

Fables & Tables Magazine

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Issue #6
Fall 2024





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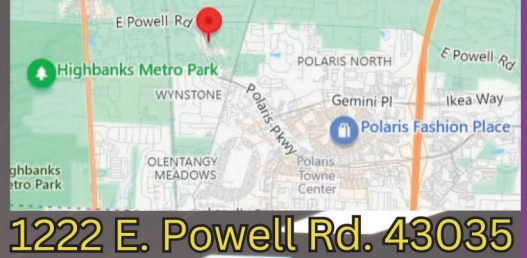
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Fables, Tables and Films!

A fable of film! -Roger Legg



Fables and fairy tales have always held a special place in the hearts of storytellers and audiences alike. These timeless narratives, rich with moral lessons and fantastical elements, have transcended generations, finding new life in various forms of media. As we witness the evolution of storytelling through films and tabletop games, it's essential to recognize how classic fables have inspired modern interpretations, shaping the landscape of entertainment today.

However, not every attempt to bring these stories to life has been met with success. Hopefully we can look at both the triumphs and missteps of fables transitioning from page to screen and page to tabletop, ultimately revealing a vibrant tapestry of content for consumers.

The Triumphs of Fable Adaptations

One of the most successful examples of fables making the leap to film is *Shrek*. This animated classic not only turned the fairy tale genre on its head but also offered a meta-commentary on the conventions of storytelling. By drawing on various fables and fairy tales, *Shrek* introduced audiences to a world where traditional narratives could be subverted for humor and deeper meaning. The film's accomplishments spawned sequels, spin-offs, and even a Broadway musical, demonstrating the power of these classic tales in resonating with contemporary audiences.

Similarly, *The Shape of Water*, an original Fable, directed by Guillermo del Toro, draws inspiration from classic fairy tales, particularly the theme of finding beauty in the unconventional. This film weaves a unique narrative that blends romance, fantasy, and social commentary, illustrating

the complexities of love and acceptance. While it received widespread acclaim, it also sparked debate over its unconventional approach. This example highlights that even when adaptations challenge traditional storytelling norms, they can offer profound insights and resonate deeply with audiences, proving that the effort to reinterpret these timeless tales is always worthwhile. Likewise with the rising popularity of this genre making this into a tabletop game seems like a possibility whereas a few years ago it might have been challenge.

In the realm of tabletop gaming, *Tales of the Arabian Nights* provides an immersive experience that draws players into the enchanting world of classic Middle Eastern fables. Based on the stories from *One Thousand and One Nights*, this game allows players to embark on adventures filled with intrigue, magic, and moral dilemmas. Through a blend of storytelling and strategy, participants encounter iconic characters and scenarios, making choices that shape their journey. The success of this game underscores the lasting appeal of these timeless tales and their ability to inspire creativity and exploration in various formats.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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tales, and I look forward to exploring how these narratives will once again be reinterpreted and celebrated. Whether through heartwarming films or engaging tabletop experiences, there is much to anticipate

Finally, while not every attempt to adapt classic fables has been met with applause, the end result is a richer landscape of content for us as consumers. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to engage with these stories in multiple formats, celebrating their timeless appeal.

Let's continue to embrace the creativity and imagination these adaptations inspire—who knows what new adventures await us just around the corner?

The film's popularity has led to several adaptations in tabletop gaming. One prominent example is "The Princess Bride: A Storytelling Game," which allows players to immerse themselves in the story and create their own adventures within the beloved universe. This board game captures the spirit of the film while engaging fans in a collaborative storytelling experience.

This crossover demonstrates how classic fables can thrive in multiple formats, enriching the experience for audiences and gamers alike.

As we move forward, it's exciting to consider what the future holds for fables in both film and tabletop gaming. The upcoming holiday season often inspires a resurgence of classic



Despite the setbacks, the ongoing exploration of fables in both film and tabletop gaming is a testament to their lasting influence. The fact that some adaptations miss the mark doesn't diminish the overall excitement and creativity surrounding these classic stories. Each attempt—successful or otherwise—adds to the larger conversation about storytelling and its evolution in modern culture.

Moreover, the diversity of interpretations encourages audiences to engage with these narratives in new ways. Whether it's through the humor of *Shrek*, the complexity of *Shape of Water*, or the strategic gameplay of *Tales of Arabian Nights*, consumers are presented with a wealth of options that enrich their experience. This diversity fosters a culture of creativity, encouraging new voices to take on familiar tales and reimagine them for contemporary audiences.

As we continue to see classic fables translated into various forms of media, it's essential to maintain a positive outlook. Each adaptation, regardless of its success, contributes to a broader narrative tapestry that consumers can enjoy. The ongoing exploration of these stories reflects our collective desire to understand the human experience,

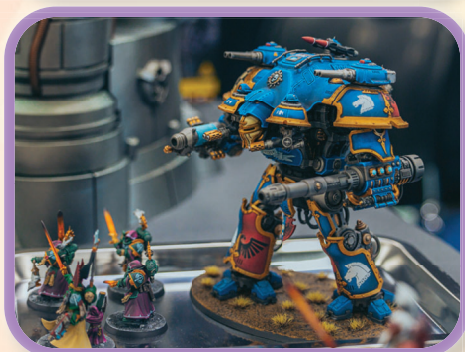
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CON Artist

BY MIKEY WOOD



Episode 3: Give 'em what they want

In the ever-so-humble opinion of yours truly, there are two main things that draw people to comic conventions (and I'm talking COMIC conventions, not these new breed of celebrity autograph farms): The COMICS and those who MAKE the comics.

