

WHITE WOLF QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2005
VOLUME 3.3

FREE

JULY TO
SEPTEMBER

MAGE:
YOUR AWAKENING IS AT HAND

VAMPIRE:
DRACULA'S LEGACY LIVES ON
PRINCE OF THE CITY BOARD GAME

WEREWOLF:
LORE OF THE FORSAKEN

EXALTED:
ASPECTS IN RETROSPECT

VTES:
PLAYER'S GUIDE

CUT
THROUGH THE
BLINDING
LIES AND WRITE
YOUR NAME
ACROSS THE
WATCHTOWERS
OF THE SUPERNAL
REALMS IN

MAGE
THE AWAKENING



NEWS, EVENTS AND MORE...

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10 WRESTED FROM THE SHADOW

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11 LAIR OF THE DAMNED

two people, one vampire, one terrible decision... we see it all in this preview excerpt of greg stolze's novel **the marriage of virtue and viciousness**.

12 ASPECT BOOKS: A RETROSPECTIVE

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13 CROWNED SUN, PAINTED FROG

A sneak preview of tim waggoner's novel **exalted: a shadow over heaven's eye**, with perhaps the most intriguing den of iniquity in all of rane.

14 VARGR RULE

A delightful, disturbingly sensual excerpt from nancy a. collins' **wild blood**, brought to you by two wolf press.

15 THE ULTIMATE V:TES REFERENCE

everything you ever needed to know about **vampire: the eternal struggle** is collected in the **v:tes player's guide**, and anything you might want to know about the **player's guide** is right here in this article.

16 THE MYTHIC VAMPIRE BOARD GAME

we've promised and promised you **vampire: prince of the city**, but now we have proof that it actually exists and is coming your way. but don't take our word for it—see it for yourself.



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Howlings

news and notes from white wolf game studio

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Where are we going to be this summer? We've got big events scheduled each month, where we'd love to see you. You can check out our website (www.white-wolf.com) for more specific programs we're offering at each event, but you can be sure we'll be holding at least one **Mind's Eye Theatre** LARP at each one since **MET** and **MET: The Requiem** are releasing at long last in July. Otherwise, here's where we'll be and when:

July(ish)

Origins

(June 30th–July 3rd)—Gamers of all stripes descend on poor Columbus, Ohio. White Wolf holds an exclusive preview game for—**Mage: The Awakening** as well as a variety of seminars and other events.

August

GenCon Indy

(August 18th–21st)—Ignore the inconveniently scheduled Telluride Mushroom Festival, and come instead to the best four days of gaming at the Mecca of hobby gaming enthusiasts.

September

DragonCon

(September 2nd–5th)—This is our hometown convention, and we'll be out in force. Previews, LARPs, a party... Check our website for more news as our fiendish plans develop.

Chad Steps Up

A Story of Unparalleled Patriotic Heroism

One week before Valentine's day this year, a call went out over the intercom. Something... horrible was in our break room's refrigerator. Something marked January 24th, 2005. The *thing* was a box of sushi, two-week-old sushi, and it posed a formidable problem. It had been abandoned, epitomizing the dangerous *laissez-faire* attitude that permeated employee-refrigerator relations at the time.

At first, the citizen who found the neglected sushi took it upon himself to throw it away, but the media had already gotten wind of the story. This was an issue too urgent to sweep into the trashcan. Who had brought this sushi here? Who had abandoned it? Would throwing it away be enough? No, we knew that something more substantive had to be done, lest relations between ourselves and our chilly neighbors deteriorate. The emotional scars left in the wake of the vicious SHINTY campaign were still too vivid. The subsequent "Achilli Purges," had proven to everyone just how bad things could get when no one is willing to make concessions.

Hoping to stave off disaster, ambassadors from the refrigerator were invited to a summit to discuss the matter. The talks began with the refrigerator's representatives explaining how their job was to keep their environment cold and airtight. In doing so, they required electricity, which we provided. In return, we temporarily stored our lunches and soft drinks on their tribal homeland. When we left food overlong on their lands, the resultant stink was trapped and impossible to dislodge. That made their homeland uninhabitable, which could lead to a walkout on their part. Such work stoppages then led either to a purge or to a complete pull-out of all food and a withdrawal of all electricity.

Employee-refrigerator relations to date had led to this codependent cycle, however, and the



refrigerator's inhabitants weren't going to take it any longer. They would accept no settlement short of a sacrifice performed in good faith. Justin Achilli himself, they demanded, must eat one piece of the sushi. Mister Achilli had once made a living eating questionable substances of ill provenance for ostensible "glory" and a nominal fee. Surely he would forgo that fee now and do as he had once done so that current relations could be improved. Instead, talks grew tense, and threats were levied on both sides. Repercussions undreamed of in the days of the Purges were espoused. A revivification of a newly emboldened SHINTY was intimidated.

Meanwhile, however, separate covert plans were being implemented. A crack commando team was dispatched to retrieve the sushi from the trash. Fortunately, the box had remained closed during disposal and had remained in its plastic carryout bag. Even better, that bag was insulated from the wet refuse beneath by an upturned cardboard box-top. The sushi was evacuated from the break room and removed to White Wolf command HQ. While token representa-

Howlings

tives remained in the talks, largely stalling, a shadowy cabal gathered to discuss the possibility of capitulating to the refrigerator's demands.

Advanced scientific examination was employed, and it was determined that the sushi didn't consist *entirely* of deadly poison. (A dissenting opinion from within the Atlanta CDC was ruled invalid.) What the refrigerator wanted could be done—likely with minimal casualties. Since our pride was weaker than our wish for peace, it was decided the sacrifice would be performed. All we needed was a willing operative.

Justin Achilli was violently opposed to the idea, however, so we turned to Chad Brown—a sometime ally and sometime enemy of Justin's. Chad had been on the scientific team that developed the *Kaiser Beef*. Chad had also acquitted himself valiantly in the Park North Shopping Cart Joust. He was even Justin's equal constitutionally, as his survival of the Bag of Door-knobs Melee had proven.

Chad showed initial reluctance. The maiden voyage of the *Kaiser Beef* had been a disaster, and despite receiving a clay trophy commemorating his heroism, the affair had left him a shell of a man. He listened in grave silence to our proposal. At its end, all he could manage was a reflexive shudder of revulsion. He submitted in the end, of course, though not out of civic duty, noble pride, or even grudging respect for the refrigerator. In truth, he gave way to that time-honored lure of greater and lesser men alike: money.

Yet for no mere dollar would Chad step up. A grassroots fundraising campaign began imme-

diately, and the half dozen of us assembled managed to raise 14 dollars in cash. Unable to deny himself that prodigious sum, Chad wearily raised the nearest morsel to his lips. The work was done in a second, and a great cheer was heard. Chad downed an airline bottle's worth of rum to cleanse his palate, and we handed over his well-earned gains. A runner was dispatched to relay the news and call our diplomats home.

Yet our joy turned to bitter ashes when we received our reply. Instead of détente, we received only garbled outrage. War was certain, despite our bafflement, and only a timely intervention by the UN prevented a deadly outbreak. The refrigerator's ambassadors' put their case before the General Assembly first. *Justin* had to be the one who ate the two-week-old trashcan sushi, they cried, or the whole gesture was meaningless. It was Justin who had led the eponymous "Purges." If Justin were not produced, our enemies promised, an unceasing campaign of SHINTY guerilla warfare could be the only result.

Fortunately the diplomats had their day. Even American Presi-

dent George W. Bush got involved—between his latest Doctors Without Borders assignment in the Democratic Republic of Congo and his unpaid MIT seminar series on the no boundary condition vis-a-vis imaginary time. He suggested that if Justin would not eat a *single* piece of the sushi, perhaps a different employee could eat *all* of the remaining sushi. This proposal was accepted by all parties with grudging respect for President Bush's calm wisdom, though no one envied the unlucky soul who would suffer in Justin's stead. Slowly our eyes turned once more to Chad...

This time, even \$14.00 would not be enough. Recognizing the stakes, we dug deep in our wallets, and indeed our hearts. The resultant sum we gathered surprised us all. The first donation was a rare, mint-condition Sacajawea dollar. The next was a staggering five euros, which as closely as we can tell without the metric system, comes to... dozens of dollars. At that show of generosity, the floodgates truly opened, such that a whopping 39 more dollars hit the table. At that show of unanimity, Chad finally decided to do what needed to be done.

Then, to show our respect for our frigid neighbors, we feted Chad's noble sacrifice in grand style, right there in the General Assembly of the UN. We provided a fine **V:TES** play mat for a plate. We decked him out in a regal, dignified pirate-themed hat. We provided every condiment and side dish available, including wasabe, soy sauce, duck sauce, ranch dressing, barbecue sauce, taco sauce, Nutella (this was the UN, after all), and an indescribable substance known only as Marmite. And there, with flash bulbs going off in his face and gawking onlookers from all over the world gawping in delighted horror, Chad ate the two-week-old trashcan sushi. His stoic resolution to the task impressed the denizens of the refrigerator, and they forswore all hostile intent. They and we returned home, each earning new respect for each other and pledging to act henceforth not only as neighbors, but as allies and true friends.

For more such stories of dubious journalistic quality, check out our livejournal at <http://www.white-wolf.com/lj.php>



Recently Overheard at White Wolf HQ

"No, he pees booze, Chris. Everybody has to drink from Pee-Boy."

"I am the Dennis DeYoung of roleplaying."

"I must evacuate my spring water!"

Q: "Isn't 'hyphenate' a synonym for 'validate'?"

A: "Well, they rhyme..."

Your Awakening Begins

by Bill Bridges, *Mage: The Awakening* developer

*It's finally here—**MAGE: THE AWAKENING**. It's been a long year of finessing this book together while stirring the cauldron and chanting in ancient and barbaric tongues, but the spell is finally complete. In this issue of the **quarterly**, we peel back the veil on the secretive world of the awakened and get a glimpse of the sorceries seething through the world of darkness.*

A Modern-Sorcery World

magic is something everybody dreams of but nobody seems to possess. The power to conjure something from nothing, to change a man into a toad, to curse one's enemies and their progeny, to call down lightning from the sky and lay waste to a city—all powers claimed by wizards in myth, legend, and epic fantasy tales. We are drawn to these tales, however, not just because of the power displayed in them. Wizards present a different kind of allure: the desire for power *tempered with wisdom*. Demons and monsters have powers, but they have great limitations and curses, too. Mages have the power of knowing when and how to use power. While this can be a limitation, it is a self-imposed one, betokening a discipline rare in this world.

MAGE: THE AWAKENING is game about these kinds of mages, and the trials and temptations they face on the path of discipline and enlightenment. The allure of power constantly threatens to draw them from the path, away from wisdom. A mage is someone who has awakened, whose soul has been freed of an ancient curse afflicting mortals. Most people's souls are asleep, unaware of the raw power they can tap to remake their world. The truth has been hidden from them many lifetimes ago; all they know is a lie. Mages can see through the lie and enact humanity's birthright: magic.

Mages live in the here and now, in this world, just down the street. Although their society resembles more the feudal states of the past, broken into balkanized regions that remain largely incommunicado with one another, they still travel and use cell phones and the Internet like most modern people. But they live in a world of secrets, where the hoarding of those secrets is a form of currency. Disagreements between mentor and student, master and adept, turn into rifts as apprentices accuse masters of withholding necessary knowledge, and masters declare most apprentices unworthy of it. When a mage can no longer work with his mentor, he leaves and seeks his own sanctum and cabal, a group of mages to whom he can trust his own secrets—or so the theory goes. In practice, cabals can be contentious, backbiting groups fighting over the same old theme: the ownership of secrets.

Humanity at large is ignorant of this occult underground. Sorcerers and witches live down the street and sometimes shop at the same stores, but the public is ignorant of this amazing truth. Even were the existence of mages to become known, most people wouldn't believe it, and those who did would see it as cause for alarm and fear rather than wonder and awe. Magic is afoot in the world, but most people resist it.

MAGE presents a vision of magic somewhat different from that portrayed in most occult literature, although it incorporates many famous occult elements. **MAGE** hearkens to stories of high magic, mythic tales of wizardly might and awesome hubris, but set in the here and now, not in some distant neverland. Instead of assuming a character is a practitioner of a known magical practice, such as *vodoun*, cabalism, hermeticism, Taoist exorcism or any number of other forms, **MAGE** posits a mortal who has become aware of a more real world than the one we live in—one from which we all once came. This awakened mortal performs magic by connecting to this invisible world. All the magical practices mentioned above hint at or in some way speak to the existence of this higher realm, but none of them fully prepares a magician to encounter it. For that, he must walk down paths of sheer mystery, entering a reality unknown to mundane occult traditions, but one that completes and realizes their fragmentary knowledge.

Mages are among the secret movers and shakers of the world. Their actions affect the tenor of reality itself—for good or ill. And yet, they act unseen, their powers invisible to sleepers, ordinary people who are shrouded in their curse, blind to the truth. Worse, if a sleeper does get a glimpse of the truth, it taints the mage's spellcasting, increasing the likelihood that something terrible will go wrong—that a paradox will occur, altering reality in ways the mage never intended.

The true nature of reality is an enigma always beyond reach. The various mystical orders hold different beliefs, but none can ever prove them. In the end, mystery prevails. Mages are drawn to seek out arcane mysteries, creating a pervasive atmosphere of ciphers, secrets, and looming cosmic revelations.

Mages fight over their own destinies. They do this not on some cosmic chessboard, but on the streets they call home. Persistent rivals of all mages are the seers of the Throne, mages from a mystical order that seeks control of the world in the name of the exarchs, legendary wizards who in ancient myth ascended to the higher world and now rule reality beyond the sight, knowledge, and reach of mere mortals. The seers do not “own” or run the government, but their agents are certainly influential in the bureaucratic offices, speeding up or slowing down the engines of governance.

Power Corrupts

There's danger in magic. Reweaving the tapestry of creation can inflate the ego and swallow a mage in hubris. As he gains more power—control over reality through the casting of spells of increasing control and complexity—he risks losing touch with his own mortal nature, forgetting the limits of his mind, body, and soul. Some mages grow callous, caring little if their magic has unintended consequences on innocent bystanders. Others see no reason to curtail their mighty wills, and use spells for even the most banal and mundane tasks that the wise claim should be performed without recourse to supernal power.

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THE AWAKENING

The abyss that separates the world we know from the higher world is said to grow larger with every misuse of magic. Each time a mage invokes a paradox through faulty spellcasting, the worlds grow further apart, and fewer and fewer souls awaken. One mystical order, the guardians of the veil, polices mage society, punishing those deemed to have broken the laws of silence and secrecy, damaging the very universe with egotistical practices. A mage who can't control his will soon finds himself ostracized at the least, or murdered by another mage's magic if he can't avoid making enemies.

Mythic History

The magical orders have a mythology about their beginnings, the legend of a fallen civilization and a war for the throne of reality. The names for that civilization are many, most of them lost over the years, but even the sleeping know one of them and seek evidence of its truth: Atlantis.

For many years uncounted in the far distant past, mortals suffered at the whim of monsters, hunted by spirits and preyed upon by bloodthirsty revenants. Beset by creatures stronger than they, culled by howling beasts whenever they migrated into territories whose borders they couldn't possibly perceive, mortals found it nigh impossible to advance above their need for survival, to envision ways of living outside of fear.

Following visionary dreams of a distant island free from strife, small bands of mortals set out to sea from many different lands, each following the vision given to them in dreams. When they arrived at this promised land, their bodies entered deep sleep while their minds traveled to far astral realms beyond the ken of other mortals.

There they met the others, the daimons of their own souls, the hidden twin of each soul traveler. These judges challenged them to prove by what right they came on astral roads to the realms supernal, and set them to a series of tests. The victors returned with their souls aglow, lit by a celestial fire. They could see into the realms invisible and ken the secret workings of creation, the principles and substances from which everything was wrought. Through the sympathy their far-journeying souls now shared with the realms supernal, and the knowledge they gleaned from studying realms visible and invisible, they could call down the ways of heaven, the higher principles that ruled over the lower realms of matter and spirit. They made their very thoughts real, imagination rendered into matter and flesh.

They had discovered magic.

The loose confederation of immigrants to the island soon organized into a city-state led by the magi: Atlantis. Over time, the enlightened founded separate orders to fulfill the roles of governance, from mystical militia to scholars to a priesthood of the mysteries to guide them all.

The power to warp the very skein of creation soon outstripped the wisdom of those who wielded it. The hubris of the magi rose unchecked. Many generations after the first had established Atlantis, their legacy turned sour. Mage turned on mage, and so was born the first wizards' war.

The victors claimed Atlantis as theirs, and drove the losers to the far corners of the earth. Then, combining their power, they wrought a great spell and erected a ladder to the realms supernal. They

spurned the traditional astral paths by which a sorcerer could approach the higher realms by means of a soul journey, for they sought to walk the celestial reaches in their own bodies. They stormed the heights and claimed the thrones of the gods for themselves. Ruling from on high, no longer bound to earth, even their petty dictates and whims became real, for they stood over the lower realm and influenced it with their very thoughts. The subtle veils were rent, and the higher and lower worlds came together—the pure mixed with the impure, and the universe trembled.

