

The Silven

Trumpeter

Silven Trumpeter 07 - February 2004 Issue
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The Official Magazine of Silven Crossroads

Fancy a trip to Hell?

Raymond Huling gives you his insights on taking your party to the nether regions of the gaming world.
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Two d20 Products Reviewed

Our reviewers take a look Arcana Unearthed and Out for Blood.
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being a professional sculptor
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Write to Dana at :
adriayna@yahoo.com

From the Editor

Adversity is all around us. It is questionable if humanity could even exist without the concept of fighting, taking sides, and gaining ground over others. Adversity is a driving force within our world, our entertainment, even the games we play. Heroes are born and crafted from adversity. They are those individuals who have fought and won despite terrible odds, they are those who have triumphed over their enemies, and they are those who have gained the respect and loyalty of their fellows through their efforts. Adversity is what drives most games, be it CRPG or PnP. But is this necessarily the best way to play?

It is true that adversity, competition, and fighting seems to be innate to human nature. We all strive for something, and those ambitions have a way of conflicting with others. At the same time, we grow tired of the infighting; we grow tired of the wars. Is the adversity-type game the best one worth running? All too often, it seems it is the *only* type of game running. What about exploration, mystery, or uncovering secrets? Even these types of themes can have their own adversity, although the focus is usually on other aspects.

From another angle though, the adversity-type game does have its advantages. In the end, the heroes do save the day. In the end, the mastermind plots are foiled and the bad guys are punished. We delight in these types of games, because in the real world, such clean-cut victories are hard to find.

RPGs are unique in the larger genre of "games" because they don't normally pit the players up against each other. Players aren't competing for the prize, they are working together for a single goal. It seems likely then, that these games would foster more solidarity. All too often, however, adversity spills from inside the game to the players themselves. Argumentation over rules, characters actions, and DMs rulings all take place at the gaming table. Is there no fun without adversity? Is there no winning without a fight?

This month, the *Silven Trumpeter* has several interesting takes on the issue. Pike Stevenson's *The Cost of Virtue* weaves a tale of three superheroes that face a terrible adversary and a more terrible choice. In *Looking for Hell*, Raymond Huling delves into the place of ultimate adversity—the depths of hell—in the hopes of creating a unique portrayal. Sean Holland details the exploits of the Zulu army in *Through the Lens of History*, while Shane Cubis ports his adversaries to a new colony in *Antipodean Adventures*. This month take a moment to realize that we are all on the same side.

Best Regards,

Dana Driscoll

Dana Driscoll

Editor In Chief
Silven Crossroads E-zine



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Chatting with Gary Gygax

by Kosala Ubayasekara
& Gary Gygax

Welcome to our regular monthly debate and informational piece done in collaboration with Mr. Gary Gygax, the original creative mind behind the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game. For our first Q&A of the year, we begin with a recap of some items you touched on last year to see how they are doing and then take a look ahead to 2004.

Q1) To get us started, lets check on the progress of the Hall of Many Panes mega-Adventure. You said last year to us that Troll Lord Games were gearing up for a 2004 release. Is that still on schedule?

Funny you should ask that. It so happens that two days ago I was sent a file of a manuscript of 500+ pages length for the Hall of Many Panes. I am just beginning to read and give the final author's edit. The work is currently slated for release in the summer of this year, possibly at Origins or at GenCon.

Q2) You talked also about Troll Lord Games looking to publish a Lejendary Adventure Boxed Set. How's that coming along?

This project, the Lejendary Adventure Primer Boxed Set, has been turned over to Troll Lord Games, and the cover and interior art are now being lined up. It is also slated for release this year, sooner than the Hall of Many Panes. Soon after the boxed set is published, Troll Lord Games will supplement the work with a campaign-base module from me, Living the Lejend. All of that seems to be on track.

Troll Lord Games will likely soon be announcing actual release dates for all of the named projects.

Q3) How is the progress on the Lejendary Adventure MMORPG going? Is there a release date for the game yet?

Dreams Interactive is still hard at work developing the coding and graphics for the Lejendary Adventure Online game. I believe that DI is looking for some additional staff, but that the projected beta-test of the LAO game remains as sometime near the end of this year.

Q4) The RPG industry has been going through a lot of changes the last few years. What do you think the biggest surprise in the industry was in 2003? Any predictions about where the industry will go in 2004?

It was no surprise that electronic RPGs continued to grow in sales volume. Not a few paper game folk were rather startled to find that the market was going south for modules and support products.

Because of a glut of product and flagging sales, I do believe that there will be a shakeout in paper game publishers, with quite a few closing their doors. I expect the base audience for RPGs to contract a bit this year unless Wizards of the Coast does some intense marketing to bring in new consumers. I mention WotC because they are the only hobby game publisher with the wherewithal to accomplish such a task. Back in the early 1980s TSR spent a lot of advertising and promotion on recruiting new gamers. Since then nothing much has been done along those lines. Wizards was planning to, I know, but then they were acquired by Hasbro, and those plans seem to have gone by the boards.

About the Authors

Gary Gygax is credited as being the founding father of the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game and is a well known figure and writer in the industry. Now working mostly on his new roleplaying product line, Lejendary Adventures, he is a household name among role-playing enthusiasts.

Kosala is a serial entrepreneur residing in Stockholm, Sweden. Aside from being the founder of Silven Crossroads, Kosala holds an advisory board position in a privately held Swedish company and works part time in the Swedish public sector on a volunteer basis.

Contact the Authors

Kosala can be contacted at kosala@silven.com. Mr Gygax's email is not printed here for privacy reasons.

About the Artist

Interior black and white artwork for this article is done by Veli-Matti Joutsen. Mr Joutsen is a self taught artist living in Finland, who has been drawing and illustrating since early childhood.

Contact the Artist

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artwork copyright Veli-Matti Joutsen

Q5) What do you consider your most rewarding gaming achievement/experience of 2003 to have been?

Well, that's a tough question, because I enjoy all of my work. If pressed I suppose I'd have to say that completion of the Hall of Many Panes campaign adventure module was the most satisfying achievement, because the work was so extensive.

Q6) What kind of goodies can we look forward to on the Legendary Adventure front in 2004? Are there new releases planned for game store shelves?

Hekaforge will continue to release the remainder of the five-part Legendary Earth world setting this year. With luck, the three remaining portions will see publication, but for certain Jewels of the East will be released so that with the LE Gazetteer and Noble Kings & Dark Lands three of the five will be available. Cris Clark is also planning to get an LA game adventure module or two into print this year—possibly the massive Castle Wolfmoon one—finally and at last;)

As mentioned above, Troll lord Games will be releasing the LA Primer game boxed set and a large support module this year. Depending on their scheduling, it is possible that as many as three other LA game supplements might make it in 2004. They are the Tome of Knowledge and More Beasts of Lejend books for the core rules, and the Legendary Pantheons book supplementing the LE world setting by providing information on the 20 pantheons of deities recognized on that world.

Q7) Will you be at any major gaming conventions like Gen Con Indy this year?

With my work schedule and advancing years, I don't plan to make any conventions this year other than a small one in Glen Ellyn, IL, CodCon in mid-April and then the Milwaukee Gamefest in early July. As a matter of fact being at a convention pretty well drains me for as much time thereafter as I spent going to and at the event. Coupled with pre-con preparation, the time lost thus is about three or four days for each actual event day.

Following up this article...

Find out more about Gary Gygax's Hall of Many Panes module at the Troll Lord Games website found at : <http://www.trolllord.com/homp.htm>

More information on Gary Gygax's Legendary Adventure RPG can be found at the official LA Game website at : <http://www.legjendary.com>

The MMORPG being developed by Dreams Interactive based on the LA Game RPG has an official website at : <http://di.gamepoint.net/legjendary/en/index.php?page=news>

You can read more about Hekaforge Productions, the primary publisher for the LA Game product line, at their official website at : <http://www.hekaforge.com/>

If you want to head off to the Milwaukee Gamefest, everything you need to know about registration as well information for visiting the event is on the official website at : http://www.advantageconvention.com/Gamefest_Milwaukee.htm

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Exclusive Interview

with Sandra Garrity

Interviewed by Dana Driscoll

Sandra Garrity is one of the most renowned sculptors in the RPG industry. She has done work for many leading miniature/RPG related companies including Ral Partha, Reaper, and Dwarven Forge. We extend a special thanks to Sandra for donating her time and wish her all the best in her continuing efforts. This interview was conducted via email with some questions gathered from the Silven Crossroads community.

Q) Can you begin with telling us some background information about yourself?

I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, went to Phoenix College and then Arizona State University, where I got a degree in Art Education. After graduation, I became an art teacher for an elementary school. A year later, I married and moved to Texas, where my husband, an Air Force Officer, was stationed. There, I worked as a freelance artist, doing mostly paintings and some sculpture. For the major part of my husband's career, and in numerous locations throughout the country, I worked at freelancing until I had two children to take up the major portion of my time. When my daughters were toddlers, I began working doing freelance art again. My two daughters are now in collage, and my husband is retired. In 1989, I began working for Ral Partha doing minis. In November of 1992, I returned to freelance work and now work for a number of companies in the gaming, pewter and toy industries. I also do private commissions.

Q) What was the first mini you sculpted?

The first mini done in epoxy putty for a gaming company was a small dragon for Ral Partha. It was not done correctly for casting in the two part molds used, but did show that I had some potential for doing the work.

Q) How does one get started into the mini-sculpting business? How did you get started? What sort of education and/or training did it require?

I would say that one would first learn to do the miniatures in the materials required by the company they wish to work for. Contact the company and try to get information on what they want and then provide a resume which includes pictures of your work. I got started when an artist friend, who was working as a freelancer for Ral Partha doing the art for the blister cards called me. He encouraged me to go and interview. I did, and subsequently wound up working for them, first as a freelancer, then on staff.

Q) What size do you work at when developing a new model?

Usually it is done the same size as the final product. What I make goes into a mold and the casting is the same as the original.

Q) How does the sculpting process work? Do you begin with sketches and research?

Sometimes I work from art supplied by the client, and sometimes I am asked to do the design for the figure. When I do the design, I do research and then do workup drawings of the sculptures to be done. These are submitted to the client for final approval. After the design is finalized, I proceed with the sculpt.

About the Author

Synonyms for the word Dana include variegated, multifarious, or perhaps convoluted. Dana has a variety of different interests, some of the most important being reading, writing, learning, and playing D&D. She is currently a graduate student working on her PhD in linguistics at State University of New York: Stony Brook, with her undergraduate work in Literature, Writing, and Women's Studies. While she currently resides in Long Island, NY, she is a country girl at heart, growing up in the wooded Appalachian mountains of Western Pennsylvania.

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Q) What can you tell us about the mass-production of minis after they are sculpted?

Most of the minis in the gaming industry or pewter industry are produced in white metal (now, mostly in lead free alloys) using a spin cast process, with a two part disc shaped mold.

Q) How long does it take to create a mini from beginning to end?

The time needed to make a mini is very much dependent on the size, detail, number of pieces, etc. An average human type figure of about 28-33 mm takes me from 14 to 18 hours of hands on work, plus the necessary cure times for the various details and parts done throughout the sculpting of the figure. A dragon might take as much as 100-150 hours of hands on sculpting plus cure times, equaling a month of time from start to finish.

Q) How do you get so much detail into a small figure?

Most of us use magnifying visors and homemade tiny tools scaled to our needs. Lots of patience is in order as well.

Q) What is your creative process like?

All reference is gathered that will be used to define the look of the sculpt. The sculpts start with an armature and are built up in layers, allowing the layers to cure to form a firm surface for subsequent details to be added. Most of the time, I have multiple figures under construction so that there are always figures cured enough to have new putty added. The final check includes the cleanup of any rough spots and the addition of any copyright info required.

Q) As a female designer, do you have special concerns when creating minis? Do you seek to make more varied female minis or is this really not a concern?

Most times my being a female does not really affect my approach to the work I do. Making a sculpt that fulfills the artistic goal is the driving force. I do, however, like to make female figures that are attired in more realistic dress. I do the more scantily clad females for my clients because there is a market for them and, as an artist, I must keep marketing issues in mind as well as artistic issues. My desire, when possible, is to create female minis that reflect both good taste and realistic design. I think most women would choose the practical thing when representing a character, so I like to provide that.

Q) Do you formulate the ideas for the miniatures yourself or are you commissioned to do the work?

Most times I am commissioned to do specific figures. From time to time though, I get the joy of designing my own figures.

Q) Do you have a favorite mini? Which one do you believe is your best work?

I don't really have a favorite mini. Each mini I do leaves my office and I think, "I wish I'd had time to do a bit more here or that part differently." This gets me a lot of teasing from my husband, who says I'd never get anything out of my office if it weren't for deadlines.

As to what I think is my best mini--well that changes as I keep turning things in. I do think most of the pieces I like best have done within the last few years.

Q) Do you see any new trends developing in the industry that will affect the types/styles of minis made?

I see the sizes of the minis growing and the style of the figures becoming a bit more exaggerated. There is a trend to have minis on tabs for use with slot bases too. I don't like this trend, as it forces the poses to be flatter (and boring) unless the client will allow multi parts.

Q) Which companies have you worked for so far?

In the Gaming Industry: I've done work for Ral Partha; Lance and Laser; Leading Edge Games; Rafm/Silver Fox; Grenadier; Game Lords; AEG; Chivalry Consulting, Inc.; Discount Hobby; Black Orc Games; Talon; Guardians of Order; Dwarven Forge; and Reaper Miniatures.

Outside the Gaming industry: I've done work for Franklin Mint; Danbury

Mint; Rawcliffe Corporation(now a division of Encore Group Inc.); and

Polymeric Systems Inc.

Q) Do you have a preference of genre or style when sculpting?

Not really. I like to do a wide range of things.

Q) What is the newest mini you are working on? Can you let us in on any of your other ongoing projects?

Because of contractual restrictions, I am not at liberty to discuss specifics of works in progress, but look to Reaper Miniatures, Wolfchild Games (in China and UK) and Grogard Miniatures (in France), and Discount Hobby for some new things.

Q) Do you work on a commission basis?

Yes I do. I am a freelancer and contract for my time.

Q) Is there anything else you want to add?

I'd really like to say that working in the gaming industry has been wonderful. The great folks who buy the miniatures and all of the fine people that I do work for have truly enriched my life. I hope to continue do my best for all of you for many years to come. Thank you all for your support.

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The Cost of Virtue

by Pike Stephenson

"Good evening, Team Trinity."

The words rolled like ice water down Inertia's spine. The heroine gaped in disbelief as the hideous façade of Dr. Rictus filled the team's colossal central monitor. Her quivering hands, gloved to the elbows in sleek crimson, barely managed to pause the disc. The sudden silence within the Trinity command room prickled her nerves and made her aware of the darkened corners and shadows that lurked between the other computers and monitors. She studied the villain's features, rooted to the screen by a mixture of morbid curiosity and fear.

His skin was the color of sun-bleached leather, stretched taut across a gross exaggeration of a human skull. His thin, wide lips perched outside a mouth filled beyond capacity with small, jagged canines. His eyes were two deep, black orbs that devoured the light about his face. Inertia knew this demented madman all too well. She also knew that he had been securely locked away after their last battle, or at least he was supposed to be. But, understanding the intrinsic vulgarities of this villain she was certain that anything was possible.

Inertia handled the clear gem case that had held the disc. On its cover, etched in black calligraphy was one word: Rictus. Aside from that there was no other clues as to its origin. It must have been delivered by one of her teammates, she concluded, which would also explain the general summons she received a short while ago. As she sat alone, past encounters with Dr. Rictus dominated her thoughts.

Once he had rigged a city transit bus to slowly dispense a deadly neurotoxin of his own design, as it made its route through the busy streets of Emerald Bay. Before that he managed to control the minds of several civic leaders and directed them to commit vicious crimes and random acts of chaos. With each instance, he pushed the envelope and put countless innocent lives at risk. He was obsessed with death and destruction, each on an increasingly grander scale and

without any understandable cause or reason. If this was Dr. Rictus, his plan would be far more insidious than the last. Looking back at his frozen image, Inertia felt small, frail and vulnerable.

This can't be real, she thought.

"My sentiments exactly," replied Psibrid.

The telepath's sudden intrusion startled Inertia beyond reason. Her powers, honed to perfection by numerous battles and hours of training, kicked in reflexively. A near invisible pulse of energy, like a ripple in space, lanced out at the speed of thought and thrust her teammate across the command room. Psibrid somersaulted backwards, his heels just clearing the rows of recessed fluorescent lights, until he landed on all fours a few feet from the room's lone door. Inertia vaulted from her chair and dropped into a one-kneel battle stance, her lean, sculpted arms extended and ready to strike again. The air about her red and white body suit quivered as if it were excited by the prospects of combat. It took a moment for her frayed nerves to settle and to realize whom she attacked. Inertia stared vacant and lost across the expanse between herself and Psibrid. The telepath stood, brushed and straightened his long, dark coat and smiled.

"How many times have I told you not to do that?" Inertia's words came out in quick, high-pitched gasps. She was not at all thrilled with the way the recording had unsettled her.

"Which part, the sneak up on you thing or the scan your thoughts thing? In all defense, you were projecting something fierce."

"Both!" Inertia scowled, her scarlet lips looked like a wrinkled cherry beneath the polarized goggles that covered her eyes. She stood, placed both hands on her hips and attempted to look as imposing as her petite form would allow. Psibrid glowed with pride as he often did after befuddling his colleague. It made her all the more adorable, he said. She hated adorable. Though in truth she could not complain; she enjoyed the attention.

With well-measured pride, Psibrid strolled back to his teammate's side. His booted feet were as silent as a whisper below the whirs and beeps of the tireless computers, surveillance equipment and other hi-tech devices that bordered the long, narrow room. Inertia relaxed but maintained her scowl as he pretended to ignore her. She took a deep cleansing breath, sighed, then returned her attention to the video screen.

"Now that you've scared the hell out of me, what do you make of this?" Inertia pointed towards the stilled image of their arch foe.

"What's there to make? The nut's locked up and under maximum security." Psibrid ran a finger along his unmasked face. He stopped at a long scar that ran from the corner of his mouth to his left eye. He traced it with a single finger, deliberately following its course, and then glared more intently at the screen. Inertia could see that the wound had healed, at least the visible one.

"Its new," Inertia said, "as in the last twenty-four hours new." She tapped several keys and brought up the disc's encoded time stamp on the screen. Both heroes observed it in grim silence.

"This is bullshit, plain and simple," said Psibrid.

"I wish it were," came a voice from behind.

Valiant, the team leader, stepped across the threshold of the command room's door. He was a powerful man, standing a few inches shy of seven feet and with a muscular build that bordered obscene. He wore a suit of gleaming, golden mail that ebbed and flowed like a great amber ocean across his body. A matching cape followed in the wake of his journey. Tucked under his left arm was an ornate helm, leaving his chiseled yet boyish face bare. Waves of ash blonde hair draped down his shoulders as well as a small tuft that sprouted from his chin. He stopped at Inertia's left side and set his gaze upon the monitor. Her eyes followed up his firm arms, lingered at his broad chest then rested on his smooth, tan face. She tried not to sigh but it was almost uncontrollable; the man was perfect, physically.

"Forgive my tardiness for I had intended to be here at the first viewing." Valiant's voice resonated like distant thunder echoing through a deep canyon. He remained transfixed to the video image as he continued. "The disc arrived at the 12th precinct mailroom earlier this afternoon. I summoned you shortly after I was made aware of it because I value your insights and evaluations."

"How thoughtful," said Psibrid, "In case he's loaded the disc with a powerful virus or a doomsday transmission that will send a swarm of killer cyber bees right down our throats."

"Wait," Inertia interjected. Her red-gloved fingers danced across an adjacent keyboard. The entire computer console came to life. Multi-colored lights flickered and emanated from the curved, silver station. Long seconds, like encapsulated lifetimes, passed before the system paused to rest. "Negative. The computer found zero traces of viruses or command-override signals. I will set up a series of firewalls and ECM's to be safe so we can watch the rest of the recording."

Not without some popcorn. Psibrid's intently skilled telepathic conveyance filled her mind to the point that she could almost smell the buttery aroma. Inertia grinned.

Always the smartass, she mentally replied. Looking back she could see a smile creep across his face. Steeling herself against any further invasions, Inertia returned her attention to the screen.

"I'll restart the disc so we can catch all of the details." Flanked by her teammates, Inertia found strength and comfort, which was evident in the fluid precision of her movements. She completed the last of her security protocols and replayed the disc from the beginning.

"Good evening, Team Trinity. Yes, it is I, Dr. Rictus, again in preparation to spar with my favorite youthful vigilantes."

"Puh-leeze," Psibrid heckled. Inertia placed a finger to her lips and *shooshed* him while Valiant stood motionless, absorbing every detail of the recording.

"It has been too long since our last foray. I must say I was a tad concerned that you would not survive my cybertronic death squad." Inertia shivered at the thought of the metallic tentacles that writhed from the robots. Their overwhelming assault pushed her abilities to the extreme. She was left fatigued, depleted and nearly another victim of their chaotic rampage.

"After that battle I spent many long hours replaying the events and I have seen the error of my ways." Dr. Rictus turned away from the screen and sauntered towards a single, high-backed chair that was hidden behind him. Dim lighting, outside the scope of the camera, vaguely illuminated the unadorned room. Aside from the madman and the chair, the room was vacant. Rictus adjusted the tattered and mottled cape that covered him from shoulder to toe, then sat down.

"Stop!" Psibrid thrust his hands into his dark, wavy hair and threw his head back. "What the hell is this? We put that psycho behind bars a couple of months ago. Is this a joke?"

Valiant spoke but never turned his attention from the screen. "After receiving word from Chief Schaeffer, I immediately contacted the VonSenreich Institute to confirm that Dr. Rictus was still in custody."

"He's escaped and you're now just telling us," Psibrid said as he stared at the golden giant.

"That is why you are watching the disc."

"You've known for hours and you haven't said a word. That bastard nearly killed us and wouldn't hesitate to try again!"

Valiant finally turned to regard his teammate. "I am aware of the severity of the situation."

"Like hell you are, you freakin' zombie! You're damn near indestructible while we are not. If that lunatic is planning to take us out we're as good as dead."

"That is unlikely," scoffed Valiant. "You are safe and we know not what his plans are. You should not waste your energy on such trivia and let us continue our viewing of the recording."

"And you should go back to humanity school because your people skills suck."

