

THE Campaigner

Issue 29



Skyward
Building a city in the clouds

IT'S
A
WAY
OF
LIFE



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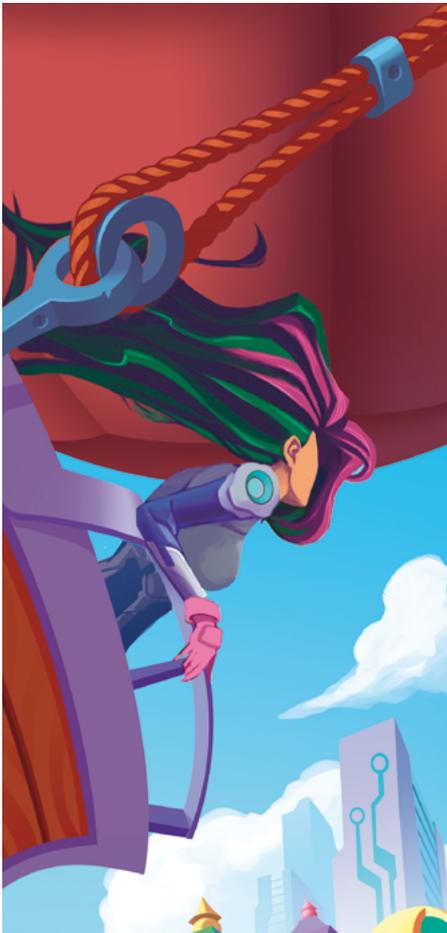
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Skyward

It's a way of life

A Dungeon Master in character at AVCon.

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**MOTIVE
FORCE** MEDIA



Editorial

Matthew Lee, Editor

contact@thecampaignermagazine.com

We have successfully passed through another stretch of tabletop related events. Are you energised, or fatigued?

Origins Game Fair and Gen Con were the big two, but a multitude of smaller ones littered the landscape. Here in South Australia the yearly anime and video game convention, AVCon, ran with an all new tabletop presence. Long time readers would know about the Tabletop Room at AVCon, but this year it was moved to one of the main halls. This not only increased the physical area of tabletop, but also made it much more visible to the general attendees.

Speaking of conventions, new contributor Justin Spicer gives us a rundown on Gen Con this issue. This is the first time we've covered Gen Con, and I really enjoyed reading Justin's insight into the event. Hopefully I can make my way to it, at some point in the future.

This issue we feature *Skyward*. As we all know by now the publisher of *Skyward*, Rule & Make, closed down this year. This left the game's future in question, but after speaking to designer Brendan Evans both for the article as well as at AVCon, I'm glad to hear that more *Skyward* isn't out of the picture. Check out the game feature to learn more about *Skyward*'s possible future.

There is an aspect of *Skyward*'s creation that I did leave out, which I thought was more worthwhile touching on here. I personally had a nominal involvement with the game, creating the logo design for Rule & Make not long before the Kickstarter went live. It really doesn't have much bearing on the overall end result, so didn't feel like an integral element that needed to be included.

Still, I am immensely proud of the logo design. Rule & Make approached me with the design job a little over six weeks before the crowdfunding campaign started. Not a

lot of time. But Allen and Alannah gave me a good brief, and trusted my judgement, which resulted in the logo we know today. I'm extremely happy with the ideas behind it, even if in hindsight the execution could do with a little more cleaning up.

But logos are hard work, even at the best of times. And people don't always respond positively, no matter the thought and effort put into their development. Which is something anyone paying attention to the new BoardGameGeek logo would probably have noticed.

Reactions have been mixed, and quite rightly so. I'm not going to dissect the logo here (I've done that elsewhere), but the new brand overall has its strong and weak points. I think it can only really be judged after a longer stretch of time. We need to give it a chance to settle in, and for BGG to fully implement it where they intend.

Until next issue. ✕



Concept sketches for the *Skyward* logo.

The Campaigner looks at the most notable events in the recent months, and explores the real facts behind the stories.

The Pride of Pallet Town

A collection of 103 *Pokemon Trading Card Game* cards went for over USD\$100,000 at auction. The cards were from the first edition of the game. Auctioneers Goldin Auctions said that the sets value came from the pristine condition of the cards, with fewer than 50 of some of the collection existing in such a good grade.

In the past other *Pokemon Trading Card Game* collections have gone for similarly high amounts. 2017 saw a similar set get USD\$100,000 at auction. While the year before a rare holographic Pikachu card sold for USD\$54,970 at auction. ✕

An Unexpected Departure

After 14 years at Fantasy Flight Games, game designer Corey Konieczka announced in August he was leaving the publisher. Still remaining within the Asmodee empire, the designer revealed he was starting a studio called Unexpected Games.

The studio is focussing on innovative design and idea incubation. As Konieczka said. "Our goal is to create games that are novel, fun, and accessible," the designer said. "We hope to surprise people and create experiences that they've never had before."

