

MAIL ORDER



THE MANUAL

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GREETINGS, SHREWD CUSTOMER.

Welcome to Mail Order Monsters, Inc. Let these pages be your guide to the fantasies which can be yours through our services. Our Mail **OR**der **PS**ychon **H**eroes (affectionately known as "morphs" for short) are the finest in the galaxy. Your wish is our command.

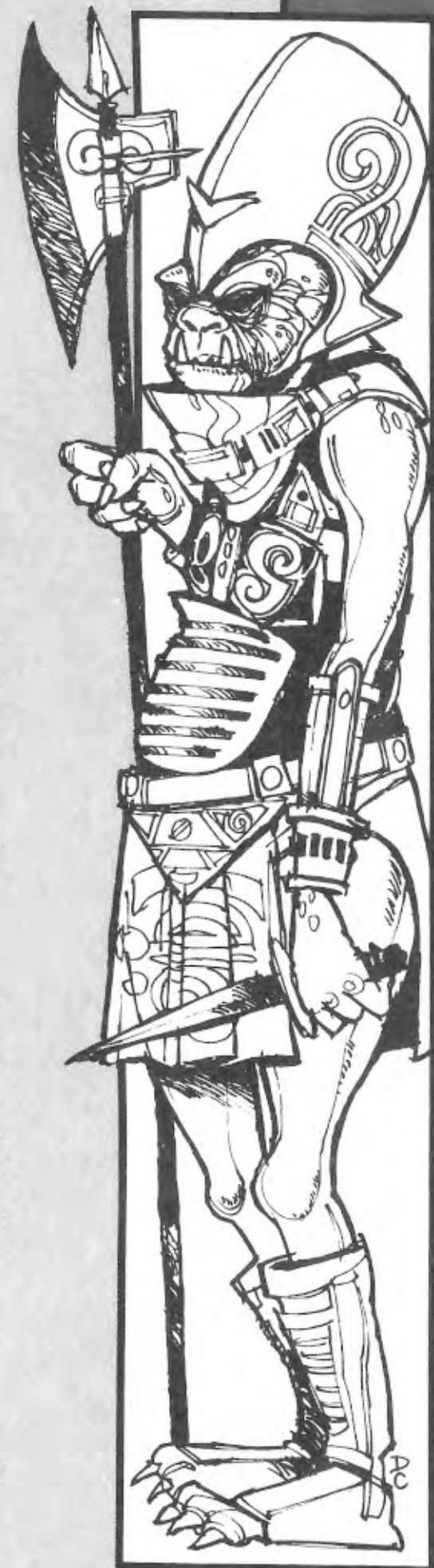
Look on **page 2** for information about how to take morphs out for a Free Trial (the **Beginner** option), so you can learn how combat works, and so you can get a feel for the different morph and weapon capabilities.

When you're ready for something more complex, move on to our Rental Option (**Intermediate**) described on **page 4**. Spend 1000 psychons to put together your own combinations of morphs and weapons. Then choose the battlefield and the contest.

Our **Tournament** competition, described on **page 5**, is for experts. The results of each contest are saved on your Owner Disk. Winners receive psychons and victory points which their owners can spend on better weapons and traits, or on new morphs. Begin with 500 psychons and earn your way to the top.

For **general information** about morph traits, extras and weapons and the importance of each, turn to **page 6**.

Important Note: For information about how to proceed as you use the Mail Order Monsters program, watch the top of the screen as you work.





FREE TRIAL (BEGINNER)

Select Free Trial to go straight to the morph vats to pick from our twelve basic morph stocks. Then use your joystick to move the highlight from morph to morph and press the button when you have the one you want.

A Morph Summary screen will appear, and you must type in a name for the morph you have chosen. If you choose the one player option, you will be spirited to the battlefield as soon as you press Return (after typing in the name). If two humans are playing, you'll go to the battlefield after the second player has chosen and named his morph.