A faint amber glow began to slowly pulse from Valiant's eyes. Methodically, he released his grip from the console, finger by finger, leaving eight thick indentations. He turned his massive frame, squared his shoulders and stared down at the dark telepath. Psibrid met the gaze with no less intensity. He adjusted his stance with purposeful precision and focused his own energies into a visible ebon shield about his hands. Valiant loomed in closer, his eyes pulsating quicker and brighter. Inertia didn't like where this was going. She spun her chair around and stepped in between the feuding heroes.

"Boys," she shouted, "this is getting us nowhere and only aides that madman's cause. Both of you had better settle down right now and refocus. If this is Dr. Rictus, he may have something planned beyond blowing us off of the map. Don't let that sick son of a bitch turn us against each other." Inertia maintained her position between her teammates, watching, waiting for one of them to withdraw.

After a long, tense moment, Valiant's eyes ceased to glow. "My apologies," he said, "I do sometimes forget that your physical thresholds are limited."

"That makes me feel all warm and tingly." Before Psibrid could add a few more choice words, Inertia flashed him a cold stare. She hated it when her friends fought like this. As sterile and pompous as Valiant could be, he was always there when she needed him. Psibrid on countless occasions had risked his life to protect hers, whether she needed it or not. He was wild, sometimes reckless, and she loved him all the more because of it.

Psibrid eventually agreed with a nod and stood down but his face told a different story. Inertia sat down and returned her attention to the monitor. She reached for the keyboard to resume the recording but hesitated. Psibrid was right about one thing: Dr. Rictus was pure evil and by far the most frightening of their collective foes. His plans escalated to new levels of terror at each encounter. Was she ready for this, so soon after the last battle that nearly ended her life? Before she could reflect further, the monitor flickered. Psibrid

had reached over and started the disc. He remained outside of her mind yet his expression had softened, displaying an insightful understanding and concern for Inertia. He drew back his hand, placed it on her shoulder and gently squeezed. It was comforting, but only for the moment.

Back at the monitor, Dr. Rictus moved his bony hands in front of his face and pressed his fingertips together, apparently lost in his own thoughts. "Too often," he continued, "I have underestimated your resolve, your creativity, your capacity for the greater good. As heroes go, I have been most impressed at your ability to turn the direst of situations into a challenge well met and accomplished. So, how far will you go? What is the extent of the 'greater good'? Tonight, my young adversaries, we shall see."

Dr. Rictus rose from his seat and grabbed his enormous cape with both hands. He drew his arms out like the wings of a dark angel preparing to take flight and exposed a diabolical device. A multitude of technicolor wires laced in and around his torso. Many of the wires connected to dozens of luminescent green vials that cast a sickly glow from under his tattered cape. At the center of his chest rested a digital timer that a majority of the wires appeared to originate from. The timer was counting backwards, displaying less than three hours before timing out.

"As you can see, I have a bomb that is set to detonate at midnight. The explosive force will be quite deadly yet fairly localized. I have one intended target; me."

"What the hell?" Inertia quickly looked back at her teammates. Psibrid's face was a combination of confusion and contempt. Valiant's normally expressionless face rippled with a hint of tension. They were obviously as unsettled as she.

"You have a decision to make, and not one to take lightly. You can either locate and save me or let midnight come and rid the world of the menace that is Dr. Rictus." He dropped his arms than sat back down in his chair. The camera zoomed in tight on his chest, filling the screen with the timer. "But be warned, as you may be aware, there are other recipients of this recording that are in notable places. They will watch and wonder, 'what will Team Trinity do'? What will you

do? What is the greater good? Tick-tock, my fate is in your hands."

Inertia removed her visor and wiped away the hot tears that stung her eyes as the screen faded to black. His words echoed within her mind.

What is the greater good?

What will you do?

"What will we do?"

From The Town



Crier

INQUEST GAMER picks VAMPIRE: THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE® as all-time best multiplayer CCG

Atlanta, GA, January 30, 2004 — InQuest Gamer, an industry-leading magazine, has named White Wolf's Vampire: The Eternal Struggle as the best multiplayer collectible card game of all time.

The article, appearing in the March 2004 issue of InQuest Gamer (#107), examines all the top collectible card games based on their play in games with more than two players, examining (among others) the variety of viable strategies in multiplayer games and how much interaction went on between players. Vampire: The Eternal Struggle (or VTES) soared to the top of the list, eclipsing such well-known games as Lord of the Rings and Magic: The Gathering. "[VTES] combines the best of one-on-one play with multiplayer while remaining balanced," said InQuest, and paid special attention to importance of diplomacy and politics in the game. "The politics of the setting shine through in the CCG... Diplomacy isn't just an aspect of [VTES], it's a necessity."

Read the full press release on Silven Crossroads at:

<http://www.silven.com/news.asp?case=show&id=437>

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→ Expansion Pack Madness

By Carl Batchelor

During the past few years, it seems that no successful CRPG has gone without a least one expansion pack. Once an extremely uncommon occurrence in the PC RPG world, the expansion pack has gone from being an unheard of rarity to an expected result of having a hot selling CRPG. While it is awfully nice to have more of a good thing, has the expansion pack craze hurt the genre rather than help it?

An expansion pack is a good idea for a game you like, since an extra trip through your favorite CRPG is something no role-player can refuse, but the level of quality in modern expansion packs has taken a severe drop as of late. What they call an "Expansion Pack" today is essentially nothing more than some minor material additions stuffed into a pre-existing game. Gamers expect more than just a new quest and a few more textures. For the \$35 dollar price tag we pay for these add-ons, we expect something that will end up being worth the money.

There was a time when expansion packs were rarely called such. Often, gamers bought new games without ever giving any thought to the fact that they were merely playing an "expansion" to an already finished title. Ask any *Ultima* fan if he thought *Ultima 7's* "expansion pack" was worth their money and you'll probably send them into a state of confusion. Though, in truth, the game's semi-sequel *Ultima 7: Serpent Isle* was essentially nothing more than a well crafted expansion pack. The same can be said of New World Computing's *Might & Magic 5*, which actually admitted to being an expansion pack when after installing it overtop of *Might & Magic 4*. The opening cinema changed and the two games joined together to form an entirely new title the designer lovingly named "World of Keen". While clever, it was hardly unfair. These past "expansion packs" were full fledged games that, while they did share the same graphics and gameplay, gave the gamer an entirely new experience that surpassed what they received with the original title. Unfortunately, this trend has long since died.

Today, expansion packs are more common than ever. *Morrowind* managed to squeeze out two of them, *Dungeon Siege* cranked out one of its own, *The Infinity Engine* games were responsible for spawning six more combined, and *Neverwinter Nights* has redefined the term mediocre by pushing out a couple more. While at first this didn't really bother me, I came to a startling conclusion while writing an article on what I felt the best games of 2003 were. Oddly enough, only two of the CRPGs I could think of were "original" games while the rest were all expansions. Apparently, some of the bigger game development houses seem to like their lofty perch at the top of the CRPG heap, and do not want to lose money by taking risks. From where I stand, it seems like the bigger and more successful the company is, the less likely they are to deviate from their already established money-making formula. Instead of expansion packs being a "gift to the fans" who bought and supported the game, these pricey add-ons have become nothing more than an excuse for money-hungry designers to get a few extra bucks out of their paying customers.

In less than a decade, the expansion pack has gone from "so rich with content it can almost be a game by itself" to the rather depressing "so lacking in content that it could be downloaded over a 56K modem in one night." Have CRPG designers become so timid that they would rather go with the sure-fire best seller than an entirely new game? It seems like this is the case.

This trend wouldn't bother me if the expansion packs were still being created to be complete games the way *Ultima 7's Serpent Isle* or *Might & Magic 5* were, but the expansions we are presented with today are hardly worth the \$30 dollar price tag slapped on them. Take *Neverwinter Night's* two expansions for instance. As someone who bought and played through both of them, I can tell you that the single player campaigns were nothing special. Although *Hordes of the Underdark* was challenging and well written, it seemed like the work of an unemployed college student when compared to the epic modules available for download off of the Internet. Why bother fighting yet another awakening god or power hungry Drow queen when you

About the Author

Carl is a self-confessed "Cranky Veteran Gamer" who when not working, can be found playing whatever new CRPG happened to get released that month. Carl's non-gaming hobbies include debating and/or arguing politics, Phillies baseball, web design, and working on his very own science fiction novel. Although he has been a gamer since 1982, Carl's greatest passion will always be writing and reading what others write.

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could instead spend your time investigating a haunted tavern or solving a medieval murder mystery? Of course, this goes much deeper than my preference for the fan created modules I've downloaded off of the *Neverwinter* Vault.

The sad truth about this expansion pack madness is that most of the things the designers add has already been done by the fans and usually

The sad truth about this expansion pack madness is that most of the things the designers add has already been done by the fans and usually much better to boot ...

much better to boot. Long before Bioware added modifiable inventories to their henchmen in *Neverwinter Nights*, the fans created a script that allowed potential mod makers to do it themselves. Even the much celebrated addition of multiple henchmen in *Hordes of the Underdark* was overshadowed by the fact that almost a year ago someone created a way for you to have four party members following you around—two more than what Bioware could (or would) even do.

Though the fault isn't entirely placed on Bioware. Bethesda's *Tribunal* and *Blood moon* expansions offer little more than new armor sets and tree types. While *Morrowind's* expansions have promised wonderful new additions to the game world, the new features the game's fans have clamored for are still nowhere to be seen. Instead of waiting for Bethesda to add in *Daggerfall's* famous cloaks and hoods along with old style medieval housing, we have had to rely on the

fans to do it for us. Within a year's time, *Morrowind's* fans had answered the call and not only added in all of these things, but went a step further and toughened up the game as well. They re-wrote text to make things appear more random and realistic, they created scripts that made NPCs finally lock their doors at night, and they even added in the one thing that *Daggerfall* had always been known for: a detailed banking system.

Why charge nearly full price for an expansion pack that is nothing more than a texture and furniture add-on? Why pay 30 dollars just so you can play a silly, contrived little single player campaign that is tacked on just to divert attention away from the fact that the only thing you are getting that you don't already have is a new style of tree and three new styles of rugs? Why not post this stuff to the website and allow registered game owners to download the new material for free, since most of it has already been one-upped by the fans? What's worse, why make it so that people who do not have the expansions installed have severe difficulties playing the modules of those who do?

Keep in mind though that this trend hasn't "infected" the console side of the hobby. Rather, it seems that the consoles are becoming better at creating the type of expansions the PC had once been famous for. Perhaps the best example would be Bandai's *.hack* series. Although the core gameplay remained the same throughout all four parts, each game introduced enough new features, spells, items, locations, and NPCs that any of the games could have been enjoyed individually. Although you would be missing out on most of the game's story by doing so, you could very well play them this way. Even the recently released *Final Fantasy X-2* did a good job of "expanding" the game it was based on. Had the original *Final Fantasy X* been released only on the PC and *FFX-2* was sold as an official add-on to the game, it probably would have went down in history as the most robust expansion ever released for an RPG. As much as I dislike the consoles, I have to admit that they are getting things right while the PC RPG designers are getting them completely wrong.

This isn't to be mistaken as whining, since I'm quite capable of funding my expensive hobby. It is, however, a call to arms. Four of the top selling CRPGs this year

were merely expansion packs, and only two "original" titles (*Gothic 2* and *Greyhawk*) were even worthy of note. If this isn't cause for alarm, then I certainly don't know what is. While I understand that the PC RPG genre is once again going through its "3-year dark period" it cycles through every now and then, it is depressing that so many designers are unwilling to commit to a new title and would rather package something together that they have sitting around on their hard drives back at the company office. Therein lies the answer to why this is happening. Uncertainty in a very shaky market. With consoles becoming more powerful and MMORPGs squashing the traditional offline epics, we all once loved, publishers are becoming too scared to take even the slightest risk.

The only expansion pack released in the past six years that truly stood out amongst the rest as a quality title worth my money was Bioware's *Throne of Bhaal*. While I always thought that *Baldur's Gate* was too watered-down to really count as an authentic D&D CRPG, the series reached its high point, oddly enough, during this final expansion. Instead of just adding new monsters or a few new dungeon levels, *Throne of Bhaal* was a game in and of itself. With an extra thirty hours of gameplay and all new romances and combat options for your main character to discover, it could have very well been titled "Baldur's Gate 3" and no one would have bat an eyelash. The Demi-Gorgon's tower itself was large enough to keep me occupied for weeks, even if the boss at the end was incredibly easy. Unfortunately for Bioware's fans, this is only the exception that proves the rule.

Hopefully things will change and people will wake up before irreparable damage is done to the hobby. With so many once proud PC game designers jumping ship to the consoles, or giving the consoles considerably more attention than they used to, a solution must be found before we're all forced to play *Everquest 2* just to get our PC RPG fix. Thankfully, the solution to this problem is quite simple. Either they devote more time and effort to making expansions for their games, or they make their expansions available to registered owners of the original game at very low prices. Perhaps even free. Though I'm no cheapskate, I can hardly see the logic in paying thirty dollars for an expansion that does the exact same things a fan

modification did for my game five months earlier.

This brings me to another possible solution. How about listening to the fans more often when deciding what goes into an expansion? Why is it that Bethesda has still ignored the pleas of its fans when they cry out for buyable in-game housing, working banks, a robust and ever-changing economical system, realistic NPC schedules, and improved enemy AI behavior? All of these features and more have been either attempted or already completed by the fans, but yet the need for an "official" expansion made by the game's designers is still desired. Instead, Bethesda's two *Morrowind* expansions have given us a few new armor types and a couple rather nice looking styles of trees that eat up your system's resources like there's no tomorrow. Is this what buying an expansion is all about? If it is, then maybe the white shirts running these companies need to rethink their career choice.

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The White Wolf Insider

By Amaranth

Welcome to the first edition of the White Wolf Insider for the Silver Trumpeter. Each month, The White Wolf Insider takes a look within the gaming studios of White Wolf, providing you with the new releases and latest news.

White Wolf Sells Through Entire Print Run of *GEHENNA*

Atlanta, GA, January 13, 2004: White Wolf Publishing has sold through its entire print run of *Gehenna* (WW2999; ISBN 1-58846-246-3), the final release for *Vampire: The Masquerade*, ahead of the book's January 14th release date.

Consumer interest has been extremely strong ever since White Wolf announced in August of 2003 that it would be bringing an end to the *World of Darkness*, the contemporary horror setting for the majority of its games and fiction, in a series of books called the *Time of Judgment*. *Vampire: The Masquerade*, the flagship game line of the *World of Darkness*, would end its run in the first book of the *Time of Judgment*, namely *Gehenna*. Retail interest has followed consumer demand in both the hobby stores and chain bookstores, with *Gehenna* currently at #217 at Amazon.com. Overall sales rankings and its companion novel *Vampire: Gehenna, The Final Night* (WW11910; ISBN 1-58846-855-0) come in at #7 at Amazon.com's horror fiction listings. All this interest has translated into very strong orders, to the point that White Wolf has now sold all printed copies to various distributors, chain store customers, and to individual consumers through preorders on www.white-wolf.com.

"It's very gratifying to see *Gehenna* generating this much excitement," said Mike Tinney, President of White Wolf. "*Vampire's* been a ground breaking, best selling game for over 13 years and our fans are anxious to see it's final act. They won't be disappointed."

Fans looking forward to seeing *Gehenna* and afraid they won't be able to find it aren't too late just yet, but time is indeed running out. "The demand for *Gehenna* has been overwhelming," said Dean Burnham, Vice President of

Sales. "We've exhausted our supply of the product and we recommend that fans contact their local hobby retailer or bookstore (Borders, Waldenbooks, Barnes and Noble or other bookstores) to reserve their copy."

The *Time of Judgment* event continues through March with a series of hardcover game supplements and accompanying novels:

Releasing January 14th: *Vampire: Gehenna* (WW2999; ISBN 1-58846-246-3) & the novel *Vampire: Gehenna, The Final Night* (WW11910; ISBN 1-58846-855-0)

Releasing February 2nd: *Werewolf: Apocalypse* (WW3999; ISBN 1-58846-323-0) & the novel *Werewolf: The Last Battle* (WW11911; ISBN 1-58846-856-9)

Releasing March 1st: *Mage: Ascension* (WW4999; ISBN 1-58846-417-2) & the novel *Mage: Judgment Day* (WW11912; ISBN 1-58846-857-7); *World of Darkness: Time of Judgment* (WW5399; ISBN 1-58846-475-X)

WhiteWolf Sells Film Rights for *HUNTER: THE RECKONING* to Uwe Boll and BOLL KG

Atlanta, GA, January 16, 2004: White Wolf Publishing, Inc. today finalized an agreement with German director/producer Uwe Boll for the film rights of its *Hunter: The Reckoning* horror property.

Hunter: The Reckoning is one of several horror properties developed by White Wolf as part of its award-winning *World of Darkness* setting. The property's focus is on men and women who become aware of supernatural monsters preying on humanity and who are imbued with special abilities to combat them. Since its introduction in 1999, *Hunter* has spawned a line of pen-and-paper role-playing games, a series of mass-market novels and three video games from Vivendi Universal: *Hunter: The Reckoning* (X-Box, Gamecube, 2002); *Hunter: The Reckoning: Wayward* (PlayStation2, 2003) and *Hunter: The Reckoning: Redeemer* (X-Box). "*Hunter* has become one of our most successful mass-media properties," said White Wolf's President, Mike Tinney, "and we're thrilled to see it head toward the big screen."

About the Author

The author writes: "I have been a White Wolf fan for the past 10 years, and it never seems to stop.. no matter how hard I try. I have two kids, and a loving wife.. which support me through everything that I decide to do. I look forward to providing you with information regarding to the White Wolf Gaming Studios, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions."

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"This game provides a great opportunity to produce an exciting feature film," added Uwe Boll. "We look forward to capturing the unique and frightening qualities of *Hunter: The Reckoning*." Boll and his film fund Boll KG specialize in developing films based on successful video game and media properties. The film will be produced with Shawn Williamson (*Alone in the Dark, WhiteNoise*) of Brightlight Pictures Inc. Williamson said, "This property lends itself very well to feature film adaptation. *Hunter: The Reckoning* is a spectacular game, and we look forward to bringing the most thrilling elements to the big screen."

White Wolf's film rights are represented by the Gersh Agency.

With 78 million dollars in production funds raised in the past two years, Boll KG is a fast-growing film production entity based in Frankfurt, Germany under the aegis of Dr. Uwe Boll. With this most recent acquisition, Boll has emerged as a pre-eminent director and producer of films based on video games. Artisan Entertainment released *House of the Dead*, based on the Sega franchise, in Fall 2003; Boll is in post-production on a film adaptation of Atari's *Alone in the Dark* (with Christian Slater, Tara Reid and Stephen Dorff) in Vancouver.

Brightlight Pictures, a feature film and television production company based in Vancouver, BC, Canada, develops, finances and produces independent feature films and television projects for the domestic and international marketplace. Company principals and producers, Stephen Hegyes and Shawn Williamson, have worked on over 50 productions in the last 10 years, including Bruce Sweeney's *Last Wedding* which opened the 2001 Toronto International Film Festival and starred Molly Parker, and *Alone in the Dark* starring Christian Slater, Stephen Dorff, and Tara Reid. Brightlight is currently shooting *The Long Weekend*, a Canada / UK co-production between Brightlight Pictures and Gold Circle Films UK starring Chris Klein and Brendan Fehr. More information on Brightlight

Pictures can be found at: www.brightlightpictures.com.

Since its entry into the role-playing game market in 1991, White Wolf Publishing, Inc. has grown, maintaining an average market share of 26%. With collective book sales in excess of 5.5 million copies during this time, White Wolf is one of two undisputed worldwide publishing leaders for pen and paper role-playing games. White Wolf properties have been licensed for television series, comic books, action figures, console and computer video games, coin-operated arcade games, professional wrestlers, replica props and weapons, interactive media events, and a myriad of merchandise. More information on White Wolf can be found at their website: www.white-wolf.com.

White Wolf, *World of Darkness*, and *Hunter the Reckoning* are registered trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

About the Author

Alicia (Lynxara) writes the webcomic *Fantasy Wars* and the *RPG Wars* comic strips for the *Silven Trumpeter*. She graduated from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia in 2002 with a major in Religion & Philosophy and is currently a graduate student at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. When not changed to her word processor, her hobbies include anime, video games, and of course, role-playing.

About the Artist

Elizabeth Ellis (KouAidou) draws the webcomic *Fantasy Wars* and the *RPG Wars* comic strips for the *Silven Trumpeter*. She graduated from the University of Maryland with a major in Japanese in 2003 and is currently at large. When not shackled to her art supplies, her hobbies include anime, translating,



by Kou and Ali



Star's Night Part 6

by Aaron Todd

Jagger Tan had been watching her for longer than she could have imagined. He'd pigeoned her from the moment she'd taken a seat at the bar. She needed something and he figured he might be just the guy to help her.

After stealing her datapad, he made sure that she would stay well enough for him to be able to get something from her later. He'd go to her ship and wait for her return.

Jagger arrived at the ship hoping that she hadn't been killed. But then, even if she was, he had her ship. All he had to do was find a way in. That was seldom difficult. He'd found his way into enough ships that he didn't feel this would probably not be much of a challenge. Private ships sometimes were, if they belonged to privateers, but this woman was no privateer by any stretch. She had a specific goal, and once she'd accomplish that, she'd head back to her ship.

As he expected, the ship was locked with a simple low-bit cipher. He pulled out his tools and had it open in seconds. Sometimes this stuff was almost fun.

The loading ramp came down and he figured he'd take a stroll and check the place out before she got back. He wanted to find out about how she lived before he actually met her. He went inside and turned on the lights.

He started off going to the right, which was towards the back of the ship. He would see what she was carrying, if anything, and maybe get a glance at the engines. He hoped that she wasn't carrying anything too illegal. He had his share of problems and didn't need to make them worse by getting mixed up with some smuggler carrying a load of weapons to some under-funded resistance movement.

Once at the cargo bay, he walked right inside, opening the door with the push of a button. She must not lock the interior doors when the exterior is locked. Inside, he saw nothing of real interest. There were a few boxes, but the hold itself wasn't really big enough for smuggling of any sort, so she must not be running anything. It seemed a bit small, though, for the size of the ship. He wondered what modifications must have been made to other parts to make this room seem so small. He didn't bother to look in the boxes. They appeared to be nothing more than bulky luggage.

Other than that, the hold had some EV-suits and a wall of spare parts for ship repair next to a rack of tools that seemed to be complete enough to work on the entire ship. This woman liked doing things for herself. Unless, of course, and he had only just now thought of it, what if she is not alone and someone else is coming back to the ship to meet her.