Spurred by the imminent destruction and corruption of the world, the exiled mages banded together and assaulted Atlantis, climbing the star ladder and wrestling with the celestial mages in their heavenly palaces. Their struggles were terrible. The two sides clashed in a chaos of realms, and the losers—sorcerers on both sides—were flung from on high back into the lower realm.

The ladder shattered, disintegrating into dust, leaving the victors beyond the reach of the earthbound mages. Where the ladder had been, reality cracked and fell into itself, creating a rift between the higher and lower realms, a terrible void that sucked life and energy into itself. The abyss divided the realms once more, keeping the high, pure realm from the taint of the low. But this was no subtle veil, permeable to returning souls. It was a gulf of unreality, an aberration that was never meant to be. What was before a single world became two worlds—the supernal world and the fallen world, with a vast abyss between them.

The veil between the worlds of spirit and matter hardened, becoming the daunting gauntlet, a barrier impassible except through magic. Shaken by the reverberations of the ladder's destruction, the foundations of Atlantis crumbled and the island sank beneath the waves. The mystical place that had birthed the magi was no more. The survivors would later wonder: was this the primordial event that inspired myths of the flood and the tower of Babel? Perhaps. Or perhaps the war reverberated throughout time itself, endlessly repeating its disastrous finale in every human civilization to come.

Once again, the enlightened escaped to the far corners of the earth and there began the long, slow process of relearning what was lost. Hunted once again by monsters, their progress was slow, for the needs of survival came before the slow study of the mysteries. What's more, those souls that had not already been touched by the realms supernal grew dim, like cold lumps of coal hiding dim cinders within. Many forgot their magical heritage and their souls entered a slumber deeper than they had known before.

This great decline was known as the quiescence, the sleeping curse. Cut off from the higher realms, divided from their birthright by the abyss, souls could not maintain their luminosity and so fell into sleep. Worse—the gravity of the abyss pulled on them and weighed down the lids of their inner eyes, causing them to refuse any vision of the higher world. The mages—those who remained awake—could no longer work their magic before those who slept without invoking the powers of the abyss. Only a rare few in any place at any time remained awake, tending the flame of supernal knowledge, keeping the lore of magic alive.

With the abyss between them and the supernal world, the source of magic, mages' power began to wane. It became harder and

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THE AWAKENING

harder to draw the supernal energies across the void. Then, one by one, the watchtowers appeared, their flames sending beacons from the supernal realms across the vast night to the souls of the awakened. Legends tell of five Atlantean kings, the mage heirs of the awakened city who led the fight against the exarchs. They climbed the ladder and dueled within the celestial palaces. When the ladder shattered, they remained in the higher world and continued to resist the exarchs. These were the oracles, their numbers few but their powers potent. The oracles each erected by magic a tower in a single supernal realm, and each invested into their tower the virtues of their own souls and the sum of their magical knowledge, imbued into the very stones of the structures.

The watchtowers sent visions across the Abyss to mages in the fallen world, calling to them as Atlantis had once called to their ancestors. Through harrowing soul journeys, some of the mages finally arrived in astral form at one of the five watchtowers. There they carved their names into the foundation stones and awoke in their bodies. But they were no longer forsaken, for their names had been writ by their own souls. They once more claimed sympathy with the realms supernal.

The Awakening

From time to time, everyone has moments of clarity in which they're able to connect the pieces of the larger pattern and, if only for a moment, *understand*. For one brief, shining moment, their minds are open to all that the universe has to offer, ready to reach out and touch the great mystery.

A soul, once stirred, is either sent in a dream or ecstatic vision onto strange astral pathways, or plunged into a "mystery play," a hallucinatory experience whereby the common, mundane phenomena of the world are transformed into highly symbolic and meaningful ciphers. A person experiencing an awakening is called a seeker. Many seekers think they're going crazy, and in a sense they are. The insane sometimes perceive meaning in random events, but the mage sees how no event is truly random in a vast tapestry woven by consciousness.

The ultimate end of both a mystery play and an astral journey is to deliver the soul to a watchtower for initiation. The awakening is sometimes named "the call." It's the watchtower that does the calling. The soul, hearing its name whispered from the supernal world across the infinity of the Abyss, either responds and enters the trance of awakening, or refuses the call and remains in sleep.

In a mystery play, the watchtower can be nearly anything in reality: a skyscraper, a phone booth or a grove in the woods. Its true form is evident to the seeker, but to no one else. It is the archetypal castle perilous, the tower of testing, before which the seeker might be found wanting. If he passes the tests—by proving his perseverance throughout the awakening—he is admitted into the tower, where he sees a multitude of names carved onto its walls. With a knowing beyond reason, he recognizes the empty space reserved for his name and begins to write, carve or will his name onto the surface. Even the illiterate know how to do this, for the process of writing is an archetypal image, not a literal act of writing. It is the awakened one's first spell, the declaration of his true self and his right to stand in the supernal world. By virtue of this name and its expression within the watchtower, the awakened soul gains sympathy with the supernal realm in which his name is written.

Again, this process is archetypal and can take many forms. In a mystery play, the seeker might write his name into the ledger at a bank, although the clerks there might believe that he is merely signing up for a safe-deposit box, unaware that he now claims a much greater treasure than all the assets within the bank. Or he might instead sing his name outside the window of a lover he courts, initiating a marriage of his soul to the supernal. The permutations are endless; the symbols mean the same: a divine initiation.

Once he has established his name in the heavens, the seeker returns to bodily awareness in the "real" world, no longer a sleeper. He is now a mage.

The Paths

A mage's path represents his innate magical connection to a higher reality. It is a result of his awakening. His soul has journeyed to one of the five supernal realms and his name has been written on the watchtower there. By means of this sympathetic connection the mage can draw down the laws of that supernal realm, performing magic.

A character's path colors the aura of his magic, and it often seeps into his dreams, influencing his imagination and even behavior at times. His supernal realm calls to him and he feels most at home amidst places or imagery that evoke its strange lands. Symbolology and myths that hint at the places and presences of his realm are also important and vital to his method of practicing his art.

Mages argue over theories about whether one's path is predestined or is chosen by the soul's own free will. There is strong evidence for both sides, leaving most to shrug and say that all things are possible in the supernal world.

Acanthus: The path of thistle, watchtower of the Lunar gate, the realm of Arcadia, kingdom of enchantment, abode of the fae, ruled by the Arcana of Fate and Time. *Enchanters* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Fool," relying on luck and intuition to guide their way.

Mastigos: The path of scourging, watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet, the realm of Pandemonium, kingdom of Nightmares, abode of demons, ruled by the Arcana of Mind and Space. *Warlocks* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Devil," exulting in unfettered will.

Moros: The path of doom, watchtower of the Lead Coin, the realm of Stygia, kingdom of Crypts, abode of shades, ruled by the Arcana of Death and Matter. *Necromancers* epitomize the tarot trump of "Death," remaining steadfast during change.

Obrimos: The path of the mighty, watchtower of the Golden Key, the realm of Aether, kingdom of the celestial spheres, abode of angels, ruled by the Arcana of Forces and Prime. *Theurgists* epitomize the tarot trump of "Strength," pursuing a divine mandate.

Thyrus: The path of ecstasy, watchtower of the Stone Book, the realm of the primal wild, kingdom of Totems, abode of beasts, ruled by the Arcana of Life and Spirit. *Neoshamans* epitomize the tarot trump of "The Moon," following the allure of passion and impulsive action.

MAGE™

THE AWAKENING

Orders

An order is a social organization for the furthering and betterment of mages, aiding them in honing their practice of the Art for the purposes and goals to which the order strives. Most orders claim a truly ancient pedigree stretching back to fabled Atlantis, although one of them is much more modern and seeks to unite the scientific and magical worldviews. While the orders often work together, each espouses its own goals and practices. These often cause conflict, especially where ownership of valuable magical resources is concerned.

Although a character can be initiated into an order during character creation, he can later leave that order and join another (or go it alone as an “apostate”). Mages who leave their orders, however, are often reviled by their previous order and might even be distrusted by members of a new order. If a mage cannot demonstrate the discipline to stay with those who first nurtured and tutored him after his Awakening, perhaps he lacks the necessary resolve to attain mastery of the Art: such mages can endanger others, especially if they are so fickle as to accept any alliance offered to them. Mages do not make easy friendships; they rely on the wisdom of their orders to weed out those unworthy of their attention and time.

The **Adamantine Arrow** defends sanctums and cabals with its combat magic.

The **Free Council** seeks to escape the strictures of the past and modernize the craft of magic.

The **Guardians of the Veil** protects the mysteries from any who would despoil them or dare reveal them to the unenlightened.

The **Mysterium** searches for valuable lore hidden throughout the material and invisible worlds.

The **Silver Ladder** desires to establish a proper hierarchy of the Awakened—with its members at the top.

The Secrets of the Universe: Arcana

The mages of Atlantis codified the workings of the universe into a metaphysical system involving 10 elementary forces. They called these elements the—“Arcana,” for each revealed secrets about aspects of reality beyond the mundane. As a means of conceiving the inconceivable, the Atlanteans devised a metaphor for the universe: the tapestry. The threads of this great weave consist of the 10 Arcana, and their warp and weft make up the patterns within the tapestry.

Then the celestial ladder was shattered, creating the Abyss and dividing the worlds. While the Arcana still represent reality, their true power only faintly manifests in the fallen world in the most fundamental and static ways, recognized as the common, unyielding laws of physics. They are now truly manifest only in the supernal world, in varying degrees within the five realms. To weave their strands a mage must draw them down into the fallen world by way of the watchtower of his path's realm.

The Arcana are:

Death: ghosts, decay and the underworld.

Fate: luck, chance, oaths, and curses.

Forces: fire, gravity, storm—energy in all its material forms.

Life: power over the organic world of plants, animals, and even humans.

Matter: stone, metal, plastic—all the inorganic material substances.

Mind: the power to read and control thoughts and emotions.

Prime: magic itself—mana, illusions, and enchantment.

Spirit: communication with and control of spirits.

Space: command of distance and space; teleportation and scrying.

Time: clairvoyance of the past, divination of the future, and control over the passage of time.

Sample Spell: *Labyrinth (Space 5)*

The mage can mutate dimensional axes. A hallway can be made to go on for miles (despite the fact that it is in a building that is only a hundred feet across at its widest point).

Practice: making

Action: instant

Duration: prolonged (one scene)

Aspect: vulgar

Cost: none

A simple spatial warp, making one direction appear to be another, might levy no penalties, while a complex one, making all roads lead to one junction, might be—3 or more, depending on how much space is affected.

The mage is capable of sculpting bizarre vicissitudes of place and distance through this level of space, folding space in ways that defy the senses. For instance, the horror movie staple of causing every possible path of egress from a given locale to instead lead back into isolated wilderness is possible, as is making a road that a person can visually confirm leads to the store down the street actually go in the opposite direction. Needless to say, this use of the Arcanum can be extraordinarily vulgar and potentially insanity-inducing if practiced in blatant enough ways upon another person (almost assuredly requiring Resolve + Composure rolls by the subject in order for him to keep calm and rational).

Rotes

All mages can cast spells as soon as they learn the proper degree of Arcanum mastery (space 5, in the given sample). This is called an *improvised* casting. It calls upon the mage's innate connection to the supernal world (a trait called *gnosis*) and his Arcanum rating. This does not always result in a strong dice pool, however, especially for beginning mages. To improve their casting ability with a certain spell, mages can learn that spell as a *rote*, a tried-and-true crafting. Here's a sample rote version of the Labyrinth spell (the spell effect's are the same as listed above, but the dice pool is more favorable):

Guardians of the Veil Rote: Sundered Path

Dice pool: intelligence + occult + space

Guaranteed to eventually dissuade all save the most dogged of interlopers, this rote helps a guardian of the veil to defeat sleepers' (and others') curiosity with frustration, fear or despair, as she sees fit. Roads that go on a little too long leave inquiring souls feeling tired and most eventually lose interest. Paths that double back upon themselves in some nightmarish Moebius loop, on the other hand, can eventually erode the courage, and even sanity, of one unprepared for such inexplicable happenings.

MAGE: THE AWAKENING, a 300-page hardcover world of darkness game is available in August. (**MAGE: THE AWAKENING** requires the **world of darkness rulebook** to play.)

Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Chasing the Dragon

by Will Hindmarch, *Vampire: The Requiem* Developer

Fond reflections on the *Ordo Dracul* and a peek inside



Ordo Dracul
WW25120, \$31.99
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page 18

ordo dracul is a peculiar book for me, because i've been with it on both sides of the developmental process. it feels sort of like i saw my manuscript off at the airport, then somehow managed to beat it here and pick it up when it landed. i feel kind of jet-lagged, looking back on **ordo dracul**.

Prepare for Take-Off

when i started work on **ordo dracul**, i was writing as a freelancer. **vampire: the requiem** was still new to me (though, by the time you read this, it'll be "that old game that came before **werewolf: the forsaken**"—and there's that jet lag again) and i was approaching the new manuscript with an even mix of enthusiasm and terror. we freelancers didn't know much about the **ordo dracul**, yet, even though greg stolze had blazed a trail with **rites of the dragon**. so we got to think up all sorts of crazy new material for the dragons, from ghost-eating mediums to turkish vampires bred to hunt dracula. while we had a lot of space to play and explore new ideas, that space lay like a valley in the shadow of some prestigious and towering castles: the original novel, *dracula*, and the expectations of **vampire** players everywhere. rikes.

In-Flight Entertainment

normally i don't get to do the kind of research i'd like, but i happened to be honeymooning in the uk during the first draft of **ordo dracul**, so i had some rare opportunities to dig up inspiration and background material. i poked around some of the london neighborhoods mentioned in *dracula* and visited the beautifully spooky highgate cemetery, which might just be the place stoker was thinking of when he buried (then staked, then beheaded) lucy westenra. mixing details from the british museum with highgate cemetery and the idea of the **ordo dracul** as a social club for occult intellectuals led to the mystic torpor technicians of the libitinarious bloodline. (also, i ended up with a whole slew of notes and photos that would end up inspiring a future **vampire** book.)

but back then, i had no idea that i'd be in atlanta in two months working as the new **vampire** developer.

Landing

months later, looking back at **ordo dracul** as a developer, i'm reminded of the thrill it was to work on a slate as clean as the **ordo dracul**'s. more than anything, i think i'm excited about the "oddities of the blood" in the book's final chapter. you'll find new coils of the dragon (including forbidden "apocryphal coils"), new merits, and disciplines, like you'd expect. one of my personal favorites, though, is the new discipline/devotion package that makes up "blood alchemy." here's an excerpt from the section on blood alchemy's specialized devotions, called solutions. to me, it's a wonderfully simple way to handle a staple of gothic pseudo-science.

Blood Solutions

the solutions distilled through the techniques of blood alchemy are simply a category of similar devotions. while the earliest blood alchemists used their knowledge of chemistry to make sense of the changes they were making in their own blood, no knowledge of the physical sciences is actually necessary to create these solutions. within the **ordo dracul**, it is a matter of fact that most blood alchemists are also dabblers in chemistry, pharmacology, medieval alchemy, or folkloric brews, but only as a result of the practice's history within the covenant. tonight's blood alchemists descend from the original founders of the practice. tomorrow night's blood alchemists could have all but forgotten its roots.

every power of blood alchemy requires the practitioner to shed his own vitae (represented by the solution's cost) into the mixture. vitae is the medium through which the powers of blood alchemy are transmitted. that vitae may be hidden within other substances, but it is the vitae that matters.

the subject of a solution's power is always the being that consumes it. (a few solutions may be suffused into solid foods or even capsules, but the vast majority of solutions are imbibed.) a solution retains its power for a number of nights equal to the successes achieved on the activation roll to create the mixture. as with this practice's foundational discipline, the more dots the blood alchemist has in spoiling, the more concentrated

Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Wyrm Nests and Werewolves

Developer's note: *This book is the first I got to develop after **werewolf** was completed, and the timing couldn't have worked out better. on the other hand, vampires shouldn't see things the same way that werewolves do. this sidebar excerpt is an example of how you can get the maximum utility out of your **world of darkness** library. you can stick to the material in **ordo dracul** and have the tools you need to create mystic sites for your **vampire** stories, but you can also dig into **werewolf** for other ways to surprise your players' kindred characters. mix the elements of one storytelling game right into another. (or don't. i'm not the boss of you.)*

when essence is created by actions in the material world, it takes on a kind of *resonance*, or emotional aspect. crime scenes, for example, contain essence that resonates with terror, death, hate, and other grim emotions. sites that are popular for weddings and celebrations might resonate with joy. this resonance affects the rituals vampires perform on fontal nests and other mystic sites, because the energy being manipulated by the ritual is essence. therefore, the storyteller should consider and be aware of the spiritual resonance of fontal nests used as the centerpieces in dragon rituals.

if you're familiar with **werewolf: The forsaken**, you might think a fontal nest is the same thing as a spirit locus, and it can be. the kindred of the **ordo dracul** have neither the means nor the experience to understand spirit loci as well as werewolves do, though, so dragon classifications on the subject are less precise.

certainly the vampires of the **ordo dracul** would classify a spirit locus as a kind of fontal nest, but not all fontal nests are spirit loci. some fontal nests are unique phenomena that follow strange rules devised by the storyteller to impact a single story. some could be wellheads of magical power if your chronicle overlaps with **mage: The Awakening**. the powers of other mystic sites from other storytelling games could also fall under this header, at least for the sake of dragon record-keeping.

the vitae he bestows into the mixture and, so, the easier it is to hide the presence of his blood in the drink.

it is assumed that those who drink a solution will attempt to resist its effects. All solutions therefore involve a contested action, pitting the potency of the blood alchemist's sanguine infusion against the resolve, stamina or composure of the drinker to determine if a subject is affected. resistance is always reflexive.

when a solution is first swallowed, the drinker gets a slight but palpable sensation of the coming effect. for psychic solutions, this often manifests as little more than a developing wooziness, but for solutions containing physically altering powers (such as vigor) the oncoming rush is decidedly clearer. anyone who drinks a solution may choose to forgo resistance and simply allow themselves to be affected by its powers—but they don't get a second chance to resist later if they change their minds (or have their minds changed).

