

THE DONJON CAULDRON PRESENTS...

The newest in War, Board, and Adventure Games you might have missed

Knights of the Bloodlords (1st Ed)

By New Strategy Games, reviewed by J. Harmon

A two-player competitive war-game in the vein of *Chainmail*, *Knights of the Bloodlords* hails from Atlanta, the work of two statisticians in their spare time. The game boasts an "epic scope" and years of gameplay, with mechanics for simulating troop supply lines, popular support in the various regions of the campaign world ("The Bloodlands"), as well as a complex system for earning the favour of various gods (the titular "Bloodlords").

Unfortunately, it just doesn't measure up. Combat is a slog, requiring rolling at the start of every round for every unit to make "real-time morale adjustments" to determine the actions available that term, and the rules for magic veer uncomfortably close to actual physics calculations one might find in a high school exam. The common to-hit tables in, say, AD&D 1e become a 3-dimensional to-hit matrix, incorporating a number of additional environmental factors that make even a simple skirmish a chore.

Thankfully, the focus on small warbands of knights rather than conventional fantasy armies makes the game merely tedious rather than impossible without substantial calculators or game aides. Still, for a game claiming to be about "the swift and brutal field of battle", it certainly takes a long time to land a hit.

Conclusion: Best left to the statisti-

cians and computer-users amongst us.

Dream Quest Adventure Game (1st Ed)

By Khadath Games, reviewed by S. Healy

This new pamphlet game comes to us from across the Atlantic, released last year but only making its way to our offices this month due to various shipping delays. Khadath Games is a new design workshop based in London, and unfortunately that lack of experience shows in their first offering. The game suffers from a number of presentation issues: Confusing writing ("Primes" is used to represent both your primary skills or statistics and the prompts generated by rolling on certain tables), inclusion of Latin phrases that players are supposed to read, and a general insistence that this is not a "game" hampers its appeal at the table.

The mechanics are a greater puzzle: The Lord of Silence, clearly meant as a Dungeon-Master style character, has been replaced by a series of tables or references to the Tarot, and players are expected to divide the duties of world creation and running various non-player characters ("shades") between them. The lack of clear guidance for how to resolve situations in the dream-world makes the game even more confusing.

It's a shame, because the premise of *Dream Quest* is tantalising - you are participating in a lucid dream, part of a group of "golden sleepers" ready to combat unseen evils that be-

gin infesting humanity's subconscious after a mysterious shooting star crosses the sky. The pulp horror/sci-fi premise goes nowhere except in a series of confusing dungeon-crawling rules, and while the Objects of Note are evocative they lack any coherence: fitting, I suppose, given the theme.

Conclusion: If you're looking for games that might serve a similar premise, Chaosium's newest release "Call of Cthulhu" is a much better bet. (See page 12 of this issue)

Descent into the Silver Ship

By Chronos Simulations, reviewed by M. White

A unique idea, brought to us from California in hand-packaged parcels. *Descent into the Silver Ship* promises a "grand adventure in a box", perhaps a campaign to rival the legendary *Castle Greyhawk*. The *Silver Ship* is a massive, Enterprise-like starship that has crash landed on a planet in the "Medieval Rim" of the galaxy, and you play as interpid fantasy heroes ready to plumb its chrome and steel depths. The package comes with 20 large-scale printed grid maps, an instruction packet with rulebook, and several tokens to serve as your heroes on the board.

Exploration follows much of the traditional dungeoneering tropes: You march down hallways with torches, find locked doors, and come across all manner of monsters - only now they've become aliens, robots, cyborgs, and psionic ghosts that can

