New Beginnings
by Mark Acres
Inn at Boremium
Scale: 1 square = 2 feet

Bed

Shelves

Pantry

Stove

Meat Storage

Dish shelves

Balcony

Fireplace

Table

Chair
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................... 3
Chapter One: Creating Characters ............... 4
Chapter Two: Tips for Beginning Players ......... 9
Chapter Three: Tips on Role Playing ............. 12
Chapter Four: What Would You Do? ............... 15
Chapter Five: A First Adventure ................ 25
Character Sheet ................................ 31

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a challenging new realm of fantasy adventuring on the continent of Taladas in the DRAGONLANCE® campaign world of Krynn!

New Beginnings is specially designed to help new players of the AD&D® 2nd Edition game begin campaign play in Taladas. However, even experienced Dungeon Masters should realize that starting any new campaign, especially with beginning players, is a challenging task indeed.

The players must assimilate a great deal of material in a relatively short period of time, and unless that material is presented in a clear, organized fashion, new players may become discouraged. Using New Beginnings, DMs will find they can get new players started quicker, and with far less frustration than would otherwise be the case.

Experienced players and DMs should find that this module can still be quite helpful as they move their campaigns from other settings into Taladas, where many things, including some game rules, are different from the established norm.

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE

Because New Beginnings helps players begin campaign play on the newly-described continent of Taladas, it is assumed that readers of this material already own the Time of the Dragons boxed set which contains the Taladas campaign setting itself. Players who don’t have the boxed set will need to hook up with a group adventuring in the Taladas setting in order to use this module.

Further, this module uses the AD&D 2nd Edition game rules. Players should have access to the AD&D 2nd Edition Players’ Handbook, and DMs should have a copy of the AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Master’s Guide. Finally, it is recommended, although not necessary, that the DM have access to the DRAGONLANCE Adventures hardcover book.

Most of the material in this module is for use by both players and DMs. All of the text except that in the final chapter may be read by players and DMs alike. The text in the final chapter, and the maps marked “DM’s Map” are for the DM only.

New Beginnings is divided into five chapters. Chapter One helps new players to create a character for campaign play in the Taladas setting. It includes a step-by-step review of the character creation process, tips on choosing character races and classes for a Taladas campaign, and a new character sheet. Permission is granted for players to photocopy the new character sheet for personal use only. Experienced players may use Chapter One without the aid of the DM to help them create a Taladas campaign character. The character must be approved by their DM for use in his or her game, however. New players should use Chapter One along with the DM to help them in the process of creating Taladas campaign characters.

Chapter Two outlines many helpful tips for beginning players. These include suggestions about how to make gaming sessions more fun for everyone involved. The chapter covers advice on such important topics as equipping the character, gathering information, and group tactics. Players may read this information for themselves, or DMs can share it with new players in an informal way.

Chapter Three helps new players “round out” their newly created character, by adding distinctive personality traits and personal goals for the character, and stresses the importance of good role playing. Like Chapter Two, it may be read by the players alone or discussed by a group.

Chapter Four presents a series of “What Would You Do?” encounters for individual characters within each character class. These encounters present typical situations that might normally confront a first level character on the continent of Taladas. Players decide what their character would do in each situation, and determine the outcome. Suggested courses of action and answers to relevant rules questions are printed in boxes so players can see how their own solutions measure up to those of more experienced players (and how well they conform to the rules of the game).

Chapter Four also contains an interesting “dry run” encounter for an entire party. This is designed to let players see how their different characters can interact to solve common problems and overcome common obstacles.

Lastly, Chapter Five contains a short capsule adventure that the DM can use to launch his or her Taladas campaign. The adventure has been designed so that the players can encounter many of the differing races, cultures, and religions that make Taladas unique and challenging.

ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout this book, standard abbreviations are used without further explanation. For example, “AC” means armor class, “hp” stands for hit points, and so on. All references to existing source materials are to the AD&D 2nd Edition books.

Common abbreviations used are:

PHB = Player’s Handbook
DMG = Dungeon Master’s Guide
RBT = The Rule Book to Taladas
GBT = The Guide Book to Taladas
CHAPTER ONE: CREATING CHARACTERS

As a beginning player of the AD&D® game, you are about to become someone new! This new persona is the character you will create and role play throughout the campaign. This chapter explains, in a simple, step-by-step fashion, the best way to go about creating that character.

WHAT YOU NEED

In order to create a character, you will need the following things:

1. Scratch paper and pencils;
2. A set of gaming dice, including at least one 4-sided die (d4), one six-sided die (d6), one eight-sided die (d8), one ten-sided die (d10), and one twenty-sided die (d20);
4. A copy of The Rule Book to Taladas from the Time of the Dragons boxed set;
5. A character sheet. It is strongly recommended that players photocopy both sides of the character sheet on pages 31 and 32 of this booklet for their personal use.

New players should create characters only with their DM's help and guidance. The DM needs the above materials, and a copy of the AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Master's Guide. A copy of DRAGONLANCE® Adventures is strongly recommended, although not strictly necessary.

BEFORE STARTING

Before beginning the character creation process, players must know which of the several methods for rolling basic ability scores their DM wants them to use. Be sure to clear the method to be used with the DM who will be running your Taladas campaign.

Throughout the process of creating a character, make all notations on the character sheet in pencil; almost everything you write will eventually need to be erased and altered as the character progresses through his or her life of adventure.

Make all calculations needed in the character creation process on scratch paper; enter only the final results on the character sheet.

Finally, it would be helpful to read through this entire chapter once before beginning.

CHARACTER CREATION STEPS

1. Write or print your own name in the space on the character sheet marked "player."
2. Using the method approved by your DM, roll dice to determine the character's six ability scores. Jot down the six ability scores on scratch paper. Don't enter them on the character sheet yet; they may be modified.
3. Choose the character's race. This is an extremely important decision. The choice is limited only by the minimum and maximum ability scores allowed for all races (humans are exempt from this restriction). Players should consult "Table 7: Racial Ability Requirements" in the PHB and "Racial Ability Requirements for New Races" in the RBT. Also, see "Choosing The Character's Race," below.
4. If the character is nonhuman (elf, dwarf, Bakli, etc.), consult "Table 8: Racial Ability Adjustments" in the PHB and "Racial Adjustments for New Races" in the RBT. Add or subtract the appropriate modifiers for each ability to the scores obtained in Step 2.
5. If the character has a Strength score of 18, roll percentile dice to determine Strength bonus as explained in the PHB.
6. Enter the adjusted ability scores in the appropriate spaces on the character sheet.
7. Consult Tables 1-6 of the PHB. Enter the information relevant to each ability score in the spaces provided on the character sheet. For example, a character with a Strength of 9 would enter 35 for "Wgt Allow," 90 for "Max Press," and so on.
8. Enter the information on the character's special racial abilities and limitations in the spaces provided. Each entry should be a brief note to help the player remember the ability during play. For example, under "Racial Abilities" for a half-elf character, the following notes would be proper:
   - Resist sleep and charm-related spells, 30%.
   - Infravision, 60 feet.
   - Spot concealed door, 1 in 6.
   - Find concealed, 1 in 3.
   - Find secret door, 1 in 2.

Special racial abilities are summarized in the PHB and the RBT. Limitations include maximum obtainable experience levels in certain classes (available from the DM) and miscellaneous other restrictions in the race descriptions.

9. Choose the character's sex and enter this in the place provided on the character sheet.
10. Determine the character's age, height and weight and enter the information in the appropriate spaces on the character sheet. Consolidated age, height and weight tables are included at the end of this chapter. Do not determine the character's maximum age; this is for the DM alone to determine and know.
11. Consult the consolidated movement chart at the end of this chapter to determine the character's
base movement number. Enter this number in the space provided on the character sheet.

12. Choose the character’s class. Nonhuman characters may be eligible to be multi-classed. Class options available to a character are restricted by the character’s ability scores (Table 13, PHB) and race (as noted in the race description). Before choosing a character class, see “Choosing the Character’s Class” below. When the choice is made, enter the information in the space provided on the character sheet.

13. Choose the character’s alignment. See “Choosing the Character’s Alignment” below. Enter the chosen alignment in the space provided.

14. Determine the character’s hit points, as explained in the character class descriptions. Be sure to add any bonuses allowed for good Constitution scores.

15. Consult “Table 60: Character Saving Throws” of the PHB. Enter the numbers shown in the appropriate space on the character sheet. In the space next to each saving throw number, note any modifiers that might apply to some throws. For example, paladins gain a +2 to all saving throws, while dwarves receive a saving throw bonus based on their Constitution score.

16. Make notes in the spaces provided for any special abilities or limitations of the character’s class. For example, a paladin character would have numerous notes under class abilities, such as:

   - Detect evil intent—60 feet.
   - +2 all saving throws.
   - Immune to disease.

