

# QUEENSLAND WARGAMER

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# Queensland Wargamer

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The Queensland Wargamer is the  
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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to yet another issue of the *Queensland Wargamer*. Some of you may feel that your favourite area of gaming or your favourite games are not being covered fully. Many of our members play GURPS, Shadowrun and other games. We have only ever received one GURPS article, no Shadowrun articles, and no Rolemaster articles. Is this an accurate reflection of the interests of our members? Are these systems that don't need articles?

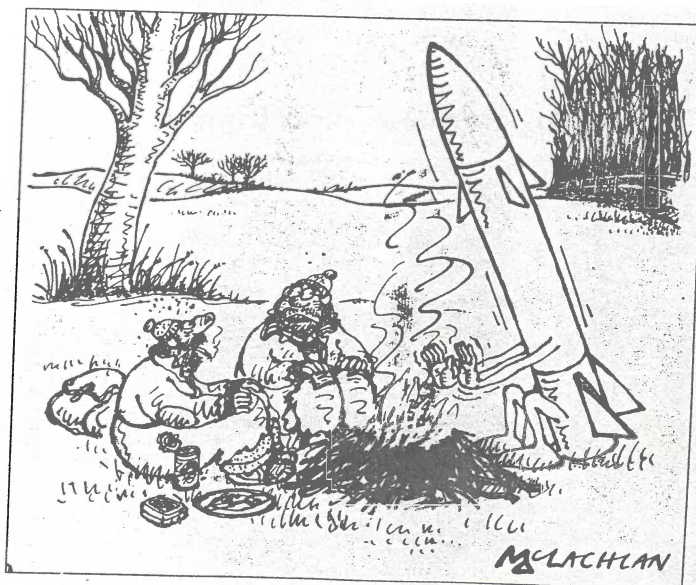
The magazine is usually written by a small group of people, and reflects their current interests. If these people do not write about your game, your game will not be featured. (You could, however, become one of the writers.) We do try, though, to include articles of general interest as well as items specific to certain games.

Some of you may not have to write anything especially for the *Wargamer*. You may already have written an article. Our Mongol issue's history of the Mongols was originally a history assignment. Just hand in the assignment and we'll do the editing. How difficult is that?

Previously used modules are good too. With close to a hundred people in QUGS, I guarantee not everybody will have seen it.

Many thanks to Alister Whipp for the cover to our Vegetarian issue.

Timo Nieminen and Nick Lawrence



"I think it's a heat-seeking missile."

## CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW! FOR CHAMPIONS

One of the more innovative additions to the DC Universe made in the early 1980s was the creation of Captain Carrot and the Zoo Crew. Though only 20 issues of their own comic were published, these issues were noted for their humorous and entertaining nature. The Zoo Crew are a perfect existing model for a comedy campaign, and this article will present character designs for them, as well as provide some background on the Zoo Crew and their world.

The Zoo Crew came into existence when six people came into contact with a fragment of a meteor that imbued each of them with superpowers. These six people were: Captain Carrot (a rabbit), the leader of the Zoo Crew; Pig-Iron, the team's brick; Yankee Poodle, a telekinetic; Fastback (a turtle), a speedster; Alley-Kat-Abra, mistress of magic; and Rubberduck, able to stretch his body. At first the Zoo Crew was a temporary affair, an alliance formed solely for the purpose of stopping Starro (a gigantic extraterrestrial starfish who had previously fought the Justice League of America) from conquering the Zoo Crew's earth (Issue 1). After defeating Starro, Captain Carrot persuaded the others that they should remain a team, despite the misgivings of some of the Crew (Issue 2). With time, the Zoo Crew became a real team. Since there have only ever been a handful of superheroes on their world, the Zoo Crew fight the most dangerous foes around and stop the world-threatening plans of the criminal masterminds (though most of their villains seem content to merely try and take over the U.S.A.). Other known heroes are Little Cheese (a mouse), who has shrinking powers and eventually joined the Zoo Crew (Issue 20), and the Terrific Whatzit (a turtle, but he cleverly disguised his identity by not wearing his shell), who was active during the Second Weird War (W.W.II).

In the pre-Crisis DC Universe, the Zoo Crew existed on a parallel earth, identified as Earth-C. (It is extremely unlikely that this earth survived the Crisis.) On Earth-C, many different species of animals found on our earth (identified in the DC Universe back then as Earth-Prime) had evolved into sentient beings, most of them conforming to a bipedal stance with arms, legs, hands and feet. Most birds lost their wings in exchange for arms. Hands with one thumb and three fingers are the norm. Feet display a bit more variety, and webbed feet and cloven feet can be found as well as the more common three-toed human-like feet. There does not appear to be any inter-species relationships that produce offspring, but marriages between animals of different species do occur (Issue 4). The names of people and places changes on Earth-C to names with animal components, such as Gnu York, Chimp Beastwood, and the Frankenswine Monster.

By Issue 8, the Zoo Crew had established themselves in Los Antelopes on the west coast of the United Species of America. Their base was the Z-Building, shaped like a letter Z, naturally. The Zoocruiser could function as an aircraft, a submarine, a hydrofoil, a helicopter, and also as an all-terrain ground vehicle. The Carrotmobile was not as versatile, and to my knowledge was only used for a picnic in Issue 12. Finally, the Starhopper was a space shuttle for the Zoo Crew's personal use. All of these vehicles and their base were given to the Zoo Crew by President Mallard Fillmore. This was to show the Government's gratitude for the Zoo Crew saving the United Species twice in close succession (Issues 3 and 6). The close cooperation between the Zoo Crew and the Presidency extended to a good working relationship with police authorities, although no member of the Zoo Crew was legally deputized.

When it comes to combat (an integral part of most Superhero RPGs) the Zoo Crew tend to win by the time-honoured methods of outnumbering and overpowering their opponents. Frequently, the entire team fights one foe, or one foe with some goons. Examples of these include: Bowsar the Barbarian (Issue 7), Cold Turkey and his Snowbirds (Issue 13), and Gorilla Grodd (Issue 20). A reasonable proportion of these single opponents are very powerful and difficult to defeat, like the Timemaster (Issues 8 and 9) or the Bunny From Beyond (Issue 6). Most other storylines in the Captain Carrot comics are solo scenarios, with one hero fighting one villain. Only one storyline (Issues 14 to 16) involved a loosely organized coalition of villains. Because of the nature of these plotlines in these comics, the Zoo Crew tend to "line

up and take turns" in fights. Fighting a well-organized team, the Zoo Crew would do badly. Herein lies a problem for the GM, since PCs will not wait for their turn in fights, but rush their opponent and defeat them with the Zoo Crew's superior numbers. The Zoo Crew will also do much better against teams of opponents, because the PCs will be used to fighting as a team. Thus, in a Captain Carrot campaign, the style of combat may differ from that seen in the source material, which in turn means that the style of play may be very different as well.

This problem can be ignored and is only relevant for those who want to follow closely the style of the comics, There is no reason why you cannot enjoy the detailed background, characters and humour of *Captain Carrot And His Amazing Zoo Crew!* with your friends. Go ahead and try it out.

### Published Material

Pull-out preview in *New Teen Titans* 16 (February 1982)

*Captain Carrot And His Amazing Zoo Crew!* 1 (March 1982) to 20 (November 1983)

I have also seen advertisements for a six part mini-series called *The Oz-Wonderland Wars*, but I have not been able to find a copy.

### CAPTAIN CARROT

0+48	STR	10/70*	15PD/12ED Resistant*	10
0+34	DEX	10/24*		
0+48	CON	10/40*	70 STR AP, bite*	14
0+8	BODY	10/15*	70 STR, 1/2 END=3*	14
3	INT	13		
4	EGO	12	25"/100? Superleap,END=2*	17
0+8	PRE	10/20*		
1	COM	11	Perception 14*	5
0+13	PD	2/30r15*	+6 Telescopic Vision*	7
0+13	ED	2/24r12*	Ultrasonic Hearing*	4
0+13	SPD	2/5*		
	REC	4/22*	Instant Change, Σ⇒ Hero ID	5
	END	20/80*		
	STUN	20/70*	1 All Combat Level	8
			PS:Comic Book Artist 11-	2
193	CHAR TOTAL			
			POWERS TOTAL	86
			TOTAL COST	279

\* = Hero ID

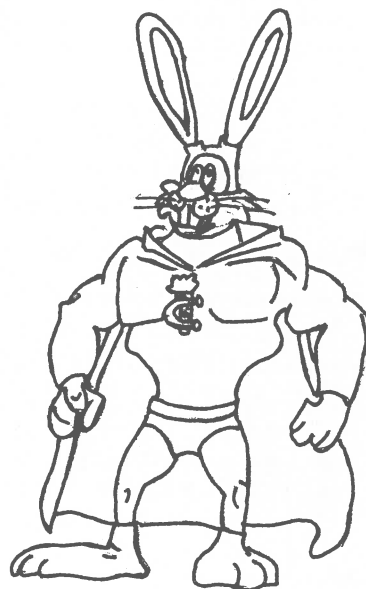
### DISADVANTAGES

- 15 Secret ID Roger Rodney Rabbit
- 10 Accidental Change to Normal ID when END Used Up 11-
- 15 Code vs. Killing C/S
- 15 Heroic Motivations C/S

### Background/Personality

Roger Rodney Rabbit, artist and writer of the JLA (Just'a Lotta Animals) comic book, gained his superpowers from eating the carrots from his windowbox carrot patch, which had been struck by a fragment of a radioactive meteorite. The first member of the Zoo Crew to meet Superman, Captain Carrot played a crucial role in the team's formation, and has been the official leader of the Zoo Crew since it came into existence.

In his normal ID, Roger is an unimportant and unappreciated individual. He does not have a forceful or charismatic personality, and he knows it. Although at first his inhibitions still affected him as Captain Carrot, with time Roger became more confident in his worth, both as a hero and as a person. Perhaps the most dedicated member of the Zoo Crew, Captain Carrot is in many ways both the heart and the brains of his team.



### Powers/Tactics

Captain Carrot is superstrong, fast, and bulletproof (but he avoids testing his resistant defences whenever possible). His biggest disadvantage is that his powers do wear off (probably because he was not directly struck by the meteorite piece). He can exhaust the energy from his Cosmic Carrots if he exerts himself too much. In any case, the energy from one carrot wears off after 24 hours.

Captain Carrot usually leads the Zoo Crew into battle, because of both his high DEX and SPD, and because he has a good movement power. He often uses Move Bys (12d6) and Move Throughs (22d6) on dangerous opposition. One of the Zoo Crew's heaviest hitters, Captain Carrot makes good use of his powers and is an effective fighter.

### Appearance

In his normal ID, Roger Rabbit is a reasonably average member of society (i.e. unfit and flabby). He has brown fur, with white fur on his face. As Captain Carrot, he is a far more imposing figure. His whole body grows larger, and his upper chest, arms, and thighs become more muscular. Captain Carrot wears a yellow bodysuit with dark green leotards and red boots, mask, belt, and cape. He usually carries two Cosmic Carrots on his belt in case of emergencies.

### Quotes

"Sizzling Celery!"

"Leaping Lettuce!"