The Bottled Command

(dominate •, spoiling •)

"sleep," he said as he slid the awl into his palm. "sleep," he said as he squeezed one hand in the other. "sleep," he said as a thick drop of blood fell heavy and almost black into the glass of white wine before him. "sleep," he said one last time as that drop sank to the bottom. with one finger, he stirred the wine until the blood had thinned and spread and turned all the fluid an impenetrable red.

cost: 1 vitae

dice pool: intelligence + intimidation + dominate versus subject's resolve + blood potency

action: instant and contested; resistance is reflexive (An instant action is required to make the solution; its effects are resisted with a contested action)

by distilling his will and personality into his blood, the character creates a potable imperative. essentially, the character is infusing a one-word command of the type normally communicable with dominate ci• into a liquid medium. when this command is distilled, the character makes his activation roll as if he were invoking the command power of dominate as usual. record the successes achieved on the activation roll (if any) for use when the solution is consumed. the drinker feels compelled to take the action infused in the solution unless he succeeds on a reflexive resolve + blood potency roll contesting the successes achieved on the activation roll. if the subject fails the contested action, he is affected exactly as if the solution's creator had affected him with the command power in person (see **vampire: The Requiem**, p. 124–125).

this power costs six experience points to learn.

***ordo dracul**, a 224-page hardcover sourcebook, releases in july.*

WEREWOLF THE FORSAKEN

Wrested from the Shadow THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES BEHIND LORE OF THE FORSAKEN

BY ETHAN SKEMP, WEREWOLF: THE FORSAKEN DEVELOPER



Lore of the Forsaken
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page 21

The implicit potential problem with building a game on the principles of animism is that no matter how incredibly cool animism is—and when you turn it up to “animistic horror,” it is incredibly cool—animism isn’t something with which everyone is intimately familiar. The concept that everything might potentially possess a spirit isn’t something that’s broadcast at us through pop culture. yet it’s a simple enough concept that, with a little work, anybody should be able to take a concept like “animistic horror” and do it justice, even if they never said the word “animistic” before picking up a copy of **werewolf: The forsaken**.

That, my bravos, is where the upcoming **Lore of the forsaken** comes in. It’s a handbook to werewolf spirituality—not a survival guide to the spirit world as such, but more a look at how the animistic world of **werewolf** impacts the lives of the werewolves themselves, how it saturates their society and informs their decisions. we’ve already seen what it’s like to have a cauldron of bizarre, hateful entities boiling over on the other side of an invisible glass wall, ready to slip through the shadow. we know that spirits hunt. but it’s also important to see just what happens when an uratha and a spirit interact in a way other than predator and prey.

This book covers a lot of material, but the overall focus is the spirit powers werewolves draw on—the blood and sweat they shed to earn them, what they do with them, how this plays with the greater themes of animistic horror. And what, you ask, are the specifics? well, let’s see what sort of aspects of lore we’re going to cover here.

- **Totems:** not just pack totems are covered in this book (although we certainly do take a longer look at them). there’s also a look at the greater ones—the firstborn wolf-spirits who oversee the tribes, the distant caress of Luna herself, and even the dark touch of the blighted totems of the Bale Hounds.

- **Auspices:** Luna’s gift to the forsaken is a potent one. An auspice is more than just access to a certain path of moon-magic, it’s a role you were all but born to play. what does it really mean to have the blessings of the full moon? what are the myriad ways you could interpret the tasks of the Irraka? here we look at the many facets of Mother Moon’s blessing, and just what they can mean to you.

- **spirit magic:** what is it like to learn a gift? what are the secrets lying behind how rites work? how do these things affect a werewolf’s life—do the uratha revel in their hard-won powers, or are they hesitant to use them imprudently? gifts and rites are a tremendous part of a werewolf’s arsenal, and as such, they deserve an in-depth study. here it is.

- **The Living world:** finally, **Lore of the forsaken** covers a most a delicious topic: items of power, things that have been awakened, and places where the wall between worlds... thins. if you were already intrigued by the discussion of how loci form and are fought over in the **werewolf** core rules, here you’ll find a more extensive discussion of how they figure into the struggles of the forsaken, the pure, and the spirit entities that hound them both. if you were interested in the myriad possibilities spilling out of the wake the spirit rite, take a look at the in-depth exploration of why the uratha awaken spirits, and what happens next. And if you were hoping for some more details on fetishes, both on the process of creation and more sample fetishes to place in your chronicles, we’ll have you covered here, too.

As you can see, the **Lore of the forsaken** isn’t book-learnin’—it isn’t lore that’s easily won, and it isn’t knowledge that imposes a gentle burden. it’s power and knowledge that’s torn from the shadow, and it’s meant to be used. use it wisely.

Lore of the forsaken, a 160-page hardcover sourcebook, releases in september.

Lair of the Damned

An excerpt from *The Marriage of Virtue and Viciousness*
by Greg Stolze

steve and aurora didn't talk much until they were skirting joliet. they spoke, but it was about trivial things. their jobs. what was on the radio. stopping for lunch, they went to a drive-thru. neither was hungry, but they both felt an unspoken need to keep their strength up. they were driving through a rusted-out neighborhood on the border between a disused industrial area and the rustic acres of factory farms. once, workers had lived there. now, steve guessed, the people who lived there didn't work. the houses were small bungalows with peeling paint. here and there stood a bigger, older house. here and there lay a diner or a closed-down grocery store.

"he was here?" steve asked.

"i followed and watched him," aurora said. "at first i couldn't believe what i'd seen. i thought i was cracking up."

"that's understandable."

she turned to glare at him, and he raised his hands.

"i mean it's a crazy situation, you know. it's a crazy thing. not that you've been acting... i mean, you're just, like, adapting to what you experience. to someone on the outside, it—"

"okay, i get it."

"it made sense when i was thinking it."

"we're here."

she pulled in behind a boarded-up gas station.

"he had another place," she said, "but i burned him out of it. that was after i'd started carrying a mirror. after i'd seen him feed a couple times."

"you didn't try to—"

"stop him? of course i tried to stop him. i called the fucking cops on him. and then i got to see him put his brain-freeze shit on them and feed on *them* too. he wound up making them arrest me."

"holy crap."

she shrugged. "a night in the lockup, big deal. the next day they let me go and said they were giving me a 'warning.' said there was no grounds for a complaint, but i could tell they were embarrassed. he'd told them some bullshit story, and it evaporated the next day. but by then he figured i wasn't a problem. or maybe he was planning to come and get me too, only i flushed him out. i made him run during the day and i tracked him to his backup bolt-hole." she jerked her thumb.

"and that's here?" steve's mouth was suddenly dry.

"that was here. i got him when he was sunburned and crispy and out of it and i put the stake in him. and i *thought* that was the end of it." she got out, shouldered her bag and slammed her door. steve wanted to stay put, but he found himself following.

"it wasn't? why wouldn't that..."

she shrugged. "they only turn to dust when they're really done, it turns out. a stake just freezes them up."

the back door was padlocked, but the lock wasn't all the way in. a tug from aurora's hand and it came open.

inside, lit by the cracks of light that sheared through the gaps between the window boards, they found a decaying counter and a litter of cigarette butts, beer cans, chip bags, and condoms.

"fuckin' teenagers," aurora muttered. "they have no idea." she crouched and started messing with the floor. she looked up at steve. "little help here?"

he bent too and soon discovered a panel, disguised with dirty linoleum, that they heaved up with some grunting. beneath it was a broken-edged gap in the concrete foundation, leading to a raw-earth hole shored up with four-by-four wooden boards.

aurora pulled a handful of glow sticks out of a pocket. she snapped and shook them, then dropped a few down. their sickly green light revealed that the tunnel went only a few feet under the ground and then turned, running parallel to the surface.

"we'll have to crawl," aurora said. "now you see why i told you to bring a change of clothes." she started down as steve turned on his flashlight. he shone it down on her and realized that she was crouching at the bottom and screwing a silencer onto the barrel of a pistol.

"you think we'll need that?"

"if i don't, it means he got out and we're screwed," she said, then started crawling.

steve took an almost atavistic moment to look at her jeans-clad ass as she went down the passage—his instinctive lust a touchstone drawing him back to reality—and then he followed.

in the dank of the enclosure, steve couldn't find anything appealing about the situation, despite his proximity to aurora's fairly nice backside. from the green back-lighting of her hair, he guessed she had a glow stick in her mouth and one in her left hand. she spat out the first after crawling about twenty feet, and he could see a right-hand turn.

"this is it," she said. "this used to be a big underground gas tank. don't worry about fumes. i'm pretty sure he's just as scared of fire as we are."

she turned and crawled and he followed into a steel tank. it was maybe six feet in diameter. she'd rotated until she was crouching again, her back against one curving wall, pointing her gun at a dead man.

"still here," she whispered. she didn't dare glance back at steve, but said, "get a good look. here's what they *really* are."

steve crawled into the cramped chamber. he could see a figure, all skin and bones, clad in a dirty doctor's jacket. it looked more like a bundle of sticks bound in white cloth than anything alive. he moved closer, almost against his will. it was curled in the fetal position, and he could see its hands, its face... dry like autumn leaves. there, in the middle of it, was a stake. steve had never seen a dead body before, had never been so close...

and he reached out and pulled the stake free.



The Marriage of Virtue and Viciousness
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page 18

EXALTED™

Aspect Books A Retrospective

By Geoffrey C. Grabowski, Exalted developer



Aspect Book: Wood
WW8844; \$19.99
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page 20

Exalted's "splatbooks"—the character subtype development books—began with the solar caste books. These are great books, but I think the format really pulled its weight in the line when the dragon-blooded Aspect Books were developed.

The dragon-blooded culture is a *potential* nightmare as a major component of an intellectual property. The dynasty is a complicated, honor-driven society that has been ruled by a single queen for more than seven centuries and deliberately engineered to be Byzantine for the sake of making it ineffectual. The realm's state religion, its view of human life, and its personal customs are all totally unfamiliar to the average reader.

The dragon-blooded offer the kind of depth that dedicated fans demand, but they're also problematic. Stealing heavily from real-world cultures made the dragon-blooded more accessible when developing them, but there was only so much general reader familiarity could cover. Plus, even with their own hardback, the dragon-blooded were mostly dry explanation, and much that was written for the book or outline never made it to the hardback due to lack of space.

Focus on Life

The "splatbook" format as a generic structure for books was pretty well developed by the time I came to White Wolf. Yet even when you're working with a heavily refined outline like the one that was the basis for the Exalted "fatsplat" hardbacks—but the Aspect Books actually were conceived and executed largely as planned, with no major hitches. What problems did develop were either quickly overcome or turned into opportunities by quick interventions.

Without a sharp focus, the Aspect Books would probably have been a succession of ancient dynasts one-upping one another through the books, but that seemed to me like it would mostly be masturbation on our part. Anybody can see what it looks like when powerful people do one-another over—just watch the news.

What makes each dragon-blood unique, though, is her childhood, so I focused the Aspect Books on the youthful experience of the subjects. Doing so didn't just explain important things about the characters, it focused on describing the experiences that every player out there portraying a dragon-blood would need to know about. The play utility of thoroughly covering the experience of youth in the dynasty far outweighed the allure of telling a big story or detailing an intricate web of relationships.

This was accordingly the primary focus of the Aspect Books, and I made clear in the outlines that the focus was on the individual characters and their experiences as members of their culture. I thought the books were very good at this. The idea that the dynasts were inaccessible was never something the game was criticized for, even though the average reader probably doesn't know what it's like to come of age as a slave-holding religious zealot in a culture of martial-arts warriors.

Reflections

Each of them paints pictures of fleshed out, humanized dynasts, some of whom are heroic, some of whom are decidedly not and all of whom are products of dynastic culture. I think that, taken as a group, they're something I'm pretty proud of; they really offer a window into dynastic existence. It showed the humble and the proud alike while still keeping the emphasis of the material such that someone reading the story of any one of the book's five characters would gain insight into things that her character had experienced or witnessed.

Aspect Book: Wood, a 96-page softcover supplement, is available in August.

Crowned Sun, Painted Frog

An excerpt from *Exalted: A Shadow Over Heaven's Eye* by Tim Waggoner

The inside of the painted frog was just as unimpressive as the outside. plain wooden walls, thatched ceiling, dirt floor, no furniture of any sort. candles stuck in the necks of clay jugs sitting on the floor provided the light.

Rawgut led swan into a second room, larger than the first. A large open pit yawned in the center of the floor. At first, swan thought the painted frog's customers were supposed to jump down—or perhaps be tossed down by Rawgut. But as they got closer, swan could see a set of wooden stairs leading down into the pit.

Rawgut pointed at the stairs. "Down there. Ask for xhosa." when the barbarian had finished delivering his oh-so-elaborate directions, he held out his callused, sausage-fingered hand. swan frowned, but understanding came a moment later. swan nearly laughed. The barbarian was waiting for a tip!

swan reached into his money pouch and, with long deft fingers, withdrew a single dinar and then, thinking better on the matter, withdrew two more. he tossed all three to Rawgut, and the barbarian snatched them out of the air with a speed that belied his bulk. swan hoped the amount would prove sufficient—especially since all Rawgut had done for him was open a door, glare at him and walk him from one room to another.

The barbarian examined the trio of coins before hiding them away in a pocket of his pantaloons, and then, without so much as looking at swan as he passed, Rawgut headed back into the outer room, presumably to once more take up his position as doorman.

swan started down.

The first thing he noticed when he reached the bottom of the stairs was the smell. no backed-up sewer stench here. instead, the scent of incense mingled with the odors of green growing things. he wasn't surprised, then, to step into a chamber with rich soil on the floor and a small pond ringed by trees and bushes in the center of the room. The stone walls and ceiling had been painted blue to simulate sky, with a few fluffy white clouds present as an additional touch of verisimilitude. The room was lit by a glass sphere hanging close to the ceiling without visible attachment. swan assumed it was intended to represent the sun. the sphere glowed with a bright, warm light beyond the capabilities of a simple flame to produce.

Aside from the natural decor, the room was devoid of furnishings, but it was far from empty. A dozen people sat or lay on the soil around the pond, most with eyes closed and blissful smiles on their faces. Different castes were represented: minor royals, common shopkeepers and clerks, lower castes... even a single untouchable was present. swan had never seen so many people of such disparate castes under the same roof, let alone in the same room. There were a few foreigners in the mix as well, traders from the north and east. But whatever their differences, they all had one thing in common—clutched in the hands of each one was a colorful frog, sometimes more than one. The frogs were of varying sizes and patterns, but their color scheme tended toward a mix of reds, blues, yellows, oranges and greens. The frogs had two small sacs behind their heads from which white froth oozed forth. when a frog had produced enough froth to cover its sacs, the person holding the frog brought the creature to his or her face and, with an expression of tremulous ecstasy, began licking the thick white substance off the frog, moaning softly in pleasure as he did.

swan was looking over the frog-lickers, trying to decide which, if any, might be xhosa, when he heard the sound of stone sliding against stone. he turned to see a rectangular section of sky-blue brick swing outward—a hidden door, he supposed, though perhaps hidden only to maintain the illusion of a pond surrounded by sky. A middle-aged southern man stepped through. his pantaloons were made from expensive blue silk, and he wore a vest cut from the same cloth. he was bald, though as if to compensate, he had a full red beard. he had no tattoos or piercings, making it impossible to determine his caste, but he wore a great deal of jewelry—rings on his fingers and toes, gold chains around his neck, silver bracelets on his wrists and jade earrings dangling from his ears. whatever the man's caste, he clearly didn't lack for money.

The man pushed the door closed behind him then walked with easy, confident strides to greet swan.

"Are you xhosa?" swan asked.

The man bowed, neck chains tinkling against each other. "I am. To whom do I have the honor of speaking?"