These notes are for the player’s own reference during play. In the class abilities space, players should also record their scores for such things as thieving abilities (for thief class characters), spheres of access (for priest class characters), moon of influence (for Taladan wizards), and so on.

17. Enter the character’s experience level on the character sheet. All new characters begin at level one.

18. Enter “20” in the space for THAC0 on the character sheet.

19. Together with the DM, determine what, if any, weapon proficiencies, secondary skills, and languages the character knows. Enter these, along with the appropriate ability score modifiers in the space provided. (The DM must tell the players whether or not he is using the rules for proficiencies. He should also indicate to the players how he intends to handle the question of languages. The DM should consult the “Languages” chapter in the RBT in particular concerning this question.)

20. In cooperation with the DM, players whose characters can cast spells should determine what starting spells are available to them. Wizards should record these on a separate sheet of paper which will become their spell book. Priests should already have determined their spheres of access in earlier consultation with the DM.

21. Together with the DM, players should determine their starting available money, and record this amount under “Current Funds.”
Additional Character Sheet

Data

The back of the character sheet provides space to record equipment, weapons, armor, and magic items. The DM will determine how characters may equip themselves. Usually, DM's allow beginning characters to spend money from their starting funds to buy equipment at standard prices. Some DMs prefer to wait, and let equipping the character be a part of the first adventure. Certain Taladas characters have their starting equipment already specified for them.

The back of the character sheet also provides spaces to record the spells (if any) that a character currently has available. When the characters decide what spell or spells to have prepared for the first day’s adventuring, they should be entered here, along with any pertinent data about the spell.

There is a space on the front of the character sheet to record attacks allowed per round. The DM should help the character fill in this space, based on class, level, and the type of proficiency rules (if any) being used.

Choosing the Character’s Race

The race chosen for a character is extremely important. Race can effect the character's choice of classes, advancement in the chosen class or classes, alignment, background and personality.

In the Taladas campaign, there are more races to choose from than those given in the standard AD&D® 2nd Edition rules, and even more than are included in the DRAGONLANCE® Adventures supplement!

The DM should carefully review with new players their various choices of race. Particular attention should be paid to giving players at least a brief summary of background information about the new PC races in Taladas. It is perfectly appropriate for the DM to state frankly that he or she has some preference for using or not using certain new PC races. For example, a DM could certainly tell the players that it will be more difficult to work an ogre or Bakali PC into the type of campaign he or she has planned. However, a good DM will certainly leave all options open to those players who want to try them.

For the player, the most important consideration in the choice of character race should not be game rules, mechanics, or even how relatively powerful a given race seems to be. As new players become more familiar with the game, they will see that the game rules balance out the various special abilities of the different races, so that no one race is really more powerful than any other.

Instead, the real questions a new player should ask himself are these: How well can I play the role of a character of this race? How much fun will it be to pretend to be of this race? Would I enjoy taking the role of a Bakali, or an ogre, or a dwarf?

A common mistake that new players often fall into is devaluing humans. The nonhuman races generally have the ability to combine classes; for example, an elf can be a fighter/mage/thief all rolled into one. However, new players should realize that such multi-class characters tend to advance in level at a much slower pace than single-classed characters. Don’t forget that while humans have no special abilities, they have no special limitations either, a fact that can become very important as the campaign begins to develop.

Choosing the Character’s Class

Like race, character class is an important decision. It really boils down to this question: How will the character make his or her way in the world? If force of arms is the desired answer, the player should choose the warrior class. If the mysteries of magic are attractive, the player should choose the wizard class. The priest and rogue classes each have certain abilities that are very desirable as well.

Again, the basic question is which class will be more fun for the player to play. A player who thrives to combat will probably do poorly as a kender thief; a player who dreams of casting powerful magics would not be well suited for a warrior character.

In the Taladas campaign, however, there is much more to choosing character class than in other AD&D campaigns. The DM should take pains to make the players aware of the many different types of characters that can be found in each class in Taladas, as these are summarized in the player character kits provided in the RBT.

It is especially important for DMs to take note of the special rules that pertain to priests in the Taladas campaign. The DM should be familiar with the information on priests in the DRAGONLANCE Adventures book if possible, and most definitely with those rules outlined in the RBT. These new rules should be made available to all players who are even considering the priest class for their characters.

Players who intend to play together as part of a group might want to consider group balance in choosing their class as well. It is usually important to have the special capabilities of all four major classes represented in a party of adventurers. For example, a group of eight elven fighter/mage/thieves might suddenly find themselves in desperate need of a priest when confronted by a horde of undead, or even when deeply engaged in a serious battle. Magic is often needed to aid even the most
heroic fighter. The talents of a thief can turn the tide in many cases, and sometimes help avoid an unnecessary and costly fight. All the classes are equally important to the success of a group, and the success of the group is almost always important to the success (and survival) of the individual characters.

**Choosing the Character's Alignment**

Before players choose their characters' alignments, the DM should be certain that they understand that the moral alignment they choose may greatly effect their courses of action in the future. While players are free to choose between a good, neutral, or evil moral alignment, the choice of an evil alignment is strongly discouraged. First of all, it is much more difficult to be a successful evil character in a well run Taladas campaign. While there are certainly evil characters who thrive and prosper on the continent, all are governed by the basic law of Krynn—the law imposed by the High God. That is the Law of Consequence. While evil may be chosen, it is in the nature of evil to consume itself; the consequences of evil will be visited on the character sooner or later.

Players should not assume that their character's race automatically determines their alignment. In Taladas, there are ogres, goblins, minotaurs and many others who deviate from the natural tendency of their races toward evil. In some cases, this need not even impede their relations with similar beings. For example, a lawful good minotaur could champion the cause of justice (as he sees it) in the arena, and become a highly respected champion, even though the basic philosophy of minotaur society is rooted in lawful evil.
### Consolidated Height and Weight Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Height in Inches</th>
<th>Weight in Pounds</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf</td>
<td>43/41</td>
<td>130/105</td>
<td>1d10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elf</td>
<td>55/50</td>
<td>90/70</td>
<td>1d10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnome</td>
<td>38/36</td>
<td>72/68</td>
<td>1d6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-elf</td>
<td>60/58</td>
<td>110/85</td>
<td>2d6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kender</td>
<td>32/30</td>
<td>52/48</td>
<td>2d8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>60/59</td>
<td>140/100</td>
<td>2d10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakali</td>
<td>70/68</td>
<td>160/120</td>
<td>2d12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goblin</td>
<td>40/38</td>
<td>74/70</td>
<td>2d8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minotaur</td>
<td>84/82</td>
<td>180/170</td>
<td>2d6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogre</td>
<td>104/98</td>
<td>230/220</td>
<td>2d8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Format is male/female

### Consolidated Age Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Starting Age</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Maximum Age Range (Base + Variable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5d6</td>
<td>250 + 2d100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elf</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5d6</td>
<td>350 + 4d100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnome</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3d12</td>
<td>200 + 3d100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-elf</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>125 + 3d20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kender</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3d4</td>
<td>100 + 1d100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1d4</td>
<td>90 + 2d20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakali</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>100 + 5d10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goblin</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1d6</td>
<td>70 + 2d10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minotaur</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1d8</td>
<td>100 + 2d20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogre</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1d10</td>
<td>50 + 4d20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consolidated Movement Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Base Movement Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elf</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-elf</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnome</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kender</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakali</td>
<td>9 (Swim 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goblin</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minotaur</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogre</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beginning players who are completely new to the AD&D® game may feel overwhelmed at first. This is only natural—it seems that there’s a lot to learn. Rest assured that once you’ve played in a few gaming sessions, the rules will seem like second nature to you. However, there are several things you can do to make playing the game more fun. Some of these are game related; others are of a more social nature.

**Equipping Your Character**

When it comes time to purchase the equipment for your first character, you will quickly discover that, just as in real life, you are on a limited budget—in most cases, a very limited budget. With so many goodies to choose from, how can you make the most of the few silver pieces you have? Here are some suggestions for each character class:

**All Players**

There are a few items that every PC should have, simply because they have so many uses in so many different situations.

**Rope:** Every PC needs a length of rope, at least 50 feet or more if it can be easily carried given your other gear. Rope has obvious value for climbing, but it can also be used to bind prisoners, string a way across an otherwise impassable chasm, set a trap for pursuers, lash logs together to make a raft, and probably a thousand other things that you won’t realize until your next gaming session!

**Dagger or Knife:** Every PC (except those priests whose religions forbid its use) should have a dagger or at least a good, sharp knife. This is one of the few weapons that can be used when a foe is boxing or wrestling with you. A good knife can also be essential to survival in the wild. If nothing else, it gives you a good quick way to adjust the length of your rope!