### PIG IRON

40	STR	80	1 Growth, 0 END, always on, persistent	7
21	DEX	17	3 Density Increases, 0 END, always on, persistent	20
50	CON	35	Σ⇒ taller, 1600 kg, +20 STR, +3 PD/ED,	
12	BODY	17	+1 BODY/STUN, -4 Knockback	
-1	INT	9		
	EGO	10	30PD/20ED Resistant	25
10	PRE	20	10pt. Lack Weakness	10
-1	COM	8		
35	PD	50r30	1 Hand-to-Hand Combat Level	5
30	ED	40r20	PS: Steelworker 8-	1
13	SPD	4		
	REC	19		
	END	70		
	STUN	65		
			POWERS TOTAL	68
			TOTAL COST	277

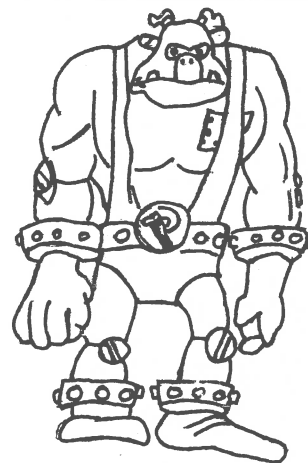
209 CHAR.TOTAL

### DISADVANTAGES

- 0 ID Peter Porkchops
- 20 DF Big, Ugly, Made Out of Iron NC/MR
- 10 Brash, Enjoys a Fight C/M
- 10 Wants to Live the Good Life C/M
- 10 Code vs. Killing C/M

### Background/Personality

Pig-Iron was once Peter Porkchops, hardworking Steelworker in Piggsburg. A piece of radioactive meteorite struck Peter, and knocked him into a vat of molten metal. The meteorite preserved Peter's life by transforming him into the Swine of Steel, the Porcine Powerhouse, Pig-Iron!



This transformation was clearly influenced by Peter Porkchops' psychological state. Pig-Iron is brash and aggressive, very unlike the kind and gentle Peter. It would seem that the transformation turned Peter into a form that could express the built-up hostility and aggression that he couldn't express beforehand. Most of the Zoo Crew like Pig Iron, even though he is often crass and violent.

Powers/Tactics

Pig-Iron is a classic brick: strong, damage-resistant, and slow in combat. He is willing to brawl with anyone. Although he is not an innovative tactician, Pig-Iron has learnt of the advantages of clever fighting, and is able to trick his opponents when pounding on them doesn't work.

Appearance

As Peter Porkchops, Pig-Iron was scrawny enough to make Roger Rabbit look fit! As Pig-Iron, however, he is both larger and stronger than Captain Carrot. He is also ugly. Pig-Iron weighs well over a ton, and his skin colour is a dark purple-grey. What clothes he does wear are shiny black; his belt, arm and leg bands are studded.

Quotes

"I been known to lose my ever-lovin' temper!"  
 "If it's a scrap ya want, I'm always happy to oblige!"

ALLEY-KAT-ABRA

5	STR	15	80pt. Power Pool	80
42	DEX	24	40pt. Control Cost, no skill roll required, O Phase	
20	CON	20	Action to change, OAF Magic Wanda	60
2	BODY	11		
8	INT	18	30pt. MP - Magical Abilities	30
20	EGO	20	Precognition, no conscious control, must concentrate	
5	PRE	15	throughout (0 DCV)	u1
4	COM	18	6d6 Telepathy, 1 Phase to activate, must concentrate	
5	PD	8	throughout (1/2 DCV), x2 END=6	u1
4	ED	8	10"/20" Flight, 1 Phase to activate, must concentrate	
16	SPD	5	throughout (1/2 DCV), END=2	u1
	REC	7		
	END	40	KS: Magic 13-	3
1	STUN	30		
132 CHAR TOTAL			10pt. Mental Defence	6
DISADVANTAGES			Comic Book Martial Arts	20
15	Secret ID	Felina Furr	1 Overall Level	10
10	Rivalry with	Yankee Poodle	Acrobatics 14-	3
15	Code vs.	Killing C/S	Breakfall 14-	3
15	Kind, Polite,	Likeable VC/M	POWERS TOTAL	218
			TOTAL COST	350

Background/Personality

Felina Furr was a student of the occult. When a meteorite struck her, it increased her mystic powers to a great extent. However, most of this power has to be focussed through her Magic Wanda, although she can cast some basic magic spells without it.

A pleasant and likeable person, Felina enthusiastically supported Captain Carrot when he suggested that the Zoo Crew stay together after their first mission. She gets on well with all the members of the Zoo Crew except Yankee Poodle, who Alley-Kat-Abra disliked almost from the start.

Powers/Tactics

Alley-Kat-Abra's greatest power is her Magic Wanda. In the comics it is capable of anything Alley-Kat-Abra uses it for. This is a big problem for the GM. Magic Wanda makes Alley-Kat-Abra the single most powerful member of the Zoo Crew. In the comics, she does not dominate the Zoo Crew because she fails to use her powers most





effectively. For example, she tends to use Energy Blasts in combat to the exclusion of everything else. A clever player would use Magic Wanda to Entangle and Flash opponents as well, something that never happened in the comics. In this way, that player would come to dominate the group, and possibly spoil the others' enjoyment. There are two ways of limiting Alley-Kat-Abra in a campaign. The first is to give her character to a player who will not use it as well as they could. The second, and more feasible, is to make Magic Wanda's power level lower. I have chosen the second option in this design. If you prefer to use the first, boost Magic Wanda up to a 120pt. Power Pool, or even better, if you think it is necessary.

#### Appearance

Alley-Kat-Abra wears a red bodysuit, with a purple cape, gloves, and boots. Her cape has a hood. Her fur is black, and her face is light blue.

#### Quotes

Since Magic Wanda works best when Alley-Kat-Abra uses rhyme, there are many examples of chants and spells in the comics. More commonly used mystic expressions include: "Thank K'libann!", "By the Holy Mountain of Harrt'z!", and my personal favourite, "By the Flea Collar of S'kuubi-Duu!"

#### FASTBACK

5	STR	15	EC-Running Powers	
60	DEX	30	1. 40"/640" Running, 0 END	104
20	CON	20	2. 40 STR Telekinesis, cannot squeeze or punch,	
4	BODY	12	1/2 END=3, wind blast	40
	INT	10	3. Desolidification, END=4	40
	EGO	10	4. 40"/640" Swimming, only on the surface, 0 END	20
3	PRE	13	Instant Change	5
	COM	10	4 Running Levels	20
12	PD	15	10PD/10ED Armour, 14, shell	20
6	ED	10	POWERS TOTAL	249
20	SPD	6	TOTAL COST	379
	REC	7		
	END	40		
	STUN	30		
130	CHAR TOTAL			

#### DISADVANTAGES

- 15 Secret ID Timmy Joe Terapinn
- 15 Code vs. Killing C/S
- 15 Easygoing, Laidback VC/M

#### Background/Personality

Timmy Joe Terapinn, a slowpoke swamp-dwelling hillbilly, received the power of superspeed when his fragment of the meteorite hit him. Although he cannot hold down a job because he is too slow, Fastback the Reptilian Rocket has proven his worth to the Zoo Crew on many occasions.

Fastback is a friendly and easygoing person. In his life the emphasis is on slow and easy. He talks slow, walks slow, and eats slow. However, he does not think slow. Timmy Joe isn't stupid, he just isn't in a hurry. He gets on well with nearly all of the Zoo Crew; only Yankee Poodle finds his slowness excessively irritating.

#### Powers/Tactics

Although at first Fastback could only run at superspeed, he has since discovered new applications of his power. Most recently, Fastback has learnt how to vibrate through walls. Thankfully, he was never shown to be capable of travelling to other dimensions like the Flash could, although his speed was shown to be comparable with the Flash's.



Like other speed weeds, Fastback's Move By (9d6) and Move Through (16d6) are his most devastating attacks. For Move Throughs, Fastback's special effect is to withdraw into his shell (i.e. his armour activates) and hit his target as a flying projectile. Like Pig-Iron, he is not a tactician, but he does defeat dangerous opponents by the clever use of his powers.

#### Appearance

Timmy Joe Terapinn has dark green skin, an orange beak, and a blue shell (which I suspect is painted rather than naturally blue). In his Hero ID, Fastback wears a dark blue costume with light blue trim.

#### Quotes

Typical dialogue is: "Heck, I'm shore 'nuff glad y'all see it our way, cap'n!". Have fun.

#### YANKEE POODLE

30	STR	10	80pt.MP-Animal Magnetism	80
16	DEX	20	40 STR Telekinesis, cannot squeeze or punch,	
	CON	18	1/2 END=3	m12
	BODY	10	10d6 Energy Blast,vs. PD,1/2 END=3	u6
1	INT	11	20pt. Missile Deflection,at range, costs 1/2 END=1	u3
	EGO	10	20pt. Missile Reflection, costs 1/2 END=1	u3
4	PRE	14	15"/60" Flight,END=3	u3
2	COM	14		
8	PD	10	2 MP Combat Levels	6
4	ED	8		
10	SPD	4	Conversation 12-	3
	REC	6	Cryptography 11-	3
	END	36	PS: Gossip Columnist/Celebrity Interviewer 11-	2
75	CHAR TOTAL		POWERS TOTAL	121
	DISADVANTAGES		TOTAL COST	196
15	Secret ID Rova Barkitt			
10	Rivalry with Alley-Kat-Abra			
15	Arrogant, Bitchy VC/M			
10	Greedy, Manipulative C/M			
15	Code vs. Killing C/S			
5	Rep. Celebrity Interviewer/ Gossip Columnist 8-			

#### Background/Personality

Rova Barkitt, famous Follywood celebrity interviewer (i.e. gossip columnist), was struck by a radioactive meteorite, the radiation of which altered her body's natural Electrolyte balance, thus giving her powers of animal magnetism! An experienced media personality, she uses her skills to act as Public Relations Officer for the Zoo Crew.

Yankee Poodle is the least liked member of the Zoo Crew. Arrogant and egotistical, she clashed with Alley-Kat-Abra from Day One. Her rivalry with Felina is no doubt due to jealousy, as Alley-Kat-Abra is more attractive, intelligent, and popular than Yankee Poodle. The rest of the Zoo Crew gets along with Rova as best they can. Although at first only slightly committed to the team, with time Yankee Poodle has become more acceptable to the other members of the Zoo Crew. It is now unlikely that she will the reveal the secret identities of the rest of the Zoo Crew as a reporting coup for herself.



#### Powers/Tactics

Despite her comparatively low power level, Yankee Poodle's powers have very flashy special effects. From her right hand she can fire blueish stars (of semi-solidified electromagnetic force) that repel all matter (i.e. Missile Deflection, Reflection, and Telekinesis), and her left hand produces red and white stripes that attract all matter (Telekinesis). She can fly by creating a ramp of stripes and propelling herself with a stream of stars. When both stars and stripes are directed at the same target, they explode, producing magno-blasts (Energy Blast). Yankee Poodle has become very skilled in the use of her powers, and often shows off when it is safe to do so. Her favourite tactic is to hide at the back of the Zoo Crew and snipe away at the opposition.

Appearance

Rova Barkitt is an attractive white poodle. As Yankee Poodle, she wears a blue top and shoes, and red shorts and gloves. Her mask is blue, and she has a circlet of red stars in her hair. Her legs are bare.

Quotes

Yankee Poodle dialogue is noted for snide comments and an air of superiority. Just like Zsa Zsa Gabor, she calls people "Dahling" and treats them with contempt.

RUBBERDUCK

5	STR	15	EC-Stretching Powers	
39	DEX	23	1. 25"/50" Stretching, 0 END, pe sistent	211
30	CON	25	2. Shapeshifting, colour doesn't change, 0 END, persistent	27
8	BODY	14	3. 25"/50" Superleap, 0 END	29
5	INT	15	4. 50% Physical Resistant Damage Reduction	22
2	EGO	11	5. 10pt. Missile Deflection, at range, +2OCV	16
5	PRE	15	6. 10pt. Missile Reflection, +2OCV	22
2	COM	15	7. 15PD/15ED Resistant	15
12	PD	15r15	8. +5d6 HA (8d6), 0 END	14
10	ED	15r15		
17	SPD	5	2 All Stretching Combat Levels	16
	REC	8	Martial Arts, +5DC	32
	END	50	Martial Grab -1OCV -1DCV STR 50 Grab, 8d6	
	STUN	35	Martial Escape +0OCV +0DCV STR 55 Escape	
135	CHAR TOTAL		Martial Dodge +5DCV	
<u>DISADVANTAGES</u>			Acting 12-	3
15	Secret ID Byrd Rentals		KS: Movie Industry 11-	2
10	Rep. Movie Star 11-		Breakfall 14-	3
15	Code vs. Killing C/S		PS: Stuntwork 11-	2
10	Permissive C/M		Combat Driving 14-	3
10	Wants to be a Hero C/M		Combat Piloting 14-	3
			TF: Ground, Air, Water, Space Vehicles	4
			Mechanics 11-	3
			POWERS TOTAL	427
			TOTAL COST	562

Background/Personality

Byrd Rentals was a movie stuntfowl who got lucky and made it as a movie actor. Now a famous Follywood actor, Byrd developed the power to stretch his body when he was hit by a radioactive meteorite. The Malleable Mallard named himself Rubberduck, and went on to join the Zoo Crew.

