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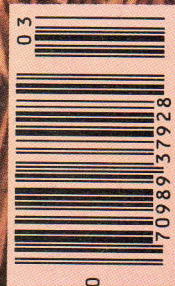
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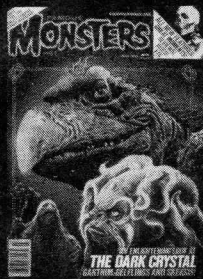
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ALL NEW FEATURES!
GREAT MOMENTS!
REVIEWS!
VIDEO!
ETC.



AN ENLIGHTENING LOOK AT
THE DARK CRYSTAL
GARTHIM, GELFLINGS AND SKEKSIS!





FAMOUS MONSTERS

Incorporating MONSTER WORLD

ISSUE No.191

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- 4 FANG MAIL** Our readers write in to condemn us for the latest mistakes we've made!
- 5 THE REPORTER** The latest movie and book news from the Horrorworld Film Scene!
- 11 GREAT MOMENTS** FM's El Rauncho Award is given to the worst films ever made!
- 12 THE DARK CRYSTAL** Who are the Gelflings? Find out in this exciting FM preview!
- 20 HOW TO SHOOT A BEAST** Lisa Morton demon-strates her photographic talents!
- 25 THE VIDEOCULT** Our Rovin Reporter lists more games than you can shake a joystick at!
- 26 THE MONSTERRIFIC ANGEL** A tribute to Forrest J Ackerman—aka Mr. Monster!

- 30 TIME MACHINE PART II** Our filmbook continues as the Eloi battle the Morlocks!
- 38 REVIEWS** FM buys the tickets; you read our reviews, then decide for yourself which pix to see!
- 40 FANTASTIC TV 1983** A sampling of what the major networks are offering this season!
- 47 FASCINATING FACTS** Is truth stranger than fantasy? Sometimes! Here's a sample!
- 49 THE SENDER** Dreams turn to nightmares that kill in this recent shocker from Paramount!
- 52 MOLDY MUMMIES PART II** Most of the modern mummies are dustier than ever!
- 58 ALL ABOUT XTRO** Abducted by aliens, a man returns to Earth horribly changed!
- 71 FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING** You can learn strategies of today's SF & Fantasy Games!

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The Dark Crystal



SECRET.
STRANGE...

SORCERY-RIDDLED.

This is the World of the Dark Crystal.

A Land Outside Time.

A Place Beyond...Places.

Beautiful yet bewildering.

A fairyland sometimes frightening.

An imagi-nation "peopled" by creepy creatures, outre beyond mortal experience: "things" that hop...that crawl...that *skitter*...all the while singing sweetly in some unknown language or shrieking wildly in some alien tongue.

In the World of the Dark Crystal *everything* is alive. Plants speak. Trees have tongues. Brooklets babble of forgotten yesteryears. Pebble, stone, boulder & mountain become *moving* beings.

The very *atmosphere* is alive with the scent of fear and the macabre magic of arcane mysteries.

And dominating all is the Supreme Mystery: the *power* of...THE DARK CRYSTAL.

THE STORY

OUR FABULOUS TALE opens in a land unplaced in time or space, unknown in our commonplace Dimensions 3.

It is a world dominated by an evil breed called—

The Skeksis.

Once, from the dizzy heights of a sparkling castle in whose heart glowed a great Crystal with energy absorbed from the world's 3

Suns;—once from this exalted eyrie a tribe of supernal thinkers & incredible creators ruled the land.

Catastrophe

But a thousand years ago a terrible convulsion mysteriously shook that land.

The Crystal cracked.

Its heart darkened.

Its surface grew gray & lifeless.

The Reign of the Skeksis had begun!

And gradually the Castle degenerated.

The people & the rulers degenerated until all was drear & drab decay, dominated by one unworthy ruling motivation:

Greed.

Corruption

The Skeksis controled the impure Crystal and it became the center of their weird rituals and the source of their power.

Now, a tremendous astronomical occurrence is forecast. If it is allowed to come to pass, the Rule of the Skeksis will be entrenched forever, beyond hope of revolution or overthrow.

The Elfin Menace

There is only one thing the Skeksis secretly tremble at: the fear that an ancient prophecy may one day be fulfilled concerning a noble race of elfin creatures; that these Gelfling will somehow undermine & destroy their power.

