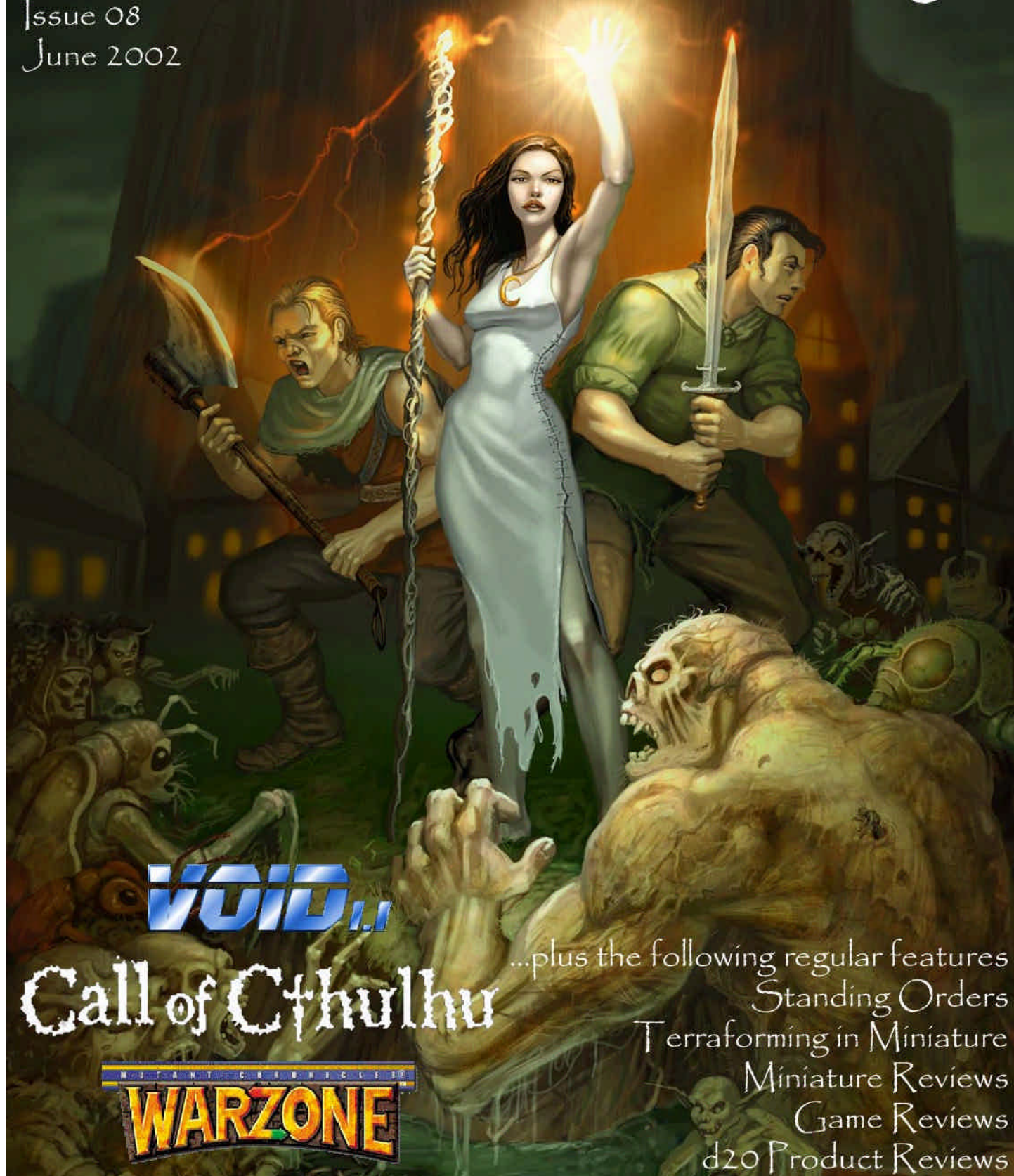


Fictional Reality

Issue 08
June 2002



VOID..

Call of Cthulhu

WARZONE

...plus the following regular features

Standing Orders

Terraforming in Miniature

Miniature Reviews

Game Reviews

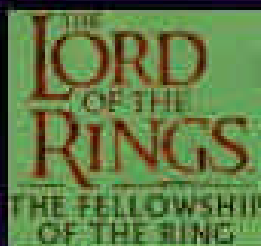
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Fictional Reality

June 2002

Issue 08

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Ah, Summer in Texas. Actually, it's not too bad right now, but by August we'll be just dripping with sweat. I guess I'll have to spend more time inside painting figures and playing games. Well, that's not all that will be taking up my free hours during the Summer. Baby Megan is preparing for her arrival and will join the rest of the brood sometime in late August or early September. That puts a wee dent into my gaming and painting schedules, but also nixes any plans I had of attending Gen Con this year. If anyone that gets to Gen Con this year would like to write up a report I'd love to put it in the next issue. Next year may work out better for me anyway. My oldest son, Bradley, has been gaming with my Dungeons and Dragons group for a while now and has also been trying his hand at some painting. He's getting the hang of things and by next year he should be a pro. Ok, next year will be a go. We should actually start planning for it now. Road trip or catch a plane?

Planning is a huge part of a rather large terrain building article this issue. Ever want to build a castle? Well, we did it. We're also spreading our role-playing game wings a bit with a very cool short Call of Cthulhu adventure from the GM of our local CoC group. About halfway through this issue you'll find some information about Dark Age, a new skirmish game. What I've seen of the miniatures look amazing. I hope to have some to review for the next issue. You'll have to settle for just eleven pages of miniature reviews in this issue. I think you'll be able to get by just fine though. A bunch more d20 reviews round out this issue and I hope that you find it entertaining and informative.

The artwork on the cover was given to me to use from the guys at Mystic Eye Games. They make a lot of the d20 material that I have really taken a liking to. Be sure to check them out on the web.

If there's something in particular (battle report, product review, d20 adventure, etc) that you'd like to see next issue please drop me a line at m.theurer@att.net

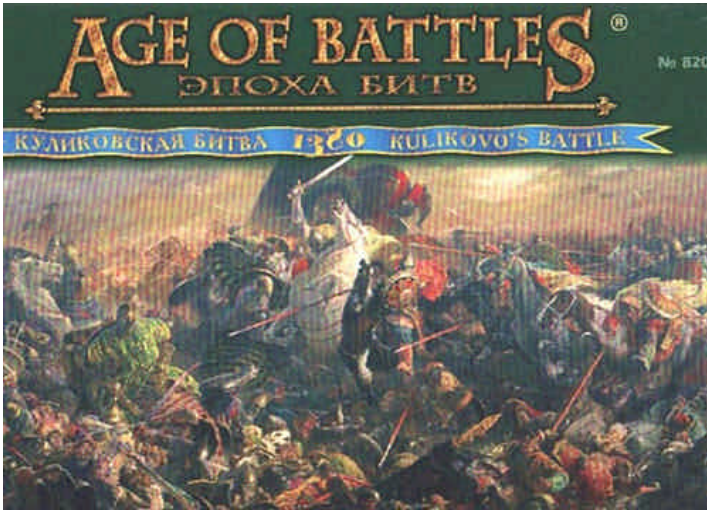
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Like I point out every issue. What doesn't belong to me, the copyright to all of the games and game worlds and figures and artwork etc... is the property of their rightful owners. I challenge none of it, but am very appreciative for being able to include it here. Thanks very much.

STANDING ORDERS

BY DEANO C. WARE



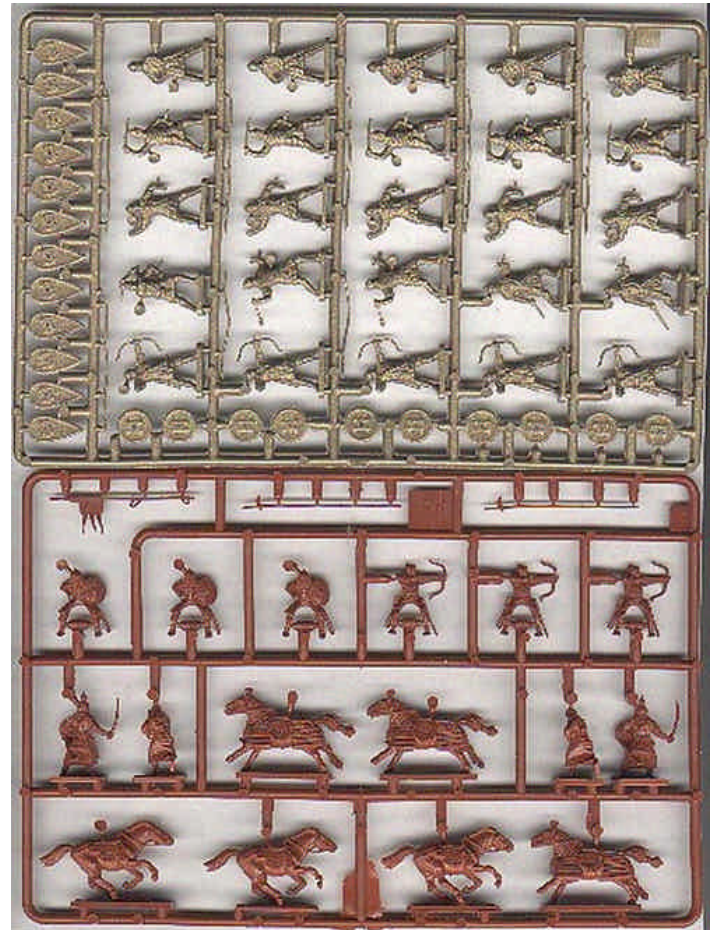
Well this month marks the one year anniversary of this column in Fictional Reality and I must admit that I am pleasantly surprised that it is still going. I owe a lot of this to you the readers and fans of FR, many of whom I have never had the pleasure of meeting but sometimes, like this weekend, I do and always appreciate the feedback. In that vein I would like to thank Rich Orbane, a gamer and reader of FR, as my way of thanking all of you. Finally, in looking back over the last year while I am satisfied with the profiles we have brought you so far, this year I will attempt to bring you more of the type of profiles I originally envisioned for the column. This will mean less profiles featuring 'boxed' or 'board' games like BattleCry or Lord of the Rings and more miniature wargaming books or manuals like Ravens of Karnage, Katana and Samurai Swords.

AGE OF BATTLES

This month I am profiling a Russian game called Age of Battles. I first saw accessories to some fortification accessories for the game at my local hobby shop and then later picked up the complete boxed set when it became available. Being a connoisseur of wargames I was intrigued to find out whether or not our Russian colleagues wargame as we do or whether or not they incorporated their own biases into their wargames. If you are similarly intrigued, read on....

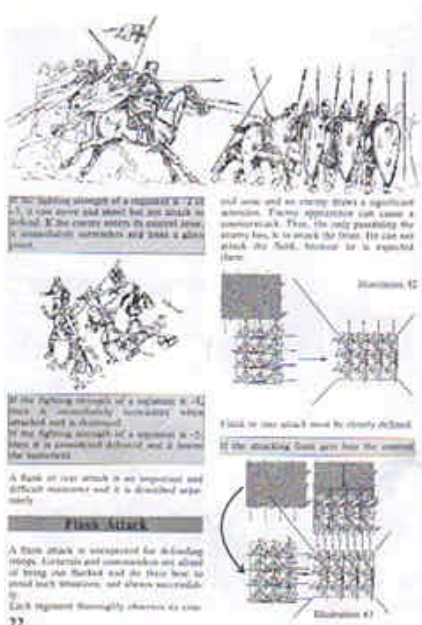
What You Get - Age of Battles is a Russian miniatures game sold in a box containing everything you need to play the game. Actually Age of Battles is the name of the "game system" and each box contains a game based upon a different historical "battle" - not necessarily a different era. I purchased the game based upon the battle of "Kulikovo" which is based on historical events, which took place on September 8, 1380, when the Russian

retinues under the command of Moscow Prince Dmitry Donskoi defeated the Golden Horde troops led by Khan Mamai. Presently, other than the battle of Kulikovo, the Battle of Marathon is also available. The box includes: 64 plastic miniatures of approximately 1/72 scale, 10 formation bases, 10 banners with labels, 10 roster cards, a ruler strip, the rulebook, a 20 sided die, and a sheet of terrain markers.



What You Need - Everything you need to play the game is included in the box, however the game is played with a 20 sided die and only one is included so it would definitely help to pick up an extra one.

What You Are Told - The introduction to Age of Battle states: "This game is for 2-6 players. The [contesting] armies commanded by players meet on the historical Kulikovo field. The military characteristics of the armies are also close to the historical ones down to the limit. The tactical regiment maneuvers is of much importance in the game. Relying on skillful commanding the smaller army can [defeat] its more numerous enemy. You can reproduce the historical events of "Mamai's Defeat" or trv



Age of Battles Rule Book

plastic miniatures sold in most gaming stores but the terrain sheets are printed on very thin paper and will certainly have to be pasted to thin cardboard if you expect to use them. However, they are in color so mounting them to board should be worth the effort. The roster cards are very well done on laminated thin card and can be marked on with any dry erase marker and then used again. The ten (10) formation bases can hold about 12 infantry figures or 8 cavalry figures. Unfortunately some gluing is required for the figure's shields and spears and this can always be a pain when dealing with plastic. The tartar miniatures come in 7 different poses, while the Russian army features about 16 different poses.

What's Old - Being a Russian game I was surprised to see some familiar (not necessarily "old") rule mechanics in Age of Battles. The first of these is the points or "cost" system it uses for each type of unit or figure. The authors suggest you can either play the "battle" right out of the box or else create your own battles between armies of equal points. In order to facilitate this, the

game includes an 'army list sheet' depicting each figure in the game and its value and costs. Each army has a separate list. Other than the 'cost' system, most of the rule mechanics were actually quite familiar – each figure

Anyway, the victory should be gained not only at the expense of strength, but also using the [art of command] [Author's note: some text has been revised in translation].

What You Will Discover - The first thing you will discover about Age of Battles is that the game is 'translated' in English - not written in English. The English is broken but still quite readable. The miniatures are equal to any other

figure has Movement value, Attack value, Defense value and (where applicable) Shooting value. Age of Battles uses a pre-measured movement system meaning each unit/figure can move a pre-determined distance each game turn. Standard unit formations are used so I presume this implies that medieval Russian armies did not employ any different formations than those of their European counterparts. Finally, even combat resolution is quite familiar - each attacker rolls a d20 die and must roll equal to or higher than the difference between his 'Attack value' and any modifiers and the defenders 'Defense value' and any modifiers.

What's New - Judging from the previous section, it is apparent there aren't any industry "innovations" in Age of Battle but surprisingly the game itself feels quite "new". First of all, unlike most games, the way Age of Battles uses combat modifiers is quite unique. Instead of adding and subtracting modifiers prior to each combat, each "unit" in the game has a roster card on which it records any "modifiers" that apply to it. These modifiers are then added/subtracted for a total "Combat Advantage". As a result some units will receive a positive modifier to their Attack/Defense value while others will receive a negative modifier. However, in addition to modifiers for 'formation', leadership, standards, musicians, etc., each unit has a "Glory" number which increases as the unit defeats other units in combat. A unit's total modifiers and its glory are called its "Battle Spirit". Another quirk of the game, if not new, is that players are allowed to hold a portion of their army back in 'reserve' prior to the battle and introduce it later prior to any of their moves.

What's Familiar - Combat in Age of Battles while familiar, is quick. There are no "saving" throws and a unit's "armor" is simply reflected in its 'Defense value'. This makes for quick games but can be very frustrating when you lose a leader. It also makes missile weapons very powerful because even though 'range' will affect the score needed to hit, a d20 invariably rolls 'low' so it is quite common for archers to kill from very long distances. Another familiar rule mechanic used by Age of Battles is allowing units to contain mixed figures. However, since each 'figure' has its own values this can slow combat down considerably if you have a front rank of say 'three halberdiers and three swordsmen' fighting a front rank of 'three spearmen and three axemen'.

What's Good - The best part of the game by far is the rulebook. Despite the broken English in the rulebook it is very well illustrated and contains complete rules for gaming 'sieges' or 'assaults' at the end of the book. Fortifications and siege accessories are available for the game but sold separately. The rulebook only has 35 pages including the siege rules, which begin on page 27. While some of the English takes a while to figure out the size of the rulebook makes its quite easy to read them two or three times until you understand them. I was also impressed with the overall 'feel' of the rules. There also appears to be a very strategic aspect to the game in that it is possible to take 'weak' figures and form them into a

Regiment's battle force		Battle spirit	
Regiment's Shooting		Regiment's Shooting	
Cavalry charge	2/3	Cavalry charge	2/3
Second line infantry	+1	Second line infantry	+1
The covered flank	+1	The covered flank	+1
The covered flank	+1	The covered flank	+1
The commander	+1	The commander	+1
Standard-bearer, Musicians	+1	Standard-bearer, Musicians	+1
The accelerated movement	-1	The accelerated movement	-1
Attack in flank	-1	Attack in flank	-1
Attack in flank	-1	Attack in flank	-1
Attack in rear	-1	Attack in rear	-1
Loss of the commander or standard	-1	Loss of the commander or standard	-1
Regiment's battle force		Battle spirit	

Age of Battles Unit Card



'powerful' unit by maximizing their modifiers and gaining more and more Glory. This would make for an excellent 'campaign' system as well where you could allow units to carry Glory over from a previous battle so long as the unit's never drops below the minimum amount of figures necessary to prevent it from disbanding.

What's Bad - Even though I have alluded to "broken" English in the rules, they are not really that bad. For example here is a passage indicating that slingers do not receive any negative modifier when shooting over other ranks: "Slingers can shoot over the head of the troopers fully using the shooting result, but they cannot shoot when in the regiment. They have to make one step back." Other than the English the only "bad" thing about the game is it doesn't deal much with "command" if you prefer that in a game. There also aren't any charts and weapons and armor are only dealt with abstractly in a figure's values.

What I'm Going to Do with These Rules - I haven't played a large battle with the game yet, which I think the rules would be perfect for. However, based on the skirmish game I played where my leader was killed by an archer I definitely intend to modify the rules and add some type of 'saving' rolls. Ironically, the rulebook indicates this is the 2nd Edition and indicates they have added suggested improvements by other players. So if you are interested, give the game a try and let the authors know what you think should be in the third edition. You can find more info on Age of Battles at:

www.ageofbattles.ru/engl

MINIATURE REVIEWS

CHAINMAIL

SKIRMISH GAME

This issue, our look at Chainmail miniatures starts with a big 'un. The Ogre Delver (pictured above) comes as a three-piece model consisting of two hands with axes and the rest of the body. In addition to his two hand-axes he is also armed with a small-ish warhammer. In the game he would use the hammer as a thrown weapon, but comparing his size to that of the hammer I wouldn't expect him to do much more than sink a few nails with it. Cleanup was pretty easy with this model. Flash was almost non-existent, the mold line could only be seen upon



direct scrutiny and there were no flaws. The wrists, where they connect to the rest of the arms, looked a bit thin at first glance, but when they were glued into place they fit ok and look fine. Mister big and gruesome is not wearing much in the way of armor. Just some pieces of stitched together leather, a loincloth, and a leather mask. Being an ogre he really does not need much more in the way of armor though. He is also wearing several belts, wristbands, and straps. I do like the miniature's pose. You can imagine him wading through ranks of enemies, just cleaving away with the axes. The Delver is a little less muscled than other ogres, but he's no lightweight by any means. I've been impressed with many of the other ogres that are available for Chainmail. They would all cross over nicely to other games, miniature and role-playing. Not trying to bash anyone, but at about two-thirds the price of other ogres I wouldn't have to think too long before grabbing a whole bunch of ogres from the Chainmail line. At \$8.00 USD each they are a very affordable way to go if you need a bunch of big burly lads and want a bit of variety.

Next up from Wizards of the Coast is the Half Dragon Mage from the Ravilla faction. The Ravilla faction is made up primarily by elves, but also has quite a few smaller dragons that accompany them onto the battlefield. Having a half dragon in their ranks makes perfect sense and adds nicely to their flavor. To the right you'll see the figure. It comes as a four-piece model made up of the body (including head), tail, left arm (holding a staff), and little dragon wings. A small amount of cleaning was needed and the mold line was noticeable and needed filing. All of the pieces fit onto the body just fine, but the line where the tail attaches to the



Body is quite noticeable and will need to be filed down a bit. This is another female model and on closer inspection you'll notice that she's fairly well endowed. Well, with her being a half dragon I'm not really sure what well endowed would be, so I'm guessing a bit here. Her right hand is holding a spellbook and the staff in her left hand bears a draconic head. As you would expect with being a spell caster she is not wearing much in the way of armor. She definitely got most of her features from the dragon side of the family and I wish that they had made the wings a little larger to emphasize this more. She bears little resemblance to the non-dragon side and I would not have minded if it had been taken a bit farther. At \$6.00 USD the model is decently priced and has other uses if you're not into Chainmail. Most obvious is as a PC in a role-playing game and she could also be used as a Stygian Priestess in Chronopia.

Our next figure to get the "turn your head and cough" treatment is the Abyssal Eviscerator. With a name like that it had better be one bad boy. The picture below and on page 6 go a long way to letting you know that this guy is not kidding around. He has two legs, four arms, teeth that go on forever and a tongue that would make Gene



Simmons of KISS jealous. The monster comes as a three piece model, with the two large arms coming separate from the body. They fit easily into place and there is a little bit of room for movement before they will look noticeably out of place. There was a little bit of cleanup



needed with the Eviscerator, but there were no flaws and the large arms did not need to be pinned into place. You can go to that trouble if you wish, but I think they'll be just fine being glued. His little 'T-rex-ish' baby arms are there to shred you up after he beats you down and drags you in with the big ones. In addition to his muscles he has lots of big bony plates all over his body and there are more teeth in his mouth than I care to count. Another cool touch is the fact that he has three eyes. Obviously, he's going to make his way into Naresh armies for Chainmail. In fact, two are in line to be painted at my house. Other uses could include (with a bit of conversion work) use as Bloodletters in Warhammer Fantasy Battles or as Dusk Realm Warriors in Chronopia. Do I need to mention that they would make, and will in my game, great adversaries for your player characters in Dungeons and Dragons? Nope, didn't think so. He'll set you back \$6.00 USD, and like I said he's cool enough to warrant be picking up two of them so he's good to go.



Over to the right you'll set your eye upon one of a pair of Skeletal Dwarf Soldiers. These come two to a box for \$6.00 USD. That's not a bad price for two miniatures, but I'd really be happier if there were two sculpts instead of just one. I found each

model to be complete, but in need of more than a few minutes of cleanup. Mold lines were visible and needed filing and flash was present in a lot of places. The shield, a separate piece, is nicely detailed with a skull on the front and is reinforced with an iron band around it. These undead dwarves retained their beards into the afterlife and their skeletal remains are visible under their helmets, in their boots, and in their gloves. They are wearing chainmail armor with a few bits of plate and leather that has certainly seen better days. Their helmet, in the open position so you can view their skull, has been made into the visage of some demon. These little guys also have several uses beyond Chainmail. The Devout army for Chronopia specifically fields Dwarf Risen (Skeletons) and a couple of these standing next to the ones by Excelsior

would look just fine. Also, for Warhammer Fantasy you could drop these into a regiment of Skeleton Warriors (Gothic or Vanilla) and they would look good and also add a little variety to your unit. Again, I'm not thrilled that there's only one pose, but I can live with it.

Last up from the Chainmail line for this issue is the Human Shadow Priest of Ahmut's Legion. This evil cleric is wearing loads of plate armor and has a sash hanging from his waist. His face looks very cool. It's pallid and sunken, but not quite undead looking. The shield is very nice, bearing a raised image of the logo for Ahmut's Legion, an Equiceph skull. The mold line was visible, but needed minimal



filing. The flash was about the same as with the Skeleton Dwarf Soldiers. Meaning that there was more than I'm used to seeing on Chainmail figures, but nothing horrendous. A few minutes of cleaning up and he's ready to go. The more I looked at this figure the less I started to like it. It took a little while before I could put my finger on it, but I think that I've nailed it down to the pose that just doesn't do it for me. Specifically, him holding up his unholy scepter up like it's the Olympic torch. I've decided to clip and rotate his left arm so it's in more of a forward position like he's about to unleash some spell focused through the scepter. He'll set you back \$4.00 USD, which is not bad at all for a character model, but out of this bunch he's at the end of the line.

