

the DM should determine beforehand the amount of the guns' use and the extent of their effect. A pre-set limit on the evolution of the weapons and the DM's firm control of their use will make it impossible for the weapons to disrupt the balance of the game.

Steven Zamboni  
Sacramento, Calif.

## Jester adjustments

Dear Editor:

The article in DRAGON #60 about elves was superb, as were the sections on alignment and cantrips. Then came a new NPC class, the Jester. I thought the Jester was very well done, but I found three mistakes.

First, on Table I, the experience level is ten levels higher for the first ten categories than it should be. A simple typographical error, but still . . .

Second, according to the article half-orcs may achieve 4th level — but this is wrong. In order to become a Jester, a charisma of 13 or greater is needed, and no half-orc may possess a charisma rating higher than 12 (see Character Race Table III, page 15, PH).

Finally, Jesters gain spell power as they advance in level. Unfortunately, halflings and dwarves may advance to respectable level, thus gaining the ability to cast spells of a magical nature. This is a power specifically prohibited to either race. I find this particularly ironic because Mr. Moore (the author) once wrote, "Dwarves do not use any magical spells . . ." (DRAGON #58, page 25).

All told, I still have great respect for Mr. Moore's writing skills, as I do for all the contributing authors to your magazine.

Richard Falkenrath, Jr.  
Little River, Calif.

*We plead guilty to the first count, Richard. It was indeed a "simple" typesetting error; call it nine errors, if you want to get particular, but don't blame us for ten of 'em. The level numbers 11-19 at the top of the experience point chart should be 1-9, obviously — but level 10 is supposed to be level 10.*

*However, I think we can debate your second and third complaints. Neither the author (Roger Moore) nor the editor (me) thought about the half-orc's charisma limit before the article was printed — but remember that the limit of 12 does not apply to other half-orcs, and a half-orc's charisma with respect to others of the same race can be higher than that. (See pages 16-17, PH.) A DM who wants to use a half-orc jester NPC could justify it by*

*allowing the character to meet the charisma qualification as long as the character's pre-generated score for that ability is 13 or higher.*

*I can't explain the final "mistake" you pointed out by referring to a rule book, but I can ask you to accept the "fact" that the jester, as presented in that article, is a unique character class, and dwarves and halflings who are members of that class are likewise unique in their ability to manipulate (however inefficiently and unpredictably) some of the forces of magic. As support for that line of reasoning, I offer this month's edition of "From the Sorcerer's Scroll" (page 9), wherein Gary Gygax describes his concept of a jester as a character — which can be human, gnome, or halfling — with "some magic-user spells and illusionist magic." If both he and we have made a "mistake," then at least we're in good company. — KM*

## 'Just a game'

Dear Editor:

I have been playing D&D and AD&D for three and a half years. I have found it very enjoyable and interesting, and also quite harmless.

Yet I am constantly reading articles by people who claim that D&D gets kids into demons, lowers their respect for life, and is anti-religious. Some of these people claim to have played D&D. One man said he was going to raise money through donations and "buy as many copies of the game as I can and then burn them." In some schools D&D has been prohibited.

Why is it that people can't see that D&D is just a game, and one of the best games around?

Nels Bruckner  
Jasper, Ore.

*Nels' letter is one of many on this subject that we've received over the past year or so, and it asks the same question we've asked: Why, indeed, can't these people see that the D&D® and AD&D™ games are just games? Games that are meant as diversions, games that are meant to be fun, but games. Nothing more — and nothing less. What's wrong with playing a game?*

*We're sure you've all seen the stories in newspapers and magazines and on television. (Our critics are good at getting attention in the media, and this issue makes for sensational headlines.) Basically, those who criticize our games say they somehow promote*  
(Continued on page 70)

## The rule to end all rules

If you couldn't find any victory conditions in the rules for PLANET BUSTERS (issue#64), here's an extra paragraph that should make everything clear. The rules do mention that players are "all seeking to bring the most planets under their control," but we accidentally left out this more detailed description of how to win.

## How to win

When the Peace Treaty counter is drawn, the game immediately ends. The Peace Treaty must be revealed, and no further actions can be taken. Each player totals the number of planets melded in his or her Sphere of Influence. The player with the greatest number of planets — not the most points on planet counters — is the winner.

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# Out on a Limb

(From page 3)

violence and evil, devil-worship and the occult, that they're so popular that many people spend lots of time playing them.

Well, that last accusation may be true: many thousands of people do spend a lot of time playing the D&D and AD&D games. Just as many other people spend a lot of time playing baseball or golf or tennis or watching television. Any hobby presumably carries the potential for being too absorbing and time-consuming. But that doesn't mean all hobbies should be banned, does it?

As for the other observations made by certain self-appointed critics . . .

