

Though many of those reading this have played and know all about the game of Dungeon, this is being written under the assumption that many of you have never even heard of the game.

This is intended for distribution with the 47<sup>th</sup> mailing of Minneapa,<sup>1</sup> with an additional 50 copies to be given away at DisCon<sup>2</sup> and other gatherings.

The history of Dungeon is brief. It began when, in early February of this year, Blue Petal<sup>3</sup> invented the game. It was first played on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at the home of Denny Lien.<sup>4</sup> It was the night of a meeting of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society (MinnStf), and was played by Richard Tatge, Martin Schafer, and I. It lasted about twenty minutes, ending abruptly as the party was killed by twenty orcs.

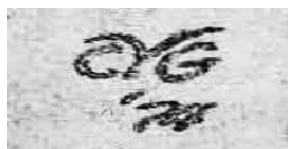
Since then, there have been numerous descents, not only in Blue's maze, but in the eight others that have sprung up since then. Descents have lasted as long as thirteen hours, and involved as many as ten people.

However, since there are so many different mazes, run by so many different people, there are bound to be many discrepancies and idiosyncrasies among them. Because of this, it would be nearly impossible to publish a rule book truly representative of all mazes. Therefore, I am writing this with the rules to my maze alone; some of the rules herein stated do not apply to other mazes, just as some rules in other mazes do not apply in mine.

This booklet is not meant to be a rule book to my maze as much as it is meant to use the rules of my maze as an example for those who wish to make mazes of their own, but do not live in the Twin Cities area.

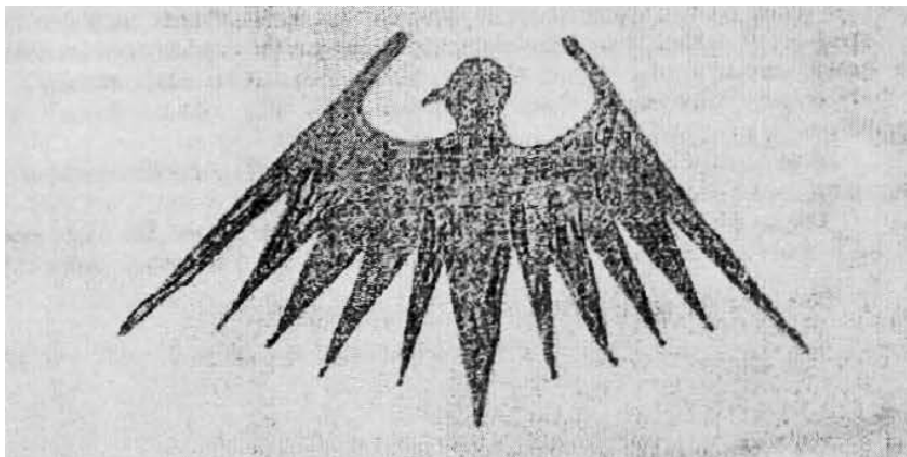
I would like to hear from anyone interested in making a maze, or anyone with a question, or any other feedback. All LoCs<sup>5</sup> are welcome and will be answered.

Read and enjoy.



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# an introduction

The basic idea of the game, for those totally unfamiliar with it, is this: the players form a party composed of warriors, priests, and wizards. The party starts out on the surface, then enters one of the castles and descends into the dungeon. Once in the dungeon, the party moves from chamber to chamber, accumulating treasure and making a map as they progress.

To procure treasure from the chambers, the party must battle its guardians. For killing these guardians, and for performing other valiant deeds, they obtain karma.<sup>6</sup> As treasure and karma accumulate, a party member may exchange them to move up in rank.<sup>7</sup> This may be done only between descents, though.

Unlike other games, the characters in this game are kept from descent to descent, eliminated only if killed or no longer wanted. A player may have more than one persona, but this may tend to make matters confusing.<sup>8</sup>

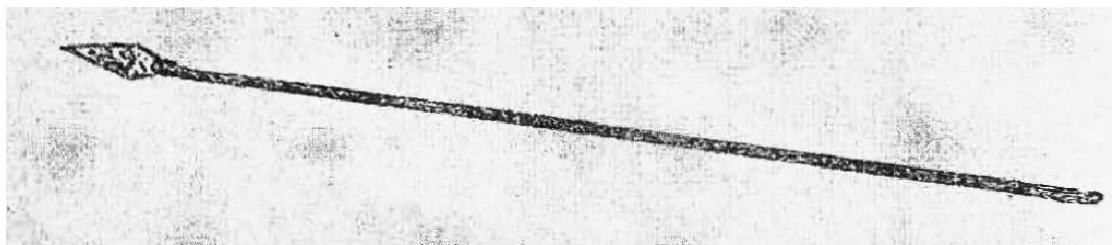
There is no object to the game, per se, other than to see who can move up the highest, collect the most treasure, etc.

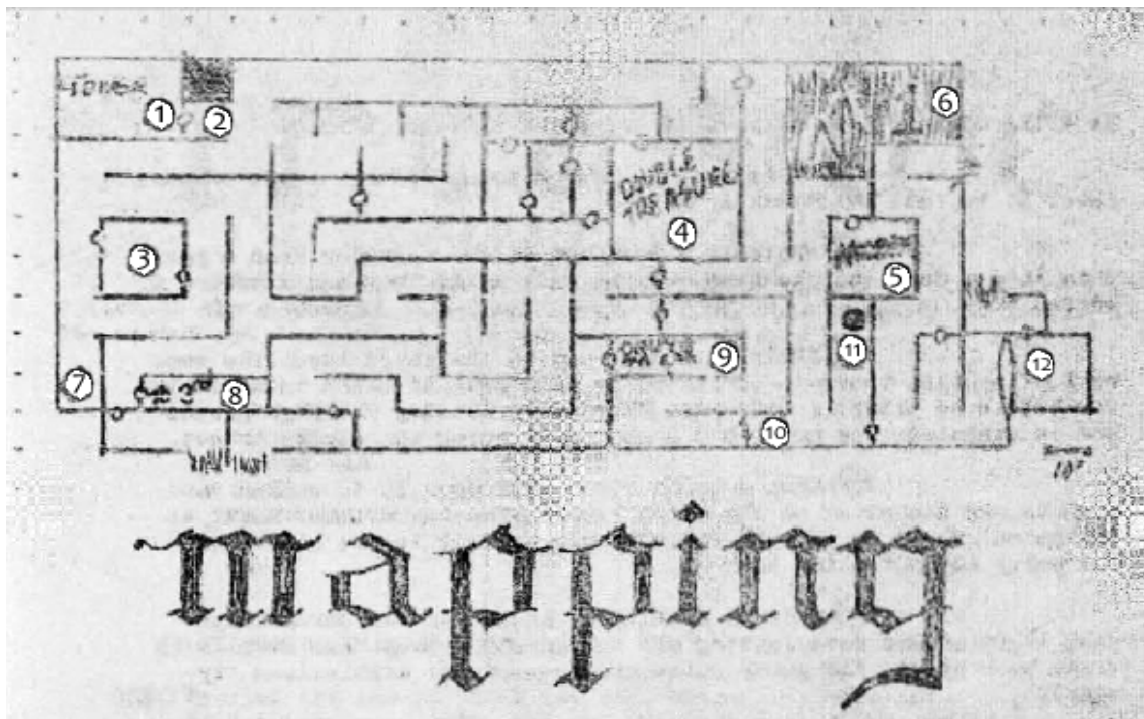
SETTING UP THE DESCENT: The first matter to be taken care of is choosing personas. It is important to keep a reasonable ratio of warriors, priests, and wizards. Warriors should comprise the bulk of the party, as they do the heavy work. There should be at least one wizard, but only one or two are needed. Wizards light the battles by exploding light balls:<sup>9</sup> if this is not done, the party is at a battle disadvantage. Wizards also use other spells, but there is a limited number of spells to be found, and they can be handled only by a couple wizards. Since priests heal wounds and also fight, they are also important. One priest for every three or four warriors is the ratio found to be the most effective.

Next on the agenda is the buying of supplies (see: SUPPLIES) and weapons (see: WEAPONS).

Once this is done, all that need be done is for each player to put all the necessary information down on persona sheets.

The party is then ready to descend.





One need not be a cartographer to create or map the Dungeon. Above is a piece of a model Dungeon, to illustrate how a maze is mapped. Mazes are made on quadrille<sup>10</sup> (4 squares to the inch) paper, on note-book sizes sheets. Each ½' represents ten feet.