Miniature	Stock #	Army	Price (USD)
Ogre Delver	88390	Drazen	\$8.00
Half Dragon Mage	88780	Ravilla	\$4.00
Abyssal Eviscerator	88760	Naresh	\$6.00
Skeletal Dwarves	88460	Ahmut	\$6.00
Shadow Priest	88550	Ahmut	\$4.00

MINIATURE REVIEWS

EXCELSIOR entertainment

This issue we'll start off with two more ani-morphs from the Iron Claw line that is distributed by Excelsior. Like we talked about in the last issue of Fictional Reality the Iron Claw line of figures are animal-humanoids that are a bit smaller than most of your player character models.



To the left is are a couple of looks at a fox-like creature named Dierdre. She's carrying a short bow and a quiver of arrows, but that's all as far

as equipment goes. She's wearing very light leather armor and some leggings and is certainly a rogue of some sort. Cleanup did take a little while as there was some flash that needed to be trimmed along with the bottom of the base that needed to be leveled off. The mold line was very faint and just took a second to file down in the places where it was visible. Dierdre could be used as a Ratling rogue in Dungeons and Dragons or you could use her in the Iron Claw rpg.

Vesper is a raccoon-like humanoid that is either a Sorcerer or Wizard or could very possibly be used as a Shugenja. He's leaning back a bit, ready to unleash a spell on his foes. Cleanup was about the same as with Dierdre. All of his fur looks fine (as does Dierdre's) and his robes hold a good amount of detail. A nice touch are the spectacles that he is wearing. They are kind of hard to see in the pictures, but they add some flavor to the model.



Both of these models, the whole Iron Claw line in fact, can add something unique to a party of adventurers. I think that they would have the most impact if maybe only one or two players were using non-standard races such as these, but if you want a whole litter of these little buggers running around have at it. Many from this line could also find a home in mass combat armies. They could most easily be integrated into a Skaven army for Warhammer Fantasy Battles, but I'm sure that ingenious players can find many more uses for them.



Above is the green sculpt of the new Swamp Goblin Sentinel. Unfortunately, the picture is all I've been able to get my hands on so I cannot give a full-blown review of the model.

Based on the size of a normal Swamp Goblin I'd say that the Sentinel is probably the length of a horse and a little wider if you take into consideration the extra room his bendy legs will need. I'd estimate the height of the model at about the same as standard cavalry figures.

The rider appears to be holding a spear aloft in his right hand with his left hand ready to draw a dagger. The jaws and stinger of the Sentinel are also visible and look like they are ready to strike.

From what I can see this looks like a very nice model and worth the \$12.95 price tag and since Chronopia is more of a skirmish game, and the Sentinel takes up an Individual slot, you're only likely to have one or maybe two in your army. It doesn't rank too high on the versatility chart, but Swamp Goblin players can rejoice now that it's out and I can see using it in my Dungeons and Dragons campaign.

www.excelsiorgames.info

MINIATURE REVIEWS

CONFRONTATION



Here we have two relatively new Confrontation models to take a look at. First up is Tanath, the Young Wolf. As is readily visible, Tanath is from the barbarian army and is quite buff. He is very muscled, but not in an over the top kind of way. He did require more cleaning than is typical for Confrontation miniatures and as you can see above his rather large spear broke. This happened during

cleaning. The spear is top heavy and the joint where it broke seems pretty weak. Even with that problem I really like this figure a lot! The ritual scarring on his chest and arms is very cool and he just looks like a major bad-ass. At \$7.99 USD he's a bit on the pricey side, but it's a versatile figure that can fit into many games. Tanath comes as a one piece model, unless his spear brakes on you too!



as big as a regular sized model. He is one bad motor scooter!

OK, now for the downside. Razheem will set you back about \$20.00 USD. If you're comparing him to a general on a dragon that's not too bad, but it just gave me a slight cringe. Not enough not to get him though. He's absolutely awesome!



Razheem L'Insense is a massive mounted model that impressed me from the get go. He comes in seven pieces and went together very easily. Actually, there was less cleanup with Razheem than with Tanath. This figure makes for a brutally impressive centerpiece of an army. If you don't play Confrontation he will also find a happy home in many other games. I don't play Alchemists in Confrontation (But I might start now!) so I'll be using him in my Dungeons and Dragons campaign as a bad guy. I doubt that you'll come across as perfect of a mounted Chaos Warrior general I could even see him in a Vampire Count army for Warhammer Fantasy Battle. He'd also make a very suitable Undead Knight for Chronopia. With the right paint job he could also probably be dropped into a 'good guy' army.

He's wearing massive amounts of plate armor and looks ready to cut a wide swathe through enemy ranks. Seeing the model in your hand really gets across the 'massive-ness' of the figure. His shield alone is almost



MINIATURE REVIEWS

Fantasy Encounters

Fantasy Encounters: Dwarves is, as you would guess, a set of dwarf miniatures suitable for use in a fantasy game. The set contains five pre-painted figures and three stat cards for each figure, representing the early, middle, and late stages of their d20 careers.

The first dwarf, the Leader, is carrying a large hammer that he'll need both hands to swing properly. He's wearing plate and chain armor, a large horned helmet and a belt buckle large enough to make you think he came from Texas. The paint job is very clean and quite good, but there is a small part of his mustache that was not done. A quick touch-up will take care of that though.



LEADER

The (female) Scout is next. Out of the group of five she is probably the weakest. The paint job, while passable, is a step down from that of the Leader. Also, her head seems a bit large when compared to the rest of her body. She's in sort of a crouching or low-walk pose and her hair is tied back into a ponytail and she's wearing a lot of leather armor with a few metal pieces. A short sword and small metal shield finish of this model.



SCOUT

A red-headed dwarf fighter is next. He's carrying a large two-handed axe and is wearing chainmail armor. Like the Leader, his paint job is clean and I found no problems with it. His pose is just a little static and he could be just as ready to chop a monster or some wood for the fire. The facial detail on this dwarf is probably the best of the set.



FIGHTER

Fourth in the set is a dwarven Cleric. He's dressed in flowing robes and didn't strike me as the tin can kind of cleric that will be in the middle of a hoard of undead cracking skulls. I found his head to be a bit on the large side, like the female Scout. One hand is raised, which makes him look like he's casting a spell, while the other is holding a mace.

The last of the five figures is an Engineer, err a Monk. Well, even though his stat card and the box indicate that he is an Engineer all of his stats indicate that he is, in fact, a Monk. Nothing wrong with a dwarven Monk, just a typo that seemed to slip in. Believe me, I know how that can happen. He is wearing very little in the

way of armor, but is loaded with lots of other stuff. In addition to carrying a hand axe he also has a small hammer and pick on his belt and a backpack full of stuff. We're back to a more proportionately sized head with this model and the paint job is fine.



CLERIC

While some of the figures will need a bit of touching up, overall, all of the paint jobs are fine for playing with and I've certainly seen much worse plopped down on the game table. The set retails for \$24.95 USD and you're probably asking yourself if it's worth about \$5 USD per figure for pre-painted dwarves. The figures by themselves would be a questionable purchase, but what comes with the set, other than the figures of course, really throws my vote into the 'yes' column. That would be the stat cards. Each miniature comes with three cards that detail everything you would need to drop the figure/character into your d20 game. Yes, you certainly could sit down on your own and write up fifteen different character sheets (one for low, medium, and high levels), but you could also have sat down and painted all five figures yourself also. This set is designed to save you time and it does that. As a DM I am concerned with playing/running the game and I already have lots to do.



ENGINEER

Many of these models could be used in a fantasy dwarf army, but I think this set has two 'best' uses. The first would be when you have an untimely player-character death, especially in the middle of a session. If they don't have a spare character on hand just hand them the set and have them choose a character of an appropriate level. Even if it's only for that one session you've kept from having to stop things to roll up a new character or have someone sit out when it could have been avoided. Second, they could be used as NPC's or lackeys hired by the player-characters.

These kinds of sets could also be of use to DM's that just need a stockpile of characters for drop-in players that are not part of your regular group that come to play once in a while and could grab whichever dwarf has the abilities that the party is lacking at the time. I look at this set as a DM's utility that will help give you more time to do what I, and hopefully you, like doing most and that's playing the game.

MINIATURE REVIEWS

mithril

Here we are with the second part of our look at Mithril's line of 54mm Lord of the Rings miniatures. For starters we'll take a look at Boromir. He is standing up in a very 'ready' pose. Not actually in combat, but waiting for someone else to make the first move. Other than his base, Boromir comes as a three-part model with his sword and scabbard being separate from his body. He's wearing leathers and cloth



garments and has a long fine cloak over his shoulders. Other than a horn at his waist, and his sword, he has no other pouches. Facial features are simple and look good. His hair is parted in the middle and is about shoulder length at its longest. As is pretty routine for miniatures from Mithril Boromir required just about zero cleanup time and had no visible defects. His clothing has lots of folds and should paint up nicely.

Merry, a hobbit, is next on the block. He needed just a bit of cleanup along the mold line, which was just slightly visible. Other than that small amount of cleaning there were no defects on the model and he fit perfectly into his textured base. Merry is holding a pipe in one hand and has his other hand stuffed into a pocket. As you'd expect he's shoeless and his pants come down just past his knees. Slightly chubby cheeks round out his face and a big brillo-pad of hair tops his head. He's wearing traveling clothes along with a scarf and a hooded cloak. He comes as a single piece miniature and there are no weapons to be found on his person. Like almost all of the figures in



this set Merry is in much more of an easy going pose rather than being ready for combat. If you plan on using these figures for a diorama or display then this is fine. Like Boromir his clothes have many folds and should paint up nicely showing off lots of shades and highlights.

Pippin is the next of the 'wee folk' in this batch. I think that I like him the most out of this group. Maybe because he's in more of an 'action' pose. He's carrying a couple of bags slung over one shoulder and appears to be walking forward instead of just waiting for something to happen. There's not a weapon to be found on him, but there is another pouch on his belt. The hood of his long cloak is pulled up over his head with just a little bit of hair poking out. There was a mold line that was a little more prominent than the one on Merry. It cleaned up easily and there was also just a tiny bit of flash at the bottom of his cape. Nothing too bad. His hands lacked a little detail, but with them being curled up around the sacks that he's carrying it's hard to notice.



Finishing off the hobbits in the set is Sam. He's also a little more animated than the rest with some belongings slung over one shoulder and looking like he's on a hike. He needed about the same amount of cleaning for flash and a mold line as with Pippin, but that's certainly not saying that it was an excessive amount because it wasn't. Overall, I'd have to say that Mithril figs come out

of the blister very clean and in need of very little cleanup. Like Merry, Sam has the big curly brillo-pad of hair. He's a little thicker in the middle than the other ones and doesn't appear to have missed any meals. He also looks to be wearing a heavier coat than the others. He's not in armor or anything though. Facial detail was pretty much the same as the rest. That is to say it is simple, but not overstated or exaggerated. That's also a mainstay of the Mithril figures that I've been able to take a look at. None of them are over the top or cartoony at all.

This ten figure set is finished off with Galadriel. She's standing upright with her arms outstretched. Flowing robes are hanging off of her arms and her long hair comes down to her waist. Both of her feet are barely visible beneath her robe. There's not much else to this figure, but some nice touches are the butterfly pattern on the front of her bodice and a couple of flowers in her hair. Since she doesn't have any pouches or weapons she



was molded as a single piece. The mold line was just barely visible, but there were no defects or flash to clean.

The whole set of figures is very nice and a Lord of the Rings fan would probably enjoy them very much. If you're not a huge fan or don't plan on using

them in a diorama with other 54mm figures or don't have a 54mm fantasy game to use them in your level of enthusiasm may be a bit lower. As soon as a fantasy version of Inquisitor comes out (No, I'm not starting any rumors here just wishful thinking) these, along with pretty much all other 54mm non-science-fiction miniatures will have lots of new fans.

If you're thinking about getting the set I would suggest buying them all as part of the discounted offer on the website. You'll end up saving about 15% off of the regular price and will end up with the whole set. Definitely take a few minutes to check out the rest of the website. In addition to the 54mm Lord of the Rings figures you'll also find tons of 25mm and 32mm Lord of the Rings miniatures.

www.mithril.ie



MINIATURE REVIEWS

EXCALIBUR Miniaturen

This issue we have our first look at figures from Excalibur Miniaturen in Germany. They produce fantasy and sci-fi figures as well as a couple of skirmish games. The first thing you'll notice with these figures is they have a slightly larger than normal plastic base. Overall, flash was almost non-existent, but mold lines were visible and needed just a little filing.

To the upper-right you'll see a young lady that is very proud of what mother nature (or her plastic surgeon) gave her! She is packing some guns, and I mean that in any way you want to take it. What little clothing she's wearing is very form-fitting and she even has a belly-button ring. She's wearing a set of goggles that looks more like headgear than bionic implants. This is a very cool figure that would fit perfectly into a Necromunda gang or could quite easily be used as Covert Ops Specialist in Warzone. If you're playing Inquisitor with 32mm figures then you have a very good bounty hunter or assassin on your hands here.



Valerien Bourmont



Drill Master Sergeant Folkner

Mother probably gave him). In addition to a couple of pouches and a belt he has a nice medal pinned to his chest. This, and the cigar in his mouth, will really help this model stand out when painted. A rifle and pistol finish off the model, but he'd be great just standing out there with a bad attitude and harsh language. An awesome model! Outside of Fearless the most obvious use for Folkner is in Warhammer 40K. He's cool enough to be leading a unit of Orks.



Randolph Siss

Randolph Siss is a mutant and a mean looking one at that. The model was a clean casting and required almost no cleanup. The pose is a little flat, but does give him an image of being in the middle of a fire-fight. You can tell he's strong, but he's not bulging at

the seams. His head and neck have several connectors for bionic bits. Facial detail is good and up close you can tell (and it would stand out well when painted) that a lot of his head has been replaced with bionic parts. He could quite possibly fit into a Cybertronic army or in a Necromunda gang if your not using him for Fearless.

The little bugger at the top-right is Drill Master Sergeant Folkner of the Maygons army in Fearless. He's about the size of a goblin and has tons of character. The model itself had a very small bit of flash that needed to be cleaned, but the mold line was not visible and there were no defects present. He's wearing a trench coat, a rather large helmet, fatigues, and combat boots (that his

I-Core 7 is a rather large robot that is part of the human army. The model is much taller than a 'regular' 35mm infantry model and comes as a 9 piece model, including its base. It went together easily and does not require pinning.



I-Core 7

I got it to hold together just fine with superglue. It has more of a sleek appearance rather than a hard edge to it. There are three guns on the model (small, medium and large) and a double missile rack for your killing pleasure. A few minutes were needed to clean up the model, but it was nothing excessive. The I-Core 7 has a lot of uses in other games. It could be used as a combat droid in Inquisitor or maybe even pass as an Eradicator Deathdroid in Warzone.

At the top of the next page you'll see the first of two alien-types from the Fearless game. First up is one that initially reminded me of the aliens from the movies of the same



H-type-hunting-cysion

name because of the second set of jaws coming out of its mouth, but that's really where the similarity ends. This hunter walks on four legs and actually has much more of lizard look to it. The mold line was visible, but

was filed down without any trouble. There was no flash to be cleaned and there was nothing wrong with the model. Body detail is very nice and it should paint up very nicely. After looking at the model for a few minutes it hit me that if you clip off the extra set of jaws that coming out to bite someone this could do very well as a drake in the Ravilla faction for Chainmail. Gotta love multi-use models.

Hkrhrxar (don't as me to pronounce it) is a rather tall alien from the Plasmoids army. He (she, it?) is not quite twice the height of a standard trooper, but is a bit gangly. It comes as two pieces (upper and lower half) and fit together perfectly. There was a bit of flash that needed to be trimmed, but I



Hkrhrxar

could not find the mold line. It has more of a bio-mechanical feel than the more animal-like Cysion above. In addition to a whole lot of scaly flesh it's wearing several plates of armor and has a large pack that looks like part of his back. A blaster and sword make up its weapons. Out of the whole batch of seven figures I'd have to put him in spot number seven on my list. He just didn't do too much for me.

Last up, upper-right, is Ellen Elektra, another human. The first thing that I thought of when I saw this figure was the comic book heroine "Dazzler". Do you remember her, the disco chick? Ok, maybe I'm dating myself too much, but I just couldn't get that image out of my head. She, Ellen not Dazzler, is dressed in a jumpsuit and has two wrist blasters that connect to a power pack on her back. There is also another connection from the power pack that plugs into her temple. Facial detail is good and the only thing that needed cleaning was the mold line, which was visible, but not too bad at all. Then there's her hair. Great "Flock of Seagulls" Batman! There's probably enough hairspray up there to ignite half of the battlefield. Toss a match in her general vicinity and it would be like Michael Jackson doing a Pepsi commercial. Don't get me wrong. I'm not bagging on the figure, because there

Really isn't anything wrong with it. There's nothing wrong with doing the hustle either. Ok, that was a cheap shot, sorry. No, the figure is fine and would work well in a Necromunda gang, a science fiction role-playing game or in an episode of Charlie's Angels.



Ellen Elektra

All of the Fearless figures came with game stats, which was a nice touch. The only problem with some of them is that they were printed in German. My one semester of German in the 9th grade is not only rusty, but it's been sent to the landfill. I'd expect that any figures being sent to US retailers would have the English version of their stats.

Below you'll find each model's stock number and price in Euro and USD. A test copy of the Fearless rules is also available from the Excalibur website. Be aware, that there is an adult section of the site that young 'uns will need to stay clear of. Naughty bits are still naughty bits even when they're only on little metal models.

Model	Stock #	Euro	USD
Valerian Bourmont	EX9132	3.95	3.60
Randolph Siss	EX9156	3.45	3.15
Folkner	EX9414	3.45	3.15
I-Core 7	EX9702	20.40	18.60
Hunting Cysion	EX9356	3.95	3.60
Hkrhrxar	EX9301	5.90	5.38
Ellen Elektra	EX9245	3.95	3.60

All of the regular human/cyborg/mutant character models are priced really well. I-Core 7's price is reasonable, especially when you take into consideration that it's all metal.

If you take a look around the Excalibur website you're sure to find models that you can use even if you're not playing one of their games.

www.excalibur-miniaturen.com

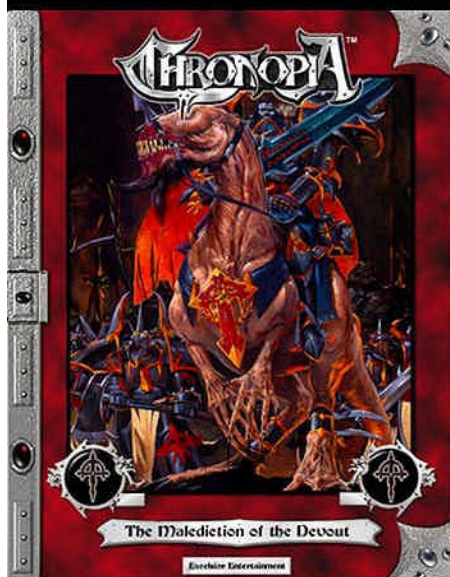


From beyond the grave, the mythic One King has returned to reclaim his lost kingdom, sending cries of hope and wonder throughout the Firstborn people. His usurpers have squandered their spoils of war and the great Triad of the Elven Dukes, the Dwarf Overlords and the Ogre Emperor has collapsed. The sinister power of the serpent people known as Stygians, asleep and forgotten for millennium, has been awakened and their march to reclaim the lands of Chronopia has just begun.

This book contains:

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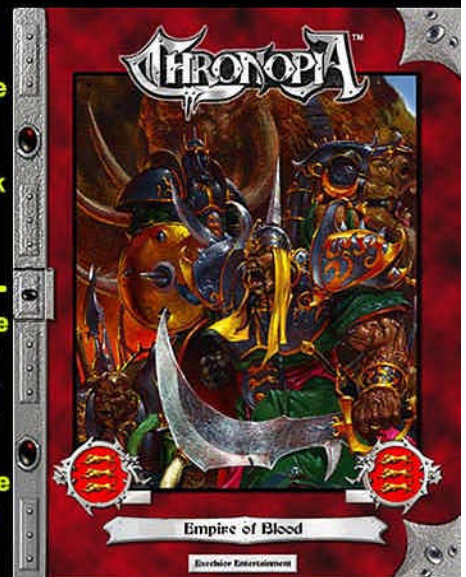
EXE-02201 \$34.95



In the dark places between worlds there lurks an enemy that looks down upon Chronopia with lust and an unquenchable malice towards all living things. In the shadows that gather in the forgotten places of the land, the powers of the Dark One, championed by his minions the Dark Prophets, are emerging.

Few travelers make it a point to ever move through this land except by invitation or by one of the routes maintained by other races. The Court of the Ogre Emperor is enmeshed in a two-front war with the Stygians and the Devout while at the same time trying to quell the unrest in his own kingdom, especially after the secession of the Swamp Goblins.

EXE-02208 \$24.95



EXE-02210 \$24.95

www.excelsiorgames.info

MINIATURE REVIEWS

PULP FIGURES



This issue we get our first look at a range of miniatures from Bob Murch, former RAFM sculptor of their Call of Cthulhu figures.

The figures in the Pulp Figures line are geared more towards the action hero kind of game rather than the creeping monster and everyone dies game.

A first look at the website reminded me of movies like Indiana Jones, The Shadow, and stories of adventure and intrigue. The first pack we'll look at is the Film Crew. You get a director, a camera-man, a camera, a script girl, and the guy that holds the thingy that they click when the director yells, "Action!". All of the figures are in the 25-30mm range and do remind me a lot of their RAFM Call of Cthulhu counterparts. The director has one hand stuffed in a pocket and the other holding a megaphone. Puffy pants, a scarf and a beret bring out the character in this model a lot. The figure did need some cleaning as the mold line was easily visible, but there was nothing else to do with him before priming the figure.

The camera and camera-man come as separate pieces. The camera does need to be removed from a hunk of lead at its base and the legs need to be (carefully) bent into position so it will stand on its own. Other than having to snip off the bottom piece the camera was the cleanest model of the bunch.



The operator required just a bit more cleanup than the director, but it didn't take too long. He's wearing a simple outfit of trousers and a shirt, but things like his suspenders, and the part in his hair help him to stand out. Facial detail on this figure, and with the director also, was clear and good.

The 'clicky-thing' (dang, why can't I remember what that's called) guy (upper-right) is wearing suit pants and a vest, with his shirt sleeves rolled up. Cleanup was about the same as with the director, meaning a little, but not too much.



His face is a little flatter than the other guys, but not like he got hit with a shovel or anything.



Last on the crew is the script girl. Despite having a bit more flash than the others she is my hands-down favorite of the group. Her hair is tied back in a bun and her dress is nice, but simple. So, what makes her my fave? Because I can see her used perfectly in CoC as a nice old librarian who's secretly holding the Necronomicon in her hands! Woo Hoo!



With just a tiny bit of work you can use all of these figs in CoC. If you're experiencing a resurgence in CoC like we are then you'll love these figs.

The set below is a 5-man baggie of Neanderthal Warriors. You get 5 different poses and several come with separate weapons. They were all free of defects and quite nice. If you're not playing a game like Rugged Adventures, available free on the Pulp Figures website, then you could use these as ghoul, but they do have a bit less cross-over usability.

Each set will run you \$12.00 USD for five figures and at less than \$2.50 per figure they are a good deal. Like I said before, if you are a player of Call of Cthulhu then these can really fit the bill for some new investigators or non-player characters.

DESCRIPTION	STOCK#
Film Crew	PHP-1
Neanderthal Warriors 3	PLT-3

www.pulpfigures.com

MINIATURE REVIEWS

REAPER



Oh boy, do we have a big one to start with from Reaper this time around. Above you'll see the new Hill Giant, Blorg Mudstump. Without his club he stands 3" tall and with it he towers over 5" tall. Detail on this figure is great. There were no defects at all, but there was some cleaning to do. The bottom of the base needed some trimming and the mold line needed to be filed down. His club is really the bone of some really large beast and it's been inscribed with runes and even has a dwarf skull tied to it. The arm fit into the body joint easily, but I would suggest pinning it instead of relying just on glue. He's a tall guy on a rather narrow base and if he takes a dive you know what's going to break, his arm. Other very nice detail on this figure includes a rock to toss at people, a keg for when he gets thirsty after throwing rocks at people, another skull on a necklace, rope belts, and various pouches. As is pretty custom with big guys from Reaper he's also carrying something for lunch. The Ettin has a pig and Blorg has a pair of rather large birds to snack on later. I'll be dropping him on to a large base for stability, but he is worth every cent of his \$12.00 USD price.



