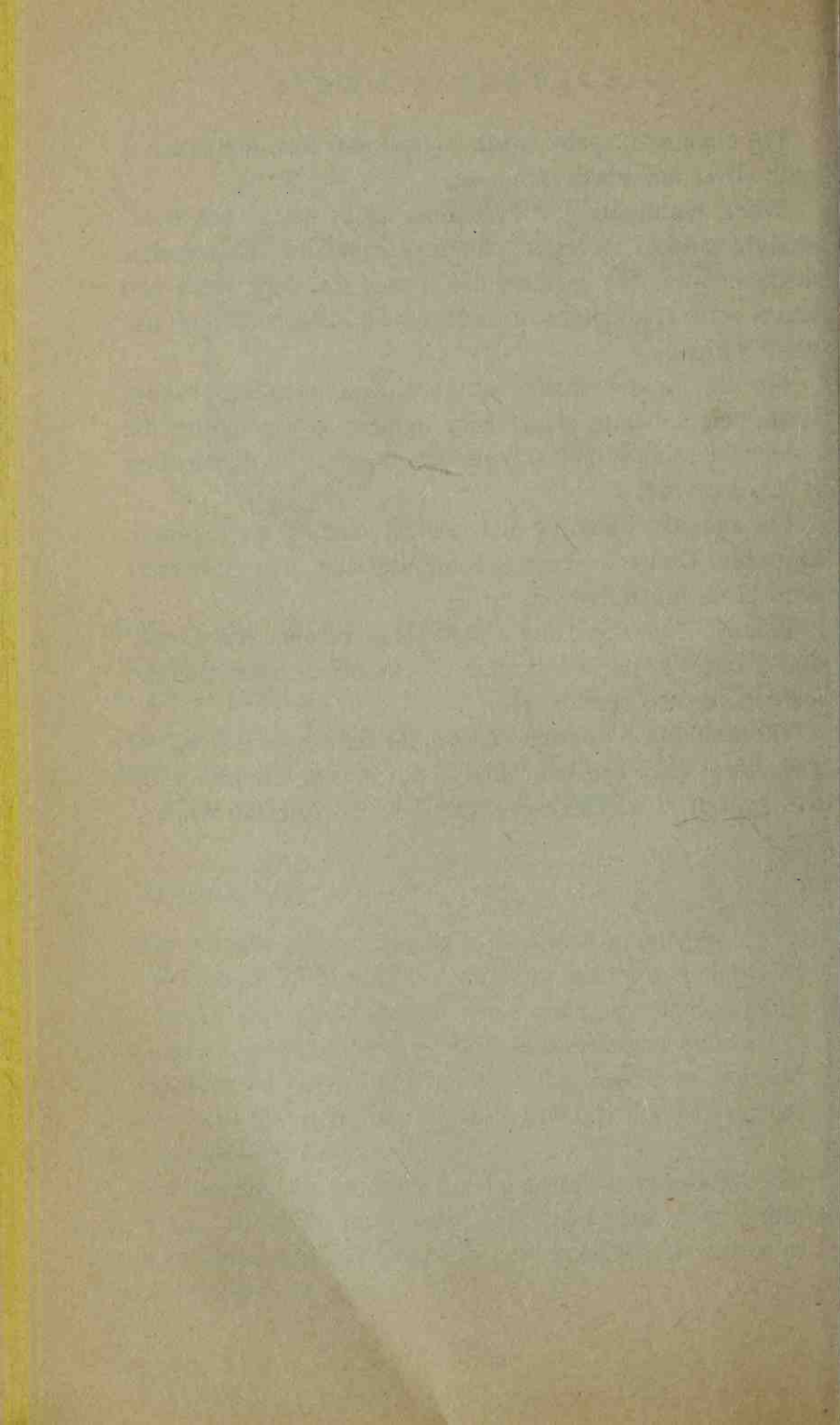
When highlighting and shading cloth try to use bold, straight strokes to reflect the way in which the material tends to fold. For leather, use a medium dark wash and leave—don't highlight it unless you have to—and use gloss varnish.

For the lighter shades of cloth and suchlike, except flesh, remember to shade very lightly, as the lighter the colour the more it naturally reflects the light so the shading is less extreme.

For animals, blending and gradual shading are far more desirable. Don't do too much highlighting. Try an overall semi-gloss finish instead.

Finally, if you're using a matt spray varnish afterwards, don't forget to put a little dab of gloss over eyes, metals, leather, painted shields, etc.

The painting of miniature gaming figures is a long yet rewarding task. The more that is put into it, the more you will get out of it. The end result is well worth the while.



PLAYING GOD



Having got involved in role-playing games, sooner or later you will want to referee adventures of your own devising. Although many game systems have ready-to-play scenarios and adventures, there is nothing quite like the feeling of accomplishment when players are obviously enjoying something of your own creation. How do you go about this

daunting task? A lot will depend on the game system you have chosen—inventing two or three floors of a fantasy dungeon is not the same thing as inventing stellar systems inhabited by alien races. The type of knowledge required is different, and it is part of the process of choosing a game system in the first place that you should anticipate the great day when you create your own game-world.

Whilst the background knowledge required might differ from game to game, there are certain basic rules to creating your own adventures that apply across the board. For example, it is necessary to decide if the adventure is going to be one in which the adventurers are given a starting situation and subsequent developments depend on the choices that players make—such an adventure is called an *open-ended* situation—or if the players are to work their way through various dangers to achieve, in the end, one major objective or reward—a *closed* situation. This decision is crucial to the adventure because it profoundly affects the way in which the adventure will be moderated. In an open-ended situation the players are given a freer rein on the choice of activity, but against this is the fact that the referee will have his work cut out to keep one step ahead of the players—it will be impossible to prepare in advance for every eventuality. In a closed situation the players have less choice of action and hence perhaps less control over the destiny of their player-character, but the referee can concentrate on making the most of each element of the adventure.

Both types of situation have their advantages and disadvantages, but since we are more concerned with beginning referees, it is suggested that the closed situation should be preferred until sufficient experience in moderating adventures is achieved.

One certain way to disaster for new referees is to bite off

more than can be chewed. Many people are disenchanted with role-playing before they have really started, after attempting to run a full-scale adventure straight away. A complete RPG system is a complicated paper machine—it has to be, to cater for all the types of activity required in role-playing. As an analogy, any piece of machinery or electronics, such as a motor car or a TV set, is a complex mass of bits and pieces when viewed as a whole. Yet every day up and down the country, a large number of people are employed in maintaining such equipment, having learnt what each piece does, and how the pieces join together. Similarly, with RPGs—to get the best out of the game system a referee has to learn how the parts work in order to understand the whole.

Start out with a simple encounter, if you haven't played the game system before—a small party of player-characters against a group of whatever enemies your chosen game system employs. Then go on to another encounter, adding more detail and complexity, gradually drawing in other elements of the game until a full-scale adventure is in progress. This method may not seem the most exciting way to introduce yourself to a role-playing system, but jumping straight in at the deep end can quickly dampen your enthusiasm when you find yourself unable to cope with all the problems and decisions required. Make sure at each stage that you, as the referee and arbitrator of events, can sustain the action at a suitable level of detail and competence, in terms of both preparation and control over players' actions. That way, you will gain confidence in regulating events, and the players will in turn have the confidence to concentrate on playing their parts and in trusting to your judgment. The method also has the advantage of committing to memory the basic 'nuts and bolts' of the rules system, which cannot be a bad thing.

The next thing to bear in mind is the purpose or the *objectives* that the players are expected to achieve, weighed against the *dangers* a referee thinks up to challenge them with. To start with, the following are the types of reward players will be searching for, depending on the type of game system:

- monetary or other material gain;
- improvement of personal skills or characteristics;
- increased or improved job prospects;
- social advancement;
- opportunities to expunge forces of evil (or good);
- satisfying curiosity/quest for knowledge through investigation or deduction;
- the satisfaction of practising character skills successfully—a 'job well done'.

To oppose the players, the referee has the following types of obstacle to put in their path:

- monsters or other enemies, posing either a physical danger or a mental or psychic danger;
- physical obstacles, either obvious (such as sheer cliffs or walls, raging torrents, terrible blizzards, the hard vacuum of space), or secret (hidden traps, poisoned water holes and the like); tests, riddles and conundrums, which the players must solve to open a door, gain knowledge or prevent a certain event from occurring;
- the presentation of clues in a series of fragments, each of which is pretty useless by itself but builds up like a jigsaw puzzle into a clear picture of the objective;
- the need to possess a specific item (hidden somewhere else) to pass an obstacle.

Other objectives or obstacles may be thought up as well, but the point to be aware of is that it is often the case that referees launch into an adventure without comparing the dangers they have invented to the rewards that the players can expect. Achievement of a suitable balance between these factors is mainly a matter of experience; bear in mind that high danger for little reward may sometimes be acceptable, though more often the players will feel cheated, whilst too easy a time can quickly lead to boredom.

It is unlikely that you will be the master of every subject required to construct an interesting and comprehensive adventure for your role-playing group to enjoy. Such subjects as history, geology, botany, physics, demography, astronomy—the list goes on and on. All may be valuable depending on the type of setting you have chosen. All is not lost, however, if the list consists of your least favoured school subjects. The game systems often do a lot of the work for you, and other publications (games supplements and the hobby magazines) exist in part to help in this regard. There is also the specific literature for the game setting—fantasy fiction, science fiction, historical novels and so on—which can provide many details to flesh out adventures as well as inspiration for adventure situations covered elsewhere in this chapter.

It may perhaps seem obvious to advise that novice adventure designers should try to base their first efforts on a familiar theme, but players have an annoying habit of discovering when you don't know what you are talking about! At the same time, players should not expect the referee to know every last detail; there will be occasions when effects of players' actions or minutiae of the environment will have to be estimated preferably on the basis of a rational extension of previous events. Of course the referee

is also free to invent his own logic in such cases—in a fantasy world, players should expect the unusual!

I have tried to outline some of the problems facing a referee regarding the game background. The principle objective, however, is to keep the adventure flowing, and players will usually recognize that some compromises may have to be accepted—indeed, a problem can occur if the referee tries to impart too much detail to the proceedings and the wood can no longer be seen for the trees. On the other hand, if a referee deals only with events crucial to an adventure, then he deprives himself of many opportunities to mislead the players or camouflage the eventual intent.

There are several areas on which the referee can concentrate to improve his or her administration and design of role-playing adventures for a group of players. Some are essential, whilst others are perhaps better described as short cuts or alternatives to inventing everything yourself.

The first obvious area is the game system. A referee should become as familiar as possible with the game system in order to keep the adventure flowing. Role-playing moods and tensions, as the players imagine themselves actually battling a manticore or testing the atmosphere of an unknown planet, can quickly be destroyed if the referee has to spend ten minutes searching for a particular table or even worse, not knowing the answer at all.

Secondly, a referee who does not devote his attention to preparation before a playing session is asking for trouble. The various role-playing systems require differing amounts of preparation but all require some. Even if a ready-made scenario is purchased, the referee must read through it and get to know what it leaves to him to prepare. There are referees who are capable of, and prefer to, improvise adventures as they go along, but such paragons are usually

able to do this only through long experience with refereeing, and should have the agreement of players to do so.