In an effort to preserve their evil Dynasty, the cruel Skeksis rulers have done their wicked best



The Skeksis Ritual-Master and Garthim-Master plot the succession to the Emperor's throne.

to eradicate the Gelfling race. In fact they believe they have succeeded. But—

The Gelfling Named Jen

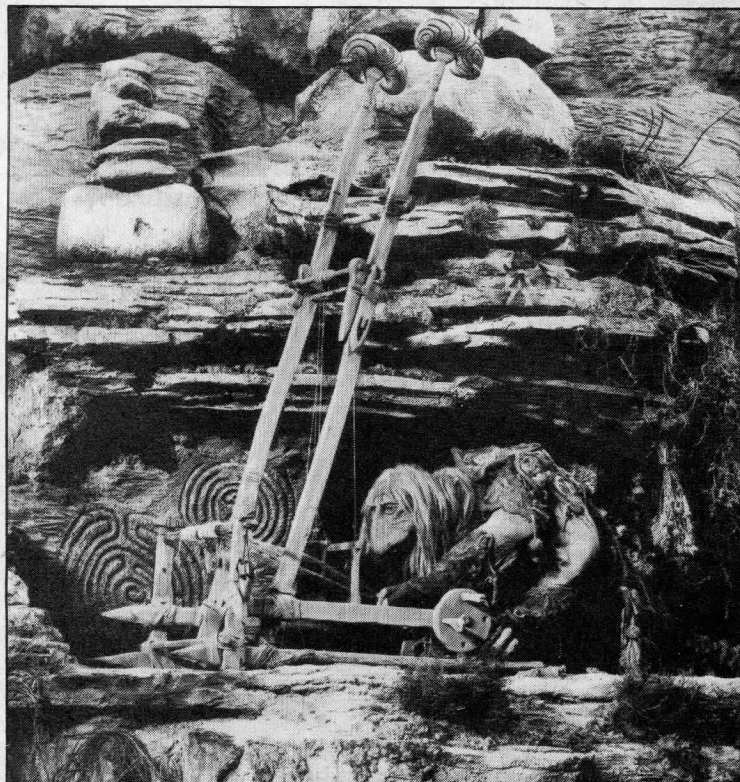
The Skeksis Castle is guarded by fierce warriors known as Garthim. They are encased in shell-like armor and enforce the Skeksis' rule without pause or pity. But unbeknownst to the Skeksis, one Gelfling boy—Jen—has been saved from the Garthims' claws. Snatched from the very grasp of Prince Sirki, he has been raised by a clan of strange, unworldly & impractical mystics called the urRu.

Jen's mission upon reaching maturity: to discover the secret of the Crystal's darkness and restore its inner brilliance...and with the return of the light, true balance to his world.

Wisdom of the Master

UrSu the Master, most wise of all the urRu, brings up Jen with all the tender loving care of an exotic orchid, convinced the elf-boy is the last of his kind.

Jen's sheltered life is shattered when his Master dies. But with the guru's last breath he breathes a task for Jen. He shows him the image of a small shard of crystal and, expiring, whispers: "You must find this...and return it...to its rightful place...before the Great Conjunction..."



To a gnome, there's no place like home, as this urRu Master would be glad to tell you.



The shifting sands of fate are weighed by UrSu.



A kindly Podperson enjoys a lusty nighttime revel.



A helpless Podperson trembles under intense interrogation by a blood-hungry Skeksis.

The Great Conjunction

It is the astronomical hour when the world's 3 Suns will converge as one.

If Jen fails, *all things whole & good will be destroyed forever!*

Ironically, even as Jen's urRu Master lies dying, so too does the Emperor of the Skeksis, as if to confirm the delicate balance of the world implied in the prophecy of the Great Conjunction.

An ugly and bitter power struggle ensues between the Chamberlain, the strongest of the Skeksis faction, and the Garthim Master. Using all the evil power at his command, the Garthim Master triumphs. The Chamberlain is stripped of his power and is banished from the castle.

The Seeing Crystal

Meanwhile, Jen sets out on his lonely journey. He is saddened by the loss of his urRu Master. He is frightened to be leaving the peace and tranquility of the urRu valley.

But his destiny beckons him.

As he sets out across the wild landscape, Jen becomes aware that the very earth seems to be watching him, threatening him, that flora can become fauna, and that the forests and marshes are alive with chattering, gibbering creatures.

Hidden among this generally harmless gallery of grotesques is one creature that is not so harmless...

A bat with a seeing crystal.

A tool of the evil Skeksis.

Aughra the Astronomer

The bat betrays the existence of Jen, a Gelfling, to the Skeksis. A Gelfling! Alive! The race they so fear! The race that they have worked so hard to obliterate in order to preserve their own reign.

Fearful that the ancient prophecy will be fulfilled, they send their Garthim warriors to track Jen down and destroy him.

Meantime, Jen has reached the mysterious and astonishing observatory of Aughra the astronomer, the Keeper of Secrets. Under Aughra's gruff direction, Jen finds the crystal shard, and learns something of its meaning.

Suddenly, hordes of the terrible Garthim attack the observatory.

Aughra urges Jen to flee...flee!

Kira

Frantically, Jen plunges into the bordering swamp to escape the Garthim's wrath.

But no comfort is to be found in the wild swampland. It is crawling, creeping, and slithering with creatures of bizarre, horrible countenance and figure.