The first comic convention I ever attended was one of those small comic shows they used to have at a Holiday Inn in Wayne, NJ. My dad handed me a twenty and told me he'd be back in two hours and there I was...Twelve year-old me wandering about a showroom filled with more comics than I think I had ever seen in my life, up until then. At that point in my life I was still riding my bike to Clifton News to grab G.I.JOE off the rack.

I know I was twelve because I know it was in October of 1985 and I know this because attendees got to pick two free comics and I chose Marvel's TRANSFORMERS #8 (the first appearance of the Dinobots, check your local eBay) and DOCTOR WHO #13.

I don't remember anything else about that show, honestly. Don't even remember what I bought. It was most likely back-issues of the aforementioned G.I. JOE or TRANSFORMERS books because I, like so many of my generation, was a slave to the three-count marketing blitz of Comic/Animation/Toys that was prevalent then (there were even little animated commercials telling me to buy the Marvel G.I. JOE comic, I had no choice but to willingly fall victim to it). But, see, that's how we comic nerds tell time. We don't use historic events (I just looked it up and the space shuttle Atlantis launched in October of 1985. Did I remember that? Nope. But I remember getting those two free comics at a Holiday Inn comic show). I can tell you that I went camping in Vermont with my Grandfather and Uncle Gary in July of 1984 because I bought three comics at a local five-and-dime: BATMAN SPECIAL #1, INCREDIBLE HULK #300, and MICRONAUTS: THE NEW VOYAGES #1. I asked my mother the same question and she, after thinking for a bit, confirmed it because she remembers news reports on the radio of the San Ysidro McDonald's shootings (Wikipedia is your friend). You'd think I would remember something like that but, no. All I remember are the comics. If you pulled any random comic from my collection and showed it to me I could tell you where I got it but I have no idea what my grandparents' birthdays were.

In 1995, while a student at Mansfield University, a friend of mine called me up and asked if I

wanted to take a drive up to Ithaca, NY to Ithacon. It was a Sunday so, when we arrived, there was only a couple of hours left before the show closed. I was a broke college student with lofty dreams of drawing comics, so I had brought along some art pieces in my bag...Mostly small oil illustrations on Gessoed (spellcheck says that's not a word but we artist-types know otherwise) illustration board. While wandering the rows, I saw that Sam Glanzman was there. Sam was an old-timer who got his start in comics back in 1939 working on books like AMAZING-MAN and SPITFIRE and GREEN HORNET before taking a break to join up with the U.S. Navy during WWII serving on the U.S.S. Stevens, an experience he would later weave into the Marvel graphic novels A SAILOR'S STORY in 1987.

I wandered over and flipped through the panels and panels of original comic book art with utter amazement. For those of who you who may not know, comic art is generally drawn on 11x17" pages, usually Bristol Board, and, back then, anyway, photocopied in what was called "non-photo blue" onto thicker boards and hand-colored using dyes or inks or paints. Sam had BOXES of these pages. The hand-inked pages, the hand-colored blue-line boards. I was awestruck. He chatted with me a bit about the early days and asked if I was an artist and I replied with a confident "Sort of".

"SORT of," he asked, "Let me see some of the sort of."

So I showed him. He gave me some really kind critique but kept going back to this one, tiny little painting I did. An angel in deep, anguished thought with the word "PAINLESS" across the bottom.

"I like this," he said, "How much would you want for it?"

"Oh, you can just HAVE that," I replied, not knowing what the hell I would charge for my artwork (I still don't).

He told me that was absolute nonsense and had me choose a page of original art from his selection. With a shake of the hand and a smile we traded art and I was the owner (and still am) the original artwork for page thirty-seven of A SAILOR'S STORY. The inked original page art, the hand-colored blue-line board, and the acetate overlay.

Believe me when I tell you that I don't remember anything else about that con, but I remember talking to Sam.

When I started tabling at cons in 2002, I was really just looking for an excuse to be there for three days. My dreams of drawing comics had sort of faded as I didn't have the talent or work-ethic to do so professionally, but I figured I'd give it a try (and I was working at a Kinko's so photocopies were basically free - you'd be amazed how many issues of a mini-comic you can get out under the guise of 'test copies'). I got together with some work pals and we put together some comics. My first was a comic called SOLITAIRE about a third-wall-breaking super-hero aware of the fact that he's in a comic book. It was very meta, kind of funny, and sold surprisingly well and I tried, to the best of my ability, to make sure the people that I interacted with had an enjoyable interaction because that nervous kid who you're friendly to and engage with? They'll remember you.

You see, every con is somebody's first and every conversation with you, as an artist on the other side of the table, is, potentially, their first experience talking to an artists, especially the kids. See, fans of comics are mesmerized by what we do. It's magic, to them. YOU may think your work is garbage, but, for someone ELSE, you may be their favorite artist.

Part of that engagement, sometimes to our chagrin, is drawing them whatever they ask for. I

started doing con sketches first to pass the time but, eventually, it became my primary source or revenue. Sketch cards (same size as a baseball card) or larger pieces. And the requests ran the gamut from the standard "Can you draw Batman" or "Can you draw Superman" or "Can you draw Spiderman" (the webs, man...the goddamned webs...) to the absurd. "Chewbacca as a Green Lantern", "Jon Snow from Game of Thrones dressed as Disney's Snow White", "A Sexy Octopus" (seriously...Dude wanted a sexy octopus). Whatever they ask for. This took me a bit to learn, honestly. I resisted drawing Deadpool or Harley Quinn or Baby freakin' Groot until my wife informed me I was being a silly person and probably losing out on money. And she was right (she's always right). I would draw a Deadpool card, that card would sell, I would draw another and that card would sell.

The most money I ever made at a convention was the year I sold sets of prints of the various Doctors from DOCTOR WHO. Seriously! They didn't want my original stuff, but that fan art stuff sold like CRAZY.