1. This is the tower, the link between the surface and the Dungeon. Towers may extend far into the various levels of the Dungeon, or to just the first.
2. The □ on the wall is a secret door. When reaching a secret door, the party does not know if there is a chamber or a corridor behind it. If it is a chamber, there is always something behind the door, waiting. If it is a corridor, the gamesmaster<sup>11</sup> rolls two dice. If doubles<sup>12</sup> are rolled, there is something.
3. This is a chamber. Any area that has a "C" in it is a chamber. When a party enters a chamber, it is told the dimensions, if and where there are any other entrances, what they have to fight, and any peculiarities of the chamber. Only after the battle is the treasure rolled for.
4. The words, "DOUBLE TREASURE," mean that this chambers treasure is rolled for twice. This is one of the peculiarities spoken of in 3.
5. The word, "MAMMALS," in this chamber means that the guardians of this chambers treasure are on the Mammals table. This

is still another type of peculiarity found in some chambers.

6. This area is just a place to keep track of what level it is, and which way is North.
7. This is a dead-end in the corridor. When a party runs into a dead-end, the same roll is made as if they had opened a secret door.
8. This is a stairway to the third level. The same roll of doubles-there-is-something is made here. If there is something, the battle is slightly different. Whoever is holding the high ground has an advantage.<sup>13</sup> The party has a choice of using the stairs or not.
9. When a party opens this door, it is sucked into a chute and deposited on the fifth level (or whatever other level is indicated). There is no roll for anything waiting in the chute, and the party may not climb back up.
10. This is a sliding panel. When the party stops past it, it slides back down, cutting off the corridor they came from. It'll slide back up if the party rolls (you guessed it) doubles (one try only).
11. The black dot is a trap door. The weight of the party causes it to give way, and they land on the level directly below.
12. This chamber has a double-door. It will hold a battle line twice as wide as a normal door.

Besides the chambers pictured here, there are many other kinds of chambers, such as casinos,<sup>14</sup> movie theaters (only in Larry Brommer's maze, though), and such.

#### DIRECTIONS:

Let us imagine that the party is in the tower.<sup>15</sup> The party leader elects to open the door. S/he would then be told that it was a corridor leading to the East. S/he decides to follow the corridor. "Ten, twenty feet East, corridor goes North, South, East and West," the gamesmaster would say. The number of feet is always counted out loud. The party would then decide to go, let's say, South. "Ten feet South, corridor ends, goes West." Then, the party would have to decide whether to go on in this direction or not. Assuming that they do, the gamesmaster would then say, "Ten, twenty, thirty, forty feet West, corridor ends, goes South." The party wants to go South, so, "Ten feet South, continue South, goes East." They want to continue South. "Ten feet South, continues South, secret door to the East." They would then decide to either open or not open the door. In the case that they did, they would then be told that it is a chamber, and it is twenty feet by twenty feet, they are in the upper left-hand part of it, there is a secret door on the lower right-hand part. Then the Baddies<sup>16</sup> table would be consulted for the guardians, and a battle would ensue. After the battle, the treasure would be rolled for on the treasure table. The party would collect any treasure there was, and would leave through either door. If leaving through the other door, the doubles roll would then be done.





Below is the treasure creation table. For each category, two dice are rolled. If the number as indicated is/are rolled, that treasure is present. To find the amount and description, see the paragraph on such.

GOLD	7
GOLD BAR	6, 8
SILVER	5, 6, 8
SILVER BAR	4, 7, 9
JEWELS	7, 9
MAGIC WEAPON	12, 2
SPELL	2, 11, 12
RELIC	3, 10
SAGE	4, 5, 6
SUPPLIES	4, 10
DOUBLED TREASURE	Doubles

**GOLD:** To find the amount, roll two dice three times. The total is the amount. If doubles are rolled, the two dice are rolled once again.

**GOLD BAR:** A gold bar is worth 10 gold pieces. It cannot be broken into pieces, it may only be spent in one lump sum. There is only one to a chamber.

**SILVER:** The amount of silver is found the same way as gold. Sixteen silver pieces equal one gold piece.<sup>17</sup>

**SILVER BAR:** A silver bar is the same as a gold bar, except that it is made of silver.

**JEWELS:** The amount of jewels is determined in the same way as gold. Then the jewel table is consulted to see what kind of jewels they are. Two dice are rolled, and the kind of jewel they correspond to is the kind they are. The table is below. The number in parentheses is the amount of silver pieces each jewel is worth.

DIAMONDS (16)	10, 12
RUBES (10)	8, 11
EMERALDS (7)	7, 9, 5
TURQUOISE (4)	6, 3
QUARTZ (1)	4, 2

**MAGIC WEAPON:** The table below is used to find which magic weapon is in the chamber. One die is rolled to find which category it is from. Then another die is rolled to find out exactly which weapon it is. The warriors roll to see who gets it; the highest roll wins (if it is a non-cutting weapon, priests may also roll). Weapons may be traded or given to other party members; occasionally the general store keeper will buy excess weapons. Weapons such as the “Sword +1” work just like the weapon they are, but one is added to their die roll when attacking.

(TABLE ON NEXT PAGE)

I

- 1 SWORD +1
- 2 SPEAR +1
- 3 AXE +1
- 4 MACE +1
- 5 PIKE +1
- 6 ROLL AGAIN, BUT WEAPON IS +2

II

- 1 TANGLE-WEED\*
- 2 SHURIKENS (hit anything with 7, used only once a battle each)
- 3 THORNY TANGLE-WEED\*\*
- 4 MAGIC BLOW-GUN DARTS (hit anything with 8)
- 5 TANGLE-WEED
- 6 THROWING DARTS (hit anything with 9, each used once a battle)

III

- 1 MAGIC SHIELD (takes 10 hits<sup>18</sup>)
- 2 BULLET-PROOF VEST
- 3 MIRRORED MAGIC SHIELD
- 4 NECK-BRACE (safety from vampires)
- 5 WERE-WOLF WARDER (wearer cannot become were-wolf)
- 6 MAGIC SHIELD

IV

- 1 TRIPLE MORNING STAR (three axe blows)
- 2 MAGIC ARROWS (hit anything with 8)
- 3 SPEED ARMOR
- 4 INFLATABLE RUBBER RAFT
- 5 ICE SKATES
- 6 PARACHUTE

V

- 1 MAGIC THROWING AXE (may be used from back line, returns to hand)
- 2 MAGIC THROWING DAGGER
- 3 TRIPLE FLAIL (three mace blows)
- 4 UNDETECTABLE STACKED DECK (used only once)
- 5 UNDETECTABLE LOADED DICE
- 6 SMOKE BOMBS

VI

TWO MAGIC WEAPONS

\*: TANGLE-WEED is a super fast growing weed thrown into chambers to clog them up, giving the party time to run away from whatever it was that was in the chamber. It may not be thrown in open areas, though, because it may also entangle the party. When getting tangle-weed, the gamesmaster rolls one die to see how much there is. The same is true for shurikens, blow-gun darts, throwing darts, magic arrows, and smoke-bombs.

\*\* : THORNY TANGLE-WEED is tangle-weed which kills whatever is in the chamber. The karma is not collected, though. It is done so that gory pictures may be taken to sell to the Daily Dungeon<sup>19</sup> (very underground).

SPELL: Wizards collect spells by finding them in chambers. For some spells, such as being able to use spear balls, the spell allows the wizard to buy the balls from the general store.<sup>20</sup> For the first three spell categories, there are as many charges of the spell as is rolled with one die. If there are two or more wizards, they decide between themselves who gets the spell (wizards sort of keep to themselves; the party leader doesn't interfere.). The table is on the next page.