To the right is Valdarynn, Arch Mage. He appears to be a human and has a

long flowing beard and hair that is just past his shoulders. Facial and hair detail is awesome. One hand carries his spellbook and the other is outstretched casting a spell that looks like some kind of bird made out of fire. It would be a very nice affect for a fireball. A bit of time had to be dedicated to cleaning him up as there was flash in several places and the base had to be leveled. There is a ton of detail on the fringes of his robes and he should paint up very nicely.

Merry (below) is an Elf Thief and she definitely looks the part. She's dressed in studded leather armor and is brandishing two weapons. Maybe a bit of ranger in her too. The mold line needed cleaning and there was about as much flash as with Valdarynn. She's standing at the ready, which leads to a bit of a flat pose, but if you're careful you can adjust her arms a bit. Facial detail is plain, but very nice. She's carrying a few pouches and has a bag slung over one shoulder, but what really stands out the most, and is my favorite part of this model, is her ears. They are very prominent, but not goofy. All are very good models with a lot of character.



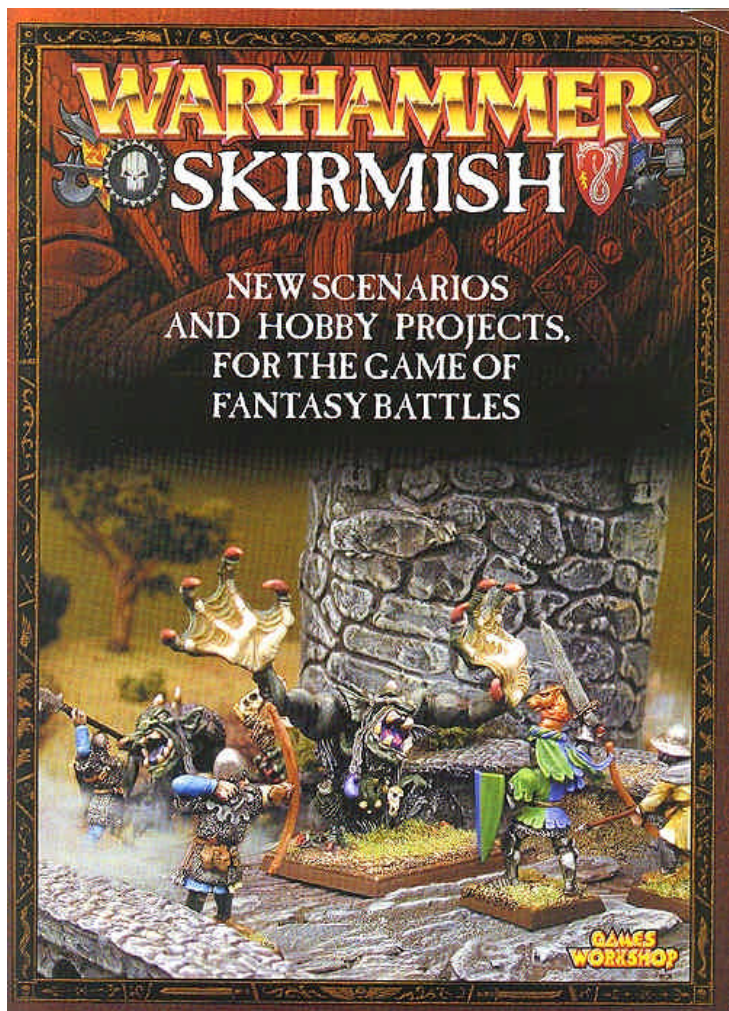
Blorg Mudstump, Hill Giant	2579	\$11.99 USD
Valdarynn, Arch Mage	2591	\$2.99 USD
Merry, Elf Thief	2579	\$2.99 USD

I really cannot wait until I can get my hands on some of the new Warlord line of figures from Reaper. From what I've seen they look wonderful, which I'd expect, but they come with textured slotted bases and are a bit more dramatic in their poses. Check them out next issue.

www.reapermini.com

GAME REVIEW

GAMES WORKSHOP



BASICS

Warhammer Skirmish is a 48-page full color supplement for Warhammer Fantasy Battles. It retails for \$3.95 USD and is produced by, you guessed it, Games Workshop.

STORYLINE

There is no single storyline here. Warhammer Skirmish is a set of scenarios, a few rules, and a whole slew of modeling tips and projects for you to use in Warhammer Fantasy. All of the scenarios are based around smaller point value games, with an emphasis being put on the story behind the fight. Each scenario details the models that each side can use (sometimes with strict limits and others let you buy whatever you want from the selected army), a map of the battlefield, what your objectives are, deployment rules, special rules, what other troops/models could also be used, and finally how you can fit in the skirmish as part of a larger (standard) battle. Many of them also have terrain building tips and projects like building a monolith or an oasis. Longtime players may

Have seen these projects before, but everything is wrapped up in a nice bundle here.

PRESENTATION

Absolutely top notch. The interior text is all very easy to read, the pictures are clear and the maps, while just a tad on the small side, are detailed and easy to replicate in your games. If you're at all familiar with White Dwarf then you know what this booklet looks like.

VALUE

Let's start off with Warhammer Fantasy players. If you want something fresh to play that you can knock off in around an hour, quite likely even less time than that, then drop your four bucks here. But, I've already got rules for smaller scale battles in the Warhammer Fantasy rule book. Ok, yes you do, but this supplement is not really about rules. It's about the games themselves and why your guys end up fighting my guys. Unless you have an absolute aversion to playing a game that doesn't require you to fill the table with troops I think you'll enjoy this.

Ok, now for the non-Warhammer Fantasy players. I was very pleasantly surprised with how much of the Warhammer Skirmish book can be used in other games. Realistically, Games Workshop is using Warhammer Skirmish to give players of Warhammer Fantasy something new to do (duh!) and maybe bring in some new players that might be scared off by full-blown armies. Yeah, you need the Warhammer Fantasy rulebook if you want to play 'Warhammer' skirmishes, but I found each scenario useable in games like Chainmail and Chronopia also. In fact, an industrious GM could even use one of the scenarios as part of a role-playing game. Having multiple uses always makes me like something more and this booklet really does that. Even if you're not a player or fan of Warhammer Fantasy you could spend \$4.00 in a whole lot worse ways. It's about the cost of a single miniature and how many of those do we all probably have that are at the bottom of a bitz box waiting to get painted.

If you head over to the Games Workshop website you'll also find a section devoted to Warhammer Skirmish. It's full of skirmish stuff. In fact, it's so full of stuff that you might question buying the booklet. All of the scenarios in the booklet are also on the web for free. So, why drop the four bucks? I happen to like the feel of a book in my hands and even though I'll be printing off the twenty or so scenarios from the site that are not in the book they won't look as nice as the ones in the book and I'll save the ink, paper and time of printing off half of them myself.

www.games-workshop.com

GAME REVIEW

Magic Challenge

Mic Schröder

Magic Challenge is a free short 5-page download from Excalibur Miniaturen. Of the five pages that you'll download only three make up the rules to a fantasy miniatures game of combat between rival wizards. To play the game you'll need, in addition to the rules, at least one d20, a tape measure with cm markings, miniatures of wizards and those of creatures that you'll be summoning.

Magic Challenge is definitely a work in progress from Excalibur and it's billed as such. What you can download is really the basics of a growing system. In the game each player controls a wizard that can cast generic offensive, defensive and summoning spells.

As you would expect for a game that is not 100% developed there are some rough edges and it's also translated to English from German so there are some awkward sentences, but nothing that you cannot get through with a second reading.

Each turn, your magicians can do two things; move and cast spells. Each magician has a protective magic shield that you are trying to deplete and a pool of spell points which are used to power the spells they wish to cast or some can be saved from one turn to the next.

The creatures that can be summoned currently fall into one of four types (Goblins, Orcs, Amazons, or Movable Siege Weapons). The Excalibur website does make note that new summoned races are in the works though.

The game is very, and I mean very, generic and is not yet suited for competitive play, but with further updates it could be. It's an entertaining roll around the game table and for free you could do a lot worse.

www.excalibur-miniaturen.com

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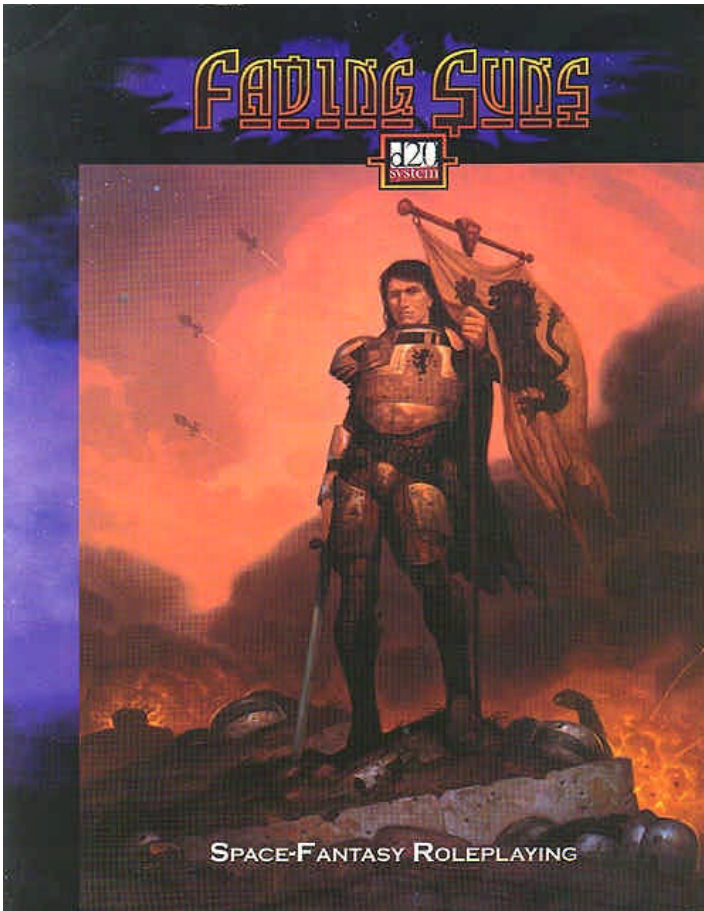
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GAME REVIEW

FADING SUNS

d20 SYSTEM

by Brian Ahrens



Basics: Fading Suns: d20 published by Holistic Designs describes itself on the front cover as “space-fantasy roleplaying”. Fading Suns: d20 keeps all the flavor of the original Fading Suns rules set while converting it so that fans of the d20 system may play Fading Suns in a role playing structure that they are familiar with and enjoy. The book is divided into seven chapters along with an introduction and an appendix. The editing of Fading Suns: d20 is better than the original version of the game. During character creation, the d20 version of the rules requires less turning back and forth in the book looking for needed information on constructing a character.

Fading Suns: d20 allows a player to assume the person of a human, two humanoid races or even a very alien race. A player can choose one of twelve character classes. There are no prestige classes included in this d20 system game. Some of the character classes are similar to character types in the original Fading Suns game while other classes are unique to the d20 version, i.e. The Living Weapon, which seems more related to the monk class in the current edition of Dungeons and Dragons than anything in the non-d20 system of the game.

The “skills” and “feats” chapters are both a mixture of old and new items.

Fading Suns: d20 is a 191 page, perfect bound, paper back book with a retail price of \$25.00.

Storyline: As the title of the game implies, the suns of the galaxy, in the game year 5001 a.d., are fading. The reason(s) for the dimming of the stars is unknown. A gamemaster is allowed to come up with his/her own reason(s) for this stellar phenomena. The Universal Church of the Celestial Sun has several different sects. Some of these factions propose their own theories for the dimming of the suns. It could be a punishment by the Pancreator for the sins of Man or that too much technology is to blame.

It is a time of superstition and hope. A new emperor of the Known Worlds, Alexius, is attempting to unite mankind in an effort to emerge from a second dark age that has befallen man. Mankind has fallen far since his high point during the technological “utopia” of the Second Republic. Noble houses, merchant guilds and sects of the Universal Church vie for power and wealth. Some caring for the common man while others look upon the citizenry as just another resource to be exploited. A player can outfit a character with all types of goodies: from a dagger to a blaster rifle and psychic powers to theurgic rituals. And if your character happens to end up on the losing end of combat you can always (if you have the cash, of course) invest in some cybernetic replacements for the offended body parts. Better living through electronics.

Presentation: Fading Suns: d20 has a user-friendly layout. The text is very legible. As with all d20 system games there is no shortage of charts and tables. Each character class receives a good description and each gets it's own leveling chart that will be quite familiar to anyone that has played any other d20 system role playing game.

The interior artwork is done in black and white only. This artwork does a good job of conveying the anachronistic flavor of the game setting. There is a picture of men wielding swords and axes as well as a drawings of futuristic scenes: a jumpgate, the passage to the stars, and futuristic cityscape. The cover painting is the only color artwork; a man in plate armor holding a banner with flying machines in the background. Both the interior artwork and the cover painting are very appealing. They are better than one comes to expect from a gaming company that is not named Wizards of the Coast.



Value: Holistic Designs has a commendable job in converting their original Fading Suns role playing game to the Fading Suns: d20 version. The only drawback I found to the d20 version of the game was the lack of rules on how to go about converting characters from the original Fading Suns edition to the d20 system of the game. The game mechanics of the original edition and the d20 version are vastly different. The biggest difference being that there were no character classes in the original version of the game. This difference would be problematic when trying to use the many supplements published for the original version with the d20 system.

For the outlay of \$25.00 the purchaser receives a role playing game that has a tried and true, as well as popular, set of game mechanics as well as a rich, well written and unique setting for imaginative adventure.

If you are looking for a game that does a good job of portraying a space opera type game; this is it.

www.fadingsuns.com

You can run, but you'll only die tired.

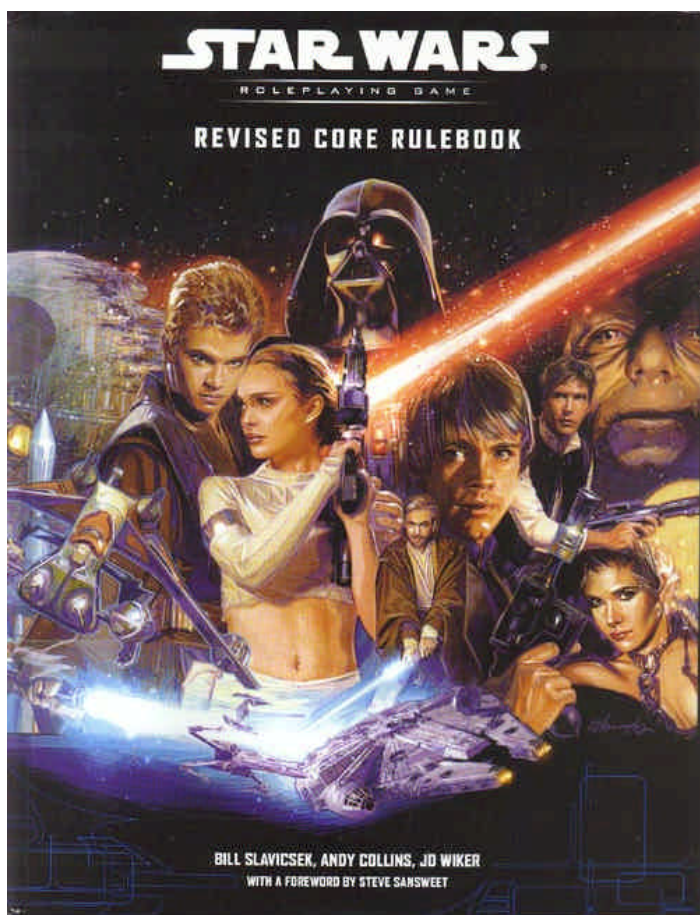


Chronopia: War in the Eternal Realm

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www.excelsiorgames.info

GAME REVIEW STAR WARS



BASICS

Star Wars Roleplaying Game: Revised Rulebook is a 384-page hardback book. The covers and interior feature full color artwork. There are fifteen chapters, a nice index, a basic Foreword and Designer's Preface and a brief introduction to the mechanics of the game before getting knee deep into everything in each chapter. It retails for \$39.95

PRESENTATION

Saying that the book is absolutely gorgeous just doesn't do it enough justice. It is a work of art. Stills from the movies and drawn artwork is everywhere. The text is very easy to read and all of the charts are clear. I enjoyed the many character quotes that are littered throughout the book. This is probably the most visually appealing roleplaying book I have seen.

STORYLINE

Um, hello, you're playing the Star Wars Roleplaying game here. I really think that we all know what's going on with the story. The different Era are fleshed out and stats for major characters are given for each period of time.

THE GAME

OK, so this is Star Wars d20, but it's not just Dungeons and Dragons with guns. Star Wars uses a slightly different system than straight hit points and a high AC to keep you alive. You earn Vitality points each level, like hit points and you have Wound points, equal to your Constitution and also sort of like hit points but they get soaked up second most of the time. Armor reduces the amount of damage you take, but can also limit your DEX and make you easier to hit, and you don't want to get hit because a Blaster does 3d6 damage. Try diplomacy first and then start shooting. There are some other differences between Dungeons and Dragons d20 and Star Wars d20, but if you are familiar with the d20 system in general you won't have a problem catching on.

Since this is the 'revised' edition of the core rulebook then something had to change, right? Information from *Attack of the Clones* was added to the book, along with other new information and rules, and at the beginning of each chapter there is a short paragraph detailing what is new. Every chapter, except for Chapter 1 Abilities, has new material. This can range from re-writes and clarifications of skills and feats to the most significant changes, which took place in the Vehicles and Starships section. One thing that really pleased me was that Attacks of Opportunity are 'in' and Jar Jar is 'out'.

VALUE

You might think that the base value of this book lies in whether or not you're a fan of Star Wars. I don't think so. Yes, if you're a gamer and a die-hard Star Wars fan then this book is for you, no doubt about it. I guess you could call me a Star Wars fan, but not the kind that stands in line for weeks before a movie comes out. I enjoy the Star Wars universe, but I like how the d20 system puts a playable science-fiction game together too. Now, what if you fall into the category of not being a Star Wars fan? I'd have to honestly say that you would also benefit a whole lot from this book. Obviously, it will take some tweaking on your GM's part to use this book to play *Killer Clowns from Outer Space* d20 or *Ice Pirates* d20, but I think it could be done without causing a brain embolism.

The forty dollar price tag may cause a gasp or two, but if you're a Dungeons and Dragons player you can think of this one book as part Player's Handbook, part Dungeon Master's Guide and part Monster Manual, with enough of each to play the game. Of course, if you're absolutely not a sci-fi game fan then move along.

www.wizards.com/starwars

PRESS RELEASE



Ichtyoids, a free web enhancement for our Worldbook is released.

The Ichtyoids, an ancient race of evil Fishmen, is available for free at the Mystic Eye Games web site. Originally scheduled to be an exclusive web enhancement for the owners of the Worldbook, we have decided to give it to everyone. In our commitment to give away free original content we want to make sure that there is plenty for everyone. The Ichtyoid race will also introduce you to Gothos and the world of The Hunt: Rise of Evil is a small way. Please enjoy the race.

Material that will be offered as exclusive web enhancements to follow are:

How to run a fantasy horror game:

Advice and some new optional rules on running gothic, fantasy horror in Gothos and the World of The Hunt: Rise of Evil.

Witch spell expanded:

The extensive list of witch spells to include the arcane options that are available to them.

The Gazetteers:

A more detailed explanation of each of the locations on the maps of the Worldbook to include some information on locations not even noted on any maps. There will at least eight of these available in the coming months absolutely free to owners of our popular Worldbook.

Thanks for your continued support and look for these upcoming retail titles soon:

Blight Magic

The Witch of Loch-Durnan

Librum Equitis volume 1 (Ambient Inc)

Foul Locales: Urban Blight

Wild Spellcraft (Natural 20 Press)

Necromancer's Legacy (Ambient Inc)

The Hunt: Rise of Evil- Guilds and Adventurers

www.mysticeyegames.com

PRESS RELEASE

JEFF VALENT STUDIOS

Wednesday, April 03, 2002

Pinnacle Entertainment Group and Jeff Valent Studios are pleased to announce that Jeff Valent Studios now has the exclusive license to produce all of Pinnacle Entertainment Group's figure lines, including Deadlands, Great Rail Wars, Hell on Earth, and Weird Wars.

"The arrangement worked so well with Weird Wars that we decided to extend the license to cover all our miniatures. This helps our customers get orders faster, particularly on larger items such as our Great Rail Wars vehicles. Jeff is also an accomplished sculptor and has many other freelance sculptors available as well - something Pinnacle has never had. This means new figures for all our lines are on the horizon and can be produced much more efficiently than us acting as middle-men."

The product lines should be up on the www.jeffvalentstudios.com website this week. Below is an updated product list and a release schedule for new products. This will give everyone a clear picture of what is available for immediate shipment and what will be released in the near future.

Customers, Distributors and Retailers that are interested in getting Deadlands, Great Rail Wars, Weird Wars or Hell on Earth miniatures (or any other Jeff Valent Studios Products), please contact Jeff Valent at 165 Charles Street, Vestal, NY 13850, Phone: (607) 785-5486, Fax: (719) 623-9763, Email: jeff@jeffvalentstudios.com.

www.jeffvalentstudios.com

PRESS RELEASE

GAMES WORKSHOP

www.games-workshop.com

Games Workshop Announces Its 10th Annual Games Day Hobby Celebration and Gaming Convention

Games Day USA is the annual gaming extravaganza for the Games Workshop series of hobby games such as *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* and *Warhammer 40,000*, the world's most popular tabletop battlegames. This year's event is our 10th Anniversary Games Day and should be the biggest and best ever! There will be gaming events ranging from beginner to expert for all the games, plus painting contests, seminars, demo games, special guests, and more. There will be lots of new *Lord of the Rings* tabletop battlegame events too, including displays and promotions plus of course sneak peeks at the new *The Two Towers* figures and game for the upcoming motion picture!

Scheduled Guests include *Warhammer 40,000* Game Designer Pete Haines, longtime favorite figure sculptors Alan and Michael Perry (lead designers for *The Lord of the Rings* miniature line), author Dan Abnett (the best-selling *Gaunt's Ghosts* novels), Robin Dews of the upcoming *Warhammer Online* project, Jervis Johnson of *Fanatic*, and *Forge World's* Tony Cottrell. Also in attendance will be Sabertooth Games, running events for the new *Warhammer 40,000 Collectible Card Game*.

Show Dates: June 28th - 29th

Location: Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD

Friday Hours: 2pm - 7:30 pm

Saturday Hours: 10am - 7pm

Tickets: Call 1-800-394-GAME

Games Day History

Long a tradition in England where the Games Workshop hobby started, Games Day in the USA started 10 years ago in one of Maryland's Games Workshop Hobby Centers. Despite the small venue, nearly 100 dedicated fans showed up for the full day of fun! The next year the show was moved to a real convention hall, where the show grew even larger. So big in fact that two years later the show moved to the Baltimore Convention Center and spread into a 2 day event. Each year the show has expanded in both size and attendance, with thousands arriving each year to play, paint, and celebrate the miniature gaming hobby.

Each year has seen such wild events as Squig Hopper Races, fun (but messy!) Speed Painting competitions, and Formula Waaaagh! demolition derbies. One highlight has always been the Golden Demon miniature painting competition, showcasing the best figure painters in the

country and their work with the finest miniatures in the world. Last year's Games Day drew nearly 4,000 enthusiastic hobby fans, and even more are expected this summer.

This year the USA will see two Games Day events, one in Chicago as well as the annual Baltimore event. This will be the first Games Day in America outside of Baltimore, and the Windy City will never be the same! Set for July 27 in the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, the show will start the spread of these conventions throughout the country in years to come. This year will also see the second annual Games Day convention in Canada on August 17, at the International Centre Hall 1 in Mississauga, Ontario. Both events are expected to draw thousands of gaming fans

About Games Workshop

For over 25 years Games Workshop has designed, manufactured, distributed and sold tabletop wargame systems and associated miniatures, marketed as a complete hobby for teenagers and older. Its key brands are *Warhammer* and *Warhammer 40,000*. The latest addition to the range is *The Lord of the Rings* line of battlegames and miniatures produced under an exclusive global license from New Line Cinema, with imagery based on the Oscar winning series of films directed by Peter Jackson.