A Shadow Over Heaven's Eye
WW10069; \$6.99
ISBN 1-58846-871-2
page 18

exalted: a shadow over heaven's eye, a 288-page mass-market paperback novel, is available in july.

Vargr Rule

An excerpt from **Wild Blood**, by Nancy A. Collins



Wild Blood
by Nancy A. Collins
WW12996; \$13.99
ISBN 1-58846-878-X
page 21

Join Two Wolf Press and Nancy A. Collins this fall for **wild blood**, a trip through the terrifying life of the vargr, creatures known to human folklore as werewolves. This tale of self-discovery and revenge has been out of print for a decade and ties into the novella "The Nonesuch Horror" in **Dead Roses for a Blue Lady**. In the following excerpt, a man on the hunt gets more than he bargained for.

Johnny leaned against the sink in the men's room, squinting at the smeared mirror as he dabbed at his chin with a wad of wet toilet paper. Things were getting out of hand.

Normally he would have written off the girl in the leopard-skin shirt as being too weird and set his sights on far more predictable prey, but he could not get her out of his mind. He could still smell her and feel the feather-light touch of her hand on his face. He knew he would have to make another try.

The band was still thrashing along, its amplified roar muted to a dull thunder by the bathroom door. The sink rattled in time with the music, vibrating against his hip.

What had happened with the punkette was weird, but not so weird he couldn't bring things back under control. After all, control was his life. He couldn't imagine a situation where things could get so far out of hand he wouldn't be able to bring it back to the way he wanted it to be. He was confident that he would screw the beauty in mirrored shades. It was all a question of when.

He saw himself as hunting particularly crafty prey, and it intrigued him. It had been so long since any of his weekend conquests had played hard-to-get. He had almost forgotten what it was like to pursue a woman worth the effort. Johnny smiled at his smudged reflection, his confidence restored. He would make her his. And the consummation of the chase would be the fuck to end all fucks.

Something moved behind him in the mirror, catching the corner of his eye. At first he did not trust what he saw: years of neglect had produced a fog of grease on its surface, turning it into something short of a funhouse mirror.

The punk girl stood at the threshold, smiling at him, her leather jacket zippered shut. Johnny gripped the sink but did not turn around. She knew he saw her and she didn't care. A crimson fingernail touched the throat of her jacket, tugging on the zipper; its slow snarl was

louder than thunder. The black leather parted, revealing white flesh. Her breasts were perfect, standing firm and solid. Although full, they did not sag in the least. The nipples were round and pink, like the eyes of a white rabbit. It felt as if Johnny's legs had disappeared and the only thing keeping him from falling down was his hold on the sink.

The zipper continued its downward track, exposing her second set of breasts. They were located just under the first pair, obscuring the split of her ribs. They were smaller than the first set, more like the tits of a girl in junior high school. The nipples and aureoles, however, were far larger than those found on most seventh graders.

At first Johnny thought she was wearing a pair of foam rubber "joke" breasts, like the transvestites parading through the streets during Mardi Gras, but he couldn't spot a seam of any kind, and he could have sworn that the nipples had hardened as they were exposed to the air.

Was it possible he'd been drugged? Had her fingernails been dipped in some kind of hallucinogen? That was almost as crazy as having two pairs of tits, but at least it kept him from having to accept the thing in the mirror as being real.

Despite his revulsion, Johnny could not bring himself to look away. The zipper continued downward. Her third and final pair of breasts rested just above her belt buckle. They were smaller than the second set, with most of the surface area taken up by oversized erect nipples.

Now completely exposed, she stood with her hands on her hips and sneered, daring him to turn and face her. Instead, Johnny vomited into the sink and collapsed onto the piss-stained floor.

When he looked up, she was transformed. Her fur was the color of spoiled cream, her face a disturbing mélange of lupine and hominid features. A twisted, taloned hand reached out and caressed Johnny's face. The palm was dry and hot and felt like a catcher's mitt he'd once had as a boy.

The werewolf bitch eyed him as she idly fondled her middle tits.

The smell of female was strong in the confined space, triggering instinctual responses. Johnny choked on the bile rising in his throat as he felt himself stiffen inside his pants. The bitch leaned forward, her breath, reeking of old blood, hot against his cheek.

"Relax, baby," she growled as she unzipped his fly. "Vargr rule."

wild blood, a 200-page trade paperback novel, is available in September.

The Ultimate V:TES Reference

Vampire: The Eternal Struggle Player's Guide

by Rob Goudie

since the original *Jyhad* base set in 1994 and continuing through 2005's **kindred most wanted**, enthusiasts of **vampire: The eternal struggle** have been rewarded with a series of compelling cards, countless deck-construction options, and a unique social experience. while a large card catalogue and sophisticated game design are a boon to players, they can also be daunting to someone approaching the game for the first time. therefore, the **vampire: The eternal struggle player's guide** meets this challenge head on and delivers the ideal resource for new players and veteran players alike.

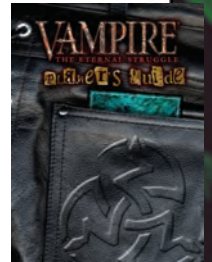
whether you are wading into deck building as a new player or you're a longtime player looking to explore a new clan or discipline, the **v:tes player's guide** aids you in building a wide variety of competitive decks. as part of a comprehensive survey of deck building, we examine each clan and discipline and explain their key cards and best uses. in addition, we've provided sample decks to show the cards in context—giving you an indication as to the quantity needed of each card, as well as an idea of what cards work well together. we've also supplied a sweeping overview of the game's major deck archetypes, and we go on to explain how to build and play them better than your opponents. you'll also find constructed and draft format tournament strategy articles by two of the world's top players. The guide provides new players a head start, while the game's more seasoned players will welcome the easy entrée into learning to play a new clan or discipline.

as any grizzled veteran can attest, new players usually learn how to create powerful card

combinations long before they actually learn what they should do with those combos. new players can create a lot of havoc and might even get a quick victory point, but they are rarely able to turn that quick start into an actual win. Alternatively, some new players are so passive that they give their prey free reign to oust player after player, without ever mounting a threat of their own. This outcome is not surprising since even a rudimentary understanding of the intricacies of table dynamics can take many months or even years to develop. The **v:tes player's guide** examines relevant strategy topics such as table balance, deals, and cooperation, and it even addresses the tactical particulars of frustrating other players' decks by creating hand jam and disrupting their critical card combinations. (it's not nice, but it's very effective.) The wealth of strategy and tactics advice allows a new player to leap forward in his learning and approach the game with the maturity of a **v:tes** expert.

we know that when inspiration strikes and a new deck idea comes to mind, there's nothing more discouraging than being away from your card collection. The **v:tes player's guide** remedies this problem with a visual encyclopedia of the entire **vampire: The eternal struggle** card catalogue. over 2,000 card images are displayed along with a chronological list of sets in which the cards have appeared. A convenient deck-building tool that you can take with you anywhere, the **vampire: The eternal struggle player's guide** is the ultimate reference for players and collectors.

Just be sure to get one quick. you know your opponents will...



Vampire:
The Eternal Struggle
Player's Guide
WW2699; \$34.99
ISBN 1-58846-648-5
page 20

the vampire: The eternal struggle player's guide is available in August.

Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

The Mythic Vampire Board Game

Proof that *Prince of the City* actually exists

by Steve Wjcek, White Wolf co-founder

Vampire:
prince of the city

Vampire:
Prince of the City
WW5212, \$39.99
ISBN 1-58846-274-3
page 21

As loyal fans already know, we have announced the coming of a **vampire** board game several times now in these pages over the past couple of years. yet despite our ardent proclamations, no **vampire** board game exists today.

well, this september, the board game will *finally* become a reality, and a glorious thing it should be. but we've cried wolf many times, claiming the game would release. why should you believe us this time?

Ah ha! This time we have proof!

witness this first glimpse at the board design for **prince of the city**.

witness the lovely master sculptures (courtesy of some of the sculpting pros at wizzkids) ready to be cast into board game toys.

witness the rules on the game! ok, well, those are a bit too long to print here, but suffice to say the board game has come together at last! As i write this, our international publishing partners are even working on rules versions in a half-dozen different languages. once they complete that, it all goes to press to become board game geek goodness.

but is the game worth the wait? hell, yeah it is, but then how objective can i really be? i helped create it.

so how about the word of those hyper-critical bastards we call "in-house playtesters" here at white wolf? They gave it their thumbs-up approval (albeit after about 10 re-designs). so, they know it passes the muster. All things being equal, though, the final decision is yours to make this september.

What's the Game about

for those of you who've missed our many and varied prior proclamations of this game's many virtues, i'll recap what **vampire: prince of the city** is all about.

you take the part of an elder vampire in a city that just lost its prince. such a tragedy—i'm sure you had nothing to do with it, right?

now someone must take the seat of authority and rule the city's kindred. someone like



vampire™

THE REQUIEM

BOARD



you, perhaps. unfortunately, you're just one of many rivals for the throne.

you and two to four other players take the roles of elders of each requiem clan and set about accumulating more prestige than your competitors. the one with the most prestige at the end of the game is recognized as the city's new prince.

There are two primary ways to gain prestige. one is to act the part of a prince by solving any dilemmas that arise in the city—dilemmas that affect the kindred populace, that is. if you can put an end to these troublesome events when they arise, then naturally the city's kindred will look upon you with the respect due a ruler. unfortunately,



many of these events cannot be tackled single-handedly and that means recruiting the assistance of some of your peers, who then share in the prestige.



when you accumulate prestige through events, you gain prestige tokens to mark your growing respect among kindred.



controlling the mortal institutions of the city (as represented by zones on the board) is the other method of accumulating prestige. who pulls the strings at city hall?



who calls the shots with the police? who bosses around the union at the airport? whoever controls the city ought to rule the city. spread your immortal influence through the mortal institutions and try to consolidate domains of power among the city's government, business, arts, religious, or other sectors.



The influence you exert in the various realms of mortal activity are represented by your clan influence tokens.

whichever vampire accumulates the most influence in a city zone takes control of that zone. different city zones are naturally worth different amounts of prestige. pulling the strings at city hall is accorded more respect among kindred than controlling the sewers.



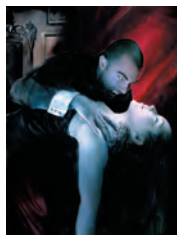
when your peers get in your way (and it seems they make a habit of doing so), you will have to strategically or socially outmaneuver them. you might even have to engage in a little physical instruction of who should rule the city. a vampire in torpor can't very well be crowned prince in your stead!

meanwhile, you have to manage your resources such as retainers, equipment, and your precious vitae. each elder has access to his clan's signature discipline powers to use so long as he have the vitae to power them.



vampire: prince of the city brings the machievellian strategy and social interplay of the requiem to the board-game format. it's a good way to show your friends the world of vampire (or for them to show you the fun of board games). now you've got one more thing to play if your storyteller can't make the weekly chronicle session!

the vampire: prince of the city board game is available in september.



Ordo Dracul™

Beyond Undeath

Visionaries among the Damned, members of the Ordo Dracul seek to transcend the curse of vampirism. Devoting themselves to hoary experiments and the philosophies of their leader, Dracula, the Drag-

ons of this covenant seek to discover what lies beyond the Requiem.

A Covenant Guide for Vampire: The Requiem™

- Details the history, hierarchy and goals of the Ordo Dracul (one of **Vampire**'s core factions), and serves as an invaluable guide to the world of the Kindred from the covenant's unique viewpoint
- The Ordo Dracul — the covenant founded by Dracula himself — has proven to be the most popular faction in **Vampire: The Requiem**
- Features new bloodlines and Disciplines unique to the Ordo Dracul, including a new Coil of the Dragon (the covenant's unique power), making it a sure draw to players
- Provides settings, antagonists and story seeds for Storytellers

ISBN: 1-58846-257-9 Stock #: WW25120
Retail Price: \$31.99 U.S. Page Count: 224 (hardcover)
Authors: Will Hindmarch, Christopher Kobar, Matthew McFarland and Greg Stolze
Developer: Will Hindmarch
Cover Artist: Alex Maleev



Vampire: The Marriage of Virtue and Viciousness™

Vengeance Is His

Word has spread among Chicago's Kindred that Prince Maxwell is to grant

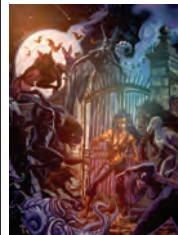
an indulgence, a one-night lift on the ban imposed on destroying fellow vampires. The Damned scurry for position and ready their long-delayed revenge. But no vampire's rage is more consuming than that of Solomon Birch, the fallen zealot of the undead church known as the Lancea Sanctum. Birch's enemies know that if they don't strike first, he surely will.

Vampire: The Requiem™ Novel #3

About the Author: Greg Stolze is the author of **Vampire: A Hunger Like Fire™** (the first in this series), 2003's **Trilogy of the Fallen™** and **Rites of the Dragon**. His short fiction has appeared in several anthologies and magazines.

ISBN: 1-58846-872-0 Stock #: WW11238
Retail Price: \$6.99 U.S. Page Count: 288
(mass-market paperback)

Author: Greg Stolze
Cover Artist: Jason Alexander



Predators™

Hunt or be Hunted

The world of werewolves is fear made flesh. Pain, terror and hatred all take physical form, and all hunt for prey. The Forsaken are well aware of these horrific threats, and pit themselves

against their enemies when the moon rises. But are werewolves the predators... or are they the prey?

Blood Flows under a Full Moon

An antagonists supplement for **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, **Predators** contains a horde of threats to pit against the werewolves of your chronicle. Inside are details on spirit foes from beyond the Gauntlet, and the Ridden they possess. Also included is information on the mad Rat and Spider Hosts, and on monstrous foes from the darkest past. Whether you need foes for a short and brutal encounter or a long and harrowing hunt, nothing fits the bill like a book full of predators. Hardcover.

ISBN: 1-58846-326-5 Stock #: WW30300
Retail Price: \$29.99 U.S. Page Count: 192

Authors: Jackie Cassada, Aaron Dembski-Bowden, Forrest B. Marchinton, Deena McKinney and Nicky Rea
Developer: Ethan Skemp



Werewolf: Storyteller Screen

There When You Need it

There's nothing more frustrating for a Werewolf: The Forsaken™ Storyteller than

searching for that one rule during a game. Well, that and needing to use a Gift and not having enough Essence. At least we can solve the first one. Here's everything you need in one place.

Just a Claw Away

White Wolf® introduces this useful reference tool for Werewolf Storytellers. The screen is made from thick, durable cardboard stock and displays all the necessary rules and charts for easy reference during game sessions. This is no flimsy screen.

ISBN: 1-58846-593-1 Stock #: WW30701
Retail Price: \$14.99 U.S.



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Branded Apparel for Mage: The Awakening™

- New T-shirts heralding the release of **Mage: The Awakening**.
- High-quality, black, Fruit of the Loom heavy T's featuring original artwork from the game.
- White Wolf T-shirts are perennial sellers
- Features graphics by renowned artist Michael Kaluta!

Stock #: L — WW57010, XL — WW57011, XXL — WW57012

Retail Price: \$21.99 U.S.
Artist: Michael Kaluta



Exalted: A Shadow Over Heaven's Eye™

In Defiance of Destiny

Maylea is a young noblewoman in the city of Yane, whose future has been written

in the stars since the day she was born. How she would live, what she would do, who she would marry. Yet, Maylea is not content to blindly consign herself to fate. When Swan, a freelance diplomat who's supposed to be dead, arrives at her father's estate, Maylea realizes that her true destiny might be writ larger than anyone ever suspected.

Exalted® Novel #5

About the Author: Tim Waggoner is the author of **Dark Ages: Gangrel™** in the Dark Ages Clan Novel Series, **Return of the Sorceress** (Wizards of the Coast), and **Like Death** (Leisure Books).

ISBN: 1-58846-871-2 Stock #: WW10069
Retail Price: \$6.99 U.S. Page Count: 288
(mass-market paperback)

Author: Tim Waggoner
Cover Artist: UDON





Mind's Eye Theatre™

A World of Darkness

It's never far away. You glimpse it shift in the shadows, hear it whisper on the breeze, feel its presence in every nightmare. A world so very like our own, but where sinister societies and ancient horrors cloak themselves in modern guises, and every truth uncovered only reveals a deeper mystery beneath. The shadows call. Will you answer?

How Deep Do the Shadows Reach?

Mind's Eye Theatre gives you everything players and Storytellers need to play a live-action game set in the World of Darkness®. From setting material and rules for playing mortal characters to Storytelling advice and an innovative challenge-resolution system, this book is the cornerstone of a totally new live-action experience. Enter the theatre of the mind and learn the secrets of the night. Trade-sized and hardcover.

ISBN: 1-58846-522-5 Stock #: WW50000
Retail Price: \$22.99 U.S. Page Count: 160

Authors: **White Wolf Game Studio**
Developers: **Peter Woodworth & Alex Teodorescu-Badia**



Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem™

There's Music in the Night

As the sun fades into memory and the world falls into darkness, the haunting notes of the danse macabre echo, calling the undead to play their nightly games. From turf wars in the streets to cutting remarks at society parties, old grudges spill fresh blood as vampires vie for power and prominence. It's a world without pity, a world of predators. Now that you're one of them, it's your world too.

