FRACAS

a challenging
computer
adventure

for apple II
and any number
of players

FRACAS

By Stuart Smith

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Eldric and Mordella were born of the computer's innards on a wintry Friday morning. Eldric was of average strength and only a little more clumsy than most fellow humans. Mordella was an unusually strong person, but she was no more skillful than Eldric. Armed with a shield and a broadax, she agreed to venture forth with Eldric and his mace in search of fortune. They met in the far off town of Faroph to begin their adventure.

Mordella easily pushed open the thick wooden gates leading to Main Street, and ran out of the town square toward the Fearsome Forest. Eldric, somewhat reluctant to encounter danger, took a long time pushing on the door, grunting strenuously, to slip out after Mordella. By the time he finally got through, Mordella was well into the Forest.

On entering the Fearsome Forest, Mordella took a quick survey of her situation. Amidst many trees scattered throughout the land, she spotted a carelessly concealed pile of a hundred ducats, a rabbit foaming at the mouth on the west end of the forest, and two wolves licking their chops far south of her. The Leader of the Wolf Pack took off on a quick but haphazard run toward Mordella, while the Big Bad Wolf approached the unsuspecting rabbit. Mordella, still a safe distance from either wolf, was able to hightail it to the ducats, stashing them away in her robes. Unfortunately, the added weight would render her less skillful.

The Leader of the Wolf Pack, unable to see Mordella clearly through the trees, crept slowly closer to her. In a clearing nearby, the Big Bad Wolf caught up with the Rabid Rabbit, but the rabbit grazed the wolf before he could land a blow. His tough skin absorbed some of the force of the rabbit's attack, but he winced from the surprisingly strong blow. Mordella thought it wisest to take evasive action, waiting behind a tree for Eldric's arrival and help.

Eldric pushed open the gate and hurried toward her, but the Leader of the Pack was quick to engage him in battle. Ready for the attack, Eldric swung his mace, walloping the wolf and knocking him off his feet. Mordella ran over to help Eldric while the Rabid Rabbit and the Big Bad Wolf circled each other for position. The Leader of the Pack struggled up after Eldric's powerful blow, but Eldric's attempt to strike again while the wolf was still groggy swung wide of the mark. Just before the enraged wolf could retaliate,

Mordella joined the fracas and landed a fatal blow on the Leader. She found five ducats on his body, adding it to her booty.

Big Bad Wolf had chased the Rabid Rabbit, who eluded him for a short while but suffered a grisly fate. The wolf then charged after Eldric!

Eldric turned in the nick of time and swung wildly with his mace. Then Mordella lifted her broadax and slashed recklessly at the wolf, missing in the confusion of the fracas. Her uplifted arm was an easy target for the wolf's razor sharp teeth! Aaaaaaarrgh!! Mordella learned a valuable lesson from the injury — her experience increased the skill at her disposal. Eldric clumsily flailed away unsuccessfully, but Mordella, a little wiser and rather desperate, connected devastatingly with her broadax. The Big Bad Wolf ignominiously bit the dust.

Disdaining the opportunity to rest a while in the Forest, which was now cleared of all dangers, Mordella and Eldric dashed through the distant pass to the Festering Foothills. Mordella preceded Eldric and was able to scoop up a pile of seven hundred ducats before an angry badger and lynx could react. The additional weight would have been detrimental to her skill but for the thrill of grabbing up the riches. The excitement of the battle was upon her and nothing would distract Mordella from proper attention to her combat technique.

Eldric followed quickly, positioning himself on the opposite side of a natural barrier from the badger, intending to take on the lynx first. The speed of the lynx's attack caught Eldric off guard, however, and he was grazed by the wild cat's claws before he could lift his mace. Ouch! Poor Eldric at least had the intelligence to profit from the experience, learning to react to danger more quickly in the future. Responding to the attack with a well placed swing of his mace, Eldric managed to kill the lynx with a single blow.

With each of them wounded, Eldric and Mordella were not anxious to engage the badger. Luckily, he was unable to find a way to them quickly enough to prevent their retreat through a one way pass back to the Town Square, even though Eldric once more had some trouble negotiating the passage.

Safe and sound back in the heart of Faroph, alive but wounded after their fracases, Mordella and Eldric breathed a sigh of relief. Together they had wrested over eight hundred

ducats from the jaws of danger, and they appreciated a well deserved and health-restoring rest.