He went back to the ramp and looked around to see if anyone was approaching the ship. The coast was still clear. He would look around some more.

In the other direction, there would be the front cabin, but she would also need living quarters. They should be somewhat centrally located on a ship this size. They only had room for storage, engines, cockpit and one reasonable sized room, or two smaller ones. There was possible room for a lounge for long trips, but that was offset against the side of the cockpit.

He found them right where he expected on the interior of the ship. The door was about halfway between the front cabin and the ramp. It wasn't locked either.

Inside this room, he found what was clearly the quarters' of someone single. There was no decorative ornamentation around the room anywhere, except for the picture of a young man, around twelve or thirteen standard years. He looked carefully and could definitely tell that she was his mother. No doubt about it. He could have passed for a much younger brother. But then who would have pictures of a younger brother as the only picture in the room.

About the Author

Aaron Todd is a devoted husband and Computer Operations Manager in a Philadelphia suburb. A classically trained literature buff and an award-winning poet, he has turned his attentions over the last year to his long-sought-after career as a novel writer. With his first work nearly finished, Aaron is actively seeking a publisher and agent. In his free time Aaron likes to jog, bike ride, read Star Wars novels, and enjoys a challenge at any level. With Football, Hockey, and Lacrosse as his favorite things to watch, activity is never in short supply.

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There was a small closet, packed loosely with a couple flight suits and some more comfortable garb. There was a refresher next to the closet, and on the other side of the room was another door.

He opened it and decided that there was now confirmation. This room looked like it belonged to a boy. There were a few toys in a box against the wall. The bed was about the same size as hers and the walls were covered in pictures of fighter craft. The kind of things a young man dreamed of.

So now, she was alone, but the boy had to be somewhere. She wouldn't send a twelve-year-old boy off to fend for himself on a planet like this. Had he run away while she was gone? No, the outside door was locked. Had the boy died, and she kept the place as a shrine?

Uh-oh, new thought: This woman might be truly nuts.

Maybe helping this woman out was not the best idea. He started to head for the ramp again to take a look around and this time she was coming. She was walking straight for the ship. She paused about halfway between the ship and the door. She'd seen the hatch was open.

He couldn't run now, so it must be time to follow it through. He headed for the front cabin. That seemed as good a place as any to wait for her. She would have to come up there if she wanted to leave. And she would want to leave. With a little luck she might not come in blazing a path.

He had really hoped for some more time to look around the ship to figure out what she needed. He had also hoped to search the data card some more so that he could learn as much about her as he could. So far, what did he know about her? She lived alone, but had a young boy somewhere. She was chronically bothered by something and she liked to gamble.

She had a ship that was her own and didn't stay in any one place too long. The manifest showed that she'd only stayed here for three local days. She wasn't a smuggler. The ship would have had much better security and it would not have children's quarters. Not much to go on, unless...

The front cabin door was open, too. So, in he went, closing it behind him again. By the time he'd gotten to the front viewing panels, she was already past the front side of the ship and probably coming up the ramp.

He could hear her walking away from him, her heavy boots clanking on the carbon-steel deck plating. She was headed for the back of the ship.

He took a moment to look around to be sure that there was nothing of any danger up in here. Every ship had its tricks; he just didn't want to get dumped on by something obvious. He didn't want to get cornered in here if she was good and mad, which she probably would be. He could see nothing of consequence, so he settled into the pilot's chair, faced it towards the door and waited.

Ynara opened the door, gun drawn, to find a stranger sitting in her chair. Neither one said anything for a moment as she grasped the fact that this man had broken into her ship.

"Lose something?" he held up the data pad.

"How did you," she paused. "You were in the bar. You took it from me." There wasn't as much agitation in her voice as he had expected.

"Just an old trick." Jagger would not let himself get nervous, even with the gun pointed right at him. He

let a small grin cross his lips.

"Well, hand it over," She waved the gun from him to herself.

"I don't think just yet," he was just being smug now.

"Hello. Gun. Now." She made no subtle gesture towards the gun in her hand. She was taken a bit aback by his defense.

"Well, I think there might be something in here of some use. Say, some information about your son?" He fanned it between his thumb and forefinger.

She grew instantly more tense. If she wasn't a cluttered mess inside before, she was now. He thought he detected her taking a small step backwards. She definitely leaned back. He'd caught her with a hammer to the temple. He had definitely stumbled onto something. Time to jump on her while she was off-guard.

"Yes, I believe you're looking for him. And this little thing probably has all manner of information about him on it, doesn't it?"

"Who are you, anyway?" She wanted to be evasive, get him going on a different track. She needed the pad back, but he couldn't know how much. Time to push him.

"I'm sorry, where are my manners? Jagger. Jagger Tan. And you must be the venerable..." He glanced down at the pad again, "Ynara Diri. Ynara."

He paused for a moment as he considered the name and her appearance. "Say, you're Minaren, aren't you?"

"Yes. Now get off my ship and give me the pad back. I really don't want to make a mess in here. I'm in a bit of a rush." She stuck to her deflection.

"The boy must be something special to you, then isn't he?" He was joining her in the game. His posture stayed completely relaxed. He wasn't leaving.

"Are you going to get off my ship, or not?" Realizing that he was staying, she was showing her agitation. She really didn't want to have to take the time to clean up the kind of mess she'd leave if she had to kill him.

"I don't believe we've established that yet. I've got something you want. And I have no doubt that you have something I want." This guy wanted to bargain with her.

"Well, what is it that you want? Money? I can't say I have much of that."

"Well, from what I've seen so far, I imagine you are pretty capable. I'm sure you can find ways to get the money you need. After all, you probably rolled over that Bollen, back there didn't you. Of course that wouldn't be too difficult once you got him knocked over. And of course, there was that ever-present machine of his. How did you handle that?"

Ynara was beginning to piece things together now. It was this man who had been on the hover-bike, too. He was following her. Did she know him? Had she taken something from him in the past? She'd never been to this planet before, so unless he wasn't local, where could she have seen him before.

"Why are you following me?"

"Who said I was following you? Who is to say that I didn't see you in the bar, pick your pocket and realize that the information I had taken from you would be worth something?"

"Why are you following me?" She repeated the question to make a point that she didn't buy that story for a second.

"I just told you. Because I've got something you want and you've got something I want. We can work together here. Look, you want to find your son, right?" He paused waiting for her answer. He had thrown his suspicion against the wall, now he would see if it stuck.

"Okay, right," She hated conceding that, but he had already figured it out.

"And I could use something to do with my time. Something lucrative, preferably. So, why don't I help you and you help me?"

"So, why should I trust you to help me? You picked my pocket, broke into my ship, went through my things, and now you think you can hold my son for ransom? What kind of man are you?"

"The kind of man who quite possibly saved you from getting your head kicked in by a walking appliance. Those circuit scanners don't always work you know. Now, I'm not saying I'm not in this for me. But I could see on your face the moment you walked in the bar that you needed help," he exaggerated his perceptions. "I can help you."

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- Easily apply a template (like celestial or lycanthrope) to a base creature.

Easy to learn!

- Comes with a complete and detailed help file.
- Step-by-step, **in-program tutorials** get you started quickly!
- "Tips of the day" show you features you might not know DM Genie has.
- Let the mouse hover on any control to popup a helpful ToolTip!

Run battles between your PCs and monsters

- Calculates all attack/damage bonuses
- Automatic AC calculation - knows which types of bonuses stack, and which don't.
- Keep track of numerous conditions (like prone, blinded, etc.) – and apply the effects automatically.

Manage **multiple campaigns**

- Each can have its own skills, feats, spells and psionic powers and is independent from one another.
- Easy to switch from one campaign to the other.
- Move creatures and customized items between campaigns using the import/export functions.
- Create or import separate adventures in each campaign.
- You can even export/import an entire campaign!

Create and run complete adventures

- Each room or event has its own rich text description
- Associate monsters and treasure with each room or event in an adventure.
- Uses a system of hyperlinks to quickly navigate within an adventure.
- Add maps with clickable regions
- Roll random encounter tables automatically.

A **huge database** from the core rulebooks
Export and import functions

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Unnoticed and Underappreciated Part 3: An Introduction to Remixed RPG Music

By Angus McBlane

Continuing from the last two articles in this series on the world of video game music, I'd like to introduce you to the third and final aspect of console RPG music in this trilogy of articles. While the first article focused on the music itself as it appears

with the game, the second focused on professional arrangements, this third and final article will focus on an often misunderstood realm of music creation: that

Remixes and arrangements are very similar. The only apparent difference between them is that remixes tend to be by those individuals who have no thought to the marketability of the track.

of the remix. Remix in the VG music world is much different than in it is in the mainstream musical world. For the most part remixes are put out by those individuals who have a passion for VG Music and are interesting in expressing their art in music form. The title "Arrangement" tends to reserved for professional releases. Many remixes are learning experiences for what may become original compositions. While there certainly is a lot, and I mean a lot, of terrible remix's out there, there are a few sites that strive to create level of professionalism in the music that they host.

The largest, and by far the best remix community out there, is Overclocked (OC) Remix (<http://www.ocremix.org/index.php>). This site host a stellar array of VG music remix's than ranges from heavy trance (seemingly the favourite among remixers) to jazz and vocal pieces. A second site that has emerged from its disastrous first attempt is VGMix (<http://www.vgmix.com/>). While not as good in quality as OC Remix, it is very well on its way. The first thing one will notice when visiting these sites is that they host remixes from all genres of games. While RPGs certainly are a main area of remixing, due to their recent time in the limelight, there are many great tracks remixed from other great games. RPG's seem to be a weapon of choice for the remixer because so many of the tracks are melodically driven; they are not filler.

Within these communities of remixers exists a whole range of styles that one can find. A large portion of the remixes at OC Remix are Techno/Trance styles. It's difficult to say why this style has become so popular with remixers but as a music fan it is certainly interesting hearing the JENOVA theme from *FFVII* with heavy beats. While techno/trance remixes are by far the majority, there certainly are jazz tracks and even partially orchestral tracks.

What remixers do, much like arrangers, is rework the track into something entirely different. Certain remixers will take a track that sounds incredibly synthesized and turn it into a track that appears to be orchestrated, at least in part. Some remixers rework tracks so they can be played on the piano, guitar or even more exotic instruments.

The mood of the track can change dramatically with how it has been remixed. An excellent example of a stellar "somber" remix is "Death on the Snowfield" by AmIEvil (<http://www.ocremix.org/detailmix.php?mixid=OCR00205>). This track is a remix of the "Terra" theme from Final Fantasy VI. A great example of a more upbeat techno version of the same song is "Terra Trip Machine" by JV (<http://www.ocremix.org/detailmix.php?mixid=OCR00401>). It all depends on taste.

There are also those individuals who attempt to market remixes and gain exposure for the remixers. The only studio currently doing this is OneUp Studios (<http://www.oneupstudios.com/>). This studio releases albums filled with remixes. They tend to be tribute albums dedicated to the original composers and are completely legal. By legal, I mean that the music is licensed to be remixed and reproduced for sale. A portion of the sale goes to the original composers. OneUp currently have two albums out, and are awaiting the release of the third. The pioneer of this

About the Author

Angus McBlane is currently an undergraduate at Simon Fraser University in beautiful British Columbia, Canada. He is working on his Bachelor of Arts (Humanities Major, History Minor with a Concentration in Middle East and Islamic History). He has a passion for literature, especially texts from the classical world, theology, and philosophy. In his spare time he enjoys reading, writing, Console gaming, music (Mainly VG, Classical and Trance), movies, capoiara, and all that other fun stuff that the youngins like to do.

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was a project known as "Project Majestic Mix." This was the original completely legal remixed cd of VG Music. *PMM* was released a few years back and since then OneUp has been brought into the limelight with a similar task.

Remixes and arrangements are very similar. The only apparent difference between them is that remixes tend to be by those individuals who have no thought to the marketability of the track. Rather it is a labor of love to create something new from something old. Remixes help young composers gain experience, exposure and hopefully to help VG Music gain the recognition it deserves.

I hope this trilogy of articles has been helpful to people as an introduction to the vast world of video game music. There are many great OSTs out there; it is up to you to support the artists so that they may continue producing them. This world of music is not only underappreciated, but goes hardly noticed in the mainstream press. Thankfully, this art form has been gaining more recognition and increased coverage of not only music but video games in general. With a number of shows dedicated to video games, a network entirely dedicated to it and an attempt, albeit rather biased and boring, at an award show, it seems that the time for video games to come into limelight as an art form is at hand. It is only a matter of time before games are embraced as such and every aspect of gaming gets the respect it deserves, from music to direction.

I'd like to end this trilogy with a list of worthwhile titles that anyone who has an interest in music should look to:

Chrono Cross OST

Chrono Trigger OST

Xenogears OST

Xenosaga OST

Final Fantasy IV-XI OST

Final Fantasy VII-X Piano Collections

Final Fantasy VIII Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec (Fully Orchestrated Album)

Grandia OST's

Skies of Arcadia OST

Shadow Hearts OST

Star Ocean 3 OST's and Arranged Album

Legend of Zelda Series OST's

Morrowind OST

Myst III: Exile OST

Hitman 2 OST

Metal Gear Solid 1 and 2 OST's

Following up this article...

Anybody interested in pursuing further knowledge of the World of VGM can look to these resource sites for help:

Soundtrack Central <http://www.altpop.com/stc/>

Game Music Revolution <http://www.gmronline.com/>

Chudah's Corner <http://www.chudahs-corner.com/>

Slightly Dark <http://slightlydark.com/>

Overclocked Remix <http://www.ocremix.org/index.php>

VG Mix <http://www.vgmix.com>

Gamingforce Forums <http://www.gamingforce.com/forums/>

Talent

Spotlight ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

Every now and then we like to inform our readers about singular individuals in the RPG industry that do awesome work. This month we want to point you to the website of Sam Hullick.

Mr. Hullick is a Chicago based, self-taught composer that creates music scores and soundtracks for games and interactive media.

Head over to his website below and check him out. Don't forget to listen to the amazing samples on the site :

<http://www.samhullick.com/>



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The Adventures of Starlanko the Magnificent

The Perilous Quest to Mandregal's Tower Part I: Where It All Began

by Matthew J. Hanson

People could say what they wanted about taverns. Many people in Starlanko the Magnificent's circles did, and usually it was some type of joke. "A mortally wounded man walks into a tavern, and with his last dying motion hands you a map to the ancient artifact of Minra," that sort of thing. If you wanted work you should go find a bounty list, check with the border town, join a company or join The Guild. Taverns were for drinking. At least that is what they said. People could say what they wanted. Starlanko liked the taverns.

Starlanko the Magnificent was currently in the Black Dog Tavern, one of several such establishments in the city of Tallidan, in the kingdom of Gordius. Tallidan was about as far north and as far east as one could get and still be truly in Gordius proper. Any farther than that and they got into the wild lands, areas that were "officially" claimed by the Gordius, but were too overrun with dangerous monsters to actually be inhabitable. Even if he had not already known he was near the edge of civilization, Starlanko could have guessed it. All he had to do was look around the room.

The common room was a dingy place. The light was dim, and the smell of tobacco, sweat, and a hint of blood permeated the air. The occupants were motley, dirty, and unkempt, and many were not entirely human. There was a small group of dwarves stoically drinking and keeping to themselves, a lone elf chatting with a group of humans, and more than a dozen people who appeared to have some level of orcish blood in them. Most of them looked like half-breeds, probably the product of the raids that had been all too common in this area twenty years ago. A few seemed full-blooded. Starlanko's business associate, a burly man named Redreck was engaged in a drinking competition with one of the pureblooded, which was fine. They both knew Redreck was the brawn, and Starlanko was the brains of the operation, Redreck only needed a clear head if there was slaying to be

done, and that could probably wait until he slept it off.

Out of the general filth of the Black Dog Inn, there were a number of people who caught Starlanko's eye. Two he found noteworthy, not because they looked like good leads, but rather they were both wizards, like himself, and each was trying to hide in his own way. One was wrapped in a dark gray cloak, his hood was drawn overshadowing his face, and he sat alone in a dark corner. The other was trying to blend in with the locals, to appear as nothing more than a common craftsman, but Starlanko could tell from the tiny details that both of these men were well schooled in the Art. They hid it well enough that those untrained could not tell, but there were subtle clues, cadences of speech, or even the way one held his gaze, that suggested a wizard's rigorous training.

Of the two wizards, Starlanko paid more attention to the one trying to fit in, who was deep in conversation with a woman wearing heavy plate armor. She was telling a story of how she raided the remains of a wizard's tower in the wild lands, over a decade ago. Apparently the two other people sitting at the table, a male half-orc in leather, and an unarmored human male, had also been party to the exploits described.

"...and you know what we found after we cleaned up the last of those goblins?" the woman in the plate armor asked.

"I don't know," the other wizard said. "What did you find?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing at all? No tables? No chairs even?" the wizard asked. Starlanko could tell what he was doing. The wizard hoped to learn about some treasure that the warrior and her friends had overlooked. Something

About the Author

Matthew J. Hanson is an aspiring writer, as well as a long time gamer. He normally lives in Minnesota, but is currently finishing his senior year of college in Beloit Wisconsin. Recently, his 10-minute play *Who is Ruth* was selected as the winner for the American College Theatre Region III winner, for their 10-minute play competition, and it will be advancing to the national competition in April. If you would like to learn more about Matthew J. Hanson, please feel free to visit his website at www.matthewjhanson.com.

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that they would not recognize the value of.

"Of course there were some things. I mean there were chairs, and a couple pieces of silverware, and all that useless wizarding garbage."

"Oh, I know what you mean, like all those vials, and jars, and powdered who knows what? Those wizards and their weird collection." The wizard laughed, "I bet he had all sorts of books too." This was the question that Starlanko had been waiting for, and probably the point the other wizard had been building to the whole time.

"Oh yeah, you should have seen the books. There were rows and rows of them. All nice and neat too. At first we wondered why the goblins hadn't just chucked 'em in for fire, but then old Bruiser here," she motioned to the half-orc, "he sure figured it out no didn't he?" She slapped the half-orc on the back, and he muttered something under his breath. As best as Starlanko could work out, it was "I searched for traps."

"Blast of cold fly out and floored old Bruiser when he tried to snatch one. Zippy did a scan, found the cases were magic, but none of the books was, so we made like the goblins and left the books where they stood."

The woman had cocked her head towards the unarmored man when she mentioned Zippy doing a scan. It confirmed Starlanko's suspicions about him. He was a poser. What some people called a born-mage, other called a sorcerer. They were people born with a gift for the art, needed no formal study,

and relied on their raw talents. Starlanko considered posers to be in the same category as the burly fighter type: they had their uses, but where ultimately not in the same class as the true learned mage.

"Well that's a bum deal that there wasn't more treasure, but at least you got a good story out of it," the wizard looked on the bright side.

The woman snickered, "Yeah, but a good story won't pay for my ale."

"It will in this case," the wizard said, and he set several coins down on the table. "Thanks for the telling." The woman was obviously surprised by the stranger's generosity, but she did not argue, she just laughed and knocked her friends on the shoulder after the wizard had left.

Starlanko watched the wizard leave, then, after he peered around the tavern to make sure nobody was watching him, he followed.

They entered the hall leading to the individual sleeping rooms. Starlanko hung back in the shadows at the end of the hall, while the stranger went to one of the doors. He inserted a key, and then paused.

Suddenly the stranger spun. His eyes cracked with an electric fire. His staff was bathed in the same energy, and it was pointed at Starlanko. He had not been holding the staff just a moment ago.

"Who are you and why are you following me?" he demanded.

Starlanko placed his own staff on the ground on raised his hands into the air. "I apologize," he said, "I just wanted to talk to you. Someplace away from prying ears." The stranger stared at Starlanko, his eyes still burning. Then the light faded and he lowered his staff.

"Of course, please come in," he unlocked the door and held it open for Starlanko. "I don't mean to seem paranoid, but, well, I am not without enemies."

"Who is?" Starlanko asked, as he proceeded into the room. "And these days, you can never be too careful."

"Please take a seat," the other wizard said. The room was lush by the Black Dog Tavern standards, which is to say it had not only a lice ridden cot, but also two rickety chairs, and an empty crate that could serve as a table if push came to shove. The stranger had taken up residence in one of the chairs, and leaned it against the bed.

Starlanko sat down. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Starlanko the Magnificent, Master of the Arcane Arts, and Wizard Extraordinaire." He tipped his pointed hat.

"Pleased to meet you. My name is Callan." Callan had not hat, but touched two fingers to his brow in recognition.

"The pleasure is mine, Callan. Callan, it's a nice simple name."

Callan smiled. "You may call me Callan the Scholar if you need the extra syllables, but I prefer simply Callan."

Starlanko knew how to read between the lines. "You should be thankful for people like me, Callan the Scholar If-You-Need-More-Syllables," Starlanko said. He was wearing his royal blue robes, trimmed with gold designs, and enchanted with a minor spell that made it shimmer at the proper angle. "We create the illusion in the general populace that all wizards stick out like a sore thumb. It better allows you to pass unnoticed. Besides, it is often advantageous to make people recognize your power. You can't tell me that little display in the hallway was subtle."

"Fair enough," Callan replied.

"It was rather impressive though. Tell me, did you actually call in your staff, or was it just hidden the whole time?"

Callan scratched his head. "I assume Mr. the Magnificent, that you did want to talk about staff storage."

"Of course. Let's get right to the heart of the matter. Your a straight forward kind of guy, I can see that. It's an admirable quality." Starlanko paused just long

enough to take a breath, but not long enough that Callan would interrupt and accuse him of stalling. "I happened to hear the conversation you had with that heavily armored woman. Would I be correct to assume that you are planning to investigate the ruined tower she mentioned?"

"That would be correct," answered Callan.

"Well, then I propose that we work together on this venture. Two of us would doubtlessly be more effective than one. Three actually, because I would like to bring along an associate of mine. He is one of those good with the sword sort. He may come in quite handy, as the area we are venturing into isn't an altogether hospitable area. And as the goal of this mission is knowledge, there is no disadvantage to such an arrangement. If we were look for gold, we would have to split it equally, but knowledge is that something that we can all take as much as we want from it, and it would not diminish the other's supply. What do you say? Partners?" Starlanko held out his hand.

Callan did not take it right away. "What sort of knowledge are you seeking from this venture?" he asked.

Starlanko had not been expecting this question. "Well, new sorts off spells mainly. Spells are the blood of our profession after all, but I would take anything that could prove valuable."