The first game from the studio is scheduled for a release some time in 2020. ✕



A Dish Best Served Cold

Off-and-on-again tabletop personality Wil Wheaton, along with his company Media Dynamics, sued Legendary Geek & Sundry at the start of August. The actor alleged that the company had failed to pay the share of the *Titansgrave: The Ashes of Valkana* revenue he was owed.

The main point of the suit is that while Legendary Geek & Sundry owned the distribution rights to the show, a clause stipulated Wheaton would be consulted before distribution or promotion deals were made.

The actor alleges that Legendary Geek & Sundry failed to fulfil the provision and negotiated licensing agreements with a number of outlets without consulting him.

He is seeking at least USD\$100,000 in damages and requesting a full accounting be conducted by the court. ✕



The Mark of The Game

After almost two decades BoardGameGeek unveiled a new brand at the start of August. It was a drastic departure from the original brand, losing the existing character for a broader visual identity of primarily blue, orange and white.

In a post about the rebranding Scott Alden from BoardGameGeek said, “BGG welcomes all gamers, whatever your level of experience or particular tastes, and updating the logo reflects our belief that gaming is for everyone, not just geeky guys with glasses. Whatever our differences individually, gaming brings us together. Our new symbol is a nod to BGG's past, while also inviting you to see yourself in that silhouette — or to find your passion for play represented in that “game flame.”

Community reactions were mixed. ✕

Another Loss

Owner of Minion Games and co-founder of DriveThru, James Mathe, died in mid June. James was as equally known for his straight-forward manner as for his involvement in helping and mentoring new designers and publishers. Tabletop has lost another important figure. ✕

Tariff Trouble

The volatile relationship between USA and China took, and continues to take, tabletop creators on a wild ride. President Trump at times promised severe tariffs to be imposed on their trading partner, with holds then being announced weeks or days later. Only to give way to more talk of tariffs.

Primarily for those in the USA using Chinese manufacturers it has been a rollercoaster of dire and positive scenarios. Lists of tariff and tariff exempt items continue to stack up. But with no official announcements or sanctions imposed, it has left the future viability of manufacture in China up in the air.

China currently handles manufacture of a large number of tabletop games, from the USA as well as numerous other international publishers. Even if in theory tariffs would only affect US publishers, in reality those worldwide could be caught up in the ensuing trade war. ✕

All In The Package

Large tabletop publisher and manufacturer Hasbro announced that it will be phasing out plastic from product packaging. The scheme is to start in 2020 and culminate in 2022, removing plastics from items such as polybags, shrink wrap and blister packs.

Hasbro has previously removed wire ties in 2010, introduced recycling labelling in 2016 and began incorporating plant-based bioPET in 2018. ✕



Gen Con Continues to Break New Ground and Old Records

Words and photos
by Justin Spicer

Our incessant need to go beyond the veil of our loves has led to peak convention saturation. Whatever hobbies and interests are held most dear can now be celebrated with likeminded people with the same fervour. Even in an era where hundreds of millions flock to the internet to community build, there is still the ever-present tug of having interpersonal connections.

It was a different world 52 years ago, save for the fact that human nature dictates that people must gather to celebrate their passion as one. Before he was the legendary Dungeons & Dragons scion, Gary Gygax offered up his basement in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin for the first Lake Geneva Convention in 1968. In the years that followed, more acolytes to war games, board games, and the birth of role-playing games began to join the crowd. The abbreviated Gen Con grew to take over meeting spots, universities, and convention centres throughout the Milwaukee area for 35 years. By 2002, when Gen Con bid farewell to Wisconsin, the convention had grown from 12 individuals to nearly 23,000 attendees. Indianapolis became host for Gen Con in 2003, where the convention has now stayed for 17 years. In this time, much of the war gaming that kickstarted Gen Con in the late 1960s has now been pushed aside for the skyrocketing board gaming industry, sustained excitement for trading card games, and a renewed focus on RPGs that are directly tied to Gary Gygax's original vision.

But like most conventions, Gen Con has also morphed into something more than an all-consuming love of board gaming. There is an art show, LARPing (buoyed by True Dungeon) is now more prevalent, science-fiction and fantasy literature is prominent, and cosplayers descend upon downtown Indianapolis, Indiana for the biggest board gaming convention in North America (and becoming on par with Essen Spiel as the biggest board gaming-centric convention on Earth).

This year's Gen Con boasted the biggest crowd yet, with more than 70,000 visitors taking over the Indiana Convention Center (ICC) and handful of interconnected hotels (and a sports stadium) in the heart of Indianapolis. Despite the astronomical growth Gen Con has experienced since its move, Indianapolis is now trying to keep pace. The Convention Center plays host to 30 aisles full of vendors (more than 500 publishers, gaming accessory creators, artists, and authors took over the exhibit hall this year – another new record for