A section of the hobby has put forward the argument that ready-made scenarios are actually harmful to 'true' role-playing. They claim that this leads to stereotyped play, with referees reading descriptions from a booklet, and relieving them of the need to think on their feet. Adventures are thus 'spoon fed' to the players, and things become less exciting than watching a soap opera on TV. Proponents of the use of published adventures maintain that this is the fault of the referee: his attitude is one of relief at avoiding all that work and one of trust in the printed word. A published adventure should be treated as an aid, not the divine gospel. Whether on the matter of published adventures or any other aspect of refereeing, once the referee ceases to think about the material, he is dead.

It has already been mentioned that films and literature can play an important part in refereeing. Most people's interest in fantasy or science fiction role-playing can be traced to a previous interest in the equivalent body of fictional literature.

The good news is that, whether your favourite book or film is *Lord of the Rings*, *Dune*, *2001*, *Star Wars*, the *Darkover* series—whatever—then you can re-create it in role-playing. There is a snag, though—do you want to play through a story to which you already know the ending? If the course of the story changes to prevent a fore-gone conclusion, surely this is no longer a re-creation? The answer is that role-playing of whatever subject sets out to create similar, rather than identical, situations. It does this by re-creating the background, whilst avoiding shadow-like adherence to a plot. By concentrating on setting up a believable background and reasons for whatever current

state of affairs exists at the time or place of the adventure, and gradually building up a wealth of detail, the players' characters and the situations they find themselves in begin to take on a life of their own—certain actions become obvious, even inevitable, often because of background events that on the face of it have little to do with the immediate problem. There seems little point, for example, in a poor young farm boy trusting his future to an obviously criminal spaceship captain heading for almost certain disaster. But add a tyrannical galactic empire, and a desperate bunch of rebel freedom fighters whose only hope of success lies with a captured princess, and the action begins to seem positively sensible! It is all a matter of context.

Though absolute fidelity to one particular story is out, there is nevertheless a great deal to be gained from fictional literature. The key problem is that whatever book or film you borrow from is almost guaranteed to be known by at least one of the players, who will unfailingly spot it and spoil your day. It is necessary to camouflage your source of material by a sort of 'mix and match' process, taking plot and details from several storylines and probably adding some of your own original material as well for good measure. You need not stick to one type of fiction for your plots; a good story can be transferred by changing the background to suit your game system. There is no reason, for example, why the story of Jason and the Argonauts could not be reset in the far future.

Are your adventures dull and lifeless? Role-playing no fun anymore? Gradually, referees and players will become familiar with the processes of role-playing. However, the first flush of enthusiasm often fades and the participants may have reached a crisis point in their involvement with the hobby. Three issues seem to hold the key to this crisis,

and each should be carefully considered to see if one or more of them can increase your role-playing enjoyment. They are believability, interest and balance.

Believability has already been mentioned to some extent in this chapter. Though role-playing usually deals with fantasy and other fictional settings they should display some internal consistency. Consider this example; a party of explorers finds itself in a part of the dungeon complex and proceeds to visit each room in turn. Three rooms adjoin the corridor and each is 20 by 30 feet, with a 6 by 3 foot door. The first room contains the bed and personal effects of a stone giant, as well as the giant himself. He turns out to be neutral in the good versus evil battle. In the second room, a good wizard is hard at work translating documents. In the third room, a party of evil orcs are spending some free moments torturing a hobbit from the last party that came this way.

This sort of thing is really unacceptable. To start with, the stone giant is too big to get out of his room. Then each room's inhabitants are of a different alignment. And how could they possibly get on with each other, year after year? Such a mish-mash is usually the result of rolling dice on a random inhabitants table, without applying any thought. The designer has to consider the lives of his creatures when they are not beating up parties of adventurers—how do they survive, what do they eat? Such things need only be considered in an overall way—it is possible to go overboard and end up with identical creatures in identical surroundings in a sort of ghastly dungeon suburbia—and applies as much to alien races or post-Holocaust mutants as to fantasy creatures.

Some facts in this general matter of believability are well known—everyone knows that trolls don't care for daylight and so aren't given greenhouses to live in, for

example—but there is a case for RPGs and supporting material such as magazines to give much better guidelines on the lives and requirements of the creatures they employ.

Then there is the question of *interest*. In fact, believability and interest are more or less the same point—they overlap because believability is the major means of providing interest. A dungeon design can be interesting because of the reasons thought up by its designer for the original purpose it was built for. The kind of random placement of monsters and treasures as exemplified by our example is not only unrealistic but will quickly lead to boredom. The dungeon becomes a treasure supermarket where the players go in, beat up a few monsters and come home with the goodies; it exists in a limbo without any real purpose. Similar comments can of course be made to the settings for any other type of RPG.

By working out the reason for a setting, and matching inhabitants, furnishings and artifacts to it, a new dimension is added to play. Apart from fighting for reward, the players can also try and figure out the logic of the setting and if they can do it soon enough they may be able to anticipate future dangers, or the best direction to strike out in. In a random dungeon, the players have no incentive to do anything other than get out, alive, with as much loot as they can carry. So, the message is that any effort the designer puts in to providing a purpose to an adventure, and carry that forward into detailing the setting, will increase the role-playing atmosphere. There is the matter of a designer's pride as well—do you want to churn out stuff that anyone with dice and a set of tables can do?

Earlier in the chapter we dealt with risks and rewards, and the way a designer *balances* these is the third leg of increasing your design ability. If the risks are high for little reward, then the players will feel cheated and, if it goes on

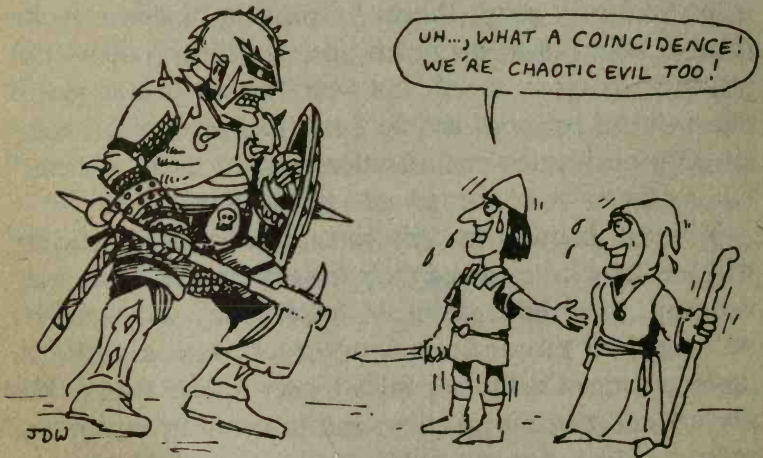
like that, might wonder why people bother playing the game at all. If, on the other hand, players have too easy a time of things, then although players will be happy for a time the referee is forced into an inflationary spiral, and has to dream up more and more spectacular treasures to satisfy. A series of adventures in this vein is living on borrowed time, as players end up too rich to make it worthwhile adventuring any longer. Another problem can crop up, particularly with games such as *D&D* where treasure has a direct bearing on the advancement of characters, which is that players can go up faster than they have truly earned the right to do.

Obviously, no one can state specifically the balance of risk and reward since it depends on so many factors—the type of player, the length of time danger exists (the threat of sustained low-level danger might be as risky as one short instant of great danger), the purpose of the expedition and so on. It can only be learned by experience, and in particular an effort should be made to understand the relative values of things in any specific game system—not just their monetary worth, but with objects such as magic items, found weapons and so forth, their use to a character. Obviously such considerations should count in determining the value of the reward.

You will know when this balance is achieved; players will feel they have earned their rewards and advancement, and with the other matters of believability and interest, will want to take part in another of your designs. A designer cannot really ask for a higher reward than to see players enjoying his creation, and to complete it wanting more.

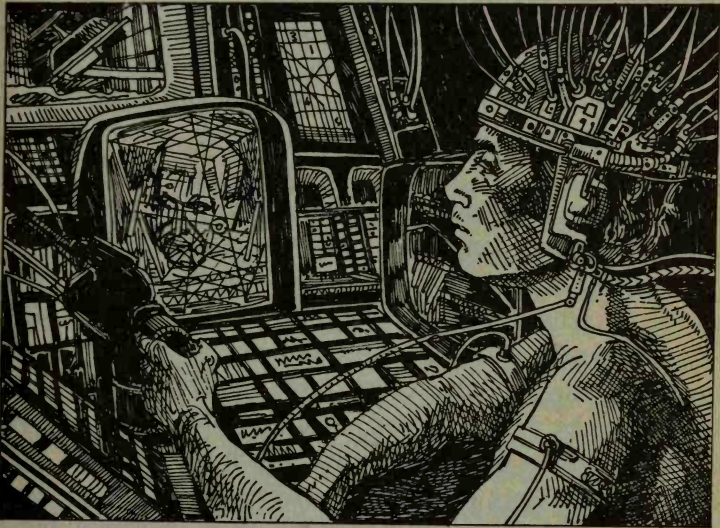
Lastly, don't forget that role-playing is supposed to be fun. If it gets to the point where players storm out of the room and swear never to speak to each other again, it has

ceased to be a game. Role-playing is essentially a game of co-operation—between the players, and between the group of players and the referee—and if this cooperation breaks down then the participants are in trouble; referees need to be fair with the players, and the players should be fair and polite with the referee. ‘Role-playing is Fun’ can also be taken to mean that humour is an integral part of playing—as long as the participants can agree on what is funny and what isn’t. Characters can have silly accidents, make fools of themselves, play practical jokes on dwarves, and get up to a thousand and one pranks and escapades, if it is part of their character’s nature to do so, and the referee can arrange for comic interludes if he thinks that everyone is getting a bit too serious. Just as in real life though, the best moments in role-playing are often spontaneous and unlooked for. Such moments make the hobby of role-playing worthwhile.



CHAPTER 7

COMPUTER GAMES



A computer is a machine which processes 1s and 0s (binary code) amazingly fast. It is limited in part by the speed and variety of its parts, but also by the skill and experience of the designers, especially those who design the routines and languages which convert those 1s and 0s into usable text and pictures (graphics). A microcomputer consists at a

minimum of a central processing unit (CPU) through which all activity occurs, units (chips) containing memory, where series of 1s and 0s are stored, a keyboard for putting information into the system, and a video display, often a television set or a specially designed video monitor which looks like a television screen but gives more detailed results. Other items, such as a device to print output on paper, and some sort of external medium for storing programs and other data, can be added.

In general, the larger a computer's memory, the more it can do. Memory is expressed in 'K', or kilobytes. A kilobyte is about one thousand bytes, strings of eight 1s and 0s. In effect, each byte is a code for an individual number, letter or other character. 1K is about 1,000 characters, so a page of this book contains about 2K of information.

It's a long way from strings of 1s and 0s to a computer game. Computer languages translate information from a type usable in one part of the machine to another type usable by another part, finally reaching the human operator. Machine language, usable directly by the CPU, is translated into an intermediate form, which can be translated again by a "high-level" language such as BASIC or PASCAL into a form of English which the operator can learn without great difficulty to understand. Machine language, as one might expect, is much more difficult to use, yet programs written in it or an intermediate form run much faster (and take up less memory) because the high-level stage is bypassed. The better computer games are written in machine/intermediate language, yet one can write satisfactory games, and programs for many other purposes, in BASIC. To write a sophisticated role-playing computer program requires years of work to learn the proper language and programming techniques. Moreover, the low-

level languages are different for each kind of CPU, just as a different version of BASIC is used for each kind of micro.