## I

- 1 GORGON GORERS (each ball kills one Gorgon)
- 2 CROC CRUNCHERS
- 3 TURTLE THUMPERS
- 4 MANGANI<sup>21</sup> MANGLERS
- 5 SNAKE SMASHERS
- 6 BLASTING WAND (kills anything)

## II

- 1 AXE BALLS (each ball delivers 5 axe blows)
- 2 SWORD BALLS (5 sword blows)
- 3 SPEAR BALLS (3 spear blows)
- 4 PIKE BALLS (3 pike blows)
- 5 MORNING STAR BALLS (4 morning star blows)
- 6 CHOICE

## III

- 1 HERBIE<sup>22</sup> WALL-BANGERS (knock down walls)
- 2 SUNLIGHT BALLS (kills vampires)
- 3 SLAVE BALLS\*
- 4 BLINDING BALLS (temporarily blinds enemy, allows party to get extra hits in)
- 5 TANGLING BALLS (works like tangle-weed)
- 6 HEALING BALLS (each heals party member of as many hits as can be rolled with one die. May be used during battle)

## IV

- 1 BODY SHIELD (takes ten hits. Doesn't regenerate after descent like armor.)
- 2 WIZARD'S SWORD (works like regular sword, but only for wizards.)
- 3 WIZARD'S AXE
- 4 ONE TOTAL HEAL OF SELF
- 5 CAMERA OUTFIT (includes camera, roll of film, and flash-cubes)
- 6 FLASHLIGHT

## V Books (roll two dice)

- 2 BOOK OF DEMONS (Vol. I)
- 3 BOOK OF DEMONS (Vol. II)
- 4 BOOK OF DEMONS (Vol. III)
- 5 BOOK OF MYTHS
- 6 "WHO'S WHO IN THE DUNGEON"
- 7 JOKEBOOK
- 8 TROLL TRANSLATION BOOK
- 9 JAPANESE<sup>23</sup> TRANSLATION BOOK
- 10 TRAVEL BROCHURE
- 11 PARTIAL MAP
- 12 two books

## VI

### TWO SPELLS

\*: SLAVE BALLS, when unleashed, can make anyone but another party member, a sage, or a ghod<sup>24</sup> a slave of the wizard. A wizard may have only five slaves, though. The slave follows the orders of the wizard, no matter what they are, provided the wizard stays within fifty feet of the slave, and feeds it well (prices are arranged by the general store keeper).

RELICS: Priests obtain karma by finding relics in chambers. They roll to see who gets it; highest roll wins. To determine the amount of karma it is worth, the gamesmaster rolls two dice and multiplies the numbers. And, if the two dice are doubles (what else?), the karma is doubled.

**SAGE:** A sage is actually an extension of the gamesmaster's own self.<sup>25</sup> The sage may be either a blessing or a curse, depending on the gamesmaster's disposition at the time. Sages usually are friendly to a party, though, unless the party has done something to anger the sage, or if the party has been extremely lucky in the accumulation of treasure. In the latter case, the sage may be angered at the party because the sages actually own the dungeon, and they don't like people hauling off too much loot.

Sages come in many forms. Some are blacksmiths, which (in a good mood) make magic weapons. Or there may be a gaming sage, who might play poker or black-jack with the party (and put up magic weapons or spells, if s/he feels like it). There can be almost any kind of sage the gamesmaster finds appropriate.

Sages generally don't give something for nothing. Most of them require homage of some sort, be it in the form of relics, brandy, or whatever. The amount given determines the sage's hospitality, though the ratio differs from sage to sage.

A sage who is friendly to the party may say that he will grant one wish for each party member, provided the sage is not inundated by unreasonable requests (a friendly sage may become an unfriendly sage if the party doesn't watch out). Or he may give advice or directions to the leader, or ask the party to perform a task (for treasure, of course).

If the sage is unfriendly to the party, he may put a curse on them, such as, "May you find a dragon in every chamber." Or he may take some of the treasure. And a particularly evil sage may pretend to be a friendly sage. ....

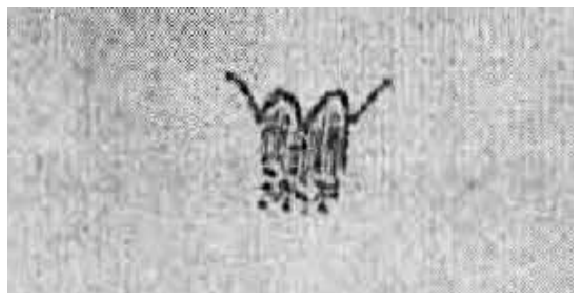
Sages are the absolute masters of the maze, answerable only to ghods, which very rarely visit anything as low as an (ugh) dungeon.

**SUPPLIES:** This is another form of treasure which is subject to the whims of the gamesmaster. Any amount of any supply the gamesmaster feels like supplying the party with. The party member with the highest roll gains possession (if s/he wants it).

**DOUBLED TREASURE:** As the name implies, when this doubles whatever treasure was already in the chamber, except for the sage.

**DIVIDING THE TREASURE:** At the end of the descent, the gold, silver, and jewels are divided as equally as possible, with any remainder going to the party leader. Jewels may be kept in their original forms, though they are usually converted to silver/gold.

**SPECIAL TREASURE:** Some chambers may contain special treasure, listed in that chamber before the descent begins.<sup>26</sup> This treasure may be a special weapon; I personally found the sword Stormbringer in Martin Shafer's maze. Or it may be a ghod, or ....





In addition to choosing between being a warrior, a priest, etc. a player must choose between being either an elf, a dwarf, or a human.<sup>27</sup> Elves have the ability to sense secret doors. A dwarf may tell if the party is moving up or down, and to what extent (number of levels, etc.). Elves and dwarfs require 10% more karma and gold than humans do to move up in rank.<sup>28</sup> The amounts listed on the rank charts are the base human amounts. It is advisable for a party to have two or more elves and dwarfs, as one may be killed.

Warriors are the muscle of the party. They do the bulk of the fighting as they are the most effective in this department. A warrior may wield any weapon outside of wizards' weapons, or those which require ranks higher than their own.

The warriors rank chart is below. The third column lists the amount needed to move up in rank. It is important to remember that a party member may move up in rank only between descents, unless assisted by a sage. Note that on the characteristics column, in the places which announce "MAY TAKE \_\_\_\_\_ MORE HITS," that is to say, they may take that many hits without their armor.<sup>29</sup> The amount of extra hits the warrior may take is not added on, one group upon another.

Rank	Characteristics	
11	Sons only*	25 G, 25 K
10	Starting rank (except for sons)	40 G, 50 K
9		50 G, 100 K
8	Add one to die roll when attacking	65 G, 176 K
7	Acquire son* / Become chivalrous***	80 G, 200 K
6	Acquire daughter**/May take five more hits	110 G, 400 K
5	Add two to die roll when attacking	150 G, 580 K
4	May take ten more hits	190 G, 700 K
3		300 G, 950 K
2	Add three to die roll when attacking	500 G, 1325 K
1	May take fifteen more hits	



Priests are the most intelligent of the party. They make the best party leaders; the highest ranked priest leads, unless a warrior or wizard is higher (if there is a tie, wizards take preference). The party must follow any orders the leader gives, though they may mutiny or threaten to if they wish.<sup>30</sup>

Priests are also healers. In a chamber, after the battle is over, each priest may heal one party member (themselves included) of as many hits as are rolled with one die.<sup>31</sup> Healings may take place at almost any other time (except during battles), but in these situations there is a possibility of being jumped (with doubles, of course).

Priests may fight, though they may not use weapons which cut.

It is very important to note there are Spiderist priests, in a Spiderist maze (there is, however, a student at the sage school named Herbie....)<sup>32</sup>

Rank	Characteristics	
10	Starting Rank	35 G, 45 K
9	Becomes chivalrous***	40 G, 95 K
8	Add one to die roll on hits	50 G, 165 K
7	May take five more hits	75 G, 260 K
6	Roll for son****	110 G, 380 K
5	Roll for daughter*****	160 G, 525 K
4	Add two to die roll on hits	200 G, 680 K
3	May take five more hits	325 G, 950 K
2	“ “ fifteen more hits	550 G, 1150 K
1	“ walk on water	

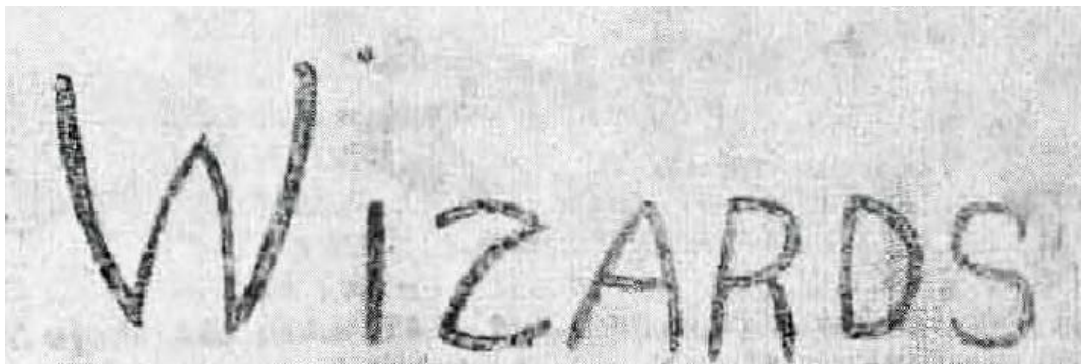
\*: SONS begin at eleventh rank. They may not, while at this rank, wield weapons costing five or more gold pieces. A son is the same denomination (human, elf, or dwarf) as his parents. Parents lose karma if the son is killed. Sons have a way with dogs.<sup>33</sup>

\*\* : DAUGHTERS have no rank. They do not fight, or heal, in fact, they serve no real purpose at all. They must either be brought down on descents, or be baby-sat at the general store keeper for thirty gold pieces a descent. The only armor they wear is ornamental leather armor, which takes six hits. The only treasure they may take is jewels. They lose their parents karma if killed.<sup>34</sup>

\*\*\*: CHIVALRY is achieved at seventh rank for warriors and ninth rank for priests. Once chivalrous, the warrior/priest may no longer perform unchivalrous deeds, or use weapons such as brass knuckles, etc.<sup>35</sup>

\*\*\*\*: At sixth rank, a priest must roll to see if he gets a son. In the event that he does, the son must be sacrificed to the Great Spider, and the priest becomes a tenth ranked warrior. All karma is lost, but other possessions are kept (though the skills of healing, etc.) are revoked. If the son is not sacrificed, the Spider will eat both of them.