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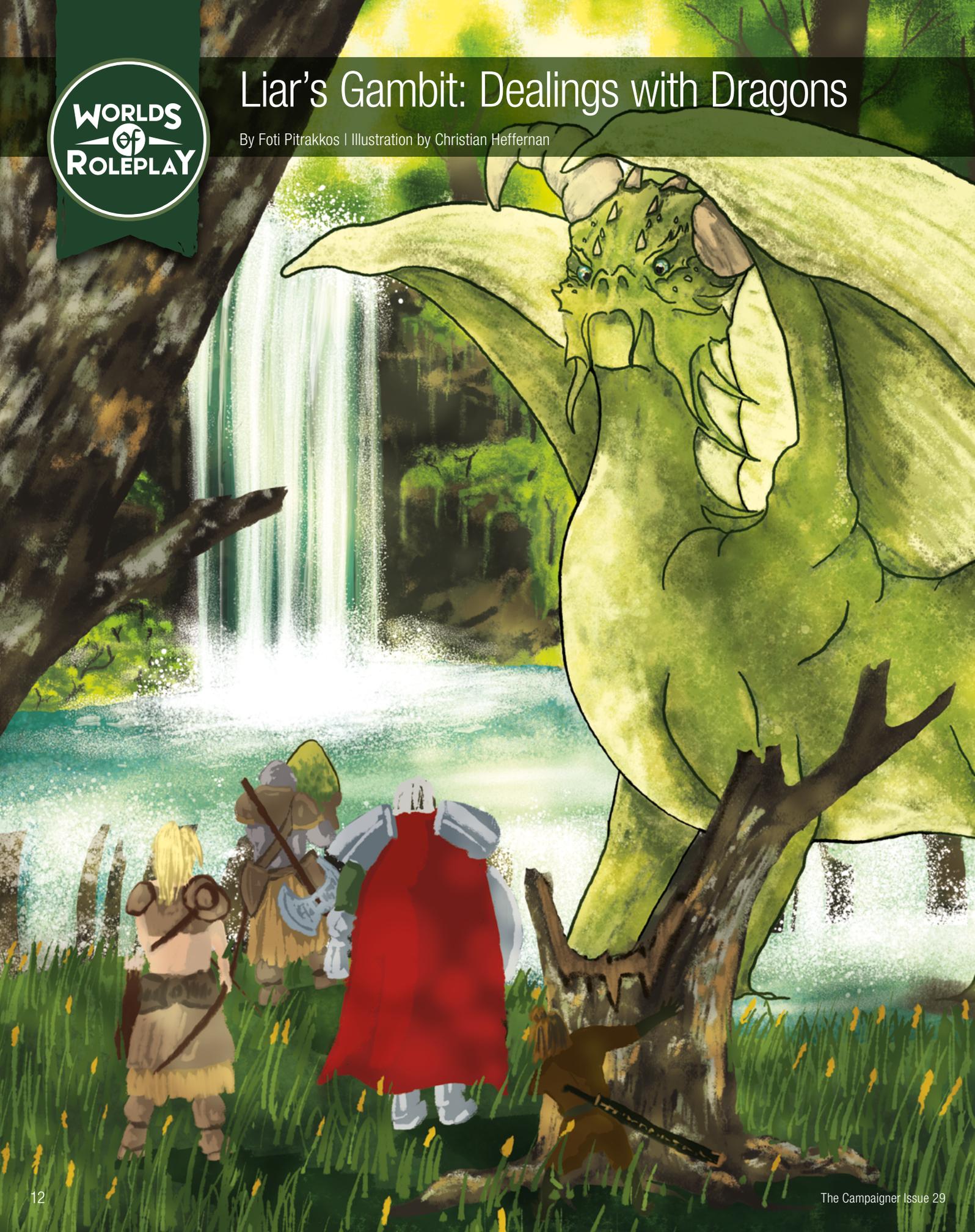
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Liar's Gambit: Dealings with Dragons

By Foti Pitrakkos | Illustration by Christian Heffernan



Rin looked at the huge, green dragon looming before him and tried to suppress a tremble.

It wasn't just the fact that this legendary creature could swallow him whole without effort; nor was it the fact that green dragons were infamous for their cruelty, particularly towards those of elven persuasion.

No, it had more to do with the fact that he was currently in possession of the creature's egg.

Specifically, it was Kaag who was holding the precious object, but that was a trivial distinction in this matter. At most, that meant the hulking goliath might be the *first* to suffer the dragon's wrath – the rest of them would suffer it nonetheless.

The tremble finally escaped Rin, leaving the master of lies tongue tied – it was an alien feeling for the elf.

"Your egg is safe, majestic beast!" bellowed Kaag, lifting it high with massive arms.

Rin winced. The goliath's attempt at flattery was clumsy. Never call a dragon a *beast*.

Thankfully, Lute stepped forward to mitigate the damage. "We are nothing in your presence, great lord of the forests," the half-orc said, bowing low. "And we are humbled to have been given a chance to serve you."

Well done, Lute, thought Rin, taking a deep breath. The priest's words helped to ease his nerves, though not enough to snap him out of his panic.

The dragon stretched forward with her head so that it hovered right before Kaag. "Step forward, beast," she rumbled. "Place the egg before me, and await your doom."