As may be obvious by now, there is little standardization in the computer industry; individual items are made for individual machines, or for certain types of machines. Fortunately, you can buy ready-made computer games to run on specific machines. These programs are usually stored on a cassette tape which must be played on a recorder, or on a floppy disc which is played on a disc drive. Occasionally programs are on plug-in cartridges. A micro must have the necessary recorder, disc drive, or plug-in facility in order to use the program. Cartridges are limited practically to arcade-style games only, and only two or three machines have the facility. Cassette is relatively slow because the recorder must play the tape for several minutes in order to read the whole program. A disc drive reads a program in a few seconds, and can be ordered by the computer to refer back to the disc at important junctures for further information. A single disc, with capacity for 160 to 500K depending on type, can hold more information than any microcomputer can accommodate at one time. Many of the best games are available only on discs, and the most sophisticated role-playing game presently available, *Wizardry*, requires frequent reference back to a disc, so that it cannot be put on tape.

The history of computer games is as old as the history of computers, but it is only within the last ten years that sophisticated RPGs have appeared on mainframe computers. Writing a program for a complex game is a demanding task—more demanding than writing some business programs for commercial applications, which is often quite straightforward by comparison—and it was necessary to develop techniques for writing the programs in a way that

made it easier to get them to run properly, and to improve methods of storing information about the games on tapes or discs, and retrieving it again.

Even when this had been done, the computers that were used to run the games were too expensive for private individuals to be able to consider buying them for their own purposes. Since 1977 or so, the advent of the cheap microcomputer has changed this situation completely. You can now invest a fairly small sum of money in the purchase of a micro and obtain a large quantity of games software to run on it, with the prospect of many hours of enjoyment of this fascinating extension of traditional gaming.

Unfortunately there are many pitfalls awaiting the prospective purchaser of a micro to be used for gaming. It's necessary to look in some detail into the machines themselves—the hardware—and to make a careful study of the games that are actually available—the software. There are additional problems that the player of conventional games never had to worry about, such as the possibility that his machine will become obsolete shortly after he acquires it. Let's look at that difficulty first.

Microcomputers now being offered for sale have many more facilities than the machines that first launched the microcomputer boom in the late 1970s. Often the user is given built-in disc storage, allowing him to hold programs and data on a floppy disc and call his chosen program into main memory at a moment's notice, so that it can be run or examined. This is much more sophisticated than the method of tape storage, in which programs are held on a cassette tape which has to be searched for several minutes to find the particular program the user wants. Computers tend nowadays to come equipped with much more main memory, allowing longer and more complex programs to

be run. The recent models nearly all allow colour displays to be generated and shown on an unmodified TV screen, and these displays are less crude than they once were, giving a convincing illusion of a picture rather than a collection of little squares of different colours. Computer printers are now available for a reasonable price which offer high-quality printed output, and an associated development in software technology has been the provision of interchangeable character and graphics sets, so that the user can, for example, design his own script, display it on the screen, then produce printed material using one of the excellent word-processing programs on the market.

Despite the rate of improvement, owners of older machines part with them reluctantly. Computers are solid-state machines, not subject to mechanical wear, and individual chips which overheat can be replaced cheaply. Peripheral equipment such as disc drive units may wear out, but such mechanical parts require maintenance no more often than, say, an office typewriter. In other words, an older computer doesn't wear out. But the investment the owner is most reluctant to sacrifice is his extensive collection of software, which will almost certainly not be compatible with a machine from another manufacturer, and may not be with the latest model from the same manufacturer. There is usually a lack of software for a new machine in the first nine or twelve months of its existence, so there is little inclination on the user's part to give up his tried and trusted system.

All this suggests that the choice of a micro should be made with care, as the user will be more and more committed to it as time goes by, even while newer machines with additional 'bells and whistles' are appearing on the market. There are a couple of exceptions to this. Recently the volume of software available for some machines, such

as the Apple II+, has become so great that the manufacturer is encouraged to make its new machine compatible with the old software. Hence the new computer (in this case, the Apple IIe) starts with a mass of software available for immediate use, instead of enduring reduced sales until the software writers catch up, and the owner of the older machine can trade up without ruining his collection. Moreover, independent companies produce peripherals or programs which enable some software written for one machine to run on another, but the difficulties (and costs) are such that this is rare at present in gaming.

The other exception applies to the numerous kit computers which were popular some years ago. These were excellent tools for discovering how computers actually worked, as the user put the machine together and tested it himself. They were, however, difficult to use for practical applications, and little commercial software became available for them. The most important underlying trend in the last couple of years has been that the majority of computer-users have no interest in how computers work; they just want to be able to use them for particular applications, without worrying about what goes on inside the black box. In any case, there is little to be learnt from examining the insides of the latest microcomputers; the tendency is for the different electronic components to be integrated together to reduce assembly costs, and there may be nothing to see but empty space and one enormous custom-made multi-purpose chip.

With these exceptions, a computer bought now is likely to be in use for many years, but there may still be suspicion that the price of a new model will drop substantially if one just waits a few months for the manufacturer to recover his investment. It is true that prices of microcomputers have fallen steadily over the past five years, but there

are reasons to think that this process has come to an end. The costs of promotion, packaging, distribution and so on are much the same whatever the value of the item being marketed, and in recent months manufacturers have found themselves forced to revise their estimated selling prices upwards for certain new machines.

The rock-bottom price for a computer with a black-and-white display and the bare minimum of user facilities is probably about \$100. This goes up to \$300 for even a primitive colour display, partly because a special chip has to be designed to handle the signal which forms the TV picture, and partly because more memory is required to hold the more complex colour picture. If the user is to be able to build up such displays and have enough memory left to run a useful program, the price goes up to about \$800, to include a fairly sophisticated programming language 'built in' to the machine as a set of read-only memory chips containing not only the language (usually BASIC) but also a special extension of it which allows the user to build up displays fairly easily. This is essential, as there is a great deal of information packed into a single, static colour display, and, unless the user is given programming aids of this kind, it will take him hours of labour to create each picture.

Programs which feature complex screen displays tend to be very long and to take a long time to load in from cassette, but if the user wants a disc-based system the cost jumps to somewhere in the region of \$1500 and it is difficult to see it coming down substantially in future. What is needed is an alternative to disc technology, allowing massive amounts of data to be stored cheaply and recalled rapidly. Possible future developments will be studied at the end of this chapter.

If the computer buyer has reconciled himself to the cost

of the machinery, he will still have to choose among the constantly-increasing variety of micros on the market. Fortunately, as far as game players are concerned, the choice is relatively narrow. Game software producers can afford the cost of writing or translating a program for a computer only when the volume of sales of that machine becomes quite large, or is likely to soon. And in a happy rather than vicious circle, for the manufacturer, the more game software available for a machine, the more people buy it in order to play the games. But micros once popular for games, such as the TRS-80 Model I and PET, *have* gone out of fashion, usually because they can no longer accommodate the desires of gamers and programmers, or the manufacturer offers a better machine which can use some of the old programs.

All of the currently popular game computers can run good arcade-type and text-adventure games, but one may doubt that all of them will be able to run the elaborate role-playing games which are sure to be written in the next few years. As always, there is a trade-off between capabilities and price; the newest of these machines which was not developed from an earlier model, the IBM Personal Computer (PC), has the greatest capability but also costs much more than the others.

The most popular machines for games are the Apple II+, Atari 800, Commodore VIC-64, IBM PC, and Radio Shack TRS-80 Model III. Some are available with less than 48K of memory, but these are easily expandable to at least 48K.

The Apple II+ is probably the world's most popular micro, and Apple has tried to maintain that popularity by offering an improved model, the IIe ('enhanced'), which is supposed to operate much of the older software. There are hundreds of educational, business, and other non-game

programs available. Although it is not as convenient to use in all respects as the IBM PC, no one can go far wrong with this machine.

The Atari 800 can run complicated arcade games on cartridges, as well as disc-based games, and benefits from its association with the firm which makes the home video computer system and many stand-alone games for arcades. (The Atari 400, in part because it lacks a proper keyboard, sacrifices too much to be worth the lower price.)

Commodore's PET was the first practical home micro-computer, but it has fallen to competition by more powerful machines. The newer VIC-20 is too small for sophisticated games, but its larger brother, the VIC-64, seems to have been made with gamers in mind. The graphics are particularly outstanding, and Commodore keeps the price low by making all the components itself. However, as of this writing, one cannot be sure that the VIC-64 will generate the mass of software already available for the other machines.

IBM's PC has benefitted from the enormous reputation and selling power of the largest computer manufacturer in the world, and from a CPU which is transitional between the old 8-bit and newer 16-bit units. Software firms stampered to translate programs for the PC, with independent peripheral companies close behind. But the IBM is by far the most expensive machine described here.

The TRS-80 Model III is the only popular game machine with no colour capability, and its graphics in general are its weakest point. (The TRS Color Computer, despite its better graphics, is insufficiently powerful for many games.) On the other hand, there is probably as much commercial software of all types for this computer as for the Apple II+. Owing to its superior distribution network,

the TRS-80 III may be the only computer one can actually buy from a full-service dealer in many locales.

Whether you buy one of these machines or some other, there are some precautions to take. Computers can be purchased at a discount from mail-order firms, but this is often unwise. In most cases, only an authorized dealer is able to repair a machine, and computers do break down every year or two. Moreover, mail-order can lead to delays, machinery damaged in transit, and other frustrations.

There are also 'work-alike' (and often look-alike) versions of the Apple and IBM PC made by obscure companies and sold at much lower prices. Buying one of these is risky because a program for, say, the Apple may not always work on the 'Apple compatible' machine, despite the advertising, and because the manufacturer might not adequately service what it sells—it may even go out of business soon.

When you buy a machine for games, you must be sure it has sufficient memory for the games you have in mind (ordinarily, 48K or more), that an adequate storage system is included (for sophisticated role-playing, a disc drive is necessary, but cassette is good enough for many games), and that all the expansion boxes and cables are included. The strategy of any manufacturer who offers a basic system plus an expansion path is to attract the buyer with a low price for the initial purchase, and make the profit from add-ons which, in reality, are essential for any serious use of the machine. Even the 'little' items such as a cable needed to use a television rather than a video monitor (\$30) or a game joystick (\$10—50) can make a big difference. When comparing prices, know what is included in the quoted price, since 32K of memory, a disc drive, or a monitor can make a difference of hundreds of dollars.

When you buy software, be sure that the program is for

your machine and disc-controlling system (if you have one). A 48K program for the Atari won't run on an Atari which has only 16K memory, nor will a program for Apple DOS (disc operating system) 3.0 run on a machine using DOS 3.3. (Ordinarily, if the manufacturer changes its DOS, it provides a copy of the new controller to *registered* owners of the computer.)

Some computer experts advise a potential buyer to find software that will serve his purpose, then buy a machine that will run the software. If a buyer is primarily interested in playing games *now*, without regard for what may be available three years hence, this is good advice. In connection with games it is particularly important, for there are many popular, powerful, fairly priced micros for which virtually no game programs exist, such as the Osborne I.

At present, the Apple II+ dominates the game software market. Most disc-based game programs—which are usually the best games—are available for the Apple even if originally written for another machine. Yet the history of the IBM PC shows that if a computer is an obvious success, the software manufacturers offer program translations for it within six to twelve months. For example, *Wizardry* (see below), originally for the Apple, has now been offered for the IBM PC, but for none of the other machines listed above.

If the buyer is concerned with games which may be available three years from now, the choice of micro is more difficult. Machines with small memories, such as the Timex-Sinclair, can be discounted out of hand regardless of popularity. The most powerful of the machines popular today are those most likely to be popular three years from now, while the less capable machines may no longer be produced. But a brand-new computer, which may be more

powerful than any currently popular model, will not necessarily be around a few years hence.