\*\*\*\*: At fifth rank, the priest must roll to see if s/he gets a daughter or not. The situation is the same as it was for the son, except that a daughter need not be sacrificed.



Wizards are essential party members, even though they are somewhat shifty and occasionally untrustworthy. By unleashing their light balls, they supply the extra light needed to do battle that the torches lack. Without this additional light, the party is at a heavy disadvantage in battle.<sup>36</sup>

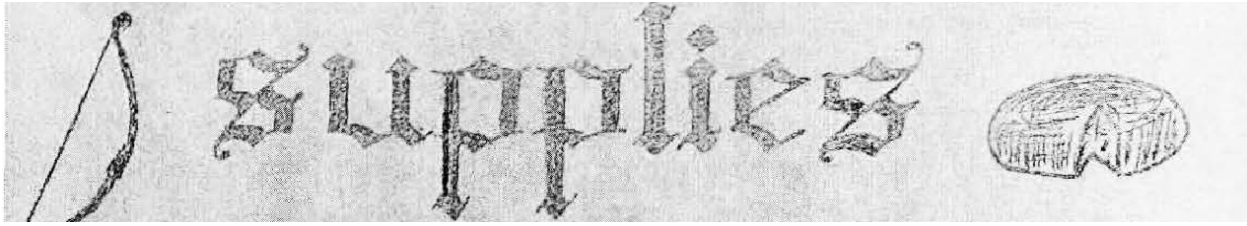
Wizards may not wield weapons or wear armor shields, and take only two hits to kill. They may, however, assist in the fighting by using their various fighting spells. In addition to this, they also have many other useful spells.

Below is the wizards rank chart. The amounts of karma and gold needed to move up in rank are the same as for warriors. The only difference is that a wizard, in order to become seventh rank, must turn in a unicorn's horn.<sup>37</sup>

Rank	Characteristics
11	Apprentices only* / May use mace balls / May have two spells
10	Starting rank / May use five spells / May use mace balls
9	May use sword balls / May use ten spells
8	May use axe balls / May use eighteen spells
7	May use pike balls / May use twenty spells
6	May use unlimited amount of spells / Gain apprentice
5	May take five more hits / Eternal light staff**
4	May use warrior's weapons
3	May wear armor
2	May levitate and become invisible
1	May walk through walls

\*: An apprentice is much like the warrior's son, with a few exceptions. They require 20% more karma and gold than humans do. They may take five hits without armor. They are loyal to the instructions of their master and never disobey. When the apprentice reaches seventh rank, it has completed its studies, and is replaced by a new one.

\*\* : The staff of eternal light eliminates the need for torches or light balls. It may be handled only by wizards of fifth rank or lower (4, 3, etc.).



Below is the price list for the General Store and affiliated shops. The first category lists the weapons available. An asterisk denotes a weapon which may be used from the second line.<sup>38</sup> A "P" indicates that the weapon may be used by priests. And the number in parentheses shows the rank the weapon requires for its usage. A weapon without a number may be used at tenth rank, and if it costs five gold pieces or less, it may be used at eleventh rank. Some weapons, such as the flail, deliver two blows of another weapon. That is to say, the dice are rolled twice instead of once. Others, such as the great sword, deliver a blow greater than the weapon normally does, but if even one is used, only three fighters may come abreast.<sup>39</sup> Some weapons offer no explanation of their usage, such as the bola, or the martel de fer. These are weapons of special purpose, and the party must use its resources to discover just what they are for. All prices are per each item.

	AXE	5 gold
	MORNING STAR (two axe blows)	30 gold
	BROADAXE (axe +1, only three abreast)	10 gold
	SPIKED KNUCKLES (axe -1)	4 gold
*	THROWING AXE (axe -1)	4 gold
P	MACE	4 gold
*P	SLING	3 gold
(9) P	BLUDGEON (mace +1, only three abreast)	10 gold
P	FLAIL ("Scorpion") (two mace blows)	25 gold
(8) P	BOOMERANG	3 gold
(9) P	BOLA	5 gold
P	QUARTERSTAFF	2 gold
P	MARTEL DE FER	3 gold
P	BICYCLE CHAIN	3 gold
P	BRASS KNUCKLES	3 gold
	SPEAR	2 gold
*	THROWING DAGGER (spear -1)	2 gold
(9) *	PIKE	4 gold
*	BOW (spear -1)	5 gold
	CROSS-BOW (spear +1, only three abreast)	15 gold
	ARROWS	1 gold
	SILVER ARROWS	2 gold
	WOODEN ARROWS	8 silver
	QUIVER (holds ten arrows)	2 gold
(9) *	BLOW-GUN (spear -2)	3 gold
	" " darts (each has ½ arrow space)	8 silver
	SWORD	6 gold
	GREAT SWORD (sword +1, only three abreast)	10 gold

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



	SPIKED MACE (1 axe or mace blow)	10 gold
(9)	BUNDI DAGGER (or “vaschi”)	6 gold
(9)	BULL-WHIP	4 gold
	STILLETTO	4 gold
	CAT O’ NINE TAILS	9 gold
	HALBERD (1 axe or spear blow)	10 gold
	BOILED LEATHER ARMOR (takes seven hits)	6 gold
	CHAIN MAIL ARMOR (takes ten hits)	10 gold
	PLATE ARMOR (takes fifteen hits)	15 gold
	SHIELD (takes five hits, only one to a warrior/priest)	5 gold

NOTE: between descents, the armor regenerates, fresh for the next expedition down. This is not true, however, for shields. A shield is slung over the back until such a time as the fighter wishes to use it (usually when the armor may take only a few more hits). At this time, the shield is put in front. During the time that the shield is in use, the warrior/priest is a less effective fighter.<sup>40</sup>

Below are the price lists for priests, warriors, wizards and general supplies. An item from the priest’s list may not be used by, let’s say, a warrior, but the warrior may buy it for the priest as a gift. Or, if a wizard is low on gold, another party member may lend him/her some. Or, if the party is low on resources, they may apply for a loan at the general store (20% interest).

Some of the supplies have very specific purposes. Edible supplies, such as cheese, are generally for giving to beasts as peace offerings (though not always). Some supplies have no specific purpose to them; they may be used as anything the party’s ingenuity dreams up.

#### PRIESTS

	CRUCIFIX	1 gold
	HOLY WATER	2 gold
	HOLY ROBE	5 gold
	MEDI-KIT <sup>41</sup>	5 gold
	QUILLS	1 gold
	WOODEN STAKES	1 gold
	SNAKE-BITE KITS	35 gold
	SPIDER-SHAPED LOLLIPOPS	2 gold

#### WARRIORS

	LOADED DICE (always roll seven)	100 gold
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#### WIZARDS

	LIGHT BALLS	1 gold
*	MACE BALLS	1 gold
*	AXE BALLS	1 gold
*	SWORD BALLS	1 gold
*	PIKE BALLS	1 gold
	GENERAL (may be either light, mace, axe, sword or pike)	1 gold

\* must have the spell to use it

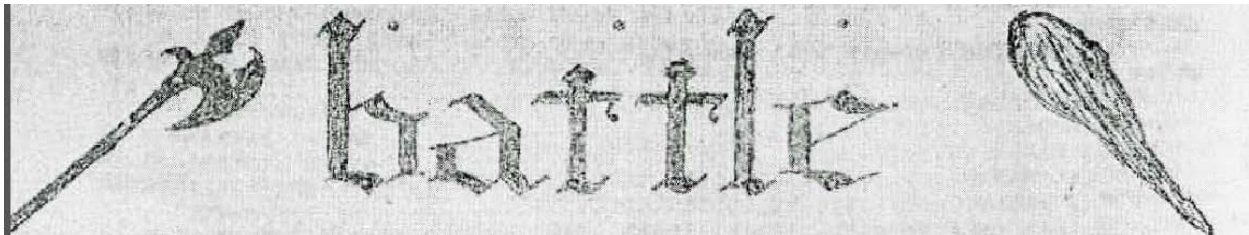
#### GENERAL SUPPLIES

	CHEESE (per wheel)	1 gold
	COTTAGE CHEESE (per can)	2 gold
	GARBAGE (per can) <sup>42</sup>	3 gold
	DOG BISCUITS (per box)	2 gold
	PIN CUSHIONS	1 gold
	PINS (per 100)	2 gold
	FLIES (dead, per 100)	3 gold
	ELEPHANT JOKEBOOKS	4 gold
	DR. SCHOLL’S FOOT POWDER	7 gold