Frustratingly for Rin, Kaag kept calm and did as the creature asked. How could he stay so confident in the face of near certain death?

And you, who wields a tongue of sharpened steel, stands silent and helpless. Speak!

A faint whisper came to Rin from his right – the halfling blade-master, Tanaki. "I'm not done with these blades, beguiler." She placed a small hand on his wrist. "So snap out of it and speak!"

And – to Rin's surprise – that prompt was enough to finally untie his tongue. Apparently, this tiny dark-haired assassin was as terrifying to him as the dragon. He swallowed and stepped forward.

First display humility.

"Do you see, Great Wyrn," spoke Rin in the language of dragons. "Our companion eagerly kneels before you, awaiting your judgement. As do we all."

He motioned to Kaag, who stared back with a raised eyebrow. A moment later, the goliath understood and took a knee. The rest of the party quickly followed suit.

Now appeal to order.

Rin continued forward until he stood closest to the dragon, then he too fell to his knees. "For while we fear your power and wrath, we also revere your illustrious command of the law."

The dragon snaked her head towards Rin, until her massive nose was but a hand's breadth from the elf's face. She snorted and a gust of acrid air washed over Rin, choking him. He began to sway from the potency of the toxins in the breath.

"You speak well and true, elf," she said. "Unlike my brethren, I value the law above all ideals. And, while it is an affront for

such vermin as you to even approach my unborn wyrmling, I know you are responsible for its safety. This will not be forgotten."

Still reeling, Rin felt a sense of relief. Perhaps they would escape a dire fate after all.

"But this service does not pardon your other transgression," the dragon continued, arching its head up to loom above the party. "You have trespassed into my forest without leave. Furthermore, you have said nothing of your hidden companion, as if wretched creatures such as you could escape my notice in my own domain. Such hubris is unforgivable."

Rin swore. Amidst the dire nature of the circumstances he had forgotten about Avelin. The scout would have slipped into the surrounding thickets the moment a threat was detected, likely with bow in hand.

This is bad.

"Come and join us, hidden one!" the dragon roared. "Face judgement with your companions."

A moment later, Avelin stepped into the clearing, bow in hand and defiance in her eyes. Any other time Rin would admire her tenacity, but here it would only add fuel to the already raging inferno that threatened to engulf them.

Every mannerism, every move, every moment was being judged. And the verdict was all but decided.

Think, Rin, think! He was meant to be a master of information, a manipulator of circumstances. There had to be something here that could save them. What had this dragon revealed of its nature? What weaknesses?

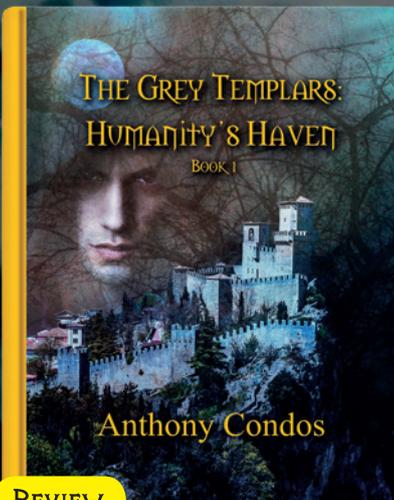
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CAN MANKIND BE SAVED FROM

DAMNATION?

INTRODUCING THE
GREY TEMPLAR SERIES
BY ANTHONY CONDOS

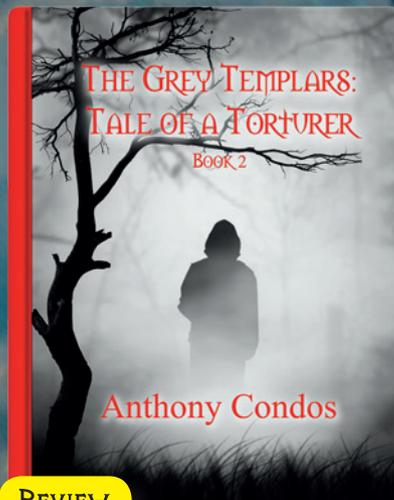
Set in a post apocalyptic world, humanity, now led by religious sects, is besieged by the forces of hell. Cults of Demon Worshipers, Vampire Covers, Necromancers and many other evil forces whose only goal is submission or death. All that stands in their way are the warriors known as the Grey Templars, genetically modified warriors of God - a blending of faith and science to save humanity.



REVIEW

Whether you are a Sci-fi, an action adventure or supernatural fan, you are going to love this character driven action book... [★★★★★]

Dez 'Derek' Maggs



REVIEW

A beautifully paced book that blends a deep character narrative with Michael Bay style action... [★★★★★]

Dez 'Derek' Maggs



The rough riding adventure continues in **The Grey Templars: Redemption** (Book 3) to be released in 2020.

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To reach out to the author to give feedback, or just to say hi... condosa2001@gmail.com

Skyward

BRENDAN EVANS





LONG IN OPPOSITION TO EACH OTHER, HUMANS AND ROBOTS NOW COME TOGETHER. USING SCIENCE AND TENACITY THE TWO PEOPLES WILL BUILD A NEW HOME AMONGST THE CLOUDS.



