

This is H I D D E N S H A L L O W S 1 ---perpetrated upon an as  
 yet unsuspecting world by Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Read-  
 ing, Berks., RG2 7PW. This, the propaganda sheet of Dilettante Dungeons  
 Inc., currently goes hand in hand with kindly Bryan Ansell's Ballburster  
 or whatever we have democratically decided to call the thing...  
 AC=8½ (Paper Armour), Print Run 180'/turn. Staples do 1 point damage each.

"I say, o Patriarch, what is that splashing sound? What art thou doing behind that tree?"

"Making holy water, my moronic son."

"Zounds! Is this what men call passing a miracle?"

"Hush, for now must I tell David Row some exciting things to do with holy water..."

"Adjust thy clothing first, o reverence. Thy alb is caught in thy Y-fronts."

HOLY WATER can be used to "anoint" weapons for use against Undead etc., causing them to function as silver weapons. Only a cleric can do this; he requires half a turn (5 melee rounds) to apply the holy water to one weapon. A vial contains enough to anoint 1 mace, 2 swords, 4 daggers/arrows, and so on. With each hit by an anointed weapon there is a 10% noncumulative chance that the water's virtue will be lost; it evaporates in any case after two full turns. Restrict rich clerics to (say) a dozen vials...

Alternatively or in addition, how about a HOLY BARRIER? This takes a cleric one full turn to set and uses up 1 vial holy water. Result is a sanctified line up to 10' long (another turn & another vial for each extra 10'. The line need not be straight), which dispels\* or turns away Undead in the absence of the Cleric. Eg. if barrier is 4th level (set by 4th level cleric) skeletons crossing it vanish with faint pops; zombies and ghouls flee; wights, wraiths, mummies may be turned away, but have saving throws of 8, 6 & 4 respectively (on 2D6---compare with Clerics vs. Undead table); spectres and higher will glide disdainfully across. The barrier evaporates after (5 + ½ level of Cleric) turns. Undead three levels higher than the setting Cleric may destroy the barrier by thinking rude thoughts at it for one full turn: in the example, the spectre could do this. If four or more levels higher they destroy it by mere proximity.

Speaking of clerics: if they must recover spells I'd rather they did it by some simple rule-of-thumb instead of another flippin' table. How about a spell recovery chance (basic) of WISDOM + 3xLEVEL %... maximum attainable being 3 x wisdom, say. Then halve the recovery chance after each re-use and drop it to zero for that spell after a failure. To be awkward, allow a delay of 1-6 turns before the spells actually return... If you really want to boost 1st level clerics, give them this basic chance of acquiring a Cure Light Wounds (only!) spell: so a 1st level cleric with wisdom 15 would have 18% chance of getting such a spell, 9% chance of recovering it and using it again, and so on.

DOCTOR DUCK'S PEPTONIZED PILLS do heal, but also cause allergic reaction which may overcome the medicinal effect. The pills come in several strengths: D4, D6, D8 etc. The appropriate die is rolled twice, once for healing and once for damage: effects are simultaneous. Thus the D4 pill can heal or damage by up to 3 points, or, quite probably, do nothing. Nasty DM's can load probabilities nastily (D6 healing, D12 damage); nice DM's can reverse this.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK is induced by certain "poisons" whose effects vary widely. Saving throw for such poisons is as vs. wands. Damage taken if save not made is 2 to the power of a D6 roll: I cause terror by producing a backgammon doubling cube, whose faces read 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64. Fun for young and old alike.

INDECISION INC: For those too lazy to choose a sex for characters, my fifth-level Idiot suggests a throw similar to the handedness throw: D6 and D12 together.

-----  
 \* OED spelling. Is "dispell" an Americanism or just another Gygaxism?

If the D12 comes higher, the character is male; if the D6 is higher, she is female. (This distribution should please Gary Gygax) Equal numbers on the dice indicate homosexuality (Oops, "gaiety") with odd numbers male, even numbers female ---UNLESS both dice come up six. In this case---you guessed it---the character is a hermaphrodite and completely immune to spells or magic items causing change of sex. Gosh, wow.