Byrd is a sophisticated and cosmopolitan duck. He has few inhibitions about himself; in the past he posed fully nude for a front-view centrefold in Cowsmopolitan. Rubberduck is a witty and charming drake, and a pleasure to be with. Even Yankee Poodle gets on well with him. Byrd is happy as a member of the Zoo Crew, despite his early protestations; in the Zoo Crew, he can fulfill his dream of being a real hero.

Powers/Tactics

Rubberduck is one of those obscene stretching weeds who can do nearly anything to the shape of their body; he can literally tie himself in knots. It is sad that many people fail to take him or his powers seriously. As one admirer commented: "Too bad you have such a ridiculous superpower! What would you call twisting yourself up like a feathered pretzel?"



In combat, Rubberduck can wrap himself around an opponent to such an extent that it takes real superstrength to break free. Though he lacks offence, Rubberduck has versatility. He is a good team player, and is the Zoo Crew's vehicle expert. Among the more intelligent members of the Zoo Crew, he does think up winning battle tactics, and rarely makes foolish mistakes.

#### Appearance

Despite being cursed with an ugly pear-shaped body (a curse placed by either God or evolution on his species), Byrd Rentals is a real hunk. He has pale light green feathers and yellow legs, feet and beak. His costume is a darker green, with yellow gloves, belt, trim and boots. His goggles are green.

#### Quotes

Rubberduck's wit and snappy repartee are the distinctive characteristics of his speech. Unfortunately, most of this dialogue seems flat and uninteresting without a context, so there is little point in quoting it.

Gary Johnson

## LEAN CUISINE: NOVELTY MAGIC IN AD&D

The AD&D spell Polymorph Other has a few common, almost standard uses. These are to polymorph the enemy into something less dangerous (a beetle, maybe); or to conjure up a handy pegasus to cross those inconvenient mountains. Or sometimes the Mage can convince a party member (usually a NPC if the DM doesn't run the NPC properly) to stand still and be polymorphed into a gold dragon. (Hope the NPC makes the system shock roll, and keeps their own mind.)

What else can you do with the spell? It partly depends on how you interpret certain aspects of the spell. For instance, find a mouse and polymorph it into a deer. (If it fails, is it a dead mouse or a dead deer? This is a question for the DM.) At any rate, you have a dead deer, and therefore venison for dinner. Now, the spell description states a Dispel Magic cast on the recipient of the spell will turn them back into the original form (survival subject to another system shock roll).

That is, if the venison is dispelled, it will change back to a much smaller volume of mouse meat. (Survival is no longer important in this case.) The question the DM should ask themselves is what happens if someone eats the venison, and a Dispel Magic is cast on them three or four days later when the food has been assimilated into their body. Does a part of their body disappear? My interpretation says not. The act of digestion acts in the same way as a Dispel Magic. This means that when the food is digested, it also disappears.

This opens up the way for modern style low calorie food. Eat all the bulk you want, and you won't put on any weight. (In fact, if you overdo it, you could starve to death.) This can be a good business venture for the imaginative PC in the right area.

The other way to use the Polymorph Other spell in relation to food is to polymorph large animals into small ones, and use them for portable army rations. If you do this, you can ignore all the articles ever written about supply lines, baggage trains and so on. Dispel Magic can be cast on the rations before eating, to bring them back to normal size, or the magical rations can be eaten and digested very slowly as they return to normal size. Of course in this case if a Dispel Magic is cast on a person who has just eaten a brontosaurus polymorphed into a pheasant, the results could be fatal to say the least. (This is one of the very many nasty ways in which magic can be used to kill characters in AD&D.)

There are almost certainly a large number of other imaginative ways in which to use the Polymorph Other spell. And of course this creative process can be extended to other spells. For example, distilling nearly pure alcohol by casting Destroy Water on wine. Magic use that goes beyond mere brutality (Fireball those Orcs!) opens up new vistas of role playing. Think about it.

Taina Nieminen

## CLAWS OF BAGH NAKH: A CHAMPIONS COLUMN

### GAME SYSTEM AND GAME STYLE

In fantasy gaming, I have noted that the differences between games run by different people using the same game system (that's a set of rules) are far greater than any general difference resulting from using different rules. Each rule system is readily usable for a wide variety of gaming styles. Other games have a much narrower focus: Traveller campaigns will be quite different to Ringworld campaigns.

Superhero game systems seem to consist mostly of lists of powers and rules for beating the tar out of each other. There are often numerous supplements chock-full of opponents on which to inflict all of these lovely combat mechanics upon. (Just like most other game systems, with their spell lists, tables of high-tech weaponry and numerous Monster Manuals.) There is relatively little on anything else (except for a few games; more on this later) so each system should be fairly adaptable to any style of gaming. We have here, however, a definite case where some game systems are more equal than others.

Some games which start with a narrow focus will not be usable for a wider campaign without a lot of work. Examples of this might include games where the superheroes cruise through space annihilating bad guys, or caveman superhero gaming systems, neither of which would have much detail on modern settings and the people and technology needed to fill them. Others might be games specific to one comic book universe which you do not wish to use.

Sometimes we will have strong incentives to use a particular game system, in which case we will need to understand the limitations imposed on us by the system. If you are a heavy GURPS player and wish to run superhero gaming, you will be sorely tempted to use GURPS Supers. This will have the advantage of familiarity with the rules, and you may already own many compatible supplements. If you want a campaign set in the DC universe, you might want to use the DC Heroes RPG. This has the obvious advantage of being able to use all of the published DC Heroes supplements, modules and sourcebooks. The other main advantage, compatibility between the game system and the game universe, is not so obvious, but perhaps even more important.

Hold on, what do we mean by that? How can a superhero game universe be incompatible with a superhero rule system? Obviously, in a fantasy game, we couldn't use a game system without any magic rules if we wanted all of the PCs to be wizards. But surely all superhero games have rules for throwing trucks at people, bouncing bullets off your chest and spraying deadly radioactive energy bolts about the city. Well, superhero games do tend to include all of these things, but the differences are important.

Firstly, they affect the game world. Secondly, they affect the game style. (It's actually a bit more complicated than that, as the game world also affects the game style.) If we want our game to have Superman™ or Superman clones in it, we will want his strength level to be represented in the game by a number with less than five digits. It's not good enough to say that since he is one of the strongest heroes in the world, he just needs to have one of the highest reasonably possible strength scores. If the game system says that a character with the highest possible strength score has to strain to pick up an empty garbage truck, Superman will feel very silly, and the player will feel ripped off. The DC Heroes game has been designed so that Superman's game statistics are reasonably represented within the game. The old Superman who could move planets would need a strength of 250 or more in Champions, with the accompanying 50D6 punch and 75D6 haymaker. And there are villains out there who don't fall over when he hits them. Where does that leave the other characters who get to fight them? It looks like the best game for DC gaming would be the DC Heroes RPG, just due to all this.

If we want a fairly standard style of superhero gaming, we will have heroes ranging from "invulnerable" bricks through to normals with a few gimmicky gadgets and a little bit of martial

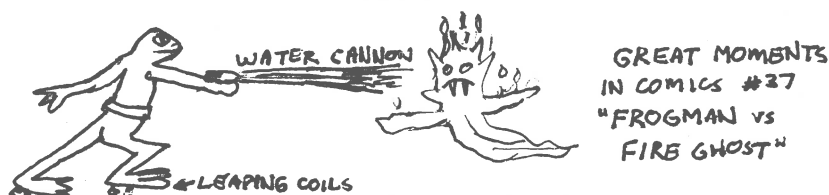
arts training. The "normals" among the heroes will probably not want to be atomized by the flick of a finger from the super-strong brigade. This is where games such as Champions come into it. In Champions, your innocent-bystander-normal with PD 2 and BODY 8 is quite fragile, the thug-normal with PD 5 and BODY 10 can be slapped around without excessive breakage, and the superhero-normal with PD 8 and BODY 15 is quite resilient. This kind of thing does lead to unrealism at times. "Look! He was knocked clean through that brick wall!" "Yeah! Good thing he hit something soft." But it does allow physically normal heroes, DNPCs, and bystanders to survive much better, which means superheroes will be much better regarded by the public as they won't slaughter bystanders in droves.

If we want the kind of world (or style) where they are at great risk, and the heroes and villains have higher casualty rates, try a game system such as GURPS Supers. In the *Marshall Law* book, the good Marshall picks up a car and throws it at the bad guys, who respond with a well-oiled tactical retreat. None of this "Oh, he picked up a car. Looks like he strained a bit. Ooh, he might come over and hit us with 8 dice. That might hurt." This is the exact opposite to the above described Superman syndrome. It is quite reasonable to expect superstrong characters to be fearsomely dangerous to normals. If you want this represented in your game, you had better choose a game system that will represent it for you. In Champions, a STR 55 lets your character pick up a tank and drop it on a normal for 11D6. The average fit healthy normal will not need medical care to survive the experience. The tougher superhero-normals may escape with only light bruising. I'm not sure how much damage this would do in GURPS, but I'm fairly sure that characters would find the experience quite painful.

Having just shown the inadequacies of Champions for DC universe role-playing and Marshall Law role-playing, and keeping in mind that this is meant to be a Champions column, what can we use Champions for? Champions seems to be designed for Marvel universe style role-playing. At least, Marvel universe characters, and characters in that style, can be readily designed using the Champions system. Champions combat can be very similar in style to the fight scenes in Marvel comics. So, if you like the general style or power levels to be found in Marvel comics, and you want your campaign to work the same way as well, try using Champions.

If we want your campaign to be set in the Marvel universe, rather than just a Marvel-style universe, you may wish to consider using the Marvel Superheroes RPG. However, all of the Marvel universe (or Marvel universe-clone) campaigns with which I am familiar are run using the Champions system. This may just be due to my early exposure to Champions making it my favoured system, or it may be due to Champions being a nicer game to run or play in than MSH. I do know that many of the MSH game versions of Marvel characters are not accurate conversions of the characters into game mechanics, so you don't lose too much by having to convert everything into Champions mechanics, either from the MSH game or from the original sources.

There are quite a few other superhero RPGs around which I haven't mentioned yet, such as Villains and Vigilantes (Does anybody out there actually play V&V?) and Superworld, since either I know virtually nothing about them or they are very minor systems that hardly anybody plays. Any Super Squadron or Superhero 2044 players out there? For better or for worse, the superhero RPG field seems to be dominated by a few games only, either Champions, superhero games tailor made for a published universe, or superhero versions of existing game systems. If you want to play in a published universe, or use a superhero system closely related to your old game system, the choice of game system may be quite obvious. Otherwise, you may need to choose with more care to make sure that you are using the right tool for your job. And remember, the game system that you use is just that: a tool, rather than a lord and master. Just don't try to hammer nails with pliers when you could use a hammer.



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## ROLE PLAYING IN ASIAN SETTINGS THE PLACE OF AGRICULTURE

As promised, here is the next instalment in the series. You might think that agriculture is not important in a fantasy role playing game, but there you would be wrong. Population densities and city sizes, warfare and social forms are all closely connected with agriculture.

To take the first point, the number of people that a given area of land will support depends upon how much of it is actually farmed, and upon the amount of food that the farmland yields. For instance, an area with a low population would probably have a low proportion of land under cultivation. Allowing for pastoral lands, the area in question can still contain a lot of wilderness, with all the possibilities that the wilderness holds in FRP games.

But populations are usually not static, and as the people grow in number, more food must be found for them. Either the land already under cultivation can be farmed more intensively (e.g. using more fertilizer, growing two crops a year instead of one, developing cereal varieties with higher yields), or more land can be brought under cultivation (i.e. clearing the wilderness).