By Matthew Lee

kyward is a card drafting and city building game. Each turn the current Warden splits cards into piles equal to the number of players. Each player gets to choose a pile to take, while the

Warden receives whatever pile is left over. These cards are used to launch buildings into the sky, creating a city for the player, as well as awarding them points. Whoever launches six buildings brings about the end of the game, and the player with the most victory points is declared the winner.

The game is designed by Brendan Evans and was first published by Rule & Make. It was run on Kickstarter before being made available in retail.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

You would be forgiven for thinking *Skyward* was conceived of as a complete package. The narrative behind the game, and how it feeds into the main mechanics, seem so interconnected that they must have been there from the start. But this isn't the case at all.

The origins of *Skyward* begin when Brendan Evans attempted to teach a friend card drafting. "I spent three years trying to teach a friend to play Magic with the intent of eventually drafting with them. It didn't work!" Brendan explained. "The bug only really bit them the year after they moved away from Brisbane to Melbourne. I decided that if I wanted to draft cards in future I needed a much more streamlined experience."

A lighter, and quicker to deliver, card drafting game was what was needed. For Brendan the answer was obvious; design one himself.

With card drafting being the core idea, a drafting mechanic seemed like the first place to start. Elements like theme and story would come later. "It was mechanics first, but we did a lot of work to integrate the themes back into the mechanics when we found a really good theme." Brendan said.

Rather than have every player draft, Brendan opted to utilise one player drafting. This player would create piles of cards equal to the number of players, with the other players deciding which stack they would take. This act of a player distributing cards into arbitrary piles for other players to choose from was dubbed the Split, and would go on to form the centre of every iteration of the game.

"The split is the *raison d'être* for *Skyward*. It's the mechanical heart of the game." Brendan revealed. "(It) is one of the only things that persisted through all versions of the game, and any changes to the rules of the game were assessed based on the way that they either improved or broke the split mechanic."

During the early stages of development Brendan opted for a generalised theme to work from,

creating a hefty card deck to edit and trim down. "*Skyward* started out as a game called *Splitsville* which had more of a generic pastoral western theme." Brendan explained. "The first version of the game started with around 360 cards, six different types of resources, and a number objective cards like "If you have Building A and Building B, you get 7 points". Pigeon cards were called "Poop" because if you're a 20-something designer you can call your cards whatever you want to call them."

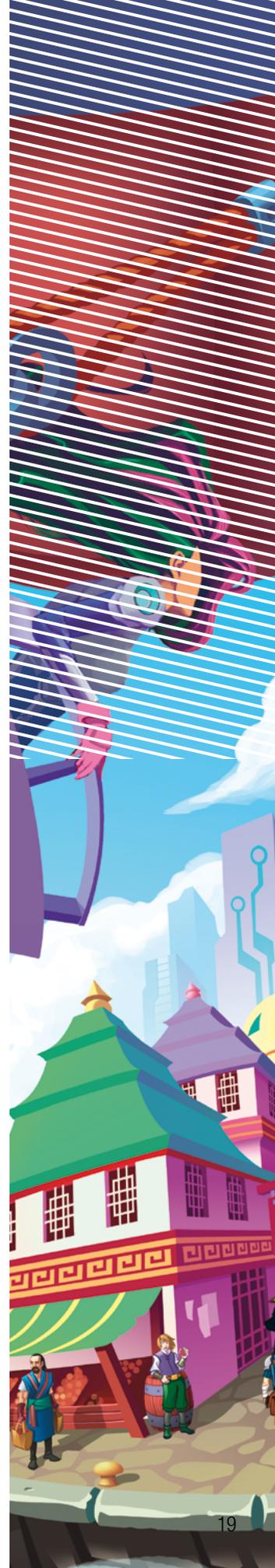
As work on the game continued card amounts, effects and uses changed drastically. Objectives were ditched in favour of getting six buildings into the player's tableau to end the game. "My peers in my design circle were big on the idea of three-act structures." Brendan said. "Six buildings gives you a good shot at three cool things that you can do, so it's a three-act structure. In six parts."

Brendan began to better grasp what the game was about. He started to streamline the mechanics and pitch of the game, attracting the attention of Jason Kotzur and Allen Chang from Rule & Make, who saw potential in the title.

"They liked the raw materials of *Skyward* and thought it could turn into something good with some help." Brendan said. "I honestly intended to find a publisher for some other game that has still never seen the light of day. I thought *Skyward* was the B-side in my side hustle of making board games, and that was in turn secondary to designing levels for video games."

Rule & Make were just coming out of the release of their first game, *Rise to Power* (see the game feature in Issue 20). "They were in a weird place where they had expertise and a game production pipeline but no content to move through that pipeline." Brendan explained.

In early 2015 Rule & Make made an offer on *Skyward*, which Brendan quickly took. "I recognised it was only a matter of time before R&M got too big to return my calls." Brendan joked. "When I signed it, the game had been streamlined to 180 cards. There were four resources, and pigeon cards were still called poop."