With its international headquarters in Nottingham England, the company also has wholly-owned subsidiaries in the US, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and Australia. Over 2,200 people are employed by the company through these operations. Games Workshop USA has its headquarters in Glen Burnie, Maryland and oversees a coast to coast operation which includes independent retailers, direct sales, and GW operated retail hobby centers.

Games Workshop owns over 250 retail stores worldwide and its products are featured in over 2,000 independent outlets internationally. Games Workshop is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange.

Games Workshop controls every aspect of its business, from initial concept and design through to manufacture, distribution and retail. Its long-running publication *White Dwarf* is available via the stores, by mail order, on newstands throughout the world (in several languages), and through its website.

www.games-workshop.com/news/us/events/GamesDay2002/Baltimore/Balt_intro.htm

PRESS RELEASE EXCELSIOR entertainment

The GAMA Show

What can you say about Las Vegas? I wish I could say something but most of my time was spent promoting the games and meeting with distributors. I am delighted to report that we made many excellent contacts at the show and retailers were delighted by the improvements we have made to these games.

The packaging was a supreme success and seemed to be a retailer favorite at the show. Even more exciting to them was hearing about the upcoming projects and the Repackaging Program we offer. This allows stores that still have old Target stock to convert it into sale-able merchandise with little effort or expense. Done by several stores already, this program is meeting with great success.

We unveiled the first of the Battalion Box Sets that are in development. Designed to support Ultimate Warzone, these army boxes come with one complete Battalion and the figure case it is carried in. Made in impact resistant plastic by the PLANO company, these cases feature foam cut trays and a complete force of figures including their appropriate Unit Cards.

Even better, these sturdy cases even have a design that allows them to be locked for added security. When ordered, these cases will be cable tied shut insuring that their contents are untampered with. Priced from \$99.99, these Battalion Sets were a huge hit and are great ways to jump right into Ultimate Warzone.

Will there be a similar product for Chronopia: War in the Eternal Realm? Absolutely. Based on retailer response, this presentation will be a big hit. Specifics on contents and the like will be posted once they are finalized. Above are the expected first three Battalions. Impressing attendees as well was the flexible nature of the programs we offered. Excellent terms, no minimums to buy, superb service,



and the like were big hits with the retailers and distributors. If you are interested in these great games and the excellent sales they will generate for your store, give us a ring.

If your store doesn't yet have our information, pass it along. If your distributor doesn't have the product yet, tell them you want it.

Overall, the show was a great success and we were very happy with the kind and enthusiastic reception we received.

Exciting New License Signed

Looking for vehicles for your MC: Warzone game? Look no further. Excelsior has licensed to Armorcast the rights to do resin vehicles for its table-top miniatures game-Ultimate Warzone. Not since Forgeworld attempted the making of vehicles have we seen any new products of this nature for the MC: Warzone universe.

I could not be more pleased with the relationship we have with Tim and Dave at Armorcast and I am confident that they will make superior products to accentuate all of our table-top gaming experience. Unlike previous models, these will conform to specific requirements and come complete with official game rules we will provide for the packaging of the pieces. By working closely with Armorcast, we will try our best to coordinate model releases with the games development as a whole.

Here is a sneak peak at an upcoming release, the Dark Legion Reaver.

The first picture is the clay rendition based on the artwork. From here Level Two details are added, a turret will be designed as well as wheels. Last is the final

approval and it's into production. The Reaver is a nasty light tank and troop transport inspired by Peter Bergting.

www.excelsiorgames.info

PRESS RELEASE



June 5, 2002

For Immediate Release

Dark Age Games Announces DARK AGE the Tabletop Miniatures Game

Atlanta, GA, June 5, 2002

Dark Age Games, a new and exciting game development company featuring some of the industry's top talent, today announces the official release of their first game: Dark Age. Scheduled for launch at the Origins convention on July 4th in Columbus, OH, Dark Age brings the grim and violent world of Brom's Dark Age to life. Dark Age is a 28mm skirmish style miniatures game produced with the highest quality standards.

Brom is synonymous with the visceral and fiercely original art that has wowed the industry for many years now. From TSR, White Wolf, WOTC and other major game companies to work in comics, computer games and movies, Brom has produced incredible imagery and has set new standards. Dark Age is born of Brom's own imagination -- a nightmarish, apocalyptic vision of the future in his trademark dramatic style. Many companies have tried to bring you the Brom look, the Brom feel. Only Dark Age can bring you the real thing. Be ready, the sun is about to go down...

Information about this exciting new product line can be found on the official Dark Age website at www.dark-age.com.

Dark Age Games is very lucky to have an all-star team. With project management from Dave Poole, line development from Cary Parris, and art direction and product-development support from Brom, Dark Age Games developed from a solid nucleus of talent. To lend the team greater art direction that nucleus grew to include additional concept artists. Bringing their experience from television, movie, and computer game projects are: Glenn Israel, Feng Zhu, Donald Carr and James Hawkins. These artists have assisted in the expansion of environment and unit concepts helping to bring out the richness of Brom's original creations. Taking those creations from the page and into the three-dimensional world are renowned sculptors Steve Buddle, Werner Klocke, Stefan Niehues, Christian Danckworth and Arnaud Boudoiron. Hailing from companies such as Games Workshop, Reaper, Rackham, Excalibur, Foundry, and Assassin their beautiful models are known throughout the industry. Finally breathing life into these stunning models is the incomparable Jennifer Haley our official staff painter. Having Jennifer also act as a consultant in the miniature design process Dark Age is able to produce

unrivaled finished product for display and sale to the public. All of this is coupled with a robust, thoroughly tested rule system, and the support of a massive, professionally-produced web presence.

The product line has been developed with quality and value in mind. Players need only purchase their miniatures to play the game. All the information they need is supplied with unit cards in the packaging and free downloadable rules found at www.dark-age.com. At launch two complete armies will be available for purchase with a third army available only a month later at the GenCon convention in Milwaukee. Additional releases will occur monthly to expand and support the product line with additional expansions planned for the fall. Dark Age miniatures will be available for sale through www.dark-age.com, major online retailers, and local hobby stores. Retailer and customer support will be the highest priority. Pricing for Dark Age products is extremely competitive for a premium product of this quality and nature ranging from \$5.99 for a single miniature up to \$29.99 for the largest boxed release.

Players exploring the world of Dark Age will battle for survival in a ravaged world. It is a world decimated by a great cataclysm leaving those few who survive to scavenge for resources and to strive to discover their past. What remains of the world is unknown: the races and creatures that struggle to survive are a mystery only the players themselves can discover.

Expect great looking miniatures. Expect fast and furious game rules. Expect a frequently updated website. Expect a unique storyline which will take you on the most twisted and unforgettable journey imaginable. Expect the best and you won't be disappointed!

Dave Poole, the Dark Age project manager can be reached at canuck@dark-age.com. Learn more about Dark Age at www.dark-age.com or come visit us at Origins, booth #232

DARK AGE, DARK AGE GAMES are TM and © 2002 Dark Age Games.

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"I really hate that guy," the convict said as he shoveled another heap of black mud out of the soon-to-be foxhole. His name was Henrich, and he said he was serving for a minor assault charge, but from the looks of his scars and gangland tattoos...I'd say it was the least of his convictions. He was a big guy, just over two meters in height, and had a shaved head under his helmet.

"Shh, don't let Maxim hear that talk...he'll put you on perimeter duty. You want to be stringing barbed wire all day?" I replied. He just shrugged and sank his spade back into the soil. I'm Barber, a lifer from Ironglass who ran into the wrong element with far too much liquor on my brain at the time. I ended up killing a guy, self-defense I swear it, which landed me this fantastic tour of the galaxy. "Hey, watch it!" I barely ducked a lump of mud that flew in from the next foxhole over. I looked over the lip toward where it came from.

"Sorry mate, don't know me own strength!" Michaels shouted with a stupid grin. Michaels was a big grunt from Vacillus, and our squad's chain gunner. His arms were as big around as my leg, and with how much marching we do I'm in pretty good shape!

"No problem. How long until next shift comes to relieve us?" I asked, making conversation to pass the time.

"An hour, maybe two...by then we will have finished most of the graves," Henrich hissed between the wet *ker-shuk* sounds of the digging.

"Foxholes, we're digging foxholes," Michaels corrected, shaking his head.

"Same damn thing these days, same damn thing," Henrich finished.

"Stow that negativity, convict. Stick to my orders, don't try and run when the shooting starts, and you'll be fine. But for now, get out of those holes and head over to the armory...I'll be making an announcement in seventeen minutes," Censor Maxim ordered. Maxim was a small framed man, but had icy cold eyes capable of watching dozens of men executed without even the slightest twitch. The other convicts in the barracks said that he was a leading member of the Viridian Royal Guard, but gave up his stripes to come to Ironglass to oversee the convict legions. He had fought against every foe the Junkers have ever faced; men, 'synths, slugs...all of them. He spun on his thick heels, and stalked off into the falling rain. We started to climb out of the muddy holes, and everyone sighed in relief.

"An announcement? This out to be good."

Standing on the makeshift stage were four men, two of which I knew. Censor Maxim and his lackey Sergeant Fulton, a weasel marine that supposedly saved a Lictor during the Confederate Wars. The other two looked like ragged convicts, wearing speckled and airbrushed armor and long matted hair. One was a man, dark-skinned and thickly muscled. The other was female, wiry like a mountain cat and topped with a brightly colored topknot. Around the stage were over a hundred assembled convicts, workers, and exo-jockeys waiting expectantly for Maxim's big speech. I saw just as many eager sets of eyes as fearful ones. I'd say mine were more the latter.

"Citizens and convicts of Ironglass," Maxim raised his staff, "listen to my words, and recognize them as the new law handed down from the Praetor himself." He cleared his throat, and lowered his staff before continuing. "As of right now, you are all property of the Legion Scorpion...the frontline Legion in charge of keeping the slugs from pushing too far inland."

The crowd erupted into a great turmoil of complaints and shouting. Maxim clenched his jaw and tapped a hidden trigger on his staff, sending a wave of pain through each and every one of us. My neural spike felt like liquid magma dripping directly into my brain, and I fell to my knees in the mud. The surge of agony gripped our hearts, and after a few seconds of it, we were done arguing or debating...we were Scorpions. Whether we liked it or not.

"Now that we have your attention, I'd like to introduce you to Centurions Julius and Aphrodite. They will be explaining to you your new role in the war effort," the Censor gestured to the two strangers, who stood and took his place at the front of the stage. It was the women who spoke first.

"Good afternoon convicts!" she looked up into the stormy sky, "And what a fabulous day to die!"

"But better yet," Julius interrupted, "what a great day to kill! The Koralon have pushed back into the sea ever since the rains started, and it has given us time to set up shelling sites all up and down the beach. The rains are starting to break, and the Viridian encampment up the coast sent word that the slugs pushed back up as soon as the sky cleared," he grinned maliciously.

"That gives us a few short hours to get you convicts into the transports and up to that beach! Because when this rain breaks, and those slimy water-breathing scum start sliding up the sands...we are going to drop a few tons of Naptha rounds into them and boil them down to rock salt! Death is the ultimate freedom!" she pounded her fist

against her chest plate, and I found myself getting excited. It had been almost a year since I actually saw combat, and then it scared the hell out of me. But now, listening to the two Centurions, I started to think maybe we could win this thing. Maybe it was the fact that they were like us, convicts. They looked at the world through an implant, they did something nasty to get here, and they have survived to become something special. They weren't some tubby suits with a pain-causing gadget that they hid behind, they were *real* heroes. They were what we *could* become. They were us, and they were right.

I apparently wasn't the only one inspired by their speeches, as some convicts raised combat blades and others just raised helmets or hands. It was like we were choosing to grab our shotguns and shields and pack into those massive stomping APCs. We felt like actual soldiers, enlisted instead of convicted, while we strapped ourselves down. It was a lot like a real army instead of a few hundred condemned criminals marching off to their deaths. For what it was worth, we almost felt free.

"Ready, set...move!" Aphrodite shouted as the Tiger APC's rear hatch slammed down into the wet sand. The storm had broken just moments before, and the savage Koralon had pushed fully thirty meters onto the beach before the emplacements flattened them. Over a dozen high-yield Naptha canisters glazed the beach, turning the sand into glass and incinerating the majority of the aliens into steaming yellowish paste. The higher-ups were wrong however, and the Koralon did not even pause in their assault. Where the first wave was obliterated, the next swarmed over the top of it. The second wave was comprised of a great deal of their human slaves, araktons. Most of them wore shreds of Viridian armor or uniforms, which meant their encampment had fallen after they sent the word South to us. The mass drivers on the chins of the Tigers spat hot death into their packs, and we stood ready behind our shields to defend the gun emplacements while they loaded them tediously. A heavy mortar shell weighed as much as two men, and the crew needed a good ten minutes to reload and arm the weapon. Ten minutes seemed like a very long time on a battlefield.

The two APCs we were standing between rattled off burst style firing, a sign to us that they were nearing the last of their ammunition. When the first Tiger spun its barrels dry, it took a heavy step backward. Our unit, led by Aphrodite, dug our heels into the sand and said our silent prayers to our respective gods. The last burst clanged out, and our other armored wall stepped backward to match his twin. The araktons kept crab walking up the beach, crawling over their fallen spawn mates, and clacking their wicked swords together in some alien signal-speak to one another.

"Fire at will, leave no slug standing! We cannot let them reach the emplacements!" Aphrodite bellowed, lowering her auto shotgun and letting a hail of buckshot loose into the approaching crab men.

"Knock 'em down!" shouted Michaels as he stepped out onto the glassy beach, the ground splintered and cracked under him like thin ice. His chain gun began to spin and he swayed it back and forth, chopping into arakton flesh. Like pouring fuel on a fire, we joined him. Shotguns blazed and more of the once-human slaves slumped to the ground in twitching spasms. But still they advanced.

As we pumped shell after shell into them, they drew close enough for us to hear their jointed legs punching through the scorched sand like living ice picks. Some of them raised their thick arms and clenched their three-fingered fists, launching sick volleys of sharp *things* at us. Some ricocheted harmlessly off of our raised shields, others sank into them like carpenter's nails, and one even found its mark in one of the newbie's thighs. He screamed, and clutched at the wound in pain. Before he could even think about pulling it out, his head opened up as if it had a zipper. Standing nearby was Censor Maxim, staff raised in one hand and smoking blaster in the other...leveled at the split cranium.

"Better that than be captured, convict! Keep firing!" he shouted, rattling off a burst of anti-matter bolts into the enemy.

We kept firing, but they just scaled over the dead and soon they were so close we could see the chunks of alien matter pulsing through their veins and jutting from tears in their once human flesh. As the araktons first closed into us, Michaels was the first to drop his weapon and draw his blade. He raised it to parry the powerful creature, but the sharp coralline edge shorn straight through the meager ferro-blade and into his meaty neck. He spun away from the blow, spraying the creature with his blood as it stepped forward. I couldn't look away as its sharp spidery legs sank into his twitching corpse like it was wet sand, pulling away covered in the same red stickiness that mixed with the salt water on its hide. Next was another rookie kid, maybe seventeen, who raised his shotgun but never even got to pull the trigger. He was stabbed in the stomach and chest by another arakton, picked a full two feet off the ground. We watched as the abomination yanked his blades together in a scissoring motion, splitting the young man into two halves. He was still screaming when they flopped to the ground.

"Fall back convicts! Emplacements ready to fire!" Maxim ordered, stepping backwards toward the Tigers. We started to follow, blocking darts with our shields and trying to back up faster than they could gain on us.

"Get going! Get to the Tigers!" Aphrodite was like a storm of steel and fire, chopping into the Koralon with her blade and eroding their exposed flesh with her shotgun when given the chance. She stepped forward into their path. Her fury seemed inexhaustible.

But even she could be overrun. Three of the crab legged warriors surrounded her, and she eventually fell with a jagged blade jutting through her belly and poking out her

back, but she died with her own blade buried to the hilt in another one's skull. As she died, we piled back inside of the APCs. No one would want to be out there when those shells scoured the beach, and even bastards like Maxim knew we weren't *that* expendable. The hatches hissed shut, and we could hear the slugs outside pounding against the hull. Screeches and thumps were loud within the crew compartment, and then all that could be heard was the crash of mortar shells erupting outside...and then silence. We looked at Maxim, and he stared at his time band on his wrist.

He nodded, and the hatch hissed open. We slowly walked down the plank out onto the steaming glass beach. It was packed with bodies, dead and alive, just minutes before, but now was scoured of all organic matter once more. We saw a few dozen of our compatriots also climbing out of their respective shelters, and it seemed like we had finally done it. It made sense, because that amount of heavy fire could wipe out anything on land. Cheers rang out across the beach, and Maxim almost smiled.

There was only one problem...the Koralon were not *on land*. The cheers were immediately drowned out by a pair of deafening *thump-whooshes* as something erupted up out of the surf in two-story plumes of seawater. A second later the emplacement trench was erased off of the beach in a ground-shaking explosion. Another gigantic coralline shell shattered upon impact against one of the nearby APCs and showered a huge area with fist-sized shrapnel that cut straight through most of us. Henrich caught two just below the shoulder blades, and he died before his body stopped rolling. Maxim evaporated instantly, standing much closer to the Tiger that was struck. I was the unlucky one. My left leg was pretty much done for, but I was still alive.

Alive...which meant I got to watch as the enormous once-Viridian behemoth-arakton monsters pounded up out of the ocean. Alive...which meant I could feel the first coralline implants being stuck into my flesh. Alive...which meant I was almost aware when they changed me from one slave into another.

Death is the ultimate freedom...at least that's what I have learned.

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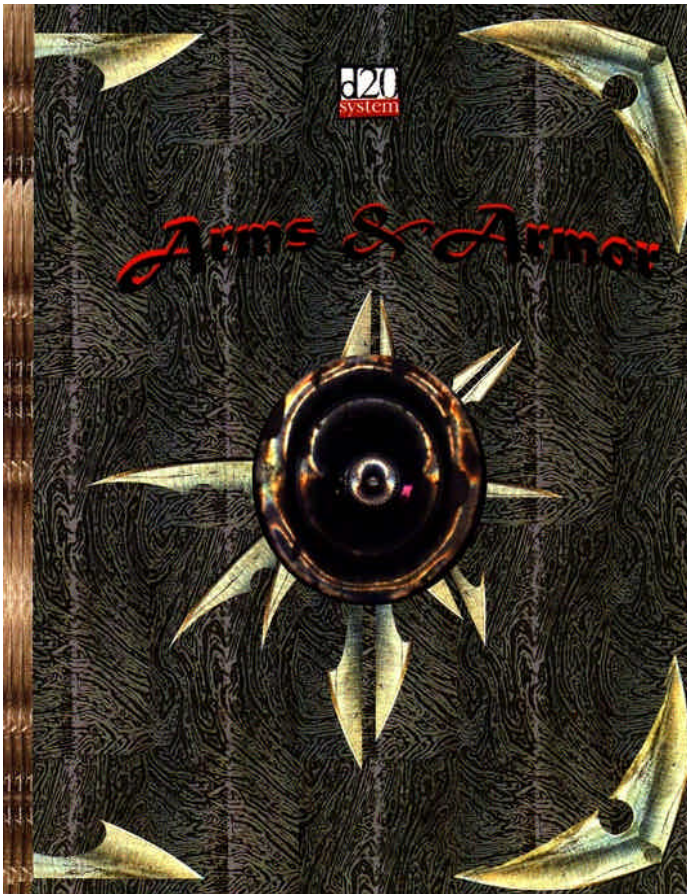
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D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



Last issue we took a look at 'Minions' from Last Bastion Press. This time we have two tomes from them, the first of which is 'Arms & Armor'.

BASICS

'Arms & Armor' is a 96-page perfect bound full color book that retails for \$24.95. It is more than just an exhaustive list of a bunch of new weapons and suits of armor. It has those, of course, but also gets into some new artifacts, masks, new constructs and rules new optional rules covering weapons and armor.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The interior of the book is laid out in a very easy to read fashion. There are many tables that are also very easy to read, but there was one table where the shading doesn't quite match up to the text. I'm not sure if this is common to the book itself or just my copy. If you took a look at 'Minions' you'll find stuff from that book making an appearance here also. The Nightling Cleaver is one of my favorites.

The first section of the book is Arms and it contains dozens of new weapons to butcher your enemies with. Unlike 'Minions' there is not a picture to accompany every

entry in 'Arms & Armor'. This is really not too big of a deal because I'm sure that all of us know what a machete and small flail look like. Some of the weapons do run to the more fantastic side of things, but it's easy enough for your DM to say yes/no to whatever he wants to allow into his campaign. There's also over one-hundred new qualities for magic weapons that will really throw your players for a loop the first time they fire up an Acidic / Dark Burst longsword! Next up are a whole slew of class oriented weapons. All of the basic classes from the Player's Hand Book get something, but Barbarians kind of got the short end of the stick with just one entry. The Optional Rules are pretty interesting. They include rules for the advancement of intelligent weapons, the ability of double weapons to separate into two weapons, and extraordinary special purposes for your most prized toys. Some of these abilities are pretty brutal, but they all also come with pretty hefty caster level requirements and, of course, will require DM approval. The new Armor section is really cool. It lists armors from the fairly mundane (Holy Robes) to the exotic (Glacier Beast Armor). There are only a couple of shields, but you'll find well over one-hundred armor qualities, choices galore! Like with the weapon section you'll also find several class oriented suits of armor. The new rules section for armor introduce armor as a damage reducer rather than something that increases your Armor Class. Additionally, there are rules to use shields for parries. There's also a handful of new constructs with CR's ranging from three to fourteen.

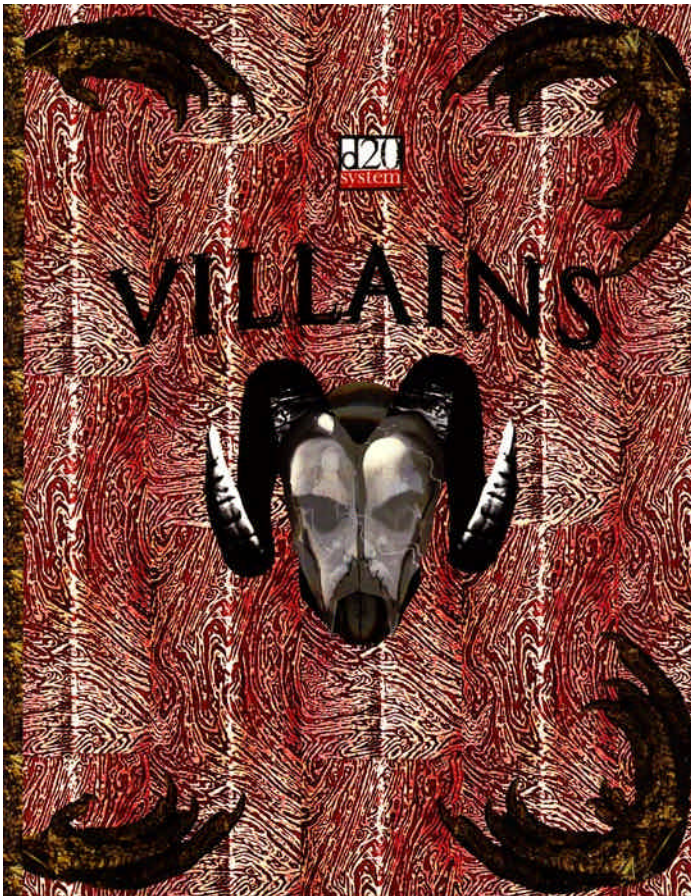
VALUE

Like 'Minions', 'Arms & Armor' will set you back about twenty-five dollars. Being full color and nicely illustrated is a definite plus. I think that a lot of its content would be better used in a campaign of higher power levels, but there is certainly a lot for any player or GM to find. I'd liken it a bit to 'Magic of Faerun', just without the spells and centered wholly on weapons and armor. There's nothing that I found that singularly made it stand out as a 'must buy', but I also found no specific reason to pass it by either. I see it as a good all around addition to your d20 library.



www.bastionpress.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



Our second review for this issue from the guys at Bastion Press is 'Villains'.