Give 'em what they want. If they ask for some obscure anime thing, look it up on your smartphone and draw it. If they want you to draw their D'n'D character? Have them describe it and draw it. Talk to them while you do, show interest. Let them know that it is an HONOR to be chosen to draw for them. Because it matters. I once watched the creator of a rather well-known comic book that's popular among the goth kid scene (no, it wasn't Neil Gaiman) treat kids who were coming up to his table as if they were an annoyance. The disappointment in their faces as they walked away was infuriating to see. Some artists are like that (and, sure, everyone can have a bad day) but the fans will remember that and that tarnishes your work, in their eyes.

I'm going to wrap this up with a quick story:

I was at a con here in the Central PA area and I was working on a sketch at my table. I glanced up and saw a mom and her daughter...young girl of about thirteen or so...The kid was clearly very shy and the mom was whispering to her and encouraging her to step up and ask a question so I put down my markers and smiled and said, "HEY! I promise you're not bothering me".

She had some questions about art and what pens I was using and I showed her (for the record: Kuretake brush pens) and let her mess with them a bit before reaching into my bag and giving her an unopened three-pack making her promise to practice. The next day she brought over a really cute drawing of a dragon. Her mom pulled me aside and told me that her daughter suffered from social anxiety and, while she loved to draw, she never showed anyone and never, ever, gave anyone one of her drawings.

For the next three years, as I attended that show, she would come to my table and give me a new drawing to show me that she was practicing and, more importantly, enjoying drawing.

That's what she will remember, that kid. As she grows up and creates and, who knows, maybe makes her own comics, she will always remember that moment, the same as I will always remember Sam Glanzman, who passed away in July of 2017 at the age of ninety-two.

Give 'em what they want. Sometimes, it's another damned drawing of Deadpool, other times, it's nothing but kindness.

Recommended Reading:
Marvel Graphic Novel #30: A SAILOR'S STORY
and Marvel Graphic Novel #48: A SAILOR'S STORY PART TWO: WINDS, DREAMS, AND DRAGONS by Sam Glanzman ■

9 Man Morris

Older Than 9 lives!

- Craig Israel

Nine Men's Morris is thought to be one of the oldest games in history. It is certainly one of the oldest for which we have definitive rules. It's been played, in one form or another, for more than 3,000 years... so it's clear it has lasting power.

Nine Men's Morris is kind of like tik-tak-toe in that you're trying to get three pieces in a row. But, unlike tic-tak-toe, Nine Men's Morris doesn't suck.

The game is played in two phases: placement and movement.

A randomly selected player to go first. They place a stone on any open intersection on the board. Players take turns placing their stones until both players have placed all nine of their pieces.

Next is the movement phase. Players now take turns moving their stones one space to any open intersection connected by a line. Players cannot move to spaces not connected by a line, and they can't move through their own or their opponent's pieces.

The goal is to create a straight line of three stones, called a mill. Once you create a mill, you can remove one of your opponent's pieces from the board. You can't remove stones that are already part of a mill, unless there is no other option.

Note that a mill must be in a straight, unbroken line. Wrapping around corners doesn't count. Play continues in this fashion until one player is reduced to only two stones. At this point, they can no longer make a mill, so they can't capture any more of their opponent's pieces... and they can't win. Victory goes to their opponent. In some variations of the game, once a player is reduced to three stones, that player gains the ability to "fly" their stones: meaning they can now move a stone anywhere on the board, connected by a line or not. This is a great rule, because it gives the player who's behind a sporting chance to come back from an otherwise inevitable defeat.

While Nine Men's Morris is the most popular version, but there are many variations, including Three Men's Morris, Six Men's Morris, and 12 Men's Morris.

There is ample evidence that the ancient Romans played Nine Men's Morris. In fact, one popular theory is that the name comes from the Latin word *merellus*, meaning "counter" or "game piece."

We don't know for sure if the Romans invented the game or if—more likely—it evolved from

earlier, simpler games. The mechanic of matching three or getting three pieces in a row has been popular for millennia. There just seems to be something about three in a row that is deeply satisfying to humans. This should feel familiar to anyone who's played Candy Crush.

But, however the game started, the Roman empire helped spread it across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, traveling with soldiers and merchants.

The early physical evidence comes largely from game boards that were carved into permanent places, like benches or stoops in public areas. Monks seem particularly fond of craving boards into pews in monasteries and cathedrals. There's even a game board scratched into a deck board of the Gokstad Viking ship.

One of the earliest written accounts comes from

Ovid's *Ar Amatoria* — or, *The Book of Love*, written in 2CE. Ovid describes a game that sounds like it could be Nine Men's Morris.

"[The game is] divided into as many parts as there are months in the year. A table has three pieces on either side; the winner must get all the pieces in a straight line. It is a bad thing for a woman not to know how to play, for love often comes into being during play."

Even in the third century, ladies loved board game geeks.

Nine Men's Morris saw its heyday in the 14th and 15th centuries, being at least as popular as Chess and Tables games. Its popularity waned after that, but it never really went away completely.

One of the few remaining crates from the Boston Tea Party has a Nine Men's Morris board carved into the lid.

The game pops up again and again throughout history, often customized to fit the times.