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Mastering the Game: FOSTERING ROLE PLAY IN YOUR GAME

By PK Byron

Images from

Let's face it, most of our beloved role playing games (RPGs) are built around a fighting rules system with characters similarly defined by combat stats and capabilities. Even the highly narrative and thematic components such as spells, psionics, and super spy equipment resolve to damage, buff, and control game effects in battle.

Yet, for all the rules so carefully written and detailed, it is the “rules absent” activity of role playing that is the attraction and heart of the hobby. Few know this better than Mike Mearls, lead designer of *Dungeons & Dragons* 5th Edition. He remarked:

“The interaction around the table, the give and take between players and DMs, the randomness supplied by a half-dozen people and the vagaries of the dice, are what make D&D, and RPG play in general, interesting” [Mike Mearls, 2003, *Amazing Stories*; Interview with a Wizard: Mike Mearls]

At its heart role playing is the building of motivations, bonds, and principles that guide the behaviour of a character within the game. In effect it is the making of a set of rules for how the character will interact in the setting - and sometimes break these rules.

The breadth and depth of the activity of role playing is so large that for this piece I need to compartmentalise the topic and examine it simply

through the lens of a common question - *how do you foster good role playing for your game?*

It is currently perhaps the first time in history that examining how people role play in RPGs is possible. The hobby has typically been played by stereotypical geeks, “in the basement of a friend’s house”, away from parents and friends to stop them asking “what’s the score?” or “who’s winning?”.

But now with the ease of digital content creation, many games are being made publicly viewable, and some have become entertainment groundswells.

The plethora of role playing game content online, some brilliant product placement (e.g. *Stranger Things*), and the mainstream adoption of the fantasy genre (think *Game of Thrones*), has led to an explosion in new players. Goldie Chan even writes articles in *Forbes Magazine* about leadership lessons to be learned from *Dungeons & Dragons*!

The highest profile example of this, and arguably one of the best role play examples, is *Critical Role*. It’s a live stream, video playback, and podcast “where a bunch of nerdy ass voice actors sit around and play *Dungeons & Dragons*!”. *Critical Role* has become the poster child for the modern RPG since they started uploading their actual play sessions to their own YouTube channel in 2015.

What has made *Critical Role* stand head and shoulders above other video streamed play sessions has been their inspired role play. Having a cast with backgrounds in drama, improv, and voice acting has allowed the players and Dungeon Master to present characters with deep seated emotions, bonds, weaknesses, and motivations.

The *Critical Role* player characters are now famous for their hundreds of thousands of fans. But of course you don't need a cast of players with backgrounds in drama, improv, and voice acting to have fun role playing.

What we can learn from the *Critical Role* example is that we can create an atmosphere, or hothouse, that supports role playing to grow and flourish. Making our games a richer and better experience.

To this end, I think there are four layers to fostering rich role playing: a **strong magic circle** at the base, then **meaning and consequence**, and **motivations**, all topped off with **agency**.



In game terms the magic circle is a collective agreement by all players to suspend reality and enter the fictional world of the game. It is an agreement that allows players to see one another as barbarians, wizards, intergalactic smugglers, and matrix hackers; in worlds with starships, spells, dragons, and laser swords.

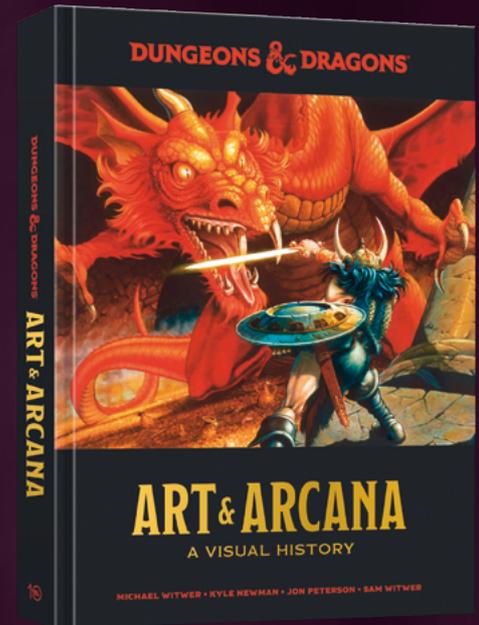
A good tool to help players enter a magic circle is art: both visual and audible. Art has the ability to break reality and trigger player mood and imagination. Take for example the art done by Larry Elmore for *Dungeons & Dragons* - his epic shield wielding swordsman stepping into the clutches of Red Dragon atop a pile of gold coins.

To old fans like me, it instantly transports me into *Dungeons & Dragons*. Not surprisingly, it was chosen for the recent book *Art & Arcana: A visual history* [Witwer, Newman, Peterson, Witwer, Wizards of the Coast, 2019].

Other games like *Shadowrun* (FASA, 1989) know this perfectly well too. *Shadowrun* captured the RPG cyberpunk market in 1989 by putting a sassy female elf with laser gun on a Harley.