This adventure actually occurred while playing a short game of FRACAS in the Faroph scenario. FRACAS is a role playing game in which you and any of your friends play the part of one or more medieval warriors.

You will make explorations into unknown parts of the game's world, fight or flee from a wide variety of menaces, acquire wealth according to your expertise and choice, and increase your character's abilities as long as you can survive. Because of the wide variety of outcomes possible in such an adventure, you will have the opportunity to select your character's goal according to his/her abilities and your inclinations.

LOADING FRACAS (Diskette Version)

FRACAS can be played on both the Apple II and the Apple II Plus. Both integer BASIC and Applesoft versions are on the diskette. If you have an Apple II with integer BASIC in ROM, simply boot the disk as you normally would. The integer BASIC version of FRACAS will load and run when the disk is booted. If you have an Apple II Plus, you must first boot DOS using the master diskette that came with your computer and get into Applesoft BASIC. Then insert the FRACAS diskette and type:

RUN FPFRACAS,VØ (Return)

STARTING THE GAME (Diskette Version)

The following message will appear at the start of the game:

TO CONTINUE OLD SCENARIO, ENTER O
OTHERWISE PRESS RETURN

This allows you the option of loading a scenario that you have saved from a previous game. The normal procedure will be to start a new game by simply pressing the return key. Now you must wait while the scenario data is loaded in.

If you are loading a previously saved scenario, you must be sure that the correct diskette is in drive number 1, and that you know the name of the scenario. Type O (for Old) and press the return key. You will be asked to enter the name of the scenario. Enter the proper name, press return, and then wait for the scenario to be loaded in.

LOADING FRACAS (Cassette Version)

FRACAS can be played on both the Apple II and the Apple II Plus. The integer BASIC version is on one side of the cassette and the Applesoft version is on the other. Insert the tape into your cassette recorder with the appropriate side facing upward and rewind the tape. Get into BASIC and load the tape with a normal LOAD command. This load takes about 1 1/2 minutes. Be ready to turn off the tape player as soon as the program is loaded and the flashing cursor returns to the screen.

Now RUN the program. If you are using the Applesoft version, the program will self-initialize, and you may rewind the tape during this initialization process.

If you are using the integer BASIC version, do not rewind the tape. The following message will appear:

TO CONTINUE OLD SCENARIO, ENTER O
OTHERWISE PRESS RETURN

This allows you the option of loading a scenario that you have saved from a previous game. The normal procedure will be to start a new game by simply pressing the return key. You will be prompted to start the tape playing again and press RETURN. This will load the data for the FAROPH TOWN scenario. At the end of this second load, you will receive the message "WELCOME TO FAROPH TOWN." Stop the tape player and rewind the tape. You are ready to play FRACAS.

If you are loading a previously saved scenario, you must be sure that you have the correct tape loaded in the recorder and cued to the beginning of the saved scenario. Enter O (for Old). You will be prompted to start the tape playing and immediately press return. Wait for the "WELCOME" message, then turn off the tape recorder. Please note that it is not possible to save scenarios when using the Applesoft cassette version of FRACAS.

PLAYING FRACAS

To begin the game, you must establish one or more characters. FRACAS asks you to "add players". Read the following two sections, CHARACTERS and CREATING YOUR OWN CHARACTER, to get an understanding of the characteristics that the "players" can have.

After the player(s) have been defined, you will be asked to select the display speed. Beginners may wish to start off with the SLOW speed, but after playing for a while, you will want the display to move faster. The display speed can be reset at any time during the game (see ESC OPTIONS*).

The SEQUENCE OF TURNS* will be determined by the computer. When it is your turn to play, FRACAS will display your current location and surroundings (SCENE DESCRIPTION*). You must select your OPTION* and make any MOVEMENT* allowed. If you decide to attack, your BATTLE* will be resolved before the next character takes a turn.

The game continues as long as any player's characters survive or until you have accomplished your preestablished GOALS* and elect to stop. By pressing the ESC key while your character is blinking, you will be able to select any of the special ESC OPTIONS*. Among these options is the ability to save a copy of the game on diskette so that you can continue an interrupted game later.

CHARACTERS

Each player of FRACAS may control one or more characters. You may play solo against the computer, or with several of your friends cooperating or competing with you.

Whenever the computer gives you the opportunity to create a character, it will first ask you for the character name. This name may be any combination of letters, numbers, spaces, and punctuation marks. You will then be asked to specify your character alliance. This is the color of your character, entered as a number from 1 to 6. You cannot attack another player of the same alliance. No computer controlled character has an alliance from 1 to 6, so you will be able to attack any computer character (and they can attack you!).