There is a tendency among some buyers (and some computing magazines) to assume that the latest micro to hit the market must necessarily be an advance on anything that has gone before, and that it will fulfil every aspect of the manufacturer's specification. On the contrary, experience has shown that the majority of new brands of micro-computer are failures; they appear, are reviewed once or twice in the magazines, and then disappear without trace. Sometimes they are overpriced, sometimes they fail to live up to the specification that the manufacturer announced prior to the launch, and probably sometimes they are just unlucky. It takes at least six months to find out whether a new computer will 'catch on' and somewhat longer to decide the size of the software base, if any, that will grow up around it. The prudent buyer will not consider a machine that has not been on sale for at least a year. Obviously, if everyone took this approach, no one would ever buy a micro. Before jumping in at the deep end, however, it may be wise to stand back and let other buyers take the risks.

Once you have bought your micro, are you going to program on it or play games written by others? Probably you don't know the answer until you have tried both. There is now a vast range of games software (not all of the same quality) and you should have no trouble filling up all your spare time just playing the games on the market. If you get into programming, this also can be unbelievably time-consuming, but a lot cheaper. There's no need to be over-ambitious to begin with; it may occur to you that you could write games programs as good as those on the market, and you may well be right, but it is a full-scale project to produce a workable, debugged computer game,

and it will also test your aptitude as a game designer; on the whole, good game designers are rarer than good programmers.

A more practicable alternative is to write routines which will run on your micro and assist you in the play of your favourite game. This could be a character generator or dungeon generator for a fantasy role-playing game; a world-generator for a science fiction game; a melee resolution routine for any game with complex and tedious combat mechanics; or any one of a wide range of other projects, all of which offer speedier play of the game while still requiring some manual activity on the part of the players. Programs of this kind are a comparatively straightforward programming exercise, and offer a fast payoff in the sense that you can start deriving benefits from each routine as soon as it's finished and can be applied to the game in question.

If you follow this path, don't forget that others will be having similar ideas. There is not much point in writing a cult-creating program for *RuneQuest* if someone else has just finished doing the same thing and is prepared to give you a copy of this program; read the specialist magazines to find out what work has already been done, if any, in your chosen field of interest, in order to avoid the syndrome of 're-inventing the wheel' that occurs when a number of people have the same idea for a programming project independently.

If you like the idea of such software but would want to buy commercial packages of this kind, there is a surprisingly restricted range of such products available at the time of writing. Apart from a couple of TRS-80 programs for creating dungeon-scenarios for fantasy role-playing games, very little game-assistance material has been produced. It now seems likely that game-assistance programs will be

produced first of all for some of the conventional wargames on the market, but similar aids for SF and fantasy games are likely to follow in due course; most likely in magazines such as *White Dwarf*.

A survey of the existing range of computer RPG software, apart from the type of program mentioned above, reveals a rather unbalanced situation, in the sense that some game-subjects are hardly catered for at all, while others have been covered with computerized versions rather extensively. All such software can in practice be divided into three categories.

The first category refers to computer-moderated play-by-mail games. It ought to be made clear that although there are a couple of dozen of these games at the time of writing, most of them run by American companies, none offers the players the opportunity to use their own micros in entering their moves. The player generally receives a computer printout from the company running the game, giving details of the results of his previous move and any additional information, and he has to fill in a form with details of his next turn and send it back. These details are then entered into a fairly powerful computer system by the company, together with the turns received from all the other players, and the computer can calculate the new game-situation that results from the interaction of the activities of the various players. Nevertheless, the micro owner who is interested in RPGs should keep an eye on play-by-mail (PBM) gaming. For one thing, such games offer almost the only opportunity for multi-player role-playing campaigns that can be found in the area of computer gaming. For a variety of reasons, almost all computer games are intended to be played solitaire, and although many of them are extremely entertaining, they offer limited appeal to the player who is looking for multi-player

scenarios. PBM games give the participants the opportunity to make alliances, engage in collective expeditions, and of course betray their allies when the occasion arises.

All this activity is carried on by postal correspondence, and the work of entering players' moves to the central computer is also essentially a manual task. Recently, however, one of the companies that has been running a successful fantasy-based PBM game for some years has been experimenting with OCR techniques. This stands for Optical Character Recognition and refers to equipment which allows the computer to scan the players' turn-sheets with a camera, decode the entries on the sheets and turn them into data for its program, without the need for any human intervention in the job of getting the data into the machine. Such equipment is still at an early stage of development, but in due course it will offer cheaper PBM games and faster turn-rates for the players.

Moreover, the transmission of turns and their results by electronic means rather than by mail is already possible by direct hook up between the user's micro and a central computer holding a variety of different games. The connection is made via the normal telephone lines, using a connection device called a modem. Unfortunately this means that the phone company's normal charges have to be paid on top of the charges made by the company running the game, and, as a typical game can last for four hours or even longer, such activities are for the very rich. The cost of electronic communications will, however, tend to fall in the long term, and multi-player real-time games by phone modem may become practicable one day.

The second category of computer games covers science fiction games. The outstanding example in this field is probably *Galactic Trilogy*, a set of three games available for the TRS-80, and now being rewritten for other comput-

ers such as the Apple and Atari. Like nearly all such games, it's solitaire; you play the part of an aspiring dictator, sending orders to various officers in your fleet to despatch spaceships to the 20 inhabited worlds in the central area of the galaxy, in an attempt to gain domination over the entire area. The game has a strong economic element, in the sense that plans must be made in advance to generate new resources on recently-captured worlds, which can then be used in subsequent stages of the campaign. It's a very well-realized concept, and provides more varied and intellectually satisfying enjoyment than *Star Trek*, another classic space game. However, the same comment applies to all games in this category; although the computer is capable of generating 'opponents' to the player, which in this case are hostile fleets of spaceships, the process of defeating such an enemy is largely a mechanical one, since there is no sense of an intelligent, unpredictable adversary.

Galactic Trader continues the future history outlined in the first program of the series; now you have to be a shrewd merchant, getting the best price for the goods that you transport between the worlds of your Federation. Once again, economic calculations are at the core of the game-system. In *Galactic Revolution*, the final part of the trilogy, the basic concept is similar to the first two games, but this time there is provision for up to three players, making the game potentially much more interesting.

Nearly all the computer games with an SF theme that are currently available derive from the *Galactic Trilogy*, or from one aspect of its overall system. Most of the others derive ultimately from David Ahl's *Hammurabi*, which is a resource-management game in which a series of decisions must be made by the player at the beginning of each year concerning the management of his economy; the re-

sults at the end of each year influence his decisions for the following year, and so on. Although this sounds quite dull, such a game can be made interesting by transferring the environment to, for example, a generation ship on its way to some distant star, and presenting the player with lots of randomly-chosen surprise events each turn.

An honourable mention should also be given to games like *The Warp Factor* which attempt to simulate tactical space combat on a smaller scale than the games mentioned so far. A graphic display of a sector of space is given, and this can be quite realistic if the computer in use is one with fairly sophisticated graphics facilities, for example the Apple. There is usually a two-player option, which offers a more exciting challenge than a solitaire fight against the usual zombie-like computer adversary. The main criticism of all such programs is that they do little more than offer expensive versions of manual games that already seem rather out of date, like *Star Fleet Battles*. All sorts of things ought to be possible—true three-dimensional combat tactics, instant calculation of complex equations involving the effects of gravity wells on ships in flight and so forth. In reality, the difficulty of creating a successful computer program on such subjects is so great that only very simple game-systems tend to be chosen by the programmer, and even these are already stretching the capabilities of the current generation of microcomputers.

The final category of games software includes all the programs that come under the general description of 'Adventures'. This is by far the biggest category of the three, and only a brief survey of this field will be possible here. People are usually fairly decided about whether they like or dislike playing Adventures. If you are a fan of these programs, there's little more you need to know; almost any micro you buy will offer you the opportunity to while

away many a happy hour solving one such puzzle after another, whereas if you have never understood the popularity of this kind of game, it's unlikely that you can be converted by anything said in this chapter. However, an account is given here of the origins of Adventure games, and the way they have developed in the last six years or so.

The first Adventure-type programs were written in the US in the mid-1970s, and were very much conditioned by the computer hardware available for their implementation. There were no microcomputers in common use, and a much larger mainframe installation was used for Crowther and Woods' *Adventure*, which was written in Fortran, not a particularly suitable language for a program of this type. Visual Display Units were not in common use and the player, after typing in his command, was expected to read the output from the program as hardcopy on a teletype. The amount of backup store available was, however, much greater than users of micros are generally given, and large amounts of detail relating to the game could be held on disc and called into main memory during play. Similar hardware was used for *Zork*, written by a team of four programmers at MIT. This second Adventure was however a much more sophisticated project in a number of ways, chiefly in terms of the much more elaborate commands that could be input by the player; whole English sentences could be typed in and reasonably sensible replies would be given. There was however no question of pictorial display of the rooms and caverns encountered; the whole technology of sophisticated visual displays of computer-generated information, although it had already been developed for other purposes such as air traffic control systems, had no part in the *Zork* project, which was essentially a part of Artificial Intelligence research.

Many new programming techniques were devised as *Zork* was written and rewritten, a process which has still not ended. When the commercial application of the program became clear, further techniques were developed to compact the program and its associated database into the minimum amount of memory, so that it would run on disc-based versions of the more popular micros. The good news is that this work was largely successful, and the version of *Zork* (and now its sequel, *Zork II*) that can be bought for various micros is essentially the same as the original. The bad news is that one of the main features of the mainframe data-processing environment in which these programs were developed has not been transported into their implementation on microcomputers; namely, multi-terminal play. Most mainframe installations consist of a central processor which can handle input from and output to a number of workstations simultaneously; nowadays a workstation is likely to consist of a colour VDU, a keyboard, a small printer for collecting copies of the screen display from time to time, and one or two other gadgets. Actually nothing the computer does is simultaneous, but it is capable of handling sequential operations so fast that the illusion of instant response is given to each of the terminal users. This kind of set-up offers many intriguing possibilities for multi-player computer-controlled games. Most authors of software for micros have, however, assumed that only one machine would be available for use, and have not experimented with games involving multicomputer link-ups, although the technology for it is already established. For similar reasons, most authors have also written solitaire Adventures that offer nothing to a group of players looking for a collective game.

Playing *Zork* is much like playing any text-based Adventure. You begin in an initial location, described in a

couple of sentences, such as the entrance to a cavern. You control a puppet-figure and can direct it to pick up objects, move in various directions, look around, and so on. The challenge of the game in the early stages is mainly to find a route around the environment that will allow you to inspect interesting situations and make a map so that you will be able to retrace your steps later. Subsequently, you will need to decide what activities remain to be performed to win the game and what puzzles to solve to do this. The puzzles may involve finding a magic word that opens a door, or using an object in a particular way to get over an obstacle.

In many cases, solving a puzzle means hitting upon the particular combination of words in a command that the programmer has allowed for when writing the game. It can be particularly irritating if this combination turns out to be an unlikely sequence of words that you would never normally use, or if it involves some obscure slang idiom unknown outside California. This highlights the essential limitations of computer Adventures; the computer is not at all like a human referee, able to consider a player's question and structure his response in the appropriate way, to give further information while still concealing the solution. Instead, the program consists of responses which will be triggered off when a particular input is given by the player, and the programmer must anticipate in advance all the possible inputs, then devise a response to each one.