Won't You Join Us?

The Requiem provides all the information necessary to bring the mysterious existence of vampires to your **Mind's Eye Theatre™** game. Secret histories of the undead, the clans and sects that make up the danse macabre, rules for the mystic Disciplines — it's all here. Discover the nocturnal world as you've never seen it before. Requires the **Mind's Eye Theatre** rulebook for play. Trade-sized and hardcover.

ISBN: 1-58846-523-3 Stock #: WW50001
Retail Price: \$27.99 U.S. Page Count: 224

Authors: **Andrew J. Scott, Peter Woodworth and the White Wolf Game Studio**
Developers: **Peter Woodworth & Alex Teodorescu-Badia**





Mage: The Awakening™

The Power to Remake the World

In an age long gone, mortals dethroned the gods and seized the heavens for their own. And for it, they were flung down into the world of clay, their minds clouded by ignorance. Only a bare few remember their birthright — the power of magic. If they cannot claim the heavens, they will make their own kingdoms on Earth.

A Storytelling Game of Modern Sorcery

- Provides everything you need to tell your own stories in the occult world of the Awakened, including details of the various orders and paths of magic, and many secrets of the World of Darkness.
- Presents the most comprehensive and freeform magic system ever achieved in gaming, allowing characters to cast nearly any spell imaginable.
- Features Boston as a fully fleshed-out, ready-to-play setting
- Features artwork by the acclaimed Michael William Kaluta

ISBN: 1-58846-418-0 Stock #: WW40000
Retail Price: \$34.99 U.S. Page Count: 304 (hardcover)
Authors: Craig Blackwelder, Brian Campbell, Stephen Michael DiPesa, Steve Kenson and Malcolm Sheppard
Developer: Bill Bridges
Artist: Michael William Kaluta



Aspect Book: Wood™

Verdant Children, Ashen Bows

Performers and healers without compare, the Aspects of Wood are the naturalists and beast-tamers of the Dragon-Blooded Host. Yet, these ever-increasing Exalts are far more than mere doctors and trainers. With their extensive mastery and their devotion to the Dragon of Growth, Aspects of Wood are the roots of the Dragon-Blooded and the renewing fountain of their people.

An Aspect Book for Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded™

- The final Aspect Book for Exalted® — character “splatbooks” detailing the different identities of the Dragon-Blooded Exalted.
- Contains new magical powers, rules and artifacts that Wood-Aspected characters need to fulfill their destiny.
- Also contains teaser information about the history of the Realm and the stories of its people (as all Aspect Books do) to increase interest among Exalted fans

ISBN: 1-58846-683-3 Stock #: WW8844
Retail Price: \$19.99 U.S. Page Count: 96 (softcover)
Authors: George Holochworst and Ellen P. Kiley
Developer: Geoffrey C. Grabowski
Cover
Artists: Kevin Lau, Udon Entertainment Corporation



Vampire: Prince of the City™

The Prince Is Dead

Unseen by mortal eyes, the Kindred have long pulled the strings of power in humanity's cities. But now the ruler of the city's vampires has met Final Death. In the resulting power vacuum, each of the five clans seeks to claim the throne. The only thing in their way is each other.

A Board Game Based on Vampire: The Requiem™

- In this European-designed board game for White Wolf's Vampire: The Requiem, up to five players assume the roles of vampire clans in a struggle for control of their city.
- Using a mix of diplomacy, deceit and strategy, players compete to build their influence in key power centers and earn prestige among the undead.
- High-quality components include five plastic miniatures, 100 full-color play cards, a full-color board, five clan record cards, influence tokens, dice and an attractive board.
- This medium-complexity game requires no previous knowledge of Vampire and the subject matter has been kept appropriate for family play.

ISBN: 1-56504-274-3 Stock #: WW5212
Retail Price: \$39.99 US Format: boxed game
Designer: Mike Nudd
Graphic Design: Becky Jollensten



Vampire: The Eternal Struggle® Player's Guide

Elevate Your Game

This full-color strategy guide and exhaustive encyclopedia of cards offers both new

and veteran VTES players insight into the strategies and tactics of the game. Every card is included and every strategy examined.

A Strategy Guide and Visual Encyclopedia

- Over 100 pages of strategy advice from the world's top rated players, including sample deck lists for every clan and Discipline in the game.
- Full color images of VTES's over 2,000 cards all arranged by clan and Discipline for easy reference — great for building a wish list for a new deck or strengthening an existing one.
- A comprehensive guide to deck building and playing for each clan and Discipline.

ISBN: 1-58846-648-5 Stock #: WW2699
Retail Price: \$34.99 U.S. Page Count: 336
(Full Color Hardback)
Authors: Ben Peel, Robert Goudie, Joshua Duffin, Jay Kristoff and more
Developer: Robert Goudie



Mage: The Awakening™ Dice

Your Lucky Dice

Take your character's fate into your own hands with these special dice made especially for Mage: The Awakening. Will you achieve great feats or suffer at the whim of chance?

A Play Aid for Mage: The Awakening™

- A set of 10 dice colored to match the look of Mage, complete with a durable and convenient carrying bag with logo.
- Target numbers on each die are different colors to make successful rolls stand out — makes the Storytelling System even easier!
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ISBN: 1-58846-580-2 Stock #: WW40702
Retail Price: \$6.99 U.S.





Lore of the Forsaken™

Powers of Moon and Darkness

The power of the moon flows through werewolves, and the spirits of the Shadows Realm enfold them. It is a strange and inhospitable world, and one that has forsaken them. And yet, werewolves are not helpless—they can claim the lore and might of the spirit world for themselves.

A Character Book for Werewolf: The Forsaken™

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ISBN: 1-58846-327-3 Stock #: WW30100
Retail Price: \$26.99 U.S. Page Count: 160 (hardcover)
Authors: James Comer, Aaron Dembski-Bowden, Wayne Peacock, Stewart Wilson
Developer: Ethan Skemp
Cover Artist: David Leri



Mage: The Awakening™ Character Sheet Pad

A Sheet for Everything

The Awakened struggle to rebuild their societies and carve out their own kingdoms on Earth. Witch, technomancer, shaman—which one are you?

A Play Aid for Mage: The Awakening™

- Preprinted character sheets, customized for every playable path and order
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- Every player needs a sheet, making this a valuable play aid.

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VII™

A Thirst for Kindred Blood

The members of the reviled cult known as VII wage a private war on the Kindred, and some whisper that they're even older than the Damned themselves. Only

those within the strange covenant know the truth of the matter—whether their hostility is a holy war, a vendetta, or something altogether different.

A Chronicle Book for Vampire: The Requiem™

- Fully details three distinct and independent versions of this mysterious sect of vampires and vampire-killers, the true bogeymen of **Vampire**. Includes history, beliefs, and prominent sect members.
- Provides full details on making VII a playable faction, including new Disciplines, powers, and character options. This makes a complete covenant guide as well
- Toolkit approach allows Storytellers to pick and choose which version of the sect they prefer or to mix and match—thus do these fearsome enemies remain mysterious, even if the players read the book.

ISBN: 1-58846-258-7 Stock #: WW25301
Retail Price: \$26.99 US Page Count: 160 (hardcover)
Authors: Christopher Kobar, Greg Stolze and Chuck Wendig
Developer: Will Hindmarch
Cover Artist: Daren Bader



Women of the Camarilla™ (2006 Calendar)

Night Beauties

For years, White Wolf's Camarilla Fan Club has broken the myth of all-male gaming with a diverse population of live-action players, including many women. Club members from around the world posed for this calendar in private photo shoots.

A 12-Month Calendar of Black-and-White Photography

About the Photographer: Bridgett Harrington is a professional photographer living in the Pacific Northwest. She is a longtime member of the Camarilla Fan Club.

- Sure to appeal to the large (5000+) membership of the Camarilla Fan Club, as well as to other White Wolf fans
- All images respect a "PG-13" standard (no nudity) and are tasteful, but some are suggestive in nature. This calendar may not be appropriate for young customers.

ISBN: 1-58846-571-3 Stock #: WW50700
Retail Price: \$19.99 U.S.

Photographer: Bridgett Harrington



Wild Blood™

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Skinner Cade always felt he wasn't like the others in his small Midwestern town. Violent dreams haunted his sleep and bursts of inexplicable anger flared in his heart. When he discovers that he was adopted, he goes on a search for his birth mother and uncovers a world of savage beasts and blood feuds. There is a wolf in Skinner Cade's heart and it fights to get out—no matter how much blood must be spilled.

A Novel by Nancy A. Collins

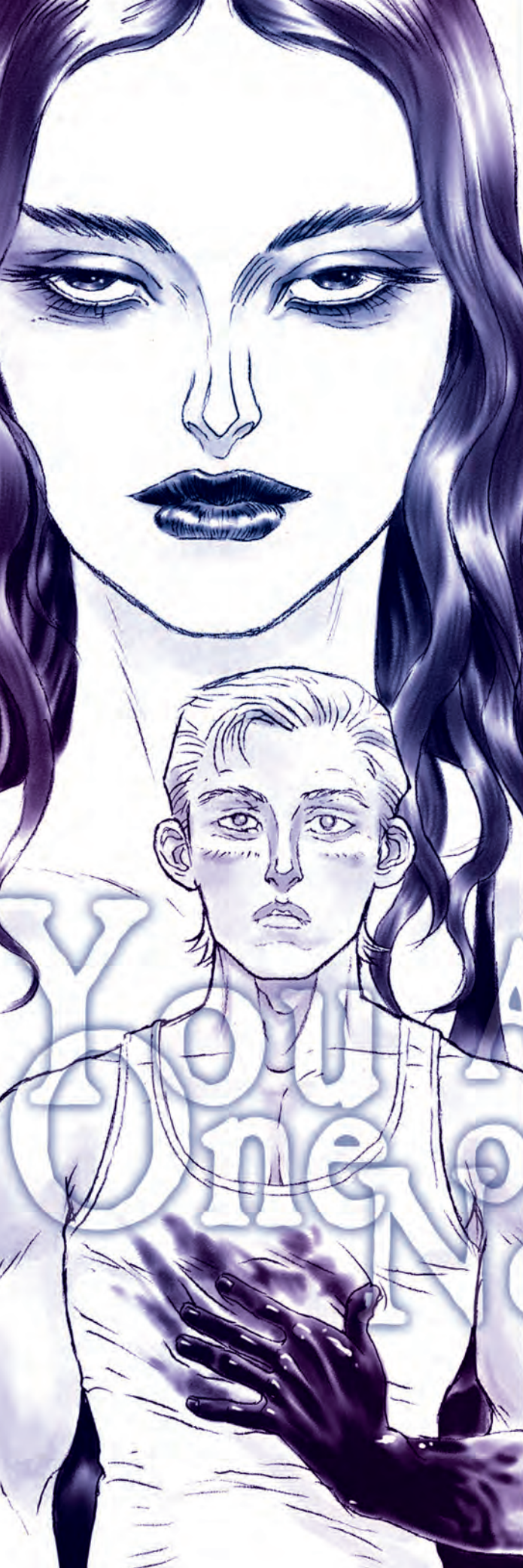
About the Author: Nancy A. Collins is author of **Sunglasses After Dark™**, **Darkest Heart™** and **Dead Roses for a Blue Lady™** in the acclaimed Sonja Blue series. She is a past recipient of the Bram Stoker and British Fantasy Icarus Awards. In **Wild Blood**, she brings her unique take on the supernatural to the werewolf myth.

- Ties into the novella "The Nonesuch Horror" in **Dead Roses for a Blue Lady**
- In print for the first time in a decade

ISBN: 1-58846-878-X Stock #: WW12996
Retail Price: \$13.99 U.S. Page Count: 200
(trade paperback)

Author: Nancy A. Collins
Cover Artist: Thom Ang





You Are One of Us Now

the
CAMARILLA



*In this World of Darkness,
will you be predator or prey?*

*Will you remain hidden
or join the Danse Macabre?*

*Don't be left alone
in the night....*

White Wolf invites you to join The Camarilla, its worldwide fan club for the World of Darkness. Thousands of players and Storytellers are out there waiting for you.

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- Join a fully integrated global live-action chronicle.
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Step into the Shadows

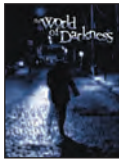
Enter the World of Darkness, a version of our world where the supernatural is real. The core setting for such games as **Vampire: The Requiem** and **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, the World of Darkness line presents core game mechanics and setting material shared by all Storytelling game lines.

Core Products

World of Darkness Rulebook

(WW55002; ISBN 1-58846-484-9; \$24.99 US)

The core for all World of Darkness games, this book presents the complete Storytelling System. All World of Darkness, **Vampire** and **Werewolf** titles require use of this rulebook.



World of Darkness: Antagonists

(WW55301; ISBN 1-58846-478-4; \$24.99)

The World of Darkness is full of horrors, many of which can't be easily categorized into supernatural species. This book — useful for all WoD games — presents an assortment of horrors and enemies who stalk vampires, mortals and werewolves alike.

Other Products

World of Darkness: Ghost Stories

(WW55400; ISBN 1-58846-483-0; \$24.99 US)

World of Darkness: Mysterious Places

(WW55302; ISBN 1-58846-485-7; \$24.99 US)



Join the Danse Macabre

Since time immemorial, the Kindred — vampires — have stalked unseen by the mortal masses upon whom they prey. Their world is a xenophobic, neofeudal nightmare, populated by tyrannical princes, wild-eyed heretics, bloodthirsty rogues and scheming manipulators. Factions vie for power, conspiracies plot in the darkness, and vampires struggle with morality and the Beast Within against a modern-gothic backdrop of horror and decay.

Core Products

Vampire: The Requiem

(WW25000; ISBN 1-58846-247-1; \$34.99 US)

The first major setting and game intended for use with White Wolf's new Storytelling System, **Vampire: The Requiem** includes rules for using vampires. Requires the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for play.



City of the Damned: New Orleans

(WW25200; ISBN 1-58846-248-X; \$26.99 US)

The signature setting for **Vampire: The Requiem**, detailing the Big Easy's history, laws, customs, and Kindred ruling class.

Bloodlines: The Hidden

(WW25102; ISBN 1-58846-255-2; \$24.99 US)

Twelve all-new bloodlines bring the variety of Kindred blood to your chronicle. New Disciplines and many different cultural heritages meld together to create many hidden and secretive lineages.

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(WW25101; ISBN 1-58846-252-8; \$24.99 US)

Rites of the Dragon

(WW25300; ISBN 1-58846-254-4; \$24.99 US)

Vampire Fiction

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(WW11235; ISBN 1-58846-862-3; \$6.99 US)

Blood In, Blood Out (#2)

(WW11237; ISBN 1-58846-866-6; \$6.99 US)

Vampire Merchandise

Vampire: The Requiem Character Sheet Pad

(WW25701; ISBN 1-58846-598-5; \$9.99 US)

Vampire: The Requiem Dice

(WW25702; ISBN 1-58846-597-7; \$6.99 US)

Vampire: The Requiem Mousepad

(WW25704; \$12.99 US)

Vampire: The Requiem Storytellers Screen

(WW25700; ISBN 1-58846-599-3; \$14.99 US)

Vampire: The Requiem T-Shirt

(L: WW57004; XL: WW57005; XXL: WW57006; \$21.99 US)

Requiem Skull T-Shirt

(M WW57016; L WW57017; XL WW57018; XXL WW57019; \$21.99)

Vampire: The Requiem Pin Display

(WW25703; ISBN 1-58846-569-9; \$99.99 US; 20 pins per display)



The Hunt Is On

Savage predators and raging beasts, the Uratha — werewolves — hunt the mad spirits and vermin hosts who would subject the world to their dominion. But the Forsaken are hunted as well, by fellow werewolves who blame them for their cursed state and by the spirit dukes who simply want their predators eliminated.

Core Products

Werewolf: The Forsaken

(WW30000; ISBN 1-58846-324-9; \$34.99 US)

The second major setting and game intended for use with White Wolf's new Storytelling System, **Werewolf: The Forsaken** includes rules for using werewolves. Requires the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for play.



Hunting Ground: The Rockies

(WW30200; ISBN 1-58846-325-7; \$26.99 US)

The signature setting for **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, detailing local packs, local enemies, the local Shadow Realm, and local opportunities to use in your chronicle.

Other Products

Sourcebooks

- **Predators**
(WW30300; ISBN 1-58846-326-5; \$12.99 US)

Werewolf Merchandise

- **Werewolf: The Forsaken Character Sheet Pad**
(WW30702; ISBN 1-58846-594-2; \$9.99 US)
- **Werewolf: The Forsaken Dice**
(WW30700; ISBN 1-58846-595-0; \$6.99 US)
- **Werewolf: The Forsaken Storytellers Screen**
(WW30701; ISBN 1-58846-593-4; \$14.99 US)
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(L: WW57007; XL: WW57008; XXL: WW57009; \$21.99 US)
- **Werewolf: The Forsaken Mousepad**
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The Power to Remake the World

In an age long gone, ambitious mortals were flung down into the world of clay, their minds clouded by ignorance. Those bare few who remembered their birthright—the power of magic—rebuilt their lost traditions. Now shamans, witches, technomancers, and more vie for dominion of the fallen world. If they cannot claim the heavens, they will make their own kingdoms on Earth.