"How much do you know about the former occupant of this tower?" Callan asked.

Starlanko was not sure why Callan seemed so concerned, nor did he know what answer Callan expected. He decided to play it safe and tell the truth. "Very little. None in fact. The first I heard of it was your conversation earlier tonight."

Starlanko watched Callan think about this. He began to wonder if this trip was such a good idea. Callan obviously knew something he did not. Then Callan shook Starlanko's hand.

"You have a partner Mr. the Magnificent."

"Excellent," Starlanko said, though he was not sure

it was excellent. "To be fair, I must ask, do you have something in particular you are looking for?"

"Yes. I do," Callan replied.

"And that would be..."

"A cure. An antidote. I don't know for sure it will be there, but the poison was crafted by the tower's original owner, so it is currently my best lead."

"Ah, I see." Starlanko said. He wondered what exactly why Callan wanted the antidote, but did not ask. Instead he speculated, "I take it you do know something about the tower's creator?"

"Yes," Callan said. "His name was Mandregal, and he was not a very nice man."

Starlanko the Magnificent, his longtime associate Redreck the Fierce and his recent acquaintance Callan the Scholar If-You-Need-More-Syllables, set out towards the tower formerly inhabited by Mandregal the following morning. The trip would probably take at least two days. Starlanko the Magnificent road upon a magically conjured hoarse, while Callan and Redreck opted for the more conventional model.

The first leg of the journey was easy, if not interesting. Grassy plains interrupted only by the occasional farmer brave enough to risk the occasional goblin raid surrounded them. Any trouble would be spotted long before it actually got to them, and fortunately no trouble presented itself.

As it grew dark, the landscape changed as well. The ground became rockier, and hilly. Gnarled trees dotted the scenery.

"I think we should stop soon for the night," Starlanko noted as the sun began to set.

"Soon," replied Callan, "I would like to keep going just a little longer."

"You know its really rather odd for a wizard of the adventuring sort to work alone," Starlanko said.

"I usually travel with somebody else."

"Is he the one that you need this cure for?" Starlanko asked.

"She."

"Ah."

"Hush," Redreck said from in front of them. "I thought I heard something." The two wizards fell silent. Redreck did not speak often, so when he did, it was important. They could hear the horses swishing their tails nervously. And there was a sound like grinding a stone coming from behind a large rock down their path, and off to the right.

Then from of to the left came a horrible battle cry. A large shape, nine feet tall, rushed out of the darkness. It hit Callan full on with a great club, knocking him from his horse. The brute tried to bring its club down upon Callan again, but the wizard erected a magical shield in just in time to block it. Starlanko cast a spell, and several bursts of magical energy flew from the tip of his wand, striking the creature in the back. It turned to face Starlanko. Callan seized on this opportunity, and cast a spell of his own, sending a storm of lightning into the creature. It fell to the ground.

Quickly the three travelers drew together, and Starlanko cast a simple spell to light the area. He could now easily identify what had attacked him, and what is more he could tell that it was only the first.

"Ogres," Starlanko said, "We're surrounded by ogres. How many more of those lightning bolts do you think you've got in you, Callan the Scholar?"

"Not enough Mr. the Magnificent. Not enough."

Gothic II

The sequel to the hit RPG Gothic developed by Piranha Bytes has finally been released in the US. Offering a world three times the size of the original Gothic, but retaining the same non-linear gameplay and an abundance of quests, Gothic II provides a gameplaying experience rivaling that of some of the greatest RPGs of all time.

Read our review at:

<http://www.silven.com/pcmac.asp?case=gamespace&id=10>

Advent Rising

Advent Rising was announced just before E3 last year. The story is being written by famed novelist, Orson Scott Card and the game will be released for the Xbox and PC. A collaboration between interactive entertainment, science fiction and fast-paced action, this action/adventure/RPG could just be the answer for the fans looking for a new and futuristic gaming experience.

We have the preview at:

<http://www.silven.com/console.asp?case=gamespace&id=30>

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Antipodean Adventures

by Shane Cubis

The First Fleet

G'Day All. This month I want to take you back to the beginning of white settlement in Australia. The name of this auspicious historical event is *The First Fleet*, the imaginative name given to the first fleet to sail to the sunny shores of a certain mysterious continent in the southern hemisphere.

Britain in the 18th century was a nation of crowded prisons. The stopgap measure of keeping criminals on floating prison hulks had temporarily alleviated the problem, but mass poverty and harsh sentences were filling even these waterborne jails with petty thieves, prostitutes and murderers. America had revolted, so sending criminals to America was no longer an option. Some of Britain's greatest minds put their heads together and came up with a novel solution: transportation of prisoners to the far continent of Australia, which would become a prison colony. Most convicts were sentenced to a seven-year or longer sentence, after which they would have the option to stay in the new settlement, or return home to England. Captain Cook had explored the eastern coast of the Australian continent a decade or so earlier, and he and his botanist, Joseph Banks, had told England that Botany Bay would be a suitable place for a settlement.

The Voyage: Arthur Phillip was chosen to captain the voyage and to be the first governor of the new colony. He would lead the fleet of eleven ships, which included six convict ships, three store ships, and two man-o-wars. On board were 756 convicts (192 female), and 550 non-criminal folk including officers, crew, soldiers and their families. There were 25 children on board. The youngest convict was a nine year old chimney sweep who had stolen some clothes and a pistol, and the oldest was an 82 year old perjurer. Murderers and rapists were excluded from the fleet, but beyond this disqualification those who sailed had been chosen virtually at random. There were a few skilled craftsmen

among them, however the majority were petty criminals with no knowledge of survival techniques or useful skills. The fleet set sail from Portsmouth on the 13th of March, 1787. Between this date and the final landing in Australia there would be births, 48 deaths, and a few marriages.

The voyage seems to have been reasonably uneventful. There are no mentions in sources of attempted uprisings or ship-to-ship battles. Of course, this doesn't mean that such things will not happen in your campaign version. On the 26th of January, 1788, the ships pulled into port and the British flag was unfurled. This landing has been celebrated ever since as 'Australia Day': the day on which European civilization in Australia began. Certain groups, especially some prominent Aboriginal organizations, have renamed it 'Invasion Day', which they see as a day of mourning.

Settlement: Far from the farming paradise described by explorer Captain Cook, Australia was found to be a dry country unsuitable to the cultivation traditional in England. Botany Bay was clearly too stony and open, so the fleet sailed a few miles north and found Port Jackson, described as "the finest harbor in the world." It was sheltered, gave access to fresh water and rich soil. While the First Fleet brought plants, seeds and livestock, none of the settlers had real expertise in the field of farming. Before long, crops were failing to grow, animals were dying of strange infections, and supplies were rationed. In a spirit of fairness, which could easily have resulted in mutiny, Phillip put the guards and the prisoners on equal rations. This rationing was supplemented with harsh penalties: one man received 1000 lashes for stealing crops, and others were hanged when the lash failed to act as a deterrent. There was a general sense of despair in the colony, rather poetically personified in an eighty-year-old woman named Dorothy Handland, who hanged herself from a gum tree rather than stay alive in this hot, alien land.

Relations with Natives: Captain Phillip was determined to establish friendly relations with the Iora Aboriginal people. He ordered his men to treat them kindly, and declared that anyone harming an Iora would be hanged.

About the Author

Shane Cubis is a young, fit, Australian plagiarist with an affinity for Spider-Man. He has recently succumbed to internet peer pressure and now secretly refers to himself as a 'gamer.' He wrote and starred in an award-winning short film, "Dream Date" (also starring Aussie cricketer Brett Lee), has had an article published in 'Knights of the Dinner Table,' as well as regular articles in such publications as 'Tertangala,' 'The Northern Leader,' and 'Beanz Baxter.'

He has an Honors degree in History/Politics, and is currently studying to be a primary (grade) school teacher. On Saturdays he calls bingo - a job his nana got him five years ago. His favorite book is 'Catch 22,' his favorite band is TISM, and his favorite movie is 'Back to the Future.'

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This policy was not a universal one, and racism (as well as the introduction of diseases and alcohol) greatly depleted their numbers. The Aborigines could not adapt to such an alien lifestyle. They were routinely hunted, and considered to be one rank above animals on the Great Chain of Being. They lost their tribal territories, their culture, the routine of their existence - all of which was replaced by a life on the fringes of white society. The idealism of the government in Britain and men like Captain Phillip had no chance against the greed and chauvinism of the white settlers.

Women: For starters, the supply of womens' clothing was accidentally left behind in England. Women were rapidly divided into two camps (figuratively rather than literally), neatly summed up in the title of a book by Anne Summers, "Damned Whores and God's Police." On the one hand, the convict women were all seen as little more than prostitutes - amoral wenches who would do anything with anyone. On the other hand, the genteel womenfolk were the upholders of decency. Men may be tempted and somewhat morally fallible, but these women had to be the ethical vanguard of a Christian community. An account of the disembarking of the convict women from the ships can be found at http://cedir.uow.edu.au/programs/FirstFleet/s_women.html Suffice to say that extra rations of rum were doled out that night, and the resulting Bacchanalian spree was

ended only by a thundering rainstorm. The next day, the offenders were marched into a clearing, where they were lectured on the evils of promiscuity and vice. Phillip threatened to have any male convict who was caught wandering into the women's quarters at night shot in the arse.

NPCs

Captain Arthur Phillip: Phillip is a fair man, and one who is interested in maintaining both order and justice in this new colony. He is a firm believer in discipline, and will not hesitate to order a flogging or a hanging if he feels that the situation

warrants such punishment.

According to Alan Serle, author and historian,

Captain Phillip was

"Steadfast in mind, modest,

without self seeking, [with] imagination enough to conceive what the settlement might become, and the common sense to realize what at the moment was possible and expedient. When almost everyone was complaining he never himself complained, when all feared disaster he could still hopefully go on with his work. He was sent out to found a convict settlement, he laid the foundations of a great dominion."

Campaign Ideas

In a First Fleet campaign, players have a number of options. They could play convicts, free settlers, military soliders or policemen, titled officers (rulers, in other words) or native Aborigines. Of course, the GM could spice it up by allowing a mix of roles, underscoring the social differences and clashes implicit in attempting to move the British class system halfway across the world.

Adventures in such a campaign would naturally revolve around the problems associated with being torn from one's home and sent halfway across the world to a hot, arid country with no 'modern' conveniences. For a long time, the colony was little more than tents and huts, with little food and regular outbreaks of scurvy. Despair would be a suitable theme for such a campaign, as the PCs struggle to help establish a society, or even find a new source of food.

Trouble with the Iora Aborigines and other tribal groups, fights between the convicts and free people, exploration and survival are all themes which can be readily incorporated into a First Fleet campaign. In a historical game, a focus on politics will possibly be more fruitful than a traditional 'kill them and take their stuff' scenario.

Of course, there is the perennial question: Who knows what lies beyond the mountain range or past the harbor? Another interesting option would be to play the role of some of the 25 children who came across on the ships. Some were the children of convicts, and some were part of more snooty families.

In a First Fleet campaign, players have a number of options. They could play convicts, free settlers, military soliders or policemen, titled officers (rulers, in other words) or native Aborigines.

What happens when kids from different sides of the tracks strike up a friendship in a foreign land? There could be all sorts of crazy exploration adventures. They could be listening at windowsills, stealing food, solving mysteries and saving the day left, right and centre in a world of ignorant adults.

Other Genres

Science Fiction: The PCs have been tried for various crimes and sentenced to work in the slave mines of Cubisia-6 for six-armed reptillian overlords. They are fed very little, and the only way out is death. Or is it?

Fantasy: Again, the PCs have been found guilty of nefarious crimes and teleported to Monster Island, where they must fight their way to the shore and somehow return to civilization with minimal equipment.

Horror: A long-sleeping race of nightmarish creatures has been awakened by the toil of convict labor. PCs must put the beasts down, perhaps with the help of Aboriginal wizards. If they fail, the new settlement will be totally annihilated.

Modern: Thanks to a legal loophole, Britain has decided to recommence the transport of criminals to Australian shores. The PCs have been secretly chosen by the

7 Adventure Ideas

1. Alliances and enemies on the ships. This is important for both convicts and other passengers. After all, they will all be cut off from the rest of their civilization, with only each other for company.
2. RIOT! The convicts are rioting on the ship! Which side will the PCs take? This will probably depend on who they are, and what they stand to gain from supporting or quelling the uprising.
3. The PCs, be they troopers, free people, or other convicts, are called upon to track down and bring back some runaway prisoners. They must brave the alien bush.
4. Contrary to popular belief, the Australian Aborigines did not simply allow the land to be taken from them. They fought against the invaders. PCs may have to protect the fledgling settlement from native raids, or on the other hand they may play tribal warriors attempting to destroy those who have killed their kin.
5. Bushrangers – for and against. This is an excellent way to combine Antipodean Adventures columns: convicts flee the colony and go rogue. The PCs could join them or fight them.
6. The PCs are officers under Captain Phillip. They must maintain order in the colony whilst feathering their own nests. This would obviously be more of a political campaign.
7. The PCs are convicts who must win their freedom in order to return to the Mother Country. The only way to avoid seeing out the full seven year sentence is to perform valiant deeds for the governor for little thanks.

Australian government to deal with this problem by any means possible.

Sources of Information

A comprehensive database of convict information and primary source evidence surrounding the First Fleet can be found at <http://cedir.uow.edu.au/programs/FirstFleet/> Beyond this I found surprisingly little 'meaty' information on the subject online.

Anne Summers, "Damned Whores and God's Police", 1975.

Any general book on Australian history will include a section on the First Fleet and life in the fledgling settlements of Australia. There are really too many of these books to list. As an example, try Manning Clark's "A Short History of Australia", 1963.

As a role-player, one thing that I really like about Australian history is the titles given to important events in the timeline of my young nation. They slot into the role of campaign titles so easily! The First Fleet, Eureka Stockade, and the subject of my next column - The Rum Rebellion!

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Through the Lens of History: Using History for Better Gaming

by Sean Holland

Vision 4: Society of Spears II - The Zulu

In this issue we leave Europe and travel South to the Zulu Kingdom of Africa. The Zulu Kingdom was built on conquest, tradition and ambition, combined to create a semi-militarized tribal state. The Zulu Kingdom was organized to support the military and in return the military system supported the stability of the state. The purpose of the Zulu Kingdom was to maintain itself and control the conquered tribes that comprised the Kingdom.

The Zulu army was highly successful in defeating other armies with the same technology level. Ultimately the Zulu were, for all their bravery and discipline, unable to stand before the superior military technology of the British Empire.

Part I - The History

There were, and are, many tribes in the region of southern Africa that the Zulu's were part of. Like their neighbors, the Zulu raised cattle and crops, the men acted as herders while the women farmed. Iron tools and weapons were made by a specialized caste of blacksmiths, to whom were attributed magical powers, from iron deposits that lay close to the surface.

The history of the formation of the Zulu Kingdom is shadowy, as the Zulu were a preliterate culture, we only have stories through the first contact with European traders shortly after the establishment of Shaka's kingdom. We know that in the early 19th century Shaka succeeded in conquering many of the neighboring tribes and convinced others to ally with the Zulu making them the dominant power in their area.

The understanding is that Shaka did this by changing the rules of warfare. Until he came along, tribal fights involved groups of warriors who danced and shouted and finally threw spears at each other. Casualties were minimal and little was decided. Such an inconclusive system had no appeal to the ruthless Shaka.

Shaka had his warriors equipped with heavier hide shields and short stabbing spears of his own design. Shaka taught his Zulu warriors to close with their enemy, batter their opponent's shield aside and finished them off with the spear. The stabbing spear was called an *iklwa* after the sound it was said to make when withdraw from a deep thrust into the enemy. Shaka also made his warriors discard their sandals and go barefoot, to toughen their feet and give them better footing in combat.

Shaka developed a combat formation called the beast's horns (*i'mpondo zankhomo*). It consisted of the front (*isifuba* or chest), two wings (the *izimpondo* or horns), and a reserve unit (the loins). The chest met the enemy head on, the horns then swung out, enveloping the enemy force and cutting them to pieces.

Once the battle was joined the Zulu commander watched from the high ground and issued orders by hand signals or runners.

Shaka's revolution in military tactics and technology quickly made the Zulu the supreme military and political power in the region. This time of conquest is known to the Zulu as 'the crushing'

But the ability of a commander to control the battle once combat was joined was limited.

The Zulu culture had a great fear of witchcraft. The people relied upon a group of diviners (or 'witch-smellers') known as *isangoma* to discover witches so that they could be destroyed. These same *isangoma* also blessed the Zulu army before it went to war and purified it thereafter. A Zulu warrior disemboweled any enemy he killed for the Zulu believed that the soul resided in the stomach and would not be free to pass on unless let loose. The victorious warrior was further supposed to wear some of the clothing of his defeated foe until a ritual cleansing could be performed. This need for spiritual purification made it difficult to keep Zulu armies in the field for too long.

Shaka's revolution in military tactics and technology quickly made the Zulu the supreme military and political power in the region. This time of conquest

About the Author

Sean Holland is a gamer with 26 years of experience. He currently DMs one D&D campaign and plays in two others. He has a BA in History (minor in Philosophy) from the University of Portland, Oregon, and is working on a MA in History at the University of Georgia. He does writing and play-testing for the game industry. If you look at any of AEG's recent One Word series of books for the d20 system you will find his name in there somewhere and he has had other writings published over the years as well.

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lasting from roughly 1816-24 is known to the Zulu as *mfecane*, the crushing. Shaka however, did not get to enjoy this success for long.

His half-brother, Dingane, assassinated Shaka in 1828 and took the kingship for himself.

Before his assassination, Shaka had managed to expand the Zulu kingdom, forcing other tribes to obey his rule and that of the Zulu. The conquered tribes shared both culture and language with the Zulu, making their integration relatively easy, but tensions remained within the kingdom. People, sometime entire tribes, fled beyond the lands claimed by the Zulu Kingdom. Their exodus became a greater problem as European settlers claimed bordering lands and offered both protection and better rewards than service to the King.

The Zulu Kingdom was the Zulu family writ large. As a son was bound to obey his father until he was married so to the same young man was likely to be called into the service of the King, who acted as father to the whole nation. As long as the King withheld permission to marry, the young men were bound to stay and serve him. When the Zulu King needed men, he would call all of the men of an age group, usually those born

in a two year block, and gather them into a regiment (*ibutho*, pl. *amabutho*) which would be given a name and hide shields that shared a distinctive pattern. Since the army was drawn from men throughout the kingdom it prevented strong regional loyalty from undermining the army's loyalty to the King. Before being summoned to serve the King the warriors spent some time training in their local area as 'cadets.' This provided the basics of military training, which was intensified once they were mustered in an *ibutho*. The Zulu equivalent of drill was ritual dances that taught them to maneuver in formation and work as a unit.

The *ibutho* would be family for as long as the King choose to maintain it, they trained, worked, lived and fought together. The bonds forged by this experience were very strong the members of the *ibutho* would often use the name of the regiment rather than their family name.

The regiments were supported by the King and stationed around the kingdom in self-contained fortified garrison towns (*ikhanda*) placed in strategic locations. Morale and loyalty was high. The warriors knew that they were part of a victorious tradition and that they would be well rewarded for their service by the King.

Ibutho remained in existence until the King gave the men permission to marry, leading to large numbers of marriages as the *ibutho* disbanded and its members returned home to start their own families. The King usually kept each *ibutho* bound to him for as long as feasible, for ten or twelve years, during which they served as his army, his police force and as labor for royal projects.

The King was advised by the *ibandla*, a council of the major tribal leaders. The power of the *ibandla* was inversely proportionate to that of the King. Under Shaka it was filled with his puppets, but later kings had to balance their actions against the rising power of the *ibandla*. The Zulu King maintained support through the use of his army and the giving of gifts, such as cattle, and patronage. Zulu measured wealth in the ownership of cattle and the King owned more cattle and goods than anyone else did, but he had a vast network of people to reward and maintain.

The Zulu Kingdom and system dominated its region of southern Africa until the Europeans arrived. The Dutch, and later the English, settlers and their firearms proved difficult for the Zulu to deal with. Early conflicts with the Boer settlers showed the Zulu how effective firearms could be and the Zulu never developed an effective counter to them, though the Zulu tried both throwing spears and purchasing muskets and rifles for themselves. The firearms the Zulu had were often outdated and ill maintained. Further, the Zulu never had proper training in the use of firearms. While a few Zulus were crack shots most were indifferent at best.

The Zulu Kingdom met its end at the hands of the British Empire. The British Administrator in southern Africa issued an ultimatum to the Zulu King Cetshwayo following a series of minor border incidents. Cetshwayo refused the ultimatum and prepared to defend his kingdom against the British. The first British advance was caught by the main Zulu army and destroyed at Isandlwana. 1,250 British and native troops were caught by surprise and unable to effectively deploy their superior firepower before they were overrun and slaughtered. But even this victory cost the Zulu army one thousand dead. With few exceptions the remainder of the war showed how vulnerable massed infantry was to gunfire. Zulu losses were terrible but they fought bravely until the end. After the war the British broke the Zulu Kingdom back into smaller tribal groupings which promptly began warring with each other.

Today there are over six million Zulu in South Africa and they still have a King who traces his lineage back to Shaka's family. The memories of their proud warrior past remain a source of national pride.

Part II- Breaking it apart and putting it back together

The rise of the Zulu kingdom can be used as a model for the systematic conquest of one tribal society by another. The introduction of new weaponry and a new tactical system can vastly change the balance of power in a semi-closed system such as most tribal structures.

An analogue to the Zulu Kingdom could easily be used as an enemy power for a campaign, but it might be

even more interesting to use them as a neutral power who must be convinced to ally with the character's homeland. This would require the characters to prove their value to the King while avoiding the dangers of tribal politics and charges of witchcraft (and the plots of enemy nations as well).

Supplemental d20 Material:

In D&D terms, a typical Zulu warrior would be armed with an *iklwa* (treat as a short sword) and unarmored except for a heavy hide shield, in some periods they would be armed with throwing spears (treat as javelins). Their weapon focus and specialization, if chosen, will usually be in the *iklwa*. Other suggested feats for a Zulu warrior: Endurance, Run and Toughness. They spent a great deal of time in the bush, so levels in both Ranger and Fighter are appropriate for elite Zulu warriors.

New Feats

Ibutho Veteran [General]

You have been trained to serve your king as a member of an *ibutho*. This training makes you hardy and ready for war.