Nevertheless, there are many excellent Adventures on the market which fit the general description given above, and in which the programmer has made the right choices on such matters as level of difficulty of the puzzles, and responses that will be given in certain situations. The series of Adventures by Scott Adams represent the yardstick by which most other efforts are judged. Since around

1979 a number of Adventure-type programs have started to appear which depart from these conventions, and which tend to be judged by different criteria. The main change is that the games are not text-only but incorporate a graphical display.

There are two principal ways of doing this; an overhead planview of the dungeon or maze (most of these games return to the fantasy RPG-type environment of the early Adventures), as in the *Dunjonquest* series, or else a perspectival impression of the puppet's view down a corridor or through a door into another room, as in *Labyrinth* and many others (this is usually advertised as '3D'). There may even be a real-time element, in the sense that the player must move his puppet around the room using keystrokes or joystick movements. The catch here is that doing this correctly can be much trickier than just typing in 'GO NORTH', and involves the sort of skills needed to reverse a Chieftain tank into a parking lot rather than anything to do with adventuring.

Although such games are at an early stage of development, most Adventure-players nowadays believe that the future of computerized role-playing lies in further sophistication of these initial concepts. Given a high-resolution colour display, a machine-language program for fast execution, large amounts of on-line disc storage to hold the wealth of data in the game, and a sufficiently imaginative plot to hold the player's attention, a rather good solitaire fantasy game can result. Variety can also be added to the program structure in such a way that the player does not discard the game after reaching the final solution for the first time. One way of doing this is to allow him to 'roll up' the attributes of his puppet-figure in advance of play, to see how different types of Adventurer fare in the same

maze. Another very popular concept is to introduce combat with a random element between the puppet and various creatures encountered in the game environment; a troll encountered during the first playing may be easy to pass, but turn out to be an insuperable obstacle the next time the player passes that way in the course of his wanderings.

Although many of these games return to themes which are familiar to players of the popular, conventional fantasy RPG systems, the most important development along these lines has been the introduction of games with more than one player-character, in an attempt to get away from the solitaire format. In *Wizardry*, you spend a lot of time at the beginning of the game generating up to 6 different characters, with widely differing characteristics. The game design is well integrated in the sense that each character has unique abilities, needed to solve some aspect of the overall puzzle in the underground labyrinth. However, if the program is intended to introduce multi-player fantasy role-playing gaming to the micro software industry, it appears to be a failure; in practice, it seems to be played by a single user who controls all 6 characters himself, rather than by a group, and, as such, is very popular.

Other aspects of the design of *Wizardry* illustrate the limitations of computer Adventures. Although the program is advertised as featuring graphics, these turn out to be simple static illustrations tucked away in one-sixth of the screen display, everything else being devoted to detailed textual descriptions of the environment, current character status and so on. This is necessary simply because the game is in fact quite like *Dungeons & Dragons*; after all, a referee could never run an expedition just by displaying

pretty pictures to the players. In order to calculate what they should do next they need detailed information about their surroundings, most of it quantified in numerical terms. Although *Wizardry* is probably the most sophisticated Adventure on the market at the time of writing, its game-system is still far more primitive than fantasy role-playing gamers have come to expect, consisting of repetitive simple combat and map-making, and lacking many of the more subtle features found in earlier Adventures. In retrospect it may turn out to have been the highwater-mark of this particular trend in games software, brilliant in many respects but essentially a dead end.

Finally, what of the future? The arrival of the 16-bit central processing unit (typically 100 times faster than the 8-bit CPUs now commonly used) and development of memory chips of 64K and eventually 256K capacity presage faster machines with more memory at no greater cost. And competition from the Japanese is just beginning. There is now some chance that the games-player will be able to buy a machine with (say) over 1000K of main memory for less than \$2000 by mid-1984, with the prospect of a continuing fall in prices thereafter.

What can you actually do with such a powerful piece of equipment? You can run much more complex programs, taking up far more memory than the existing generation of computer software. You can stop worrying about the amount of memory consumed by detailed colour displays, even if they involve animation, and you can add to your database of facts about the imagined environment of a computer game more or less to your heart's content.

Whether peripheral devices can keep pace with these developments is less certain. The television screen, even the more powerful screen of a video monitor, severely

limits microcomputer graphics. Winchester 'hard' disc drives for microcomputers are coming down in price, so that thousands of kilobytes of information can be stored and retrieved rapidly from one small disc. On the other hand, there is little progress in use of video discs for computer information storage. Limited voice synthesizers are available for home video systems such as Intellivision and Odyssey 2, but they have not passed beyond the gimmick stage. The development to look out for first is undoubtedly in the area of multi-user networks; this merely awaits agreement among manufacturers about common standards to be adopted, and will then offer the prospect of a whole new range of computer games available on a multi-player basis, while still allowing each player his own dedicated input-output terminal.

Despite the progress made in game programming in the past few years, it will be a long time before any computer can begin to duplicate the judgment and versatility of a human referee. In a game refereed by computer, the number of choices available to players is quite low, and there is very little role-playing through character interaction. It would take a major breakthrough in artificial-intelligence research, as well as much more powerful machines, to significantly overcome this limitation. It seems likely that the main emphasis in the next five years will be on play-aid programs which are intended to be used in conjunction with some manual components; the program will concentrate on doing what it can do better than any other playing-aid, namely carry out the calculations and link the players together in a common network, but it will not attempt to create a total simulation of an imagined reality. From the point of view of the role-playing gamer, this is as it should be; after all, the physical components of the various role-

playing systems have always left a great deal to the players' imaginations, and the interior universe created in the mind of such a player is always likely to be richer than the artificially generated version of it that might be presented to him through some external medium.

ONE STEP BEYOND



Role-playing games have spawned several related activities. Computer adventure games, miniature figure modelling, and curiously enough, 'live action' role-play. There are currently two known types of this available to a paying public wishing to play a more refined and sophisticated game of children's 'cowboys and indians'. One exists in

the form of a rulebook and the other in the form of a castle!

Most people remember as children hiding behind buildings, climbing up trees and building garden defences in frantic games of make-believe, such as cowboys and indians or war. Inevitably children grow out of such pastimes as other interests take their attention and more 'adult' pursuits are followed. Nevertheless, there are those who look back on those exciting days with fond memories, and the prospect of participating again in such carefree fun can be tempting. Live action games take role-play beyond the realms of imagined adventures using paper, pencils and miniature figures; the thrills and excitement are real, yet safe. Using a consistent and realistic game system, players can match skills and abilities on a personal level, and the game becomes 'real'.

KILLER

Killer is described by its designer as a game for intelligent, creative and slightly uncivilized people. It is a game for people who want to bump off their friends . . . without hurting them. Each player becomes an assassin, stalking one (or all) of the other players. Water guns or dart guns replace pistols, an exploded balloon becomes a bomb. It all depends on the fiendish ingenuity of the players as to what weapons can be devised. The winner is the survivor.

Killer is presented as a rulebook, and provides the basis for a 'live' role-playing game for any number of players.

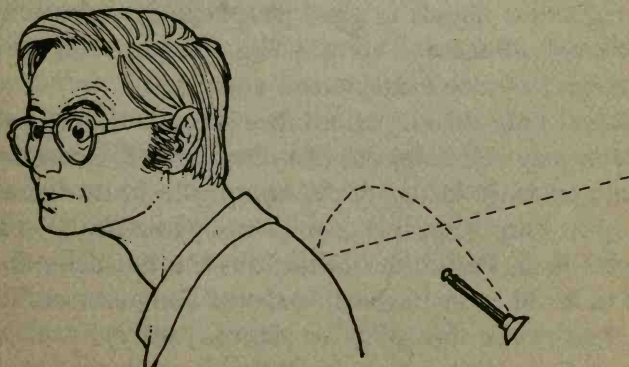
A referee is responsible for organizing the game in terms of location and duration, setting the scenario, specifying any house rules, and assigning targets and victory

conditions. After the game starts, he must be on hand to settle any disputes or arguments which may arise. Being such a free-form game, these areas of contention are inevitable. Scenarios can be set according to the wishes of the players. Gangsters is an obvious choice, but any theme can be applied from banana republics to science fiction. A popular scenario for the latter is the re-creation of 'the runners versus the sandmen' based on the book and film *Logan's Run*.

Team games are more enjoyable, but if there are insufficient players, then 'every man for himself' gives ample scope for fun.

Weaponry in *Killer* can be very ingenious, but the accent is always on safety. Suggestions are given for all types of devices from grenades (confetti-filled eggshells) to laser guns (flashlights).

Played in an orderly and responsible manner, *Killer* can be a thrilling simulation of the human hunt scenario. It has all the excitement of a sophisticated game of hide and seek, but is not recommended to those of a nervous disposition!



TREASURE TRAP

There I was, one of six, walking slowly down a dark corridor wearing this old cloak with a shield on my arm and sword at the ready. The candle flickered in the cool breeze. Nobody spoke. At the end of the corridor light shone from beneath a door. We stopped to whisper a plan. The scout, wrapped but for his eyes in black robes, slipped into the shadows ahead to listen at the door. Moments later he returned to tell us that there were probably six orcs inside a room on the other side of the door playing dice and drinking. We tiptoed towards the door and prepared for battle. The elf drew his bow, the wizard conjured up a magic missile, the cleric held his mace, the scout drew his daggers and I gripped the reassuring steel hilt of my sword. Suddenly the scout kicked open the door and we charged screaming into the room. The battle was soon over, the orcs were slain. We examined their bodies and found a few coins and a key. The key opened the door to an adjacent room wherein we found an elven maid sitting silently in the corner. She would not speak. We also found three colourless liquids in glass jars. Nobody volunteered to drink any of them. This was real role-play. Then the referee came over to examine our wounds . . .

Treasure Trap is an ingenious idea being developed by a small company in Peckforton, Cheshire. Carey & Donaldson Ltd enterprisingly leased Peckforton Castle in its entirety for the sole purpose of live action fantasy role-play. On an historical note, Peckforton Castle was the last defensible castle to be built in England, and was commissioned by Lord Tollemache in 1850 for reasons not quite clear. Carey & Donaldson Ltd realized that if so many people enjoyed a fantasy world created by paper, pencils and

miniature figures, then surely there would be people who would want to go beyond that and experience the 'real' thing.

The idea behind *Treasure Trap* is that people pay a membership fee in order to join one of the castle guilds, essentially a character class option. Then by adventuring in small groups, skills and abilities will be practised, and, by the discovery and acquisition of treasure, a player-character will progress up through the guild hierarchy.

Before an adventure commences players are equipped with costumes and weaponry. Costume can be just simple robes for a novice or full-length chainmail for experienced adventurers who have been able to 'purchase' their armour with the spoils from previous expeditions. Weaponry is mainly restricted to foam-clad swords and axes made of soft wood designed to break rather than injure. More exotic weaponry can take the form, for example, of dye-filled egg shells to represent a wizard's magic missiles.

A referee will then set the scenario, usually giving some specific objective, e.g. the rescue of a captured princess from the prison stronghold of the orcs. The orcs and other creatures will be located throughout the castle and played by non-adventuring members.

