

# Larger Than Life

## The Odd Couple

by Lawrence Hurley

*"The silver dragon soared through the bright skies above Abanasinia, her eyes continually searching for any signs of her mutated draconian kin in the war-torn land. Enjoying the warm southern breeze despite her important mission, the dragon glided on a comforting cushion of air. Her searching eyes suddenly focused onto two figures walking up a small hillock. Instantly alert, the leviathan dropped down so that she was just over the treetops. Not sure what to expect, she glided behind them soundlessly, watching for the slightest hint of danger.*

*She relaxed slightly as she noticed they were both small creatures, dwarf-sized; nevertheless, she remained cautious. As she came in for the initial flypast, the smaller of the figures, which she recognized now as a gully dwarf,*

*turned and saw her. He immediately began to shake wildly on the arm of his companion. "Dragon! Dragon! Dragon!", he shrieked, flinging himself to the ground and covering his head with his grimy hands.*

*As the smaller dwarf was carrying on about his impending demise, the other dwarf, a hill dwarf by the looks of him, looked straight into the dragon's eyes and nodded. It was a sign of goodwill and respect with not a trace of fear, and the dragon was quite surprised. She shook her head in amazement at the sight of the two unlikely companions. "What an odd partnership" she muttered and flew on, her mind on other matters.*

What an odd partnership indeed! The two of them met when Kalack happened upon a group of Aghar being decimated by a couple of draconians out for some sport. One of the Aghar was knocked unconscious (or passed out in fright) and the draconians were chasing down the other

fleeing Aghar. Kalack crept up and dragged away the downed gully dwarf. When the Aghar woke up some moments later, Kalack recognized that he had been faking unconsciousness all along. Annoyed at first at being fooled by a gully dwarf, Kalack was nearly ready to leave him for the draconians, had the Aghar not been staring at one of the books peeking out of Kalack's pack. Intrigued, he showed the book to the Aghar, who opened it upside down and leafed through it as if it were perfectly comprehensible that way. When Kalack asked the Aghar if he wanted to learn to read the book, the gully dwarf introduced himself as Flubub, sage to the court of the Lord High Emperor Huublik, and calmly claimed that he already knew how to

read. The two have been together ever since.

Kalack grew up in the hill dwarven community of Hillhome, the son of a respected smith. He was apprenticed to a leatherworker, and became quite adept at leatherworking, but his heart was not in it. His one true love was magic. Despite his racial heritage, he wants nothing more than to become a mage. He believes that dwarves can learn to work magic, and that the dwarven inability to do so comes from a cultural tradition so deeply held that none choose to question it. Older dwarves simply shook their heads sadly when he argued this view, but he has remained undaunted. He was packing his things in preparation for a journey to seek a Tower of High Sorcery when word came that the dragonarmies had destroyed a nearby village. He could not shirk his duty to his people, so he took up arms with the other dwarves of his commu-

### Kalack Hammerstrike 4th level hill dwarf fighter

STR: 13  
DEX: 10  
CON: 15  
INT: 17  
WIS: 14  
CHA: 14

AC Normal: 6 (studded leather and shield)

AC Rear: 7

Hit Points: 21

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Languages: Hill dwarf, common, Ergot, Solamnic, ancient Hylar, Aghar dwarf.

Age: 71

Height: 4'5"

Weight: 135 pounds

Hair/eyes: Light Brown/soft blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Hand axe, battle axe, shortbow, dagger, hammer

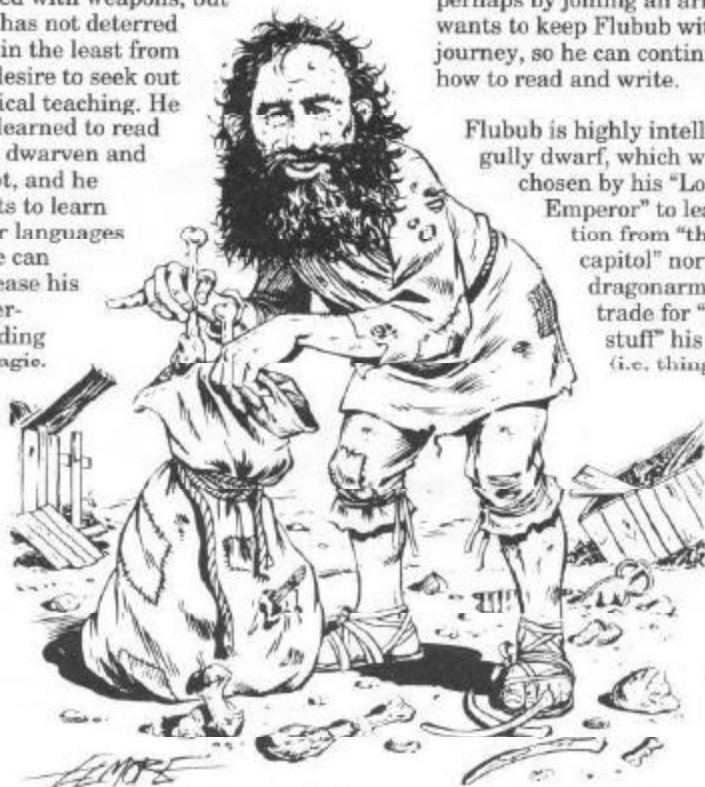
Nonweapon Proficiencies:

Endurance (15), reading/writing dwarven (18), reading/writing common (18), leatherworking (17), hunting (13), spellcraft (15)

Magic Items: Dagger +2 (He does not know this)



nity. He has become fairly skilled with weapons, but this has not deterred him in the least from his desire to seek out magical teaching. He has learned to read both dwarven and Ergot, and he wants to learn other languages so he can increase his understanding of magic.



He had risen to the rank of sergeant within the dwarven company he served with when they were outflanked by a dragonarmy advance guard and nearly destroyed. After escaping the debacle that shattered the company, he travelled north toward the lands around Solace. On the way he encountered a small band of gully dwarves being massacred by a contingent of draconians. He managed to save one of the Aghar, a gully dwarf "noble" named Flubub Phlup. Rather than getting rid of Flubub as soon as he could, he decided to help him and hopes to educate him as he seems of above average intelligence.

Kalack is friendly, noble, and respectful. He is also coolheaded and helpful to strangers. He wants to see more of the world, so he might be inclined to accompany a good-intentioned group of people to other lands. In one of these journeys he hopes to find a White Robe (or Red Robe) who is willing to look past his dwarven heritage and teach him magic. Currently, he is travelling to Solace to meet the smith, Theros Ironfeld, who is known in Hillhome. (He does not know that Solace has been destroyed, captured and liberated since last he heard news.) Once

there he hopes to travel to Solamnia, perhaps by joining an army. He also wants to keep Flubub with him for the journey, so he can continue to teach him how to read and write.

Flubub is highly intelligent for a gully dwarf, which was why he was chosen by his "Lord High Emperor" to lead an expedition from "the Imperial capitol" northwards into dragonarmy territory to trade for "important stuff" his people needed (i.e. things his

"emperor" wanted). Flubub is proud that his expedition got further into dragonarmy territory than did any of the "two" previous groups sent, even though he is their only survivor.

He feels that his tactical skills and leadership abilities make him a natural replacement for his emperor should any misfortune ever befall him.

He likes Kalack and is tagging along with him in order to learn how to read and write. With that knowledge, he reasons, it is only a short step for him to master magic and become a great sorcerer-king. He wants to keep quiet because he still thinks he is on the expedition even though back home they have completely forgotten about it, and wants to return with a great deal of knowledge in order to lead his tribe to greatness. He believes that Kalack knows nothing of these plans, and Flubub thinks himself wily enough to fool him. He pretends to be no more intelligent than a typical member of his race. He often acts foolishly and asks a lot of questions, the answers to which he never seems to hear all the way through. Despite the fact that he is an intellectual paragon among his people, he has not reckoned with Kalack's keen mind. He is not aware that Kalack has heard him mumbling in his sleep about his "destiny," nor does he know that Kalack has seen him gesturing wildly, pretending to cast mighty magic.

### Flubub Phlup 2nd level gully dwarf fighter

STR: 10  
DEX: 13  
CON: 8  
INT: 10  
WIS: 9  
CHA: 7

AC Normal: 1  
AC Rear: 1  
Hit Points: 11  
Alignment: Neutral  
Languages: Aghar dwarf, hill dwarf, common  
Age: 45  
Height: 3'11"  
Weight: 96 pounds  
Hair/eyes: grimy deep brown or light brown (if cleaned)/deep brown  
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, shortsword, club, sling  
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Survival (10), hunting (8), swimming (10)  
Magic Items: Unadorned dagger which gives as +9 AC bonus. Flubub does not know that but suspects that something is protecting him (probably the dead fish in his pocket).

Despite his personal dreams of glory, Flubub is very loyal to Kalack because he is the only person ever to show him kindness and accept him without judging him. Among his own people, Flubub was ostracized because of his intelligence. He is beginning to suspect that Kalack is even more intelligent than he is and may know even more interesting things than he does. The only thing that worries Flubub is Kalack's interest in magic: he is afraid that Kalack might want to become Lord High Emperor of the Aghar domains. Still, Kalack did rescue him, and Flubub has not forgotten that. He feels somewhat guilty for deceiving Kalack, and has considered inviting Kalack to be one of his advisors. This decision has been troubling him a great deal lately, and he is not quite sure what to do about it. He does not realize how much he has come to value Kalack's friendship and is likely to do anything to help him, even if it means that Kalack discovers his plans. Such an action may surprise him. □