Characters who have no particular GOD, and yet are not professed agnostics or atheists, are automatically held to worship Ard, god of Apathy. (AC=9, 200 hits) Ard appears, if at all, as a middle-aged man in carpet-slippers, sleeping in an immensely comfy chair. If successfully prayed for he will be 3D4 melee rounds late. His appearance causes apathy so intense that all within 50' (excepting the supplicant) who fail to save vs. magic will simply lose all interest in things until removed from the zone of influence, or until Ard departs (and even then the effect will persist for 1-4 turns). Anyone hitting Ard in any way, including missiles and attempted spells, must save vs. magic or be struck down by similar apathy. Ard only awakens if strongly provoked (DM's decision). Should he do so, all persons within 100' must save again vs. apathy, after which Ard vanishes at once. (Normally he remains for 1 turn and thereafter has 30% noncumulative chance/turn of vanishing.) He is often accompanied (50%) by a stuffed sheep. Persons touching this for the first time must save vs. magic or sleep for 2-24 full turns; thereafter they can handle it without harm. If lifted and pointed the sheep exerts its primary power of causing sleep as per sleep spell in 20 levels of monsters at once (20 x 1st level, 5 x 4th level etc.) Frequency of such use: once per hour. The sheep also has one power from Table I and one from Table III of Artifact powers in ELDRITCH WIZARDRY. There is a 5% cumulative chance of its vanishing after use of the primary power.

Anyone praying successfully to Ard is excommunicated from the cult of Apathy. He must now choose a god, and can no longer be an agnostic or atheist.

Speaking of silver weapons, which we did last page---I assume DM's make allowance for wear and tear on this very soft metal. My current system involves allotting hits to such weapons (at the moment, 12 for daggers and 20 for swords) and using Newton's Third Law: the weapon takes the same damage as what it hits (excepting Thieves' "striking silently from behind" bonuses). So Blog the Barbarian smites the Wight with his new silver sword; both sword and wight take 1-8 points of damage. After 20 points, the sword breaks. Current prices: daggers 50 GP and swords 150GP. Possible  $\frac{1}{3}$  trade-in value for ruined weapons...

THE ROD OF TRANSFER (3D10 charges) is handy if you're wounded. When you strike with it, 1-8 hits are drained from him and passed to you at a reduction ratio of 1-4 (throw D4 for each strike... you always get 1 HP, though). It's clumsy---hit as for sword-1---and you may hold it be the wrong end at first, which means ...oh dear. You can't drain more hits than a monster has, of course.

By way of variety I've added a number of substances in the Green Slime/Grey Ooze/Ochre Jelly category. Explorers of my dungeon have established certain details---Red Gunge burns fiercely, Brown Goo is sticky, Blue Rot stains weapons mysteriously and Mauve Blobs shouldn't be poked---but are these primary or secondary characteristics? What terrors lie in reserve? Is the behaviour of Puce Paste as sporadic and unpredictable as it seems? What of Pink Blancmange, White Froth and Orange Sediment? Who knows? But ignorance of the lore is no excuse.

PILLAGE AND THEFT DEPT.... A monster from Fletcher Pratt's Well of the Unicorn is the SEA DEVIL. AC=5 2 dice Move 90' No. Appearing 1-6. No treasure. Sea devils are reptilian, seeming from a distance to be small men or orcs. Their touch causes instant insanity curable by REMOVE CURSE or contact with the blood of the particular SD responsible. (Save vs. insanity as vs. magic in this case.) Being resilient, SD's bleed (when struck by point or edge) only with a probability of 10% per point of damage taken ON THAT PARTICULAR BLOW. (No difficulty in tapping a dead one, of course.) SD's are theoretically found only at sea, but this is unlikely to deter a nasty DM (the sort who decrees that the blood loses virtue when it falls on the floor) who wants them: "The door opens: you see an expanse of water. Rising from it and taking you completely by surprise are..."