"*Shadowrun* probably would have been lost amidst the cyberpunk games already proliferating, but Jordan Weisman had the idea of adding something extra: Elves on Harleys". [*Designers & Dragons* 80-89, 2014]

Chris Perkin's recently said that *Dungeons & Dragons* publications now include art on about half the pages within its books. Fria Ligan (Free League) the Swedish creators of award winning games such as *Tales from the Loop*, and *Forbidden Lands*, said they actually go to artists as their first step when starting a game as art can convey a setting and mood instantly without long and detailed briefs.



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THE THUNDER FROM DOWN UNDER

By Matthew Lee

Both *King of Tokyo* and *King of New York* contain an interesting collection of gigantic creatures. From angry apes to mechanical rabbits, they cover a lot of ground. Both metaphorically and physically. But publisher IELLO thought something was missing.

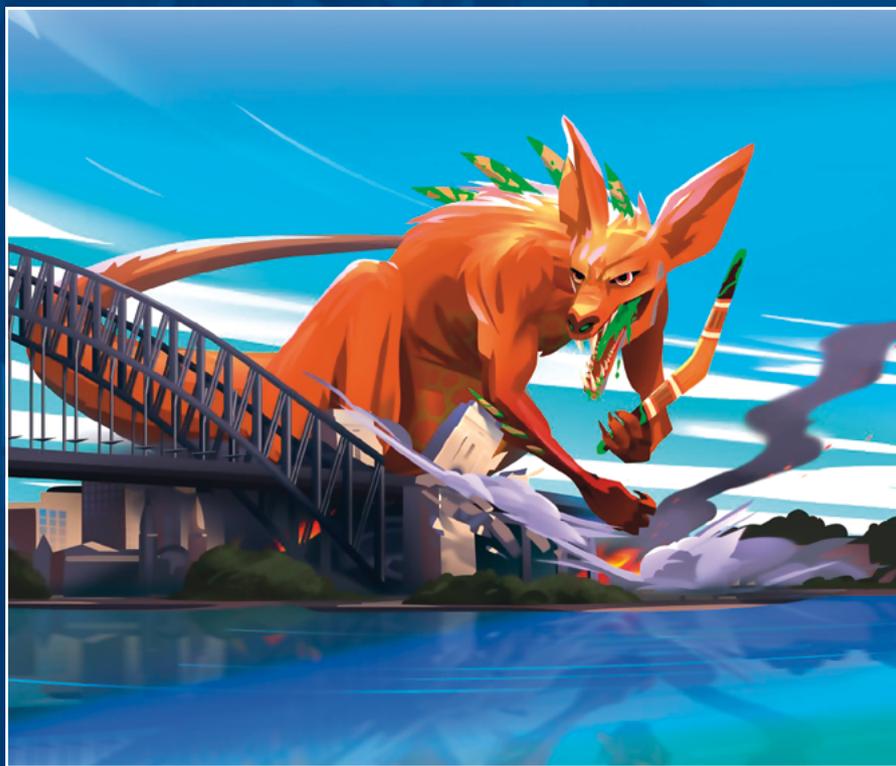
So they turned to their Australian distributor, VR Distribution, with a simple request. Create an Australian monster that could terrorise both Tokyo

and New York. “IELLO approached us asking if we were interested in working on a National Monster and we straight away said yes.” Said Etienne Leplus, Hobby Games Category Manager for VR Distribution. “They asked us what kind of monster would represent Australia the best, its weapon and what background we would want.”

VR went about putting together the idea for the creation. “For the monster we thought about Koala (Drop Bear like), Bunyip, Crocodile and Kangaroo. We settled on Kangaroo.” Etienne explained. “For the background, during the brainstorming we thought about Uluru, Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge. Uluru could have been offensive for some so we took that option out pretty quickly. So Sydney it was then. For the weapon, a Boomerang was THE item that would represent Australia the most and we all settled on that.”

While VR went about creating the brief, IELLO chose an artist. This was an Australian themed monster, being co-created with their Australian distributor. So naturally, an Australian artist was the obvious choice. After looking at some various illustrators work IELLO landed on Simon Boxer. “They found me through my very dormant Artstation account, which I should probably update.” Simon said. “It only showed environment work. Although now that I think of it, I even had a paintover of a Sydney cityscape in there. I’m sure that helped their search!”

Simon jumped at the chance to work on the iconic set of games. “I own *King of New York* and have played *King of Tokyo*, so when IELLO reached out



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THE CIRCUS IS COMING



Part 4: Last Band Standing

By Ben Makepeace,
Will Brown, Jamie Hardi
and Sean



It is inevitable. Everything comes to an end. The Radheim team have fought their last battle, in the shadow of the circus. How did it get to this, and what is the outcome? In this instalment of *The Circus is Coming* the team discuss how their warbands fared in the second half of the campaign, as well as the fallout of the final battle.