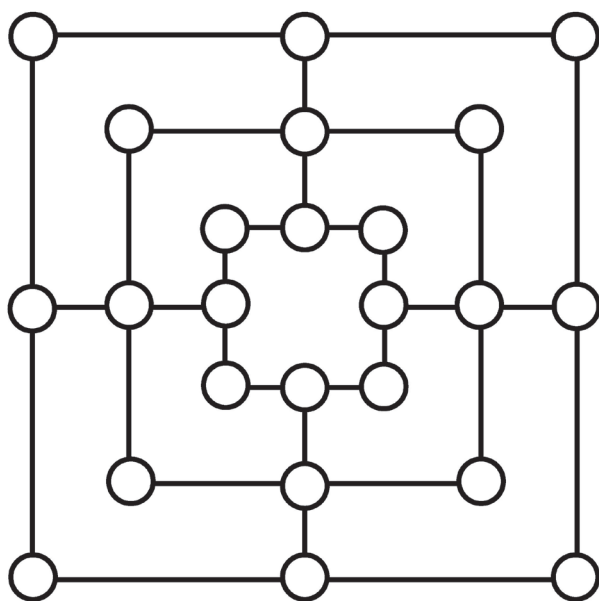
For example, during World War I it was sold as "Trencho" in the UK. The intersections were re-envisioned as cannon emplacements.

In the 1950s the game was sold as "Cowboy Checkers," presumably to appeal to Gunsmoke and Lone Ranger fans.

Perhaps the most recent, high-profile example — although not so recent now — was the release of *Assassin's Creed 4*, where Nine Men's Morris appeared as a nearly impossible to beat mini-game within the game.

Finally, when you get three in a row, why is it called a "mill?" There's speculation that the shape of the board is meant to look like an ancient grain or olive mill. But more likely it's simply linguistic evolution... Latin *merellus* becomes Old English "mylen", becomes Middle English "mille" and, eventually, "mill" as we know it today. ■

Nine Men's Morris



The Forge Tavern Presents Autumn Cocktail Recipe:

THE AUTUMN MULE

THE AUTUMN MULE!

As the chill of the autumn evenings roll in, it's time to change out our cocktail menu at The Forge Tavern. One of our most popular drinks for this season is the mule cocktail. This delightful concoction is a twist on the classic Moscow mule, featuring the warm and spicy flavors of fall. Whether you're cozying up to your favorite RPG, board game or fantasy novel, the autumn mule will add a little warmth to your evening.

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 oz vodka
- 1/2 oz fresh lime juice
- 3 oz ginger beer
- 1 oz apple cider
- 1 oz Spiced Pear Liqueur
- Apple slices and cinnamon sticks for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a copper mug or highball glass with ice.
2. Pour in the vodka and lime juice.
3. Add 1 oz Spiced Pear Liqueur
4. Add the apple cider and top with ginger beer.
5. Give it a gentle stir to combine the flavors.
6. Garnish with apple slices and a cinnamon stick for a festive touch.

The autumn mule cocktail strikes the perfect balance between sweet, tart and spicy notes, making it an ideal companion for autumn nights.



SPOTLIGHT ON

ORIGINS

GAME FAIR

A LOOK AT THE 2024 ORIGINS GAME FAIR

- Justin Rood

The Origins Game Fair was held this June, almost 18,000 attendees from all over the nation and beyond attending to play, shop, learn about new releases for the year ahead, and more. Once known as the Origins International Game Expo, the convention has been held every year since 1975, except for 2020 due to the pandemic. Originally a wandering event, Origins found its' forever home in Columbus in 1996 and is a summer event. While the con came first, it is organized and operated by the Game Manufacturers Association, better known as GAMA, and is one of the biggest events of the year for gamers and game retailers alike. This year, your friendly neighborhood Fables & Tables magazine had a booth at the convention and had the great fortune to have a sit down with Executive Director of Origins, John Stacy, and Nicole Brady from the GAMA Board of Directors.



John Stacy, and Nicole Brady



With the convention in full swing at the time, both leaders were in good spirits and tired but excited. As John explained, once the convention has started, his biggest concern has been alleviated. "What keeps me up at night is whether everyone shows up," he said. It's the organization in the year ahead of the convention that are the hard part, getting all the moving parts of retailers, vendors, contractors, event staff, and more all scheduled and set in place starts not even months but more than a year before the actual event. Once it's all set, the biggest tension is that all those moving parts will come together in the scheduled places at the scheduled times. The staff, both volunteer and professional, know what they're doing and have the





practice and skills to make the event work. It's getting everything set and having the expected participants in place that is the real challenge.

There are always challenges though, even when everything is set up



correctly. John mentioned that this year's Origins was the first time that they had celebrity guests, such as Adrienne Palicki and Adrian Paul, among others, and that he feels that they could have advertised and arranged that part of the convention better. "But then we'll know how to do it better next time, mistakes are learning opportunities. If we didn't screw up, we wouldn't know how to do any of this right."

One thing that John and Nicole agreed on was their happiness at the growth of the convention, particularly the rebound since 2020, the only year without an Origins in the convention's 49 year history. "This is what it's about, what brings me joy," Nicole said, "is having all these people here, enjoying themselves and happy, and introducing



them to new games and people who have never been gamers to games." Seeing that is what makes her proud and feel as though the convention is a success.



For John, he's most proud of the way that the convention has grown and how that is reflected in the Origins Awards. From a small and simple event, it's become a mainstay of the convention with many categories and hundreds of submissions every year. The Awards let the convention serve both the aims of the GAMA members and

the gaming community as a celebration of quality and achievement.

The growth of the convention continues, with the Origins Awards bringing increased prestige and cache to what was already a long standing and successful event. Far from resting on their laurels, GAMA and the team behind Origins continue to try new things to be here to bring new gamers in and celebrate the width and breadth of the hobby. ■



"what brings me joy, is having all these people here, enjoying themselves and happy"

Call of Champions:

Trial of Tiamt

Cooperation, Charity

& Games in Cbus - Justin Rood



Gaming is many things to many people. It's a fun pastime for us to enjoy with friends, and sometimes strangers, so we can relax and enjoy part of life. It's an outlet for our creativity, letting us tell stories we may not be able to tell otherwise in places we are safe with people who we have a common bond with. It's an escape from a world of stultifying banality into wonder and adventure. It's a power fantasy where we can change our world together, in ways big and small, with a brave heart, a strong sword arm, a spell, and some good friends. Or frenemies, at least. It's a way to explore ideas, themes, personal interests that don't have a way for us to access otherwise. It's seeing who can make everyone else laugh the hardest or get the GM to do the longest, most weary facepalm of the session. All good things, worthy things even, in our lives that are so often a struggle and that can be so precarious.