Prerequisites: Growing up in a Zulu-type culture and having undergone training to serve in an *ibutho*, Strength 10, Constitution 12.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Perform (dance) and Survival checks. You receive a +1 bonus on all checks relating to running and long distance travel. When wearing your national costume, you receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks. You receive a +1 morale bonus to saves against Fear effects; this bonus is raised to +3 if you know other members of your *ibutho* are watching you.

Special: Usually this feat can only be chosen at 1st level and only by a Fighter or Ranger (or similar class).

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Faith Based Initiative: Pantheons Creation 101

by Eytan Bernstein

The construction of a pantheon can be one of the longest and most arduous tasks when creating a fantasy setting. Numerous considerations are necessary to make the religious system of a given world logical and fitting. It is essential to create the pantheon of gods with the task in mind of giving the world system an organic feel. If the religions don't feel connected to the cultures or the belief systems don't seem related to the world themes, then the entire setting will accrue a sense of disjointed unevenness. In this month's Faith Based Initiative, I will be dealing with the factors that go into creating a pantheon. I will do this by discussing a variety of existing pantheistic models and the structure inherent in them. The article will also go into my reasonings behind a recent pantheon upon which this author worked.

Each fantasy setting has some sort of belief structure. The stronger examples are ones in which that belief system runs throughout every aspect of the design. The designer must decide what the relationship between the gods and mortals is like. They must consider the source of the gods power – is it something provided by a multiverse, overgod, or is this power completely dependent on the number and strength of a given god's worshippers? It could be a mixture of both. Other considerations include whether or not gods hold dominion over the entire world or just over one nation or region. Do different races (both within humanity and among other intelligent species) worship the same gods or are there specific racial deities? The next consideration is the organization of the pantheon itself.

How do designers organize a pantheon? They can choose from a number of models or create their own. Some might choose to follow the *Alignment Model*. They might assign one god to each major alignment type in their world. This creates a clear balance, but may be limiting in its scope. Designers often append this by creating servant deities to these alignment-based gods. Another type of structure is one in which members of the basic pantheon of gods represent archetypal forces of nature and aspects of humanity. This is usually a smaller pantheon with major gods representing the

most important categories of life and human existence and is known as the *Fantasy Archetype Model*. Sometimes, fantasy writers choose to organize their pantheon based on a concept or a theme that pervades the world. This is known as a *Concept Based Model*. Occasionally, designers choose a more monotheistic system. Rarely, there is no system of deities at all. A fantasy setting without a religious system shows that its designers have no understanding of human nature.

The first religious system under discussion is *Dragonlance*. *Dragonlance's* religious system is based on a semi-Zoroastrian structure of good and evil. *Dragonlance* follows the alignment-based model, though clearly Weis and Hickman had their own spin on it. The two main powers (under the overpower) are (or were) essentially personifications of good and evil and their servants or undergods represent different aspects of their teachings. Also thrown into the mix was a third force – that of neutrality or balance. These servants continued on after the two major powers ceased to be for various reasons. The major themes of *Dragonlance* revolve around the balance of good, evil and all that is in between. In many respects, this is an appealing and successful system. It follows through on its core beliefs. Despite this, many feel that *Dragonlance's* belief system makes it a very limited setting from a religious perspective. There are not all that many gods and the primary system focuses heavily on good and evil. The system uses gods that represent essentially all the people in the world. While these gods have different names depending on where they are found, they are still omnipresent. It would be nice to see a system that had more regionally based gods.

Where *Dragonlance* has deities in a very limited structure, *Greyhawk* has almost no structure at all. The gods are simply there and there is very little that unites or binds them. The gods found in the *Dungeons and Dragons* players handbook offer few choices for players looking to find a personalized deity for their character. The gazetteer (a supplement published for Living Greyhawk with vital information on the campaign setting) offers many more choices, but still does not settle the issue of structure. It is a near travesty that so many GMs choose to use the *Greyhawk* gods rather than creating their own. Despite this, *Greyhawk* also

About the Author

Eytan Bernstein is a High School social studies teacher on Long Island. He enjoys RPGs, writing fantasy fiction, movies, and making up unique words. He has previously been published as a poet and is also an accomplished pianist/songwriter. He hopes to someday make it as a game designer/fantasy writer.

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has some very interesting individual gods. Deities such as Luz, Tharizdun, Zuggtmoy, and Nerull all have interesting qualities.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from *Greyhawk* is *Forgotten Realms*. In terms of religion, *Forgotten Realms* is by far the most realistic of D&D fantasy worlds currently. It has a variety of different structures of gods including regional, alignment based and concept based. It follows the principle that all the major aspects of the world are covered on tablets that state the portfolios of different gods. While I find the variety of *Forgotten Realms* refreshing, many think it has too many gods. My response to them is that a system with too few gods is weak; throughout this history of Earth, there have been tens of thousands of religious systems with billions of worshippers – all of which did not cover the entire world. *Forgotten Realms* has some pantheistic organization, independent gods, culturally based gods and even an overgod. While *Forgotten Realms* may be too big for many and allow for too much, it is an ideal setting for variety. What it does not have is a unifying theme – this is what makes it a good setting for a large number of games, but one that does not cater to anything in particular. For this, you might look at *Birthright* or *Cthulu*.

Birthright is a setting that functions on the notion that there are powerful mortals that have been infused with divine essence when the gods fell. It uses the Concept Based Model to tie all aspects of its religious system to the notion of the supernatural birthright. A war occurred between an evil deity and all other deities, ultimately resulting in their deaths. Gods sprung up from the remains of this essence, but much of it was filtered down to mortals. The unifying theme of birthright is that each character holds a stake in the world due to

their conviction and the power with which they were born. Every aspect of the world fits seamlessly into this concept. *Birthright* has had problems with mechanics, but the logistics of business meant that it never really had the time to fix them. *Birthright* is great if players are looking for a very specific world – if *Forgotten Realms* was too vast, *Greyhawk* too generic and structureless or *Dragonlance* too limited in options. Despite this, *Birthright* only works when players are looking for this very specific political and nation-building sort of game.

A fantasy world with only a few gods or a world where a small group of gods has dominion over the entire setting is both incredibly boring and entirely unrealistic from a theological standpoint.

Outside of *D&D*, there are many good settings that cater to specific interests or have a different bent on religion. In H.P. Lovecraft's *Cthulu* setting, alien beings of monstrous power and indiscernible goals influence mankind. The model is not in line with most because it follows a rather bizarre mythology. When people learn too much or receive too much power, they inevitably lose their minds or die. This system is very limited in that the life expectancy of a character in any given game is very short. Games often tend to repeat the same imagery and themes (despite the possibility for great variation). However, people keep coming back because of a fascination with the unknown coupled with a love of the noirish setting of a typical *Cthulu* game.

The king of all fantasy settings in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Middle Earth*. It is the setting of his popular (and classic) novels *The Lord of the Rings* (trilogy), *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien follows a Concept Based Model in that his work generally focuses on the theme of how the world came to its present state through cosmic discord. Tolkien's religious system is very interesting in that it does not define its higher powers as distinctly as later attempts. It has a series of powers that belonged to a celestial choir. In the choir, one of the deities discovered dissonance and eventually evolved into great evil. These beings are gods served by extremely powerful servants that resemble Angels and demigods. Religion is not

something that is forced and pushed in Tolkien's setting. Spirituality is inherent in the folklore and is suffused in the understanding of nature. Men (and Elves as well as other goodly races) are in a constant battle with the forces of evil that all ultimately descend from that one moment of discord. No fantasy setting has ever been as well conceived and quite possibly none will be in the future. Every thread of Tolkien's mythology is seamless and the spirituality of his setting suffuses every aspect of the world.

It is quite dissimilar in many ways to the settings that came after. There are no priests of specific gods – though there are unsung servants of those powers.

The Ancient Greek system is a great model for creating a pantheon. It is the mother of the Archetypal Model. It was polytheistic, having a main central pantheon and many smaller and more minor gods and powers that surrounded the Olympians. It is not hard to adapt the pantheon to a game setting – as has been done in a variety of RPG publications (I've attempted it myself). What most of the publications seem to miss is that part of the setting is ruined if there are wizards, clerics and everyone else running around casting spells constantly. It is true that there was magic and that the gods exercised powers, but a good adaptation of this setting has to in some way take into account the flavor of the myths. This has to be done in an effort against overpowering the myths with supernatural power.

There is a lot to consider when choosing to create your own pantheon, based on the themes and feel of your world. When I recently sat down to make one, I used the alignment based system of *D&D*. I assigned one god to each of the nine alignments in the players handbook. I then created a variety of other sorts of higher powers that weren't directly related. I tried to keep in mind the regions of the world so that specific gods did not have power over the whole setting. I tried to work with some of the archetypes of the Ancient Greek setting while changing some of them around to make things feel fresh and unique – as well as organic to the setting. Some seem to have worked so far while others needed to be changed and yet others completely eliminated. If I was to do this again, I would use the same alignment based system (because of its ease of use), but create servant deities of the individual alignments that represented different aspects of their overgod's nature. I have

Pantheon Creation Checklist

- 1) What model will you use for your system? You can follow one of the existing models such as the Archetype, Concept Based or Alignment Based or you can come up with your own variation (or unique concept).
- 2) Have you covered the major aspects of your world – culture, geography, races, history, etc. in your religious system?
- 3) Where do deities get their powers? Do they get them from an overpower or is this based on the strength and numbers of their followers?
- 4) Do different races have their own deities? You could have specific racial pantheons or simply have different names for the same gods among species.
- 5) Is there only one set of gods or are your gods more ethnically or religiously based? Essentially, do you have one governing body of gods or more of an organic system of gods based on cultures and regions?
- 6) Do the gods (and the religious system) feel like they are an organic extension of the rest of the world? If your gods feel to different from the rest of your setting, it will be obvious. You need to try to build your pantheon with a feel for the rest of the setting's features and personality.

If you keep these questions in mind while you create your setting, you should be well on your way to a realistic and engaging pantheon. The most important point is probably #6. No matter how interesting or dynamic your religious system seems, it won't work if it doesn't jive with the rest of your world. If your world is low power, there shouldn't be gods constantly gallivanting around making huge supernatural shows. If you are going for a horror bent, you won't want to have lots of happy nature goddesses, but ignore the death god. It seems like common sense, but from experience, this is a rare commodity in the design of most religious pantheons.

considered abandoning alignment altogether, but that would only work in a setting that doesn't have alignment at all (and typically one outside of *D&D*.)

The main item to keep in mind when creating a pantheon is that your gods and belief systems must correspond to the world you are creating. If they feel out of place or alien to the world, they are not working (unless the purpose of their creation is to make them feel alien). The gods should correspond to regions or at least be more or less popular in different parts of the world. A fantasy world with only a few gods or a world where a small group of gods has dominion over the entire setting is both incredibly boring and entirely unrealistic from a theological standpoint. Designers need to do the same amount of research when creating gods that they do about weapons, languages and other aspects. It is theologically impossible for all of the gods of your world to be worshipped everywhere in your world. It makes no sense and is truly limiting. It is better to make region based gods or deities that have quirky regional flavors. The Egyptian gods, Greek gods and Hindu gods all had similarities, but they certainly didn't represent the entire world. If your setting assumes that only a small part of the world is being played and that the rest is undiscovered, then it might be reasonable to have a small group of gods that have power over all the regions. If this is not the case, then the world system will be extremely limited and unsound theologically. If you don't agree with any of this, the most important thing is making sure your gods are in line with everything else you are creating. Otherwise, you might as well throw the whole project to the wind and adopt the Greyhawk gods as filler.

In next month's Faith Based Initiative, I will be exploring the question of whether or not gaming is a spiritual act. Does role-playing (or at least good roleplaying) give us a greater awareness and understanding of human nature and spirituality? This will compliment my first article that considered whether gaming and religion were like oil and water. It will also dovetail with my article that dealt with the history of criticisms of role-playing

I would like to thank the academy ...

In November 2003 Silven Crossroads turned one year old. To commemorate this event we ran a few contests on the site with some great prizes sponsored by our partners. Now that all the contests have been concluded and winners chosen among our community members, and we would like to take a second and congratulate all the people that won:

Forum Activist Part 1

Our award for the largest number of forum posts made in the first two weeks of November 2003 goes to Silven Crossroads member LeaderDesslock, whose real name remains a mystery to us still. LeaderDesslock wins a copy of the PC CRPG, Lionheart.

Forum Activist Part 2

Our award for the largest number of forum posts made in the last two weeks of November 2003 goes to Silven Crossroads member Steven Russel (*handle*: Quillion). Steven wins a copy of the PC CRPG, Lionheart.

Earlier in the year we also hosted a couple of d20 contests and special events, and so without further ado ...

Silven d20 monster contest and Silven d20 raffle

We would like to congratulate Eric Runyan, who won both our d20 raffle and our d20 Monster Contest with his entries. He now has a shining new copy of Creature Collection II : Dark Menagerie to add to his collection of RPG books.

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Polyglot : Realism Revisited

A monthly column by Dana Driscoll

Welcome to Polyglot, your source for RPG linguistic insight. Last month, we began to discuss the issue of realism vs. simplicity in RPG gaming and RPG design, outlining the inherent problems with several current gaming systems in their handling of language. This month we revisit the topic from a different angle, offering solutions and possible simple revisions to current systems to make them a bit more realistic and believable. A special thanks goes out to all of last month's comments posters for bringing up many of the points this article addresses in further detail.

The following subjects will be covered in this article: the problem of the "common" tongue; learning new languages and language acquisition; non-humanoid languages; cross-linguistic problems; magical assistance with language; and finally, linguistic role-playing and campaign boosting avenues. Some of this article will focus on the d20 system, as the core d20 rules present the worst problems of any system surveyed. Other pointers will be more general and apply to a variety of gaming systems.

The "Common" Tongue

As my last article pointed out, there are many ways that the d20 system lacks when it comes to realistic language portrayal. One of the worst offenses is in the concept of a "common" tongue. A "common" tongue is simply a tongue that is shared worldwide and that every humanoid individual in the world comprehends and can utilize. Not only is the concept of a "common" tongue totally unrealistic, it also stifles role-playing and problem-solving opportunities.

My guess is that the "common" tongue was created for the d20 system because it made communication between the PCs and NPCs (especially PCs and NPCs of different races) simple and seamless. Any PC could go into most "civilized" areas and be able to freely

communicate. There would never be a question of communication problems within the group or among NPCs. Humans were attached to the common tongue because in the d20 system, humans are the standard, most versatile race. Realism could be farther from the truth, however.

As the most proliferate and most "versatile" race, humans can hardly agree with each other about what to eat for dinner, much less, that they are going to give up their own native languages and instead speak a watered down "common" tongue. Not only is it historically illogical for humans from various parts of a setting speak only one language, it is also unrealistic.

Anyone who has taken a trip outside of their home country or community realizes that the real world is literally full of languages, some similar, many quite diverse. English has recently emerged as a "world" language, not because of the ease of using English, but rather because of the past political struggles, wars, economic power, and colonization by English-speaking countries. If a "common" tongue were to exist, it would most likely not be because peoples of the world wished to communicate with one tongue, but rather because at some point in the past, the "common" speakers of the world politically and economically proliferated the globe with force. Even so, different dialect regions would still differentiate one group from another.

If you are still going to use a "common" tongue in your game, consider the history of how the common tongue came into being. Most likely, it was through wars, colonization, and political power. Those groups who have lost their native languages may harbor feelings of remorse and anger towards their ancestors for letting go of the language of their heritage or the group that invaded them and "stole" their heritage from them. This would present an interesting political struggle and could open the doorway for more interaction between PCs, especially PCs from different sides.

Another idea for the common tongue is to make common a creole language—a mixture of many different tongues. The common tongue would not

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be very complex and would lack the vocabulary to express complicated ideas. Spells or technical manuals could not be written in it, nor could complicated treaties or legal documents be written in this tongue. Because of its simplistic nature, common would only used for bartering and trade. No literature or books are written in common because it simply does not have the capacity to handle storytelling.

Common dialect areas or regions may also be a good route to go. The common tongue could have developed differently in separated regions, resulting in very unique dialects (similar to the differences between American English, British English, and Australian English). Some regions or races that have been sheltered or ignored would not speak any common tongue, only their own racial language.

A best alternative is to do away with the common tongue all together. The easiest way to do this is to create several human languages based on the different regions of the world. It still may be that human languages are what are used in trade negotiations of most major cities in the region, but it would give the game a bit more flavor. In some regions, a human language might not be the dominant language, but rather a racial language. Be creative and experiment. Be sure to enforce the use of racial languages in the

areas that are controlled by that race—it is entirely possible that many of that race speak only their racial language and have no other means of communication.

If you are doing away with or altering the common tongue, what about languages at character creation in the d20 system? Instead of automatically giving each character the “common” tongue, give them the prevalent regional language along with their own racial language.

When the PCs travel abroad, even to other planes, “regional” languages open up a whole new role-playing experience. Suddenly they can’t communicate with everyone automatically, they may need to hire translators, or find other ways to communicate. A PC who speaks the racial language will have a large part to play in negotiations with the party and the locals. A PC who speaks the right dialect in her own region may be able to get bonuses to diplomacy checks when dealing with the locals, who see her as “one of them.”

Language Learning and Acquisition

One of the inherent problems of most gaming systems is its ignorance of the language learning and language acquisition process. As discussed in the previous article, learning a language is a complex and tedious challenge. Not only does the d20 system not consider levels of language learning, it also assumes that every individual that speaks a language speaks it fluently and without an accent.

The easiest way to integrate a bit more realism into the d20 system (or any system) as far as language learning goes is to use a sliding proficiency scale. This scale was present in the Everquest gaming system, and provided a way to simply, yet accurately, show the process of language learning.

For the d20 system, a few simple changes can accomplish this. At level one, instead of giving everyone the languages they automatically “know,” give them ranks in speak language. For native speakers, give them five ranks, for any bonus language, give them four. A scale measuring proficiency—one (beginner) to 5 (native or near-native speaker) can be used to show the progress of language learning.

But what about magic? Wouldn't a magical language translator (like the d20 tongues or comprehend languages) work where a technological translator fails?

When a character wants to learn a new language, they need to find someone to either tutor them or a book or other source that will assist them in learning. Allow them to gain no more than one rank of speak language per level. They need to continue training and practicing the language to gain ranks every level.

Language learning can get even more complex when you add in language families and the differences and distances between languages. What I have presented here is simply a way to make the system more realistic, but there is really no limit to how you tweak the system for realism.

Non-Humanoid Languages

Non-humanoid languages present an interesting challenge to the gamer going for realism.

Because of the physiological differences in the speech production and articulation organs, speech of non-humanoid creatures may have totally foreign or unpronounceable sounds for the human palate.

So how does a humanoid PC learn a non-humanoid language? It's a tough question, and one that has no single right answer. Unless a PC has a way of taking the form of the non-humanoid, they are most likely going to butcher the pronunciation. They may be able to read the language and understand it, but speaking it fluently is simply out of the question because they lack the organs to correctly pronounce the language. The further away from a humanoid form the creatures are, the harder the language is going to be for humanoids to pronounce. The d20 elemental languages—Auran, Terran, Aquan, and Ignan are perfect examples of this. How does one simulate rocks being crunched, crumbled, and rubbed together with a mouth? Similarly, a non-humanoid is going to have trouble pronouncing a humanoid tongue.

The accents will vary depending on the type of creature—but suffice to say, the further away the creature is from a human shaped mouth, the heavier the accent will be. For some creatures, simulating the sounds of human speech may be next to impossible.

So what to do? This is where magic or impressive technology come into the equation. Technology or magical spells can easily simulate the sounds of both human and non-human languages, aiding different races in communication and understandability. Without these spells, communication differences may result in misunderstandings and little communication.

Magical or Technological Assistance with Languages

Magical or technological translators may be just as unrealistic as everything else. This next section takes a look at both magical and technological translators, and how these translation devices may or may not operate.

First, let's discuss technology, in the form of a “universal translator.” A translator is a device that is supposed to translate from one language to another. But what happens to a translator when it encounters a new species with a new language that hasn't been heard before? Translators, like any device, have to be programmed. Regardless of how powerful the piece of technology is, it still cannot go above and beyond its programming. Computers today can do little more than generate statistical models of language—forget doing accurate translations in a language they have never encountered. Even in the future, the issue of exposure and programming still exists.

But what about magic? Wouldn't a magical language translator (like the d20 tongues or comprehend languages) work where a technological translator fails? It really depends on how the spells work in the

settings. There are two ways spells like these could work—the first is that they are “programmed” just like a piece of technology. Whoever created the spell created it with a specific list of languages in mind. Any language not on the list wouldn’t work. This mode of thinking would preserve secret languages, such as Druidic, from being exposed.

A second way to look at such spells is that they function as a probe—going directly into the mind of the speaker, getting the underlying meaning, and translating it into a form that the caster understands. This is much more likely, and probably also why the lower level comprehend languages is based on touch. At the same time though, these spells are divination spells, not enchantment or mind-affecting.

Regardless of how it works, there should be limits to what magical and technological translators can do. If not, where then, does the challenge lie?

Cross-Linguistic Problems

This brings us to the neatly to the next subject for discussion—cross-linguistic problems. A cross-linguistic problem is any miscommunication resulting from language or communication misunderstandings. These issues can cause a host of problems that can lead to adventures and role-play opportunities (or wars, fights, and other tribulations). I have listed a series of ideas for cross-linguistic problems in the next section.

Linguistic Role-Play and Campaign Avenues

A host of opportunities can open up for the PCs following some of the suggestions in this article.

- A saying in one language means something radically different in another, leading to misinterpreted messages. Its up to the PCs to discover and fix the problem.
- The PCs need to learn a language to visit a new area of the world in the hopes of setting up peaceful relations. They must convince a speaker of that language to train them.

- Poor translation results in miscommunication of treaty terms, leaving the PCs to solve the problem.
- The PCs encounter a new species and their translator (magical or mechanical) doesn’t work. How will they learn to communicate?



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- A language lacks abstract concepts such as time, freedom, or valor. Communication of these concepts to the PC or NPC can be tricky, and result in problems for all.
- The PCs encounter a race who refuses magical assistance and will only talk to the PCs in their native tongue. The problem is, only one of the PCs is barely trained in the tongue. How will the group solve this problem?

Conclusion

This month we revisited the topic of linguistic realism vs. simplicity, discussing some simple ways to make language and diversity a stronger part of your games. Next month, we are delving into this issue a bit deeper, with suggestions and ways to enrich your PCs, NPCs, and worlds with real-world linguistic resources.