* Described in a following section.

Each character may start at the beginning location (B) or at a random location (R). Starting out randomly can be a very dangerous and occasionally a highly profitable way of jumping into a fracas.

You may elect to have the computer generate your character. Attributes (without armor) will be displayed, and you will be asked if you accept the displayed character. If you accept the character, select armor next. This will protect your character from attack at the expense of reduced speed and skill. Playing a weak character is possible but you and your friends may agree to allow a player to reject weak characters. If you want to enter your own attributes, decline the computer's offer to generate them and do so yourself.

Each character, whether played by you or the computer, has the following attributes:

LIFE FORCE is a measure of your health and well-being. When you start a game it is equal to your strength. If you are wounded, your life force will be reduced. If your life force falls below three, you fall unconscious and will be unable to do anything except rest until you are conscious again. You may be attacked while unconscious! If your life force falls to zero, you die. You may restore your life force by resting, although your life force may never exceed your strength.

May the force be with you!!

STRENGTH determines the force with which you can strike a foe, the maximum life force you can attain, and your likelihood of opening heavy doors. A human of average ability has skill and strength totaling 24.

SKILL determines your chances of hitting a foe when you attack, and the likelihood that you will have a chance to act before another character gets a turn.

WEAPON rating expresses the maximum damage that you can do to a foe with one blow. Your weapon rating originally equals your strength. Stronger characters can handle more deadly weapons. Weapon ratings for several medieval weapons are:

WEAPON	RATING
Dagger	5
Club	6
Rapier	7
Small ax	8
War hammer	9
Cutlass	10
Shortsword	11
Mace	12
Broadsword	13
Morningstar	14
Saber	15
Scimitar	16
Twohanded sword	17
Broadax	18
Battleax	19

ARMOR protects you from the ravages of an opponent's attack. Only blows that are stronger than your rating will hurt you at all. The force of a blow will be reduced by your armor rating.

Each point of armor protection worn reduces your move by one and your skill by two. It is hard to be quick and agile while wearing an iron suit of plate armor! If the computer creates your character, it will adjust your move and skill accordingly. When creating your own character, be sure to take the disadvantages of armor into account.

Common forms of armor and their FRACAS protection values are as follows:

ARMOR	PROTECTION VALUE
Shield	1
Leather Armor	2
Courboulli (waxed leather)	3
Chain mail	4
Iron plate armor	5
Steel plate armor	6

MOVE is the maximum number of spaces you may go each turn. This represents how far you can run, given no obstacles to slow you down. A normal move is ten (10).

CREATING YOUR OWN CHARACTER

When creating your own character, instead of letting the computer generate one for you, here are a few guidelines you may wish to follow.

An average beginner has strength and skill totaling 24. Computer generated characters always have both characteristics in the range of 5 to 19, but their strength and skill may total anywhere from 10 to 38. One way to select your strength and skill is to roll three six-sided dice for each ability, and take the sum of the dice for each ability rating.

Your life force and weapon rating are both generally equal to your strength. The basic move is 10. Wearing armor reduces both skill and move.

The previous guidelines are for a beginner. A special character may be created varying from these suggestions according to your own whim. All of the abilities must be entered in the range of one to one hundred (1 to 100), except for the armor rating which must be from zero to twenty (0 to 20).

A later section, OTHER CHARACTER TYPES, offers suggestions on creating non-human characters.

GAME SPEED

The speed with which scenes are described and action is displayed may be set by FRACAS players. Before the game begins, you will be asked to set the initial game speed. During the game, the speed may be changed by using one of the ESC OPTIONS.

Speed must be set to one of three values:

1) SLOW - This will display all action leisurely, and should give everyone time to read the displayed descriptions. This speed is recommended for starting players.

2) MEDIUM - This will still give most readers a chance to read all of the action as it takes place, but requires the players to pay close attention to the game to see all the events.

3) FAST - At this speed, the description of the action will flash by rather quickly. The game will proceed almost as rapidly as you can make your selections, but unless you are experienced, you will miss some of the action.

SEQUENCE OF TURNS

FRACAS will go through all rooms of the scenario which have players in them, permitting all characters in each room to take their actions before going on to the next room's activity. Sometimes a player may get a 'bonus turn' by running through a door to another room which has not had its turn played out yet.