It behooves us to remember that there are others whose lives are more of a struggle than ours. Whose lives, through no choice or fault of their own, are in a far more precarious state than we could ever imagine. For those people, especially children, gaming is all of those things mentioned before and it can be more. Gaming can be a force for good, for hope, for showing our fellows so afflicted that we have not forgotten them. Such a time when gaming can do this is coming on November 10th, 2024. From 4pm to 9pm on that date, gaming will be a force for good, and all of us can have a part in it.

The Trial of Tiamat is a collaboration between Extra Life, a fundraising program of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, and a quintet of game stores in the Columbus, Ohio metro area. November 10th, one champion from five kingdoms will join with their fellows for an all-out battle with the five-headed dragon queen herself striving to defeat her and outscore each other to claim victory for their land. But these champions need the help of the people for the champions must be armed and supplied by the gifts given by the populace. Only by the generosity of the people can each champion be best armed to face the ultimate evil. The victor will bring back a great trophy to their land, to be displayed with pride. At least until the evil deity revives and must be defeated once again!



The kingdoms are The Guardtower, Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, The Soldierly Games & Cards, Ravenstone Games, and Beyond the Board. As each store gathers

building up to the donation goal also opens up prizes that will be raffled off during the event for those that donated. One dollar equals one ticket in the raffle. Those who wish not to participate in the

raffle can give anonymously, of course. All proceeds go directly to Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The battle against Tiamat will be live-streamed on Twitch at: twitch.tv/guardtowergames with live commentary provided by The Hills Have Nerds podcast. A healer will be

present in the battle to provide healing neutral to all. In addition to the DM, there will be moderators to help keep everything moving smoothly. While the stream is going on, it will be shown in the monitors in each store as well. The champions will be level 20 characters, though some will be multiclass. The new 2024 D&D 5th Edition rules will be used for the battle along with a custom stat block for Tiamat for those that think they know the tricks the Dragon Queen has at her disposal.

CALL OF CHAMPIONS
TRIAL OF TIAMAT
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donations for Nationwide Children's Hospital, their champions get more magic items and more gold to spend on equipment and consumables. Donations are made using QR Codes on fliers in each store, their websites, as well as supplied in this very magazine. Those wanting to donate in cash can do so at the registers of the stores themselves. Each store has their own donation goal and percentage goals along the way are what power up each champion. But



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The community's ability to impact the battle does not end when initiative is rolled, however. During the champions' struggle with the Dragon Queen, gamers can boost their champions by making donations at the stores or in the stream to provide a myriad of benefits. Or, should they want to give the champions more of a challenge (or are secret Cult of the Dragon members), they can use them to boost Tiamat instead. A panel of judges will be scoring the champions not just on DPS but on contribution to the victory (we hope). The winning champion will win the trophy to be displayed at their store for one year. Until next year's battle with Tiamat! Which store, I mean, kingdom will triumph then? What new champions will emerge to join in the fray?

The Trial of Tiamat will be gaming at its' best. Creative, cooperative, competitive but friendly, and all to give to support children in desperate need. We may never slay a dragon or save a village in real life, but that doesn't mean we can't make a difference and save lives. Gaming lets us be heroes in a dramatic way but by giving what we can financially, by viewing the stream and inviting others, we can be heroes outside of our games. The gaming community is wide and has shown its power to hold even massive corporations to account. Let us use a fraction of that power of community to benefit those children who may be our fellow gamers already and give those that aren't the chance to join us in the future. ■

The Cast of Champions

DUNGEON MASTER
DAVID SWIEH

HEALER
JAMES LOWE

GUARDTOWER CHAMPION
JOSHA MILES

DRAGON'S LAIR COMICS & FANTASY CHAMPION
ADISON BALLARD

THE SOLDIERLY GAMES & CARDS CHAMPION
CAMERON GOETZ

RAVENSTONE GAMES CHAMPION
DOUG DAVIS

BEYOND THE BOARD CHAMPION
GREG RAMSEY

COMMENTARY
THE HILLS HAVE NERDS PODCAST

EVENT COORDINATOR
PHILL KWON

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Goal Level Rewards

- 10% - Raffle Prize: Deck Box & Sleeve (donated by Extra Life)
- 25% - Champion has 1 Common magic item, 1 Uncommon magic item, and 750 gold pieces.
- 30% - Raffle Prize: Plushies donated by Tasty Peach
- 50% - Raffle Prize: 5 Board Games and Champions has 2 Common magic items, 3 Uncommon magic items, 1 Rare magic item, and 7500 gold pieces.
- 70% - Raffle Prize: RPG Core Book
- 75% - Champion has 2 Common magic items, 4 Uncommon magic items, 1 Rare magic item, and 1 Very Rare magic item, plus 15,000 gold pieces
- 90% - Raffle Prize: \$50 store gift card
- 100% - Champion has 2 Common magic items, 4 Uncommon magic items, 2 Rare magic items, 2 Very Rare magic items, and 22,500 gold pieces.

STORE DONATION GOALS

The Guardtower.....	\$600
Dragon's Lair Comics & Gamea.....	\$400
The Soldiery Games & Cards.....	\$300
Ravenstone Games.....	\$300
Beyond The Board.....	\$300

State of the Series

Wendt Mini Con 24'

By: David "Blue" Wendt

Greetings again my friends! Please come and settle down next to the fire.