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LOOKING FOR HELL

By Raymond Huling

The group wants to go to Hell—all right! Well, not so much *go* to Hell, as *come* from it—a *real D&D* party: Demons & Devils. It's not surprising with all the new products dealing in racial classes, the tend towards modularity in PC and non-PC features, and the atmosphere of startling analytical acuity attendant to modern RPGs, the core options have come to seem abysmally bleak and blown-out. To mack diabolic, then, becomes an obvious remedy. We'll turn to that endlessly rich and varied land, the netherworld, the lower planes—if that doesn't amuse us, what will?

Fine, we know where we're going. Now, only the problem of execution remains: how to get there? *Keep playing D&D!*, says Jack Chick! No, that's not quite what we mean: how to arrive at the vision and operation of what Milton referred to as "a Dungeon horrible?" How best to simulate Hell in an RPG? That's the mission of this piece—to work at this question in the hope of harrowing up some insights.

The answer would go right to the heart, not only of the game at hand, but of the (pseudo?) creative process involved in all RPGs—this answer, in particular, because of both the subject's nearly universal applicability and the extraordinary resources available to the project. Especially the latter: the discourse on Hell is insurmountable in print, in painting, in film, in folklore—you can't put your arms around it, much less your character sheet. RPGs allow for more outright thievery than most other artistic endeavors; in fact, some would argue that they encourage or even demand it: RPGs have always been intended to simulate genre, sometimes their own genre (I'm looking at you, Necromancer Games). We've all heard that before, and it seems hard to argue against that position while setting down the stats for one's light saber or hob-...er, halfling. The issue here, however, oversteps the normal bounds of borrowing: beyond

the immensity of infernal treasure from which to plunder ideas, there lies the fact that the notion, the larcenously eyed object itself has no constant shape. It has no authority to hold it firm; no lone text or series of texts to weight it down. Hell has no canon. Seriously: the Catholic Church's position on Hell has a long and tortuously inconsistent history and, even today, no unified body.

This doesn't mean to say that we have *no* commonalities in our takes on the *Down-There*; no, experience argues quite the opposite. After all, we certainly understand immediately the framework of the joke when Sylvester, as he runs through his nine lives in his chase after Tweety, keeps winding up in some reddish, cavernous, fiery place populated by fork-wielding bull-dogs. Yes, our notions of Hell tend to share aspects, and we'll actually detail these in a second, but we should recognise before anything else that Hell remains fluid (this, too, we'll examine later on).

A step back from the heaps of hellfire, then. Let's ask first what we have available to us, conceptually. Ethnically, my RPG group doesn't belong only to the European West; culturally, we do, insofar as this tradition inheres in the U.S. Personally, I know very little of Buddhist and Hindu hells, except that they exist in vast multitudes and change populations regularly. I cannot readily envision them, nor speak intelligently about them (though I hope that someone else may do the latter in a forthcoming issue). It's the western Hell for this kid.

A momentary pause: 'readily envision'—that's important here. Certainly, with a bit of education, I *could* come to know Hells yet foreign to me, but I want to keep in view the need for playing to one's crowd in this situation. This is, after all, entirely the reason why we're talking about Hell and not Heaven: who can reflect on Paradise without feeling somewhat ridiculous? *This* is my eternal glory? It doesn't mean much to have a blandly fiery notion of eternal damnation, but when salvation amounts to

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not much more than a Victoria's Secret commercial (or whatever), then something has gone very wrong in the spirit of righteousness. David Cross illustrates this distinction very well: he reduces John Ashcroft's religious views to absurdity by simply following their conclusions to a caricature—the devil as little red guy, with a pitchfork and a hook in his tail; he does the same with a story from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, which reports, as news, that Heaven has both public transportation and paved roads. One of these images is always ridiculous; the other is not. Slayer can make use of one to terrifying purposes; the idea of buses and tar in the home of the Everlasting God can only be funny.

The significance here is that, if we want to make our Hells exciting and interesting, we would do well to take the time to sort out why people traditionally find Hell exciting and interesting. In other words, we'll assume that that the decorations come *second*; the fact that we seem to enjoy decorating, in innumerable styles, a place devoted to eternal suffering—this fact comes first.

Back to Hell. Again, what do we have for options? In 2004, I see two infernal possibilities: indifference and malevolence.

The first is Lovecraft; the second is everything else. Lovecraft delivered us to the Hell of modernity. Through his hackneyed plots, archaic language, insipid characters, inspired nomenclature, and redolent atmospheres, he occasionally managed to convey something of the New Hell, the one that terrifies us by infinite diminishment, rather than punishment. Lovecraft doesn't offer allegories, but a single

homology: what happens to the characters as they push through their plots, happens to us as we trudge through Lovecraft's torpid prose. Somewhere in there, we catch sight of an underlying and terrible truth: nothing recognizes us. We live below the threshold, not of importance, but of perception. In a sense, Lovecraft's serves the same function as that device in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* that killed people by allowing them to perceive their true importance in relation to the universe. Science did this to us. If we can know life and everything, it's because they are indifferent to being known. They don't care about us enough to deceive us. The works of the gentleman from Angell Street permit us the pleasure of perceiving these realities in the form of monsters, of seeing them laid out in the structure of pulp fiction—and that's the last and most dastardly incarnation of the homology: the clumsy disguises that Lovecraft tosses over his apocalypse mirror the veils we draw between ourselves and the foundations of the reality we experience. The point is to read his stuff and then take a look at our own beliefs as equivalent to his absurd monstrosities.

Unfortunately, as a role-playable Hell, this sucks. The only way to make Lovecraft's Inferno into some sort of setting would be, paradoxically, to dig the void out of his creations. Leaving what behind? The *Call of Cthulu* RPG, that's what. An excellent game, but Green Ronin's already begun the job of translating it into D&D, and after all, aren't we looking for something new to steal?

Malevolence. That's the way. The old-time Hell, the one in which we actually have importance. They *want* to kill and torture us, these devils and demons—better than that the cold shoulder! With H.P.L., we experience *poena damni*, the Hell we experience everywhere, because it flows from our consciousness of our predicament, but now we've entered into *poena sensus*, a state of real and total physical pain. Material torment—that, I can stick with something sharp! Unless, of course, I can't figure out what form it should take.

And there we find ourselves back at the crossroads: which way to turn? Hades? Hellia? Niflheim? New Jersey? What sort of landscape do we want? The blasted Hell of near-modern Protestants? The urban Hell of the Jesuits? The scaled Hell of Dante? The

colourless Hell of certain of the Greeks? What about the perverse and horrible Hells of Bosch and the Breughels? Or the perverse and pleasurable Hell of the Romantics and the Decadents? Myself, I'd vote for the latter: a number of these infernal visions extrapolate from the idea that Hell incorporates everything that affronts asceticism, all of the sins find eternal fulfillment (Paradise, in a word). The underground comic *Tales from the Leather Nun* epitomizes this movement in a manner especially dear to my heart. A Catholic priest, sent on a mission by the Pope, ends up on a tour of Hell. The tour is a common medieval conceit, on which he must confront the complete satisfaction of his desires, the denial of which forms the basis of his whole morality. He returns to the Pope dressed like a pimp.

The question of sex, of course, brings immediately to mind the *Apocalypses* of Peter and Paul, both of them remarkable for their sexual violence and violence against sexuality, as well as Augustine's roughly contemporary (4th-5th A.D.) establishment of sex as the Original Sin. Given the asexual bent of most RPGs, we may want, devilishly, to make something of this.

How about a list, then? Let's set down some of the typical images, components, themes, tropes, and what-have-you of Hell in the Western tradition. These will constitute the basic building-blocks of our Hell-scenes.

Landscape: pits, deepness, mountains or cliffs, great rivers and lakes of foul or dangerous waters, boats or ferries, bridges, gates, fire, darkness, ice, a great tree, giant mouths, cities.

There are also circles and a sense of order in our reflexive perception of Hell, but these come from Dante; the others precede him. Fortunately, there exists no greater influence on the Western concept of Hell than Mr. Alighieri, so if we want to include them, we have a justification for doing so.

Inhabitants: anthropomorphic demons, often with animal features, especially birds and ungulates; endlessly tormented people.

The character of the tormented population is vital: who are they and why are they there? The answer

'sinners for their sins', requires complications. It may suit us better to employ a simpler, perhaps even more fair method of discriminating the Hell-bound from the Glory-bound. They could be merely enemies.

Themes: not pain, but torture especially in the form of burning or devouring and, often enough, excreting; retribution and punishment; indulgence, decadence, revolution, and romanticism.

In addition to these generalities, there are a few more specific infernal aspects that may enhance our little role-playing Hell. Take the *abominable fancy*, for example. Everybody's heard of this one, if not through this terminology: the notion that the blessed have available to them the opportunity to watch the suffering of the damned. Sometimes the damned get to see them watching, too. It requires a special vindictiveness to characterize this kind of pleasure as one of the joys of Heaven. The role-playing possibilities are easily imaginable.

Then, too, there are images that we might simply find striking. The literature on the infernal has an unparalleled wealth in this regard, most of which we could borrow from randomly without losing any cogency. I'll put down here a few of my own favorites. Take Venerable Bede. In one of his descriptions of a vision of hell, he writes of "great globes of black flames rising out of a stinking pit and falling back into it again. Each of these was full of human souls." Nice. I also favor the River Slith, which appears in a number of accounts: in its disgusting waters bob and float razor-sharp blades of every kind—clearly, just the gap over which to run one of our thin and treacherous (and likely broken-glass-cobbled) bridges. But this is the place where we must take the most care: these tiny bits and pieces of Hell will seduce us; before we know it, we'll have taken too many of these seeds and obliged ourselves to six-months of entombment under tons of Apocalypses. Nonetheless, one more thing: in *Le Songe d'Enfer*, by Raoul de Houdenc (1200 A.D.). The voyageur in Hell finds himself elected to dine with Pontius Pilate and Beelzebub. The main course? Roast heretic...in garlic sauce! Loads of infernal visionaries eat or witness the eating of heretics, but only the Frenchman does it *well*. That's going in there.

The question becomes: how to sew all this together? What unifies Hell these days? For me, that last phrase points the way, "it's necessary to be absolutely modern," said Rimbaud—and why not heed the 150

They want to kill and torture us, these devils and demons--better than the cold shoulder!

year-old advice of a teen-aged, French drug addict? We'll turn to a couple of the very latest visions or uses of Hell and see what they have to offer.

I mean very modern—within the last five years or so. There has been a trend in this time, continued from the mid-nineties, toward extreme violence in horror fiction, a movement both pathetic and necessary, even righteous. I say pathetic, because these ambitious authors can't achieve any extremity. For one thing, in literature, you've got Sade forever ahead of them, impossible to overtake; for another, the actual truth of violence in the world does the same. But that second limit explains the need for this kind of work: what else could be adequate to us, who are staggering away from the most violent century humanity has ever known? The great criminologist Tanenbaum told us that every society gets the crime that it deserves. Why not say that every literature deserves its language?

Not too hard a task to find the leading practitioners of this art. Amazon has something on the order of thirty fan-tastic lists of them. Out of the multitude, we'll pick out just two books as relevant to our purpose (the superabundance of hellacious discourse doesn't abate here).

First, John Shirley's *Demons*. In this book, Hell extends itself into Our World; demons arrive and take over the joint, with enormous bloodshed. Happily, Shirley presents this as straight-forward political allegory. The plot hinges on the development that a conspiracy of corporate chiefs brought about this apocalypse, in order to indulge their avarice. This dates the novel somewhat, as the unbridled greed of corporations constituted the greatest evil known to us, prior to September 11th. Shirley acknowledges this

dust by trying to throw it in our eyes; he suggests in a prefatory line that the book has post 9-11 significance. It doesn't, but it still has merit for us, because it suggests that we might find the proper

inspiration for our Hell by looking deeply at the evils around us—not in order to discover what deserves punishment, but to discover the face of the punishers.

Shirley also provides the usual heroism routine, albeit in his own style. The savior of the world comes in the form of an American white girl, who has arrived at her powers through some kind of meditation process developed by the progenitors of the Freemasons. I tried to ignore this part of the book.

All of that amounts to no more than an introduction. We want a full-on tour of Hell, in the tradition of the vision literature of the Middle Ages. Edward Lee provides something like this in his *City Infernal*. The Mephistopolis—that's what he calls it. He re-imagines Hell as a single, grand city, replete with all manner of terrible creatures and acts.

Now, before we get into it, we should admit that Lee's a hack. He exhibits nearly all of the bad habits of your average sci-fi-fantasy-horror writer. He misuses the word 'comprise' on the second page, for example. These genres may have no better identifying mark..

Nonetheless, Lee does indicate, as the naïve so often do, the nature of our unconscious conception of Hell. Look at what he does to introduce us to his setting: "Most cities run on electricity, but *this* city runs on horror", he says, then continues, "Industrial Alchemists and Civic Warlocks use their advanced means of sorcery to harness the synaptic activity that constantly fires between neurons, the greatest production of which comes from pain." More quickly, Lee rips off the Matrix flicks—humans as batteries; except that, here, folks undergo endless torture as they supply the juice. Needless to say, this contradicts the previous statement. This city does run on electricity; it just

produces it differently. But what's important for us is that Lee advances the idea that Hell draws strength from the suffering that it imposes. While not original, this does contravene Dante and nearly everyone who went before him and has interesting theological implications. We should keep it in mind.

Let's press on. We encounter a description of a particularly dangerous demonoid, big claws and teeth—okay, what's the payoff? They're cops, "Here, though, the police do not exist to protect and serve. They exist to maintain terror through unimaginable atrocity." Now we're getting somewhere!—aside from that 'unimaginable' (really: why not just sling a hammock and call it a day?) Some would claim this to be well-painted allegory, finding bitter irony in the supposed distinction between the purpose of law enforcement on our side and on theirs: "They keep the population on its toes."

Next, we get a prostitute. "[Her pimp] keeps her in line through any conceivable act of degradation and physical violence. He also keeps her hopelessly addicted to drugs..." How is this different? Lee has done nothing more than to transpose a typicality from the actual state of affairs to his vision of Hell. Shouldn't that startle us? The exposition proceeds to follow this prostitute to her death, utterly deprived of dignity:

...today she's even less lucky. When she awakes, craving drugs, she rises from the stained mattress that serves as her bed and immediately falls to the floor. She screams when she sees what has happened to her. A Polder-Rat scurries away, barely seen. While Gumdrop [that's her charming name] slept, the creature ate all the flesh off her feet, leaving only bare bones.

How will she walk the streets now, with no feet?

Tough luck for Gumdrop.

Fat-Bag [the pimp] will wear her out with some kink tricks and then sell her body to a Pulping Station.

This distinguishes itself in no significant way from the realities of the trade in sexual slaves that is occurring right now. The point, for us, at any rate, is that Hell

exists *here*—not in any lame, existential sense, but in the fact that all possible atrocities are being committed *at this moment*.

Every torture of Hell lives in the world now.

We have the opportunity to take a different tack. There may be something to the project of producing a vision of Hell that purposefully mirrors the actual suffering of the living world. It makes for a bold statement to assert that the pain of our brothers and sisters is so great that it marks the limit even of Hell. This may constitute something of an act of cruelty against our players. What happens when one recognizes one's own world, unexaggerated, in Hell? Something profound, we hope—perhaps on the order of the experience we had when we first read this passage from *The Devil and Daniel Webster*:

"Foreign?" said the stranger. "And who calls me a foreigner?"

"Well, I never yet heard of the dev—of your claiming American citizenship," said Dan'l Webster with surprise.

"And who with better right?" said the stranger with one of his terrible smiles. "When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on her deck. Am I not in your books and stories and beliefs from the first settlements on? Am I not spoken of, still, in every church in New England? 'Tis true the North claims me for a Southerner and the South for a Northerner, but I am neither. I am merely an honest American like yourself—and of the best descent—for, to tell the truth, Mr. Webster, though I don't like to boats of it, my name is older in this country than yours."

It may not be untoward to borrow this sentiment for use in our games, to draw together all of the elements we've described under this rubric.

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Feat Factory Project IV - Architecture

by Lance Kepner

In the past Feat Factory articles we have built up a foundation, added a structure, and put a roof over our heads. We have all the workings of basic feat knowledge, and have even touched on some advanced building techniques. In this edition of Feat Factory we will explore the architecture of our building. This article is for DM's as much as players, and will explore how to use feats unconventionally in your games.

When I talk about the architecture of our building that is the basis for our understanding of feats, I mean the habitable space. How are the rooms in our building designed? How tall are the ceilings? These kinds of things, metaphorically speaking of course, are important to both a DM's world and a player's conception. How tall the ceilings are could be the power level of the campaign. High ceilings equates to high power. A studio style building could equate to an open-style of DMing. Feats can be used in unconventional ways to enhance your world, or your conceptions of the world.

The architecture and layout of your building are yours and yours alone. Even if you 'moved into' another building (like say Faerun) you are still the DM and have ultimate control. You can knock down walls and put up new ones, even build additions if you want. These are what are more commonly considered House Rules. We might not all use them, but I personally have yet to meet a DM that hasn't used a variant rule or house rule here or there. Some DM's have huge lists; some have only a minor list. Some discuss house rules, and some don't.

Sometimes it is awkward to say as a DM, or to be told as a player, 'these are the rules I don't agree with, and these are the changes I've made'. What if you don't agree with some? Can you raise issue? Should you? Topics for another article I am sure, but needless to say most DM's discuss house rules with their players and adopt them in a form of codified unwritten law. But what if there was another way to present both sides? Sometimes players may usurp the DM's position and all want a house rule that the DM doesn't

necessarily agree with. Thinking a little outside the box can alleviate most problems.

Feats don't have to be kept to their portion of the game system. They can be expanded into other areas, and have been (metamagic feats). What I propose in this article is an examination of how to use feats as supplements to straight house rules. Some house rules and variant rules may not easily make the transition from mechanic to feat, but we have to try.

House rules as feats allow two major things to happen in a game. People who like the variant can choose to use it, and people who don't like the variant can choose not to use it. It makes everyone happy.

Let's start by examining some common house ruled variants and seeing how to apply them to feats. First all of these feats presented here are under a new feat category called [Variant]. This is a special type of feat that can only be presented by the DM (or a player to a DM for acceptance) and has a set prerequisite of 'DM's permission' by default. A player should not take one of these feats and surprise the DM by saying, 'look what I get to do now'.

The Defense Roll (DMG p.25)

The defense roll is an interesting variant that adds a lot of randomness but reality to combats. While it does slow down combat if everyone uses it, not everyone need to.

Defense Roll [Variant]

Your ability to defend yourself is as chaotic as the battle around you.

Prerequisites: DM permission

Benefit: Every time you are attacked (melee, ranged, touch, ranged touch) you make a defense roll check instead of using a static Armor Class score. A defense roll check consists of rolling 1d20 and adding all your AC modifiers that would normally be allowed by the attack. [1d20 + AC] If the result of your defense roll is higher than the attackers attack roll, you are not hit. If the attack roll meets or exceeds your defense roll, you are hit. You do not add the base of 10 to this roll.

Special: See page 25 of the DMG for more information.

About the Author

Lance Kepner is the head of the Project Crossroads world building project found in the Silven Crossroads forum as well as author of numerous articles in the d20 section.

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About the Artist

Florin Badita is an architecture student and hobby artist living and working in Italy.

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You can contact the artist through his gallery on Elfwood at <http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/loth/f/1/florin/florin.html>

Spell Roll (DMG p. 36)

The Spell Roll is similar to the Defense Roll in that it randomizes spell casting. It actually downplays the significance of spell level and ability modifier. So it may be a great idea for a caster who doesn't have that 18 or 16 in the spell casting stat, or who can only cast lower level spells.

Spell Roll [Variant]

Your ability to cast effective magic flows like the wind.

Prerequisites: DM permission

Benefit: Every time you cast a spell that requires a saving throw you may roll 1d20 and add the spell level, key ability modifier, and any other modifiers you may have (such as from a feat or racial bonus). The result of this roll becomes the saving throw DC for your target. You only roll once for any spell, even if that spell has multiple targets or affects multiple creatures.

Special: See page 36 of the DMG.



artwork: *copyright Florin Badita*

Massive Damage (PH p.145)

The massive damage rule is rarely played with. At low levels it can be insta-kill from an ogre. At high levels a bad die roll and you are done. Basically to summarize if a character takes 50 or more points of damage from a single attack, Fort save DC 15 or die. Icky.

Massive Stamina [Variant]

You are so stout that large amounts of damage will not faze you.

Prerequisite: DM permission.

Benefit: You do not need to make a saving throw if you take 50 or more points of damage from one attack.

Special: See page 27 of the DMG or page 145 of the PH.

Magic weapons resizing

In 3.5 magic weapons don't resize to fit a new owner (I think magic armor still does, but I searched for both in the DMG and the paragraph eluded me. If someone would be kind enough to point out where it says so, thanks!).

Magical Attunement [Variant]

You have the ability to force magic weapons to resize to fit your needs while you use them.

Prerequisites: DM permission

Benefit: If you obtain a magical weapon that is of a size category you do not wish it to be, you may exert your force of will over it to change its size. This effect only lasts as long as you use the weapon and is considered a free action. If the weapon leaves your person it resumes its normal size.

Spells spells spells

In 3.5 many of the familiar spells we all knew and loved from 3.0 were changed. Many were changed for the better in my estimation. But needless to say, some people might not like the current changes to haste, bull's strength, fly, or a myriad of other spells. Variant rule feats might be a great way to handle them in your game. But I warn you, think twice about the exact wording, and remember that the feat should not break the mechanics of the 3.5 system (see my haste example).

Spell Variant (haste) [Variant]

You have learned ancient methods for casting modern spells.

Prerequisites: DM permission

Benefit: When you cast the haste spell you gain the following benefits instead of those listed under the 3.0 or 3.5 spell. First, the duration of the spell lasts for one round per caster level, and is applicable to one creature touched. Second, the creature gains a +4 haste bonus to AC. Third, the creature can jump 1.5 times as far. Finally, the creature can make one extra melee attack during a full attack.

Spell Variant (bull's strength) [Variant]

You have learned ancient methods for casting modern spells.

Prerequisites: DM permission

Benefit: When you cast the bull's strength spell you gain the following benefits instead of those listed under the 3.0 or 3.5 spell. First, the duration of the spell lasts for ten minutes per caster level, and is applicable to one creature touched. Second, the creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength.