Just as Jen fears he will go out of his mind with terror he comes upon--

Kira.

A Gelfling!

Jen had no idea that there were any other living members of his elfen race! Even in that darksome swamp, he is quietly overjoyed.



Aughra the Astronomer, the Keeper of Secrets, holds one vital link to the destiny of Jen the Gelfling.

The Pod People

Kira guides Jen to the village of the Pod People, a gentle and simple folk who sheltered Kira during the genocidal obliteration of the Gelflings at the hands of the Skeksis.

The Pod People welcome Jen with a merry feast of song and Pod People cuisine...and Jen's cares begin to melt away.

Jen entertains thoughts of abandoning his quest.

Why not spend the rest of his life with lovely Kira amid the simple comforts of the Pod People culture?

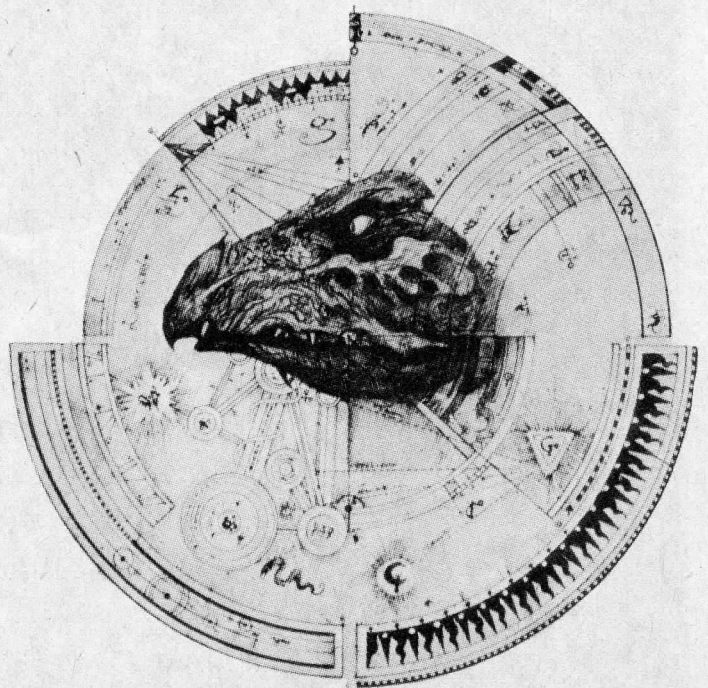
But Jen will never have the chance to confront these vexing temptations.

For lurking in the darkness outside the village is a hulking horde of bloodthirsty Garthim.

Garthim...only too eager to enslave the gentle Pod People and kill the last of the Gelfling.

Will they succeed?

Open Jim Henson's Christmas present to fantasy fans, and find out!





To a Skeskis, preserving their decadent way of life is all-important, no matter how many others must die!

More Than Muppetry

Master puppeteers Jim Henson and Frank Oz, and producer Gary Kurtz, are eager to point out that *THE DARK CRYSTAL* is *not* a puppet movie. They like to distinguish between the Muppets seen on TV and the characters of *THE DARK CRYSTAL*. The Muppets are performing, but the characters of *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, with their intricate detail and more sophisticated interplay...are *acting*.

Jim Henson is always seeking ways to expand the boundaries of puppetry. He created the Muppets while still in college, and received a local Washington D.C. Emmy for a five minute show featuring them. After graduating from the University of Maryland, Henson moved to New York City. His Muppets began making appearances on *The Tonight Show*, *The Today Show*, and *Saturday Night Live*, among others. The Muppets have been a mainstay of *Sesame Street* since its inception. Gracefully riding a seemingly endless crest of success, Henson created *The Muppet Show*, which is now seen in over a hundred countries across the world. The TV success gave birth to *THE MUPPET MOVIE*, and *THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER*.

Frank Oz has been with Jim Henson since 1963, and has gone on to become an invaluable member of *le muppet-monde*. It is Frank Oz who



brings life to the passionate Miss Piggy. Frank was the voice and guiding force behind Yoda in **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**. Also an actor, Frank can be seen, among other performances, as the weird fellow from the American Consulate who visits the werewolf-boy's bedside in **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**. As a performer and creator, Frank Oz's contribution to the field of fantasy cannot be overestimated.

Gary Kurtz, producer of **THE DARK CRYSTAL**, also produced **STAR WARS** and **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**. What more need be said? Plenty. No overnight success, Kurtz toiled for years on countless low budget films and television documentaries, learning virtually every technical craft related to filmmaking. A graduate of the film school at USC, Kurtz brings expertise as well as imagination to every project he develops.