**Flint and Steel:** Modern matches don’t exist in the fantasy world of Taladas. Rubbing two sticks together may eventually give you a few sparks to start your campfire, but it isn’t very practical for use in combat. Fire has so many uses in a campaign that it is almost suicidal to be without a source of fire—especially for characters who lack infravision. Such characters will need some source of illumination. Lanterns are best, but expensive; a few torches or candles should always be packed along.

**Pack, sack or bag:** Whether its a finely made backpack or a gunny sack, every character needs something to put stuff in so he can carry it around without being badly encumbered.

**Oil:** At least one flask of oil is highly recommended. Nothing slows down a mob of pursuers like some oil poured over the floor of a corridor and set on fire.

**Holy water:** This is an absolute must for priests, as it is required for a *bless* spell. Other characters will find it extremely useful against the lower forms of undead (skeletons, zombies, and the like).

**Food:** DMs take a dim view of characters who don’t think to eat. It always catches up with you.

**Wineskin:** Something for carrying water or
wine. Going without water is worse than going without food.

**Iron spike or piton:** An extremely versatile tool for traversing difficult terrain obstacles, especially when used in concert with a length of rope.

**Warrior Class**

**Weapons:** Don’t overload. Weapons are expensive and their weight adds up quickly. Two or three good weapons is usually plenty. At least one missile weapon (spear, bow and arrow, sling, etc.) can be extremely useful.

**Armor:** Starting out, you can’t afford the good stuff, so keep it simple. A shield is usually cheap bonus to armor class, but don’t be afraid to drop it if it gets in the way. Multi-classed characters and thieves must also be careful about the miscellaneous restrictions on them—such as no spell casting while wearing armor (except elven chainmail).

**Priest Class**

**Weapons:** Given the choice between more holy water or another weapon, take the holy water (you’re much more effective with it).

**Holy Symbols, mirrors, garlic:** Can also be effective against the undead. Always try to display your holy symbol prominently, so you won’t be fumbling for it when it comes time to dispel some threatening undead menace.

**Thief Class**

**Lockpicks:** Don’t forget to buy a set of thieves’ tools when you first equip your character. There’s nothing worse than not having the right tool to do an essential job.

**Armor and weapons:** Try to keep these at a minimum. Most all of your thieving abilities rely on being unencumbered.

**Wizards**

**Armor and weapons:** Don’t bother. Duck into the shadows or behind some hulking warrior when a fight breaks out. Try to save as much money as you can. You’ll need it when you get to higher levels for spells and magical items.

**Gathering Information**

Some players think the AD&D® game is a combat game, pure and simple. While it’s true that combat provides much of the thrill and excitement of the game, surviving combat makes the game even more fun. One way to increase the odds of survival is to gather information.

Before you rush right out to that first dungeon you hear about, ask some questions. What do the locals know about the area? What types of foes are you likely to encounter? What type of terrain will you have to cross to get to where you want to go? Who is that mysterious fellow at the next table listening to you as you question the innkeeper?

Many times the DM can be a gold mine of information—if the players think to ask. Other times, PCs must work harder to get necessary information. If you want to know what the enemy is up to, find people who are close to him. Do some favors, grease some palms, and vital tips will start flowing your way. Remember that in almost any organization or society, there is someone who will talk if given sufficient incentive.

**Group Tactics**

Each group of player characters is unique, with personalities and character capabilities all its own. Thus, it is almost impossible lay down hard and fast rules for group tactics while adventuring. There are a few general points, nonetheless, that you may find helpful.

First, try to protect the spell casters. Sure, they may seem useless at times, but there’s no replacing that timely feather fall or cure light wounds spell when you need it. At low experience levels, wizards are particularly vulnerable.

When travelling, whether outdoors or in dungeon environments, it’s usually a good idea to arrange your walking order so that the spell casters are near the center of the group. This makes them harder to hit with missile fire and often protects them in the first round or two of melee. During this time, they can cast spells that may turn the tide of battle.

Another rule to live by is to always post a guard. Whether camping out, staying at an inn, or having supper with the king of Armach,
have someone on guard. Remember to always expect the unexpected.

Along the same lines, try always to develop some standard formations and procedures. This is particularly useful in dungeon environments. Before opening the door to an unknown room containing unknown dangers, have the party arranged so that someone can listen at the door, another can open it, while still others provide cover, and spell casters are ready to let fly their magics.

If you can help it, never waste time squabbling over petty matters: Many a first level party has been wiped out while arguing about who's going to get the left over copper piece from the treasure horde. DMs love to catch unwary characters with their chain mail down.

Lastly, when all else fails, run away! Unless being true to her alignment prevents your character's fleeing, it is almost always better to live to fight another day.

**The Social Factor**

Gaming sessions are social events in the real world, as well as adventures in a fantasy world. Thoughtfulness for your fellow gamers will go a long way toward making the gaming session more fun for everyone. (It will also make the other players more willing to risk their characters' necks to save your character!)

Try to arrive on time. It is terribly annoying to have five or six characters all fixed up and ready to go adventuring, but feeling that they have to wait for the wizard to arrive.

Have the items you need with you. As a gamer, you will need pencils and paper. Having your own dice is a good idea; sets can be purchased in most hobby stores at very reasonable prices. Having your own copy of the AD&D® 2nd Edition Player's Handbook and other gaming supplements is also extremely helpful; you won't have to interrupt the DM all the time with rules questions.

Try your best not to be a rules lawyer. No matter how carved in stone a rule may seem, no two DMs will run the same encounter the same way or interpret the same rule the same way in all situations. Unless the DM has thrown the rule book away completely, try not to worry about the rules. The real fun of the game comes from the sense of drama, excitement, danger, and adventure, not from the game mechanics.

Try not to laugh too hard when the other fellow's character dies, and it's his own silly fault. Nobody likes to feel foolish. Next time, you may be the one who forgets to bring the holy water!

Encourage everyone to take an active role. When one or two players come to dominate a group, play can become stale; everything is always done in the same style and manner. Also, those who aren't participating probably aren't having much fun. Do what you can to encourage the more shy players to join in freely.

Last, but certainly not least, don't take things too seriously. Remember, it's only a game. Even when your beloved character dies—which may happen—remember that his or her funeral expenses will not be tax deductible in the real world. The purpose of the game is to have fun.
The AD&D® game is a role playing game. It isn't a board game, or a video game, which often derive their life from the rules or the components. Rather, the AD&D game derives its life, and its fun, from the interactions between the players and between the players and DM. The more each player can make his character seem like a living, memorable human being (or gnome, elf, dwarf, or whatever the case may be), the more fun the game will be for everyone.

**PERSONALITY TRAITS**

At this moment, your new character exists only on paper. As a player, your role in the game is to make this collection of numbers come to life. You do this by the way you make the character think, talk, and act.

It may seem that your choice of the character's race and class, along with his or her ability scores, would be enough to dictate what personality traits the character will have. Actually, this isn't the case at all. As is noted in the AD&D 2nd Edition Player's Handbook, two characters with identical scores, race, and class could have very, very different personalities.

Consider two warriors, both young human males. One might come from a background that has left him unsure of himself, and therefore eager (perhaps overeager) to prove himself. Such a character might be very careful not to appear to be afraid. This could be expressed in different ways. The unsure character might carry himself in a bold, arrogant way, swaggering, speaking his mind, perhaps becoming a bit of a bully. On the other hand, the unsure character might carry himself in a grim faced youth, always serious, always careful and methodical, yet always the first one into battle.

A statistical "twin" to this first young warrior might be a comical character—one who is deliberately full of bravado and bluster, not because he's unsure of himself, but simply because he and everyone else finds it amusing.

As you think about your own character, try to pick one or two definite personality traits and incorporate into your mental image of the character. Here is a list of a few such traits; you will doubtless think of many more:

- Grim
- Methodical
- Brooding
- Cheerful, even in adversity
- Zany sense of humor - a punster or joker
- Intellectual - always learning and teaching
- Elitist - thinks he's slightly better than others
- Scrupulously honest
- Well intentioned but easily led astray
- Hedonistic - addicted to "creature comforts" like a warm bed, excellent food, etc.
- Idealistic
- Romantic
- Courteous
- Plagued by feelings of guilt
- Taciturn - talks very little
- Blabbermouth - talks all the time
- Contemplative - likes to think things over, arrives at cool, clear-headed decisions
- Impulsive - makes snap decisions and plunges blindly into action
- Ruled by reason
- Ruled by passions
- Loves animals
- Detests the outdoors
- Lazy whenever possible
- Vain about dress or appearance
- Slovenly

Well, by now you get the idea. To start out, pick just one or two traits to emphasize as you act out the role of your character. Others will follow naturally.