Within any specific room, the more skillful characters generally take their turns first. Occasionally, a less skillful character will get the drop on a more dexterous one, but only if they are closely matched in skill.

SCENE DESCRIPTION

The first time an area is drawn by FRACAS, it will be described. As long as all action takes place in that area, the description will not be repeated.

Walls and impassable obstacles such as trees are white. Piles of ducats (which can be thought of as treasure chests, jewels or money pouches) are brown. Magenta doors, or passageways, will usually be in a wall, but may represent trap doors to another realm or magical passages to a different room. Characters will be variously colored squares scattered throughout the room.

Wealth and characters will blink while they are being described. It is possible that you may occupy the same location as another character if you have come through a door. In this event, one of you may disappear for a brief time. Be wary! You may still be attacked!

OPTION

When it is your turn, you must select your option. If you are engaged, you will only be permitted to move one space during the movement portion of your turn, no matter what option you select. You are engaged if your character is next to a conscious character of a different alliance than that of your character. A character is conscious if it has a life force of three or more. You are considered to be next to another character even when you are diagonally next to them.

Here are your options:

1) RUN

This option is the fastest way to move if you are not engaged in battle. You will not be allowed to run if you are engaged.

2) DODGE

This option only allows you to go half of your full move if you are not engaged. All attacks made on your character before your next turn will have only half their usual chance of succeeding. You will not be allowed to dodge if you are engaged.

3) ATTACK

This option allows you to attack another character. If you are not engaged, you will be able to take up to half of your move rating before attacking.

4) RETREAT

This is the only option that permits you to move from an engaged position to an unengaged position. If you are not engaged, this option has nothing to recommend itself to you.

5) REST

You will not be permitted to move at all if you rest, but you will have a fifty-fifty chance of increasing your life force if you have been wounded. If you are lucky enough to heal yourself, you may increase your life force by one or several points.

6) PRINT STATUS

Your current status will be displayed on the screen for a while, and then you will again be presented with the list of options.

MOVEMENT

Your character will blink as long as it is your turn to move. This chart will be displayed:

```
    8  1  2     ELDRIC

    7  *  3     MOVE 10
                TYPE 0 TO STOP
    6  5  4
```

(Your character name and move will be substituted in this display.)

The asterisk in the center of the circle of numbers represents your current location. Typing any of the numbers in the circle will move your character in that direction away from the asterisk. For instance, the 1 is directly above the asterisk. Typing a 1 will move your character to the space directly above its current location. Typing a 2 will move you diagonally to the space on the upper right of your location. Typing a zero will end the move. The chart will disappear and your character will stop blinking.

When you engage the enemy, you must stop. You may move next to and past a character of your alliance. You must move onto a door to have a chance at further exploration. Moving onto ducats will increase your wealth and possibly your experience. A heavy load of ducats may decrease your skill or move. If you select the dodge or attack option, and go for ducats instead, FRACAS will automatically change your option to retreat.

BATTLE

When a character selects the attack option, and then moves next to any character of a different alliance, a battle occurs. If you move next to more than one opponent while attacking, you will be asked to select your victim.

Your skill determines your chance of a successful attack. The percentage chance of striking a foe is five times your skill rating. For example, a character with a skill of 10 will strike a foe 50% (5 x 10) of the time. However, you will never have less than a 5% nor greater than an 95% chance of success, even if your skill is zero or greater than 19. Even when you swing accurately, a dodging foe will have a 50% chance of evading you.

If your attack is successful, FRACAS will play an ascending octave for each point of power in the blow. Descending tones reveal how much of your blow penetrates the fiend's defenses. When you are victorious, the enemy's ducats will be awarded to you unless Charon confiscates the booty as the deceased's fare across the river Styx.

GOALS

Before playing a FRACAS scenario, the players should decide upon their goals. A simple journey of exploration for the general purpose of gathering wealth and experience may be sufficient for a beginning group, but more specific goals can liven up the adventure.

Here are a few of the goals that can be imagined:

COOPERATIVE GOALS

1) The players agree to acquire a specific sum of wealth, and then return to the beginning of the scenario. (No scenario holds more than 32,000 ducats.)

2) The entire group agrees to engage and destroy a wicked monster and return to the beginning.

3) The entire group tries to get to a selected location and back.

4) All characters are started randomly and attempt to meet.

5) All players agree to explore until all of the characters acquire a skill of 20 points or better (this may take a very long time).