At the conclusion of each contest, you will have a chance to repeat the battle. If you're playing against the computer, you can ask for a different opponent as well. If you choose not to repeat the battle, game control will return to the original options screen.

OPERATING MONSTERS IN THE BATTLEFIELD

1. Player Color and Control – Player One's morph is always yellow. Player Two's (or the computer's if only one human is playing) is always red. Player One's status window appears on the upper left and Player Two's on the upper right.

Use the joystick to move your morph (represented by a square) on the big map. Overlap your opponent's square and the display will change scale, filling the screen with the sector you are both occupying so you can fight it out morph to morph.

2. How to Attack – To use the weapon your morph has readied – listed in the upper left of each player's status window – press the button and simultaneously move the joystick in the direction you want to fire, hit, breathe, sting, etc. When you use the readied weapon, its name will turn red in its status window. When it's reloaded and ready to be fired again, its name will turn green.

The status window also lists the vital supplies you are carrying – Life force, Food (needed to make physical attacks), Rounds (needed for weapons that use projectiles or chemicals) and Energy (needed for weapons and defenses that require energy). When your supply begins to run low for any item, the item's name will turn yellow. When it runs dangerously low, the name will turn red.

3. Winning the Battle – Each battlefield contains other enemies in addition to the morph you are fighting. If you fall into one of the urban ruins or are attacked by a Wandroid, you must face a tank or wandering beast which will be under the control of your opponent. Similarly, you will control the tank or beast if your opponent encounters one of these difficulties. Seize the opportunity! It's a wonderful way to wear down an opposing morph's life force at no risk to your own morph's hide. The winner is the last morph living or the first morph to defeat 5 opponents (including Wandroids and Urban Defenders).

USING THE STATUS WINDOW MENUS TO CHANGE WEAPONS AND OPTIONS

Press the button twice without moving the stick to replace the information in your morph's status window with a menu of options. The Attack option will be highlighted. To change weapons, press the button to select Attack. A list of the weapons your morph is carrying will appear. Move the highlight to the weapon you want and press the button to select it.

To select options other than Attack, move the highlight to the option you want before pressing the button. Here's what each option does:

Attack – brings up the weapons and natural attacks your morph has at its disposal.

Map – returns you to the battlefield without changing anything.

Device – brings up a list of devices available in the Intermediate and Tournament games (devices like Medikits for healing, drugs for temporary boosts in speed and mind, etc.) Also, at all levels, selecting Devices brings you a report on how much you have left in the way of Rounds, Energy and Food.

Defense Off – turns off the defense you are carrying, if you're carrying one. Defenses use energy when they are activated by an attack. If your energy supply is low and your only remaining weapon is an energy weapon, you might prefer to go with a "the best defense is a good offense" strategy.