**CASTING AGAINST TYPE**

"Casting against type" is a common expression used by film and stage directors. It means to fill a role with someone of a personality type contrary to that of the character. You can use this to create a highly interesting and often amusing personality for your AD&D game character as well.

Not all warriors need be brave and tough, nor all wizards wise and cultured. Try applying a personality contrary to the stereotypical norm of your character’s class or race. A
rough, boisterous wizard might make for an interesting character, just as a squeamish dwarf warrior might make for an amusing one. Have fun with it, and try to be original.

**Expressing Traits**

Personality traits are expressed in thought, word, and deed. In a role playing game, no one can know your character's thoughts unless you voice them or act them out. Through your character's words and deeds you let others know how his or her mind works.

**Language**

Try to create a characteristic pattern of speech for your character. Consider how different, and yet completely accurate, both of the following statements are. See how much they convey about the personality of the speaker:

"Look! A couple of hobgoblins! Let's jump 'em!"

"Ahem, excuse me, good comrades. There appear to be two rather nasty looking brutes, hobgoblins, I should say, quite near to us. Might I suggest that we attack post haste?"

Notice that both of these characters are saying the same thing, but in extremely different ways. Those differences communicate more than just the intended information; they also tell us about the personality of the characters.

**Voice**

Along with the actual words used, a character's voice can convey much about him. "Voice" refers to a combination of accent, pitch, and inflection. Is your character's voice high, medium, low, or downright guttural? How does he pronounce his vowels? Does he speak in short clips, a slow drawl, or a sing song? Pick a voice for your character, and try to stick with it. It will quickly become natural for you to use that voice whenever you're playing the character, and will greatly enhance the game.

**Gestures and Mannerisms**

If it suits your character's personality, use your hands when speaking as your character.

Whatever gestures seem to coincide with her voice will help to define the character even more. Facial expression is important too. When your character is angry, does she turn red-faced and bluster? Or does she coldly, quietly, arch one eyebrow? Both can convey a lot about the type of person the character really is.

**Character Goals**

Just like real people in real life, PCs should have goals that they strive for. Some obvious goals are imposed by the game system, such as staying alive and advancing in experience level. But these are merely mechanical goals—they don't tell us anything about the character.

A character's race and class will obviously have some influence on his goals, at lest his professional goals. For example, it is natural for warriors to crave glory and great victories, for wizards to constantly search for a better spell, or for priests to wish to advance within their hierarchy—if there is one. In simpler game terms these might translate into a warrior's quest that for that perfect weapon, a mage's search for a particular artifact, or a...
cleric’s desire to erect a great temple to his or her god.

There can be other goals as well, that characters of any class could have. These might be as mundane as owning a quiet inn in the country or as grandiose as changing the political structure of a society. In any case, they are goals that are not confined to any one class or race.

Try to pick at least two, distinct, specific goals your character will strive for throughout her career as an adventurer. You might want to link your character’s goals with the reason that he or she took up adventuring in the first place. After all, why would any sane person choose to risk his or her neck on a daily basis? For monetary gain alone? Perhaps; but doubtless there is more to the story than meets the eye.

NPCs

Players often need to be reminded that NPCs are people (at least most of the time), too! A good DM will bring some NPCs to life so vividly that the players will never forget them. But the DM can’t do that for every farmer, merchant, pilgrim and hobgoblin the PCs run into—there are just too many.

Often, as beginning characters gain some money, they begin to hire NPCs to perform certain tasks or services for them. Eventually, there may be hired, mercenary NPCs joining the characters in their adventures. The DM should take careful measures to make sure the PCs treat the NPCs like "real" people, but the players need to help in this as well.

For example, a PC warrior who hires some mercenary soldiers can hardly expect them to be the ones to open every dungeon door! NPC hirelings and henchmen aren’t cannon fodder to be blown away at the PC’s discretion or whim. If they are treated that way, the PC may find himself with serious problems: abandoned at the crucial moment, facing the consequences of an alignment change, or even worse, unable to hire anyone in the future because his reputation has preceded him!

THE IMPORTANT OF ROLE PLAYING

Once you have been involved in even one truly outstanding gaming session, you will understand that good role playing, actually taking on the role of the character, is the most important and the most fun element in any role playing game.

Good role playing is more important than the game rules. It is more important than victories or defeats. It is what makes the game fun. It is what makes some of the adventures that occur around the gaming table seem so real, so exciting, so funny, and so laden with pathos that you may still be remembering them and talking about them years into the future.
This chapter contains a sampling of encounters, or portions of encounters, designed for solo play. Players should use their newly created characters, fully equipped, to play these encounters.

Each encounter begins with a description of the basic situation faced by the player character. After this, you will find one or more questions pertaining to the encounter. The answers to these questions are boxed underneath the questions. Players should try to answer the questions, then compare their answers to those provided. In this way, new players have a chance to get familiar with both the rules of the game and the capabilities of their new characters.

The encounters are arranged in groups according to character class. The first group is for warriors, the second for wizards, and so on. Players should try the encounters in each group for which their character is equipped; for example, an elven fighter/mage/thief could try all of the encounters except those for priests. For additional practice, players can play all of the encounters, using the appropriate characters.

PCs are assumed to have all of their hit points and full equipment at the start of each of these encounters.

If played with a DM, these encounters can be embellished rather easily to add more life to the NPCs and a heightened sense of drama. However, in no way should these encounters actually count as part of the character's life. These are intended to be "dry runs," encounters that help new players learn to play.

At the end of this chapter is one encounter for a group of PCs. This encounter does require a DM, but it should still be considered a "dry run."

WARRIOR ENCOUNTERS

1. A STAND-UP FIGHT

Battle rages all around. To the left, right, rear and front, friendly forces are engaged in individual melees with ruthless Thenolite foes. For a brief moment, you find yourself unengaged, then, you see a Thenolite light infantryman raise his shield and spear.

"C'mon, then, dog!" he shouts at you.

The foe is only 10 feet away. He wears studded leather armor and a gleaming bronze helmet. He carries a large shield and a spear 9 feet long. On his belt, a longsword hangs in its scabbard.

Initial Questions:

A. What would you estimate this man's armor class to be? B. If your estimate is correct, what do you think you will need to roll to hit this foe (your THAC0 number)? C. If he hits you, how much damage will he probably do with his spear (ignoring any strength or other bonuses)? D. Using the standard initiative procedure, how would the DM determine who gets to attack first?

Once you've taken a stab at the questions, why not have a stab at the Thenolite? Here are the statistics you need to fight him:

Thenolite infantryman: AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); AL LE.

Fight a mock combat with the Thenolite. For purposes of this combat, ignore weapon specialization and proficiency rules, and use the standard initiative procedure. Don't do anything fancy; just have your character and the Thenolite beat on each other until one or the other is defeated. This ought to give you a pretty good feel for how the numbers work.

If you think you're comfortable with the basics, try these questions on for size:

E. Assume the DM is using the optional modifiers to initiative. What modifiers, if any, would apply to the Thenolite's initiative roll?

F. Assume the GM is using the optional

ANSWERS: Encounters 1

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If you think you're comfortable with the basics, try these questions on for size:

E. Assume the DM is using the optional modifiers to initiative. What modifiers, if any, would apply to the Thenolite's initiative roll?

F. Assume the GM is using the optional
“Weapon Type vs. Armor Modifiers.” What modifiers would apply to your character’s attacks on the Thenolite, and his on your character?

G. Assume you are a specialist with your weapon, and the Thenolite is not a specialist with his. How would this affect the combat between your character and him?

Now, try the combat again, using weapon speed to modify initiative and weapon type vs. armor modifiers. When this is through, you will have an even better idea of the fighting capabilities of your character.

2. **SURPRISE!**

You are exploring an ancient tomb from the time of the old empire of Aurim. Advancing cautiously down a narrow, stone passageway, you come to a sharp right turn. Peeking carefully around the corner, you find yourself staring directly into the eyes of a huge spider! The beast flexes its powerful mandibles in delight at the prospect of so healthy a meal!

**Initial Questions:**

A. Will the DM check for surprise at the start of this encounter?

B. Who is more likely to be surprised, your character or the spider?

C. How will the DM determine if your character, the spider, or both, are surprised?

D. If the spider is surprised, and your character is not, how will this benefit your character?

Try taking the role of the DM, and make the surprise checks for both your PC and the spider. If it is surprised, and your PC isn’t, go ahead and attack the spider. If your PC is surprised and the spider isn’t, it attacks. (In this case, the PC loses any adjustments to AC for high Dexterity.)

**Huge spider:** AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 10; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Poison (Type A); Size, M; AL N.