SUGAR (25 lbs.)	8 gold
HANDI WRAP (per roll)	4 gold
ROLL AIDS (per jar)	5 gold
SAURIAN BRANDY (per fifth) <sup>43</sup>	10 gold
POISON (per gallon)	10 gold
MATCHES (per box)	2 gold
RAGU (per jar) <sup>44</sup>	5 gold
DARK GLASSES	5 gold
LYSOL SPRAY (per can)	7 gold
BUBBLE GUM (per piece)	2 gold
SMOKE GRENADES	25 gold
GLUE (per jar)	3 gold
FOOL'S GOLD (per piece)	1 gold
BIRD CAGES	10 gold
ROPES (per each 10')	2 gold
GRAPPLING HOOKS	4 gold
BOAT (takes five hits)	25 gold
STEEL HULL (for boat, takes ten additional hits)	40 gold
BOAT REPAIR KIT (per patch)	2 gold
* SIMULACRA	
** TORCHES	2 gold

\* SIMULACRA: are like slaves to the general store keeper.<sup>45</sup> He will rent them out for no charge, other than their fair share of the treasure. He also gets pretty mad if they are killed. The simulacra come in any combination wanted, any grouping of the components of sex, virginity/experience, warrior, priest or wizard, elf, dwarf or human. The warriors come with plate armor, spear, sword and axe. The priests are equipped with crucifix, holy robe, holy water, medi-kit, plate armor and mace. A wizard is complete with a dozen light balls, half a dozen mace balls, half a dozen spear balls, and one slave ball. The simulacra will follow any orders given by the party leader.

\*\* TORCHES: are the only supplies that are mandatory. Without torches, the party could not see its way around the dungeon. Generally, the richest party member or members buy the torches. One will last for an entire descent.



Battle is a decisive factor in the party's struggle to survive. The losing of a battle means their demise.

When the party opens a door, the battle line must be ready to fight. This means that the front line (four may come abreast in the corridors that have a width of ten feet) must be determined as to who is in it, in what order, and what weapons are being wielded.

When the party encounters a foe, whether in a chamber or corridor, it is given the following information on the enemy. A. What type (humanoid, mammal, reptile, mythical beast, or weirdie). B. Specific name (is it an orc, etc.). C. Number of enemy forces. D. Number of hits each may take. E. How many come abreast. F. How many party members each one attacks. And G. What it takes for it to hit a party member.

CONT. NEXT PAGE

The party is not told what weapons are best against their opponent(s), nor anything along these lines at all. This is something that must be found out through trial and error.

The baddies draw first blood, as they always attack first.<sup>46</sup> After they are done, it is the party's turn. Each fighter tells the gamesmaster what weapon is being used, then rolls and announces the roll (two dice are used). The gamesmaster tells if the attack was successful or not, and the party leader takes note of it. This is because the party may then see what is the most effective weapon against the enemy. If a fighter wishes to change weapons, this may be done by spending one attacking round in the switch-over.

**KARMA:** the karma attained by killing an enemy is an important treasure. It is given, however, only to the fighter delivering the killing blow. Each baddie is worth as much karma as it takes to kill it in number of hits.

**WIZARDS:** wizards may attack by using their various fighting balls. This may be done by wizard(s) if they announce which ball they are using before the other fighters attack. The blows are delivered randomly to the enemy front line. A wizard may use only one light ball<sup>47</sup> per round of attack (don't confuse "round of attack" with battle, please...).

**MAKING PEACE:** when meeting an enemy force, the party may elect to try to make peace with them, instead of fighting. This is usually done by offering gifts, most often food of some sort. For example, let's say the party encounters a pack of rats. They may decide that they are just too weak to effectively do battle, so they offer the pack a few wheels of cheese.<sup>48</sup> There are no set amounts that work, it is all up to the cruelty of the gamesmaster (though the dice usually are used to influence himself).

**ENDING A BATTLE:** a battle is over when one of the two sides is either destroyed or runs away. The only way that the party may run away without being stabbed in the back (literally) is by using tangle weed, or some other stall. When the enemy runs (there is a morale<sup>49</sup> factor), they merely slip through the walls.

**CREATING BADDIES:** for obvious reasons, I can't list all the information on all the baddies (I didn't invent the term, believe me. I use it only for want of some better terminology). I will, however, list a few of them. But first, I'll show how the baddie is found. There are five categories of baddies. To find which, one die is rolled. With a one or a six, it is a humanoid. The other four categories are numbered in the order in which they appear on this page. There are sub-categories to these, for which there are still more rolls. Then for the exact baddie there is another roll, and still another roll to see how many there are (though there are some that only come one at a time).

#### HUMANOIDS

Below are a few examples of humanoids. The first number is the amount of hits it may take. The second indicates how many hits it takes.<sup>50</sup> The third group shows what weapons hit with what.<sup>51</sup> The fourth group gives the number there, when two dice are rolled.

				2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Trolls	4	7	axe, mace:9, sword: 12	5	6	4	5	2	3	2	6	4	7	8
[Orcs] <sup>52</sup>	1	8	sword:6, others:8	13	17	10	11	8	10	9	11	10	15	20
Hoplites	7	9	spear:7 others:9	2	4	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	4	3

#### MAMMALS

Bears	5	7	axe, sword:7 others:8	2	5	3	4	2	3	2	4	3	5	7
Gorillas	7	7	cutting:8 others:9	2	4	3	5	2	3	1	5	2	5	5
Dogs	1	8	spear:7 others:8	0	15	11	12	9	10	9	12	11	15	25

REPTILES

				2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Snakes	1	7	axe:7 others:9	5	12	10	11	9	10	9	11	10	12	10
Turtles	10	9	mace:8 others:10	1	4	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	4	2
Giant "	30	6	mace:8 others:10											1 only

WEIRDIES

Weirdies are strange creatures that result from a gamesmaster's sick mind. They are just what they sound like: weird. A few examples are rolling meatballs,<sup>53</sup> snapping Turks, and Volkswagens. Unfortunately, I can't list the characteristics of any of these, as surprise is their weapon (they, and the Spanish Inquisition....).

MYTHICAL BEASTS<sup>54</sup>

Dragon	26	6	spear:10 (10 hits w/13) pike:works like spear +1 sword:6 others:9
Minotaur	15	6 (hits two at a time)	cutting: 8 others:9
Chimera	20	7	sword: 7 others :9

SPECIAL BADDIES

Some chambers may have a designated foe within it. It may be a normal baddie, or a special one. For example, in Richard Tatge's maze, there are some chambers in which a poorly faring group may meet Robbing Hood.

Note: when rolling for the number of baddies, if doubles are rolled, then there is another roll, and the two rolls are added together.

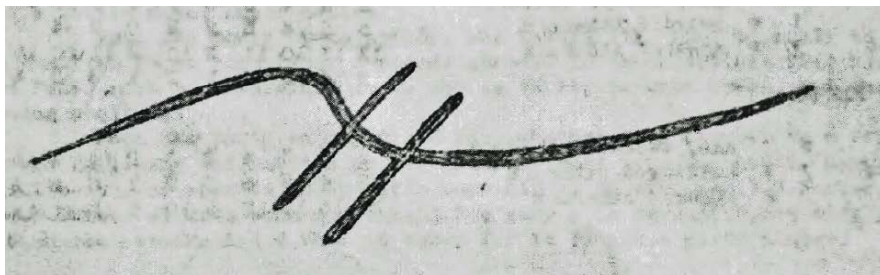
\* \* \*

I sincerely hope that I have given you all an understanding of the game of Dungeon. It is also my hope that I have made a few new gamesmasters. It has been a lot of work creating this rule book, but it has been worth it if new mazes and new players are to come of it.

And please, if anyone has questions, suggestions, comment, or letter bombs, don't hesitate to write me. I'll be very happy to answer any mail my carcass receives.

So write, eh?