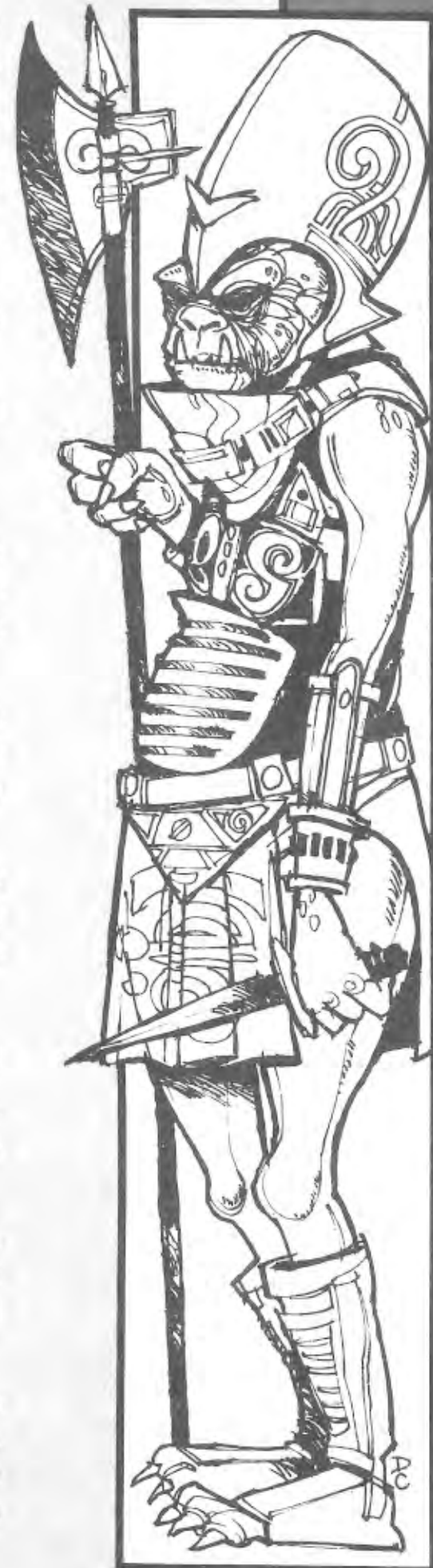
Special – brings up a list of actions you can take. Selecting Pause (by pressing the button) pauses the game until either player presses a joystick button. For a description of the Quit and Surrender options, see the description of the Tournament option on page 5.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO FIRST TIME CUSTOMERS!

Mail Order Monsters Inc. strongly urges that you practice selecting options – particularly weapons – while on the big map. It can be fatal to fumble with your options while your morph is being pursued by a determined enemy.

Each morph comes equipped with differing strengths and weaknesses and with different extras, weapons and defenses. In the Intermediate and Tournament games, all extras (beyond the basic ones a morph stock comes with) and all weapons, rounds, energy, food, defenses and other devices must be purchased.

Turn to page 6 for a description of the various traits, weapons, defenses and devices so that you might think about how to use each as you play. Even though you cannot change these items during Free Trial games, studying the information on those pages in combination with your trial contests will help you get ready for games in which you must make your own choices in these matters.



RENTAL (INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

As in the Free Trial game, after each contest you will be given the opportunity to fight again, and if you're playing against the computer you may ask for a different opponent (which the computer will pick randomly) for the replay. There are two important differences between the Free Trial and Rental options.

1. In Morph Meadow – When the program finishes loading (after you make your choice of level and respond to the computer's prompt to type in a name for your owner), you'll find your owner standing on Morph Meadow. Walk your owner (with your joystick) over the Vats to pick out a morph. Then lead the morph to the Weapon Shop to buy weapons and sundries (described on page 7). Finally lead it down to the Transmat (matter transmission) Booth for transmission to a battlefield.

You'll have a total of 1000 psychons to spend on a morph plus any trait upgrades, extras and equipment you may want to purchase. As you make your selections, watch the top portion of the screen for information about how to proceed. And if you make a mistake, don't worry. Before you leave the vats, you'll have one last chance to say whether or not you want the morph you've been working on. If you answer no, you'll return to the Meadow so you can start over.

2. Choosing the Contest and the Terrain – When all human players have led their morphs into the Transmat Booth, one player will choose the battleground, and the other will choose among three possible contests. If you get to choose the battleground, think carefully about whether your morph – or your opponent's morph – has the equipment (gills, wings, etc.,) best suited for a contest in the terrain you are considering. And then hope your opponent doesn't pick a contest totally unsuited for *your* beast. Here are the contest possibilities:

- **Destruction** – The same game as is offered at the Free Trial level, morph against morph until someone is defeated or one of the morphs has killed 5 opponents (including Wandroids and Urban defenders).
- **Capture the Flags** – There are eight flags available on the big map. They must be collected *in order*. To find out which flag is which, you must run into and back out of an area containing a flag, avoiding or killing the guard (which will be under your opponent's control) in the process. After finding flag 1, start looking for flag 2, etc. You win by collecting all 8 flags or by killing your opponent's morph before it can collect all 8 flags.
- **The Horde** – A horde of invaders under computer control will start at the top of the screen and move downward. You and your fellow player – human or computer – must cooperate to keep the hordlings from reaching the bottom. The winner is whoever destroys the most hordlings. If hordlings make it all the way, you both lose. (Note: missiles and bombs may not be used against hordlings.)