H I D D E N    S H A L L O W S 2, like its predecessor, emanates from fervid  
 Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7PW... This  
 issue is roughly aimed at Trollcrusher 3, but may yet miss. (Low dexterity.)

VISIONS OF THE NAMELESS SEER---whose wondrous crystal ball is certain proof that among the Wise still lingers the Old Art of bionics.

"The chill Ice Lane rings divers inner regions of the First Deep, persisting smooth and unthawed despite certain depredations of the western orcs, who are constrained to make cool the wine of Croggleheim their master. On a time I espied a band of freebooters led by the lusty warrior-maiden Madeline Steeleye (who in other planes and incarnations hight Joe Nicholas)... traversing the Lane's westerly reaches, they were dismayed by a creaking, a groaning, a crashing from the North. They beheld a ship, full-rigged yet no more than five-and-twenty feet in length, which thrust through the ice and shattered it from wall to wall, revealing dismal waters below. (Behind this ship it seemed that the ice returned, though with what thickness none knew.) It came on them as fast as a man might run, and, as ever, Madeline would fain have fled: yet the dice of Fate decreed that southward now appeared a Scourer, sweeping the Lane as is the wont of that gelatinous breed. Methinks men in such plight were wise to drive spikes into the walls, cling to them, and mayhap let the eldritch ship pass by to challenge the Scourer as it would; yet suddenly bold, Madeline commanded that stones be hurled and arrows loosed, whereat a wonder was beheld by all: substantially though that vessel weighed upon the ice, to missiles it was as smoke through which they passed unhindered! Others of the band now counselled that the Scourer be attacked right promptly with fire and sword; Madeline, ever slow to learn a lesson, flung herself incontinently upon the demon vessel and passed through even as the arrows had done. Methought there came a great splashing and oaths not of the most ladylike, ere this seeming was eclipsed by a commercial break..."

AN ASIDE: Perusing David Row's piece in the last issue, the sage Figgis was heard to murmur "He who bewaileth the lack of room in which to hold forth, let him throw layout to the winds: yea, let him even single-space his words of wisdom. Verb.sap."

The meaning of this cantrip is obscure.

VISION THE SECOND---

"To remotest Coventrie, horror-filled city of legend, I bent my gaze a moon ago. A convocation was there, of things shunned by common folk; on every side befell strange doings scarce to be named. There cruel and whimsical clerks of Oxenford did for their sport command unhallowed tests and combats... ensample, one Balrog pitted against a most villainous swarm of fivescore hamsters\*, the which it slew in threes by stamping, in twos by whip and sword: yet when in that bloody arena the final hamster had passed to some new incarnation, 'twas seen that but three smidgeons of vitality remained to the daemonic one. This Balrog, I do surmise, was no spawn of Eldritch Wizardry. Meantime exalted Hartley Patterson, though stricken by recent journeyings to the One Tun tavern (where the vile outlander D.Langford engaged him in converse yet failed to spy his true name), accepted with a lordly air the powers of high, middle and low justice in matters concerning the dungeons of next year's Easter Convocation; upon him falls the not intolerable burden of enticing novices into dank caverns and pits of his own devising, there to slaughter them by divers entertaining means."

(\*HAMSTERS: AC=10; 1 HP; Attack=1 point damage; small; furry; look like ordinary hamsters; are ordinary hamsters, though in strangely psychotic mood. Next week: Lemmings, sudden death to inshore swimmers!)

NEWS FROM BEYOND THE RIM--- For those in the dark, the Second Vision appears to refer to the 1977 Easter SF convention. The 1978 Eastercon will be at Heathrow Airport (the Heathrow Hotel): supporting membership, which brings you all progress reports and the lavish Convention Booklet, is £2 (deductible from attendance cost). Cheques to Skycon at 5 Aston Close, Pangbourne, Berks. Advertising in PR's---contact me.