Discussion

First lets talk about Variant Feats in general. Should they be regular feats a character can take at any level? Or should they be special feats only available at level one? For my purposes, as a DM, I would weight the number of variant feats and their respective changes and decide how important they were to my players or me. If I wanted them to be rare, then I would make them be regular feats. If I wanted these variants widely available, I may give each character a free choice of 1 variant feat at 1st level. The choice is really up to the DM on how to best implement Variant feats. Likewise a player could approach a DM wanting to take a Variant feat at a certain level or point. There are many options.

The prerequisites could also change depending on how you wanted to implement them. For instance you could add certain prerequisites to your feats, like Massive Stamina requiring a 13+ constitution score. However best you see fit to implement them is how they should be implemented.

The variant spells are the tricky part. Because the spells that were changed were changed for a reason, namely to be more compliant to the system and changing things back is an awkward and often foolhardy move. A wise DM, and someone who has read all the Feat Factory articles, has my complete confidence in creating Variant spell feats that are both useful and balanced.

I hope these Variant feats give you an idea on how to create your own variant rule feats, and I would love to hear from you on whether or not they worked in your game or not, and even some Variant feats that you might have created. And as always anyone can drop me a line (lance@stationaryorbit.com) with feat suggestions or questions. And as always please comment using Silven's great commentary features. I apologize, but Orph Maloney was busy with his monthly lecture. Maybe he will join us next time when we discuss Interior Design and Flavor.

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D&D DOOMSDAY SCENERIOS

by Bradford Ferguson



they can within the limits of the law. Wizards of the Coast is owned by Hasbro. Hasbro is a publicly traded company and is owned by shareholders. Shareholders want their stock to increase in value, executives want the company to perform well so that they can get big bonuses, and the workers want to perform well so that they are promoted, get paid, or simply keep their jobs.

Some Background

The Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) / d20 industry has been going on strong for many years. The rules for D&D have evolved from Original D&D, to 1st edition D&D, to Advanced D&D 2nd edition, to 3rd edition D&D, to D&D v.3.5. Because D&D is a constantly evolving game, a new version of the D&D rules is inevitable. With the release of D&D 3.0, Wizards of the Coast (WOTC) created the d20 license and the Open Gaming License (OGL). Ryan Dancey was the "brain child" of this effort, developing the two licenses because he thought that if third-party publishers support the D&D brand through making supplemental materials, people would have to buy the core rulebooks to be able to those materials.

The strategy worked and the D&D / d20 industry has experienced phenomenal growth since the introduction of D&D 3.0, d20, and OGL. Everything seems to be going along fine, but there were some ripples over this past summer when WOTC changed the terms of the d20 license, preventing Valar Productions from publishing the "Book of Erotic Fantasy" with the d20 logo. This move made d20 publishers realize that they could not take the d20 license for granted, as the d20 license forces the license users (the publishers) to use the current version of the license. This is one of the differences between the d20 license and the OGL – the users of the OGL can ignore current versions and use previous versions of the license if they wish.

WOTC is a business

Sometimes fans of various gaming companies forget that the companies are businesses. This is true for RPGs, board games, collectable card games, and strategy games. These businesses must pay for their staff, their offices, and their operating expenses. Most businesses want to make the most money that

Let us suppose that Hasbro / WOTC, like any other business, is motivated by financial gain. WOTC is unique in the RPG industry in that it owns the D&D property and controls the conditions of the d20 license. Wizards also controls the OGL in that, I believe, they can revoke that license at any time. Their objective is to make the most money over the longest period of time with the D&D brand and the two licenses. Now, what I am about to describe in the next section of this article would be rather earth-shattering to the d20 publishers and the d20 industry.

D&D 4.0 will come out sometime down the road. While some people think it will be 5 or more years, I am more cynical (Wizards does want to make money) and think it will be in less time. Regardless of that caveat, there are two scenarios that I am going to propose, both would be dire for a vast majority of the current d20 publishers...

Doomsday Scenario #1

First, imagine that when WOTC published D&D 4.0 they pulled both the d20 and the OGL license. Even though the d20 industry has helped to spark interest and grow the popularity of D&D itself, WOTC has no obligation to allow other publishers to continue to publish under the d20 banner. One could argue that WOTC "owes" d20 publishers for making D&D more popular, but you could also argue that d20 publishers owe their livings to WOTC for allowing them to use d20 in the first place.

So why would WOTC pull the d20 license? I think that while the d20 license assisted Wizards greatly by helping to increase the popularity of D&D, it hurt them in that other companies beat them to the punch and will damage the sales of all Wizards accessories.

About the Author

"Bradford Ferguson is the Head of the Silven Crossroads D&D/d20 Section. He has been writing d20 articles and reviews, and he has been speculating about the d20 industry since the inception of Silven Crossroads. Bradford currently plays in a Forgotten Realms campaign and is planning to run a Darwin's World 2 Post-Apocalyptic game. When not gaming, he is a trader at one of the financial markets in Chicago."

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Wizards of the Coast is coming out with Unearthed Arcana and also Races of Stone. The first book is variant rules for D&D; however, there are tons of variant rules out there in the d20 market already that people have bought. The second book is a race book for dwarves and gnomes; however, several companies already have produced books on dwarves and gnomes.

Now the books put out by WOTC will likely be of higher quality than most d20 publishers have on their shelves. However, the consumers of these books will feel burnt because they purchased the other d20 book, making them less likely to buy similar WOTC books. I do not claim to be representative of most gamers, but I think that people's gaming wish lists have generally gotten smaller from January 2003 to January 2004. First, in 2003, companies published books on various subjects and genres that were not previously covered. Second, in 2003, people bought books to fill their gaming needs. Therefore, I believe that there is less demand for a majority of books, but there still is demand for very specific books.

But I digress, so while the d20 license helped the popularity of D&D, it is now competing with WOTC. Most consumers have already bought the core rulebooks and WOTC can only make money on supplemental material (accessories) in which they compete with other d20 publishers. Since the d20 industry has already published a litany of supplemental material for D&D, Wizards sales may be lacking as people already have what they want.

The doomsday scenario would be that WOTC uses the fact that d20 built the popularity of D&D, and it publishes D&D 4.0 with the new (higher) demand and then they can publish the supplements without

competition. There will be no competition because there would be no d20 or OGL companies if WOTC revoked the licenses. "But," you say, "People will get upset with Wizards and they will refuse to buy their product." To a limited extent that will be true, but most people do not follow the industry as closely as those of us on the Internet. Most people would begrudgingly buy D&D 4.0 and the supplemental materials.

This would be devastating to d20 publishers because they could no longer publish d20 books and they would have to shift gears to other RPG systems. The designers and writers could create their new system, but these new systems would not have the popularity of the d20 brand. Most in the d20 industry would have to go back to their "day jobs."

Doomsday Scenario 2

Now I'm not really privy to how the design process actually works, so I do not know whether this could be pulled off. The second scenario involves this: before WOTC publishes D&D 4.0, they would pre-write all their supplement books. They would figure out the shape of the rules of 4.0, then they would write the class, equipment, racial, and setting books before they released 4.0. When they released D&D 4.0; this time they would keep d20 intact. But, *BAM* a month after release of the core books, they release the fighter book, then *BAM* next month they release the bards and rogues book, etc. They release everything in rapid succession before the undercapitalized d20 publishers have a chance to publish competing material.

This scenario would also be very devastating to d20 publishers as they could not simply write the money-makers before WOTC lumbered along and published similar, competing material. This move would squeeze some of the excesses that some of the d20 publishers enjoyed before the competition (including Wizards) got material out. This maneuver would also allow Wizards to save face and not draw the ire of the more devoted and informed gamers.

It would be difficult for Wizards of the Coast to pull off this scenario. The strategy would require the 4.0 ruleset to be robust and stable during the development of the supplemental books. Additionally, WOTC would

also have to be able to exercise an extraordinary amount of coordination and they would to make a significant investment in many artists, writers, and other creative folks.

Would it Really be that Bad?

Yes. Right now, we are gaming during a golden age of the D&D / d20 industry. All the d20 companies are very passionate about games and they support the industry by giving people more options. Just like Silven Crossroads supports your RPG hobby and helps inspire you to game to new heights, the various d20 products and industry leaders help make our games more fun and interesting. If Wizards got rid of d20 and OGL with the release of 4.0, all this extra support would go away and games would be less fun for those of us who enjoy the third party support of D&D.

Undoubtedly, when Wizards is planning for D&D 4.0, they will attempt to account for many factors. Businesses want to make the most money, so it is all about the numbers. Here's to hoping that Wizards will determine that they would make less money if they released D&D 4.0 as non-d20 and non-OGL.

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Steven Russell reviews *Arcana Unearthed*

"Arcana Unearthed" (print edition)

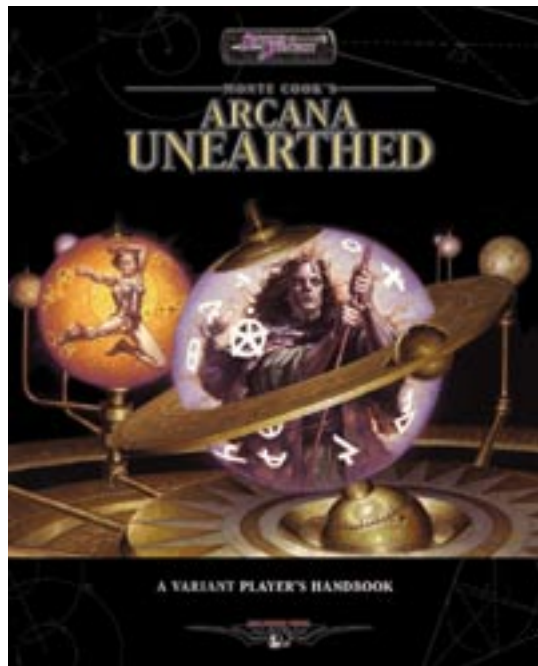
Author: Monte Cook

Maker: [Malhavoc Press](#).

Review written by: *Steven Russell (aka Quillion)*

Review edited by: *Bradford Ferguson*

Review date: 12/23/2003



The first hardcover supplement from Malhavoc Press, *Arcana Unearthed* is 254 pages in length and is available from your local gaming store or online store for \$29.95 (the same price as the revised Core Rulebooks released by Wizards of the Coast). The black & white interior art is by Toren Atkinson, David Hendee, Jennifer Meyer, Stephen Shepherd, and Sam Wood. The cover art is by Mark Zug.

From the Back Cover

"The 3rd Edition of the world's most popular role-playing game has thrilled hundreds of thousands. But surely there's more to fantasy than the traditional elves, dwarves, fighters, and wizards. What if there were a whole new player's handbook, presented just like the original, but with different character classes, races, skills, feats, and spells? You've Got It!"

"Monte Cook's Reinventing the Wheel" would have been an appropriate title for this book and Monte Cook pulls it off better than anyone else could. *Arcana Unearthed* makes a masterful stand-alone role-playing book. *Arcana Unearthed* is the fantasy equivalent to *Mutants and Masterminds*. It made me stop and go "Wow! You can do that with d20?" It is a signpost for next generation of third party products that show the versatility and power of the D20 OGL. I wanted a copy when it debuted at GenCon this year, but guess what? The book sold out! Twice!

Why not a Perfect Score?

AU is not a product for the beginning role-player, it doesn't make any attempt to hold the player's hand and teach them the basics, but the format treated me like a new player. It covers too much old ground when the idea was supposed to be fresh and new. I was told how to make a balance check like some rookie. If Monte Cook had simply showed the changes to make, it would have made for a more interesting read. I also would not run the risk of what is happening to me in 3.5. Sometimes I make an error because I have mastery of 3.0 D&D, but not of the differences that AU creates. I understand why, but I know how to play d20 - he did not have to teach me again.

Reviewer's bias: I was salivating when I heard and read about this book. Ever since Malhavoc press got off the ground I have bought every product Malhavoc has put out, save the psionic books. So, when I got this assignment I was overjoyed and unhappy as I was going to have to criticize a work and a designer I respect. Monte Cook co-created the rebirth of D&D rule mechanics that gave the worlds most popular RPG one of the worlds best systems. So just consider me a Fanboy!

About the Author

Steven Russel is a long time D&D player and Dungeon Master and is a regular contributor in the Silven Crossroads forums.

Review snapshot

CLASS: Rules Supplement

STR: 16 (*Physical*). Hardcover. Sewn-in Binding.

DEX: 16 (*Organization*). (Organization). Follows standard PHB organization, the format is for new players not advanced.

CON: 16 (*Quantity of the Content*). Lots of new content, but cover old ground from the SRD and from the Books of Eldritch Might

INT: 18 (*Quality of Content*). Wish I had done it.

WIS: 14 (*Options & Adaptability*). Casters and Magic system go hand in hand. Is 3.0, not 3.5.

CHA: 14 (*Look & Feel*). Wondrous cover. interior all black and white, David Hendee work ruins yet another work.

How we rate our reviews

Scoring definitions.

18 = Superior. Best of the best.

16 = Very Good. Part of a Baker's Dozen.

14 = Good. Most gamers would like this.

12 = Fair. Some gamers would like this.

10 = Average. Most gamers would be indifferent.

8 = Subpar. Flawed, but not without promise.

6 = Bad. Most gamers would dislike this.

4 = Very Bad. Among the Dirty Dozen.

2 = Inferior. Worst of the worst.

Monte Cook does such a excellent job with AU's casting classes, spellcasting rules, and spells that they cannot be piecemealed into your existing game. Understand that the whole of the spell casting classes, the casting system, and the spells must be used together. This weakens it's power as a supplement; however, it is a variant players handbook not a rules supplement. Yet, everything else about AU is easily used piecemeal. So, even this complaint is praise.

[Editor's Note: Agreed. The magic system and classes must be used together. You can use the magister in your standard D&D game, but the magister must use the AU spells in order to be balanced with a standard D&D wizard. Additionally, the wizard cannot use the AU

spells and be balanced. However, I argue the assertion that AU is not a rules supplement as it proposes a totally different magic system.]

Presentation

The cover is glossy with a nice smooth finish (fingerprints, fingerprints, and more fingerprints). The paper is glossy and is completely white with black text. No background is visible on the page, just the text and artwork. There are no page borders and each chapter contains a small image in the top right hand corner. Go buy a book cover for this product! A cover should save your copy from the dangers of pizza grease and spilled cola. Chessex makes some nice covers.

The cover contains the only color images for the book; all other art images are black and white. I want full color when I pay thirty dollars for a book, but it is a minor issue. When it comes to art, I could usually care less. It's "Wow! That looks cool." and then I don't look at the pictures for the next 10 years as I reference the material a thousand times. Even monster pictures are only good for a one-shot use. However, I hate David Hendee's work (see Steel's review of the art in *Anger of Angels*). His chicken-scratch sketch style, abstract paintings, and the lack of detail in his work is pathetic especially when compared to people I like (Toren Atkinson, Jennifer Meyer, Stephen Shepherd, and Sam Wood). Please Mr. Cook, give some other artist a shot!

It's a variant players handbook that mirrors the layout of the player's handbook. An index! Wow! A D20 publisher with a good index, is this a sign of the coming apocalypse? I hope Monte Cook will do more indexes, I know they consume time, which is money, but indexes really make a product useful for DM's and players everywhere.

Content

I hate doing lists of contents when doing a review, but my editor is a tie rant with hornz and a tale! (j/k) Also, with so many new classes and races I will touch on each of those; however, I am going to go a bit in depth with one character so you can get a sense of the wonder that AU creates.

First off, when it comes to Monte Cook always read his introductions. They are always well worth it and he brings something to introductions most authors lack. Monte Cook still has an awe-inspiring take on role-playing games.

Races

Faen: A diminutive fey-like humanoid race (with the three subraces of Quickling, Loesong and Spryte)

Giants: unlike the standard D&D giant, these resemble the personality and size of the giants from Stephen R Donaldson's *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* series.

Humans are the only core race and are a bit more setting specific though I could have wished for something similar to what WoT or FR did with humans.

Litorian are anamorphic lion-folk, though I like the fact that Monte Cook avoids just making them men who act like lions.

Mojh are very interesting, a Transformational race of humans (they are infertile except for koblod-spawn) that wanted to be more like dragons.

Sibeccai are anamorphic Jackel-folk (again better than most anamorphic races),

Verrick are red-skinned, blue-haired humanoids, that remain aloof in their deep intellectual pursuits.

One nice thing Monte Cook adds is racial levels. These allow your character to become more of what they are rather than advancing in your class. Think of becoming more of a Giant. You become stronger, tougher, wiser, and bigger. Monte Cook took the idea of racial prestige classes, enhancing a setting, and made it purely racial. For my first character, I wanted to be a Giant (I am a big Stephen R Donaldson fan like Mr. Cook is). I wanted to stay away from the fantastic, so when I first started the character I chose to create a human character that would become Mojh and be a spellcaster. This was great, because his racial levels increased his spellcasting. I loved it!

Classes

The classes of *Arcana Unearthed* have so many options and paths to go down that characters in the same class will look extremely different from one another. Also, he deals with a number of minor issues that D&D



seems to ignore. You get bonus spells for 0th-level spells, medium saving throw progressions, nothing less than six sided hit dice are used for any class, so now your mage won't be the cowardly mage hiding behind the cowardly thief... he will be standing beside him! Multi-classing does not draw an experience point penalty (no favored class). The only restriction in multi-classing is that a character cannot have more than one type of any classes where a character-defining choice must be made - Witch, Totem Warrior, Etc.

Akashic: Maestros of collective memory (think Dune racial memories of the benigeserit sisterhood [no way I spelled that right]).

Champions are warriors who defend a chosen cause - six of which are presented (this makes the class highly customizable by allowing different routes).

Greenbond: Animancy, the magic of life, excellent spellcasters.

Mageblade: a warrior spell caster who uses rituals to enhance their weapon (this is the only class I had issues with, I think it is a mistake to not allow weapons other than blades for this class).

Magister: The master spellcaster, these take a page from the Donaldson's Council of Lords, Tolkien's Wizards, Shakespeare's Prespro and the Magic of Recluse. The magister's staff is the source of their power.

Oathbound: a monk-warrior of vows, fidelity, loyalty and devotion give this character power to accomplish his sworn goals. They are very reminiscent of the Bloodguard of the Council of Lords (Stephen R. Donaldson).

Runethane: Spellcaster that is a creator of runes, wards and items.

Totem Warrior: bind themselves to an animal spirit that grants them interesting abilities and each choice presents vast opportunities.

Unfettered: another warrior, these are swashbucklers. I have not compared them to the Swashbuckler of the *Complete Warrior* yet but I like this class and its counterpart.

Warmain: The tank you always wanted to be.

Witch: A spellcaster who focuses on themselves as well as the magic in their spells. Almost every witch is a unique and mysterious individual.

I have only a minor issue with Monte Cook about the names he has chosen for his classes. I do not like one-word descriptions, as the Magister is easily confused with the Magister of Forgotten Realms and the Witch is simply a bad choice. There are many witch classes, and witch can be a gender specific name (a witch is female, a warlock is male). These are very minor complaints though, as each class is very good, is not front-loaded, and gains interesting abilities at higher levels.

I wanted to test out the spell system of this system, so I chose to make my character a Magister, one of two classes with a full spell-casting progression that can cast any type of spell. I also get a staff that is tougher than the original, a bonus feat from a list (can I say I hate feat lists, I like 3.5's answer of putting that in the feat description) every five levels, later I get a nice bonus vs. spells and spell-like abilities, an option for some really cool flavor texts that reflect the character being so magical, the ability to substitute STR checks with INT checks, and finally, something that all D&D classes need that many prestige classes use: a top ability that makes the class stand out.

Skills

Sneak replaces move silently and hide, listen check for sleeping characters, a few new knowledge skills that are all very good additions to something that has not gotten brushed past in most rules supplements. I do have a question for Mr. Cook, why not eliminate the double role of listen and spot? You did it for hide and move silently with sneak why not make a perception skill instead?

Feats

Arcana Unearthed has an interesting array of feats, a few of them are improved versions of standard feats. Take a close look at feats like Sturdy (a much better version of Toughness), Exotic Weapon Proficiency that deals in groups, and Armor Proficiency: Exotic that helps with a new armor type. Characters can also blow a chunk of change at 10th and 20th level to swap one feat for another. Just the pure customization of this makes me love the system that much more. I am going to take Aid Spellcasting as my first general feat. It helps increase the DC of the Caster level of another's spell. (Quite useful for a one-shot kill or dispel magic) I enjoyed the idea in the Books of Eldritch Might and I liked that it was included in *Arcana Unearthed*.

Some metamagic feats are gone, replaced by Spell Templates. The idea of how you do magic item creation feats has also changed to things like Craft single use item (brew potion). New magic item creation costs make a great deal more sense and solve the issue of why you would take anything but Create Wondrous Item.

Talent Feats

We have seen them before, only Monte Cook gives them a name. Talent Feats are feats you can only take at first level. These are feats that you are born with. I have always liked these as a GM and as a player. I took one called Born Hero that gives me an extra Hero Point and helps me get more hero points.

What are Hero Points?

Hero points are similar to Deadland's "fate chip", TSR's Marvel Superheroes "karma", and d20 Modern's "action points". Hero points are clearly defined as being in the DM's purview, with the DM having the final word on what earns them, what they can do, and whether or not to use them at all, so there's no fear of them having a disrupting effect on a campaign. I love the idea of hero points, it is something I can reward players with other than exp, gold, or magic. However, I have a problem with their name and how you earn them. Monte Cook throws alignment out the window



as a role-playing tool and as a game mechanic, but puts a benefit in that requires you to play heroically. This seems contradictory to me.

Ceremonial Feats

These feats are by far the best and most interesting, supernatural feats that you gain via costly material components and the assistance of others. You can chose to have one at first level or you can chose to have an additional talent, but all Ceremonial Feats have a prerequisite of a Truename. The idea of a Truename (you can see the influence of first edition D&D and the Wizard of Earthsea in this design) is that you have a secret name that you discover in a secret ceremony (if you don't have a true name you are called Unbound). Truenames have a major affect on the way spells affect you. So DM's can abuse you with your truename and powergamers gain a little more power. (Note: Raise the Dead is a spell that depends on knowing someone's truename) I decided upon having a true name and making my ceremonial feat Wild Mage which lets me have the Wild Template and once a day my character can make a target have to make two saves against my spell.



Equipment

Hey check out some of the really cool weapon templates and the very interesting exotic armor. No longer are you stuck with full plate being the top end model. Things such as articulated plate and dragon armor are always of great interest to me.