Core Products

- **Mage: The Awakening**
(WW40000; ISBN 1-58846-418-0; \$34.99 US)
The third core setting sourcebook intended for use with White Wolf's new Storytelling System, **Mage: The Awakening** includes rules for using mages. Requires the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for play. Available in August 2005.



Shadow Plays and Live Horrors

Live-action play takes stories into new territory. Costuming, décor and intense roleplaying define this style of play. Join in the global chronicle of the Camarilla fan club in which you can play with thousands of others across the world.

Core Products

- **Mind's Eye Theatre**
(WW50000; ISBN 1-58846-522-5; \$22.99)
The core for all live-action games in the World of Darkness, this book presents the complete Mind's Eye Theatre rule system. All other Mind's Eye Theater products require the use of this book, and it acts as the central rulebook for the Camarilla fan club's global chronicle.
- **Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem**
(WW50001; ISBN 1-58846-523-3; \$27.99)
The first setting book intended for use with the **Mind's Eye Theatre** rulebook, this book provides all the rules and setting for portraying the Damned in live-action play.



Epic Fantasy in the Second Age of Man

It's the Second Age of Man, a time of wonder, corruption and boundless adventure. In a game that melds cinematic action, high magic and a rich fantasy world of decadent rulers and emerging heroes, **Exalted** invites you to play a champion chosen by the great gods to be their agent in Creation. Your demigod hero struggles to find greatness, explore the hidden corners of reality and scheme in the great halls of power.

Core Products

- **Exalted**
(WW8800; ISBN 1-56504-623-4; \$29.95 US)
The main **Exalted** rulebook covers the Solar Exalted, once the rulers of Creation, now reincarnated as a new breed of outcast heroes. Contains all core game mechanics and the powers of the Solars.



- **Exalted: The Abyssals**
(WW8813; 1-58846-665-5; \$29.95 US)
Provides complete details for playing the Abyssal Exalted, the dark reflections of the Solars, who draw their power from the Underworld. Also details the Deathlords and the Underworld itself. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

- **Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded**
(WW8811; 1-58846-656-6; \$25.95 US)
Provides complete details for playing the Dragon-Blooded, the hereditary Exalted who rule the Second Age. Also details the great empire called the Realm and its Byzantine society. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

- **Exalted: The Lunars**
(WW8812; 1-58846-657-4; \$25.95 US)
Provides complete details for playing the Lunar Exalted, the savage, shapechanging demigods who once stood beside the Solars. Now they hunt in the barbarian wilds, with their savage tribes at their side. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

- **Exalted: The Fair Folk**
(WW8815; 1-58846-678-7; \$29.99 US)
Provides complete details for playing the fantastical Fair Folk, from raksha nobles to commoners and the Mountain Folk, as well as providing details on the Wyld beyond the edge of Creation. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

- **Exalted: The Sidereals**
(WW8814; 1-58846-669-8; \$29.95 US)
Provides complete details for playing the Sidereal Exalted, the mysterious servants of the stars, and Creation's greatest martial artists. Also details the heavenly bureaucracy and the great celestial city of Yu-Shan. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

- **Exalted: The Autochthonians**
(WW8816; ISBN 1-58846-681-7; \$34.99 US)
Provides complete details for playing the Alchemical Exalted, the heroes of the mechanical god-world, Autochthon. Also details the god-world itself, as well as the agenda of its desperate rulers. (Requires the **Exalted** rulebook to play.)

Exalted Players Guide

(WW8804; 1-58846-673-6; \$29.99 US)

A complete companion to the **Exalted** core products, this book provides advanced and optional rules for combat, as well as details on new character types and magical powers.

Other Exalted Products

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Provides full details on playing Inquisitors, the agents of the Church in its war against the demonic and evil influences on the world.

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Provides full details for playing medieval sorcerers and magical scholars, including the many different magical traditions and paths to power.

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Provides full details for playing the dreaded werewolves who hunt man and beast alike through the endless woods of the Dark Medieval world.

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Character Books and Player Guides

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(WW11031; 1-56504-995-0; \$5.99 US)
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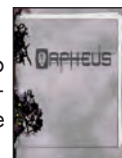
ORPHEUS Don't Look Back

Join the Orpheus Group as it parts the veil between life and death. All it will cost is your soul. An innovative limited-series game, **Orpheus** casts players in the roles of agents able to walk among both the living and the dead. The story arc unfolds through all six books, creating a terrifying chronicle.

Core Product

Orpheus
(WW21000; ISBN 1-58846-600-0; \$34.95 US)

The **Orpheus** rulebook has everything you need to play, from complete game mechanics and supernatural powers to full details on the Orpheus Group, the private agency that delves into the Underworld.





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
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The Inside Scoop

News and Notes from Sword & Sorcery Studios and Arthaus Publishing



The Year's Best by Monte Cook

I get asked for my opinion on various d20 System books a lot. It's understandable, because there's a lot of stuff out there, and it's nigh impossible for a lone DM to know what to use in his campaign or for a player to know how to find the good options for her character. I try to keep up with the industry and keep abreast of the material produced, so that when asked for my opinion, I can give an informed answer. And the thing is, I really like reading game books. I'd do it for fun, even if it weren't important to my job.

I've often thought, though:

"Wouldn't it be cool if there were a place you could go to get all the very best material?" I mean, we've seen collections of various types of game material before (feats, spells, prestige classes, etc.), but their goal was to be comprehensive, not selective. It would be nice if there were a way to shine a light on the really good stuff. Now there is: *Monte Cook Presents: The Year's Best d20*.

The Year's Best d20, a 96-page book that I compile and introduce, presents a unique collection of spells, monsters, classes, feats, and variant rules chosen for the qual-

ity of their design. Drawn from a thorough examination of products released in 2004, the contents represent a variety of authors and publishers. In the book, I preface each selection with a short introduction explaining why I chose to include it and what makes it noteworthy.

I own a number of books like this on other topics. *Spectrum*, for example, comes out every year and showcases extraordinary science fiction and fantasy art. *The Year's Best Science Fiction* and the *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* are also favorites of mine. Like our book, these collections represent just the editors' opinions, but they are well-informed opinions, to be sure. They serve as a great way to get a sampling of various art pieces or short stories, particularly those you might have missed.

And that's really the key to *The Year's Best d20*. Even if you're paying attention to the d20 System releases, so many of them are published that it's easy to miss some. This is an opportunity to check out material to which you might not have been exposed otherwise. Perhaps the publisher was somewhat obscure, or it was one great piece in an otherwise mediocre book. Maybe it came from a publisher you don't nor-

mally pay attention to, or maybe it's from a book that just slipped through the cracks. Of course, if you buy d20 products, you might also recognize some of the included material from your favorite books—*The Year's Best d20* seeks to laud designers of good material, regardless of source. The only determining factors for inclusion in *The Year's Best d20* is that the material be (1) quality stuff that (2) came out in 2004 and that (3) would make a good addition to your game.

You might be asking, "Why would Monte care?" Shouldn't I want to keep good material from other publishers under wraps? Why put out a book that praises others (and excludes my own work)?

Well, in the first place, while I am a publisher of d20 System products myself, I'm also one of the people who helped create the very system that they're all based on. So I am personally invested not only in d20's success, but also in seeing it handled well by other designers.

But altruism and quasi-parental feelings aside, it's also in my own best self-interest. I believe that the release of good d20 products helps all publishers like myself, and the release of poor ones likewise hurts. It's simple, really. If a

The Inside Scoop

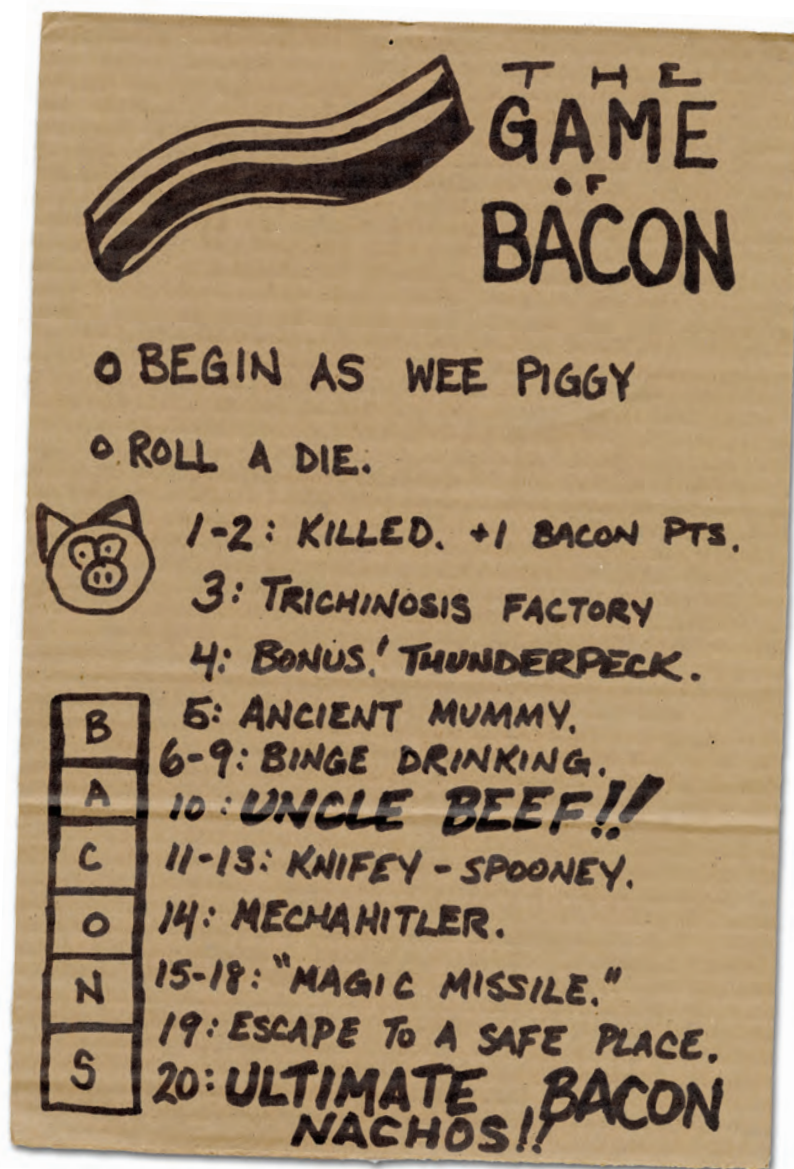
gamer goes to the store and buys a good product from someone else, he's that much more likely to go to the store again next week or next month, and that time he might buy a book of mine. If that first product was terrible, however, he's less likely to ever return to the store, and I'll never have the opportunity to sell him one of my books. So I want to draw attention to the good products, in order to encourage designers and companies publishing quality material to continue to do so.

It's going to be a fun book to produce. As I write this in February 2005, I'm beginning to get some ideas of what it will include. I've already read a lot of the products that came out in 2004 and, assuming their publishers are willing, I imagine some of their contents will go in the book. I don't know for certain, though, because there could be plenty of gems in the products I overlooked on my own.

In any event, I've got a lot of reading ahead of me. It's going to be fun.

Look for **Monte Cook Presents: The Year's Best d20**, a 96-page collection from Malhavoc Press, in stores in September.

The Game of Bacon



Why do they pay us the big money? Because here at Insider Central, we create games. Sometimes on the spur of the moment. When we're exhausted. At a convention. And not just good games either, but games like this:

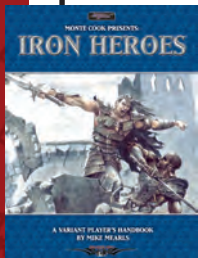
Are You A Good Person?

Of course you are. You want to fight evil. You want to help people. You want to be a hero. Well, the folks at Malhavoc Press have a way for you to turn in-game heroism into real-world heroism. Check out this site to find out how. (Yeah it's a clunky URL, but just type it in and see where it takes you. It's important.)

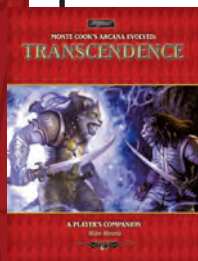
http://www.montecook.com/cgi-bin/page.cgi?mc_los_140

The Next Generation of Fantasy Gaming

Iron Heroes by Mike Mearls



Monte Cook Presents:
Iron Heroes
WW16154; \$37.99
ISBN 1-58846-796-1
Page 17



Transcendence:
Arcana Evolved
Player's Companion
WW16149; \$19.99
ISBN 1-58846-788-0
Page 16



Monte Cook Presents:
The Year's Best d20
WW16133; \$19.99
ISBN 1-58846-798-8
Page 18

This summer sees the release of **Monte Cook Presents: Iron Heroes**, Malhavoc Press's next variant player's handbook. Following in the footsteps of **Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed**, this rulebook takes the familiar game mechanics of 3rd edition roleplaying and puts a new spin on them. **Iron Heroes** "action fantasy" game mechanics derive from a series of basic assumptions of how the game works. These changes from the book's OGL foundation come down to three points.

Options, Options, Options

The **Iron Heroes** mechanics present you with more options during the game than ever before. While you still have feats, skills, and class abilities to pick from, **Iron Heroes** also gives you *more flexibility* in actions you take during the game. If you want to drop your defense and make a daring attack, you can decide how much of a defense penalty to incur and what form your bonus to offense takes. You might knock an opponent backward, seize a bonus to attacks, gain a bonus to damage, or inflict a penalty to your foe's attacks. In each case, you gain this benefit by throwing yourself into an attack, ignoring your defenses for a moment in order to strike a telling blow.

This basic mechanic runs throughout **Iron Heroes**. For almost every decision you make, you can decide to risk your chances of success against gaining more benefits from that success. The *challenge system for skills* epitomizes this design feature. The challenge system was designed to make skills more useful across all levels. In many games compatible with the d20 System, your skills become less important as you gain levels. The total result you need on a check is low enough that, at some point, improving the skill makes no difference.

Iron Heroes adds challenges to the mix to make skills more flexible. In exchange for a penalty to your skill check or an increase in the check's Difficulty Class, you gain more benefits from success. For example, you can use the Perform skill to inspire your allies in battle, granting them a bonus to attacks. If you accept a penalty to your Perform check in a skill challenge, the total bonus you grant as a result increases. As you gain more ranks in Perform, you can accept higher penalties to grant even greater bonuses.

Feats in **Iron Heroes** offer a similar range of options. In many cases, a feat includes up to nine expanded options that improve its basic abilities. As you progress in level, you can spend

your feat selections on mastering your existing feats to take more of these options. This *feat mastery rule* makes it possible for you to focus on one specific talent or spread your training over a wide range of areas. In either case, you never have to spend feats or skill ranks on useless abilities that you don't want. Once you take the base feat, its expansion options automatically become available as you gain levels. None of them have prerequisites.

Action and Adventure

Iron Heroes is a game where characters are defined by what they do, not by the numbers on a character sheet. The *rules for stunts* allow you to attempt a wide variety of actions. Rather than define each possible stunt in strict game terms, **Iron Heroes** gives you a basic list of effects that a stunt can accomplish. To attempt a stunt, you make a skill check and use the total result to determine the effectiveness of your action. You can string together several weak stunt effects, or you can go for a single powerful result. In any case, you have total control over how the stunt works.

To help encourage interesting, fun combat sessions, **Iron Heroes** makes the environment a much more important part of battles. The *guidelines for zones* allow a DM to link

special abilities and unique combat actions to the terrain you find in an encounter area. A crumbling stone wall can become a deadly weapon with one, strong push. Your mighty berserker can lift a table and fling it into a crowd of thugs to send them sprawling. The rules for zones encourage your DM to make the environment an important part of the fight while ensuring that it's worth your effort to use your character's surroundings. You never know what sort of object can prove useful until you try to use it—an imaginative, daring stunt could be exactly what you need to defeat a foe.

Iron Heroes also uses a variety of new rules, along with some of the best open source mechanics, to place an emphasis on action for all characters. Nobody has to play the cleric, because the *reserve rules* remove the need for healing. In **Iron Heroes**, characters automatically begin to heal damage as soon as combat ends. If you have time to rest, you can return to full strength. There is a limit to how much damage you can heal in this way each day, and you cannot regain reserve during combat. Battles are as dangerous, deadly, and tense as ever, but once the fight is over, you can move on with the action rather than juggle spells. Best of all, no one is forced to play a role he'd rather not play.

The *concept of tokens* promotes heroic action by rewarding you for adopting a fighting style that takes advantage of your character's talents. As a berserker soaks up wounds, he gains fury tokens, which improve his battle rage. If an executioner hides at the edge of fight and studies her target, she can deliver a lethal

blow to a critical area. The character classes each embrace a specific style of fighting, and the mechanics reward you for utilizing that style.