The second course is more likely to be undertaken in the short term. This means that the wilderness will be encroached upon by colonists who have migrated some distance (perhaps one mile, perhaps one hundred) from their ancestral farms. Considering the nature of the wilderness in most FRP campaigns, this will be a highly dangerous undertaking. Here is a made-to-order place for adventurers. A ranger might protect the colonists out of a sense of duty; others might be more likely to work for hire. The first method also holds possibilities for characters. Treasure from foreign lands takes on a new meaning. If the PCs are from a backward area, better strains of cereals (either fast ripening or higher yield varieties), or knowledge of better farming practices might be found priceless on their return.

City sizes are closely linked with the amount of land that is needed to support a certain population (much more land was required in Europe than in China). With a basic knowledge of agricultural yields, a GM can calculate how much food certain cities would need to import over what distances (remembering that water transport of bulk grain is much cheaper than overland transport). They can also see the possibilities this has for monopolies and prices, siege warfare and so forth. (A good calorie counter can be used to work out how many kilograms of cereal grain and vegetables the average person needs to eat each day.)

The link between agriculture and warfare is first in the amount of surplus food available to feed the army, and second to determine when the army can march and fight. This will also depend upon whether the army is made up of conscripted peasants (who must be allowed to go home for the harvest, or they will desert anyway), or professional soldiers who are free to fight the year round. At certain times in Chinese history, the army (consisting of career soldiers) was kept busy in the off-season (as it were) by cultivating military farms, which also alleviated the supply problems.

Social forms are also linked with agriculture, but the causal connection is not clear. Do agricultural patterns exist because of the social forms, or do the social forms exist because of the agricultural patterns? The discredited theory of hydraulic despotism claimed that the despotic nature of Asian civilizations stemmed directly from their agricultural patterns. The large irrigation works of Asian agriculture needed coordinated efforts to build them, and despotism was the only way to achieve this coordination.

That ends this brief explanation of why at least a basic knowledge of agriculture is important to both GMs and players alike. The following article compares Chinese patterns of agriculture with those of traditional (mediaeval) Europe and should be useful even to people who are not interested in Asia itself.

Taina Nieminen

## CHINESE PATTERNS OF AGRICULTURE

China has always supported a higher density of population than Europe, and the Chinese people generally have had one of the best diets in the world. (The economically depressed China of the nineteenth century in which subsistence agriculture was the norm was not typical of the rest of Chinese history.) Chinese cultivation was able to support a higher density of population due to higher cereal yields than in traditional European agriculture, and to the minor role of animal husbandry. The several reasons for these higher yields will be considered in turn in describing the patterns of Chinese agriculture.

There are two major environmental zones in China, and so there are two main patterns of cultivation. The dry northern plains support a dry field (generally wheat and millet) agriculture, and the sub-tropical regions south of the Yangtze River are dominated by irrigated wet rice cultivation (although these wet fields can be drained and planted with dry land crops).

There are generally quite dramatic differences between the climate of Europe and that of China, and this had its impact on the development of agricultural practices. For example, the North Chinese farmer had to cope with short periods of very heavy rain, rather than the constant drizzle of European weather. If the Summer rains were too heavy, flooding would result; or there could be drought if they failed. As a consequence, there was an early emphasis on flood control in the North China plain.

### Livestock

One of the fundamental differences between Chinese and European agriculture is the importance of livestock. In traditional Europe, animal husbandry and grain production have always been integrated. Grazing lands formed a large proportion of farmland, and animals were pastured on fallow fields.<sup>1</sup> This was one of the few ways of maintaining soil fertility in traditional Europe. Animal manure was usually in short supply because fodder crops were rare, and few livestock could survive the lean winter months. (Excess animals would be killed and their meat salted for the winter.) The result was that fields had to be left fallow one year in every two or three.

European livestock were kept as draught animals (ploughs were heavy, poorly constructed and turned the soil inefficiently and slowly, needing teams of from four to twelve oxen or horses to draw them), and also for wool, leather, meat and dairy products. (Meat for the rich, and milk and cheese for the poor.)

In China, on the other hand, animal husbandry has not been at all important in historical times. Animals were kept, but fewer than in Europe, and they were grazed on waste land (such as hill sides or river banks). Buffalo, oxen and mules were used for ploughing, but only one or two animals (two oxen or mules in the north, one buffalo in the south) were needed because the Chinese plough was much lighter than the European one. As well, transport in the south was generally by boat or carrying pole (the land in the south is quite mountainous) so there were fewer roads, and thus a lesser need for animals for transport. Carts and road transport were generally used in the north.

The animals that were kept by the Chinese were pigs and poultry, which can live on household scraps and waste. They not only provided meat (pork and poultry were the most common meats in the traditional diet) but pigs were also great producers of manure.

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<sup>1</sup>In crowded areas of China, on the other hand, letting land lie fallow to restore its fertility was regarded as a last resort as early as the Han Dynasty, whereas in Europe it was still an essential part of crop rotation until the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

Because land or grain was not needed for feeding livestock, this in itself meant that a given area of land could support more people in China than Europe. But as will be shown, there were other reasons as well.

### Cereal Cultivation

Cereals made up a larger proportion of the diet in China than in traditional Europe. The Chinese diet was predominantly cereal grain (wheat or millet in the north, and rice in the south), with cooking oil, green vegetables, pickles, sometimes meat or fish (the waterways and lakes of South China teem with fish), and spiced with soy sauce, ginger, chilli or vinegar.<sup>2</sup> Dairy products are simply not a part of the Chinese diet.

Chinese cultivation managed a much higher yield than did European cultivation because of the sowing techniques used by the Chinese; the types of grains cultivated; farming practice which was generally more labour-intensive than in Europe; and field fertility.

### Sowing Techniques

The seed drill<sup>3</sup> first appeared in China sometime during the Han Dynasty. By comparison, in the West, seed was always sown by hand (usually broadcast) up to the eighteenth century. (The seed drill was completely unknown until the sixteenth century.) Chinese methods were more elaborate. The Chinese themselves distinguished three methods of sowing: broadcasting, sowing in rows, and sowing individual seed.

Broadcasting of field crops seems to have been regarded as rather an inferior practice in North China, where sowing in rows by drill was preferred as it saved seed and economized on soil moisture. If a crop was sown broadcast, it was usually because the seed was too small to be sown properly by drill. In South China, most dry land crops were broadcast. But rice was sown broadcast in North and South China.

Individual planting was used for crops that were unsuited for drill sowing, for example, ginger and other roots and tubers. Transplanting of rice seedlings can be seen as an elaboration of this method. Transplanted rice gives substantially higher yields than rice sown broadcast, but it is a comparatively complex procedure, and is much more labour-intensive.<sup>4</sup>

### Farming Practice

This refers to the tending of crops after germination. In China this was generally more labour-intensive than in the West, and was one of the reasons for a higher yield. For example, hand weeding of rice can increase yields by up to 45%.

A general principle in China was that one should use less seed on poor soil than on fertile land. This reflects the care that went into tending the crops. (For where weeds are not controlled, the practice is to sow more seed on poor land to ensure that at least a few plants

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<sup>2</sup>In the Sung Dynasty, vinegar and soy sauce were considered to be two of the necessities of life essential for even the humblest peasant family.

<sup>3</sup>The seed drill is a machine that allows seed to be sown in straight rows. It basically consists of a seed bin, and some mechanism, perhaps a sieve, which regulates the fall of seed to the ground. Thus, the seed can be sown thickly or thinly as the farmer wishes. Most Chinese seed drills sowed not only seed, but also applied manure (although this was a later development).

<sup>4</sup>In transplanting, the rice seed, usually pre-germinated, is sown in seed-beds of various types, and then transplanted into the main field after anything from 2 to 8 weeks depending on the variety of rice. The seedlings should normally be transplanted at their period of maximum rate of growth, by which time they will have reached a height of 15-18cm. The sturdiest seedlings are pulled up from the seed-bed by hand and tied into small bundles which are transported immediately to the main field as they must be transplanted the same day. The roots of the seedlings are usually washed and the top few inches of the leaves trimmed to reduce evaporation and damage in handling. They are then transplanted into the main field.

survive.) Here it should be noted that a by-product of broadcast sowing is that the grain that germinates springs up so haphazardly that thorough weeding is almost impossible.

### Yields

Millet and rice produce many more grains on each plant than either wheat or barley. So the nature of millet and rice is to have a higher yield to seed ratio. Pre-modern Europe had ratios no higher than 3:1 or 4:1 for wheat. This meant that as much as one-half or one-third of the crop would have to be kept for seed grain (this is partly a result of the use of broadcast sowing which is very wasteful of seed).<sup>5</sup> In China, on the other hand, wheat yield to seed ratios were about 10:1 by the twelfth century. (This is a normal figure for traditional cultivation techniques in Asia today.) Compare this with the figures for the late twentieth century: wheat varies between 20:1 and 6:1.

Rice, by comparison, today averages 50:1 and millet (*setaria italica*) yields are of the order of 100:1. Some varieties of rice can give 100:1. Yields that were attained in China historically were easily as high as 20:1 or 30:1 for rice, and could even have approached modern figures. Certainly, millet yields very early on were said to have been as high as 100:1.

The higher yields in Chinese cultivation meant that only a small proportion of the crop was needed for seed gain, allowing a greater part of the crop to be reserved for human consumption.

### Fertilization

As mentioned above, European farmers used mainly animal manure, supplemented to some extent by vegetable waste, marl (a kind of rich soil), and (in coastal areas) seaweed and sand.

In China, animals had a smaller role in the agricultural economy so (while animal manure was never wasted<sup>6</sup>) they provided only a very small proportion of the total amount of fertilizer used. In general, the Chinese used a wider range of materials, including human manure. Green manures - crops grown solely for the purpose of improving the soil for a following crop (mainly legumes with nitrogen fixing properties) - were also used, although the use of these cultivated manures seem to have begun later in China than in the West. Other fertilizers that were used were: hemp waste, oil cake or cake left over from making bean curd (industrial by-products that had to be purchased by the farmer), lime, mollusc shells (used for their lime content), river mud, animal bones and hoofs, chicken feathers and so on.<sup>7</sup> The Chinese understood that the addition of organic manures improved the soil structure and increased water retention as well as nourishing the crops.

### Farm Sizes

Allowing for fallowing of fields in traditional Europe, two or three hectares of land were needed to feed each person. In the most fertile parts of mediaeval Europe (e.g. Flanders, Eastern England) c.1300, farm holdings of under three hectares (7.5 acres) were too small to support a family.

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<sup>5</sup>The low yields of traditional Europe are explained by poor farming practice, and also the possession of few good strains of seed.

<sup>6</sup>Silkworm droppings were a particularly potent fertilizer. Sericulture - the cultivation of silkworms and production of silk cloth - were an integral part of farming practice and economy.

<sup>7</sup>In seventeenth century Kwangtung, frogs killed in brine were used as a fertilizer.

Chinese farms were much smaller, this smaller size made possible by high productivity. Two hectares could support a family of eight (two adults, two old people, and four children) in the north. Holdings in rice growing areas could be as little as one acre for a family.<sup>8</sup>

Field size makes a contribution to land productivity. In Europe, field holdings were long strips sometimes just a few feet wide, and this also contributed to inefficient farming and low yield. Actually, fields in the North China plain superficially resembled this pattern. Fields were rectangular and laid out in large regular blocks or strips which were several hundred metres wide. Partible inheritance over the centuries reduced many of these plots to strips only a few feet across. But the Chinese strips within a single block of land were not managed by common consent, nor were they ever used as communal pasture land.<sup>9</sup>

Double cropping also ensured a greater yield from a given area of land. Land in the north could yield three crops in two years, and in the south two crops in a year. In some parts of the south, farms could produce three crops of rice, or two crops of rice and one commercial crop in a single year.<sup>10</sup> Vegetables were also intensively cropped in this way. Multiple cropping is largely a product of a more favourable climate in China than in Europe, but also results from the development of early ripening varieties of rice, and from agricultural practices such as transplanting, and from the absence of the need to let land lie fallow.