Kin of the Ferret-beast

By Ben Makepeace

Well, I can say that things settled for me, and it didn't go so bad... but I never did get to accumulate that pack of dogs I was after. But I did buy them for the last game with remaining gold!

My Ostlanders lost three notable Heroes in the end; so my early death-rate didn't keep up (thankfully). One of the Ruffians, Sonofa, became a Hero and grew to be quite a combat powerhouse. But was unfortunately killed in the last few games and didn't see out the campaign. A couple of my Jaegers also became Heroes; Braggada became a fearsome hunter with her fancy handgun, and Grenda had a very short-lived time as a Hero before she met her end.

We did have a bit of an issue with fortitude; several members suffering long-lasting chest wounds and running around at T2, some hand injuries, and lost eyes... but it's all just character building right? Gudrod Grindsson and Volpe fostered a campaign-spanning hatred which was great fun to play with, and lead to some real highlights throughout the series.

I really struggled with the Nouveau Riche rule. It was far more restrictive than I had anticipated. I also struggled with not being able to recruit hired swords; I always loved them in my Witch Hunters (preferring a Slayer with two axes, and an Ogre with axe and club) but didn't realise how much. I still struggled with income, and so didn't really get to convert a lot of minis, or add things to existing warband members. A closing rating of 265 is smaller than I had thought I'd end the campaign on, so perhaps I didn't get stuck in enough, or my early setbacks made me less pro-active. Or maybe we just played less games than we intended?



Pro-Circus really had a great campaign, and rallied everyone in Mordheim to our wonderful cause! After previously losing the first game, we lost game 7, which denied us a later opportunity, and game 13 which meant we'd be up against way more opposing warriors. But we won every other encounter and skirmish in the story.

I went into the last battle with a stash of gear: Gromril Sword, Athane, Sword, Light Armour, three Wyrdstone Shards, a Wardog and 35 crowns.

And reinforcements in the way of: a Nurgle Circus Magister, five Brethren, four Gor, two Frenzied Mobs, a Warlock (The AV guy).



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The Birth of Tactical Pragmatism

By Matthew Lee | Illustration from Game Workshop

What happens when you mix political satire with miniature painting? It seems like an unlikely combination. But for comedian Jordan Shanks, after a disastrous episode of his show *FriendlyJordies* which included buying and painting a Tau Riptide, this became a reality.

After a previous episode comparing Australia to *Warhammer 40,000* fiction, wargaming player fans of *FriendlyJordies* suggested Jordan try the hobby. Always one to seize an opportunity, or at least a chance for a joke, Jordan went on to buy and start to paint a Tau Riptide. A mix up with the undercoat,

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Thiago Vasques Mari

Each issue Featured Hobbyist looks at a member of the community, explores what the hobby means to them and takes a look at some of their collection. This issue we talk to Thiago Vasques Mari from South Australia, Australia.



Can you tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Thiago Vasques Mari; I am from Brazil and I have been living here in Adelaide for the last 11 years. I live at Happy Valley and I work as a swimming instructor. I am married with 2 kids (9yo boy and 6yo girl). I play the bass guitar, used to play the drums and now I am learning how to play the normal guitar; which is very different from playing the bass guitar by the way.

What kinds of tabletop games interest you and why?

I always loved competitive board games and war games; however I discovered the passion for cooperative and Euro games here in Australia. I used to play a lot of RPG (GURPS mainly) and card games (*Pokémon* and *Legends of the Five Rings*); but the favourite “board games with friends” was the Brazilian version of *Risk* called *WAR*.

I believe that I like those kinds of games because of all the good memories that they bring back; also because I like watching my enemies suffering over their empire collapsing because of a bad decision or a bad roll of dice.

What games are you currently interested in playing? Why these in particular?

Root is one that I really want to try. I think that it is a competitive strategy game, plus I love the setting of ruling the forest. I am waiting for my copy of *Unbroken* to arrive, so this is one that I am definitely interested in playing. This one has the whole dungeon crawling theme from RPGs that I like it.

What are your all time favourite games? What about these makes them so special to you?

Risk (WAR), *Once Upon A Time*, *Dixit* and *Munchkin* because of all the good times and memories that I had playing with my friends back in Brazil. They make us laugh a lot.



Mage Knight - The Board Game, because is the best solo and cooperative game that I have played so far. *Gloomhaven* because it is the one that I had spent (and will keep spending) even more time playing with my son, and hopefully with my daughter in the future. Also because it is a great game that mimics RPG (D&D and others)

Agricola was the first Euro game that I played and it is my mother’s favourite game. We play a lot when she visits us from Brazil

Who do you play with?

I play as often as life allows me with a group of friends, including one of the writers of this magazine. I also play with my family, mainly my son and daughter.

My friends and I are always trying to play on weekend nights after our kids are in bed and when life/wives let us do it. I do not attend any regular events, but maybe in the future I will try.

How does playing tabletop games fit into your life, along with family and other hobbies? Do they compete for your time?

Amongst all the everyday life commitments and hobbies, tabletop fit a very in a small spot. As I said before, I try to play whenever my life is a little more flexible.

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