THE TOURNAMENT GAME

When you're ready to tackle the ultimate challenge, select the Tournament game. It's just like the Rental (Intermediate) level, with these important differences:

- 1) You only get 500 psychons to start. You must earn additional psychons (to spend in the Weapon Shop or for new morphs) plus victory points (which allow a morph back in the vats for more extras and higher powered traits) by winning contests.
- 2) The results of each contest must be saved on an owner disk. If you need to make an owner disk (from any disk containing information you no longer need) you'll be given the chance to do so after selecting the tournament game. The program will then prompt you (in the message area in the upper portion of the screen) whenever you need to put your owner disk or the game disk in the drive.
- 3) In addition to terrain and contest, two contest rules may be selected as well – one each by each of the two players. Select rules which hamper your opponent's morph and aid your own – “no chemical attacks” for instance if the enemy is carrying a Gas gun while your morph is armed only with a Laspistol. To use your choice to cancel the rule selected by your opponent, select the same rule again.
- 4) Before the battle starts, you will be given the chance to say how many victories a morph must win to be declared the victor.
- 5) The Special menu – produced by double pressing the button, then moving the highlight to Special, then pressing the button again – contains special significance in the tournament game. If you're losing and your opponent didn't select “no surrender” as a rule, you may select Special and then Surrender to give up. Your morph will lose the contest, but it won't lose all its Life force.

If “no surrender” is in force, you can still plead for mercy by selecting Quit and then pressing your joystick button before the countdown ends in your status window. If your opponent does likewise before the countdown ends in his, her or its status window, you'll go back to the introductory screen. It will be as though the battle was never fought.

- 6) To use monsters in your stable, enter the Corral in the Morph Meadow. There you can Get monsters (for upgrading and for trips to the Transmat Booth), and you may Pen (save) them. You may also Zap monsters who are so wounded that it seems the right thing to do. Exit to return to the Meadow.

Note: To get rid of an owner select the owner at the beginning of a tournament game, then reject it when asked whether you accept or reject that owner. You will then be given a chance to erase it from your owner disk.





THE BASIC MORPH TRAITS

These may be increased for each morph – for a fee, of course – in the Intermediate and Tournament games. The maximum for all traits except Life is 12. Life may go as high as 250. The maximum you may add on any one trip is 3 for the first four traits and 30 for Life.

Armor – The natural defense against attacks. A tough hide proves very useful in Beastfu (i.e. hand to claw to tentacle to jaw, etc.) bang-ups!

Muscle – Your morph's ability to duke it out, to kick sand in other morphs' faces and live to tell about it. Also important for carrying heavy weapons and devices.

Speed – Crucial for zipping around the terrain and the competition. Slow morphs are soon no morphs, if they aren't careful.

Mind – Your morph's ability to solve philosophical problems. Perhaps more importantly, though, the ability to reload quickly after firing. Dumb morphs get nailed while fumbling with the ammunition.

Life – The longer, the better. Life points are zapped every time an opponent scores a hit.

MORPH EXTRAS

There are eleven extras to choose among for each morph in the Intermediate and Tournament games – a total of 20 in all. They belong to 4 groups.