Note: If the PC is bitten by the spider, he must make a saving throw vs. poison with a +1 modifier. Failing the saving throw means the PC loses 15 hit points.

After playing out the surprise round, roll initiative and conduct a mock combat with the spider. Once you’ve finished, (or been finished, as the case may be) try tackling these questions:

**E:** If the DM was using the “Weapons vs. Armor Type Modifiers,” how would they apply to this combat?
F: What happens if the PC suffers multiple poisonous bites from the spider?

**ANSWERS:**

The poison is cumulative; each bite would add to the existing poison. The effects would be similar to the first bite but with greater intensity.

3. DEATH OVER DISTANCE

To play this encounter, assume your character has the following equipment: one melee weapon of your choice, one longbow, 20 flight arrows, one carefully scored flask of oil equipped with rag wicks, and flint and steel. Assume your character is proficient with the longbow, but not a specialist.

You stand atop a low knoll in the midst of an open field. Ilquar goblin war cries choke the air all around you. Suddenly, four of the menacing creatures scramble toward you, wielding their gnarled spears. They are about 200 yards away. Remaining calm, you pluck an arrow from your quiver and take aim.

Goblins (4): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5, 4, 4, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Spear); Morale 12; AL LE.

Initial Questions:

A. What is the PC’s “to hit” number with the first arrow shot? (Ignore weapon type vs. armor modifiers.)

B. What modifiers apply to the attack roll for the first shot?

C. How many shots is the PC allowed?

D. What modifiers apply to any shots after the first?

Go ahead and stage the fight, with your PC using his or her missile weapon and the goblins continuing to close. In the first round, the goblins will close to 140 yards; in the second round, they will close to 80 yards; in the third round, three (if that many are left) will charge, while the fourth (if left) will close to 30 yards, intending to join the fray next round.

The first time through, have your PC use her bow until the goblins have charged. The PC may use her melee weapons in the rounds following the charge.

When the fight is over, ask yourself this question:

E. In game terms, what are the effects of a charge?

Now, play out the encounter again. This time, let your PC light and hurl her flask of oil at one of the charging goblins (if any live long enough to charge).

When you’re done, take a shot at these questions:

F. How far can the PC throw the flask of oil?

G. What modifiers apply to the attack roll?

H. What damage will the oil do if it hits?
THIEF ENCOUNTERS

These encounters are specifically designed for thieves. Players whose characters are multi-classed should use primarily their thief characteristics when playing these encounters.

This series of encounters and questions is linked together to form a mini-adventure. Your thief PC has learned that a moderately well-off minotaur merchant in the great city of Kristophan has obtained a secret map. According to your PC’s sources, this map shows the location of a long-lost tomb of one of the great rulers of ancient Aurim. Such a find could be worth riches beyond imagining!

In addition, this merchant is known to dabble in the purchase and sale of the occasional minor magic item. Being that they have yet to begin their adventuring careers, your PC’s party of adventurers is sorely lacking in magic items.

Lastly, the merchant is also well-known as one who corrupts local officials and deals in stolen goods; in fact, the map itself was probably stolen.

Thus, for the greater good of your comrades (and your purse), you have decided to try to steal the map (and any magic items you might come across) from the modest villa of the merchant Baldameris!

4. PREPARATION

You realize that such a major score perpetrated a villa in the New City section of Kristophan is an ambitious task for a first level thief.

In preparation, you casually “case” the villa during daylight hours. The house has a high, two-story outer wall with no windows and only one large gate. A strange type of mark, like some weird lettering, adorns this gate. An armed guard lets servants come and go through this, the only entrance. At times, the barking of a dog echoes from inside the interior courtyard.

Questions:
A. What further information might your PC want before attempting to burgle this villa?
B. Where might such information be found? How?
As far as a time when the villa might be empty is concerned, it is common knowledge in Kristophan that even household servants are given the day off when major cases are to be tried in the imperial arena...

5. THE FIRST OBSTACLES

Arena day arrives. Baldameris, his family, and servants all leave the villa to attend to the bloody trials. They will almost certainly be gone until late in the evening. When night falls, and the Saiones patrol has just passed, you make your move. The first obstacle is the wall. It is a smooth, cracked masonry wall, slightly over 20 feet high. The gate is no better for climbing. To avoid attention, you have brought no rope.

Initial Questions:
A. What is your PC's chance to successfully climb the wall?
B. How fast can your PC climb the wall?

Go ahead and give the wall a try. Roll percentile dice. If the roll is greater than the percent chance to climb the wall, your PC fails; he simply isn’t able to climb this wall. Otherwise, the climb succeeds in one round.

Assuming the climb is successful, your PC is now at the top of the wall. Peering into the courtyard, he sees the armed guard carelessly strolling about the garden, occasionally stopping to listen to the distant cheers of the arena crowd, sighing in his displeasure at having to be on duty this night, then walking on. There is an entrance into the villa proper about 30 feet from your PC's position.

Stop for a moment and ask yourself these questions:
C. What is the first thing your PC must do?
D. Would it be better to try to sneak into the house, or sneak up behind the guard to attack him?

Now, roll to see if the climb down the wall is successful. Failure not only means falling damage, but noise as well, which will certainly alert the guard. For purposes of this encounter, assume the roll was successful. Now, the thief must move silently to the door. Try these questions:
E. What is your PC's chance to move silently?
F. What happens if he doesn't?
Guard, human (1): AC 5 (chainmail); MV 12; HD 1-1; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (S-M) or 1d12 (L) (Longsword); THAC0 20; AL N.

6. MAKING THE PINCH

Inside the house, you move quickly to the room where a bribed servant girl suggested that Baldameris might stash his valuables. It’s a large room on the second floor of the villa with a balcony overlooking the courtyard. Several large, curved couches are scattered about the room, with small marble tables adjacent to them. The back wall, about 20 feet long, features marble shelves filled with all types of ceramics, small sculptures, and bric-a-brac. Carefully, you begin examining the items on the shelf. After about three minutes, you reach for a small statue and find that it slides slightly on its base. A panel in the wall slides open. The doorway opens onto an extremely narrow, dark staircase. Descending cautiously, you reach a room beneath the floor level of the villa. Fortunately, you have flint and steel, and are able to light a candle you find on a small table in the room. The room is quite tiny, and, aside from the table and candle, contains nothing except a large wooden chest with iron bands. The chest is 3 feet long and stands about 2½ feet high.

The chest is locked.

Initial Questions:

A. What is your thief’s chance to pick the lock?
B. What should your thief do after picking the lock?

Make the rolls to attempt to pick the lock. If successful, make the rolls to find traps. (Notice that in actual play, the DM would make the find traps roll, and simply tell the player whether or not the character found a trap.)

C. Assume that your character made the rolls to pick the lock and then found the trap. Would it be best at this point to try to remove the trap?
D. If your character doesn’t try to remove the trap, what might he do instead?

Opening the chest, your character indeed finds his or her heart’s desire! There, neatly folded into a flat leather case, is the map! Also in the chest are several gemstones—two emeralds, five sapphires, and a diamond. Finally, there is a gold brooch, and a slender, tapered, white ivory rod about 15 inches long. In retrospect, think about these questions:

E. What course of action would you have taken had your character not been able to pick the lock?
F. What would have happened if your character failed to spot the trap?

7. ESCAPE?

His goods carefully stashed in a small bag worn on a strap across his or her shoulder, your PC thief snuffs out the candle and, attempting to move silently, climbs back up the narrow, steep stairs. Near the top of the stairs, he listens intently for any sound from the room above, but hears nothing. He passes back through the secret door, crosses to the marble shelves, and twists the small statue, once
again closing the door. He turns to leave the room and, 10 feet away, in the doorway, sees the guard walking toward him in the dimly lit corridor!

Roll 1d10 for both the guard and the thief! On a roll of 1-3, the party rolled for is surprised. If the thief is surprised, and the guard isn’t, the guard moves to attack immediately (the guard gets one free melee round). Combat then proceeds by rounds, using the normal procedure. Play out the fight, then have a go at these questions:

A. Assume the thief is not surprised, but the guard is. What is the best course of action for the thief?

B. Assume neither character is surprised. What is the best course of action for the thief?

Play out the remainder of the action. If the thief gets away down the wall, he will probably escape; the gate can be opened from the inside, and the guard will have to run through the house to get back down to the courtyard level. The thief has sufficient time to get away. Ah, but...

C. Where’s that dog?

8. CONFRONTATION WITH EVIL

Your PC has spent several days in the town of Jala in northern Armach, very quietly doing what good he could do. Word of your priest PC’s presence has spread, however; and given current conditions, especially the growing popularity of the cult of Usa, you have deemed it best for your character to move on.