BASICS

Like 'Arms & Armor', 'Villains' is also a 96-page perfect bound book with a soft cover. It also retails for \$24.95 USD and also gives you more than just what the name might imply.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

As far as layout, readability, and artwork I've found all of the products that I've seen from Bastion Press to be the same. That means that I've found them all easy on the eyes and not lacking in these areas.

Inside you'll find twenty new villains to menace your player characters. They range from humans, to humanoids, to monsters and each entry gives not only their familiar stat block, but also nicely detailed appearance information (along with a picture for each bad guy for you to show your players), a section on their history (which can pretty easily be brought into your own campaign world), their personality (just why do the bad guys do the things they do), how they like to fight and how to use them in Low, Medium, and High level games. They also contain details

About the minions of the villains as really good bad guys must have lackeys to help them in their diabolical plans. Out of the twenty presented in the book my two favorites right now are The Xyryth, a fiendish dire shark (yikes!) that lies in wait until the time is right to eat, and eat, and eat, and eat! I'm sure that recently finishing the books 'Meg' and 'The Trench' by Steve Alten didn't hurt. Check them out. Tsystalor Krune is also quite cool. He was created by an evil god to stalk the world and destroy all of the good and happy people. That's what makes the god of nightmares feel all warm and fluffy on the inside. He's one bad mutha!

Like I said, 'Villains' gives you more than just a line-up of evil-doers to smack your PC's around with. You get a handful of new spells and a couple of pages of new magic items (most suitable for those who have chosen the darkside), but the kicker for me are, you guessed it, the prestige classes. There's only four presented in the book and they are labeled as being 'villainous' but I can see them making an appearance into just about any campaign with relative ease. Out of the four (Bloodtracker – a bounty hunter, Dinosaur Cultist – dino-druid, Gutter Stalker – homeless killers of small stature, and Sea Reavers – Pirately guys) my favorite has got to be the Dinosaur Cultists. Ok, so you get yourself eaten by a T-Rex and maybe the dinosaur god decides that it likes you so big ma-fugly pukes you up and now you're accepted as one of them. Awesome! You'll also find a single new monster for use against high level parties (see below for a pic of the beastie).

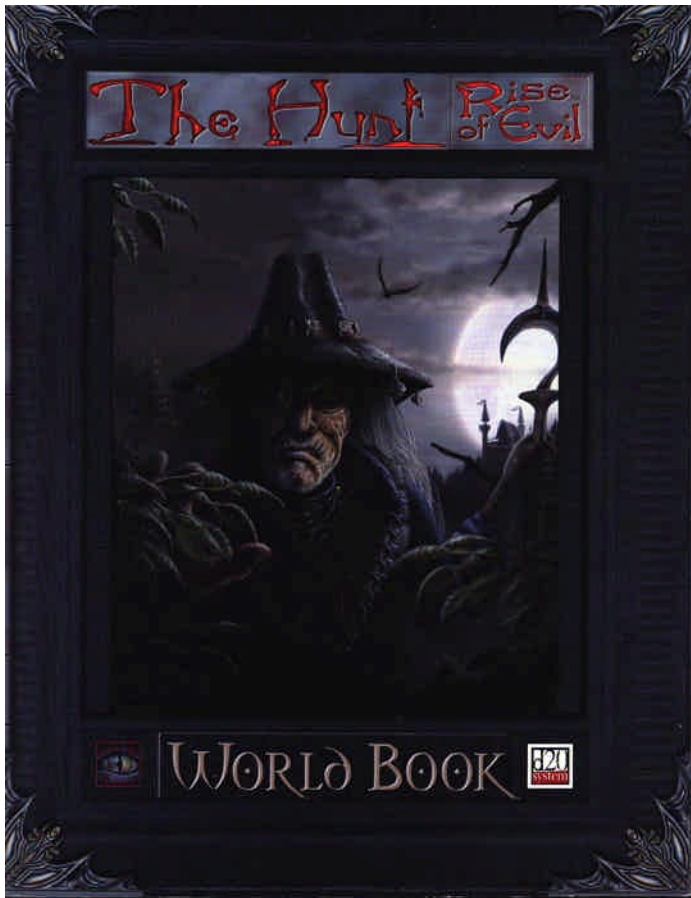
VALUE

This book can go a long way towards saving DM's a lot of time when it comes to fleshing out new adversaries. Not just stats, but motivations and their history also. I'm all for anything that does this and does so with quality results. I'm very happy with 'Villains'. Also, check out their website for some extra 'e-villains' that didn't get put into the book.



www.bastionpress.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



BASICS

We have another product from Mystic Eye Games to take a look at this issue. *The Hunt: Rise of Evil* is their world book that details the world of Gothos. It is a 144-page perfect bound black and white book that retails for \$19.95. Just as I noticed with 'Nightmares and Dreams' I and II the artwork continues to increase in quality. The maps are nicely drawn, but would have looked a little better if they were black/white/gray rather than black/white/brown-ish. All of the text is nicely laid out and easy to read as are the charts.

BACKGROUND

The first things that caught my eye after flipping through the book were the Table of Contents and the Index. Oh, what a godsend. I expected *The Hunt* to be somewhat of a Ravenloft wanna-be, but I ended up being wrong and it turned out to be quite different and useful. The book presents ten governments / homelands that make up the central part of Gothos. Each one has descriptions of their rulers, major towns, population, religion, politics and much more. The background info takes up anywhere from three to six pages (about 4 being the average) and includes a more detailed map of the region. What follows is a condensed description of each of them.

Dunreth – Think of medieval Scotland of our own world, but ruled by the 17-year old son of the deceased king. Lots of hearty fighters types are about with few wizards and sorcerers, but plenty of druids and rangers.

Gildor – An island nation ruled by Queen Katherine IV, Gildor is much like Spain or France of our world with a heavy emphasis on the church. Gildor and Dunreth are great allies, but you'll find many more arcane magic users in Gildor.

Ithganin – Oh, bad guys...really bad guys. Ithganin is a very harsh place to live unless you are at the top of the caste system, but even when you're there you have to look out for all those that are right under you. Ithganin is actually ruled by a mighty demon lord and is an evil cross of the Japanese/Middle-east of our world. As you might expect there are no Paladins in this evil land, but Rangers and Druids are also absent from the kingdom of the demon lord's empire.

Kirkland – Thick forests cover much of Kirkland, which is much like our Germany of the middle ages. It is a theocracy ruled by the Priest King and Kirkland has a decent relationship with both Gildor and Dunreth.

Mirak – Mirak is a republic where the citizens are kept in line through intimidation of the Ministry. The Ministry has built up the population to have a hatred of Elves so don't betaking your pointy ears here unless you have lots of backup. Their xenophobia also extends to the other humanoid races, to the point of hunting down half-orcs as monsters.

Nord – The frozen lands of Nord are made up of many villages and are without a really organized government like the other lands. This is the land of mighty human and dwarf barbarians.

Romanus – I found this to be my favorite land in Gothos. It is a modified version of the ancient Roman Empire of Earth. It is ruled by an emperor, with a senate to represent the people. There is also a Religious Council that guides both the emperor and the senate. Romanus is in a constant state of war with Ithganin, but fighting has not gone on for quite some time.

Rylonia – Rylonia is made up of nomadic clans and is quite similar to the American Indians of our world and is made up almost exclusively by humans with just a tiny smattering of half-elves. Rylonia shuns the world outside their own clans. I like this area of Gothos almost as much as Romanus. Unless you're running a group of PC's that all come from Rylonia you'll probably have to work in a single PC as an outcast from a clan.

Sheena – The proper name of Sheena, the Confederation of Free Traders, is a bit of a misnomer. It is likely that the only trade that goes on is between the four ruling families. Each family controls an island and they take what they need from the other local regions. One great big pirate paradise.

Wakistan – A vast desert empire whose inhabitants are suspicious of outsiders and are ruled over by the Kalif. Wakistan has a middle-eastern flavor and djinn and other such creatures are what you'll find in this Aladdin-ish region.

On to what has probably become the drug that fuels my 3rd Edition Dungeons & Dragons addiction, classes and prestige classes. There are four standard classes and while the Shaman of Rylonia are quite nice my favorite are the Centurions of Romanus. I'd love to have one or even two working together in my campaign. There are nine prestige classes and I found the Knight of the Rose, the Road Warden and the Swashbuckler to be the most to my liking.

Similar to the rules for Vitus in Mystic Warriors, characters can earn Dream Points which can be used to manifest other powers. If you're running a moderately high powered campaign these would work well, but like Vitus, it could unbalance a low to medium power level game. Blood and Blight magic are also quickly gone over, but a complete version should be coming in another supplement. Very basically, Blood Magic is powered by sacrifices and Blight Magic gets its power from ravaging the natural world. There is a nice section that is devoted to new dieties, a few new domains and churches. These could all easily be dropped into another campaign world

or used on their own. There are about forty new feats ranging from the ability to use Blight Magic to becoming a Scythe Master to many that simply add to skill checks.

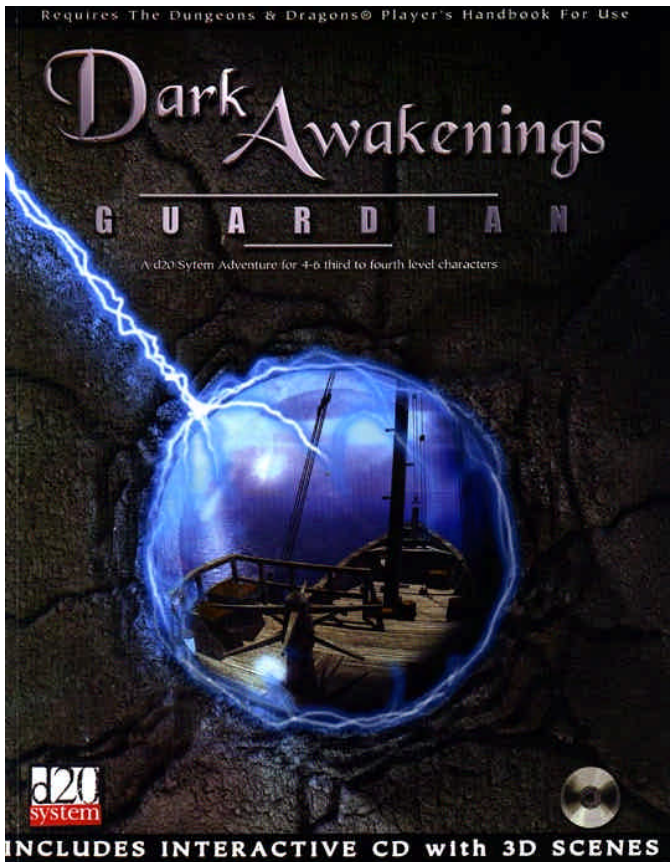
VALUE

I liked, no, I really liked this book. It can easily be used as the sole world that you set your game, but is it also easily dropped into an existing campaign world. This is how I intent to use the cultures and governments presented therein. I run a Dungeons and Dragons game in the Forgotten Realms and will scatter the ten regions among the land of Faerun. The Hunt: Rise of Evil gives you a lot of good information, and does so for a very reasonable price. I continue to be more impressed with Mystic Eye Games with each product that is released.

www.mysticeyegames.com



D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



of role-playing that there is potential for. With that said, when the time does come to fight, man oh man, you better be ready.

VALUE

The addition of the CD-ROM (PDF files, printable maps, 3D scenes, etc) is a very nice touch, but I'm not totally convinced that it's worth the \$20 price tag. Everything on the CD has been put together very nicely, but I just don't have my computer out at the table when we're playing Dungeons and Dragons. The printable color maps are definitely the most useful part of the CD. The 3D scenes are nice, but I found them to be less useful than the maps. As I said earlier, I don't make a habit of having my computer out at the gaming table. If you make use of a computer quite a bit then you'll probably have a great time with the scenes. I don't think they really conveyed much that a DM couldn't do with old-time storytelling. There was nothing wrong with them, but I just didn't find them to be stand-up-and-applaud awesome. I found the adventure itself to be a very nice change of pace and for a couple of dollars less this would be well worth the price of admission unless you use your computer a lot during your games. If that's the case then you'll be much better off.

BASICS

Dark Awakenings: Guardian is an 84-page perfect bound softcover adventure for a party of 4-6 3rd or 4th level adventurers. All of the text is very readable and notes to the DM stand out and are easily found. All of the maps and handouts are full color and are beautiful. They are all duplicated on the CD that comes with the book and are individually printable. This is awesome as it will keep you from mangling your book as you try to show the pictures to your players. Even with the other artwork being black and white it's still very nice and doesn't look at all like something you'll find on the wall of a kindergarten classroom. It retails for \$19.95.

STORYLINE

The characters are charged with the investigation of an island where many years ago the elves imprisoned a terrible creature and then took off. The island's new inhabitants have awoken the beast and need you to put everything back the way it was before really bad things happen. Ok, that's probably a bit oversimplified but you get the idea. The background of the area where you'll be playing has been nicely fleshed out and can get the players and DM up to speed quickly. This is not a hack-and-slash module. If you have a group of players that are willing to take a break from the constant flow of blood they might find themselves pleasantly surprised at the amount

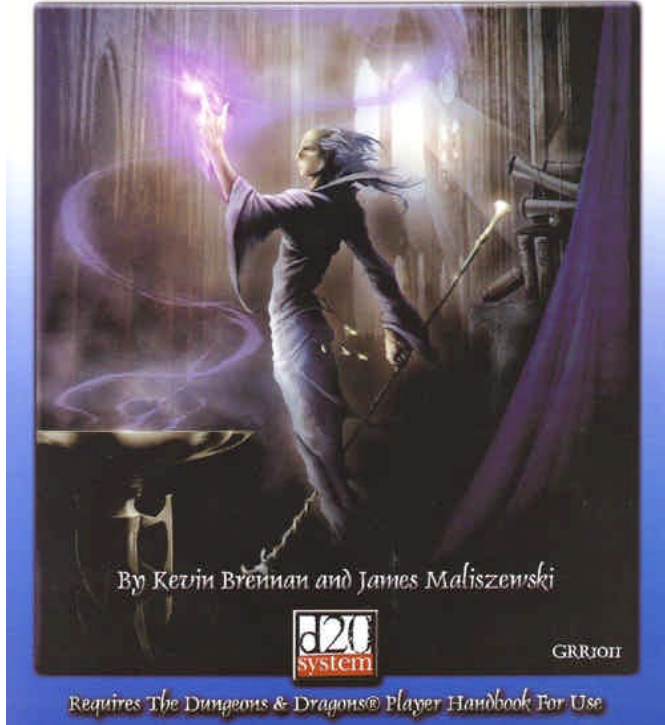


www.auran-d20.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Brian Ahrens

-A R C A N A- SOCIETIES • OF • MAGIC



BASICS - This supplement for the d20 system is just what the title implies, organizations that use magic or deal with magic in different ways.

The Abbey of Green Steel is just the opposite of the nice, tranquil place where Q. C. Kane studied with Master Po in the old Kung Fu t.v. show. The monks in this abbey are secretly more concerned with acquiring power and becoming Devils (literally) than with the grabbing of a small rock from some old guy's hand before he can close it.

The Dragon Gang is a thieves' guild that is run by, you guessed it, a dragon. Picture Don Corleone with scales and claws. The Dragon Gang is into all the same criminal activities that Vito, Sonny (before he became very perforated) and Michael were into in the The Godfather. And just like any good criminal organization, The Dragon Gang, is only interested in profit.

The School Behind the Veil is advertised as a place for warriors to hone their skills and learn new ways of folding, spindling and mutilating their opponents. The "guy" who runs the place is actually a 3,000 year old ghost interested in world domination.

The Servants of Decay have an interesting hobby. They want to bring about the destruction of civilization. The servants are amoral. They believe that the downfall of civilization will bring about the return of Preternature, an ancient "perfect" reality. "Civilization" (not the computer game) is what keeps preternaturals from impinging upon ordinary reality. The Servants want anarchy.

The Tribunal of Arcane Law functions as the magic police. If some wizard with delusions of grandeur decides to open a permanent gate to Hell then the Tribunal will step in and stop him/her. The Tribunal only interferes if activities of an individual or organization does something of such magnitude that it might turn ordinary people against magic or transcend national interests.

Inside the Temple of the Living God the poor, almost defunct god, Viraxis, is trying to mount a comeback from obscurity. His last temple is trying to spread the worship of Viraxis back among people so that the god may once again take his place with the other dieties of power in whatever mythos a campaign has in place.

Presentation – Each society comes with history and background information. Major NPCs are also described with characteristics, skill, spells and motivations. The organizations that have a static base of operations also have some nice maps. Each section of the map receives a brief description. Each group also has a new feat and prestige class.

Storyline – Along with their histories each organization comes with some ideas for using them in a campaign. Also, each group comes with two or three adventure ideas revolving around that organization. Last, but not least, all the societies have one or more alternative backgrounds so that a GM can change the orientation of the groups. These alternative views will allow a game master to change an "evil" society into a "nice" one or vice versa for his/her players to interact with.

Value – This 63 page, perfect bound tome retails for \$14.95. That price comes out to \$2.49 per society. Odds are that a GM won't be able to drop all of the groups in to a campaign, but this book does what it is intended: it saves a GM brain power. The groups are ready made and would need little or no work to be dropped immediately into a fantasy campaign. Some of the group are "evil" while others have a more appeal to more moral PC group. This book gives a GM both potential enemies and allies to throw at a group of players.

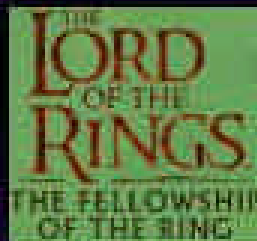
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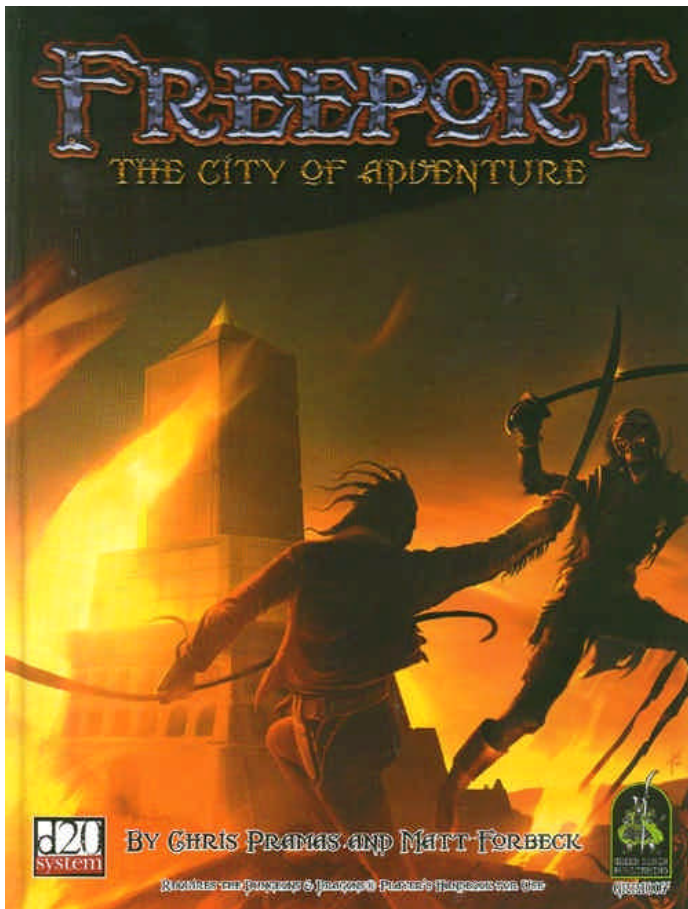


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D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



BASICS – Freeport, The City of Adventure is a 150 page hard-back book by Green Ronin publishing. It details a city that can be used as the backdrop of adventures in Dungeons and Dragons or another fantasy game. The covers are full color and the binding feels very sturdy. The interior art is all black & white with some of it great and some of it ok, but all of it passable. The book will set you back \$29.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS – Inside you'll find six chapters, two appendices, a table of contents **AND** an index. Having both of those just makes a GM's job all the easier when trying to find something. Chapter One gives a nicely detailed history of how Freeport came to be and where it is now. At seven pages it's a rather quick, but interesting read. Chapter Two goes into detail about the islands close to Freeport and the sorts of trouble that your characters can get into there. In Chapter One you learned how the history of the rough and tumble city of Freeport. Now in Chapters Three (The City of Freeport) and Four (A Freeport Gazetteer) you get down to the business of making a living (or killing) in the city. These chapters go hand in hand with a beautiful map of the city. It's four folded panels in size and is at the back of the book. It's perforated for easy removal, but just take an extra minute

when removing it from the rest of the book. It's too nice to tear up. Chapter five gives the GM many ways to run a campaign in Freeport. Freeport is more than a bar-fight a night place. Yes, it absolutely can be that if that's what you and your players want. You can hack-and-slash your way through town if you like. But there's also so much more to Freeport. You could get into a heavy role-playing (light on the combat) game where the players are embroiled in all sorts of political games of cat and mouse. A city this size would also work without a hitch for a mystery game. Being a coastal city also opens up an opportunity to get just about anywhere else in your campaign world. The sixth chapter, new rules, is where you'll come across two new prestige classes (The Freeport Pirate, different enough from the Dread Pirate in Song and Silence to warrant its inclusion here, and the Crimeboss), an NPC class (Cultist), new Feats (not just centered on pirate-types, but quite useable for lots of different characters), new Spells (lots that are water or most useful to characters that spend a lot of time at sea), and new Magic Items (like the spells, they are geared towards sea-dogs, but you'll find lots of very cool things here).

The two appendices detail firearms, what true pirate would be without one, and standard buildings that your characters will wander into. The latter will save the GM time in having to take care of sketching out each building in the city, but the former should be looked over before giving your players the 'go-ahead' to use them. Firearms are brutal and can just lay waste to enemies. Doing so at range makes them even more powerful. This is balanced with major reload times and being rather expensive for non-magical weapons.

VALUE – Ok, so should you shell out around \$30 for Freeport, The City of Adventure. Well, if you're the piratey type and want a cool place to send some scurvy dogs down to Davey Jones' locker then heck yeah. If you're more of a 'classic' fantasy player then this may not float your boat. The only downside I noticed was that there is a lot of gray coloring to the interior pages. In some places this didn't contrast very well with the black text. Nothing was unreadable, but a lighter background would have eliminated this entirely. As I said earlier, the map is just gorgeous. Freeport is easily drop-able into any fantasy campaign or you could even run a whole campaign just in and around Freeport. There's enough going on here to keep your players busy and entertained.

www.greenronin.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW



Gaming Frontiers is a d20 magazine that is published on a quarterly basis. Ok, calling it a magazine may be a bit of an understatement. Each issue contains everything that you'd expect from a magazine, but a lot more of everything.

The debut issue of Gaming Frontiers was released for free at Origins and GenCon last year and gave a great tease as to what the regular content would be. If you didn't make it out to either of those conventions and your local game store doesn't have a copy you can drop the guys at United Playtest a letter, and \$1 to cover postage, and they'll shoot you out a copy. The premier issue is very fantasy centered. Inside you'll find a mini-adventure, a piece of fiction, a new prestige class, and a cult that can be dropped into any game world. Each article has been donated by a different game company and is up to the quality of their other published material. The 'freebie' issue is 20 pages long and is printed in full-color. Very nice.

With the first regular issue you'll notice several things. First, it's pretty darn big. The page count shoots up to 140 and they maintain a full-color interior. The article count also skyrockets and science-fiction material is added to the fantasy articles. Inside you get lots of preview material from various games, new classes for your players to try

out, cartoons, fiction, and review material. Visually, each issue is wonderful. As with the preview issue a lot of the articles are from the various companies that produce d20 material.

The second issue continues with the same format at its predecessor. In addition to the fantasy and sci-fi material they also expand to the spy genre and give a glimpse of the upcoming Judge Dredd role-playing game from Mongoose.

Another noticeable difference between the preview issue and the regular ones is the price. It increases to \$17.95 per issue. Before you stroke out and say, "That's about what I pay for a whole supplement from <Insert your favorite gaming company name here>!" I don't think that Gaming Frontiers is trying to be another supplement in the sea of material that is available for d20 games. Inside each issue you get a ton of different material, quite useable, that you can bring into your campaign. What you like will probably prompt you to seek out the rest of the material where the excerpt came from. If you don't like it so much then maybe you saved some cash by not picking up the supplement in the first place. So is it just one big advertisement?