COMPETITIVE GOALS

1) The first player whose character(s) acquires a fixed amount of wealth wins. You may wish to add that they must bring it back to the scenario beginning.

2) The team of characters with the most wealth after a fixed number of turns wins.

3) The last player with any characters left alive wins. (You must be permitted to attack other player's characters.)

4) All characters are started randomly, and the first player to bring all of his/her characters safely to the beginning wins.

A character that dies is out of the game. This can make the game boring for a player whose character(s) is quickly eliminated. We usually permit a player to create a new character immediately. The new character will have no

wealth or acquired experience, so the player will still have an uphill battle to catch up, but he won't have to sit idly by waiting for a new game to start. We also encourage new players to join in a game that is already in progress.

ESC OPTIONS

Whenever your character is blinking, you may press the ESC key to see a list of special options. Select the option you want, press the return key, and answer any further questions required by that option. When your request has been performed, the display will return to the main FRACAS scenario and you may continue with the reply for which the computer was originally waiting.

The options available to you are:

0 – RETURN TO GAME
Select 0 to avoid doing any of the other options.

1 – ADD CHARACTER
This option permits you to add a new character at any time. NOTE: although the number of characters that may be added to a scenario is initially limited, death permits addition of new characters.

2 – CHANGE ALLIANCE
This option permits you to change your character alliance.

3 – COPY SCENARIO TO DISK (Disk versions)
Selection of this option after hitting "ESC" allows you to save the current situation on diskette and continue your adventure at a later time. You must have a previously formatted diskette in drive 1. You will be prompted to enter a name for the scenario you are saving. Choose a unique name and write it down for future reference.

You will have to wait for the scenario to be saved on diskette, but eventually control will be returned to the game and you may continue to play if you wish. The Applesoft version of FRACAS takes longer to save and load old scenarios and, while saving, the disk drive will turn on and off several times. This is normal. Be patient and wait for control to be returned to you.

3 – COPY SCENARIO TO TAPE (Integer BASIC cass. version)
At any time that you wish, you may make a tape copy of your scenario. The copy will preserve the current status of all characters. The tape may be read by FRACAS at some later time to continue the adventure.

4 – HARAKIRI
If you select this option, your character will commit suicide, and be removed from the game. Ducats will not be awarded to any player.

5 – CHANGE SPEED
This option permits you to change the speed. For details, see the section on GAME SPEED.

EXPERIENCE

There is no sure-fire way to get experience but a lot of things help. If you can land a few powerful blows on the mightiest monsters, survive some crushing attacks yourself, and pick up a little wealth on the way, then you will have the opportunity to grow stronger and more skillful. Warning! The computer-controlled characters may also profit from experience!!

OTHER CHARACTER TYPES

HUMANOID CHARACTERS

An ELF, like a human, has strength and skill totalling 24. Their skill is always at least 10 (before armor), and their move is 12.

A FAIRY has little strength, never more than 7, and very high skill, perhaps 17. Like other humanoids, the average fairy has a total skill and strength of 24. Their weapon rating is a mere 3, but they also have an armor rating of 3 without reducing their skill or move. Their move is a flying 14.

EVIL HUMANOID CHARACTERS

The damage a GIANT can do is never as great as his strength of 40 or 50, but a single blow from a giant is capable of killing most human foes. Luckily, their skill is below 7 so they miss frequently.

A GARGOYLE has skill of 9 and strength of 20, has stony flesh that offers 3 point armor protection, and has a move ranging from a walking 8 to a flying 15. The gargoyle carries no weapon, but his stone fist can do 12 points damage.

GOBLINS and HOBGOBLINS are weaker than humans, with an average total strength and skill of 18 for goblins and 21 for hobgoblins. They favor the same weapons and armor as humans.

An ORC has characteristics just like a human, except that they are invariably evil and ugly.

ANIMALS

A WOLF has a strength of just 10, though a DIREWOLF may be a little stronger. However, with a move of 12 and skill of 15, they are fast, dangerous creatures. They carry no weapon, but their bite and claws can do 7 points damage. A wolf's hide is thick enough to act as 1 point of armor.

A LYNX is weaker than a wolf, with strength of just 6, but at least as skillful. They are about as fast, but can only do 5 points damage with their claws. Their hide is not thick enough to offer any protection.

A BEAR is slow (8), fairly clumsy (9 or less), but very strong (30). A bear's claws can do 14 points damage, and its very thick hide is as good as leather armor.

Wishing you Many Enjoyable Adventures

Stuart