I look forward to these quarterly visits where we can talk about what I've been preparing and running. I'm not certain where the summer has gone, but as you will soon see, my brain has turned to the spooky season.

But first exciting (to me at least) news. During the first ever Wendt Mini Con (hosted here in my home), I ran a playtest session of the 12 Ravens game, set in my Saturday Morning Action Cartoon Heroes (SMACH) setting. Great fun was had by all and in the end, a barbarian prince with a powerful sword invoked his special trait and slew the big bad with an insanely powerful blow. Everything worked the way it was supposed to, which means I really need to get down to finishing the text and cleaning everything up in general.

But that's not the only positive 12 Ravens news. One of the players was so taken by the rules set that he asked to beta test it for an anime game he had been gearing up to run. Dubbed the "12 Ravens: Tengu Edition", he has challenged me to tighten things up and add some optional rules. Specifically, Escalation rules:

OPTIONAL RULE: ESCALATION POINTS

Escalation points are earned when you roll a 1 or a 5.

Escalation points may also be earned when an opponent takes trigger actions (monsters growing to giant size, for example).

Powers (or tiers of powers) are unlocked when your total escalation points exceed a predetermined value.

After the conflict where the powers were unlocked, escalation points reset to zero.

There may be multiple levels of unlocks (for example: unlocking your super suit; activating your special weapon; summoning your mech; mega-upgrading your mech)

Unlocked abilities still will need to be powered by points generated by rolling 'large' numbers, but I could see them being more powerful than 'normal' abilities due to the unlock restriction

Escalation rules are an important add, because in some of the source material that inspires both SMACH and 12 Tengu characters routinely have to reach certain critical points in the narrative to activate their powers. I'm sure you can think of several, but top of my mind are Power Rangers, Digimon, and to a lesser extent, Battle of the Planets. I also like that it makes every roll important, every number that shows up does something. Which is cool.

Not mentioned last time, we have spun up "Cle-X", an X-Men game set in Cleveland and using the Marvel Multiverse (d616) rules. This has taken the space of our former Saturday night virtual game and by all accounts, everyone is having fun. We had played a handful of session

in June and July and I ran an "Annual" session at Wendt Mini Con, live and face-to-face. The PCs (and a couple of guest stars) got pulled into the Mojo Cinematic Universe and were split up into three horror-inspired settings. In the end, the heroes prevailed and found themselves thrown into a whole new set of problems back in the real world.

The system is pretty solid, if it does show its roots in a certain level-driven d20 based game. (That fact may not be obvious to anyone who did not invest in the playtest version, as they took the feedback pretty seriously and made a much better game out of it.) My only real complaint is that while char gen is made much easier with the Roll20 online generator... the resulting character sheet is both hard to read on screen and does not have a print option. Since these are quibbles about the virtual support, I figure it's not a deal breaker.

But what about horror? I promised you spooky stuff, didn't I? Well let's start with the (mythos and Poe-inspired horror game). I have some bad news and some good news. We have not actually started play yet, but we have added a new player - someone who had a minor amount of D&D experience in the past and is eager to try the system again. I've gotten inspired and since I have my fancy gaming table, I've decided to lean into miniatures. The included picture is the store that the PCs are inheriting. I need to work on my paint job, but I'm pretty pleased with the result.

The other good news is that I've worked out some horror specific rules to help drive the tone of the game. I won't share them all here this month, but I do want to share a subset of the Sanity Mechanics.

Sanity Mechanics

Sanity Dice and Points

Sanity Dice: Each class has a Sanity Die determined by the formula Sanity Die = 16 - Hit Die.

- Barbarian: d4 Sanity Die
- Fighter, Paladin, Ranger: d6 Sanity Die
- Bard, Cleric, Druid, Monk, Rogue, Warlock: d8 Sanity Die
- Sorcerer, Wizard: d10 Sanity Die

Sanity Damage and Recovery

Sources of Sanity Damage:

- Minor Horror: DC 10, 1d4 SP damage
- Moderate Horror: DC 15, 1d6 SP damage
- Major Horror: DC 20, 1d8 SP damage

Psychic Damage: Reduces Sanity Points instead of Hit Points.

Sanity Dice Reduction and Recovery

Dropping to Zero SP:

- Permanent adverse effect (e.g., phobia, chronic insomnia, disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws).
- Sanity Dice step down one size, with SP fully restored based on the new die size.
- If reduced below d4, the character is permanently retired.

I mess with casters and mechanics for cursed items as well, but I will save those for another

time, if there is interest. When adding mechanics, I usually start complex and then simplify. In the case of Sanity Dice and Sanity Points, I wanted to mirror Hit Dice and Hit Points. I almost immediately got questions about why spell casters got larger dice. In addition to the mechanical symmetry, it's because spell casting has the potential to cause sanity loss as you push the boundaries of reality.

But that is NOT ALL! In the past, I have run "Strahd Must Die Tonight!" and indie games as one shots to celebrate the spooky season. Keeping up with that tradition, I am gearing up to run an epic, face-to-face 5e one-shot in late October entitled "The Heart of Necrothar". The Pitch:

Overview: The adventurers are drawn into the ancient undead city of Necrothar, a sapient metropolis cursed into undeath centuries ago. Rumors claim that Necrothar harbors great power—an artifact known as The Heart of Necrothar, which is said to hold the key to either restoring the city to life or plunging the world into a new age of death and darkness. However, Necrothar is no passive ruin; the city is "alive", sentient, and hungers for the souls of those who enter.