No, I didn't get that feel either. If that was the case then you wouldn't get useable material, and you certainly do get that. I've already stated that it's not quite a magazine, but more than that. So, what is it exactly?

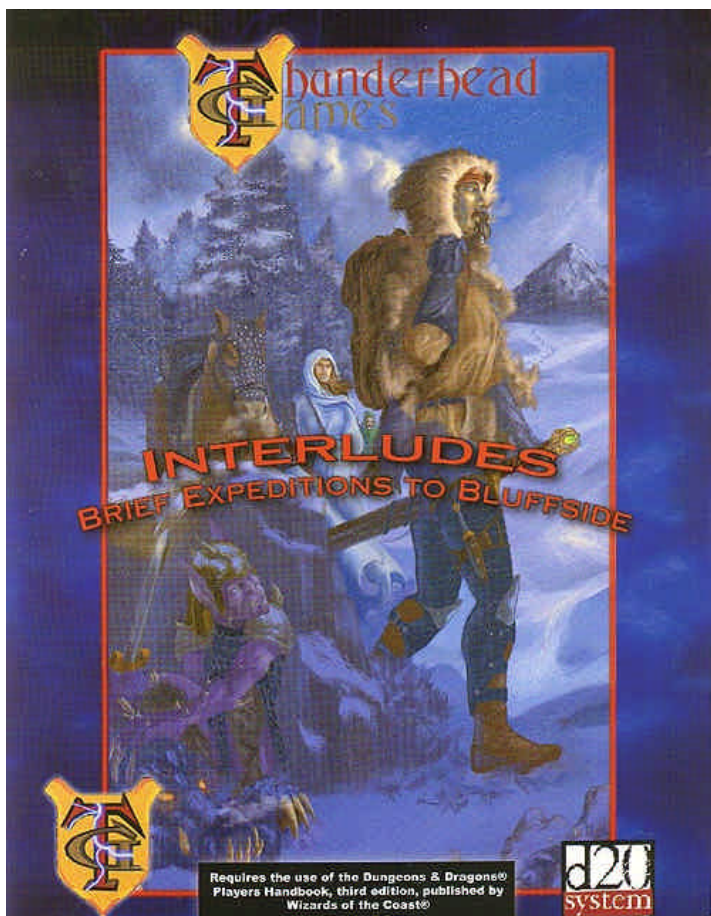
My impression of Gaming Frontiers is that it's kind of like a buffet. You know, you pay one price and get to sample whatever you like and when you find something that really tickles your taste buds you tend to hang around that part of the buffet line a little more. Players of just one specific genre (fantasy, sci-fi, espionage, etc) will find less useable content than players of many different kinds of d20 games, but that's to be expected. I doubt they could put out a different magazine for each specific genre. This way everyone gets something and a good number of people will get a lot.

I liked each issue very much. I'd say definitely try out one issue and if find even half of the material useful and/or entertaining then you've done pretty well. The preview issue had a subscription offer, but this was pulled when each regular issue got so big. In my opinion, that's the one thing that's missing, but it may just not be possible for United Playtest to offer this.

www.gamingfrontiers.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Brian Ahrens



Basics

Interludes: Brief Expeditions to Bluffside is, despite the plurality of the title, really only one expedition. Interludes is a 63-page adventure for a group of second level characters. This module is published by Thunderhead Games and has a retail price of \$10.95.

The adventure is designed to be used with Thunderhead Games' Bluffside: City on the Edge campaign setting, but a gamemaster would have little to no trouble in altering Interludes to fit into any d20 fantasy campaign setting.

Storyline

The first interior page of the book indicates that this adventure is designed for second level characters. What is not given is the size of the group of players that Interludes is designed for. This should not discourage a game master. The writer, Mr. Quinn, was thoughtful and insightful enough to include variances for each encounter. These variances allow for ways of lessening or increasing the difficulties of each encounter to fit with the strengths and make up of the party of characters. These variances can modify an encounter to fit with a fighter heavy group,

divine spellcaster heavy group or an arcane spellcaster heavy group. The adventurers begin Interludes traveling along the Coldwind Road on the way to Kirkwood, a minor stopping point on the road. The players will make their way through an adventure that involves the inhabitants of Kirkwood, Rakers (goblinoids that live in the forest outside Kirkwood) and the Hammers (thieves from the guild in Bluffside). Interludes is not a stereotypical kill-the-monster-take-the-treasure type of adventure. A party composed of straight hack and slash players will have a more difficult time completing the adventure than will a group or more role-play oriented characters. Hack and slashers should not be discouraged. There is plenty of opportunity for flexing of muscle and swinging of steel in Interludes. The players will explore Kirkwood and some of the places of interest in the surrounding forest.

Presentation

The interior of Interludes: Brief Expeditions to Bluffside is nicely done. The printing is on a decent quality paper and the binding seems to be durable. The text is of a size and font that allows easy reading. Any text that needs to be read by the game master to the players is conveniently printed in bold-faced type. The variances for each encounter are separated into boxed areas near the encounter description for ease of use. The maps included with Interludes are nicely laid out and keyed for the different areas of importance. The only drawback to the maps is that they are printed a little on the dark side and will need to be looked at in good lighting. This darkness is from all the maps being printed on a gray-scale of color from black to white. The only color in Interludes is the cover artwork. The interior art is black and white like the maps and receives grades of fair to above average. The color art on the cover gets an "above average" grade from this reviewer.

Value

For the retail price of \$10.95 this is a very good investment for fantasy gamer. Along with a well written adventure the purchaser receives the description of twelve new creatures, two new spells, eleven new items, two new prestige classes, two new feats, twelve-plus place of interest in Kirkwood, thirty-plus new Non-Player Characters and six ideas for furthering adventuring in the area of Kirkwood. These six adventure seeds could be the justification needed for the plurality of the title of the book.

www.thunderheadgames.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Christopher Carr



This is the new campaign module released by Wizards of the Coast for the Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game that will take characters from 1st to 6th level. The Wheel of Time Roleplaying game is based on the writings of Robert Jordan who is currently undertaking a monstrous series that sees book 10 out in November. The books are detailed (some say overly detailed) and large (some say WAY overly large), and easily lend themselves to a roleplaying game of high fantasy. The Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game (henceforth referred to as WOTRG) is a D20 system making it very easy for anyone familiar to the current D&D to play.

Upon first thumbing through the book I was impressed that the artwork is surprisingly good. Jordan aficionados are repeatedly disappointed by lousy artwork, and here at least, as well as in the core rulebook, we are not offended. Each section is delineated as a chapter, and the book on the whole is easy to digest. All of the NPC's stats are listed at the end of each chapter for you to copy upon note cards or to bookmark.

With repeated re-readings several other positive things have popped out. Each chapter neatly lines up approximately with a level up for the characters. The end of the module corresponds nicely with the requirements for prestige classes. Just when characters reach their esteemed goals, the module is over and the GM can create adventures that fit with the party goals. The first chapter is VERY nonlinear and is simply a collection of simple low level adventures that allow the gamemaster to geographically move the characters to the start of the second chapter. The module weaves itself in and out of the book series,

and well-read people will easily be able to pick out characters and situations from the series. The PC's do not actively participate in the rescue of Elayne from the Seanchan, but they might be in the area and hear rumors of a male channeler. The module gives several ways of dealing with the characters depending on what type of character that they are running. A latent dreamer may have warnings in his or her dreams and a noble may receive gossip. These little "hooks" are listed throughout the modules as asides. For the novice GM these are VERY helpful. Also helpful to the beginning GM is the large amount of annotated skill checks sprinkled throughout each adventure. It helps to have the DC of a sense motive check printed rather than having the player character roll and you making it up on the fly. The maps of the villages are well rendered and useful, and there is quite a bit of background for each country that the characters will pass through.

Although I am a big fan of Jordan's writings and this game there are some things to be noted before running out and purchasing it. Hands down the first thing to raise eyebrows is the price. It comes in at \$30 for a 191-page module that requires \$40 Rulebook to play. As I glance around at other modules (particularly the "super modules") I notice that this appears to be the market norm, so this claim is one of personal taste rather than a real complaint. Another issue is the fact that without a working player knowledge of the background some of the nuances of the module are lost on them. Off handed comments that should be loaded with information tended to get overlooked. My PC's simply pointed out to treat them as if they knew nothing and to overkill the hints. We will see if this eases everyone's problems with the setting. As a novice role-player (A little over a year now), this campaign is the first I have ever GM'd. It is very important to realize that this is a **ROLEPLAYING** module. People can get themselves killed quick. The WOTRPG does not offer any instantaneous healing. It converts damage to sub dual damage thereby speeding up recovery, but note that it does take time to (gasp!!) recover. With this in mind do not expect dungeon crawls. Although the maps of the towns are nice, the building drawings are representative and do not have the actual measurements drawn off. This could be common in modules, but as a beginner it sure would have been easier if it was provided. Simply drawing the same pictures with a grid system underneath it would have been enough.

My small gripes aside I think this is a great module. All of it can easily be adapted to fit into other universes, and would work nice to force a group of heroes to think instead of the typical "charge the bad thing" style of roleplaying that is common in game stores. The mini adventures especially give a great twist on the stereotypical caravan and save the village from a pack of killer x,y, and z's scenarios. I do like the realism of the healing and this would be a neat twist to put into a campaign. Have the characters enter "Randland" via a portal stone and watch the horror as the cleric screams, "Thangs just don't seem to work right pa. Dis here arm should be well by now!!!" If you have not read the books before playing then do a little research. Websites abound, and a WOT compendium was published a few years ago. The website www.audiobooksforfree.com has the first six or so online for download. Burn a disc of them and listen in the car. For any Robert Jordan fans that Role-play this is a must. For everyone else I think this is a great introduction into a complicated series, or at least a wonderful start of an adaptation to another setting.

D20 ADVENTURE

Call of Cthulhu[®] ROLEPLAYING GAME

by J. Michael Tisdell

General Hospital

This is a short d20 Call of Cthulhu adventure for 3 or more investigators. The adventure is set in Texas in the early 1930's. With minor modifications, the story could be moved to the 1920's or to the modern day.

Summary

The Investigators are in a minor car accident and have to rush an injured bystander to the local hospital. Arriving at the hospital, the investigators find themselves involved with a year old murder – and a ghost out for revenge.

Background Information

General Hospital is a small hospital located on the edge of Jasper, Texas. Jasper is located in the piney woods of east Texas. The hospital is rather unremarkable. However, there are also reports of someone – or something – wandering the patient's wing.

Exactly one year ago, Elvis Green was brought to General Hospital with a gunshot wound. Sheriff Carter, who brought Green in, said that he had been shot resisting arrest. Carter was investigating the disappearance of a 4-year-old girl and he wanted to talk to Green. Green ran from the Sheriff and was shot.

Dr. Cleave, the physician on duty, operated on Green in an attempt to save his life. Cleave, who had lost his twin sister when she they were 6, intentionally botched the operation. Green died from internal bleeding two days later – in the West wing. Since the mutilated body of the missing girl was found shortly before Green died, there wasn't an investigation of his death.

On the year of the murder, Green's spirit has returned to exact vengeance on Dr Cleave, Sheriff Carter, and the town of Jasper.

Events

The following events occur in the order given. The pacing of the events should be handled by the Keeper to keep the game moving but do not overpower the players. They should have time to investigate.

The sequence is set such that the events will happen in the order listed if the investigators do nothing to move the story along. Their actions may change how things happen.

1. Hook

Below is a suggested hook to get the group of investigator's involved in the mystery. Use this or create one that better fits your campaign.

Late one night, the adventurers are driving along a dark two-lane highway. As they round a corner, an elderly man standing in the road startles the driver. He is waving his handkerchief to get the party to stop.

The man says his name is Elwood Barber. He is a farmer that lives outside of Jasper. This evening, Father Gideon from the local church, came to visit Elwood. After supper, they were sitting on the front porch, when Father Gideon passed out.

Elwood quickly loaded Father Gideon into his truck and was driving him to the hospital. However, as he rounded the corner, he lost control of the truck and wound up in the ditch. Elwood has been standing on the road about fifteen minutes hoping to flag someone down.

Farm Truck

The truck is front-down in the ditch and its front axle is broken. Father Gideon is the passenger side of the truck's cabin. A quick examination reveals that Gideon is very pale and his breathing is shallow. A **Heal** check (DC 15) will show that Gideon is unconscious – actually, he's slipped into a coma. A second successful **Heal** test (DC 20) will reveal the coma.

Elwood Barber is also looking a little ashen and pale. In all the excitement, a successful **Spot** check (DC 25) is required to notice.

2. Arriving at the Hospital

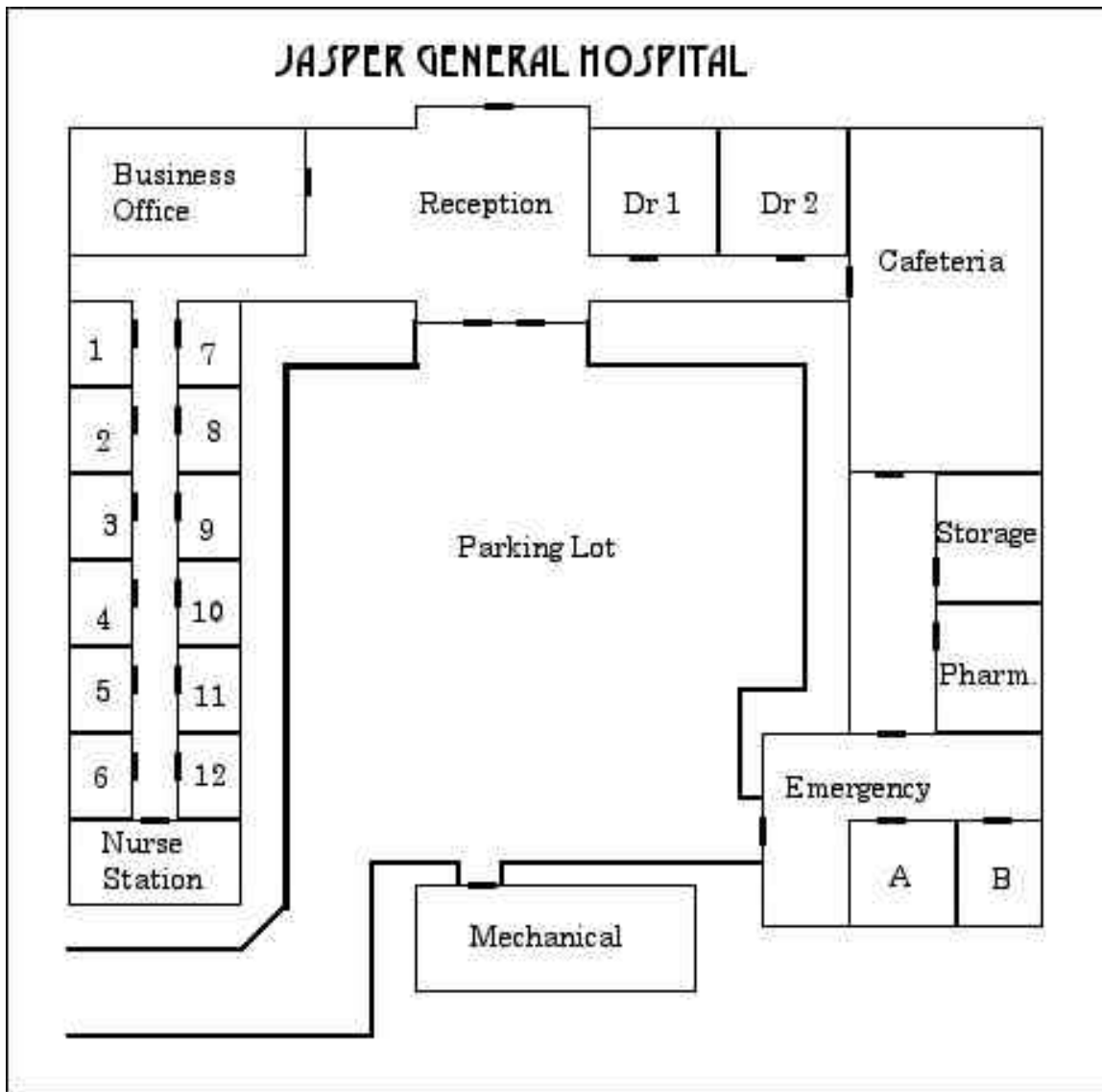
Jasper General Hospital is located on the north edge of town. It's a large single story building with two wings; parking is in the rear. Nurse Todd will meet the party when they bring in the unconscious priest. She will be sitting at the reception desk.

Nurse Todd will give the priest a quick examination and then help the party move him to Room 1. During this time, Elwood Barber is starting to feel woozier. A successful **Spot** check (DC 20) will reveal this.

Elwood Collapses

If the party has missed Elwood's problems, he will collapse into a chair in Room 1. Nurse Todd will put Elwood in room 10. Unlike Father Gideon, Elwood is just exhausted. Estelle will put him to bed. She will also shoo anyone out of the Elwood's room, saying he needs his rest.

After taking care of Elwood, Estelle will tell the party she is going to get the Doctor and admittance forms for Father Gideon. Some of the party should remain with the Priest to be able to pick up on the next event.



3. First Sighting

Nurse Todd returns and helps the party fill out the admission forms. It will take about 5 minutes to complete the forms.

Have the party make a **Listen** check (DC 20). The party members who succeed will hear a muffled scream coming from down the hall. If they leave the room immediately, they will see what appears to be a patient leaving Elwood's room and entering the one across the Hall. No Sanity check is required for this sighting.

If no one makes their Listen check, Nurse Todd will go down to Elwood's room after she's done with the paper work. She will invite one of the investigators to accompany her.

Hallway

If there is a player character in Room 7, he will meet the investigators as they come out of the Father Hennessey's Room.

He will have heard the scream. If the party failed their

Listen check, it will be this character that sees the ghost go into Room 4.

Room 4

If the party members enter Room 4, they will see only Mrs. Dahl who is sound asleep. If they wake her, she will not know anything about the incident.

4. Elwood's Room

When the party enters Elwood's room, something doesn't feel right. Players with the **Sensitive** feat should make a test (DC 15). A player that passes this test will feel cold when they enter the room.

A character that makes a successful **Listen** check (DC 25) will hear the faint sound of water (blood) dripping on the floor.

Elwood's Bed

Elwood is lying on the bed, with the woolen blanket pulled up to his shoulders. His face is ashen and has a horrible grimace on it. Pulling back the covers will reveal that Elwood has quickly bled to death from a small incision on

the left side of his chest. The blanket and covers are stuck together and make a wet parting sound when they are pulled back. The bed is covered with blood and some is dripping on the floor.

Upon a successful **Spot** check (DC 10), a bloodstain can be found on the floor next to the bed. A subsequent successful **Cthulhu Mythos** check (DC15) would identify the pattern as a marred *Elder Sign*.

A successful **Heal** check (DC 15) or a **Spot** check (DC 20) will reveal that the wound on Elwood's body is a surgical incision.

Nurse Todd

Nurse Todd will approach the bed if no one else moves. She will quickly check Elwood's pulse and then go for Doctor Cleave, leaving the party behind.

5. The Doctor Arrives

Doctor Cleave will arrive shortly and examine the body. He will pronounce it dead at the time he arrives. He will then ask the party what happened to him. Doctor Cleave will ask if anyone did any unofficial operations on Elwood. After the questioning, Dr. Cleave will insist that the investigators return to the lobby to wait for Sheriff Carter. Dr. Cleave will remain behind.

Nurse Todd

Nurse Todd will have called Sheriff Carter.

Second Sighting

As the group leaves Room 10, each one should make a **Spot** check (DC 15). Those passing the test will see the Ghost enter Room 9.

6. Meet the Sheriff

Sheriff Carter will arrive in about 20 minutes. He will be greatly put out for being called at this time of the morning. He dressed in a hurry and did not have a chance to tuck in his shirt.

Sheriff Carter will question the party members about what has happened. Though he sounds like a dimwitted oaf, the Sheriff is quite bright, and good at his job. He is not overly suspicious of the party; people die in hospitals all the time. However, he will be wary if anyone tries to pull a fast one.

During the questioning, Dr. Cleave will enter the lobby.

The First Real Clue

After questioning the investigators, Sheriff Carter will question Nurse Todd. Nurse Todd will reveal that the wound on Elwood's body looks exactly like that on Elvis Green's body.

Have the players make a **Spot** check (DC 20). A success will mean that the player sees a quick reaction on Dr. Cleave's face. Doctor Cleave will go to his office, to work on papers. He will actually be making an entry in his journal.

7. Meet Enrique

After the questioning and any investigation that the players want to do, Enrique will come running into the room. He will be out of breath and almost hysterical. Nurse Todd will fetch Doctor Cleave.

Between gasps and sobs, Enrique will describe seeing the Ghost enter Room 4. The figure looked familiar to Enrique, so he followed it into the room. He found Mrs. Dahl dead in the same manner as Elwood.

Questioning Enrique

If questioned, Enrique will be able to describe the figure well enough that Nurse Todd, Dr. Cleave, or Sheriff Carter will recognize it as Elvis Green.

Nurse Todd, Sheriff Carter, and Dr. Cleave will run to Room 4.

Room 4

Mrs. Dahl is lying on the bed, with the woolen blanket pulled up to her shoulders. Her face is ashen and has a horrible grimace on it. Pulling back the covers will reveal that she has quickly bled to death from a small incision on the left side of his chest. The blanket and covers are stuck together and make a wet parting sound when they are pulled back. The bed is covered with blood and some is dripping on the floor.

Upon a successful **Spot** check (DC 10), a bloodstain can be found on the floor next to the bed. A subsequent successful **Cthulhu Mythos** check (DC15) would identify the pattern as a marred *Elder Sign*.

A successful **Heal** check (DC 15) or a **Spot** check (DC 20) will reveal that the wound on Mrs. Dahl's body is a surgical incision.

Aftermath

Resolution

If Dr. Cleave fails his Sanity check, he will return to his office and kill himself.

Nurse Todd will follow the Doctor and will find his body. This will cause her to confess. Sheriff Carter will then arrest Nurse Todd for accessory to murder.

If the party dispatches the ghost, Nurse Todd will confess to them what she knows. Sheriff Carter will arrest Nurse Todd and Dr. Cleave.

Experience and Sanity Awards

- ♦ If the investigators manage to uncover the evidence of Dr. Cleave's crime and turn it over to Sheriff Cleave before Dr. Cleave commits suicide, they will score 1,000 XPS.
- ♦ If the investigators dispatch the Ghost and/or uncover the evidence of Dr. Cleave's crime, they will score 750 XPS.

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- ♦ If the investigators do not uncover the evidence of Dr. Cleave's crime, they will score 500 XPS.

Consequences

The arrest or suicide of Dr. Cleave and the arrest of Nurse Todd will satisfy the ghost. Elvis Green will not return. Sheriff Carter will clean up the mess, but he will suggest that the Investigators leave town as soon as possible.

Dramatis Personae

Elvis Green

Elvis Green was a drifter and handyman. He came into town about a month before his death and began working out at the Meacham farm west of Jasper. Elvis was an odd sort, and he was often found loitering around the school. When Sarah Angees was reported missing, Sheriff Carter immediately thought of Elvis, and went out to the Meacham farm.

He found Elvis working on a tractor and when the Sheriff went to ask him questions, Elvis began to run across the field. Sheriff Carter had to use deadly force to stop Green's flight. The Sheriff saw that Green was grievously wounded, so he took him into General Hospital. During the admission process, Carter explained to Dr. Cleave about why he went to see Green.

When Doctor Cleave operated on Green to repair the gunshot wound, he intentionally did not close up the wound. Two days later, Green died from a massive loss of blood.

On the day after Green was brought in to the Hospital, the mutilated body of Sarah Angees was found buried in the hay in the Meacham's Barn.

Elvis Green has returned on the anniversary of his death to exact vengeance on those who murdered him. The ghost appears as an ashen-faced man dressed in a hospital gown. The gown has a very large and wet blood stain on the left side of his chest. Elvis appears solid but close inspection (**Spot** vs. DC 20) reveals that his bare feet do not touch the floor. Elvis does not react to light or sound. Elvis Green only manifests himself between sunset and sunrise.

He is set on killing Estelle Todd and Dr. Cleave, as they were the ones who conspired to murder him. He also blames the hospital staff and Sheriff Carter for not doing anything to help him. He haunts the patient wing of the hospital as well as Operating Theater B. He won't be seen in the other areas of the hospital.