CVG<sup>55</sup>



## AFTERWORD

Forty years ago, Craig VanGrasstek was fourteen years old, had no idea that the game *Dungeons & Dragons* existed, and yet managed to produce what is ostensibly the first *Dungeons & Dragons* variant. This remarkable circumstance results from the informal, collaborative culture of science-fiction fandom, where ideas roam without much regard for inventors and ownership, but with fastidious attention to anything that fascinates fans and stimulates creativity.

In the eighteen pages of rules above, we see the first role-playing game condensed down to its most basic elements, reinvented by someone who learned by playing rather than studying rulebooks. VanGrasstek first encountered the game in February 1974 thanks to Louis Fallert, who had in turn experienced Blackmoor under the tutelage of Arneson's immediate circle in the Twin Cities. Few copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* were circulating at that point, and thus, in the reaction of VanGrasstek's peers in the Minneapolis science-fiction fandom community, we find some of the earliest commentary on the startling innovations that *Dungeons & Dragons* introduced. VanGrasstek at the time had the foresight to commit the rules as he understood them to paper: these *Rules to the Game of Dungeon*, first promulgated in August of 1974.

There are several reasons why this is an important text for students of gaming to examine. Because the *Rules* descend in an oral tradition from the original Twin Cities Blackmoor players, they capture local variants which give us crucial insight into the way Blackmoor was played prior to the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The telltale signs are everywhere: in that monsters are called "baddies," in the component-heavy design of the spell system, in the system of "hits" for armor and shields, in the names of classes, and in the shiftiness of wizards.

Moreover, the *Rules* give us a rare glimpse into the vibrant, free-form gaming that arose in the wake following the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Within, we find a great deal of whimsical, sometimes zany subject matter: a hodge-podge of Japanophilia, comic books, Monty Python, Tolkien, Las Vegas, and suburban America. The system is stripped down to its fundamentals: details like movement speeds, encumbrance, and the overworld are ignored, but we see plenty of Lysol spray, sentient meatballs, and elephant jokes.

But most importantly, this is a game that we can play, despite its brevity and omissions. *Dungeons & Dragons* left out plenty of details, but it still provided us with the tools to invent, and believe in, our own adventures. Eighteen pages written by a fourteen-year-old with the right understanding can deliver the same.

I was therefore thrilled when Craig VanGrasstek contacted me after my prior writing about the *Rules* caught his attention. Sadly, he had long since lost his own copies of the game. With his blessing, I produced this critical edition which restores the weather-beaten original and provides some historical commentary to fill in gaps and explain the context. We had to recreate the cover, as the original was lost, but the rest is faithful to the original edition. All credit is due to VanGrasstek for both his work and his willingness to re-release the *Rules* to the public.

Enjoy!

Jon Peterson  
August 2014

## NOTES ON THE TEXT (BY JON PETERSON)

<sup>1</sup> *Minneapa* was an amateur press association (APA) published by the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, a fan organization whose name is commonly abbreviated as “Minn-Stf.” APAs are fanzines published on a nominally regular schedule that compile contributions from a number of authors, without modifying or editing these contents, and then distribute the compilation to the author list and potentially a separate list of non-contributing subscribers. Science fiction fandom commonly used APAs as a means of communication prior to the Internet. The first *Minneapa* mailing was in July 1972; *Minneapa* mailing #47 was September 1974. Despite VanGrasstek’s best intentions, however, the *Rules of the Game of Dungeon* shipped in *Minneapa* #49 a few months later.

<sup>2</sup> **DisCon** II took its name from the District of Columbia; 1974 was the second time the World Science Fiction Convention came to Washington, D.C. Issue #37.5 of *Rune*, a local Minn-Stf newsletter, shows Minneapolis fans organizing a bus trip to attend DisCon, leaving August 28, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Louis **Fallert** (1950-2014) went by the name “**Blue Petal**” in Minn-Stf; he was the founding editor of *Minneapa*. Fallert introduced the dungeon exploration game after attending a February 6, 1974 meeting of the University of Minnesota Military History Club (a subgroup of the Minnesota Military Simulation Association, or MMSA) where he encountered Blackmoor players. Fallert had long been associated with the games community at the University: in 1971, he was listed as a member of the Club’s Public Relations Committee (in *Corner of the Table* Vol. 3 No. 6). Although many in Minn-Stf believed that Fallert had “invented” the dungeon game, which he called “Castle Keep,” he did acknowledge in *Minneapa* #39 that he “had fun playing Dragons and Dungeons” with the MMSA, which suggests he made the community aware of the published game.

<sup>4</sup> Fallert’s notes for February 9<sup>th</sup> in *Minneapa* #38 confirm that this first game took place at “Denny’s place,” and go on to say: “Richard Tatge and a couple others expressed interest in DUNGEON so we played a game that ended with all getting killed. Later a bunch of us went over to the Hobbitat and played a bit more seriously. Dick, Al, Denny, Jeff and Martin went down on three expeditions and came back alive and with enough treasure to outfit another expedition. Have to do more this some more.” That party was presumably Dick Tatge, Al Kuhfeld, Denny Lien, Jeff Appelbaum and Martin Shafer. The **Hobbitat** was a communal fan residence, home to Tatge and others; in 1974, it was located at 3755 Pillsbury Avenue South in Minneapolis.

<sup>5</sup> The term “letter of comment” or **LoC** refers to a response printed in an APA to the content of prior issues. Often these LoCs chained into lengthy threads of dialog not dissimilar to the Internet forum posts of our day.

<sup>6</sup> The usage “**karma**” is roughly synonymous with the term “experience” in *Dungeons & Dragons*, though totals of both karma and gold are required to advance in rank. Compare to *Dungeons & Dragons*, where experience can be gained through accumulating treasure (indeed, gold points translate into experience points on a 1-to-1 basis) but money is not required for advancement. Also, karma is expended to advance: that is, the karma total needed to progress in rank is subtracted from the persona’s total. Fortunately the karma sums required in the *Rules* are quite low: a warrior needs only fifty karma to advance past the tenth rank (see p.11). The karma awarded for killing a monster is equal to the number of hits the monster can withstand before dying, though only the persona landing the killing blow is awarded karma (see p.17). Priests may also gain karma through recovering relics (see p.9).

<sup>7</sup> The term “**rank**” is roughly synonymous with “level” in *Dungeons & Dragons*, though ranks move in descending order, from the lowest rank of 10 to the highest rank of 1. Only “sons” or other non-player characters such as wizard apprentices start at rank 11. Note that, like in *Dungeons & Dragons*, personae may only advance in rank between descents—unless a sage intervenes (see *Rules* p.11 and endnote 25).

<sup>8</sup> Confusing as this may have been, all of VanGrasstek’s play records from 1974 show players controlling multiple “**personae**” (characters) during a dungeon expedition more often than not, with VanGrasstek himself playing three at a time in the October 27, 1974 play record. Note that personae in the *Rules* have no attributes (e.g. the “Strength” or “Intelligence” familiar from *Dungeons & Dragons*); instead, they are distinguished by name, class, denomination, rank and possessions.

<sup>9</sup> All wizard spells in the *Rules* come in the form of “**balls**,” thus a “Light” spell is cast by throwing a “light ball.” This closely tracks the Blackmoor campaign convention of pre-manufactured spells which must be purchased by wizards before casting them. See for example in note in *First Fantasy Campaign* (p.18) about the Egg of Coot’s “huge laboratory that turns out Spells, for selling.” Similarly, in *FFC* (p.19) we see that Ran of Ah Foo has “a spell workshop that turns out one level I spell a week and one Level II Spell a month with one Level III Spell a year.” The *FFC* notes on the “Original Blackmoor Magic System” (p.74) further explain that to cast spells “the ingredients had



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to be prepared ahead of time, and of course once used were then powerless.” As the concept of material spell components does not in appear in the 1974 edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, we might infer that Blackmoor campaign conventions still prevailed when Fallert played his dungeon adventure with the MMSA in February, and that thus they carried over into the *Rules* as captured by VanGrasstek. The “balls” convention extends to balls that strike as weapons (e.g. “Morning Star Balls”), balls that charm opponents (“Slave Balls”) and even curative spells (“Healing Balls”).

<sup>10</sup> “Quadrille” paper is another term for graph paper.

<sup>11</sup> The appellation “**gamesmaster**” had currency in Minneapolis at this time as it was used by many prior games, notably in postal *Diplomacy* fandom, which had a large overlap with science fiction fandom. The term “dungeon master” would not be employed until 1975.

<sup>12</sup> Most die rolls in the *Rules* are made with two six-sided dice, per attack rolls in *Chainmail*. Here “**doubles**” represents the condition when both dice turn up the same number, which has a one in six chance of occurring. Many parlor games have special rules when doubles are rolled with two six-siders, perhaps most famously *Monopoly*, which grants players an additional movement roll whenever doubles are thrown. Thus, frequently in the *Rules*, we see doubles resulting in some special effect.