The game system itself works satisfactorily. Behind the adventuring group, the referee will follow at a discreet distance. Combat will usually ensue after the meeting of adventurers and creatures. The individuals playing the creatures have a predetermined set of instructions according to type, e.g. orcs would attack any adventurers entering their rooms. They would also fall down 'dead' if they felt a weapon hit any critical part of their bodies. When a battle was over, the referee would count the adventurers' wounds. All creatures have coloured dye on their weapons or claws which would mark their opponents in battle. The referee

would simply count the marks on each adventurer and might declare certain limbs out of action, or even death. The use of a shield or weapon arm could be lost. The adventure would continue through the castle until the objective was reached or the adventurers all died in the attempt. An interesting aspect of this type of role-playing is the stark reality of some of the problems often glossed over in proprietary RPGs, i.e. groping around in the dark or trying to carry the heavy contents of a treasure chest.

At the time of writing the whole project is very much in its infancy. Revisions and developments are constant, but then most proprietary RPGs evolve similarly. Nobody is going to complain if more special effects are introduced, such as a mechanical dragon. Nevertheless, at present, special effects and other devices are few and adventurers are reliant on the effect and enthusiasm of the two co-founders together with the members of *Treasure Trap*. Indeed, it is incumbent on the members to develop the system themselves.

Membership costs £30 per year to join plus a charge of £1 per adventure. Members willing to act as creatures for a day do not have to pay. (Not surprising considering you might have to wait around for a couple of hours in a dirty dungeon room on the off chance that the odd adventurer might come your way!)

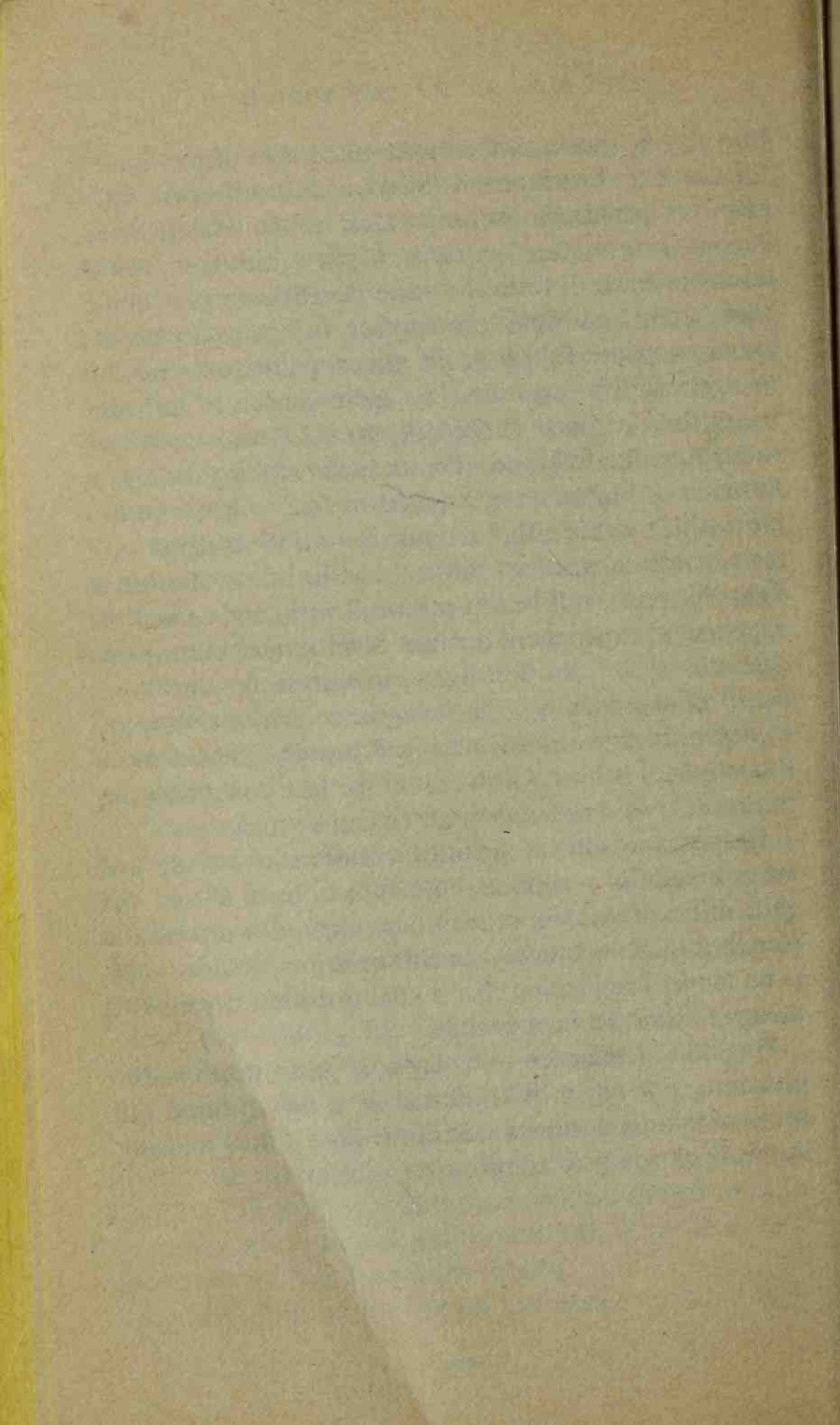
Anybody looking for a Disneyland-type environment should forget about *Treasure Trap* now. The castle itself is in pretty bad state of repair, but then it can be argued that that is so much the better because it adds to the atmosphere. Accepting this, anybody looking for an exciting few hours of rough and tumble excitement should write to the organizers Carey & Donaldson Ltd, P.O. Box 130, Chester CH1 1TD, for further details.

Another form of live action sometimes confused with

role-playing games is the medieval combat of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) and its offshoots. SCA members pursue the romantic ideal of the Middle Ages. Among many other activities at their meetings, which resemble feasts or festivals, some members dress in home-made armor and 'fight' one another, using heavily padded rattan weapons. Thanks to the armor, participants are able to strike at full speed with no more chance of inflicting injury than is found in football, provided well-developed safety rules are followed. (For example, striking the legs is forbidden.) Fighters are required to 'die' when struck a blow which would inflict serious injury if the weapon were real. A referee is always present, and no one is allowed to fight 'for real' until he has practiced with, and earned the approval of, experienced fighters. Semi-annual tournaments determine who is the best fighter in each section (or 'kingdom') of the country. The home-made armor always includes a thick wooden shield and heavily padded metal (boiler-plate) helmet which covers the face completely, as well as a leather or home-made chainmail tunic.

Despite precautions, injuries occasionally occur, and some non-SCA groups are incautious. In a related but quite different version, some groups use *real* weapons and plan their slow-motion movements before the 'battle.' This is no longer competition, but a kind of ballet, if you will, though not for the faint-hearted.

For some, live action role-play is no more than childish nonsense. For others it is viewed as a light-hearted offshoot of the more serious side of the hobby. It is included in this book solely to complete the picture.



CHAPTER 9

HOW DO I START?



Having read this far, I must assume a reader's interest in role-playing games which goes beyond just reading about them. The question is, how and where to start playing? The first step is, quite obviously, having decided on the role-playing theme desired, whether it be science fiction, fantasy, espionage or whatever, and on the complexity

level desired, to discover how and where to go about buying a game. Then, having done so, how to find other people already familiar with such games. There is no better way of learning how to play an RPG than by experience, and the education gained from joining in a game with experienced players will save newcomers hours of learning and familiarization with concepts and systems.

There are two ways that an RPG can be bought: direct from a shop or by mail order. At the time of writing, the distribution of RPGs in the UK is restricted to specialist games shops, model shops and some toy shops. However, the current popularity is such that department stores, multiple shops and chain stores are beginning to show an interest in stocking some RPGs. It is obviously preferable to purchase a game in a shop rather than by mail order, because it can be seen prior to purchase and can be assessed at least in terms of appearance and value for money. Whilst most RPGs appear relatively expensive when examining the components of the box, it must be remembered that role-playing games will be played time and time again, and on that basis are good value for money when compared to many traditional boardgames which are played once or twice and then forgotten. Rather like a record album which physically does not appear to be value for money, it is the amount of pleasure derived from it that matters. However, the wider the distribution of RPGs, the less likely it will be that sales assistants will be fully conversant with the individual titles and their different concepts and play mechanics. If advice is sought, then it is advisable to seek out the specialist games shops and some of the better hobby and toy shops. There the staff will be able to explain the games knowledgeably and patiently to any potential purchaser. Also, a specialist shop is much more likely to have a wide range of titles together with a

good selection of scenarios, playing aids, magazines and figures.

Although mail order is always a second-choice method of purchasing anything, it can nevertheless be invaluable to the person who is not fortunate to have an outlet for RPGs in his or her town. It can also be a useful method of keeping up-to-date with new trends and products, as many mail order companies offer their customers free newsletters and pricelists, and usually produce a catalogue of games with photographs and descriptions. Some companies run mail order clubs offering their members benefits such as special offers and regular newsletters. The only disadvantage with purchasing an item by mail order is that it may be out of stock and there may be some delay waiting for it to come back into stock. Many companies and a few individual shops offer mail order services. A letter enclosing a large stamped addressed envelope to any of these companies should produce details of their mail order services.

Once you have the game of your choice, the next step is to find other players. It might be that you know some already in which case there is no problem. For others, finding fellow players might be difficult, especially if your friends or family are not interested in such games.

The best way to find a local group of players is to go to the shop where the game was bought to see if there is a noticeboard. Addresses of groups or individuals may be pinned to the noticeboard. If not, you can always ask permission to display your own notice. If you attend school or university, games clubs may be already in existence. If not, you could try to form one, again using the noticeboard to make the announcement. An advertisement could be placed in the school magazine or university newspaper. Going beyond local advertising, many of the specialist magazines like *White Dwarf* offer free advertisements to

clubs and individuals seeking out additional members or groups of players. Such advertisements are often amusing as well as informative. For example:

HELP!

Young wizard locked up in solo adventures would like to join a local dungeon party. Interested in *D&D* and *RuneQuest*. Contact: A Person, 42 Fenway Park, Manchester 20 (Tel: 061-919 9191).

It is always advisable to mention your age, as some people are unwilling to play in groups with a wide age range. Some groups also restrict their membership by style of play. Some people like to take RPGs seriously and play within the strict parameters of the rules. Others like to play purely for amusement, where the rules are often bent so as not to be restrictive. Adherents of both styles are unlikely to have an enjoyable game when playing together. Again, it might prove useful to state your preferred style of play in any advertisement.

If, after trying all the above, you are still unable to locate existing players, then you are going to have to learn the hard way, i.e. teach yourself. You are going to have to sit down and commit yourself to several hours of intense reading to familiarize yourself with a game system to a standard where you will be confident and authoritative enough to be the referee. The players will have a much easier time of it. They just sit down and play. Imagining themselves in the shoes of their characters they simply act out the roles and see what happens to them. However, the enjoyment they gain from their game is usually directly proportional to the amount of preparation, effort and enthusiasm put in by the referee. Consequently, as a referee,

you must know the game system thoroughly to achieve a good mixture of believability and balance.

In order to at least see how other referees run their game worlds, one may attend any of a number of role-playing events or 'conventions' open to the general public. Small events (one or two days, attendance of several hundred) take place in most states, sometimes in conjunction with conventions run by science fiction fans. Larger game conventions lasting three or four days and attended by several thousand have become established in some areas. Most are held on university campuses, where buildings, cafeterias, and especially overnight housing (in dorms vacant during the summer or Christmas) can be rented by the convention organizers. The most well known conventions are: Michicon and Winter Gamefest, which occur in June or July and in November, respectively, in Cobo Hall, Detroit; GenCon, which takes place every August in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, about 50 miles north of Chicago; and Origins, the national summer convention supported by the game manufacturers, which changes its location each year. Origins 81 was in California, Origins 82 in Maryland, and Origins 83 in Detroit in conjunction with Michicon. (For more information write to: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48099; TSR Hobbies, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147; Origins, c/o The Avalon Hill Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214.) These and other events are advertised or included in convention lists in gaming magazines.