The ghost never makes a sound.

If Dr. Cleave commits suicide, the ghost of Elvis Green will appear next to his body and laugh – though no one without the **Sensitive** feat will be able to hear him. After a few minutes, the ghost will disappear.

Elvis Green (Ghost; Undead)

S: 16; D: 13; C: -; I: 9; W: 11; Ch: 12 (16)

HP: 35 (3d12); Speed: 30; AC: 11*; Will: +2; Reflex: +1; Attack: +1; Initiative: +5; Manifesting; Corrupting Touch* (1d4+1)

Incorporeal; Darkvision (60'); Rejuvenation (2d4 reform; DC 16; d20+3); Move Silently: Auto; Hide: +8; Listen: +8; Search: +8; Spot: +8; Feats: Improved Initiative; Sanity Loss; 0/1d8

And, for the record, Elvis Green did kidnap, molest, and dismember Sarah Angees.

Dr. Adam Cleave

Dr. Adam Cleave, M.D., has been the presiding physician at Jasper General Hospital for fifteen years. In that time, he's lost a few patients, but there was only one that he had a hand in dispatching.

When Elvis Green was brought in and Dr Cleave heard Sheriff Carter's story, Dr. Cleave intentionally did not sew up the incision made when he operated. As a result, Elvis Green bled to death over the next few days.

Doctor Cleave has been tormented by what he did over the past year. Though he has not gone over the edge yet, he is very close. Shortly after the murder, Dr. Cleave began to keep a journal. He hides this in the bottom of a potted plant in his office.

If Dr Cleave suffers sufficient sanity loss or is confronted by the evidence of his journal, he will commit suicide with his Webley. He will be rather matter of fact about this – no running and screaming.

Dr. Adam Cleave

S: 11; D: 13; C: 8; I: 17; W: 16; Ch: 15; SAN: 30

HP: 9 (4d6); Speed: 30; AC: 11; Fort: +2; Ref: +2; Will: +5; Attack: +1; Webley (2d8 20 x3).

Heal: +8; Gather Information: +6; Sense Motive: +5; Slight of Hand: +6; Weapon Proficiency; Point Blank Shot; Quick Draw

Sheriff Tiberius "T" Carter

Sheriff Carter has been the Sheriff for over thirty years. He's a large man with a prodigious gut. He is prone to swagger and chew tobacco. In all respects, Sheriff Carter is the perfect Hollywood Sheriff as seen in Live and Let Die.

Sheriff Carter is prone to be rough with suspects, but this is not unusual in 1930's Texas. He loves his job and is

the news of Bonnie and Clyde Barrow with great interest.

Sheriff Carter believes that Green killed the girl and regrets that he didn't get a chance to die in prison.

Sheriff Carter

S: 14; D: 9; C: 14; I: 14; W: 14; Ch: 15; SAN: 70

HP: 16 (5d6); Speed: 30; AC: 9; Fort: +3; Ref: +3; Will: +6; Attack: +3; S/W Revolver (2d18 20 x3).

Gather Information: +12; Sense Motive: +10; Sense Motive: +8; Intimidate: +10; Weapon Proficiency; Point Blank Shot; Quick Draw

Estelle Todd, R.N.

Estelle Todd has been a nurse at General Hospital for ten years. She has always worked the night shift – she enjoys the hours and not having to deal with all the people. She is the head nurse and also assists in surgery for emergencies. .

Nurse Todd assisted Dr. Cleave when he operated on Elvis Green. Nurse Todd noticed that Dr. Cleave didn't close up as normal. Nurse Todd has been indoctrinated that Doctor's know what they are doing. And she thought Dr. Cleave knew what he was doing.

When Elvis Green died, Nurse Todd knew the cause, but she didn't want to sully the good doctor's name. And the pervert deserved it, didn't he?

Elizabeth Dahl

Elizabeth Dahl, the wife of the hospital's Pharmacist, admitted herself this morning with a pain in her abdomen. She had an emergency appendectomy in operating theater B just before lunch. She is now resting in Room 4.

Enrique Gomez

Enrique Gomez is the night janitor. He is responsible for keeping the place tidy and keeping the coffee pot in the cafeteria full and hot (see 0). Enrique is a "heard but not seen" character for most of the adventure. He's always in a different room from the party members.

Locations

The following descriptions correspond to sections on the Jasper General Hospital map.

Parking Lot

There are currently 3 cars in the lot and an older ambulance near the Emergency Room doors. The cars belong to Nurse Todd, Dr. Cleave, and Elizabeth Dahl.

Reception

This area is about 20' square with tables and chairs for people to wait. Two pay phone booths (the closing kind) are against the north wall by the business office. There is

a single reception desk just in the middle of the room. Nurse Todd works here nights. Nurse Marlene Schirmer handles reception duties during the day.

There is a telephone on the reception desk that connects to a switchboard in the business office. The operator (Sarah Johns) is only on duty during the day. The desk is full of normal office items.

Business Office

The business office is about 30' long. There are four desks here for the office staff plus a switchboard for the operator. In addition, there are 12 4-drawer filing cabinets. The eight of the filing cabinets contain patient records while the other four have business records.

Each desk has a typewriter, telephone, and office items.

File Cabinet 6

In the top drawer of cabinet 6 is the patient file for Elvis Green. It is not very thick and lists Dr. Cleave as the attending physician and Nurse Todd as the primary nurse. The official listed cause of death is "complications resulting from gunshot wound". Sheriff Carter signed the death certificate.

Second Desk

A successful **Spot** check (DC 25) will reveal that the corner of an old newspaper is sticking out of the left side drawer of the second desk.

The front page of a year-old copy of the Jasper Tribune is in the drawer. The headline and lead story are about the finding of Sarah Angees. The article includes information about Elvis Green and Sheriff Carter.

Switchboard

Taped to the side of the switchboard are commonly used numbers. This list includes the police station, the fire department, and Sheriff Carter's home phone.

Doctor's Office 1

This is the office of Doctor Cleave. He keeps his personal medical records as books here. There is a large couch along one wall and a large desk in the middle of the north end of the room. There are various potted plants scattered around the office.

Desk

In the top right drawer of the desk, Dr. Cleave keeps his Webley revolver. It is loaded.

Filing Cabinet

A successful **Spot** check (DC 20) will uncover a file folder containing clippings from various newspapers about the Elvis Green incident. A subsequent successful **Spot** check (DC 20) will uncover that some of the news clippings are from another event of fifty-two years ago – the disappearance of Dr. Cleave's sister.

Potted Plant

A thorough search and a successful Spot check (DC 24) will reveal that one of the plants can easily be removed from its pot. Under the plant is a copy of Dr. Cleave's Journal (see 0).

Doctor's Office 2

This is the office of Doctor Applegate. He is the attending physician for the day shift. It is similar in layout to Dr. Cleave's office; without the plants.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria and kitchen can handle about twenty people. During the evening, sandwiches are available in the icebox (yes, a real icebox) and an institutional coffee pot is always full. Enrique Gomez, the night custodian, keeps the kitchen clean and keeps the pot full.

Storage

This room is full of custodial supplies and office supplies. Along one wall are a washer and dryer as well as shelves full of bed linens. The autoclave is also in here.

Pharmacy

This room is laid in a similar fashion to the Storage room. In place of the washer and dryer is a pair of electric refrigerators for storing medication. Enrique also has a few bottles of homemade beer hidden in here.

The door to the pharmacy is locked. The lock is not difficult to pick (**Open Locks** DC 15).

A successful search (**Spot**, DC 20) will reveal that five or six packages of prescription sleeping pills are missing. These have been taken by Dr. Cleave to help him sleep.

Emergency

The emergency room is kept quite clean and orderly; though it is rarely used. There are a few cabinets along the north wall where emergency supplies are stored and there is a pair of wooden chairs. Most of the area is open so as to not obstruct access to the operating theaters.

Outside Doors

The doors to the emergency room are locked; a testament to how quiet Jasper is. There's a hand-written note taped to the door that instructs people to see Nurse Todd in reception. There is also a crude map on the lower part of the note.

Operating Theater A

This room is a full equipped and up-to-date operating theater of the 1930's. There is all the usual equipment available and in plain sight.

Operating Theater B

This room is similar to A. This is the room where Dr. Cleave operated on Elvis Green. The past month, the hospital staff have reported that the room is cold and some have the feeling that they are either being watched or are not in there alone.

Upon a successful **Listen** check (DC 20), the sounds of an operation can be heard. The noise is faint, but the voices can be plainly distinguished and identified as those of Dr. Cleave and Nurse Todd.

Upon a successful **Spot** check (DC 24), a small bloodstain can be found on the floor at the head of the operating table. A subsequent successful **Cthulhu Mythos** check (DC15) would identify the pattern as a marred *Elder Sign*.

Upon a successful **Psychic Focus** check (DC 15), a character with the **Sensitive** feat will get impressions that a murder was committed in this room.

Mechanical

This large room holds the steam and power plant for the hospital. There is a workbench with various tools and a folding table and chair. This is where Enrique spends most of his down time. There is a radio on the folding table tuned to a Spanish station.

Nurse's Station

This room is a combination locker area; break room, and materials storage. There is a large sofa similar to the ones in the Doctor's offices as well as two cots. There is one dinette next to a cabinet with a hot plate and a sink. Along the north wall are cabinets filled with medical equipment and some minor drugs (the rest are in the Pharmacy).

Patient Rooms

All patient rooms are single occupancy with a medical bed, radio, wardrobe, toilet, and two sitting chairs. Each room also has a window to the outside with heavy curtains. Around the bed is a track for isolation curtains. A bedpan can be found under the bed. Unless otherwise noted below, each room is empty but prepared. Note that only rooms of interest are listed below.

Room 1

This is the room in which Father Gideon is placed when he's brought to the hospital.

Room 4

Patient Elizabeth Dahl is staying in this room.

Room 7

If there is a new player to be introduced in this adventure, he will be in Room 7 resting after having his broken leg set.

Room 9

This is the room in which Elvis Green died. This room is currently empty.

Upon a successful **Listen** check (DC 20), the sounds of raspy and pained breathing can be heard. The noise is faint.

Upon a successful **Spot** check (DC 24), a small bloodstain can be found on the floor at the foot of the bed. A subsequent successful Cthulhu Mythos check (DC 15)

would identify the pattern as a marred *Elder Sign*. This is the same sign as in Operating Theater B.

Upon a successful **Psychic Focus** check (DC 10), a character with the **Sensitive** feat will get impressions that the room is occupied by a non-corporeal force.

Room 10

This is the room in which Nurse Todd places Elwood Barber.

Artifacts

The Journal of Doctor Cleave

Doctor Cleave has kept this journal ever since Elvis Green died. The entries of interest are given below.

April 22, 1931

Today I killed a man. Sheriff Carter brought in Elvis Green, a drifter, two nights ago. Our trigger-happy Sheriff had plugged Elvis as he was trying to get away. While I was scrubbing up, Carter let me know that Elvis was to be questioned about the disappearance of a little girl.

In surgery, something came over me. I had just finished removing the bullet from Green's chest and was ready to close up, but I didn't. At least, I didn't do it correctly. The wound was seeping – and it wouldn't close on its own. In a few days, Green would bleed to death.

I knew Sarah Angees, her mother works for the Pink Ladies here at the hospital. She reminded me of sissy so much. I even commented to Sarah's mother about it. Hearing what that bastard was wanted for made me snap. That's the only explanation.

Nurse Todd was assisting me. She didn't say anything when I closed up, but I think she noticed.

September 22, 1931

Six months ago, I killed a man. I thought I had gotten over it, but lately my dreams have been troubled. I see Elvis Green in his patient's gown with blood all over it. He is chasing me. I hear his voice repeating, "You killed me!"

I've had to steal pills from the pharmacy to sleep nights.

April 10, 1932

The nightmares have returned, but they're different. Elvis is still chasing me, but now he says "I want revenge!" I have to take the sleeping pills again.

April 22, 1932

There's been an incident in the Hospital tonight. A patient was killed. His body had the same wound as on Elvis Green. I know it's Elvis. He's come back looking for me. I won't let him take me!

TERRAFORMING IN MINIATURE

by Christopher Carr
and Mark Theurer

This issue marks the return of Terraforming in Miniature to the pages of Fictional Reality. Christopher and I wanted to herald the return with a rather impressive project, but not one that would be looked at as something that anyone couldn't accomplish. As big fans of the brick molds that are produced by Bruce Hirst at Castlemolds (www.castlemolds.com) we decided to work on something that would use them somewhat outside of their normal application of building the terrain piece for which they are purchased. It would be easy for us to design some abstract and grandiose monstrosity, especially considering the rather large number of molds that are generally at our disposal. This would not do for the project at hand. We really wanted to build something that could be done with access to only a couple of molds. Here's what we came up with. We hope you enjoy reading about it and that it inspires you to do something similar.

PLANNING

All good projects start with a plan so we threw that straight out the window. No, just kidding. Our plan began by looking at all of the molds that we have and deciding which were the most versatile and useful outside of their own base projects. Any of the molds that have nothing but basic blocks made the list very quickly as did the Wizard's Tower. We left that as our 'base' of molds and looked for a design next. We agreed fairly early on that we'd try to build a castle. Not just a keep or a moat house, but a castle. Chris and I may be optimistic in what we aspire to build, but we're also realists so ideas like Buckingham Palace got tossed out the window very early on. We needed something large enough to be imposing, but not too big as to get us committed to mental asylums for trying to build it. After a bit of surfing the web we found, and settled on, Castle Liechtenstein. We found many other pictures other than the one to the right and one of the best was a computerized rendition that was a reverse angle. To keep from stepping on the toes of the creator of the picture I won't reprint it here, but it simply had the large tower on the right side instead of the left. That picture became the basis of what was to come next, figuring out the footprint of the castle and our building

plan. Below you'll see a very small sample of the drawings that we worked on to figure out height, width, and depth. It took a little while, but we decided to do the towers and gate house as a separate project. You'll see why in a minute. Considering that neither Chris nor myself had ever been to see Castle Liechtenstein in person so



we only had the pictures to go off of. We divided up the castle into three floors using the front windows as a guide. We also figured that if the windows would work as a guide for height they would also serve us well for width. We came up with a footprint that was 12" wide by 18" deep

with floors that were (1st floor = 4.5", 2nd floor = 3", and 3rd floor = 3") tall. The height of the 3rd floor did not include the slope of the roof so it would actually end up being taller than 10.5" in height. We made a few other changes to the castle as it's seen in the picture. Since there was a round section on the 2nd floor that we wanted to leave in this meant that the Circular Tower mold had to be added to our list. We decided to keep the small round tower on the third floor, but increased its size just a bit. The taller, dark steeple got axed from the plans. We wanted to be able to use the castle in games and we could see this getting broken off in the very first game. Also, the little alcove windows that you



can see on the third floor also came off the plans. We found out that the large circular tower was actually built after the main building so we had a justifiable reason to leave it off for now. By now we had actually started putting glue to bricks and things were moving along nicely, or so we thought. We took a minute to figure out exactly how many brick we would need to complete the project. Chris and I figured out how many 'standard' ($1" \times \frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$) bricks would be needed. Of course, there would be windows here and there and we could take a little off of this number. Remember back when I said that we wanted to be able to play games with the piece? That meant playing with models in the castle so that means that there also had to be interior walls which would add to the total number of bricks that were needed. It would take over 4,500 bricks just for the exterior walls. A quick look at the interior designs that I had drawn put us into the 6,000 brick range. It could have been a gazillion for all I knew! Yeah, we're just a couple of big dopes for not figuring this out before we actually settled on this particular project. I suspect that even if we knew that number we'd have gone ahead with it anyway. OK, how can we reduce the number of time that the molds needed to be run AKA how can we get more bricks for less work? Looking back at the stack of molds we saw the half-width wall molds. Slap two of the resulting walls together and you have a 3.5" tall x 4.5" long wall. Each set of two that we use saves us 28 regular 1" bricks. We just added a fourth, and last, mold to our list.

Let's take a short break to talk about the molds for a second. If you've counted along with us you'll notice that there are four molds that we're using for this project. Of those four only two are actually required. You can build this project using The Wizard's tower and the Circular Tower. You can save considerable casting time by using a mold of nothing but standard bricks and/or the flat wall section mold.

Bottom line to planning is actually do it!

BUILDING

Even though we jumped the gun a little bit and actually started building back in the PLANNING stage we learned to never do that again. Bad Mark and Chris, very bad! The building phase really incorporated more than gluing bricks together. You have to have bricks in the first place and running the molds is what you do to get them. We cannot stress enough the benefits to having a food dehydrator to dry your bricks with. We used two on this project and are already considering buying a third. No, they are not essential especially if you are not on any kind of a timeline, but golly yes they are beneficial. Overall, the casting and building of the castle is not hefty manual work



and is not overly tedious. Ok, running the molds over a hundred times is borderline tedious. The building was made easier by putting

together only one wall at a time. Each exterior wall was built as a separate piece and then they were put together to build the perimeter. Then, each interior wall was built, again on its own, and by the time we got the 2nd floor finished (for some strange reason we built it first, we're silly that way) we discovered that we had not discussed what we would use for the floors of each level.

In previous, much smaller projects, we had simply used the $\frac{1}{4}"$ floor tiles from the floor tiles mold to build the floors. We opted against this for two reasons. First, we did not want to add another mold to the project. Second, this was not going to turn out to be a lightweight model. Each floor would have to support those above it and it would need to come apart so models could be moved into and out of rooms and between the floors. It didn't take us long to come to a decision that should have been made back in the planning stage. We would use sheet of plexi-glass at the floors and support of each level. We picked up a sheet of $24" \times 48" \times \frac{1}{4}"$ plexi-glass at Lowe's for \$32 and it was more than we needed for this project. You could probably get away with thinner, and cheaper, plexi-glass, but we didn't want to risk it. Of course, you could also take your chances at using nothing to act as flooring and support, but it would just break our hearts to see the thing collapse under it's own weight.

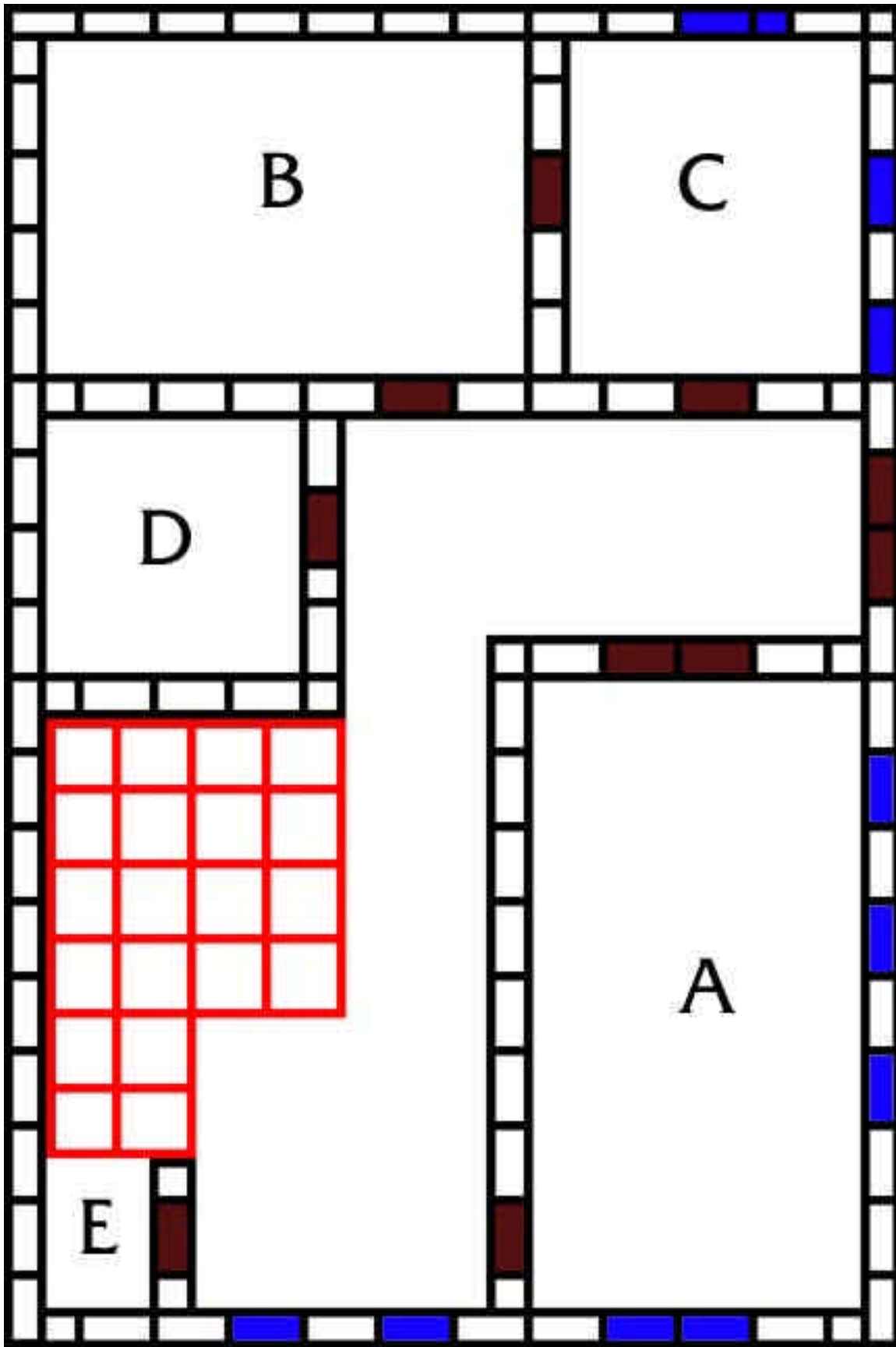
Time for another short break. This time about working with plexi-glass. To get a nice clean edge all you really need to do it score it where you want the break and then snap it. If you decide to go with the $\frac{1}{4}"$ and not something thinner you'll need to exert some force here. You might also want to wear work gloves when making the breaks as I managed to cut my fingers in several places. Also, having access to a dremel-type tool will help a lot. There are areas of each floor section that are open to the lower floor where the stairs come up. These are marked on the floorplans and while plexi-glass is pretty easy to work with I wouldn't want to hack through it with a hobby knife.

Since we brought up stairs why don't we talk about them for a minute. We went with $\frac{3}{4}"$ long steps as this allowed most 20mm and 25mm bases to get enough footing to keep the model from tumbling down. If you



have them at your disposal take the time to pre-build the stairs out of Lego © bricks.

Since we went with plexi-glass for the floors of each level we had to think about their texture, or lack thereof. It just wouldn't do to work on a castle and have floors that were smooth as glass. Christopher found some textured wallpaper in a clearance bin and after priming it along with the rest of the castle



LEVEL 1 KEY

To the left is a half-size version of the floorplan to level 1 of Castle Liechtenstein. Doubling the size of this page will give you a full-scale representation to work from.

The blue sections represent windows. We placed the windows of floor 1 one inch above ground level and are two inches tall, with rounded tops.

The brown sections are either doors (for the 1" wide areas) or double doors (for the 2" wide sections). Door openings are 1" wide by 2" tall or 2" wide x 2" tall.

The red section are where the stairs will go. You have a lot of leeway when building stairs. Just get them to the next level.

Floor 1 consists of a dining room (A), a dining room / pantry (B), a sitting room (C), servants quarters (D), and a small storage area (E).

All of the wall on level 1 are 4.5" tall.