<sup>13</sup> Although no system is given in the *Rules* for the advantage of holding higher terrain in a dungeon staircase, a +1 bonus to attack rolls suitably conveys that advantage.

<sup>14</sup> **Casinos** and gambling apparently played a large role in the Minneapolis dungeon adventures. VanGrasstek’s October 27, 1974 play report has the entire party “materialized” to Las Vegas by a sage, where games of craps followed. Note that on pg.8 of the *Rules*, on the treasure list, adventurers might find an “undetected stacked deck” or “undetected loaded dice” which presumably confer an advantage in these situations. Warriors may purchase “loaded dice” which always roll “7” as supplies on p.15. Note as well that some sages (*Rules* pg.10) are “gaming sages” who will play card, dice or board games with the party. In VanGrasstek’s September 22, 1974 play record, we see that when a gaming sage proposes playing a game, the players will apparently then in real life play the game in question: “In high spirits, the sage offers the party to play him in a game of Yahtzee, the winner of which shall receive twenty-five karma points, and no penalty for losing. Phaedra also wins here, with a score of 318. She had two Yahtzees.”

<sup>15</sup> The description of the interaction between the gamesmaster and players here can usefully be compared to the “Example of the Referee Moderating a Dungeon Expedition” in the 1974 *Dungeons & Dragons (Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, p.12). Note for example how the referee in *D&D* explicitly states increments of movement; e.g., “10’, 20’, 30’ – a 10’ square landing – steps down to the north and curving down southeast.” We see in this *Rules* passage how the gamesmaster says “Ten, twenty, thirty, forty feet west, corridor ends, goes South,” with the specific provision that “the number of feet is always counted out loud.” As no roll is made for detecting secret doors in the example in the *Rules*, presumably the party includes an elf, as elves automatically detect secret doors.

<sup>16</sup> The use of the term “**Baddies**” here mirrors the early usages in Blackmoor. We see this in other places in the *Rules* as well, for example, on p.17, where in combat “the baddies draw first blood” and in the subsection “Creating Baddies”—VanGrasstek in an aside pleads “I didn’t invent the term, believe me. I use it only for want of some better terminology.” Previously, the *Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger* #2 (early 1972) tells of a hero who “wasn’t around when the baddies showed up.” We see the same usage in the *First Fantasy campaign*, in for example the description of how “the guys at Blackmoor were exiled for losing Blackmoor to the baddies” (p.86), and the story of “Gertrude the Dragon who was killed there by the Baddies” (p.27).

<sup>17</sup> In the event that the dice determined that exactly **thirty silver pieces** were found, Richard Tatge invented a rule wherein one member of the party selected at random would then turn against everyone else (inspired by the thirty silver shekels of Judas Iscariot). VanGrasstek’s October 27, 1974 play report indicates that this happened twice in a single session, and resulted in the death of turncoat personae. The second case involved a wizard, Mervin, who had charmed Doctor Octopus (the Spiderman character) with a slave ball: the party therefore had to defeat both the wizard and Doctor Octopus.

<sup>18</sup> Language like “takes ten **hits**” is *Chainmail* terminology which entered into the Blackmoor campaign, but was largely replaced by the concept of hit points at the advent of *Dungeons & Dragons*. We see for example in the *First Fantasy Campaign* how wights “take from 1–6 hits,” (p. 91). The *Rules* follow the early *Chainmail* precedent that a strike with a weapon deals one hit of damage rather than a variable amount of damage, and that all baddies of a

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type take the same number of hits, rather than a variable number rolled from hit dice per *Dungeons & Dragons*. Note as well that the “Temple of the Frog” scenario published in the *Blackmoor* pamphlet (which is surely a slight adaptation of Arneson’s notes from late in 1972) has armor that “takes hits,” including the “battle armor” of Stephen the Rock which “can take 60 hit points before it will cease to function.” This suggests that Blackmoor had a concept that armor absorbed points of damage before breaking, which we shall see recur in the *Rules*. In the *Rules* (see p.15), armor regenerates its hits between descents, whereas shields typically do not.

<sup>19</sup> The “Daily Dungeon” was apparently a fictional **newspaper** circulated in the game world. Note that camera equipment is among the treasure that can be discovered on p.9 of the *Rules*, though it can only be received by rolling on the wizard spell table, which suggests that only wizards can use these items.

<sup>20</sup> See endnote 9 above on the manufacturing and purchasing of spells in Blackmoor. This section of the *Rules* further explains that players must find balls in the dungeon in order to “unlock” the ability to purchase balls of that type from the General Store between dungeon descents, and we see on p.15 of the *Rules* that the purchase of balls comes with the disclaimer “must have the spell to use it.” This follows the precept recorded in the *First Fantasy Campaign* that “one first learned the spells, and then got to use that spell” (p.74). In Blackmoor, however, this was a matter of “study and practice” rather than simply finding the ability to use a spell in the dungeon as a form of treasure, as we see in the *Rules*.

<sup>21</sup> The “**mangani**” are a type of ape from Edgar Rice Burroughs’s Tarzan novels.

<sup>22</sup> Although we might be tempted to read this as a mistake for the Harvey Wallbanger, after the potent potable, the usage “**Herbie**” here refers to the comic book character Herbie Popnecker, an awkward and oblivious but omnipotent superhero. It would be appropriate for Herbie to knock down walls. Note that Herbie famously carries lollipops of varying flavors and powers. Thus a “Spider-shaped Lollipop” on the *Rules* equipment list (p.15) must be useful to priests in dealing with the Great Spider.

<sup>23</sup> A vein of **Japanophilia** runs through the *Rules* and much of science-fiction fandom of the era. The need for a Japanese translation book follows the presence of elements like the shiruken, and probably smoke bombs as well (*Rules* p.8). In VanGrasstek’s play record for October 27, 1974 we see a ninja ambushing the party, but “he saw that his chances were not so good and left in a puff of smoke.” See endnote 49 on morale below.

<sup>24</sup> The usage “**ghod**” for “god” is a common one in science fiction fandom of the era. “Ghod” perhaps has a connotation of an entirely imaginary divine being. The Great Spider, who figures into the *Rules*, is an example of a ghod invented by the fan community; see endnote 32 below.

<sup>25</sup> The **sage** is a curious addition to the dungeon adventure: effectively, sages are non-player characters with the powers and personality of the gamesmaster, though the different interests and dispositions of sages constrain their agency somewhat. As a form of treasure, sages are very abundant, and VanGrasstek’s play records all show multiple sages encountered per dungeon descent. Sages in the play records award twenty-five karma (perhaps half of the amount needed to make the first advance in rank) for winning a game, give information on dungeon levels, transport the party to Las Vegas, and lust after virgin simulacra.

<sup>26</sup> It is noteworthy that the *Rules* treat as an exception the case where the either treasure or creatures (see *Rules* p.18) have been pre-assigned, as opposed to randomly determined upon the arrival of the party.

<sup>27</sup> Note that while all of the original character classes of *D&D* are represented in the *Rules*, there is no provision to play as a hobbit in the *Rules*. On p.12, the *Rules* use the term “**denomination**” in place of what *Dungeons & Dragons* would later call “race.” We do see evidence of players creating more exotic personae: in VanGrasstek’s December 15, 1974 play report, he plays as “Cedric the Centaur, male centaur warrior w/ spiked hooves that work as two axe+2 blows, takes up the space of two humans.” Also note that the names of the persona classes are closer to those used in Blackmoor than the conventions introduced in *D&D*. Blackmoor uses “hero” where the *Rules* would say “warrior,” but both “wizard” and “priest” were frequently used in Blackmoor, as in the *Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger* #2 headline, “Wizard and Priest Get Stoned At Party.”

<sup>28</sup> The 10% penalty in karma and gold for demihumans to advance compensates for the special properties that elves and dwarfs (note that the *Rules* use the plural “dwarfs” rather than “dwarves”) brings to the party. Compare to 1974 *Dungeons & Dragons*, which instead caps the highest level which elves and dwarves can achieve.

<sup>29</sup> See endnote 18 above on “taking hits.” The base system does not specify how many hits a warrior and priest may initially take, though most likely an unarmored warrior or priest could withstand five hits. The system specifies that a starting wizard can take just two hits and moreover cannot wear armor. Only at the fifth rank, halfway

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through the progression, does a warrior or wizard gain the ability to withstand five more hits: priests gain this increase at the seventh rank.