Objective: The party must locate the Heart of Necrothar deep within the city's ever-shifting, undead-infested streets. Once found, they must decide what to do with it: destroy the heart and free the souls trapped in the city, seize the power for themselves, or attempt to redeem the city and return it to life.

I've given each player 20 levels to build with, a fairly generous allocation of coin and magic items, and freedom to source material from third party sources if they choose. They have been warned not to "piss me off" at the table and I'm pretty confident from the early reactions that they are being very careful not to do so.

I've been craving an epic combat for some time now and this should fit the bill. The players are facing an extra long session where they need to fight their way from the out gates all the way to the heart of the city - where the real battle starts. I will be leveraging many of my resources - a 30 foot long scroll map, miniatures, building stats for swarms of undead, and of course building the undead city itself. For the last, I am taking inspiration from "Epic Legacy's Tome of Titans Vol 1". This book from 2CGaming features nearly two dozen epic level antagonists complete with background, guidance on how to build a campaign around them (or just include them in the campaign), as well as, two sets of stats: epic and mythic. Mythic for when epic just isn't epic enough.

The only downside is my regular suspects are all really excited for this game. Right now, I'm looking at 8 or 9 players. I may need to split the party and run it more than once. I will let you know next issue what happened both in game and out.

That's about all for now. I should really get back to planning. Until next time, happy gaming! ■

You can find me on facebook

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Badab Hunter

A Badab Campaign -Hunter Graham

The Maelstrom Warders, a group of space marine chapters in the Badab System who defend the wider imperium from the forces coming from the Deamon infested Maelstrom, call for just succession, believing that the governing forces of the imperium are over titthing the sector and not sending adequate support for their mission. They eventually open fire on a ship containing the Fire Hawks, a space marine chapter coming at the request of a neighboring sector who requires the raw materials titthed from Badab and soon the inquisition is called, debts of honor and duty are called upon and full civil war is entered.

Then a decade of brutal, bloody fighting that will leave multiple entire chapters of space marines nearly destroyed, and a chapter of chaos space marines will be born from the Tyrant of Badab, a former stalwart defender of humanity

The Badab war is a civil war within the Imperium of Man concerning multiple lesser-known space marine chapters fighting for a multitude of reasons. Also, it's super cheap to get into. The most recent edition of Warhammer 40K has sidelined the classic "Firstborn" space marines in favor of the new and much taller Primaris Marines, most people who are a big fan of these classic, squat models have moved to Horus Heresy. This leaves a certain quite common kind of model on the shelves to collect dust: The classic Armor Mark VII marines who lack the rules support of New Primaris and are historically inaccurate to

the Horus Heresy where they could otherwise shine. This means that a conflict where they're the main stars can be an awesome project to share with a playgroup, all going in a big lot of old space marines and splitting it between the players to all make different armies which tie in with one another, having the conflict act as a backdrop and inspiration for different missions and scenarios or even playing a full on campaign



with a set order of games. The books containing a history and all the lore of the conflict, Imperial Armor Volume 9 & 10, are available on Warhammer+ to all subscribers, just leaving specific rules text out of this copy. In addition, Arbiter Ian on YouTube has a two-part series on the conflict, giving both the history of its publication as well as an easy to consume Play-by-play of the conflict and its aftermath.

The conflict features many chapters that are slightly obscure and have enough variety between them to make up for the fact that all of the armies in the campaign are space marines, such

as the Mantis Warriors: A Successor to the White Scars who are infamous for some of their members entering a Battle Haze, which permanently changes the chemicals in their mind to maintain a constant level of focus in the pursuit of their foes. The Lamenters who are an extremely unlucky Chapter of Blood Angels constantly teetering on the brink of destruction. There's also the leader of the secessionist forces; The Astral Claws, led by the Tyrant of Badab; Luftgt Huron who by the end of the war would pledge themselves to chaos and become the piratical Red Corsairs. These are just three of more than a dozen chapters who participated; a Quick Look at the Warhammer wiki or the Lexicanum website can give you a good description of them and the other forces who participated.

COLLECTING A BADAB FORCE:

Obviously no matter what chapter you pick to play as you will need space marines, luckily with them being pumped out for the last 40 odd years they're not too hard to find. The first mention of the Badab War is in White Dwarf 101 published in 1989, then expended in 2010 by the Forge World team while being referenced and slowly expanded throughout that time. This has the benefit of almost every different space marine kit, style and painting philosophy being shown in the conflict, from the ostentatious Rogue Trader "Camo" paint schemes to more modern Grimdark space marines. all of them fit. This gives you a lot of options when it comes to making your army. If you want to buy new models the recent Horus Heresy Boxes are the most obvious pick, a big box of 20 marines can easily be made into a starting army, using the special

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

options in the kit to make commanders as well as troops to get going with just one purchase. An army can also easily be made completely out of secondhand models, luckily many stores in the Central Ohio area such as Warpate in Westerville or even Game Tables Adventures in Newark offer used models at bargain prices, not to mention discord trading, eBay and Facebook marketplace to pick up older marines. Monopose Starter Set Marines, rogue trader metal sculpts and the Horus Heresy Kits can all easily mingle together to make a unique looking army, especially in the later stages of the war where scavenging became more and more common. Paint-schemes can be varied despite the pseudo-historical presentation of the conflict. Multiple entire chapters are engaged with many of them not having more than a few pages of lore, allowing you to fill in certain elements such as Company markings, Troop type markings, and even totally different specialist camo paint schemes are all completely fine on the table! My Red Scorpions are made up of multiple kits bought, thrifted or given and use a variety of paint schemes.