Level 1

LEVEL 2 KEY

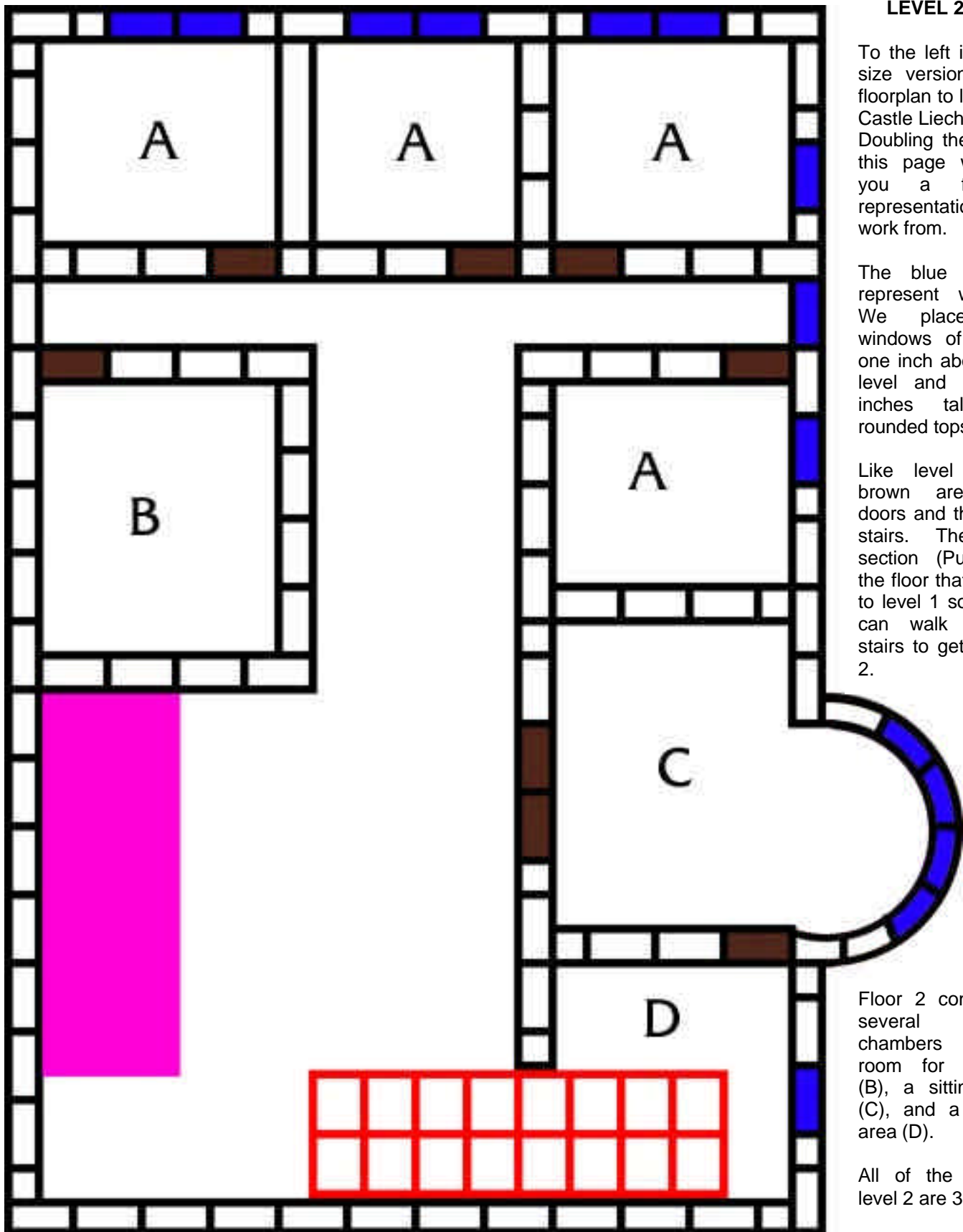
To the left is a half-size version of the floorplan to level 2 of Castle Liechtenstein. Doubling the size of this page will give you a full-scale representation to work from.

The blue sections represent windows. We placed the windows of floor 2 one inch above floor level and are two inches tall, with rounded tops.

Like level 1, the brown areas are doors and the red is stairs. There is a section (Purple) of the floor that is open to level 1 so models can walk up the stairs to get to level 2.

Floor 2 consists of several guest chambers (A), a room for servants (B), a sitting room (C), and a storage area (D).

All of the wall on level 2 are 3" tall.



Level 2

can also be dry-brushed to look like carved stone. We cut out each room's and hallway's piece of wallpaper

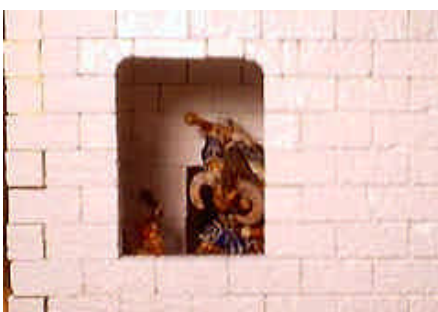
flooring separately and glued it down to the plexi-glass. We could have just glued down a whole section of wallpaper to the plexi-glass and then glued the exterior/interior walls of each floor down on top of that, but we wanted to have the walls glued down directly to the plexi-glass.



The roof sections were made with foamcore (not-pictured, but easy to do) and took almost no time at all. We went this route to lessen the overall weight of the project, the time spent casting bricks and the number of molds that would be needed. Bruce does offer roof molds on his site though. After each roof section was cut out, glued together and primed it was painted to resemble a wooden roof as much as possible but it would probably be the least used part of the model as we fully intend to use the completed castle as a terrain piece to be played 'in', not just around.

After you've finished building your wall sections and have put them together be sure to go over each joint again with another line of glue. This is a large construct that you need to be careful with and getting the joints as string as possible will only help you in the long run. Take the time to do this.

The following are some shots of the font (unpainted) where you can see fights going on in several areas at the same time.



scholars out there that can tell us what doesn't look right and which rooms were never really part of the castle, but you know what? We didn't build this for the Smithsonian, we built it to play with.

PAINTING

Be aware that plaster buildings can soak up a lot of paint. Don't be tempted to glop on too much at a time. Flat black latex works well as a base and then you can drybrush with one or two lighter shades of gray. Be sure to also paint the bottom of the plexi-glass floors with at least the black undercoat. You can probably get away with not drybrushing on the underside that will go mostly unseen. Ah, but what of that ¼" sheet of plexi-glass between each floor of the castle? If you like and have the patience and time you can hit these exposed ¼" sections with a dremel tool to texture them to look similar to the rest of the bricks.

LOOKING BACK

Now that Christopher and I are done with our version of Castle Liechtenstein we're ready for just one thing. To play with it, of course! Before we do that here's a few things we learned along the way.

- ♦ Have your plan done and ready before you pour one mold's worth of bricks. We had most of it done and things did go relatively smoothly, but next time we tackle a project of this size we'll have 100% of it on paper before getting our hands dirty.
- ♦ Going along with having your plan ready is being aware of how much work you're about to get yourself into. Like I said earlier, we would have built this even if we had known how many thousands of bricks we needed, but it would have been better to know that earlier in the process so we could have better managed our time.
- ♦ If you're building something of this size have a place to store it picked out before you begin. More than once we had a conversation that went something like, "So you're sure we can store this at your house when we're not using it?"
- ♦ Don't get too bent out of shape on historical accuracy. You can see in the final picture that there is some deviation from the actual castle and there are probably plenty of



you are done with your first project you have it to play with AND the mold(s) to use again and again on more buildings. We spent about \$16.00 on plaster and \$32.00 on the plexi-glass, but will have leftovers of each for our next endeavor. The wallpaper was under \$5 for a whole roll, which will last just about forever. We were really stunned that the only thing we ran out of was glue! Imagine that, building something of this size, needing more bricks than we can count even with using all of our fingers and toes and we run out of the stuff to stick it all together. This really all goes back to planning. Make sure you have enough stuff on-hand so you don't have to keep running back to the store. If you're building terrain you'll need the leftovers later so it's really better to over-buy than under.

How long did it take us in time? Well, we really didn't keep a tally of hours, but all of the molding and building was finished an hour here and an hour there over the course of two months.

We do need to offer our thanks to our wives. Nancy, Christopher's wife helped run the molds and sort bricks

and my wife Josel put up with me building most of this monstrosity on our kitchen table.

- ♦ Do get a little bent on play-ability. What we mean is make the model as usable as possible. As much as I initially liked the idea of 5' wide corridors it was quickly ditched after the first one was built. They are just too much trouble to move models through and if you end up fighting stuff the size of Ogres you'll run into real problems with your models because they might not fit. This might even happen with regular models that have bits sticking off of them at odd angles.

One very important thing to keep in mind. As much planning as you do, don't expect things to always line up perfectly. You will have to adjust walls, fill in gaps, file bricks, etc. It's just the nature of things. By the way, the floorplan comes out to over 16,000 scale square feet of space, assuming 1" = 5'.

This project was definitely worth the time and effort that went into it. Talking about playing a miniatures game with a castle is one thing. Actually doing it is another. Seeing people's jaws drop open when they first get a look at something this size is awesome. Then seeing them drooling, please not on the castle, as you show them how you can play inside each level is something else.

What are we going to do next? Well, first we'll be taking a step back and after a nice deep breath we'll admire it for a minute and then start to think how we can improve on it. We've already discussed making the towers and gate house. Also, since each floor is really a separate piece we can build higher and higher to our heart's content. All we have to do is make sure that the stairs line up correctly. Gaming-wise, we're planning on playing a rather large game of Inquisitor using 28mm figures, a bunch of players/characters and about a whole weekend of playing time. Game on!

Building something of this size is not entirely inexpensive. The molds can run you around \$30 each and that's why we put this project together with just a handful of them. If you wanted to you could eliminate the round sections and build the entire castle with just one mold, the Wizard's Tower. You'd be making bricks forever, but you could do it. If you have more time than money on your hands then this might be the way to go for you. But remember, when

Mark and Christopher

LEVEL 3 KEY

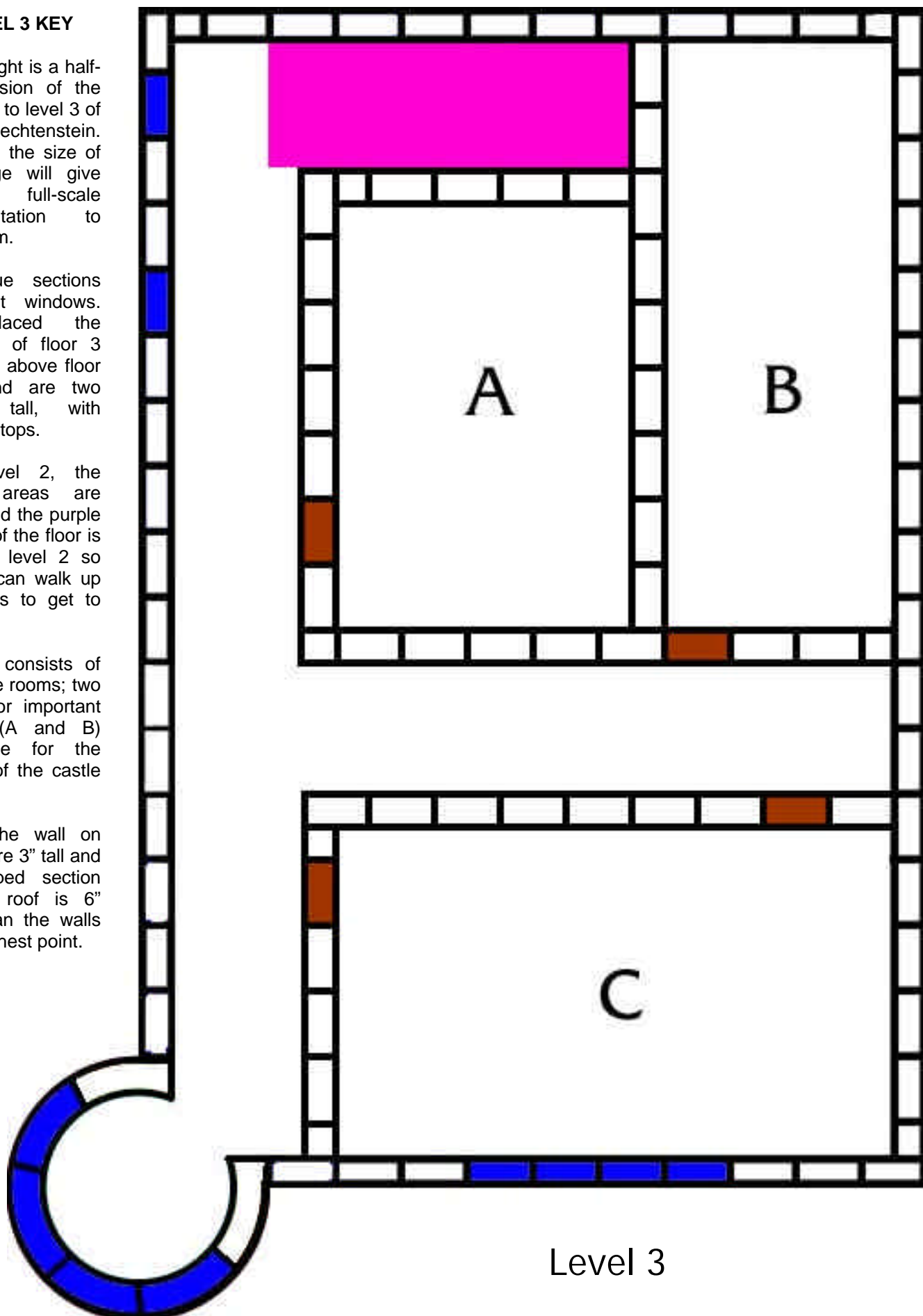
To the right is a half-size version of the floorplan to level 3 of Castle Liechtenstein. Doubling the size of this page will give you a full-scale representation to work from.

The blue sections represent windows. We placed the windows of floor 3 one inch above floor level and are two inches tall, with rounded tops.

Like level 2, the brown areas are doors and the purple section of the floor is open to level 2 so models can walk up the stairs to get to level 3.

Floor 3 consists of just three rooms; two rooms for important guests (A and B) and one for the master of the castle (C).

All of the wall on level 3 are 3" tall and the sloped section for the roof is 6" taller than the walls at its highest point.



Level 3



Welcome to our Nightmare!

Creatures out of nightmares
come to life
and stalk the darkness while
the mighty church is corrupted,
rotting away from the inside-out.
Only a few mighty adventurers
stand in the way
of pure evil.
Will you join them on
THE HUNT
and stop the
RISE OF EVIL?

The Hunt: Rise of Evil

WORLD BOOK

NIGHTMARES & DREAMS II

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MUTANT CHRONICLES® WARZONE BATTLE REPORT

by Kenneth Hutchinson

Four Skulls Crusade Tournament

The following battle report was sent in by Kenneth Hutchinson. He recently played the game as part of a tournament at a convention. Games were played with 500-point armies and the scenario rules are below.

The agents of Semai have managed to gather up the three activation keys that will allow entry into the fortified bunker where the Skulls reside. Agents of Semai were transporting the keys when a Cressentian Saradon Pack shot down their craft. The keys are now scattered across the terrain with the wreckage of the craft. While the keys do not reveal the location of the bunker itself, it will allow access once it is found.

Your victory points will be determined by calculating the following factors:

1. There are three objectives (keys) worth up to 100 points each; these are placed along the center of the table. A model can pick up an objective for one action. He may hand off the objective to another model for one action so long as the two models are in base-to-base contact. If the model is killed, the objective will be dropped where the model fell. Possession of the objective at the game end will be worth 75 points. Retreating the model carrying the objective off the deployment zone table edge will secure the objective and be worth 100 points.
2. You will be awarded points for killing the enemy equal to their point value. Models killed by enemy action will be added up after the game. This will be worth between 0 and 500 points.

3. You will receive points for your troops who survive the battle equal to their point value. This will be calculated by subtracting the amount killed by your opponent from the total you started with. This will be worth between 0 and 500 points.
4. Possession of all three objectives at the end will be worth an additional 50 points.

The Capitol Force:



- The Hurricanes (Heavy Infantry)- consisting of 8 grunts, one heavy weapon specialist and Big Mojo as the sergeant.
- The Frank's Raiders (Heavy Infantry)- consisting of 6 grunts, and Evil Frank as the sergeant.
- Titan's Hammers (Assault Marines)- consisting of 5 grunts, one heavy weapon specialist, and Titan as the sergeant.

The Bauhaus Force:



- Ducal Squad- 8 grunts, 1 heavy weapon's specialist and one sergeant.
- Hussar Squad- 4 grunts, one heavy weapon's specialist and one sergeant.
- Jeager Squad- 5 grunts and one sergeant.

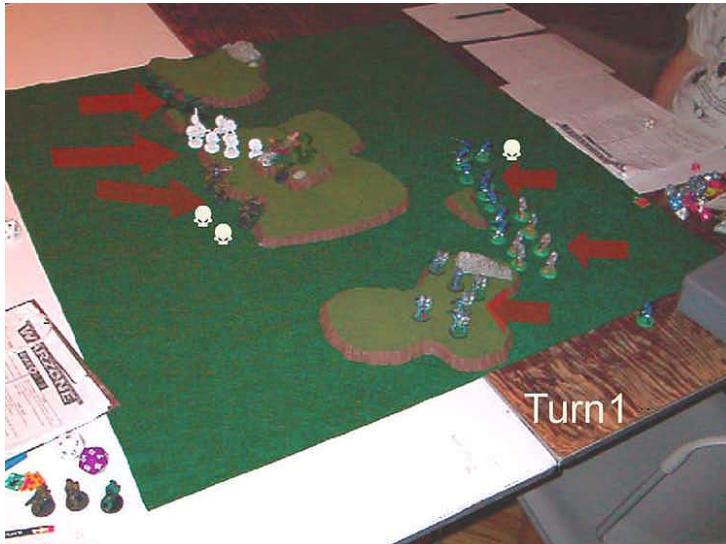
My strategy was to give up one key and cut the board in half with massive firepower while sneaking in and claiming one key myself. I had hoped the center would hold allowing lay down a hail of fire that would allow me to claim the remaining key.



DEPLOYMENT (LEFT)

Jack won the initiative, so I deployed first. I deployed the Hurricanes, squad 1, in the middle. They were to act as the suppression squad. Jack deployed his Ducal squad just off center to the right of my Hurricanes on his side of the board. Next I deployed squad the Frank's Raider on my left. They were to take the key to the left then sweep in from the left and add fire support to the middle. The Jack deployed his Hussar squad to my far right. I assumed in a position to take the key to my right. But, in doing so, it overloaded my right side. Way too much fire power for the well-armored assault marines to try and handle alone. So, I opted to deploy

Titan's Hammers just behind the Hurricanes and to their left. This turned out to be the best move, because Jack then deployed his Jeagers to my right, further overloading the right side of the board. Had I deployed my assault marines to that side, they would have been outnumbered 3:1. It turned out Jack had come to the same conclusion about deploying his Jeagers on the opposite side of the board as well. In deploying his Jeagers in front of his Hussars, it would later prove a bit of a problem.



TURN 1 (ABOVE)

Jack won the initiative. His Ducal squad advanced and opened up on the Hurricanes racking up five hits and 2 KIAs. I in turn activated the Frank's Raiders. I felt this was the best move as Jack Ducal's advanced in such a way as to block LOS of his Hussar squad. I would get the Hurricanes in position to and blast his Jeagers when they came out of cover to take the key to the right. Sure enough Jack activated his Hussars and all the firing lanes were nearly blocked by the Ducal squad that advanced earlier. Next I advanced the Hurricanes to the ridge and set up a firing line. Jack then advanced his Jeagers out of cover to take the first key. Titan's Hammers then advanced along the left flank. I was using the ridge as cover from the Ducal squad. Titan popped off a round and killed the closest Ducal squaddie. Things were looking pretty good. The Hurricane were in position the Jeagers were exposed while seeking the first key and Titan's Hammers was moving into position the hammer the less skilled Ducal squad.

TURN 2 (UPPER-RIGHT)

Jack won the initiative. This turned out to be the theme for all but one turn. Jack activated his Ducal squad. The squad advanced and fired at the Hurricane managing on one hit and 0 KIAs on the well-dug in squad. The Hurricane ripped into the Jeagers scoring 3 Hits and 3 KIAs. One Jeager falling to a burst from the squad's HMG specialist. One Jeager holding the key was one of the fallen. Jack then activated the Jeagers once again claiming the key. The Jeagers score one Hit and 1 KIA against the Hurricanes. I then activated Titan's Hammers



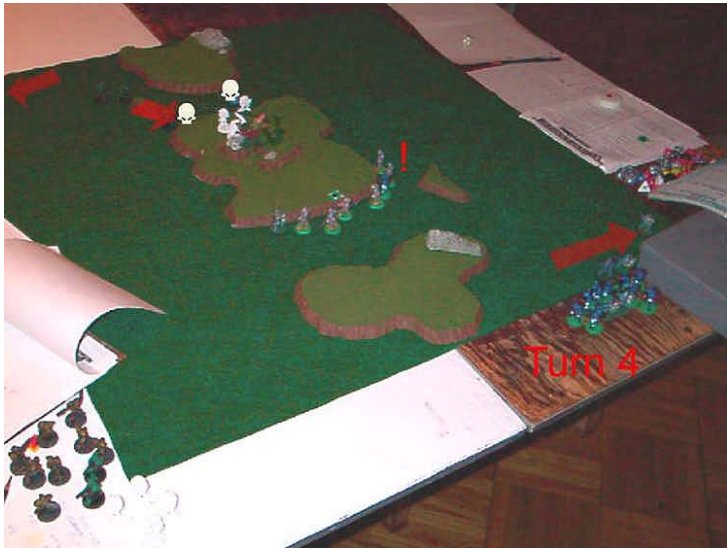
came around the left flank and ripped into the Ducal squad scoring 5 hit and 3 KIA even with the Ducal squad in heavy cover. This forced a panic check. But, the Ducal squad passed with ease. Jack then activated his Hussars and obliterated the Hurricanes. Not even Bad Mojo's karma could protect them from what happened next. Jack Hussar's scored 6 hits resulting in 4 KIAs wiping out the entire Hurricane squad in a hail of fire. Well there went my suppression squad. I activated the Frank's Raiders to capture the key to the left. The sergeant Evil Frank personally retrieved the key.

TURN 3 (BOTTOM)

Again Jack won the initiative. The remaining Ducal squad returned for on Titan's Hammers scoring 4 hits and 2 KIAs. Titan, who was on wait, failed his leadership test and could not respond. Titan's Hammers activated and returned fire scoring 5 Hits and 4 KIAs. The Ducal squad failed its leadership test and panicked. The Jeagers then activated. Part of the squad advanced to the center while one Jeager broke from the squad and headed off the board with one of the keys. The Frank's Raider then advanced. Evil Frank scored 1 Hit and a KIA on the



advancing Jeagers as he raced toward the edge with one of the keys. The rest of the squad scored 1 Hit and 1 KIA as well on the Jeagers. The Hussar then activated scoring 1 hit on Titan's Hammers, but scoring no kills.



TURN 4 (ABOVE)

Jack again won the initiative. The Hussars activated scoring 4 Hits and 1 KIA against Titan's Hammers and 2 Hits and 1 KIA against the Frank's Raiders. I activated Frank's Raiders. Evil Frank exited with the key as the squad failed to score a single hit. The Jeagers failed to score a single hit as well. Titan's Hammers managed to score 1 Hit but failed to make a kill. Jack attempted to rally the last Ducal squaddie, but failed.

TURN 5 (BELOW)

I finally managed to win an initiative. I activated Titan's Hammers scoring 3 hits and 2 KIA against the Jeagers. The Jeagers were down to one man and he was running for the edge with a key. He was 3 inches out of the range of the sergeant Titan who attempted to pick him off before



he could get away. Jack activated the Hussars who scored 3 hits and 1 KIA against Titan's Hammers. Frank's Raiders failed to score any hits.

TURN 6 (BELOW)

Jack one the initiative. The remaining Hussars move into a screening position scoring 3 Hits and 1 KIA against Frank's Raiders. Frank's Raiders returned fire but failed to score a single hit. The last Jeager exited the board with the key. Titan's Hammers scored 1 Hit and 1KIA on the Hussars to end the round.



CONCLUSION

I knew it was going to be close and thought I could tip the scale in my favor by picking off the lone Jeager. I got the lone Assault Marine in position but forgot the assault carbines only have a range of 24 inches. It was a long shot, but he was the best man for the job. He had the highest RC skill of the Capitol forces left on the board. I was quite pleased at the kill ratio of the Assault Marines. If the Hurricane had not been wiped out by the Hussars, I would have had a solid firing line to sweep in and capture the center key. When the totals were added up, I lost by about 10 points. I would consider it a draw. We both only captured one key which was the objective of the scenario. It was a good battle to lose. It could have gone either way. One more kill in my favor would have tipped the scales my way. The next tournament battle was not nearly as glorious. Frank's Raiders and Titan's Hammers ran into a buzz saw called a Nephrite of Algaroth. Bad dice rolling did not help either. The Nephrite killed over 10 squaddies before we managed to bring him down. Needless to say, we were routed.