As your PC leaves Jala, walking alone down a crude trail, she sees in the distance, by the moonlight, a furtive, human-sized form. The hooded figure flits behind a low ridge at the edge of an open field.
Your priest proceeds, slowly and cautiously, keeping a careful eye on the area where this figure disappeared. At a distance of about 150 yards, the ridgeline is suddenly alive with movement. Against the backdrop of the pale moon, two disheveled human figures shambling forward awkwardly, flanked on each side by four other figures—skeletons!

"Bring me her heart!" The command rings out through the night air, and the skeletons deftly start forward. The disheveled figures struggle to follow and keep up.

**Skeletons (8):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 7, 7, 6, 4, 3, 3, 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; AL N; Size M. Not affected by sleep, charm and cold-based spells. Holy water causes 2-8 points damage.

**Zombies (2):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 7, 9; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; AL N; Size M. Sleep, charm, hold and cold-based spells have no effect. Always attack last in round. Holy water does 2-8 points of damage.

**Initial Question:**
A. What is your PC’s best course of action?

In this first run-through, assume your PC successfully casts the *bless* spell on herself in the first round. In this round, the skeletons close to within 30 yards, while the 2 zombies only come within 90 yards. Now answer these questions:

B. Is there any chance the PC’s *bless* spell could fail at this point?

C. What are the effects of this spell?

In the upcoming round, melee is possible—the skeletons attempt to close on your PC and attack. In this round, your priest will certainly try to turn all the undead horde attacking her. Before she does, ask yourself these questions:

D. What is your PC’s chance to turn the undead?
E. What are the results of success?
F. If the attempt fails, can another attempt be made?

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Now, roll initiative for the round. Roll for your PC and the skeletons; do not roll for the zombies, as they will move only after everything else has happened (zombies always move last). If the skeletons win the initiative, all close on your PC; four are able to actually attack. Resolve the attacks and record damage to your PC (if any).

If your priest wins the initiative, or is still alive after taking four attacks, have her make the attempt to turn the undead. (As you do, role-play your character forcefully proclaiming, "Begone, foul creatures of the night!" or some similar traditional, heroic balderdash.) Note the results on scratch paper.

Finally, continue the combat round by round until it ends. Note that a PC with movement greater than 6 may have a good chance to run away from the zombies, as they are quite slow and always lose the initiative.

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### 9. FRIENDS CAN KILL YOU

Your PC is of lawful good alignment (at least for purposes of this encounter). She accompanies the rest of her group to a market place to buy supplies. While there, she notices the thief in the party picking the pocket of a passerby. Hmm...

There are two questions that the player should consider carefully. The answer to each effects the answer to the other:

A. What should your PC do?
B. What might be the results of not doing anything?
First level wizards can be difficult to play, especially solo, because they have so few hit points (virtually any successful attack will kill them) and only one spell with which to attack or defend themselves. Beginning wizards must often use their wits and their ability to make themselves valuable to others in order to stay alive. On the other hand, even a single first level spell can be tremendously effective—if the wizard gets to cast it!

**WIZARD ENCOUNTERS**

10. **SNOOZE TIME**

Your first level wizard PC is exploring an underground dungeon. He is in the middle of a long corridor, a mere 10 feet wide and extending about 100 feet in either direction. Without warning, four tough human bandits suddenly drop in, only 30 feet in front of him, through a trap door in the ceiling! Luckily, the wizard is not surprised. He has prepared one (your choice) of the following spells: *sleep* or *color spray*. Before casting the spell, ask yourself this:

A. How will the decision to use a spell affect the initiative die roll?

B. What will happen if your wizard chooses to cast the spell and loses the initiative?

C. What other options does your wizard have?

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**For now, let's assume your PC wizard does decide to cast his spell, and is lucky enough to win the initiative. The spell is cast.** Note that unless these bandits are more powerful than they look, they gain no saving throw against either of these spells! In fact these are 1 hit die bandits. *Sleep* will hit 2d4 of them; *color spray* will get 1d6 of them. Make the die rolls. Then let any unaffected bandits close and make their one attack. (THAC0 20; Dmg 1d6). Now, what about that spell? Try answering this:

C. Assume that all the bandits were affected by the spell. What is the possible outcome?
Whether or not your wizard survived this mock combat, you should now see that if the wizard were part of a group that included one or two fighters, he would be a powerful figure indeed! They could protect him until the spell was cast.

II. SHOOTING BLANKS

Your wizard slays bandits in the above encounter and continues merrily on his way. He gets no more than 40 feet, however, when two of the late, lamented bandits' best friends appear—one at each end of the corridor. Yikes!

A. What would you have your character do? How long will it be before the wizard can cast another spell?

A GROUP ENCOUNTER

This encounter is for several player characters of different classes. Running it requires a DM.

The encounter is quite simple. The PCs are placed in a completely enclosed, very large space: a room with stone walls, ceiling, and floor measuring 100 feet by 100 feet with a 10 foot high ceiling. The DM has a party of NPCs who are exact duplicates of the PCs in every respect except clothing, facial appearance, and, obviously, thought processes. Characters from only one group can leave the room alive. The NPCs are lined up about 10 feet apart near the center of one wall; the PCs are lined up identically near the center of the opposite wall.

As DM's are fond of saying, "What do you want to do?"
CHAPTER FIVE: A FIRST ADVENTURE

This chapter is for the eyes of the DM only. If you plan to play a character in this adventure, do not read beyond this point!

SETTING AND SYNOPSIS

The PCs meet one another for the first time in the small rural village of Boremium. This community is located in High Vale in the League of the Minotaurs, on the trail running south from Jalum. The village sits at the point where the trail from Jalum intersects the trail to the Pathar Frontier, near a bridge over the Lenika River. The exact location can easily be found by comparing the DM’s maps in this module to the map of the League and Armach in the *Time of the Dragons* boxed set.

Boremium is alive with rumors and its citizens are discontent. Most of the frontier garrisons of the League have been removed to the threatened border with Thenol. As a consequence, High Vale has suffered, as creatures once subdued in the New Mountains and the High Vale Range have returned to their old haunts and their old habits.

As the PCs are learning to know one another and gathering information from the locals, a raid sweeps through Boremium! A mixture of humans, goblins, and undead ride through the village, burning buildings, slaying innocents, and providing the PCs with their first taste of actual combat. Because of the PCs’ intervention, the raiders quickly retire toward the Darcika Woods to the west.

The PCs are given the opportunity to set off into the forest, seeking the raiders’ base camp and attempting to gather information about them for the imperial government. Further enticement for the PCs is provided by legends concerning a long abandoned fortress from the time of Aurim hidden within the wooded boundaries of Darcika.

The PCs can easily locate the site. It did serve as a base for the raiders, but most of them have since dispersed. All that remain are a few priests of Usa from across the nearby Armach border, a special guard, and a few of the undead commanded by the priests.

If the PCs can defeat these villains, they can learn the secret purpose behind the raid on Boremium, and gain a clue as to the location of a fabulous treasure hidden somewhere in the Conquered Lands...

DM’s BACKGROUND

The raiders are followers of the evil god Usa, (known as Hiteh to the folk of Armach). The Usa cult, though driven underground, is growing rapidly in Armach. It is now powerful enough to supply priests and men for pillaging raids into the neighboring lands of the League.

These raids are being encouraged by Bishop Trandamere, who is ruler of the kingdom of Thenol in all but name. Recently, Armach and the League have settled their own hostilities, and the League’s border legions have been concentrated in defensive positions on the Thenol frontier.

Trandamere, who is turning Thenol into a virtual theocracy under the priests of Hiteh, finds it easy to influence the priests of Usa in nearby Armach. Having Armach raiders threatening High Vale may be reason enough for the League to withdraw troops from the Thenol border. While the government of Armach will certainly protest its innocence of any knowledge of such raids, the skirmishes may have the added benefit for Trandamere of driving a wedge between Armach and the League.

THE VILLAGE OF BOREMIUM

Boremium was never more than a simple village, but until recently it was quite a prosperous one. The farmlands of the region are fertile; the forest to the west is a good source of lumber, and the High Vale Range did support considerable mining activity. Boremium’s location near the only major trail and bridge across the Lenika River made it a natural center for industry and trade.

The DM’s map shows the center of the village. The imperial quarters, which serve as a residence for visiting imperial officials, is a stone villa in the minotaur style. The remaining buildings are made of wood, including the local arena, which consists of little more than a flat field surrounded by wooden bleacher style seats and a wooden wall. The market booths are in a large wooden barn, open on both sides, the barn divided into stalls which are rented by merchants passing through the village to hawk their wares. The map shows a few individual businesses where the PCs might care to trade; prices here are only slightly above average, but selection of merchandise is somewhat limited.