INSANITY--- Well, what do you do when someone flips? A bit boring, after all, if the victim merely sits around being comatose. I'm trying a system whereby, whenever I'm feeling bored as DM to a loony-carrying party, I roll a D20 to find impartially what said maniac will do next. (Wugga-wugga-wugga!)

<u>Die Roll</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>
1 - 8	Catatonia. (No movement whatever. Attempts to adopt foetal position.)
9	Attack with insane strength, HIT+3 DAM+2. High chance of breaking bonds.
10-11	Attack savagely, HIT+1 DAM+1.
12-13	Attack feebly, HIT-1. (Bonuses on insane attack are in addition to existing ones. Attack made on randomly chosen person nearby. No spells; no striking silently from behind; no missiles. At DM's option, the loony may use <u>insane cunning</u> to conceal his murderous intention.)
14-15	Seizures---25% chance each turn. Otherwise apparently normal. Seizures mean spasms and loud cries: will attract wandering monster (50%) unless gagged. Will do self damage (1-4 points) unless bound.
16	"The horrors". Incontinent flight in random direction, bursting through doors with +3 on door die so DOORS 1-5 becomes 1-6(2); 1-2 becomes 1-5.
17-19	Return to normal for 3D6 turns before next check. 2% chance of complete spontaneous cure.
20	<u>Contagion</u> . Symptoms in this period are anything which occurs to the DM. There is a 10% noncumulative chance (each turn) of the victim emitting a psychotic blast, max range 20': nearest person must save vs. magic or become insane for 3D6 turns (3% chance of permanence).

Gibbering, drooling, rolling of eyes, twiddling of thumbs, cries of "Yngvi is a louse!" and (worst of all) manic production of fanzines may be added to the syndrome according to the DM's whim, in conjunction with any of the above. Hahahahaaaaaaah!

MISCELLANEOUS--- Well, yes, I admit it: I invented the Cursed Ring of Bladder Weakness. It cannot be removed except by Remove Curse spell, or by amputation. The DM merely throws D6--as often, say, as for wandering monster checks---and the ring's doomed wearer must, if a 1 is rolled, seek a toilet within 2 turns (cost several GP ---not all dungeons have toilets, mind you, but mine does, and great was the confusion when one day a skeleton emerged from one) OR risk leaving the party in order to urinate unseen (50% chance of wandering monsters) OR perform in their sight and lose a charisma point temporarily---sufficiently low charisma, of course, will mean dissociation from the party. Attempts at heroic self-control are all too likely to lead to rusty armour, etc... A wearer of the Ring of Flatulence will find it impossible to surprise monsters. Such persons will endlessly seek a Manual of Personal Hygiene...

Now this is more or less the sort of thing which Peter Roberts complains about. Too jokey; too silly; shatters that old sense of wonder. But D&D is only a game, its sole purpose to stimulate amusement and interest. Should players dislike anachronism and silliness, a good DM will be careful to maintain a proper level of purity in his game; when the party is minded for high-spirited folly, they should be given all the silliness they can take. The serious and silly games don't mix well---but keep them separate and everyone can have fun, as in Hartley Patterson's two kinds of dungeon.

THE END OF THE PAGE seems rather close. I'll finish with a few random rolls from my List Of Strange Irrelevant Things To Be Found In Dungeon Rooms...

1-6 odd socks; stuffed vole; stack of remaindered copies of "I Married A Balrog" (which appears to be an orcish slush novel); glass eye; Secret Code manual (in secret code); a left clog; clepsydra; paper bag containing 1-12 boiled sweets; jade platypus; pointed stick; glass hammer; sleeping fox; coupon giving "TWO Copper Pieces Off Your Next Purchase of BATSBLUD"; Hieronymous machine; seagull feathers; flat iron; stalactites; dead parrot (nailed to perch); hammock; 1-8 cardamoms; flypaper; one earplug; origami merkin; haggis; sign saying "Positively The End Of This Issue".