Fast and Frenetic

Iron Heroes features a few key changes that alter the game's feel while speeding up the action. *Attacks of opportunity* remain in the game in a dramatically simplified form. In **Iron Heroes**, any standard or full-round action that isn't an attack provokes an attack. With that simple rule in mind, you can easily resolve attacks and move on with the action.

Magic in Iron Heroes is as dangerous to the caster as it is to his enemies. This random, capricious talent is impossible to control reliably. This design decision has two major effects. In terms of the game, **Iron Heroes** supports settings where your character's talent with his sword matters more than the blade's magical qualities. Best of all, the **Iron Heroes** classes are designed to work seamlessly with existing monster books. A 10th-level **Iron Heroes** party can take on the appropriate monsters from the core rules without any change. Even though the **Iron Heroes** characters lack magical items, their class abilities, feats, and the expanded rules for skills give them the tools they need to succeed.

For DMs, magic's reduced importance makes prepping a game much faster and easier. Rather than wade through lists of magic items and spells, you simply assign skill ranks and feats to a villain, and you're done. Two of the most time-consuming steps of adventure preparation are gone, but you end up with

opponents who provide an equivalent threat as those from other fantasy systems.

Iron Heroes keeps the same spread of options and interesting character choices as other d20-compatible games, but it removes some of the complexity and bookkeeping. This results not in a simpler, less challenging system, but in more efficient rules.

More to Come...

While **Iron Heroes** sets the stage for heroic action fantasy gaming, its upcoming supplements feature a variety of exciting new options. **Mastering Iron Heroes**, the DM's guidebook to the game, gives optional rules and advice that allow a game master to make **Iron Heroes** his own game. With **Mastering Iron Heroes** (October 2005), you can change the experience system to reward heroic acts and decisions that fit a character's personality, goals, and even weaknesses. Commentary and design advice shows you not only how the rules work, but also how you can change them to fit the game you want to run.

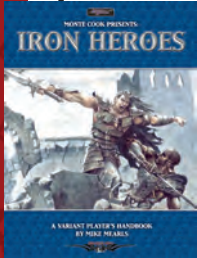
The Iron Heroes Bestiary (January 2006) introduces the innovative new villain classes, tools that allow you to create in minutes a cruel tyrant, an undead beast, or a deathless sorcerer from a forgotten age. **The Iron Heroes Bestiary** embraces the concept of choice, allowing you to spawn a whole range of strange monsters to populate your world from a series of basic templates and option menus. This bestiary allows you to spend more time creating your world and forging adventures and less time crunching numbers.

Spotlight on:

The Harrier

by Mike Mearls

An excerpt from Monte Cook Presents: Iron Heroes



Monte Cook Presents:
Iron Heroes
WW16154; \$37.99
ISBN 1-58846-796-1
Page 17

*The harrier is one of the core classes in **Iron Heroes**, a new variant player's handbook of heroic action fantasy. The following excerpt shows you a few of the harrier's abilities, along with highlights that touch on how **Iron Heroes** character classes differ from their counterparts in other games.*

Harriers are scouts, rangers, and bushwhackers who rely on their speed and agility to overcome their enemies. A harrier is at his best when he is on the move. Unlike other warriors, who might stand in place to use full-attack actions, the harrier fights best when he dodges between opponents, slips into their ranks, and delivers attacks from multiple angles as he speeds by. He is the fastest warrior on the field and, while his attacks might lack the crushing force of a berserker's axe, he slips beyond an opponent's grasp before she can counterattack.

Hit Die: 1d4+2/level

Skill Groups

Harriers gain access to the Agility and Athletics skill groups. In addition, they commonly train in skills such as Hide and Move Silently to aid them in setting up ambushes. Many harriers wander the wilderness, as they feel most comfortable in open, free terrain. Therefore, they commonly carry ranks in Ride, Survival, and similar skills.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Intelligence modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Intelligence modifier

Class Features

Harriers rely on mobility and maneuverability to overcome their

enemies. They can move faster and slip past even the toughest defenses. In combat, they tend to swarm around a foe, landing attacks from a variety of angles as they move before retreating to safety. Here is a sampling of the harrier's class abilities.

Whirling Attack: When you pounce upon an enemy, you twist, turn and maneuver around her to confound her defenses. If you use the Tumble skill to move through an opponent's threatened area without provoking an attack of opportunity as part of a move action, and you then attack her with your standard action, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack and deal +1d6 points of damage.

Running Assault: You can combine movement and an attack into a single action. As a full-round action, you can move your normal allotment. At any point during this movement, you can use a standard action to attack. You can move both before and after this attack. You gain the benefits of abilities such as mobile assault based on the squares you moved before your attack.

You cannot attempt a running assault if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Cross Attack Maneuver: When you succeed by 5 points or more in a Tumble check to avoid an attack of opportunity, you can lure an opponent into striking at a different target. You can force your foe to resolve her attack against any target that you and she threaten from your current square. You can use this ability once per round.

What It All Means

There are a few things you may have noticed about the harrier. **Iron Heroes** characters have more hit points than normal, as the harrier gains 1d4+2 hit points per level. Every class in **Iron Heroes** uses 1d4 + a kicker per level as a Hit Die. This ensures that characters have plenty of hit points, since there are no healing spells in the game.

The skill groups may have also caught your attention. **Iron Heroes** drops the concept of class and cross-class skills: Any character can spend ranks in any skill without restriction. The skill groups give you an incentive to spend skill points on skills linked to your class's talents. Each skill group contains a number of related skills. When you spend a skill point on a group, you gain a rank in each skill within the group. This means that, with a small investment, you can gain proficiency in a range of areas. Not only are you competent in a broad number of skills, but you can spend your remaining ranks on a few specific skills that fit your character.

Characters in **Iron Heroes** also gain more skill ranks and more feats compared to classes in other games. This change builds off the central **Iron Heroes** concept of more options and more meaningful choices in both a game session and while creating your character.

The sample harrier abilities show that each class is built for action. Rather than providing static bonuses, class abilities reward you for using certain tactics or acting in a way that fits your class's tendencies.



New Gears

A technical sneak-peek at the **World of Warcraft® Roleplaying Game**

by Luke Johnson

Greetings! The new **World of Warcraft Roleplaying Game** is upon us, translating the hugely successful *Warcraft* computer games into a pen-and-paper roleplaying game. The new book's 384 pages present an entire and self-contained game; it is the only book you need to dive in and create your own **Warcraft** stories.

(And don't worry that your old books won't be compatible with the new version. They're still valid! The game's core mechanics are unchanged, so you can use all the crunchy bits—classes, items, spells, and the like—from the first edition books with the new **World of Warcraft RPG** book. Check out <http://www.swordsofceremony.com> for a conversion document that helps smooth over the rough areas.)

Perhaps this is a good time to introduce myself. My name's Luke Johnson. I have been a writer for the **'Warcraft RPG'** line since the first edition of the central rulebook a year or two ago. I am excited to say that I have gone on to become the line developer, taking the place of the worthy Mike Johnstone, who has left to triumph in other interests. I am enthused about this new opportunity and have great things in mind for the **Warcraft RPG**. When I'm working with the ultra-cool *Warcraft* world, how can I go wrong?

If you are a veteran **Warcraft RPG** player, you'll notice that the new book contains revised, expanded, and updated rules. Since we were creating a self-contained game, we used the opportunity to modify the rules to make them resonate with *Warcraft's* unique flavor. You'll see changes to character races and classes. The *Warcraft* setting creates heroes, and player characters in the **World of Warcraft RPG** embrace

heroism in a way they could not before. The rules for creating technological devices are clarified, updated, and expanded.

Speaking of that last point, one of the many things about the *Warcraft* setting that appeals to me is the steamtech gadgetry lurking throughout the world. These devices combine lethality, innovation, and whimsy in a delicious treat for the discerning player's taste buds. Who wouldn't want to adventure with a gnomish battle chicken chugging along at his side? Seriously.

The **World of Warcraft RPG** book presents rules for creating devices with steam and black powder technology. These rules allow you to recreate items you see in the computer games or cobble together items of your own invention. The technology rules in the book demonstrate another aspect of the game—it is full of pieces you can incorporate into any game based on the same rules system. (You know the rules system I'm talking about—it's based on a 20-sided die? Yeah, that's the one!) If you want to include a couple of your favorite *Warcraft* races—jungle trolls, perhaps, or undead Forsaken (a playable race from level 1, by the way!)—you can. And if you want to incorporate steamtech in your setting, the **World of Warcraft RPG** book gives you the means to do so.

In addition to comprehensive tech-creation rules, the **World of Warcraft RPG** book includes sample devices. If you are familiar with the *World of Warcraft* computer game, you'll recognize some of them. Did the wendigo smack down your buddy? No worries—just hook your pal up to your goblin jumper cables and jolt him back to life!

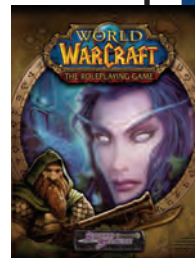
Goblin Jumper Cables

Description: This device consists of several thick yellow cables that snake out from a copper-wrapped battery. Attach the cables to various points of a recently fallen comrade, flip the switch, and the body lurches off the ground and spasms mightily while electricity plays over the thinly insulated cables. The smell of burning hair wafts up. In addition to being fun to watch, this display sometimes revives the character.

Operation: Goblin jumper cables can only revive a character who has been dead for fewer than 10 minutes. Attaching the cables to the body and properly activating the equipment requires one minute and a DC 30 Use Technological Device check. A character with 5 or more ranks in Heal gets a +2 synergy bonus on this check. If the check is successful, the body begins breathing again. The character returns to life with –1 hit point and is stable. If he was a spellcaster, he loses all his remaining spell slots. The character is also fatigued until he gets 24 hours of uninterrupted rest.

Malfunction: The battery explodes, dealing 5d6 points of slashing damage to all creatures within 15 feet (DC 18 Reflex half). The Craft (technological device) checks required to repair the device have their DCs increased by +6.

Hardness 5; 10 hp; Size Small; Weight 15 lb.; MR 4; TS 16, Craft DC 31; Price 14,000 gp.



World of Warcraft
Roleplaying Game
WW17210; \$39.99
ISBN 1-58846-781-3
Page 16

The *World of Warcraft Roleplaying Game*, a 384-page full color hardcover rulebook, is available in July.



Necromancer Power and Where to Use It

A look at **Wilderlands of High Fantasy** and **Eldritch Sorcery**

by Bill Webb



Wilderlands of High Fantasy (Boxed Set)
WW8394, \$69.99
ISBN 1-58846-948-4
Page 17



Eldritch Sorcery
WW8376, \$26.99
ISBN 1-58846-766-X
Page 16

Necromancer Games is pleased to present our Summer 2005 lineup. This summer, we are finally releasing the magnum opus of all roleplaying products: **Wilderlands of High Fantasy**.

One of the oldest and most popular fantasy roleplaying settings ever devised has been re-worked for the modern age. No longer a series of one-line entries, the **Wilderlands of High Fantasy** box set will be released this August. Over 15 writers have slaved for three years to refine and detail the original classic written in the 1970s by Bob Bledsaw and Bill Owen. The sheer volume of material presented here could make this the only game supplement a DM will ever need. Thousands of hours of play and thousands of adventures lie hidden within the pages of this massive product.

Home to the **City State of the Invincible Overlord** and other classic Judges Guild products, the **Wilderlands of High Fantasy** is the ultimate epic high-fantasy setting. The **Wilderlands of High Fantasy** was the first campaign setting ever fully fleshed out in print for fantasy roleplaying, and now Necromancer Games brings this classic Judges Guild setting to d20!

Nothing like this has ever been done before. No game world in the history of fantasy roleplaying has ever been detailed to the level of this product.

This box set contains eighteen 36" x 24" maps showing the locations of the features detailed in the books. Each map is painstakingly detailed in terms of the flavor of the local civilization, the inhabitants, and the adventure links and types. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to show some examples:

Each area is introduced to describe the feel of the area:

The northwestern region of the Wilderlands, known as the Elphant Lands, is divided by three rivers, three large lakes, mountain ranges, and steep hills. What remain are dense woodlands (dominated by the expansive Irminsul Forest), bogs, and the rare, sporadic grassland. Transportation of goods, simple travel, and even communications are extraordinarily hazardous and time-consuming, leading to tendencies of isolationism and self reliance in settlements. There is little civilization here. Most of the human population, aside from the villages, consists of Elphan cavemen. There are also bands and communities of the northern human Confeds, a race of obese hunter-gatherers scattered about the region. Located off the map proper and to the west and south of the Land of Beasts lies the land of Demi-Giants, who raid into the Elphant Lands (and beyond) on occasion.

The only significant settled population center of the region is the city of Damkina on an island within the Vast Lake, where rules the Lord of the White Throne—a remnant of an ancient empire who is sometimes referred to as "The White Overlord." The forests and plains contain mastodons, saber-toothed tigers, and other great beasts. Amazon warriors can sometimes be seen here with their tiger companions.

The Elphant Lands are claimed as tributaries by the Emperor of Viridistan, and the southern section, known as the Eleph Territories (depicted on the Viridistan map), consists of Elphan villages that are allied to Viridistan. The Elphan cavemen, whose culture is mostly still in the stone age, train and ride their great mastodons in combat.

The Elphant Lands are known for the harshness of their winters and the heavy soaking rains of spring. They tend to be quite cold and inhospitable in the north, growing more temperate and drier in the south. It is not unusual for grass to grow six feet high in some low areas, where heavy spring rains sometimes cause extensive flooding. Elphan tribesmen are common in these areas, for the hunting is good here and resources are plentiful.

Hundreds of geographic features are described in usable detail:

Glazed Lake (Calm Aquatic): So named for the glimmering, wax-like slime covering the shallows of the lake, this body of water is home to numerous large fish and other beasts of the deep. Aboleth have been seen around the shallows.

Over 1000 ruins and major areas of interest are described (and this is the player's version, the DM has significantly more information):

0814 Ruins of Sotur (EL 9 to 20+): Sotur was once the northernmost city of the Dragon Empire of the Orichalans, the companion city to Sat'r (which is now named Greenwax, located on the southern tip of the Pazidan Peninsula; Blest, 0313). The city has fallen to ruin since the majority of its structures were destroyed in a duel between two Orichalan wizards prior to the fall of the empire. Its stone walls can be seen by passing ships. To this day, the crumbling stones bear strange scars and markings from arcane blasts. The ruins are filled with conjured monsters and demons, but they appear to be restrained to the limits of the city ruins and unable to wander from it. The city has not been repopulated due to these creatures and due to the fact that the ruins are covered with a curse and plague. Anyone who remains in the city for more than eight hours is afflicted with a rotting disease that withers the limbs and turns the organs of the body to a greenish paste.

Over 2000 points of civilization are provided not as mere stat blocks, but as links to adventure!

0314 Citadel of the Purple Crescent (Citadel): Magical; AL CG; TL 4; 200 gp limit; Assets 8,125 gp; Population 260 (Able bodied 65); Isolated (human 96%

[some Ghinoran and Common Viridian], half-elf 4%). Authority Figure: Imentepec, male human CG Ill5. Important Characters: Sruffo, male Ghinoran CG Ftr3 (castellan); Morden Longstep, male Skandik CG Ftr5 (bodyguard); Frinda, female halfling [stout] LG Ftr3 (trading post).

The elderly Imentepec is the last in a once great line of Ghinoran noblemen. He still wears his traditional family garb proudly, decorated with the Purple Crescent Moon. He secretly fears for the future, when his family name will be no more. Sruffo and Morden Longstep were selected as his heirs—the two fighters were found half-dead in front of the castle gates, covered in blood and muttering about—“the Temple of Dusty Death” and a certain “Cusor.” For more on the temple, see the classic Judges Guild product The Book of Treasure Maps III. Since then, they have been faithful retainers and friends to the illusionist. The citadel has a small trading post, where all kinds of supplies are found in abundance.

Over 1,400 monster lairs (representing a sampling of common types, and several unique ones) are detailed for the DM to use in overland travel!

0716 Giant Frogs (EL 10): South of the Spinster Stream, on the border of the Al-Tamlain Marshes, close to the Nizir Hills, dwells a colony of **15 giant frogs*** (CR 2; hp 17). They are always hungry and attack small groups of humanoids on sight. A proper search of the area around the lair brings up 212 scattered gold pieces and some rusted remains of weapons and armor, damaged and corroded beyond use.

Also described are rules for applying climate, terrain types and

overland movement, technology level of the various civilizations, races and classes present, and government of the Wilderlands.

But Wait, There's More...

Also from Necromancer this Summer is **Eldritch Sorcery**. Unearth forgotten spells, lost lore, and hidden artifacts possessing the power of ages await those brave enough to search them out or create them. Highlight your campaign with new treasures or develop your character through the use of new spells and feats.

This 144-page collection of spells can be used to enhance any player character or campaign. These new spells come from the same people that brought you the **Tome of Horrors™**. Guidelines provided within this tome should help adjust any of the spells to your own game world. Necromancers, and the clerics who battle them, can find new powers here... if you dare release them.