The mining and lumber trades continue here, although increased raids on work parties by bands of goblins, bandits, ogres, and other fierce mountain denizens are driving off the work force. As the work force shrinks, so does the trade on which the village depends.

GETTING STARTED

Set the positions of the moons of Krynn according to the instructions in the RBT. Have the PCs begin in the tavern room of the inn at Boremium. The time is dusk; the season is early summer. Chance
has the PCs sitting close to one another; conversa-
tion among them should arise naturally. Have each
PC explain how he or she came to be in Boremium
at this time. If some players have difficulty making
up a suitable background story, here are some sug-
gestions:

1. Warrior characters have heard rumors of trou-
bles in High Vale. It’s common knowledge that the
garrison troops have all but been removed, and
the imperial presence in the area is very weak. The
activities of goblins, ogres and the like would natu-
rally draw young warriors, eager to prove their
mettle, and anxious to turn a coin or two.

2. One or more wizards have heard a tale (al-
though false) that the fabulous spellbook of the
Third High Wizard of the old empire of Aurim lies
in a ruin somewhere near this tiny village. How it
came to be here is a mystery that dates back to the
Cataclysm.

3. Thieves have heard that mining for iron ore
has decreased in the High Vale Range, while min-
ers turn their attention to a newly-discovered, po-
tentially far more valuable mining opportunity.
The combination of a possible gold or silver find
along with the lack of imperial presence in the area
should be more than enough to attract any sane
thief.

4. Priests have wandered here randomly, di-
rected here by strange dreams, or simply felt a
vague “calling” toward this region, where there is
increased suffering because of the activity of evil
creatures from the mountains.

When the PCs have become semi-acquainted,
or when one of them asks more about their sur-
roundings, provide a brief description of the vil-
lage (they’ve seen it on their way in) and go to
Encounter 1. In the encounters that follow, boxed
text is to be read aloud to the players.

ENCOUNTERS

1. AT THE INN

The inn shows signs of fading prosperity. It is
crowded enough, though most of the cus-
tomers are drinking and eating lightly. The inn-
keeper, a thin man with a pinched look about
his face, flutters from the kitchen to the main
room and back, constantly inquiring of the cus-
tomers if everything is alright, and what more he
can bring them. The dishes, obviously once
quite fine, are now chipped and cracked.

In all, there are some 30 customers jammed into
the room, not counting the PCs. One patron of note
is the huge minotaur who sits at the head of the large
table by the western wall, enjoying the fire and the
defereence of his 4 well-dressed human companions.
This is Balakas, the local administrator, who reports
to the provincial governor himself.

The bulk of the customers are local farmers. Two
dwarves sit among a group of human miners; they
are enjoying a brief holiday from their work in the
mines of the High Vale Range.

One man sits alone at the table nearest the east-
ern wall. He wears a plain brown cloak over a
white linen shirt, plain brown breeches, and sim-
ple soft boots. This is Arnaulf, a priest of Mislaxa.
Arnaulf is not as fanatical as the priestesses of Ilda-
mar in nearby Armach, though he knows Mislaxa
as the Earthspirit and worships her as such. Arnaulf
politely but firmly declines contact with anyone
who approaches him.

PCs who listen to the conversation around them,
or who engage the locals in conversation, can hear
the following rumors. Whether or not each of
them is true is indicated after the text.

1. Goblins, hobgoblins, ogres, and other crea-
tures, not identifiable, are raiding the mines in the
High Vale Range. Many miners have left the mines
for other work, and operations are suffering as a
consequence. (True)

2. The lumber trade has slowed, for much the
same reason. (True)

3. A huge dragon was seen winging high in the
night sky not more than a week ago. It was headed
toward the High Vale Range. (Utterly false)

4. A mad trapper from deep in the forests was in
the village a week ago. He said some hideous ritual
was taking place among the ruins of the old Aurim
fortress in the forest west of the village. (Partly
true—there is an old fortress there, but no ritual.)

5. Business in the village is slow. (True)

6. It is said that the ruins of that old fortress con-
tain a fabulous treasure, though none of those
who know the site well have ever found it. (False.)

The general atmosphere in the inn is friendly to-
ward strangers—even toward Balakas. This village
makes much of its living off of the travelers and
merchants who come here, and it would be
against their best interests for the locals to treat
anyone with anything but courtesy.

When the PCs have become acquainted and
picked up some of these rumors, move on to
Encounter 2.

2. RAID!

Suddenly, a thunder of hoofbeats can be heard,
and seconds later, a mixture of guttural and
shrill whoops and cries pierce the early evening
air. The front door of the inn crashes open
loudly. A man, who looks for all the world like a
screaming lunatic, stands in the doorway, a
bloody spear in one hand, and a flask of oil in
the other!
Usa’s raid has hit town. The raiders are divided into three groups:

**Group A**

**Clerics of Usa (Human) (3):** AC 5 (Scale mail and shield); MV 12; C 1; hp 6, 7, 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8(S-M) or 1d12(L) (Longsword); AL NE; ML 13. Spells prepared - #1: bless; #2: curse; #3: putrefy food and drink.

**Usa Fanatics (4):** AC 10; MV 12; F 0; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6(S-M) or 1d8(L) (Spear); AL NE; ML 11.

**Skeletons (12):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; AL N. Not affected by sleep, charm, hold, and cold based spells. Take half damage from sharp or edged weapons. Holy water causes 2-8 points of damage.

**Zombies (4):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; AL N. Not affected by sleep, charm, hold and cold based spells. Always attack last in round. Holy water does 2-8 points of damage.

The 3 clerics and the 4 fanatics are mounted on light horses, AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; THAC0 18; Size (L). The horses themselves do not attack unless cornered.

**Group B**

Group B consists of 20 Usa fanatics (as above).

**Group C**

**Goblins (20):** AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; AL LE; Size S; ML 11.

The leader of the raid is **Eran**, a cleric of Usa: AC 4 (banded mail); MV 12; C 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (S-M) or 1d12 (L) (Long sword); STR 11; DEX 10; CON 9; INT 13; WIS 15; CHR 14. Spells prepared: (1st) bless, curse, putrefy food and drink, detect snares and pits; (2nd) aid, silence 15' radius.

Eran is mounted on a light horse. He rides between Group B and Group C.

Group A’s task is to set fire to the inn and stables, randomly slaughter a few people, and withdraw. Group B’s task is to set fire to business buildings, deface the imperial quarters if possible, and cover the withdrawal of the other two groups. Group C’s task is to torch the local arena and randomly slaughter villagers.

Group B entered the village, whooping and screaming, only after Groups A and C were already well into the heart of town and in position to strike.

When the encounter begins for the PCs, one of the fanatics with Group A has dismounted and entered the inn. He intends to hurl his oil, step outside, and remount. Clerics #1 and #3 are just outside the inn door with 8 skeletons and the 4 zombies. As soon as the man withdraws, the clerics will direct the undead inside to slaughter all they can reach. If at all possible, cleric #3 will enter the inn long enough to cast his putrefy food and drink spell.

Meanwhile, cleric #2 with 4 skeletons is breaking in the window of the back guest room and working his way systematically down the hall, killing anything in his path.

The mounted fanatics of Group A are to guard the front of the building and help the clerics to escape, if need be. Neither they nor anyone else cares what happens to the skeletons and zombies.

While the attack on the inn takes place, Groups B and C are simultaneously striking their objectives. Group B is to cover the withdrawal, particularly of the goblins, who are on foot.

Of the people in the inn, all will panic and attempt to escape, with the exception of Arnaulf. Most run upstairs, trying to either reach the roof, or even jump out a window. Arnaulf tries to move himself to safety, and at the same time carefully observes the actions of everyone else. His chief concern is to keep himself from being revealed as a priest. As a last resort to protect himself, he will attempt to turn undead, use his prepared spell, and then enter combat, even though he has no weapon.

**Arnaulf:** AC 10; MV 12; C 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (unarmed combat only); AL NG; STR 11, DEX 9, CON 10, INT 11, WIS 13, CHR 9. Spell prepared: bless.
The PCs may take whatever actions they desire; however, with everyone else trying to escape, they will have to either attack the escaping villagers (treat them as zero-level NPCs) to clear a path for themselves, or turn and face the raiders. If they can fight their way outside, they may well come into contact and combat with other groups of raiders. In all, the raid will last only 15 rounds. If the raiding force has not fled prior to that because of failed morale checks, they voluntarily attempt to withdraw at the end of that time.

The raiding force will retreat out of the village, across the trail, and head due west into the forest, making for the ruined fortress.

Any goblin prisoners taken by the PCs will gladly talk in exchange for their lives, or a reasonable belief that they will be spared. The goblins know little, other than that their little band was sent down from the mountains by the headman of their village to aid in the raid. They came mainly for the promise of whatever booty they could lay their hands on, which was not much. Human fanatic or priest prisoners will sooner die than give any information.