It should be apparent by now that the traditional patterns of European agriculture could be said to be quite backward in comparison with those of China. Certainly the level of technology was lower, and so was the extent of knowledge of farming practices. These combined to ensure that Europe could not support as high a density of population as could China.

This information has been adapted from Francesca Bray, *Biology and Biological Technology. Part II: Agriculture*, volume 6 of the *Science and Civilization in China* series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

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<sup>8</sup>Some figures from China in the 1930s: In one particular village, the average farm size was 1.29 acres. The average production of rice was 40 bushels (or about 1220 kg) per acre, or 51.6 bushels per average farm. The average family size was 4.1, with an average food consumption of 20 bushels (this food consumption representing the food consumption of 2.9 adult males). Land rents were normally half of the total crop, i.e. 25.8 bushels.

Regarding traditional millet yields, the Ch'in statesmen Li K'ui reckoned an average yield for setaria millet of 700kg/hectare (about 280 kg per acre).

Early twentieth century wheat yields in China ranged from 400kg/hectare (about 160kg/acre) to 1100 kg/hectare (about 450kg/acre), with an average yield of 1090/hectare in 1934-6. This compares with modern yields which are as high as 4500kg/hectare (about 1820kg/acre) in some parts of the world.

<sup>9</sup>In South China, irrigated fields are irregular in shape because they follow the contours of the land. They are also small, because then water flow and depth and temperature can be controlled more accurately. The optimal size of a wet rice field is about 1/6 acre. To a large extent, the shape and size of a wet rice field is determined by natural conditions. Wet rice fields are rarely physically divided on inheritance. One field may be left to two or more heirs, in which case the division will be marked with stones or trees, but the field will continue to be cultivated as if it were one field.

<sup>10</sup>Irrigated fields are required for multiple cropping. This generally limits it to deltaic plains or valley floors because of the necessity for perfect levelling of the field surface. Terraces are a rather recent development in China proper. Terracing itself is a world wide phenomenon. Note for example the well-known rice terraces of Bali and South China, those of Peru where the Incas grew irrigated maize, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Japan, and many parts of Africa. In China today there are dry terraces in the north, and irrigated terraces in the south. Terracing may have begun as early as the Han empire, but were definitely in use by Sung times. (This is relatively late in terms of Chinese development.)



## EPIC LITERATURE OF THE LIZARD MEN

The large body of oral literature of the Lizard Men is rarely heard outside their own communities. In common with other peoples who do not use writing, their literature consists of a surprisingly large volume of poetry. The whole of the epic stories, if committed to writing, would fill some six two-inch thick volumes. Literate people may find it hard to believe that one person could memorize that volume of material, but it is quite possible. Admittedly, it might be somewhat difficult to memorize six volumes of prose, but oral literature takes the form of verse meant to be chanted or sung because that makes it easier to remember.

The intrepid adventurer, Leo'dore Las'same, has recorded and translated some of this voluminous poetry and intends in the near future to publish some selections. Meanwhile, here is one sample of a short epic poem.

### THE BALLAD OF NIKCHUK

Nikchuk brave hero from times of old,  
Wandered the land with his sword of gold.  
Righting wrongs his demeanour was bold  
Until he stood against Sharvan's Hold.  
A battle he fought at Sharvan's Hold.

The walls of the fort were hard and cold,  
Not easily would its ramparts fold.  
But Nikchuk stubborn would not be told  
And went to fight with demeanour bold.  
He charged to the fight, his heart so bold.

Nikchuk followed in his father's mould  
Fighting to the end at Sharvan's Hold.  
Fast the heads of his enemies rolled  
After facing Nikchuk's sword of gold.  
Hewn by the blade of that sword of gold.

Sundown came at last to Sharvan's Hold.  
Nikchuk looked around, his heart so cold.  
Dead were his foes who were not so bold.  
But some were left who honour had told  
Slay Nikchuk now, their honour had told.

So Nikchuk stood with his sword of gold  
Against his foes with demeanours bold.  
The fight was fierce and heads were rolled  
But none of them came from Nikchuk's mould.  
No warriors came from Nikchuk's mould.

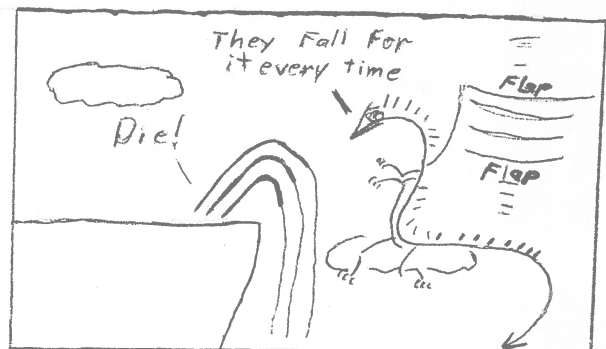
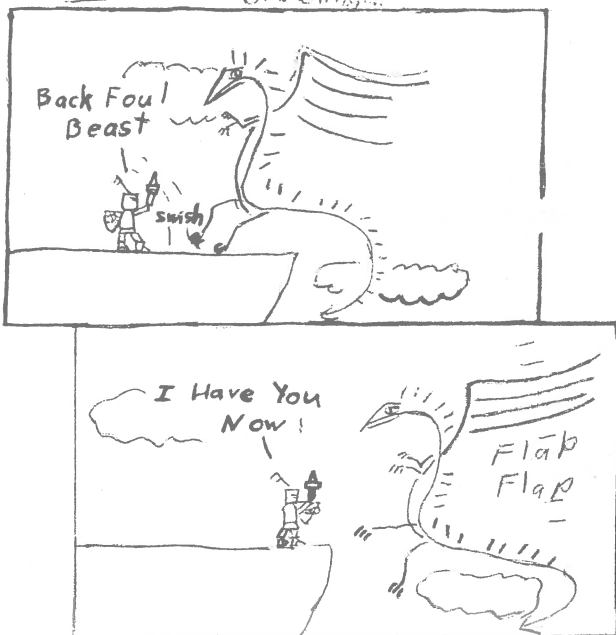
But one was left who honour had told  
Slay Nikchuk now in a fight so bold.  
They clashed with swords till the night grew old.  
The sword of steel and the sword of gold.  
Nikchuk fought with a sword of gold.

The battle raged till Summer grew cold,  
Not one falling, those heroes so bold.  
With hearts so great they could not cry "hold".  
Then each sword hit and two heads were rolled.  
Nikchuk fell down and his head was rolled.

That was the end of the hero bold,  
Who once had fought with his sword of gold.  
Too dim was he to ever be told  
Do not go up against Sharvan's Hold.  
Don't pick a fight against Sharvan's Hold.

Dragon tails

B. Welings.



## THE TOMB

This module was used for the AD&D tournament at Briscon in May 1991. For the tournament, the five pre-generated characters were chosen randomly by the players, who then decided themselves what to reveal about their characters to the other players. The only reference allowed to the players was the *Player's Handbook*. The DM should read out the Players' Introduction, and wait for the players to equip their characters. The players' map should also be given out at this point. Then the DM should read out the Employers' Speech. (DMs could also emphasize the shady characters who are hanging around.) The Legend of Tarn Torsil should only be read out if the players actively seek out information on the barrow or related legends. The players should be discouraged from taking along a baggage animal because of the difficulty of feeding it on the way.

The Plan of Events table then lists the weather and events to take place. The river can either be forded (if the ford, which is 500m upstream from where the players reach the river, is found) or swum across. The Kobold encounter should be a nuisance at worst. If no watch is placed, the characters will sleep soundly as the Kobolds steal any bright or pretty things. If guards are placed, and they are not surprised, they will hear rustling in the bushes. If the guards then make a commotion, the Kobolds will of course run away. If the guards do not notice the Kobolds (i.e. are surprised) or pretend to not notice them, the Kobolds might try some petty theft.

The deer encounter should be a mystery. The guards (there are sure to be watches at night by now) will hear rustling in the bushes, and that is all. In the morning, cloven hoof prints can be found near the camp. The DM should neither confirm nor deny any of the players' speculations as to what caused the hoof prints.

The barrow entrance is obvious and will be found easily. The players will be able to enter the barrow in two ways: through the front door, or by digging through the barrow. If they dig, the DM should ask them to note on a sketch map of the barrow where they are digging, and work out from there where the players will enter the tomb. The traps are straightforward, and can be detected by the thieves if they are seeking to do so, and if the Find Traps roll is successful. The traps cannot be set off by means such as prodding with a light pole. A heavy object on the other hand (such as the round eye on top of the front door) will set off the traps. The DM should describe the eye and its roundness, but apart from that should not give any hints of what it can be used for.

The Mummy encounter inside the first barrow chamber should be run as a normal encounter, with the Mummy activating if it is touched, or attacked in any way, or if its treasure is taken or touched. It is possible that the players will return to civilization after defeating the Mummy. (The secret door will only be found if the players search for it, but if they search for it, they should find it.) In that case, the business people will not believe that that is all of the treasure, and will want to know where the rest of it. The players should in that case be sent back to the barrow. It is also possible that they may do something strange like fake their own deaths, take the gold and run. In that case it is up to the DM as to how much further they want to run the scenario. This module does not give any advice for the possibility.

However, the players will almost certainly find the secret door and make their way down the tunnel. (They may also decide to dig down through the barrow chamber floor once they realise that the tunnel curves around to below the first chamber. In that case, if they break into the Wights' chamber during the day, the Wights will be powerless in the sunlight. But the players had better put a good distance between themselves and the Wights before sundown.) Again the traps are fairly straightforward. It is perfectly allowable for the DM to fudge dice rolls to stop all of the players dying before even reaching the Wights.

It is the Wight encounter that is the most lethal part of this module. The Wights have a movement rate of 12". That is, they will be faster than any encumbered player. Therefore, encumbered players will almost certainly be turned into Wights at this point. (The Wights activate if they are disturbed, or if anything in the room is disturbed in any way.) The DM then

has the option at this point of letting those players continue to run their character as a Wight. If this is done, the DM should remember that those Wights will be half strength Wights under the control of the Chief Wight (if the Chief Wight chooses to exert that control). In one of the games run at the tournament, three player characters became Wights, and actively plotted to turn the remaining two characters into Wights also. Part of the plan involved digging upwards (one of the players seemed to be a mining engineer) into the Mummy chamber. The Chief Wight vetoed any destruction of their home, upon which one of the player character Wights tried to instigate a rebellion against the Chief Wight. It failed.

It is also possible for the DM to have some orcs turn up (from the nearby orc encampment) to provide help to the surviving PCs, or to let the players whose characters have died continue to participate by playing the orcs.

All in all, the module is very difficult, and can have a 100% casualty rate. This information should not be given to the players beforehand. A post-mortem can be held afterwards, detailing how the players could have been successful. The easiest way for the players to loot the barrow and survive is to dig down through the Mummy chamber into the Wight chamber, grab as much treasure as they can carry, and run before sundown. Players could also kill the Wights by luring them outside into the sunlight, and cutting off their escape route. In the sunlight, Wights can be hurt by normal weapons, and do not have their level drain ability. (Characters with foresight could have silver weapons, notably silver sling bullets to use against the Wights even at night.) Wights could be trapped in the pits or under the deadfall, and thereby rendered harmless.

### **PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION**

You have been recruited by local business people to bring back treasure from a recently discovered barrow mound. You have the equipment already listed on your character sheets (and you are fully proficient in the weapons listed there). Your employers will give you more equipment if you choose. You may take anything on the equipment list free of charge. As well, you may choose to buy anything from the *Player's Handbook* equipment lists.

To find your way to the barrow mound, your party has been given one compass and one map. The map will help you to follow the tree blazes marked by the person who found the barrow.

### **EMPLOYERS' SPEECH**

Before you set off, we would like to make a few things quite clear. We have gone to a lot of trouble and expense to equip you, and we would like that to not be wasted. So, be careful, and cooperate. This is a dangerous venture - never forget that.