<sup>30</sup> Compare the party “**leader**” function described here to the “caller” role in *Dungeons & Dragons*. While D&D never explains how the caller is designated, anecdotal evidence (such as Mark Swanson’s report at the Origins I tournament) suggests that the selection of the caller did not depend on the level of characters so much as each player’s proficiency with the game; the caller was appointed by consensus of the players.

<sup>31</sup> Effectively, priests may cast the equivalent of a free *Dungeons & Dragons* “Cure Light Wounds” spell (without adding +1 to the roll) after every combat. They may also attempt to heal at any other time when the party is out of combat, but with each healing spell, the gamesmaster rolls two six-sided dice—and if doubles come up, the party has been ambushed by a random creature.

<sup>32</sup> The **Great Spider**, ghod of the fan religion known as Spiderism, notoriously consumes people’s souls when they die. Fallert played some part in the founding of the Spiderist “faith,” along with Al Kuhfeld and John Kusske. As a system element, the Great Spider exists primarily to serve as a check for priests, who must sacrifice sons to the Great Spider or die themselves. Unlike warriors, priests at least get to roll for whether or not they have a son or daughter, albeit no specific chance is stipulated: most likely, the intention was that priests roll two dice, and if they come up doubles, the child is born. Once born, a child must be sacrificed—but if the priest goes through with the sacrifice, all priestly abilities are lost, and the priest becomes a starting warrior. This suggests that priests are not worshippers of the Great Spider, exactly, but are nonetheless beholden to its commandments. But apparently even the Great Spider was no match for Herbie Popnecker, as the text here hints—also see endnote 22 above regarding the “Spider-shaped Lollipop.”

<sup>33</sup> Presumably, this means that sons can make peace with dogs when encountered as baddies.

<sup>34</sup> Although the *Rules* generously use the compound form “S/he” when describing the party leader in the example on p.6 and elsewhere, this passage on daughters (compare to sons) gives a less complimentary picture of **female adventurers**. While priests are not required to sacrifice their daughters to the Great Spider, this is probably because daughters are so great a burden that keeping them alive is its own check. VanGrasstek’s play reports in *Minneapa* do however evince female participants in the game: his September 22 report includes among its players “Patty as Phaedra the Amazon and Tepid the Priestess.”

<sup>35</sup> One idea conspicuously absent from the *Rules* is a corollary to the concept of alignment in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The notion that both warriors and priests are obligated to become “**chivalrous**” suggests that they essentially must behave lawfully. Wizards, who are “somewhat shifty and occasionally untrustworthy,” do not become chivalrous, and may thus be seen as more chaotic in nature. Note that in Blackmoor, wizards were frequently antagonists. The *Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger #2* talks of how the heroes “bagged the evil wizard of the dungeon” on one occasion, and that on another, “they supposedly got a wizard that time too.” Heroes and Priests in Blackmoor were expected to be lawful.

<sup>36</sup> The exact disadvantage of fighting by mere torchlight without the superior illumination of light balls (or the staff of eternal light) is not specified in the *Rules*. The intention was perhaps that personae suffer a penalty to their to-hit rolls, say, subtracting one the result.

<sup>37</sup> Although the *Rules* contain no other mention of **unicorns**, which could be a serious impediment to advancement for wizards, we do find them in VanGrasstek’s play records. In the September 22, 1974 session, the persona Phaedra already possesses a unicorn at the start of the game. Then, during play, “they find another unicorn, which Phaedra tames (not only is she a female virgin, but she is also carrying 16 ounces of unicorn perfume...)”

<sup>38</sup> The “**second line**” here refers to the party marching order in battle. See p.16 for more on the size of the front line (ordinary four can fight abreast), but effectively weapons usable from the second line are ranged weapons.

<sup>39</sup> The property that the great sword “delivers a blow greater than the weapon normally does” apparently does not result in the great sword dealing more than one hit in damage, but gives the great sword +1 to hit, as if it were a magic weapon.

<sup>40</sup> How much less effective a warrior or priest becomes when wearing a shield is not described in the *Rules*, but in keeping with other penalties under consideration, subtracting one from attack rolls seems appropriate.

<sup>41</sup> While no specific system is given in the *Rules* for the “**Medi-kit**,” it clearly aids priests in healing after battles. VanGrasstek’s September 22, 1974 play record describes the situation after a tense battle, where “the priests are hard at work with their medi-kits. The party eventually clears itself of all wounds...”

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<sup>42</sup> Many items in the general store, as the *Rules* p.17 suggests, are present for making peace with enemies “by offering gifts, most often food of some sort.” Cans of **garbage** might not seem like an obvious bribe for peace, but VanGrasstek’s play record for September 22, 1974 shows the party making peace with bears with an “offering of three cans of garbage,” which is sufficient to let the party pass. Later in the same play record, however, we see that these gifts aren’t always so efficacious. In another chamber, where the party finds seven bears, “two of the bears have a sweet tooth for the garbage, and the remaining five attack.”

<sup>43</sup> Saurian brandy will be known to fans of the original *Star Trek*, from episodes like “The Enemy Within.”

<sup>44</sup> VanGrasstek’s play report for October 27, 1974 includes “a chamber that was filled with crazed Italians, but they were easily pacified by the **Ragu** and meatballs.”

<sup>45</sup> **Simulacra** are, aside from sages, the only form of non-player character hireling encountered in the *Rules*. They have no concept of loyalty or morale, unlike hirelings in *Dungeons & Dragons*—instead, they strictly obey the party leader.

<sup>46</sup> The combat **initiative** system (albeit one where the baddies always attack first) described here in the *Rules* is a departure from *Dungeons & Dragons*, which had no initiative system at this time. Note however that the rules do not specify what order party members attack, which may be relevant because karma is granted only to the dealer of the killing blow to a baddie. As a clarification, the order of attack rotates around the table as per turns in a board game like *Monopoly*. Note that wizards must declare which ball they are using in a given round before any other persona attacks.

<sup>47</sup> Although the text here reads “light ball,” presumably the intention is that a wizard may only use one type of ball of any kind per round of attack. Once cast, light balls last for an entire combat, but no longer.

<sup>48</sup> *Minneapa* #39 captures some of Mike Wood’s notes as an observer of early (March 2, 1974) dungeon descents, and he records an incident where rats took a persona hostage. As a result, the party apparently reached a trade agreement with the rats where large quantities of **cheese** were exchanged for gold scavenged by the rats in the dungeon—though the quantities of cheese required were so large that the personae needed to transport it by carrying it in a boat.

<sup>49</sup> Although the *Rules* stipulate that “there is a **morale** factor,” no morale system for baddies is given. Gamesmasters may consider rolling two six-sided dice when a battle seems to be turning against the baddies, and if doubles are rolled, the baddies will flee.

<sup>50</sup> The text here is almost certainly a typo, as both the first and second number are described as representing the number of hits a baddie can take. The intention was apparently that the first number is the amount of hits that a baddie can withstand before perishing: for a dog, this is only one, for a dragon, twenty-six. The second number seems to be the number that the monster needs to exceed (rolling two six-sided dice) in order to hit a persona. A minotaur thus needs only a 6 to hit, and if it hits, it hits two targets at a time; a hoplite needs to roll a 9 to hit.

<sup>51</sup> In other words, the second number indicates the sum that must be rolled by a player with two six-sided dice in order for a persona to hit this type of baddie with a particular weapon. So, for a troll, either an axe or mace will hit on a roll of 9 or above, while with a sword only a 12 will hit. No other weapons are effective against trolls. Hoplites are more forgiving: a spear hits them on a 7 or higher, and any other weapon hits them on a 9 or above.

<sup>52</sup> The original text of the *Rules* is illegible here; the original word seems to have been typed over. “Orc” was agreed to by VanGrasstek as the best replacement.

<sup>53</sup> VanGrasstek’s play report for September 22, 1974 includes a scene where “the party is attacked by giant **rolling meatballs**. The battle is fairly quick and slimy, ending with the party victorious and gravy-stained.”

<sup>54</sup> Given that the *Rules* omit the “number appearing” columns from this table, we infer that only one mythical beast of a given type appears when they are rolled.

<sup>55</sup> Craig VanGrasstek (1959–) had moved in Minn-Stf circles for a few years before 1974, more on account of his interest in comic books than in science fiction. After 1975, he drifted away from fandom, especially when he departed for graduate school in Washington D.C. in 1981. Although he attended Gen Con once, in 1976, where he recalls meeting Gary Gygax and others, he never played *Dungeons & Dragons* except through the Minneapolis dungeon variants. Today, he is an expert on trade policy: he received a doctorate in political science from Princeton, has taught at Harvard and Georgetown, and has authored several books in the field.