The majority of my force is done in the traditional color scheme of the chapter; however my Sternguard Veteran Squads instead use the Rogue Trader era Pursuit Squad color scheme, letting them really pop on the table. In addition, there are some non-space marine elements during the conflict, the Ordo Hereticus who command the Sisters of Battle where there to investigate and combat the heresy of the region. There was also the Tyrants Legion, scores of Imperial Guardsmen and local militias who fought alongside the secessionist forces. When picking an army, it's important to have a mix of one side and the other. The loyalist forces have more chapters sending a small force to assist in the fighting compared to the only four chapters who fought in their totality on the secessionist side, so make sure you organize with your playgroup who is playing what.

SYSTEMS TO USE:

The Imperial Armor books that contain the rules for the campaign, Chapter Special Rules, Special Characters, Missions and Unique Units were made for Warhammer 40k 5th edition. So, the ideal way to play is using that rule set and playing straight from the book. Unfortunately, a copy of Imperi CD al Armor Nine with all of those special rules can run you between four and eight hundred dollars so let's discuss alternative systems. 8-9th edition of 40k: all of the rules for many named special characters as well as the rules for chapters in the Badab War are available as Legends for these two editions, in addition a copy of the Space Marine Codex and its variants are dirt cheap, many people selling them as soon as the editions changed and can be found online or in places like Half-Price books. The downside of this system is that Legends Characters, such as Ahazra Redth: Chief Librarian of the Mantis Warriors, only have their

points available as Power Level used in "Open Play" games, whereas the majority of players like using normal points from the Matched Play ruleset. To remedy this you'd have to come up with a mutually agreed upon Homebrew cost for these characters, leave them out entirely or proxy them as normal space marine characters. Horus Heresy: If we're playing the Space Marine War setting why not use the Space Marine War Ruleset? The Horus Heresy is a game system meant to represent the galaxy-wide civil war around ten thousand years before the start of the Badab War, but it can be easily adapted to fit



the setting.

This is a system that is currently in print and popular which is a big benefit, in addition because of its focus on space marine on space marine conflict it's much easier to make each chapter feel unique, for example, Red Scorpions follow the codex Astartes as a religion, so utilizing Ultramarine Inducti to make modern 40k tactical squads allows them to emphasize this specific element of their combat doctrine. Whereas the Mantis Warriors who are almost completely destroyed over the course of the campaign may start out using Salamander chapter rules, but as they fall into a desperate struggle with many of them utilizing their infamous Battle Haze focus I may use Shattered Legions rules with Salamanders and World Eaters or Emperors Children to represent those berserker-state veteran units. In addition, the extensive character customization rules including the Centurion Consuls can be used to recreate the special characters of this era with no need of homebrew. While Horus Heresy allows for certain units that are not technically part of the modern space marine organization, such as massive twenty man strong units, it's not that unbelievable that as the fighting got to its biggest and most brutal that ancient weapons of war awaken and the oldest texts on fighting their fellow Astartes are dusted off. The Astral Claws essentially revived the long unused close quarters Despoiler Squad in the form of the Retaliator Squads, something that can most accurately be represented using the Horus Heresy Ruleset. Though, of course lists should be approved by everyone in the group and making a list that makes sense in the setting should come first. This will be different to everyone's tastes. I think that Land Raider Spartans and Twenty-man strong Tactical Squads are reasonable, but I would veto a Sons of Medusae Army taking automata units

just because they're Iron Hands Successors.

PLAYING A BADAB WAR CAMPAIGN:

There's many ways to play the Badab Campaign with a playgroup. One way is to just use the Badab war as a backdrop for your games of Warhammer 40k, the other is to make a narrative campaign using your system of choice. Without access to the rules text of Imperial Armor Volume 9 it can be difficult to make a series of battles but here's an over-simplified outline of a campaign that can be used with any system you choose to play. Both players select sides and make armies.

Players are either Secessionists or Loyalists. Every time they win a game against the opposite side they gain 1 point. Start the campaign with smaller conflicts focused on Boarding actions. Much of the fighting in the early stages of the conflict were focused on attacking shipping lanes and preventing imperial presence in the sector. This is also an opportunity to use a skirmish system such as Kill Team or Shadow War Armageddon to represent the smallest and most tactical options of this time. In addition this gives your playgroup time to build up their collection and learn the rules of whatever system you're using. Move onto larger games, playing typical games between 1,000 and 3,000

points, at this point entire chapters are mobilized and armies should be growing.

This is also an opportunity to play games with larger scale, Legiones Imperialis and Battlefleet Gothic are perfect for playing massive battles where entire worlds are being laid to waste by the relentless fighting. Near the end of the campaign the secessionists are suffering from a lack of resources; those that remain are likely some of the most battle-hardened veterans of the chapter. At this point, if playing with Horus Heresy rules the Shattered Legions Army list is perfect for representing these experienced but undersupplied armies. The Astral Claws can even further their transition to a chaos warband by using elements of the Traitor Guard, transitioning their army into one using the Chaos Space Marine codex or using Traitor army options using the Horus Heresy ruleset. With the war in full swing, boarding actions, sieges, city-fighting, everything is on the table. The Palace of Thorns: The grand finale of a campaign should always be a big all-day game. The secessionists are cornered and outnumbered, pushed back to the new capital of Badab Prime. Luftgt Huron and the secessionists pledge to sell their lives dearly in a final stand. The focus of this last game is to Kill Luftgt Huron (or whatever character on the secessionist side is biggest and scariest) or to secure his fortress. The secessionists should have the goal of preventing that from happening. With this game determining the final victor of the campaign, the side with the most wins before this point should have some kind of big bonus, whether that be extra units, extra CP, or maybe giving every player on that side an orbital bombardment.

Overall, The Badab War is a fantastic excuse to paint space marines that are cheap, look cool and play fun flavorful scenarios with them and I recommend you convince your playgroup to pick it up right now. ■