You'll be well paid, but the more treasure you return with, the better paid you'll be. We'll give each of you 10% of the total treasure that you return with. This means of course, that if some of you die, it will be us who will be better off, not those of you who survive.

Of course we trust you implicitly to bring back all of the treasure, and not keep any of it for yourselves. This is because we know you so well - where you hang out, who your families and friends are, and so on.

### **LEGEND OF TARN TORSIL** (only if players seek out this information)

Tarn Torsil was the greatest adventurer of his time. He was well known for his fighting prowess, and also for his ability to find gold and jewels in huge quantities. At one time he was adventuring with some comrades when they found the barrow of an old king of the Eastlands. They were able to enter the tomb, and found inside much treasure, but also many ghosts.

There was a fierce fight, in which Tarn Torsil's comrades were killed, and it seemed that the ghosts were invulnerable. Tarn Torsil, being a resourceful warrior, escaped the tomb with as

much treasure as he could carry. The ghosts killed the horses, and so he fled on foot, closely pursued.

Tarn Torsil would have easily escaped if it had not been for the treasure that he was carrying. Slowed down as he was, they gained steadily on him throughout the night. The ghosts were about to kill him as the dawn broke. When the sun's rays touched the ghosts, they and their weapons turned to dust.

### PLAN OF EVENTS

#### Travel to barrow:

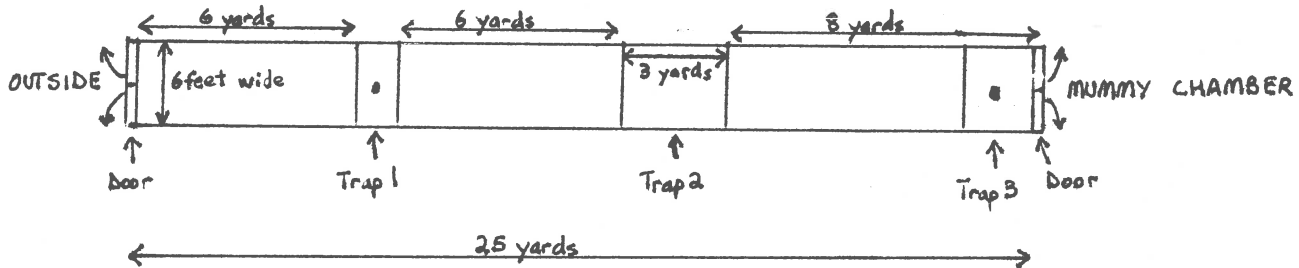
- Day 1: Fine weather.
- Day 2: Fine weather.  
Reach the river around midday.  
The ford is 500 yards upstream; the river is 20 yards wide and 4 yards deep.
- Day 3: Light drizzle, overcast all day.  
Kobold encounter at night.
- Day 4: Heavy rain.
- Day 5: Fine weather.  
Deer encounter at night.
- Day 6: Fine weather.
- Day 7: Fine weather.  
Reach the barrow in the evening.

#### Events at barrow:

- Day 8: Fine weather.
  - Day 9: Fine weather.
  - Day 10: Fine weather.
  - Day 11: Full moon.  
Fine weather.
  - Day 12: Fine weather.
  - Day 13: Rain at times.
  - Day 14: Rain most of the time.
  - Day 15: Fine weather.
  - Day 16: Fine weather.
  - Day 17: Fine weather.
  - Day 18: Fine weather.
  - Day 19: Fine weather.
  - Day 20: Overcast day.
  - Day 21: Overcast, light rain for most of the day.
  - Day 22: Fine weather.
  - Day 23: Fine weather.
  - Day 24: Fine weather.
  - Day 25: New moon.  
Fine weather.
  - Day 26: Heavy cloud in the late afternoon.
  - Day 27: Thunderstorm in the late afternoon.
  - Day 28: Thunderstorm in the late afternoon.
  - Day 29: Fine weather.
- GM's option:** if the players need the wind put up them, there is no direct sunlight when it is raining or overcast. On the other hand, bright moonlight might discourage wights.

Door 1 shows the outer door of the barrow with the eye above the door. (The eye is about 1.5 feet in diameter, and weighs about 666 lbs.) The door is locked and made of copper. The door open outwards, so the hinges are visible from the outside.

Inside the Barrow



The corridor is six feet wide and six feet high. The floor and walls are made of baked brick, and the ceiling is made of wood (above which is a layer of brick).

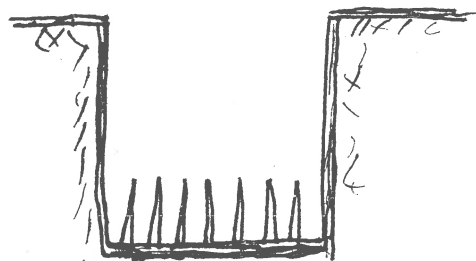
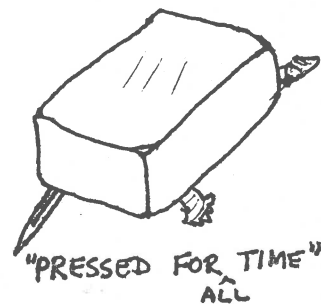
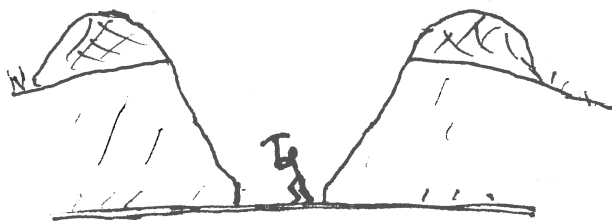
TRAP 1. A loose platform (position marked) has a 100 lb trigger. Spikes, five feet long, spring out from the wall (two on each side) at a height of three feet. They will impale anyone standing on the platform. Damage is 1D12. DEX save for half damage, if the PC attempts to avoid the spikes. (A statement such as "I freeze still" forfeits the save.)

TRAP 2. Indiana Jones collapsing floor. 250 lbs weight required (most likely two PCs, or the heavy one with a lot of equipment). PC at the edge gets a DEX save to avoid falling in. ("I leap forward" forfeits the save.) The pit is 10 feet deep (1D6 damage from the fall), with spikes embedded in the bottom (1D10 damage).

Now show the players the picture of Door 2.

TRAP 3. Deadfall. The stone block is six feet wide, two feet high and four feet deep (weighs about 15 000 lbs). Loose platform with a 100 lb trigger. 3D10 damage, with a DEX save to avoid it altogether.

The copper double doors are locked.



"Making a breakthrough"

## KOBOLDS

AC 7  
Move 6"  
HD 1/2      HP    2      2      3      4

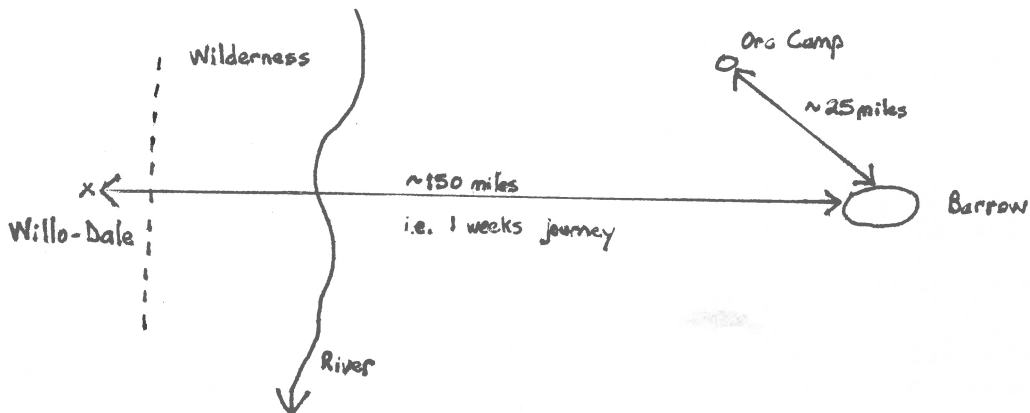
## ORCS

AC 6  
Move 9"  
HD 1  
HP

6	5		8	5	7
5	5		5	3	2
4	4		5	1	1
3	4		2	3	5

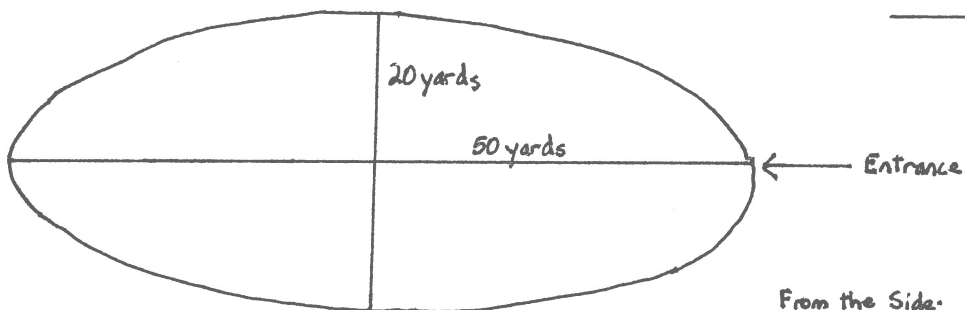
## MAPS AND KEYS

### DM's Map

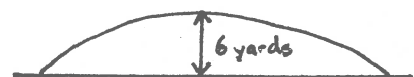


Give the players the map of the clearing when they reach the clearing. The barrow is covered with grass and shrubs, but no trees.

From Above:

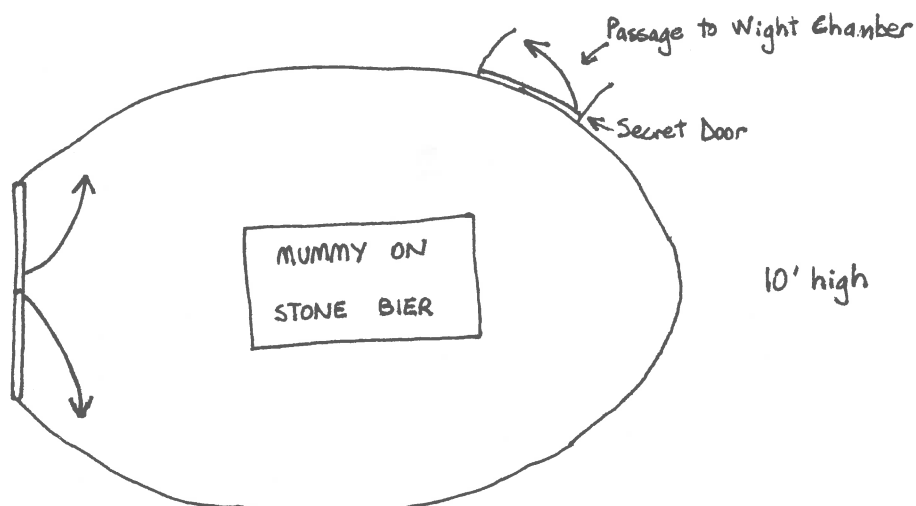


From the Side:



## Mummy Chamber

A figure in grave cloths is lying on the stone bier in the centre of the room.



### Treasure

Worn by Mummy:

Golden circlet/tiara/headband 70gp  
Left bracelet 50gp  
Right bracelet 50gp  
Collar/Pectoral 130gp  
All are solid, ornate gold

By right side:

Scabbarded sword, silver with gold inlay  
scabbard, carved gold inlaid hilt, good steel  
blade.  
Sword 100 gp value  
Scabbard 100 gp value

### Mummy

AC 3

Move 6"

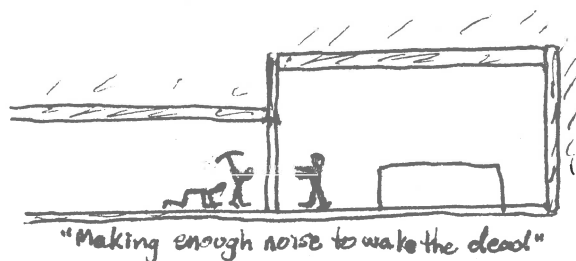
HD 6+3      HP    30

### Special attacks

**FEAR:** Save vs magic or run in fear for 1-4 rounds. (Humans save at +2) Note rule change from paralysis for player safety.