The larger conventions offer an astonishing variety of activity, since they are not restricted to role-playing. Boardgames, miniatures battles and displays, computer games, science fiction films, historical simulation games, and classical games all play a part. There are formal talks and displays about gaming as well as tournaments. Whether

you're a novice or an expert there is something for you. There are demonstration games in which spectators can learn from refereeing styles in action, participation games in which the novice can join in as a player to learn the concept of role-playing, and competitions in which experts can display their skills. There are dozens of such events at a convention, but the most popular are sometimes fully booked up weeks before the convention begins. If you are particularly interested in one game or one type of event, it is wise to send for and use the preregistration forms provided by the convention organizers.

Whilst it may seem a daunting prospect to become involved in the activity of RPGs, much of the effort involved in the learning processes can be reduced by simple participation. It is certainly worthwhile (as the millions of existing role-playing gamers will agree), and with a little initiative can easily be achieved. For many people it is almost a way of life, albeit an alternative way of life where fantasy borders on reality. Few can doubt the attractions of RPGs, as there is not exactly much opportunity for encountering monsters and treasure hunting in twentieth-century society. Role-playing games provide the basis for your adventure and excitement. I hope you are ready to meet the challenge. After all, dragons aren't that tough once you know what you are doing . . .

APPENDIX 1

GAMES

As with any new product, there is always a rush of companies eager to corner the market and establish themselves as brand leader manufacturers. Consequently, not all will succeed, and when demand has levelled out, some companies will go out of business. The manufacture of role-playing games is no exception to this rule. Although some of the manufacturers listed below are currently quite active, it is inevitable that some or all of their titles will disappear; for others success will create additional titles.

MANUFACTURER

Chaosium Inc.
P.O. Box 6302
Albany
California 94706

Fantasy Games Unlimited
P.O. Box 182
Roslyn
New York 11576

TITLE

RuneQuest
Stormbringer
Worlds of Wonder
Call of Cthulhu
Basic Role-Playing

Bushido
Aftermath
Chivalry & Sorcery
Space Opera
Villains & Vigilantes
Wild West
Land of the Rising Sun
Odysseus
Gangster
Skull & Crossbones
Merc

DICING WITH DRAGONS

Flying Buffalo Inc.
P.O. Box 1467
Scottsdale
Arizona 85252

Tunnels & Trolls

Game Designers'
Workshop
P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington
Illinois 61701

*Traveller
En Garde*

Heritage USA
P.O. Box 345125
Dallas
Texas 75234

Swordbearer

Hero Games
425 Harbor Boulevard
Belmont
California 94002

Champions

Metagaming
Box 15346
Austin
Texas 78761

The Fantasy Trip

Puffin Books
Bath Road
Harmondsworth
Middlesex
England

*Fighting Fantasy**

Reston Publishing Company
11480 Sunset Hills Road
Reston
Virginia 22090

High Fantasy

**Fighting Fantasy* books are published in the United States by Dell Publishing Co., Inc., One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, New York 10017, under license from Puffin Books.

A P P E N D I C E S

Task Force Games
1110 N. Fillmore
Amarillo
Texas 79107

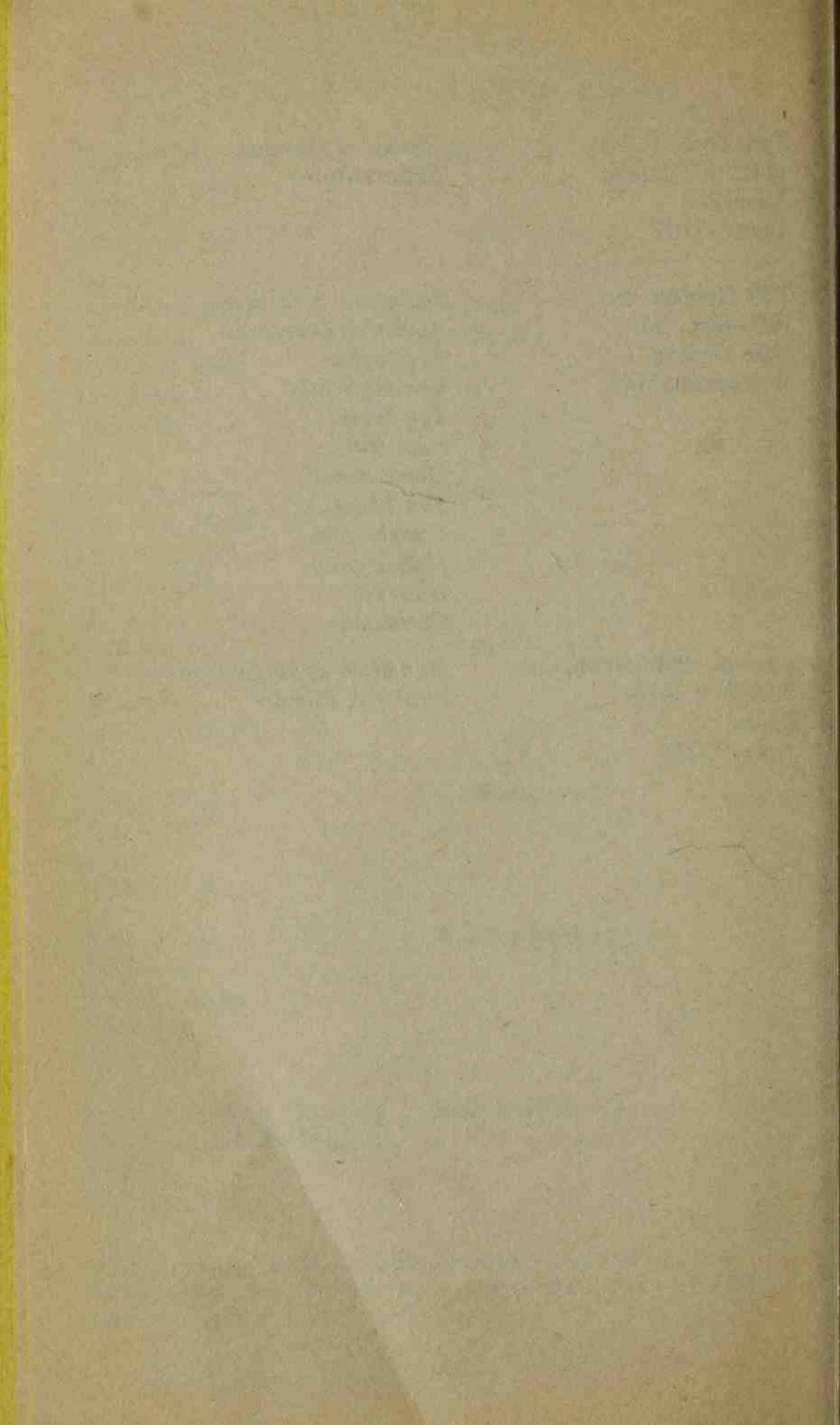
Heroes of Olympus
Supervillains

TSR Hobbies Inc.
P.O. Box 756
Lake Geneva
Wisconsin 53147

Dungeons & Dragons
Advanced Dungeons
& Dragons
Gamma World
Top Secret
Boot Hill
Dawn Patrol
Star Frontiers
Gangbusters
Dragonquest
Universe
Commando

Yaquinto Publications Inc.
P.O. Box 24767
Dallas
Texas 75224

Man Myth & Magic
Pirates & Plunder



APPENDIX 2

MAGAZINES

The quality and distribution of role-playing magazines and 'zines varies greatly. Some will be found on news stands and in shops whilst others are only available by subscription. It is advisable to write for details of 'zine subscriptions to the various publishers before sending any monies.

MAGAZINES

PUBLISHER

*Adventure
Gaming*

Manzaak Publishing Inc.
P.O. Box 12291
Norwood
Ohio 45212

Ares

Dragon Publishing
P.O. Box 110
Lake Geneva
Wisconsin 53247

Different Worlds

Chaosium Inc.
P.O. Box 6302
Albany
California 94706

Dragon

Dragon Publishing
P.O. Box 110
Lake Geneva
Wisconsin 53147

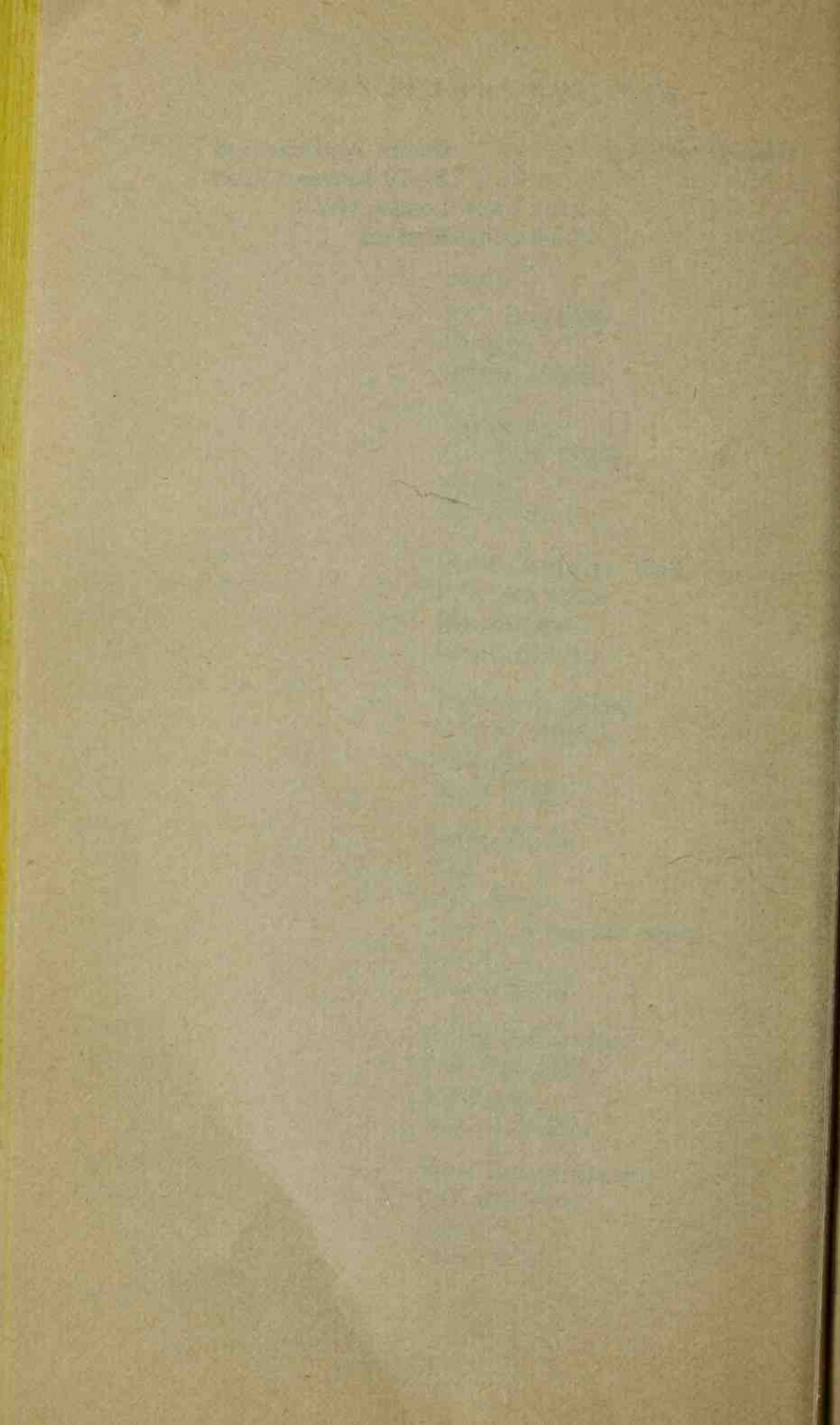
DICING WITH DRAGONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Gameplay</i> | Crystal Publications
P.O. Box 979
Crystal Lake
Illinois 60014 |
| <i>High Passage</i> | FASA
P.O. Box 6930
Chicago
Illinois 60680 |
| <i>Interplay</i> | Metagaming
P.O. Box 15346
Austin
Texas 78761 |
| <i>Journal of the
Travellers' Aid
Society</i> | Game Designers' Workshop
P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington
Illinois 61701 |
| <i>Nexus</i> | Task Force Games
1110 N. Fillmore
Amarillo
Texas 79107 |
| <i>Pegasus</i> | Judges Guild
RR8
P.O. Box 9
1221 N. Sunnyside Road
Decatur
Illinois 62522 |
| <i>Sorcerer's
Apprentice</i> | Flying Buffalo Inc
P.O. Box 1467
Scottsdale
Arizona 85252n |
| <i>The Space
Gamer</i> | Steve Jackson Games
P.O. Box 18805
Austin
Texas 78760 |
| <i>The Oracle</i> | |