"The D&D game encourages violence and glamorizes evil" — Nothing could be further from the truth. Sure, there are evil monsters and characters; otherwise there wouldn't be anything for the forces of good to defeat. Any Dungeon Master who uses the game rules in the manner they were intended to be used — and any player in that DM's campaign — will get the message loud and clear: It pays to be good. The most successful and longest-lived characters are those who disdain evil

and work together, cooperating to defeat mutual foes. And, as we've said many times in these pages, the most interesting campaigns are those that challenge players to use their wits to conquer their foes. "Hack 'n' slash" campaigns exist, but neither this magazine nor this company encourage such behavior.

"The D&D game promotes devil-worship and the occult" — Only someone who takes the game materials totally out of context could make this statement (and sadly, that's exactly what some of our critics do). Sure, demons and devils can be found in the games — along with many other monsters and creatures, all on paper, as numbers and statistics, for one purpose and one purpose alone: to give the players something to battle against. They add flavor to the game, which, our critics fail to remember, takes place in a fictional world of heroic fantasy.

In this world, as in the many worlds described in the great works of fantasy literature, there are "gods" that can play a role in the lives of the mortals who make up the world. In this world, magic exists. But anyone who attempts to make more of it than that, has simply not bothered to read the rule books. The D&D and AD&D games don't encourage evil, etc., any more than the MONOPOLY game causes its players to become ruthless real-estate barons who evict widows and orphans. Nobody who wins a MONOPOLY game is deluded into thinking they can go out and spend all that lovely play money, are they?

Certainly, in our democracy, our critics are entitled to their views. But so are we. And if you know someone who has received an incorrect impression of our hobby, you don't have to let that misconception continue. Invite that person to roll up a character and see what the games are all about. We think that's the best argument anyone could make for the hobby.

And, try to remember how the games are intended to be played. We can't keep anyone from playing the game in an improper fashion, but we hope your characters and campaigns will always live up to the standards we try to maintain. — KM

(player) pointed out that when the weapons came in contact with the wall, the shadows would naturally "follow" the weapons and be touching them on the wall and therefore striking the umbra. Also, how can the umbra possibly have such a low armor class? How hard can it be to hit a shadow with a shadow? (It wouldn't take much physical exertion.) Can an umbra parry? Does the shadow of a shield do any good? Ms. Berger had an excellent idea, but left quite a lot to be desired.

Rob Sylvain  
Hampton, N. H.

You're right, Rob, about the shadow of a weapon "following" the weapon to the target. This will happen virtually every time a flesh-and-blood character battles an umbra, because there's no way an umbra can be located between a light source and the character's weapon (which would make shadows trail away from the umbra). As the DM, you could rule that a weapon attack cannot hit an umbra if the weapon strikes the surface the monster is covering. The attack must obviously be an attempt to hit the umbra with the weapon's shadow; the player must specify that his or her character is purposely missing the surface with a weapon attack, and then carry out that attack so that the shadow of the weapon falls across (through?) the umbra as the weapon is swung or propelled. Hitting the wall doesn't hurt the umbra, just as hitting the umbra does no damage to the wall it's on.

How do you handle it when somebody makes a big shadow of his sword? Let him try to score a hit with the shadow, if he's figured out the way to do it. The procedure for doing that seems to be adequately spelled out in the article. Can an umbra parry? It probably wouldn't think to do that, because it's not very smart, but that's up to you. Does the shadow of a shield do any good? As indicated in the text, only if it's a shield with a magical bonus. An umbra's shadow-attack will simply pass over a normal shield, just like it would move over any other solid surface it contacts before reaching the target.

As for the question on the umbra's armor class: My idea of an umbra is a shadow with rough edges, such as might be created in the light given off by a flickering torch or lantern. It changes shape almost continually as certain areas fade and others grow darker, and maybe it can only be damaged by a shadow-strike that hits it where its shadow-essence is strongest (darkest). No matter how you define the "reason," if one is necessary, it seems proper to make this shadowy creature hard to hit (harder than a shadow or even a wraith), considering the way it must be hit. — KM

## 'One of the best'

Dear Editor:

The Faerie Dragon in issue #62 of DRAGON Magazine is one of the best monsters presented ever. Especially useful was the information on what Faerie Dragons eat and detail of the creature's activities. In "Pursuit and Evasion of Pursuit" in the DMG, food is listed as a distraction. But a monster will not stop for any kind of food, only for those which are normally eaten. What a creature eats should become mandatory information for all monsters, just like AC, treasure type, and so forth.

Jeff Kraus  
Port Washington, Wis.

## Umbra troubles

Dear Editor:

I decided to try putting an umbra (from DRAGON #61 Bestiary) up against the players in my campaign, and found that it brought up many problems. Naturally, they at first hit the umbra itself on the wall with their weapons. I said it didn't appear to have any effect.

Then they realized what to do, and one of them got an idea to wave his sword close to the light source, in effect making a giant shadow of a sword. Smart, but how do I handle it? So, I said that it ran away.

When I told them about the monster, one

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