Eldritch Sorcery also:

- provides new spells designed to enhance characters and game play
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- supplies new magic items, relics, and artifacts for characters to seek out or for DMs to build adventures around
- provides players with new spells and powers they'll love, without breaking the balance of the game and ruining it for others
- supplies new magic items and artifacts that can be used as a source for a DM to construct an entire campaign.

Unlike most books of spells, the spells here fit with v3.5 rules and are balanced by the same people who brought you award-winning books in the past.

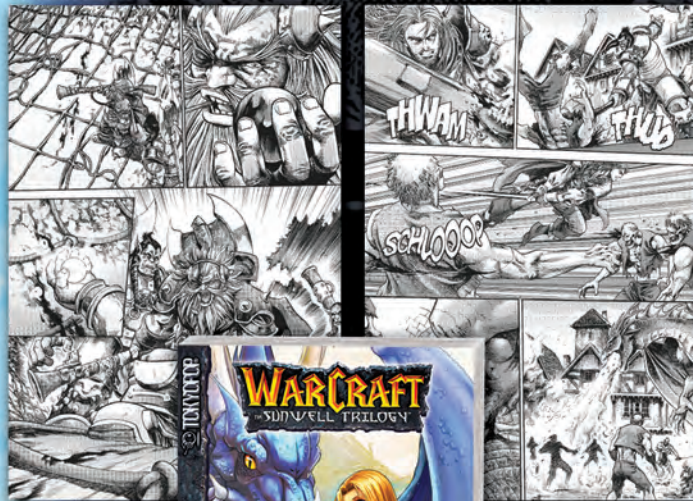


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BETHENA "MA" STONEFOLLER A COLORFUL CITIZEN OF THE LAST CITY

BY LEE HAMMOCK



The Last City
WW17605; \$21.99
ISBN 1-58846-771-6
Page 18

The world of **DragonMech** was destroyed by brutal meteor storms that literally scorched the surface world to dust. Civilization is destroyed—with a single notable exception. The bustling port city of Edge, nestled in a gigantic cliffside cave, survived virtually unscathed. Protected from the lunar rain by its thick stone ceiling, Edge straddles a 1,000-foot-tall waterfall where the Endless River spills from a cliff face. Here, two disparate cultures meet. In one direction, the river traverses the deepest underdark; in the other direction, it meanders overland through the eastern prairies. For thousands of years, Edge has been where the underdark and surface world come to trade. Now, in the age of mechs, it is the only city left standing!

The last city's economy revolves around the huge population of traders that converge there. The biggest impediment to trade is the 1,000-foot-tall cliff that separates the surface world from the underdark. From this obstacle has evolved the city's single largest industry: portaging goods up and down the cliff. Enterprising dwarves long ago carved staircases into the rock, and now they make their living charging tolls to those who would pass through with goods to trade.

This article examines one of the colorful personalities of Edge: Bethena "Ma" Stonefoller, who leads one faction of the guild that controls these staircases.

BETHENA "MA" STONEFOLLER

The leader of the Stairkeepers Guild is Bethena "Ma" Stonefoller, head of the stepper faction. Ma Stonefoller openly favors the steppers over the other factions in the Stairkeepers—which the Ober wizards and the mech scalars actually prefer, since it means

she stays out of their business. The pulleymen, porters, and Greymane animal riders are not so complacent, though, and they regularly struggle for more influence in the guild. As a result, steppers rarely get along well with these groups, particularly porters (whom the steppers think overstate their importance) and pulleymen (the closest competitors to the steppers in terms of price).

A native of Edge, Ma Stonefoller has been working in the Stairkeepers since her adolescence, which she spent selling lemonade and snacks to those who travel through Cliffside. She knows every facet of staircase operation intimately, but she has little experience with the other factions in the Stairkeepers. This lack of familiarity is obvious in her dealings with these other groups, which she sees as always trying to muscle the steppers out of the vertical travel business with their innovation and speed. While the members of other factions don't think of her with much fondness, the steppers and many of the folk living in Cliffside see her as a benevolent (if eccentric) grandmother. If anyone were to actually attack Ma Stonefoller, Cliffside could well erupt in riots as the whole neighborhood rose up to protect her.

In addition to controlling one of the best staircases in Cliffside, Ma Stonefoller and the Stonefoller halfling clan are the dominant force in the sales of refreshments to those traveling the cliff of Edge. Their lemonade booths are common sights on most staircase landings, and they even sell snacks on the elevators run by the pulleymen. This business is a money-making machine for Ma Stonefoller, and the profits helped her take control of the Stairkeepers. Ma Stonefoller has strong contacts with the merchants of Edge who provide the foodstuffs she needs, but her cutthroat

bargaining posture and regular use of threats has not endeared her to those who do business with her.

Ma Stonefoller is a charismatic leader and organizer who easily establishes a familiar rapport with her followers; they think of her as family. For her this is largely an act, because she is far more concerned about her own pockets than her followers' welfare. She's more than willing to cut corners that hurt others if it means money for her; hence the reduction of safety precautions during her tenure as Guildmaster. Ma Stonefoller has lived her entire life in Edge and knows its places and people like the back of her hand. This knowledge, combined with her cunning mind and political savvy, make her a very effective leader. She is easily one of the most powerful people in Edge.

Guildmaster Bethena "Ma" Stonefoller, Halfling Expert 6/ Rogue 2: CR 8; Small humanoid; HD 8d6; hp 31; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 armor, +1 size, +1 deflection); Base Atk +5; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d3-2, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6, trapfinding, evasion, halfling racial traits; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 5, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16. Height 3 ft. 2 in., weight 45 lbs.

Skills and Feats:

Appraise +11, Climb +11, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +13, Profession (stairkeeper) +17, Sense Motive +19; Negotiator, Skill Focus (Profession (stairkeeper)), Skill Focus (Sense Motive).

Possessions: leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, climber's kit, 2 thunderstones, 2 vials of alchemist's fire, artisan's outfit, signet ring, ring of feather falling, ring of protection +1

Lost in the Mists of Time

An Excerpt from *Islands of Mist*

by Anthony Pryor

Islands of Mist is a momentous product. It's the first one in which any people other than the designers at Sony Online Entertainment have been permitted to add setting material to the world of Norrath, location of *EverQuest* and *EverQuest II*. Sure, we've added bits of detail here and there in the EQrpg, and we've even described regions that existed but were not fully realized online (cf., Anthony Pryor's description of the Loping Plains in **Realms of Norrath: Dagnor's Cauldron**), but we've never done anything quite like this. These islands amount to what would be considered an expansion of the online game. As when SOE added Kunark or Velious to previously known continents, we're adding an archipelago known collectively as the Islands of Mist. We hope you see them online someday, but for now, this new region of Norrath exists only in our pen-and-paper RPG.

And best of all, because they're set apart from the remainder of Norrath, the Islands of Mist are useful for players and GMs of either the **EverQuest RPG** or **EverQuest II RPG**.

—Stewart Wieck, EQIIrpg co-creator

The Islands of Mist have lain hidden from Norrath's civilized races for centuries. This isolation is a mixed blessing, for though it has shielded them from many of the wars and disasters that have plagued the rest of Norrath, it has also cut the islands' inhabitants off from even the tiniest bit of news of the outside world. Here, races such as the ogres and the aviak still follow the old ways, preserving some remnant of their ancient glories.

Here, too, dwell two races found nowhere else on Norrath—the Paer'Dal or aquatic elves, a strange amphibious race that has built an extensive undersea civilization; and amazingly, a remnant of the ancient species of fish-folk known as the kedge. Descendants of savage hybrid folk created by the original pure-blood kedge to circumvent the limitations placed upon them by their divine creator, these lesser kedge have survived and prospered. It is the kedge, in fact, who are responsible for the isles' isolation.

Of course, none of this information was yet known to Captain Redwine when he made the following log entries:

A few of the men claim to have seen strange sights—mysterious

man-like figures just beneath the waves, great fish with harnesses like horses, flashing lights in the depths accompanied by deep, mysterious sounds. I myself have seen none of these things and have forbidden the men to repeat such rumors. All the same, as we sail from island to island or make camp on shore to forage, I cannot help but feel as if I am being watched by something. What, I cannot say, but the feeling persists.

Regardless, the islands are rich, and their inhabitants are varied. Shataya reports that several islands are inhabited by ogres. (Most strange!) We have stayed well clear of these isles, for (my own steward Zobukk notwithstanding) ogres are dangerous and unpredictable brutes. Elsewhere, through her scrying, Shataya has seen evidence of tree-dwellings like those of the Feir'Dal or the aviak. We have not yet investigated these islands, as intent as we are on mapping the present group and replenishing our near-exhausted stocks. Should there be wood elves here, I'm certain there will be much opportunity for plunder.

Recently, I should note, Shataya complains that she is having

difficulty recovering her magical energies, and that her spells appear to be only minimally effective.

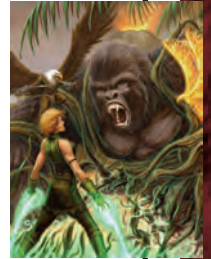
As evening comes, a deep mist has risen from the sea. Given their recent concerns, the men appear nervous and fearful. I have assured them that such things are entirely natural and have issued an extra rum ration. For the moment, they seem content.

* * *

Something strange has happened. Something strange and terrible. The mist has not broken, but instead enshrouds the isles in an impenetrable ice-blue grip. We cannot sail past it. We cannot swim under it, and we do not have the magical ability to fly over it. (The birds seem as confused as we are, so it may be that even that route would be closed to us.)

For the moment, we are trapped. Until the mist departs or until we find a way around it, here we must stay. I have told the men, and though they grumble, they appear to have accepted our situation. For the moment at least. We have begun to search for a suitable island on which to build temporary shelter.

—Log of Captain Mateus Redwine, freebooter of Qeynos



Islands of Mist
WW16516; \$34.99
ISBN 1-58846-968-9

The Professional Adventurer's Guide

by Marty Caplan

A preview of next quarter's supplement to *The Secret of Zir'An*

We wanted to do something different with this supplement than what standard player's guides generally offer. We wanted to provide Zir'An fans not only an expanded bunch of skill packages, equipment, Rune and Shadow Magic for their characters, but also some insight into what it's like to be one of the Chosen of Fate. The book is conceived as something that actual adventurers (or wannabe adventurers) would buy and use in their lives. This, good readers, is what we offer you in the **Professional Adventurer's Guide**. A sampling of what will be within:

- **Into the World**

This is a travel guide written by a famous adventurer, detailing the kind of places one can expect to encounter and characters he's met there throughout his career. The general topics include The Wilds, The City, The Depths, and The Skies, and a scattering of oft-told rumors of Secrets still waiting to be discovered.

- **Special Advertising Section**

This chapter details the course offerings of the Lokarno Institute of Self Improvement, a vocational magic education college. With branches in most major Treaty nations, the Lokarno Institute has a variety of courses on Lesser and Greater Runes. Some branches even offer specialized, confidential classes in Shadow Magic.

- **Adventure & Adventure Miscellany Catalog**

Here is where you'll find all sorts of new armor, weapons, inebriants,

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- **Services to Hire**

A classified section with details on business opportunities and hirelings offering their services as bodyguards, personal butlers, consultants, companions, and so on. Both adventurers and Hands of Fate will be well served to take advantage of the specialists and their abilities listed.

- **Who's Who Zir'An**

An adventurer is only as effective as who he knows. In this section—compiled by the expert political, business, and gossip columnists of the—*Madura Journal*—more than 20 of the most advantageous people for an adventurer to be connected to are profiled.

As you will hopefully agree, the—**Professional Adventurer's Guide** has a large variety of appealing sections that we at Paragon Games hope will enhance your gaming group's experience of the **Secret of Zir'An**. A prime resource for any future fantasy game, guaranteed for the player characters' lifetimes... however long they might last.

The Professional Adventurer's Guide

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Often find yourself in dangerous situations? Do you feel an irresistible tug to risk life and limb? Do strange and unexpected things happen to you on a regular basis? Well then my friend, you might just be one of the Chosen! And take it from us here at Adventure & Adventure, no self-respecting adventurer would be without my highly qualified self-help **Professional Adventurer's Guide**. Inside you'll find everything you need to know to survive whatever Lyiss might see fit to throw at you—from Shadekin monstrosities to Carosel thugs. And the handy Lavoï Adventurer Gear Catalog offers the best equipment at reasonable prices so you can look and feel like a real adventurer!

Knights, Knights, and Only Knights!

A look behind the scenes of **Pendragon (Fifth Edition)**

by Greg Stafford

A longtime fan of the *Pendragon* roleplaying game, I always enjoyed designer Greg Stafford's notes in the various editions of and supplements for the game. His passion for and pride in this game shone through very clearly. Therefore, I asked Greg to write a new Designer's Notes section to appear at the end of the new edition of the game that will be available in October, and the following is a small section of those notes. This excerpt discusses the design priority of creating a game about knights in adherence to Arthurian literature.'—Stewart Wieck, Publisher

Greg Stafford has been in the hobby game industry since he founded the game company Chaosium in 1974 and subsequently founded Issaries, Inc. in 1998. He is designer or co-designer of several board games, one computer game, and the roleplaying games of RuneQuest, Prince Valiant, Ghostbusters, and HeroQuest.

I early decided that I would narrow the focus of this game to be only about knights. I would not try to mimic the popular conception of fantasy that threw every possible player type into a big messy pool of options. I wanted to stick to the standards of literature, which didn't cater to commoners, thieves, scribes, or even magicians. Later, under pressure from Game Masters who wanted a portrayal of Arthurian magic, I did publish a magic system for the game, which naturally led to addressing the issue for player characters who wanted to be magicians. But I always considered that a dilution of the essential game, and almost everyone who has commented says it is no fun to be a magic user in *Pendragon*. I have to admit, that's fine by me.

By focusing on knights, I early realized that Glory acquisition would be the key to the game. It was a reasonable coin with which to measure the value of a knight's life, both in the literary and the real worlds. So I made a list of things that knights do, and began fiddling with

the relative values. With that "game coin" as the focus, I began working out how characters would collect it.

But if the game was all about knights, then I needed to differentiate them. I needed to quantify behavior, because I wanted it to be able to include patterns of conduct as different as William Marshall and Gille de Rais. Play testing resolved the system. So everyone would be a knight, and the game is about what *kind* of knight you are going to be.

This decision led to a proliferation of knightly *types*. That is, everyone would have to be a fighting type, since that is the job of all knights. But chivalric behavior, romantic manners, and religious leanings were different. I eventually included character generation for people from every nation that produced original Arthurian stories and different religions as well (not in this fifth-edition rulebook, but to be published later).

So I early had the literary structure and idealistic frame for the game. But that alone is not enough. I love the setting of medieval reality and its brutal, gritty realism of the struggle between life and death. Though many games are tilted toward player character ease, making a knight's work easy dilutes the emotional impact of play. I wanted players to feel as worried about their characters as characters would be about themselves. Since the perfection of Arthurian ideals is offset by this danger, I wanted to make a game that walked the line between the brutali-

ties of a lethal reality and the idealism of a visionary life dedicated to the highest standards of human life. This theme is the key to the Arthurian legends.

So the game is dangerous and lethal (for the characters). I didn't want to water down the knight's life of death and danger. I wanted players to know the danger, to have a reason for their knights to strategically retreat once in a while. The sweetness and light of so many previous fantasy games, which were either not lethal or had a hundred methods of resurrection and healing, is alien to the body of Arthurian lore. The original stories were entertainment for men who knew the realities of combat, and I felt that to water that down betrayed the body of literature.

So, every character is going to die, either from violence or old age.

But these people also lived in a world of ideals and hope that offered to lift them from the filth and dirt in which their lives were mired. Much of this hope came from spiritual ideals, an unreachable goal. Yet, these ideas of chivalry and *noblesse oblige*—and of romance and love—were real, and some people strove to obtain them. The legends of idealized knights striving for the unobtainable ideals would not have been so popular had they not moved those tough, grizzled killers of men, and that makes them critical to the game. I wanted it to mirror the concerns of that period. I did not want the simple, shallow reality of killing things without repercussions, without a concern for the larger world in which people live.

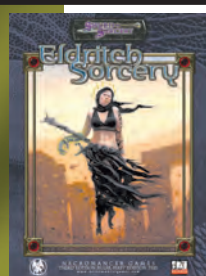
So that essential tension in Arthurian literature—ideals versus reality—had to be the basis for the game.



Pendragon
(Fifth Edition)
VW17800; \$34.99
ISBN 1-58846-947-6
Coming in October



For the rest of the Design Notes (and their context), check out—**Pendragon (Fifth Edition)**, a 240-page hardcover rulebook of chivalry and heroism. Coming in October.



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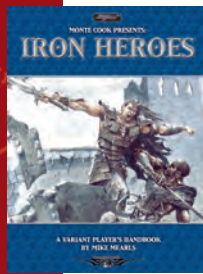
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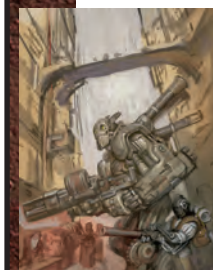
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