A P P E N D I C E S

White Dwarf

Games Workshop Ltd
27-29 Sunbeam Road
London NW10
England



APPENDIX 3

FIGURES

The manufacture of miniature gaming figures, whilst being a skilled and complicated process involving the use of highly detailed master figure sculpting, mould making and hot-metal centrifugal casting machines can, nevertheless, be done as a one-man operation. Whilst most of these one-man operations are reliable, I feel only larger, reputable and long established companies should be listed here. Most companies make both general science fiction and fantasy ranges, but official ranges licensed for particular games are mentioned specifically. An asterisk beside the manufacturer's name denotes that mail order services are offered.

US MANUFACTURER

LICENSED RANGES

Asgard Miniatures*
36 High Pavement
Nottingham NG1 1MN
England

Broadsword Miniatures
1691 South Hidden Hills Parkway
Stone Mountain
Georgia 30088

D I C I N G W I T H D R A G O N S

Castle Creations
1322 Cranwood Square South
Columbus
Ohio 43229

Citadel Miniatures US Inc
P.O. Box 12352
Cincinnati
Ohio 45212

Chronicle Miniatures*
Unit 14
Engineer Park
Sandycroft
Clwyd
Wales
United Kingdom

Grenadier Models Inc
P.O. Box 305
Springfield
PA 19064

*Call of Cthulhu
Traveller*

Hinchliffe Models
P.O. BOX 7307
Dallas
Texas 75209

Stan Johansen Miniatures
Naugatuck
CT 06770

Tom Loback General Artwork
152 West 126th Street, No. 36
New York
NY 10001

Masterpiece Miniatures
Salt Lake City
Utah 84108

Mike's Models
P.O. Box 1854
New York 10116

A P P E N D I C E S

Miniature Figurines Ltd
Pine Plains
NY 12567

World of Greyhawk

QT Models*
10 Queen Street
Bridlington York 2SF
United Kingdom

RAFM Co Inc
19 Concession Street
Cambridge
Ontario
Canada

Ral Partha Enterprises
5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnati
Ohio 45212

Saxon Manufacturing
P.O. Box 121
Rockville
MD 20850

Superior Models
2600 Philadelphia Pike
P.O. Box 99
Claymont
DE 19703

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Livingstone became interested in strategical games in 1968. He co-founded Games Workshop, Ltd. in 1975 and is currently the Marketing Director. The editor of *White Dwarf* magazine since its first issue in 1977, he is the inventor of several games including *Judge Dredd* and *Battlecars*, and is the co-author of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*.

DRAGONTALES

BY RHONDI VILOTT

Choose a Pathway to the Magic Realms

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #1/SWORD DAUGHTER'S QUEST | (130820—\$1.95) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #2/RUNESWORD! | (130839—\$1.95) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #3/CHALLENGE OF THE PEGASUS GRAIL | (130847—\$1.95) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #4/THE TOWERS OF REXOR | (130855—\$1.95) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #5/THE UNICORN CROWN | (132025—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #6/BLACK DRAGON'S CURSE | (132033—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #7/SPELLBOUND | (132858—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #8/THE DUNGEONS OF DREGNOR | (132866—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #9/APHRODITE'S MIRROR | (134176—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #10/HALL OF THE GARGOYLE KING | (134184—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #11/MAIDEN OF GREENWOLD | (135326—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #12/STORM RIDER | (135334—\$2.25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #13/PLEDGE OF PERIL | (136276—\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | #14/SECRET OF THE SPHINX | (136284—\$2.50) |

Prices slightly higher in Canada.

**Buy them at your local
bookstore or use coupon
on next page for ordering.**

MYSTERIES OF THE OCCULT

- (0451)
- THE COMPLETE ART OF WITCHCRAFT** by Sybil Leek. Sybil Leek, the world's best-known witch, astounding seer, medium, astrologer and high priestess in the oldest cult known, gives the inside story on what goes on among those who live, practice and believe in a magic unknown to most of us. (127145—\$2.95)*
 - THE COMPLETE BOOK OF MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT** by Kathryn Paulsen. An up-to-date practitioner's manual of magic, witchcraft and sorcery—with all the ancient and modern recipes, spells, and incantations essential to the Black Arts! (137361—\$3.95)*
 - MASTERING THE TAROT: Basic Lessons in an Ancient, Mystic Art** by Eden Gray. This book provides simple, step-by-step instructions for laying out cards and reading them as well as a precise glossary of symbols. Fully illustrated. (137191—\$3.95)*
 - THE SEXUAL KEY TO THE TAROT** by Theodor Laurence. Let the strange and beautiful symbols of the Tarot reveal your path to gratifying love and sexual fulfillment. (119622—\$2.50)
 - THE TAROT REVEALED: A Modern Guide to Reading the Tarot Cards** by Eden Gray. A fascinating and authoritative introduction to the ancient art of the Tarot cards. (137000—\$3.95)*

*Prices slightly higher in Canada

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P.O. Box 999, Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621

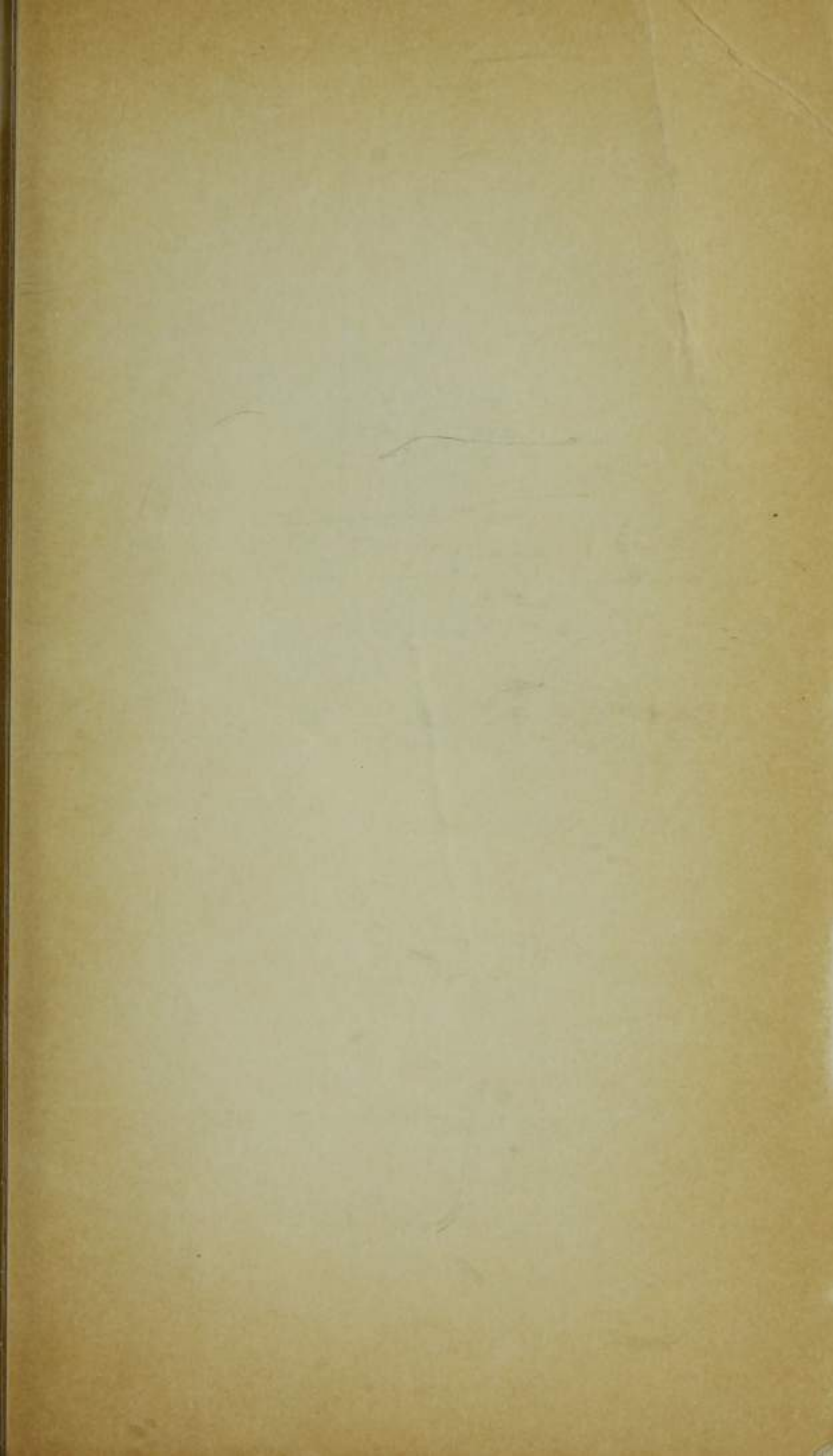
Please send me the books I have checked above. I am enclosing \$_____ (please add \$1.00 to this order to cover postage and handling). Send check or money order—no cash or C.O.D.'s. Prices and numbers are subject to change without notice.

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FROM GLITTERING DRAGONS' HOARDS TO LASER BATTLES IN SPACE...

Here is your complete guide to a whole universe of excitement and adventure—the wonderful world of role-playing games. Whether you're a player or a game master, a novice or a being of well-proven abilities, you'll find a wealth of information in this unique sourcebook;

- *Eye of the Dragon*, a solo role-playing game designed especially for this book
 - A full rundown of games and accessories
 - How to create your own games
 - The best techniques for painting figures
 - A look at the new computer games
 - A shopper's guide to games, magazines, and supplies
 - How to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, RUNEQUEST,™ TRAVELLER,™ TUNNELS & TROLLS,™ and other bestselling games



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