- 1) Means of movement. **Burrow** and **Gills** enable morphs to move at normal speeds through mountains and water respectively. **Teleport** brings normal speed in all terrain.
- 2) Means of attack. **Spit and Sting** (projectile attacks), **Web** (a chemical attack which freezes the opponent in place for a period of time) and **Psi-blast** (a psi, or mind, attack which robs your opponent of his mind force) are all effective at a distance. The other natural attacks – fiery **Breath** (chemical), the shocking **Electrotouch** (energy), and **Claws** and **Fangs** (Beastfu aids) – must be delivered at close range.
- 3) Defenses. Each of the five available reduces the damage to your morph from a specific type of attack. **Anti-thump** protects against physical attacks, **Anti-e** against energy attacks, **Anti-chem** against chemical attacks, **Anti-proj** against projectile attacks and **Anti-psi** against psionic (mind) attacks.
- 4) Natural aids. **Hands** and **Tentacles** are required to operate certain weapons. **Healing** insures a slow regeneration of life energy. **Photosynthesis** guarantees its owner a small but steady supply of the energy needed for energy attacks and to operate certain defenses and devices. (But don't forget to buy an E-Pack.)

WEAPONS

Our weapons shop inventory is second to none in variety, power and reliability. Use our Rental option (Intermediate level) to learn what each weapon offers in the trade-offs between power, weight and ammunition consumption. Then, when you move on to ownership in the Tournament game, choose and use weapons appropriate to the strength and abilities of each morph in your stable.

Here are some tips gleaned from successful owners:

- 1) If weight is a concern (because your morph isn't very strong and is already pretty slow), go for the Autorifle or the Boorang (always guaranteed to return to its sender) on a modest budget. Go for the Needler or Sword if you're all but broke, and for the Lapistol – a spiffy little laser number – if money is no object. (Lapistols, like all energy weapons, require their users to own and carry an Energy pack to hold the energy they need to fire. But in return for the extra weight and cost, they deliver a mighty wallop.)
- 2) If you'd like to be able to launch attacks on the big map, buy yourself some missiles or a bomb. But don't expect them to be light or to be a modest drain on your ammunition supply. (Note: If you're worried about weight, choose the Summary option for another look at your morph's basic traits. If you're trying to carry too much, that fact will be reflected in a decline in your Speed trait.)
- 3) The E-stealer is a handy little device which sucks the energy from your opponent's E-pack. If you get good with it, you can actually leave a battle with more energy than you had when you entered it.
- 4) The Multilas (that's right, *lots* of laser beams) and the Mindsink (for slowing down even the smartest morph) both require tentacles, and the Sword and the E-mace (a wonderful combination of electricity and blunt instrument) require hands. The E-mace, Flamer, Sword and Grav-gun choices must be used at close range.

SUNDRIES

Go to the Sundries department to outfit yourself with the ammunition required by your weapons and intentions, and to buy additional useful equipment when you can afford it and your beast is strong enough to carry it.

Be sure to buy food if you plan to use any physical attacks. Be sure to buy rounds and energy if you plan to use weapons which require them. (And remember, you'll need an E-pack, if you don't already own one, to carry your energy.)





No morph may own more than one of the 6 defenses offered. Use the Aqualung and the Jet pack to overcome the lack of gills or wings and the Medi-kit to make up for not owning Healing. And use Star Java and MemoryRNA for temporary boosts of speed of movement and speed of mind. (To use a device, select Devices and then select the device you want to use from the menu which will appear.)

You may sell weapons and devices back for 1/2 the number of psychons you paid for them.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

In May of 1980 Evan Robinson departed southern California for the dubious climes of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, leaving behind him a class-4 smog alert and what was probably his last chance at a normal life. The same day, Mount St. Helens exploded sending a cubic kilometer of ash into the stratosphere. Evan disclaimed any responsibility.

One month later Paul Reiche III also left California and headed for Lake Geneva to join TSR Hobbies Inc. where he met Evan who was still trying to convince everyone that he really had nothing to do with the eruption.

Meanwhile, Nicky Arvan (soon to be Nicky Robinson) made a surprise move from Pomona, Evan's old school, to the University of California at Berkeley, Paul's alma mater. At Berkeley she not only semi-seriously studied Molecular Biology, but co-founded California Telecomputing Systems, where she wrote dull business software.