Magic and Spells

In AU, there is only magic (no arcane vs. divine). Every spellcaster uses the same list of spells. Instead, there are types of spells - simple, complex, & exotic. A spell's type determines how hard it is to cast. Yet even if he cannot cast exotic spells he can take feats that allow him to, rather than it simply being a closed door. Once a character has learned how to cast a spell, she knows it. There is no need to lug around a spell book at all. A few things are different; some standard spells are missing others are higher level and some spells from Monte Cooks other works have appeared here. Yet, each spell is actually three spells as you can also cast them at diminished and heightened versions. He even includes a way to increase the power even further by having the spell take up two spell slots, this is called a laden spell.

Monte Cook also takes the caster-level check and adds the stat modifier too it (now called a power-level check). Another piece of simple brilliance is that the cost of item creation is listed in the spell description. It reminds me of the Ego Waffle commercial about rocket surgery. The Wild Template I chose makes my spells 25% of the time the diminished effect and 25% of the time the heightened affect. Welcome back wild mage. What will be my favorite spells? 0th: Disorient: a spell that causes a character to reroll his initiative. 1st: Wind churn: flyers have problems staying aloft, 2nd: Drain away speed: creatures get slower, 3rd: Steal Health: Deals a little damage to get a little life, and don't forget 9th-level spells like Invoked Apocalypse which destroys cities (and I do mean an entire city).

Conclusion

I hope Monte Cook does more with this line than just the setting book. He has shown great passion and care with this book. I recommend reading his design diaries about AU at MonteCook.com and his comments on the books at his message board. I also like Monte Cook's answer to what I hate about the RPGA with his creation of DiamondThrone.com - he gave the reigns of the system and the setting over to three fans.

CLASS: Rules Supplement

STR: 16 (*Physical*). Hardcover. Sewn-in Binding.

DEX: 16 (*Organization*). (Organization). Follows standard PHB organization, the format is for new players not advanced.

CON: 16 (*Quantity of the Content*). Lots of new content, but cover old ground from the SRD and from the Books of Eldritch Might

INT: 18 (*Quality of Content*). Wish I had done it.

WIS: 14 (*Options & Adaptability*). Casters and Magic system go hand in hand. Is 3.0, not 3.5.

CHA: 14 (*Look & Feel*). Wondrous cover. interior all black and white, David Hendee work ruins yet another work.

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Matt Haught reviews *Out for Blood*

"Out for Blood"

Authors: E. W. Morton
Publisher: [Bastion Press](#)
Reviewed by: *Matt Haught*
Review date: 12/14/2003



Reviewer's Bias: I received a review copy of this product.

From the Back Cover

"If ever there were a creature that truly inspired the human imagination, it would be the vampire. Whether folklore and fable painted them as monstrous or misunderstood, the lore of the vampire has emblazoned itself on the fabric of our reality. Their existence has permeated itself in our favorite game."

Binding and Price

This softcover book with a glue binding retails at \$22.95. *Out for Blood* has 96 pages of content and this review is based on a review copy.

First Impressions

The first quality of this book that struck me was the low page-count-to-price ratio. That works out to a whopping 23.9 cents per page. That's \$3.00 more than WotC's similarly sized class handbooks such as *Masters of the Wild*.

Next, I noticed that the artwork was very hit-or-miss. It ranged from the excellent to the abhorrent. For example, Phillip James' art was some of the best I've seen in a long time, with excellent proportion and attention to detail. Unfortunately, the rest of the art was mediocre at best.

Introduction

The introduction gives a brief overview of each chapter, an explanation of some otherwise confusing terminology used within the book, and a brief listing of credits. With the short length of the book, it was nice that the introduction was limited to a single page.

Chapter 1: Characters

This chapter introduces two new feats and several new uses for existing skills, but its primary function is to present eighteen new prestige classes. These classes range from the excellent to the mediocre. The Knight of the Dragon PrC is perhaps one of the best, though it is intended primarily as an NPC class. In this role, however, it can easily be used to create a truly epic villain. A high-level Knight of the Dragon with

About the Author

Matt Haught is a D&D player and Dungeon Master that has contributed numerous reviews and custom d20 creations to our readership.

Review snapshot

CLASS: Monster Supplement

STR: 10 (*Physical*). Typical glued-in softcover binding.

DEX: 14 (*Organization*). Good organization of material into different chapters, but charts are often not on the same page as the beginnings of their respective entries.

CON: 8 (*Quantity of the Content*). 96 pages of average content isn't worth \$23.

INT: 12 (*Quality of Content*). Some excellent organizations, decent PrC's, interesting monsters and a few neat spells are counterbalanced by some pretty mediocre examples of the same.

WIS: 15 (*Options & Adaptability*). Cultural variations of vampires ensure that something from this book can be used in almost any campaign, and the organizations are very flexible.

CHA: 10 (*Look & Feel*). Some artwork is excellent, while some is mediocre at best.

How we rate our reviews

Scoring definitions.

18 = Superior. Best of the best.

16 = Very Good. Part of a Baker's Dozen.

14 = Good. Most gamers would like this.

12 = Fair. Some gamers would like this.

10 = Average. Most gamers would be indifferent.

8 = Subpar. Flawed, but not without promise.

6 = Bad. Most gamers would dislike this.

4 = Very Bad. Among the Dirty Dozen.

2 = Inferior. Worst of the worst.

a Vampire Seneschal henchman (another PrC from *Out for Blood*) could prove a match for even the most prepared party of adventurers. It seems that several of the PrC's are similarly intended as NPC classes, though many will function admirably as PC classes.

Unfortunately, not all of the PrC's presented have a visible connection to vampires. Some, like the Soul Catcher, are generic undead-related classes. Others, like the Knight of the Dragon, are linked to organizations detailed later in the book. While this

allows a greater measure of flexibility for DM's, it does leave the reader wondering if he or she is still reading a book dedicated to vampires.

Chapter 2: Creatures

This chapter contains many new types of vampires and similar creatures, as well as new rules for dealing with them. The allergen, taboo and vulnerabilities are an excellent way to codify the weaknesses of different types of vampires. Optional rules for vorpal weapons and vampire metabolisms also add more variety for DM's.

Then we get into the meat and potatoes of the chapter: the monsters. Most of these entries are cultural variants of the basic vampire, with a few templates and one PC race (an emasculated version of the Dhampir) thrown in for good measure. Some of these monsters, such as the Iron-Toothed Vampire and Barb-Tongued Vampire, are innovative and interesting. Others, such as the Chupacabras, Iron Maiden and Grave Soil, seem out of place in a book about vampires.



Chapter 3: Campaigns

This chapter contains several real gems for DM's to utilize in their campaigns. Organizations such as the Watchers in Shadow, Knights of the Dragon and the Shadow Kingdom make excellent allies, enemies and

encounters for PC's of nearly any level. Adventure seeds provide some basic ideas for DM's, but nothing that a creative mind couldn't think up on its own.

I was particularly impressed with the Knights of the Dragon in this chapter. Building on the PrC found in Chapter 1, this organization reminds me in particular of the Templar Knights, had the wild accusations against that order been true. With the organizational details in this chapter, the Knights of the Dragon should prove to be a force to be reckoned with for any party. Not only is the PrC powerful, but the organization itself holds considerable power and influence in the land, as well as an official mandate from the powers of Good. Heroes who take on the Order of the Dragon will likely be branded outlaws throughout the land, and will probably end up cut off from any sort of official recourse. The decision to forsake ineffectual diplomacy for an unauthorized guerilla war will not be an easy one for the PC's, and savvy DM's can eke quite a bit of plot from this organization.

My admiration for such an excellent organization is balance by the fact that the Order has only a cursory connection with vampires. Certainly, a high-level Knight could in fact be a vampire, but the Order itself does not depend on the existence of supernatural bloodsuckers.

Conclusion

Overall, *Out for Blood* has some interesting content, but too little of it for the price. If all of the content happened to be superb, indispensable rules for the vampire-lacking DM, then it might be worth \$23. However, the content and artwork are hit-or-miss, and just can't make up for the small page count. This book would be worth \$15, but not \$23. If you're a DM with a penchant for vampires, and the *Ravenloft* books aren't quite enough for you, then this may be a product to consider. The average DM or player will get a much better content-to-price ratio by purchasing *Ravenloft* or *Midnight* products.

CLASS: Monster Supplement

STR: 10 (*Physical*). Typical glued-in softcover binding.
DEX: 14 (*Organization*). Good organization of material into different chapters, but charts are often not on the same page as the beginnings of their respective entries.

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Cartographer's Corner

by Dana Driscoll

Ice Dragon Lair

Cartographers Index : Map ID 09

The Ice Dragon Lair is located on the top of a treacherous, stormy mountain peak. It is only through traversing the dangerous cliffs for weeks or using some sort of magical means can one reach the pinnacle of the Stormwind Mountain, where Voshamok the White makes her lair.

Deep drifts of snow surrounded by sheer rock faces characterize the outside of the lair. Nearest the lair, silent and clear ice crystals, many larger than a towering oak, encompass the entrance. These same crystals, formed by Voshamok's frigid breath, cover the walls within the lair as well. Often Voshamok will entirely block off the entrance to the lair with a wall of sheer ice crystal.

Those who brave going inside will find a dark, eerie, and frigid cave. While the cave provides respite from the howling winds and blowing snow, a different type of horror awaits. The temperature is significantly lower inside the cave than the outside. The ice crystals reflect and dazzle any light sources and individuals that near them, making the entire cavern slightly disorienting.

The first cavern to the left of the entrance is Volshamok's feeding area. It is here she stores her prey, using a form of magic to keep them in an alive yet in frozen state. The faces of her uneaten prey can be seen from inside the crystals, entombed until Voshamok or her brood feel the need for flesh. Skeletons and skulls of past meals litter the floor. This particular cavern is haunted with the echoing screams of those she has devoured in the past.

Moving past the feeding area, one comes to the main chamber of Volshamok herself. Often she can be found haunched or sleeping upon her heaps of treasure she has amassed from her unfortunate victims.

She guards not only her riches but also her nest-the most important treasure of all.

The third and final chamber is Volshamok's nest. Her eggs will soon hatch three frosty broodings which will continue her reign of terror.

Alternative Ideas:

This frigid lair is the stash of the ice-pirates. They bury both their prisoners and their treasure within its hard-to-reach walls.

This cave is found inside a small asteroid, where a particular breed of cunning space creature has made his home. He lies in wait just inside the entrance for watching for ships to pass by. When they do, he darts out and rips them to shreds, storing their goods and wares within his home.

About the Author

Dana has a variety of different interests, some of the most important being reading, writing, learning, and playing D&D. She is currently a graduate student working on her PhD in linguistics at State University of New York: Stony Brook, with her undergraduate work in Literature, Writing, and Women's Studies.

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The artwork in this section is done by the author.



About this section

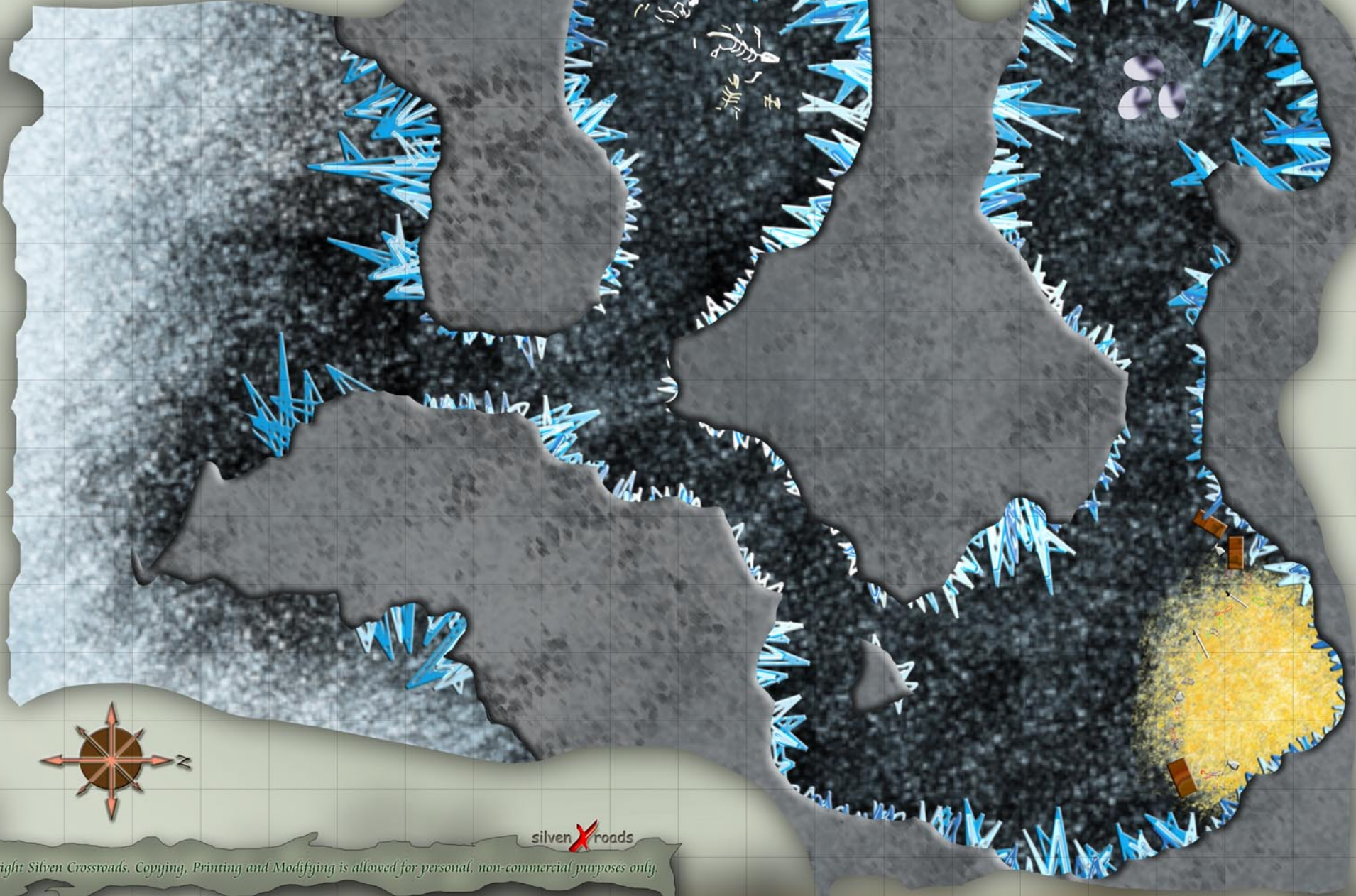
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Each map that follows is a full page, in color and contains numbered areas so that a DM can easily make notes and keep track of what he or she wants where.

On this page we will present some adventure hook ideas that go with each map. These are usable in any fantasy based RPG and are presented only to give your imagination a kick start. We are very interested in hearing your feedback about how you use our maps. Head over to our forums and tell us.

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Cartographers Index : Map ID 09
Ice Dragons Lair



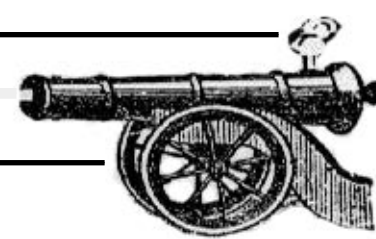
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the fodder cannon

Serving the City of Silven for over 1,000 Scribes!



The New Magic Power (Is It Worth It?)

An editorial by Dak Tamble

Recently the lives of the citizens of Silven have been bathed in a glory called magic. This powerful and enigmatic conduit of energy that flows freely from the urbanite developers (A.K.A crazy ass wizards) has gripped the city in an Iron Band of Barillo and refuses to let go.

While many citizens, myself included, acknowledge the benefit this cancerous debris bestows upon our fine city, many, like myself, also agree that this utopian magical boon cannot last forever, and must be tainted.

We, the city of Silven, have profited from countless amenities inherent to our magical exploitations. Some of these profits include city-wide sanitation including not only sewage but drainage. Only a few years ago I remember walking to the outhouse for the morning duties. Now we all get the benefit of indoor plumbing. But where does all of our waste go? Certainly we all remember the stories of Crazy Bob crawling into a potty and never coming out. How many more Crazy Bob's can we spare before we wake up and realize we are sitting on portable holes filled with crap?

And what about all these golems walking around town. If the smell on the fish golem wasn't bad enough, try asking one for directions. A rat has more personality.

Our watchtowers are ripe with all sorts of magical beasts and creations. I've even heard stories that they are the by-product of magical research and magical waste, which is now being called 'maest'. One of the Maestlings had the body of my grandmother and the head of a chicken. I didn't know whether to run away in terror or fire up the grill.

While Orph Maloney sits in his tower, probably laughing maniacally at his grand schemes coming to fruition, the good people of Silven suffer under the relentless tyranny of luxury. Do we really need all these unseen servants running around wildly serving us food and beverages? Do we really need all these wonderful gadgets that cut our hair, shave our beards, and protect us from angry and vengeful gods?

This is one Gnome who say no.

Everburning Torches not Everburning

Last Monday Aeldar Ealfman stormed into the Trinkets and Treasures magic shop demanding his money back.

Apparently Ealfman had purchased an Everburning Torch, a popular product for generations, at the T&T magic shop some thousand years ago.

The current owner insisted that no refund would be given due to the abhorrent amount of time between the purchase.

Ealfman then proceeded to produce a one thousand and two year old receipt of purchase which guaranteed the Everburning Torch to be ever-burning.

Distraught over the situation, Ealfman only wanted a replacement, and the owner obliged.

The T&T magic shop no longer sells Everburning Torches, but rather Almost Everburning Torches.

Pickle Brine Found To Cause Euphoria

An Investigative Report by Poot Fenbottle

There is a new craze in the city of Silven—pickle brine. Its everywhere and its hot. Local liquor establishments

have begun stocking this innocuous substance, and pickle sales are at an all-time high across the region. Farmers and food producers are working round the clock to keep up with the demand. Yes folks, pickle brine is here to stay.

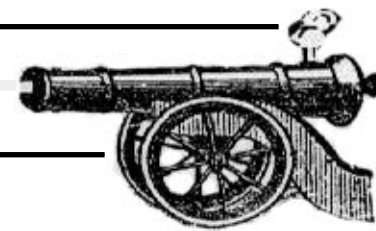
Barton Beersblood, local thug, is credited with the discovery of Pickle Brine. "I was just lookin for sumtin to eat, behind the inn," Beersblood states, "I found a jar of Pickles with none left and thought, what the hell. I chugged the thing."

Sherrif Barnab comments on the situation, "The pickle brine craze has caused quite the stir in the town. The guilds, the farmers, and the thugs have been fighting for rights over the juice."

Pickle brine is a very salty liquid, excruciating to the tastebuds. Upon ingestion, the drinker usually loses control, entering a dream-like state of pure euphoria. Other than pickles, nobody knows what is in this highly-sought after substance.

Sherry Srinvine, local widow, has been made a rich woman overnight. She says, "Last year, I began making pickles to sell to the neighbors after my husband died. Problem is, now that pickle brine is hot, I can't keep my kids away from the stuff." Srinvine claims, however, that she herself does not indulge in drinking the juice.

The Fodder Cannon is a monthly humor section by Lance Kepner and Dana Driscoll. Readers are encouraged to contribute their own amusing shorts. Send to adriayna@yahoo.com.



Fear of demonic invasions and end-of-the-known-world propaganda greatly exaggerated

An Apology by Earl Munster conveyed by the Editor

Reknowned magus and arcane spellcaster extraordinaire, Earl Munster, would like to apologise for his bahviour last week. As many of you are aware, the short grandmaster of magic went screaming down several streets, claiming that he was being followed by demons.

It appears that the grand Archmagus has attempted to summon a demon for questioning from the depths of the nine hells itself, but due to a misreading of the spell had instead summoned a pixie from the "pipes of the nine bells", a lesser plane of existance containing beings well known for their prankish and jovial nature. The pixie had immediately upon being summoned, cast a spell of illusion on the unprepared Archmagus which resulted in his misguided belief of demonic persecution and resulted in the unfortunate screaming and running we mentioned before.

We therefore urge all citizens to remain calm and ignore the Born Again Reliigious Paupers Movement and the Gepetto's Witnesses claims that the end of the world is to happen tomorrow, and for the sake of all that's holy, avoid giving them all you own in exchange for promises of a special place in heaven.

Public Poll:

Plans for Valentines Day?

Orph Maloney, Wizard Extraordinaire

"Seduce a seccubus."

Dak Tamble, Bard Wonder

"Playing at a charity for single gnome bards. It's at 42 Gnomish Rd. Ladies welcome."

Aeldar Ealfman, very old person

"At my age I don't have time for women, or bathrooms... oops."

Anselhome Whitecourt Runegarden III, Long named guy

"Valentines Day does not exist in the Beastlands. Hmm... *shudder*."

Classifieds:

Magic Bean Purchase? Lawsuits pending for faulty magic beans. Collect what you are owed! If you have bought magic beans and were injured, contact the offices of Sliviniss & Shuoute.

Real Estate for Sale: Anti-Magic Fields. Fields are prime real-estate outside of the city of Silven. Good for crops, animals, and well-protected from nearby wizards. See Oniko Cawnmeyer in the business district for more information.

Adventuerers For Hire. Lost dog? Stolen heirloom? Missing daughter? We handle all, discretion guaranteed. Contact Byron Blaneboom at the Rusty Bolt.

Wanted: Pickle Brine. Do you have any jars of pickles? We pay top dollar for pickle brine. You keep the pickles, we keep the brine. See Whorin's Wholesale Foods.

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<http://www.fantasywars.org/>

Florin Badita

<http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/loth/f/l/florin/florin.html>

Vshane SF/F Fantasy Studio

<http://www.vshane.com/>

Veli-Matti Joutsen

<http://www.silven.com/gallery/vmjoutsen>

Andi Lee Seymour

[http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/\(random\)/loth/a/n/andilee/andilee.html](http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/(random)/loth/a/n/andilee/andilee.html)

Layout, and Design

Kosala Ubayasekara

Printing Tips

Printing out the entire e-zine can be very demanding on your printer and use a lot of ink. If you are careful about the amount of ink you use in printing then we advise you not to print the entire e-zine.

Article pages and excerpts that we assume will be printed the most have been purposefully illustrated using light colors to conserve printer ink reserves. Printing out only the pages that you need will make it easier for you manage your ink usage. Each article also links to an online version where a text-only version of the article can be found.

Its recommended that you print the maps on glossy paper if you can. Glossy paper is available from most stationery or office supply stores and is more expensive than regular printing paper, but the quality difference in the print is worth it.

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