The goblins have an average of 8 silver pieces each on them. None of the other raiders carry any money. Should Eran have been slain in the combat, PCs can find on his body, in addition to his armor and sword, a scroll of protection from undead (carried as a last resort in case he failed control his undead servants).

### 3. After the Raid

What happens after the raid depends largely on what the PCs did during the raid. If they actively fought the raiding force, they will be sought out by Balakas the Minotaur as soon as the fighting is over.

Balakas is in a deep fix. He cannot send for imperial troops to pursue the raiders; at the moment, there are none to spare. On the other hand, failure to respond will weaken the prestige of the government (and the minotaur race) in the eyes of the villagers. Complaints might be sent up the chain of command; Balakas might be made to look bad.

Balakas’ solution lies with the PCs. What he needs is information about the raiders, and perhaps some prisoners. If the PCs agree to provide this, he will reward them handsomely. Balakas will begin by offering the equivalent of 500 gp in steel (he can be bargained up to 1,000 if the PCs try). This is a lump sum for the party, not for each PC!

If the PCs are slow to figure it out, Balakas will even suggest that the raiders might have based themselves in the ruins of the abandoned fort, in the woods to the west of the village. Any man of the village can give general directions to the ruin.

If the PCs did not try to fight the raiders, or behaved in some other, equally disgraceful way, Balakas will publicly announce the reward he is offering for information and prisoners. The PCs can then volunteer for the job.

Arnauf will come to visit the PCs shortly after the raiders leave. If any were wounded in the fighting, he will offer 1 *potion of healing*. He will also urge the party to take up Balakas’ offer of a reward. Further, if the *potion of healing* is not used after the first encounter, he will let the PCs have it anyway, provided they undertake Balakas’ mission.

### 4. To the Ruins

To the west of the village, the ground rises in a series of low hills with rocky outcroppings, marked by several high ridges. For several hundred yards, the forest is somewhat sparse, having been repeatedly harvested. However, at a distance of about 600 to 800 yards, the forest becomes much more dense, the underbrush much thicker, and ground rises more steeply. Still, it is less than a mile to the ruined fort, and no encounters should occur during the journey.

The raiders left a trail that is not too difficult to follow. However, while all of the undead and goblin tracks stop at the fortress, all of the hoof prints continue on past it.

### 5. Eran’s Band

When they plunged into the woods, the survivors of Eran’s band of raiders divided into two groups. Surviving priests, goblins, and undead made for the ruined fortress; surviving fanatics accompanied them to the fortress, then made their way to their homes in Armach. Eran and his small crew don’t even need their horses; the goblins have agreed to supply their short term needs.

Unless the PCs followed hot on the heels of the raiders (difficult, since the PCs probably lack horses) only the survivors of the goblins, undead and clerics will be at the ruins when the PCs arrive.

Surveying the fortress, the PCs will see that the term “ruin” indeed applies. The great fortress, built before the Cataclysm, is barely standing at all. The fortress was once a triangular-shaped stone structure some 40 feet high and 100 yards long on each side. Each corner of the triangle had a high tower with battlements. Now, the towers and most of the walls lie in heaps of stone rubble. Vegetation has overgrown the interior of the ruin. In places, it seems as if the earth itself is determined to destroy the ancient structure, for huge blocks of granite jut up from the ground at odd angles beneath and between the tumbled blocks.

If the PCs carefully search the ruins, they will eventually discover, at the spot marked on the DM’s map, a small cavern opening. This is so small that human size or larger characters must crawl to enter it. The passageway slopes down very gradually, but after about 20 feet, it opens onto a stone stairway.
The stairway is of new construction—built within the last 10 years. Any dwarven characters in the party should be able to recognize this.

At the foot of the stairs stand two large wooden doors, covered with bronze plating. The doors are extremely heavy, but not locked. Behind the doors lies the first temple to Usa ever built within this region.

The following descriptions are keyed to the DM’s map:

1. Main Temple Room: As soon as the doors swing open, the PCs are confronted by all of the remaining undead from the raid on Boremium. Eran has posted them here as silent sentinels. Their instructions are simple: they are to attack anyone or anything that attempts to enter. They cannot be surprised, since they have nothing to do but watch for the doors to open. If the PCs somehow managed to destroy all of the undead from the raid, the room is empty when they enter. (It is a just reward for a job well done.)

   The main temple room is not yet complete. The walls are of bare stone, devoid of decoration. However, at the far end of the room is a statue of Usa. Priest class characters will immediately recognize this god, not as Usa, but as Hiteh. An empty altar stone lies before the statue, but is perfectly clean, as it has not yet been used for any sacrificial rites.

   Three rounds after the PCs open the doors, or on the first round after the undead are defeated, a below of rage sounds from the area marked as room 2 on the DM’s map. From behind the blue silk curtain a minotaur emerges, a huge axe gripped tightly in his hands. He wastes no time in charging at the PCs, seeking out obvious spell casters as his preferred targets.

   This minotaur is a former arena fighter, one of the few of his race to convert to the new faith. Now, he serves the priesthood of Usa however he can: in this case, as guardian of this new, secret temple.

   **Minotaur guard:** AC 4 (bronze plate mail); MV 9; F 5; THAC0 16; #AT 1 (3/2 if specialization is used); Dmg 1d8; Size L; AL LE; STR 17; DEX 10; CON 13; INT 9; WIS 10; CHR 8.

   As the minotaur charges, any remaining priests from the raid, including Eran, also enter the battle. Their spells are as listed in Encounter 2, minus any used in that encounter which they have not had time to regain. As all these NPCs are fanatical followers of Usa, they fight to the death.

2. Priests’ Quarters: This large, unfinished room contains little of interest. There are four cots used by the three priests and the minotaur, trunks containing common clothing, and the combined treasure of the priests, which amounts to only 87 pieces of silver.

3. Eran’s Quarters: These are the unfinished quarters for the high priest of the temple, currently being used by Eran. Here the PCs can find a decent bed, several changes of common clothing, and a bag containing 600 gp worth of steel. Also here are Eran’s armor, sword, dagger, and the scroll of protection from undead. There is also a small writing table with quill, ink, and vellum. Lying beneath the plain papers on the table is a brief letter. The text reads:

   My Dear Son Eran:

   I call you a son in the faith, for he whom you know as Usa I too know well.

   Your efforts on behalf of our friends in Armach, I know well. May Usa reward you generously!

   And, I think he will. Once your work in High Vale is complete, you must visit me. I have obtained information concerning a great discovery in the Steamwall Mountains, and would reward your fine work by allowing you to take part in a small expedition I am planning.

   May the blessings of Usa-Hiteh be with you.

   **Trandamere**

6. Final Notes

   The discovery of Trandamere’s letter ends the adventure within this module. Calculate experience points for each of the player characters, and let them divide up the spoils as they see fit. Several loose ends are left deliberately, so the DM can have several things to develop in his own campaign. These include:

   1. The continuing problems in the area from the High Vale Range to Boremium. Many adventures could be set here, simply cleaning up the area, given the lack of imperial troops.
   2. The PCs report to Balakas. What they do (or don’t) report to him could make for an interesting relationship, now and in the future.
   3. This newly-constructed temple is obviously not yet finished. Eran is not sufficiently powerful to be building it, therefore who is? What further plans does this higher priest of Usa have for this region?
   4. What of Trandamere’s expedition? What more could the PCs learn of it?
   5. Other directions that the players will probably suggest to the DM.
### GENERIC CHARACTER SHEET

**Character**

**Class** 

**Race**

**Sex**

**Homeland**

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**Movement**

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**Ht.**

**Wt.**

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**Racial Abilities**

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**Class Abilities**

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**Racial Limitations**

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**Class Limitations**

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Ruined Fortress

DM's Map

Scale: 1 square = 10 yards
x = small cavern opening

Temple Area

DM's Map, Chapter 5, Encounter 5

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet
New Beginnings

by Mark Acres

It is a continent of raw beauty and wondrous magics—of marauding hordes and avenging champions—it is Taladas, the forgotten continent of Krynn first revealed in the bestselling DRAGONLANCE® supplement Time of the Dragon.

Now, this incredible setting is brought to life and made ready for adventuring with New Beginnings. This essential adventure provides all the information necessary for new players to begin adventuring in the Taladas campaign setting.

New Beginnings includes a simple, step-by-step character creation outline which new players can use without the help of a Dungeon Master. Also, it presents essential tips on equipping and playing your new character in the Taladas setting, and sample encounters which allow you to test your character’s skills without risking them in actual play. Finally, a complete mini-adventure helps to begin your Taladas campaign by thrusting the player characters right into the action.