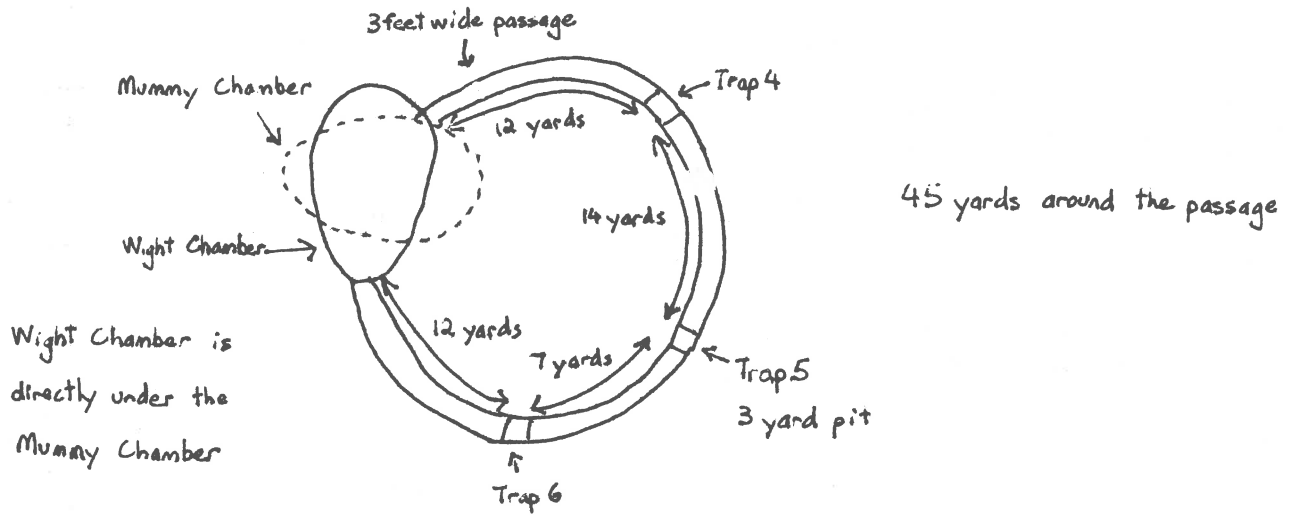
**MUMMY ROT:** All healing is at 10% normal rate. Fatal in 1-6 months. Caused by any hit.

Remember, it is slow and stupid, and completely fearless.

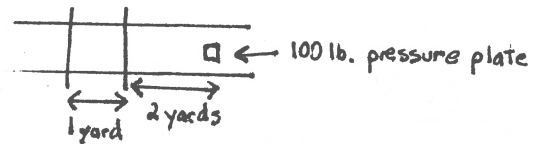


## Underground Passage

Visibility in the passage is six yards only, because of the curve. The downward slope of the passage is even throughout, and is 1 in 8.



TRAP 4. Loose platform triggers two portcullises to fall, one yard apart. 2D6 damage for anyone caught underneath a portcullis. DEX save to avoid. It is possible for a character to be trapped between the two portcullises.

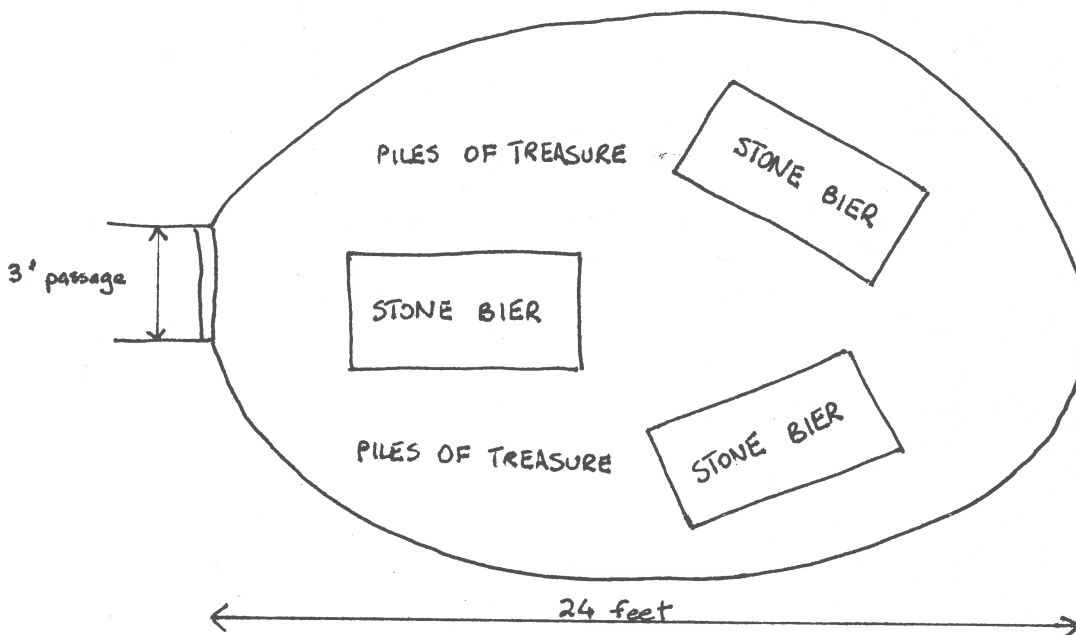


TRAP 5. Indiana Jones collapsing floor similar to Trap 2. 250 lbs to trigger. DEX save for characters at the edge to avoid falling in. This pit is 20 feet deep, so falling damage is 2D6. Spikes at the bottom do another 1D10 damage.

TRAP 6. 100 lb trigger plate looses six crossbow bolts from the wall, at a height of four to five feet. There is no save, and characters are hit by 1D6 for 2-5 points each. A crawling character would be missed by the bolts entirely.

Now show the players the picture of Door 3. It is made of copper and is unlocked. In fact, there is no lock. The wight chamber is ten feet high, and the distance between the roof of the wight chamber and the floor of the mummy chamber is ten feet.

Three figures wrapped in grave cloths are lying on the stone biers.





Wights

AC 5

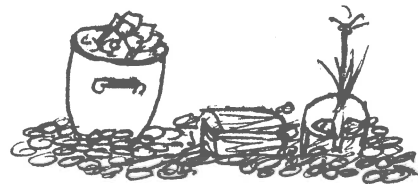
Move 12"

HD 4+3    HP    27    20    25

Damage 1-4 + level drain (first level characters who are drained die rather than become 0 level characters).

Treasure

The wights are lying on their stone biers, surrounded by piles and piles of gold and jewels. There is no need to detail most of this because even if the player characters all survive, they could not carry it away. If any of the PCs do manage to carry away some treasure (highly unlikely), make up the details.



**Wizard of Id**



## EQUIPMENT AND ENCUMBRANCE

Choose any equipment from this list. Encumbrance is in pounds (#).  
Each party also has one compass and one map (encumbrance negligible).

### Weapons

As listed on character sheets

### Armour

Chain	30#
Helmet	4.5#
Helmet, great	10#
Leather	15#
Padded	10#
Ring	24#
Scale	40#
Shield	5#
Studded leather	20#

### Clothing

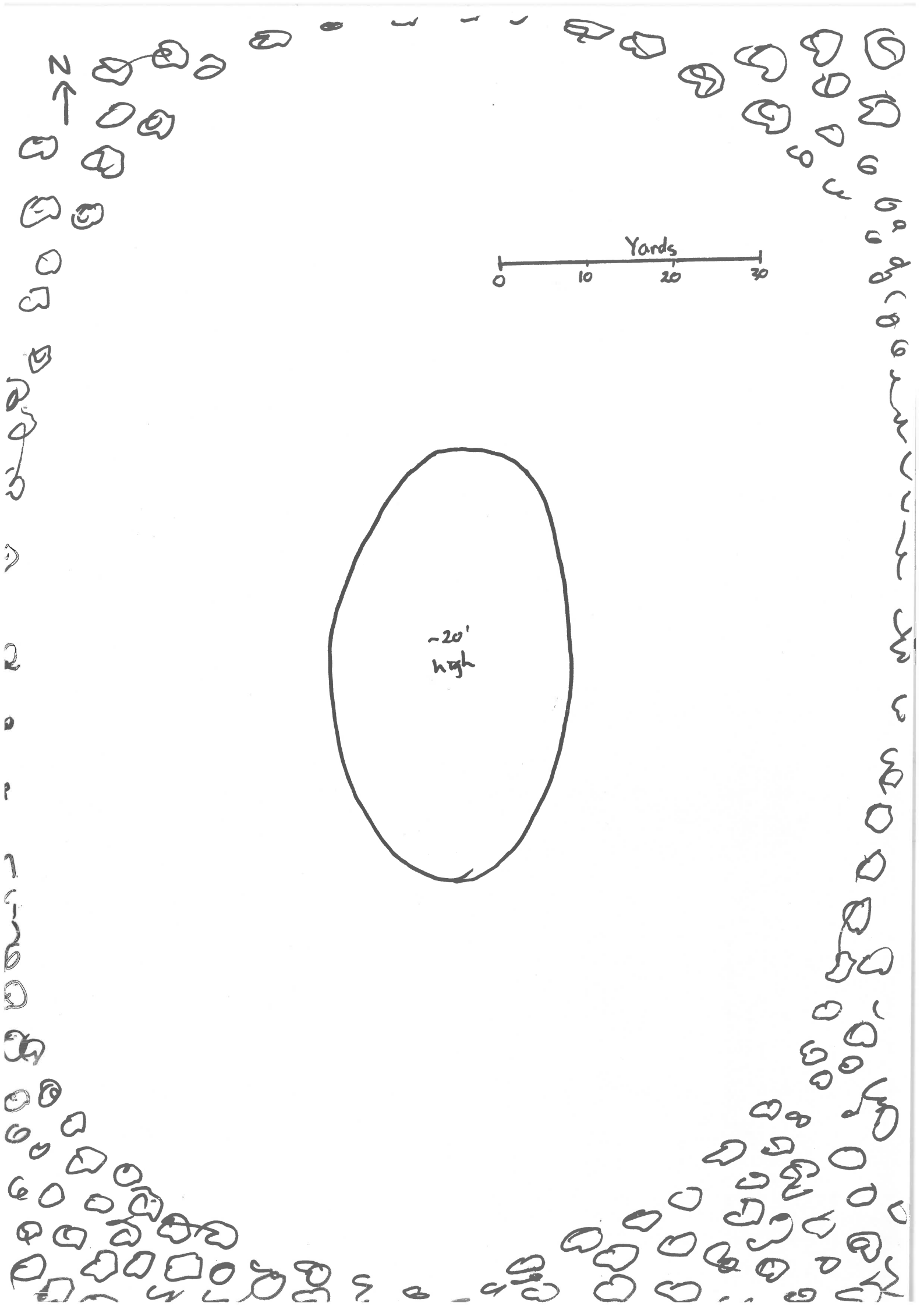
Any varies

### Rations

5 weeks iron rations 7.5# per week

### Miscellaneous

Backpack	2#
Blanket	5#
Box	varies
Candle	negligible in small quantities
Chest	varies
Crowbar, 6'	15#
Cutlery and cooking gear	6#
Lantern	6#
Mallet, one handed	5#
Mirror, large metal	5#
Oil	2# per flask
Pick	7.5#
Pole, 10'	10#
Pouch	negligible
Quiver	3#
Rope	1.5# per 10'
Sack	varies
Scroll case	2.5 to 5#
Shovel	5#
Sledge hammer	10#
Spike	1#
Tinder box	negligible
Torch	2.5#
Water skin	5# when full