As the conceptual designer, Brian Froud was responsible for the look of the world of **THE DARK CRYSTAL**...the settings, props, and characters. Uniquely equipped for the task, Froud has illustrated countless books and magazines for children and adults. "The Land of Froud" is an anthology of his work. "Faeries" which he co-illustrated with Alan Lee, was a bestseller of a few years back.



Jen and Kira atop their Landstriders, the incredibly swift beasts who carry them to the Castle Skeksis.



When the Skeksis hold a feast, murder and betrayal are in the air & everyone looks out for himself.



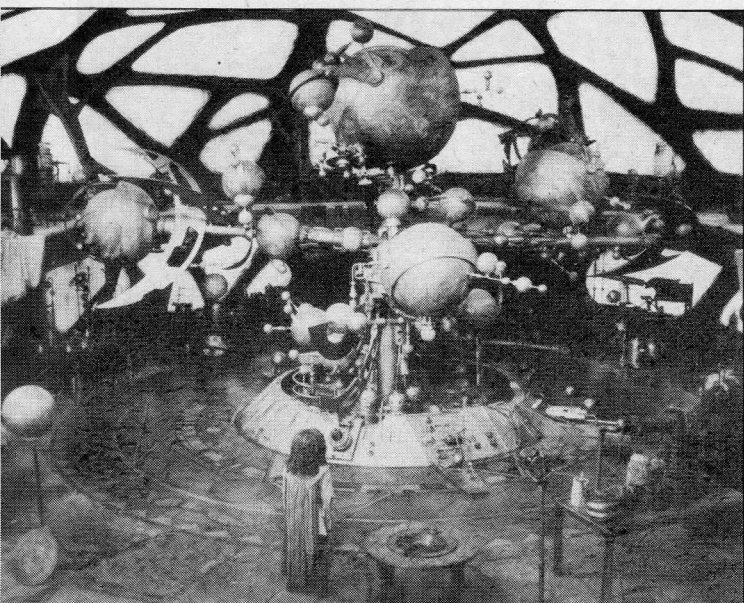
Kira, Jen's much-loved companion, aboard her Land-strider.

Sleight of Hand

Perhaps the single most important factor that led to Jim Henson's mastery of puppet manipulation was the wide and more facile use of TV monitors. When the technology allowed small monitors to be squeezed into the confined spaces of the puppeteers, a whole new world opened up. Rather than blindly manipulating their figures, the puppeteers could now watch the action as it was happening, and so much more intricately choreograph the character interaction.

Enough ingenuity and technological achievement has gone into puppetry since then that Howdy Doody's jaw would drop to witness it.

Jim Henson's use of a taxidermist's glass eye on a Muppet character five years ago led him to speculate on how many more ways could be found to achieve further realism in his chosen



Jen enters the fantastic observatory of Aughra in search of further clues to his desperate mission.

field. It was then that he began to conceive the project that would become **THE DARK CRYSTAL**.

When Gary Kurtz came to Jim Henson for advice on how to bring Yoda to life for **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**, a rapport developed, and Kurtz became the producer of Henson's grand new project.

Brian Froud spent a year designing the sets, characters, and props for the film. His designs were turned over to Harry Lange, the production designer, who was responsible for bringing them to life.

The development, creation, and maintenance of the **DARK CRYSTAL** characters cost \$5 million, and another \$5 million was spent on props, sets, and environment.

The entire movie was filmed live-action. There was no stop-motion effects. Small people were used in some of the characters to animate them some of the time, mimes were used in one or two characters all of the time, but such methods were employed a mere 5% of the screen time. The great majority of the action was brought to life via the most sophisticated puppetry techniques known...and Jim Henson knows them all!

Facets of hydraulics, radio-controlled mechanics, and mechanical linkage were all employed at some time during the production in addition to traditional puppetry techniques. Henson and his people prefer mechanical manipulation to radio-controlled, because character reaction can be made more subtle mechanically. The most preferred method, though, is employing a team of performers, the word used for the puppeteer, a person manipulating a figure by hand or wire.

For group scenes, such as the Pod People feast or the gathering of the Skeksis, as many as 45 performers might be squeezed in and around the set, anywhere from three to five people animating one character. Some of the performers would be under the stage, moving arms or feet. Others would be just out of camera range on the set, creating facial expressions or moving hands. Performers under the stage would have video monitors so that they could follow the action. Monitors were so prevalent that some of the mimes had them *inside* the character costumes!

Jim Henson performed the movie's hero, Jen, while Frank Oz performed the Chamberlain of the Skeksis. Neither man used his own voice, however, fearing that their voices had become too familiar from the TV *Muppet Show*.

Their voices may be familiar, but Jim Henson, Frank Oz, and the rest of their creative crew seem determined that their work never become predictable. The leap from Muppet-style vaudeville routines to the mystic workings of fate and destiny in an imaginary realm is a great one. But no step is too big for a man who stands as tall as Jim Henson.

THE DARK CRYSTAL promises to be a gem.

END