Back in Wisconsin, Evan and Paul were hard at work writing material for Dungeons & Dragons® and freezing in sub-zero weather. Following a rapid thaw, Paul recovered his senses and returned to Berkeley with Evan in tow. Paul began designing computer games, and Evan began dating Nicky. By the time Paul's first game was published, Evan and Nicky were happily married, completing their educations at Santa Cruz, and realizing that Hewlett-Packard and veterinary school held fewer charms than computer games. Before finally teaming up, Paul designed Archon, Murder on the Zinderneuf, and Adept with Free Fall Associates, and Evan and Nicky converted to the Commodore a certain buggy Atari game too heretical to see the light of day.

Nicky Robinson likes to splice genes, doctor sick animals, play with her microwave oven, and occasionally wonders why she is working with a tall blond alien and a man who wears camouflage. Evan has an unusual fascination for weapons modern, archaic and futuristic, as well as musical instruments which sound like squealing

cats. He is also probably the only programmer in Northern California who does not drink coffee. Paul Reiche III likes bad horror movies, *The Far Side*, and especially Laurie, his fiance (sorry Ms. Hannah). As a group, all three enjoy science-fiction, fantasy and adventure in any form available. Lastly, Paul and Evan are members of CTHULHU, a confederation of ex-TSR hirelings, which sporadically publishes what some consider the funniest newsletter available.

In creating Mail Order Monsters, Paul, Evan and Nicky pushed one of their computers so hard that rumor has it they actually fried its insides trying to improve the program.

CREDITS

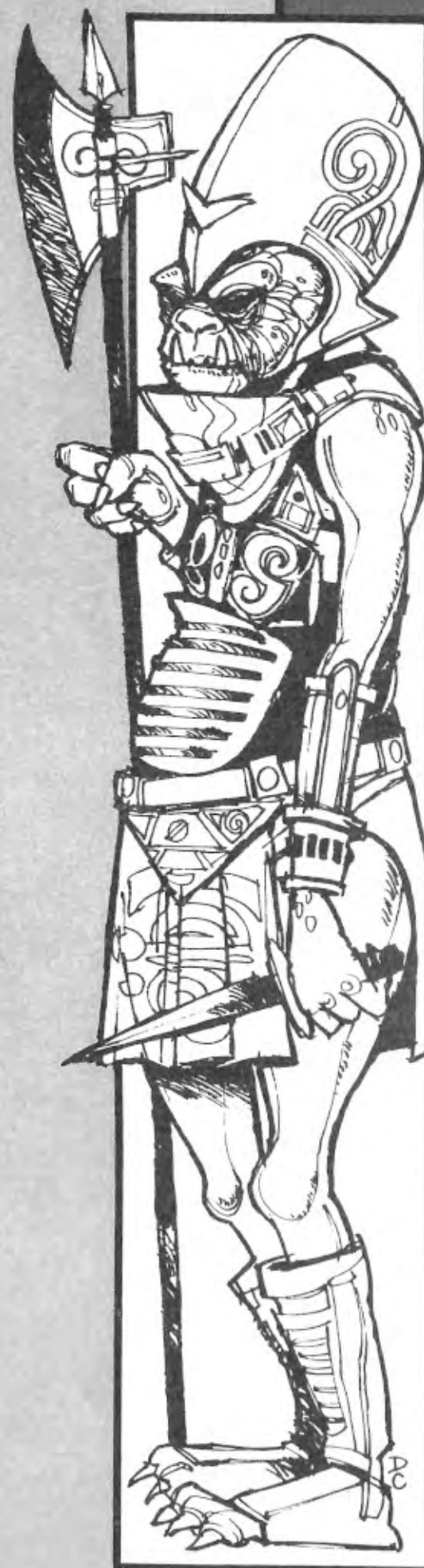
The artists would like to thank the following random assortment of people:

Anne Westfall, Robert Leyland, and Jon Freeman for answering stupid questions late at night and in general letting us pick their brains.

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