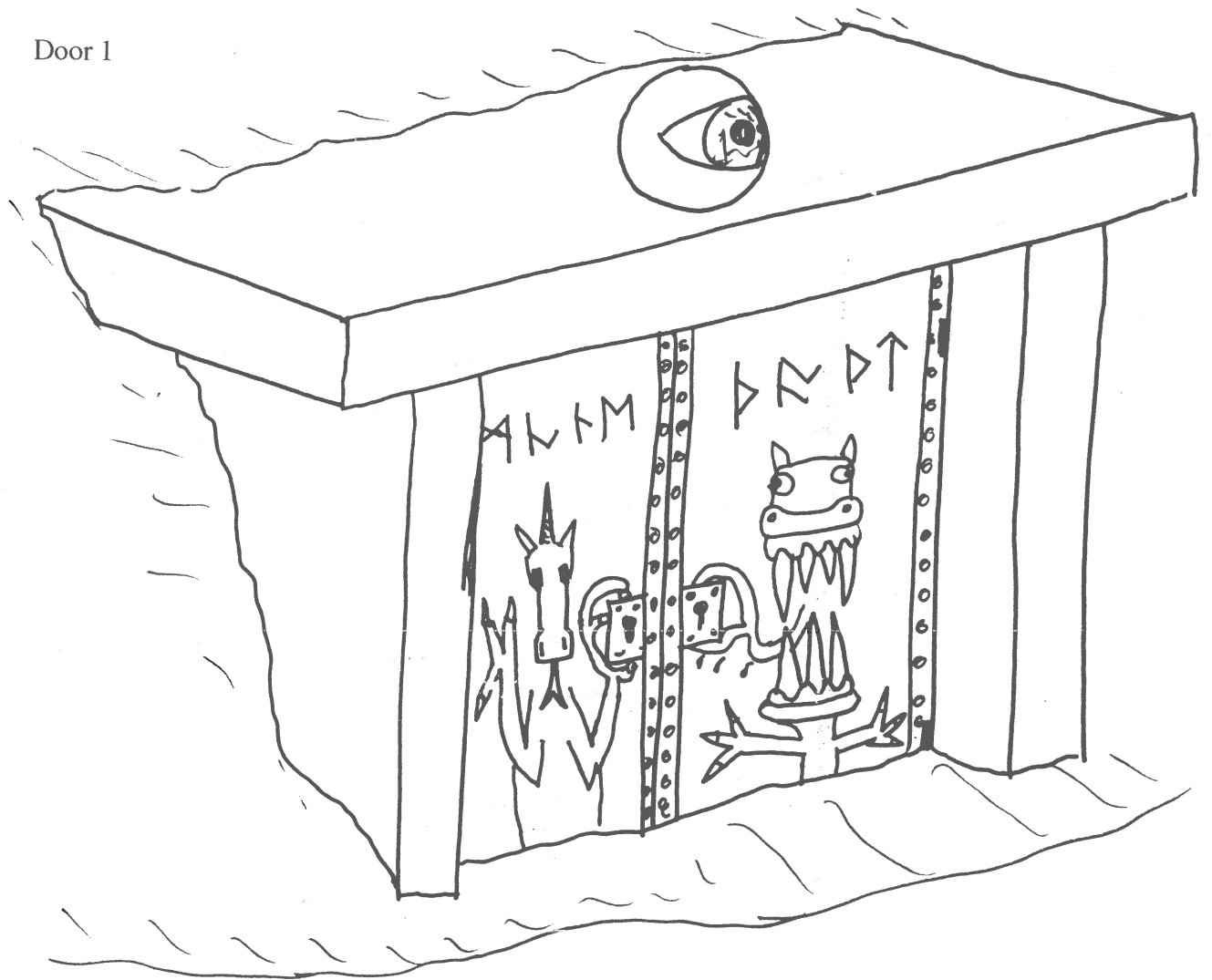
N

Yards

0 10 20 30

-20'  
high

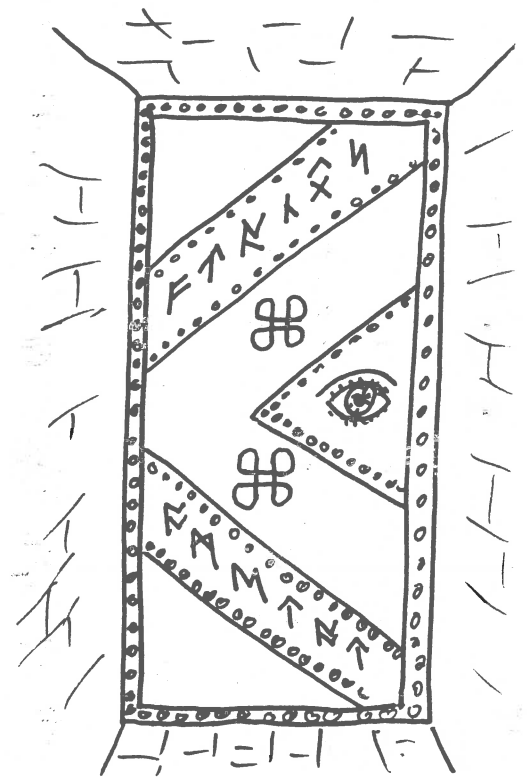
Door 1



Door 2



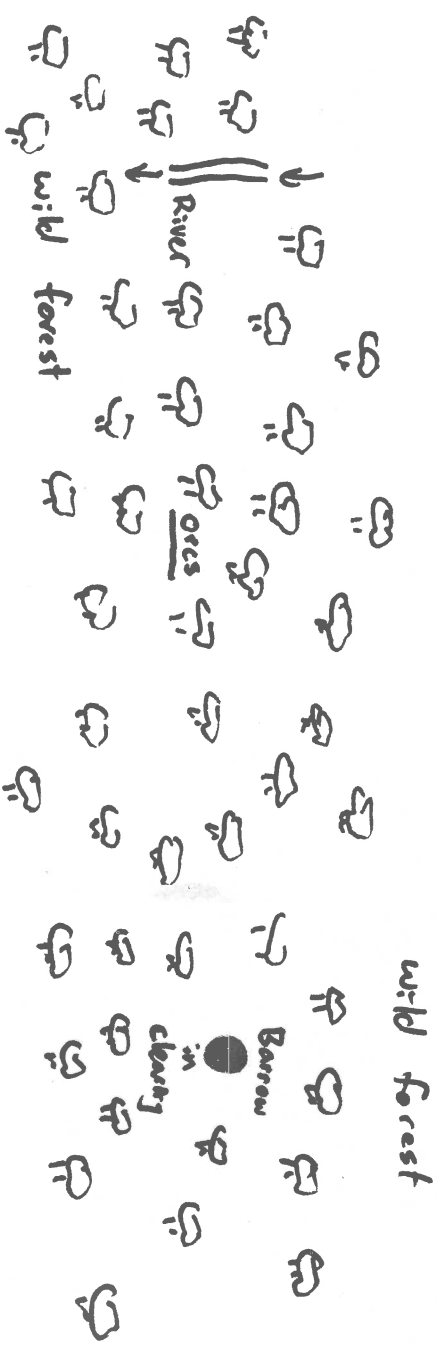
Door 3



# John Rangers Barrow And How It May Be Found

North  
↑

ores were sighted on the journey  
no ore-camps were found.



The path is marked by tree blazes  
and should not be too difficult  
to follow during daylight.  
The journey should take about a week.



This map, in payment for services rendered, is  
given by John the Ranger of Westvale

FRW

Willo-  
Dale  
Lost  
farms

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

THIEF LEVEL 1

STR 14 +20# weight allowance  
 INT 12 open doors 1-2  
 WIS 9 bend bars/lift gates 7%  
 DEX 16 -2 to AC  
 CON 15 +1 to hit with missile weapons  
 CHA 14

HP 7  
 AC \_\_\_\_\_

Thief Skills: pick pockets 30%; open locks 30%; find/remove traps  
 20%; move silently 15%; hide in shadows 10%; hear noise 10%;  
 climb walls 85%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: 19 years  
 Height: 5'2"  
 Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Money:  
 Gold pieces: 16  
 Silver pieces: 51  
 Copper pieces: 90

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance

Dagger (2) 2  
 Short sword 3  
 Thieves' Tools 0

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DM COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

THIEF LEVEL 1

STR 14 +20# weight allowance  
 INT 12 open doors 1-2  
 WIS 9 bend bars/lift gates 7%  
 DEX 16 -2 to AC  
 CON 15 +1 to hit with missile weapons  
 CHA 14

HP 7  
 AC \_\_\_\_\_

Thief Skills: pick pockets 30%; open locks 30%; find/remove traps  
 20%; move silently 15%; hide in shadows 10%; hear noise 10%;  
 climb walls 85%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: 19 years  
 Height: 5'2"  
 Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Movement**

12" 9" 6" 3"  
 55 90 125 170

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance

Dagger (2) 2  
 Short sword 3  
 Thieves' Tools 0

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

THIEF LEVEL 1

STR 13 +10# weight allowance  
INT 14 open doors 1-2  
WIS 12 bend bars/lift gates 4%  
DEX 17 -3 to AC  
CON 16 +2 to hit with missile weapons  
CHA 8

HP 7  
AC \_\_\_\_\_

Thief Skills: pick pockets 35%; open locks 35%; find/remove traps 20%; move silently 20%; hide in shadows 15%; hear noise 10%; climb walls 85%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: 17 years  
Height: 5'7"  
Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Money:  
Gold pieces: 8  
Silver pieces: 39  
Copper pieces: 58

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance  
Dagger (3) 3  
Long sword 6  
Thieves' Tools 0

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DM COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

THIEF LEVEL 1

STR 13 +10# weight allowance  
INT 14 open doors 1-2  
WIS 12 bend bars/lift gates 4%  
DEX 17 -3 to AC  
CON 16 +2 to hit with missile weapons  
CHA 8

HP 7  
AC \_\_\_\_\_

Thief Skills: pick pockets 35%; open locks 35%; find/remove traps 20%; move silently 20%; hide in shadows 15%; hear noise 10%; climb walls 85%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: 17 years  
Height: 5'7"  
Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Movement**

12" 9" 6" 3"  
45 80 115 160

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance  
Dagger (3) 3  
Long sword 6  
Thieves' Tools 0

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_





PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIGHTER LEVEL 1

STR 17  
INT 10  
WIS 9  
DEX 17 -3 to AC  
CON 18 +2 to hit with missile weapons  
CHA 9

HP 13  
AC \_\_\_\_\_

+1 to hit, +1 to damage (strength bonus)  
+50# weight allowance  
open doors 1-3, bend bars/lift gates 13%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: 16 years  
Height: 5'9"  
Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Money:  
Gold pieces: 16  
Silver pieces: 19  
Copper pieces: 78

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance

Dagger 1  
Long sword 6  
Spear 5  
Short bow 5  
Arrows (24) 5

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DM COPY

CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIGHTER LEVEL 1

STR 17  
INT 10  
WIS 9  
DEX 17 -3 to AC  
CON 18 +2 to hit with missile weapons  
CHA 9

HP 13  
AC \_\_\_\_\_

+1 to hit, +1 to damage (strength bonus)  
+50# weight allowance  
open doors 1-3, bend bars/lift gates 13%

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: 16 years  
Height: 5'9"  
Alignment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Movement**

12" 9" 6" 3"  
85 125 155 200

EQUIPMENT # Encumbrance

Dagger 1  
Long sword 6  
Spear 5  
Short bow 5  
Arrows (24) 5

Total Encumbrance \_\_\_\_\_





# BATTLETOADS

For 3 to 5 players

1. Each player starts with an army of ten toads (make your own counters).
2. To set up play, players take turns to set up one toad at a time anywhere they choose on the board (but not on a space already occupied by a toad or by an obstacle).
3. Play starts. Each player's turn consists of:
  - (a) Choosing which toad will be moved.
  - (b) Stating direction of movement.
  - (c) Rolling a die (d6) for distance.
4. Landing on a toad splats the one underneath (even if it's your own). It is removed from the board.
5. A toad landing on an obstacle (e.g. lawnmower, cacti) goes splat. It is removed from the board.
6. Toads leaping into the wall bounce off. See the diagram.
7. Play continues until only one army is left. That army is declared the winner.
8. There is no escape from the battleground.

