



# the guardtower monthly

## Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

### WELCOME

Welcome to the third issue of the Guardtower's monthly newsletter. As we figure this thing out, new features continue to spring up as contributions are made. If you have any comments, suggestions or articles that you would like to see here, please email them to us at Gtower5886@aol.com with the subject "newsletter". We have had good ideas submitted that haven't been implemented yet, so don't be disheartened if you don't see your suggestion appear immediately.

### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



Hellooooooooooooo everybody, it's Rex, your friendly neighborhood editor (really, just ask my minions). I'd like to include everyone on a landmark event. As of issue two the Guardtower newsletter has gone international! (Don't we work fast?) I'd like to welcome all of our readers in the Great White North! Hello Canada!!! I'm glad to have you with us! Also we are lucky to have a reader in South Africa! I'd like to welcome Alison Cameron, friend to Rachel Shaw, to our humble newsletter!!

Uh-oh, look out, a sidebar: I'm reminded of my first trip to GenCon eight years ago. I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of people who had gathered together in this Mecca of gaming joy. Everyone was in their element, one big family come home to play this game or that with whoever had a free moment. My friends and I dubbed it Gamer's Paradise. Everywhere you looked were signs saying "Welcome Gamers" and the like. It was beautiful.) >SLAP<

Let me backtrack and fill everyone else in here on how the large number of Canadian readers happened. Bruce Coulson, who has been writing wonderful reviews for us since issue #1 (much applause) emailed me one day and asked if I would send copies of our newsletter to the companies he reviews. Hey, no problem! This was a great idea! This helps not only to familiarize the companies we can't exist without with us, but also this fosters the sense of community gamers share.

So anyway imagine my surprise when Toren Adkinson, co-creator of Spaceship Zero, responded to my email and asked if he could send the newsletter around to his "gaming group". The "group", it turns out, consists of over 200 members and is known as the Vancouver Gaming Guild. The rest, as they say, is history... Is anyone still with me? Hellooooo... Oh well, on with the newsletter..

### WHOA! A CONTEST!

I'd like to thank everyone who submitted entries last month but here we go. We knew we would be narrowing it down. I am proud to present to you our "Final Four" (In alphabetical order):

- A) Upkeep
- B) Guardtower Monthly
- C) Mag O' Holding
- D) The Thank Heaven For Wizards And D20 So That I Can Pay My Bills This Month Obligatory Tribute Newsletter

These four title suggestions powered past the other twelve entries to stand as the readers' favorites. Now it is time to choose a winner. I call on you one last time to vote. Votes must be registered in this format:

**Vote:** Title voted for  
**From:** Your name

Only one vote will be accepted per person, multiple votes from one email address are acceptable so long as each one is from a different voter. Votes will be accepted until April 23rd. This time, in the event of a tie, ties will be broken with a "best of three" vote by Tod, Marcus and Rex.

The results will be published next month in the (newly named) fourth issue of the newsletter along with credits for all of the entries. The winner will then receive their \$10.00 and \$5.00 Guardtower official gift certificates or "Squig Bucks" as they are sometimes called.

### BEWARE THE MUD!!! (EVIL TRICKSEY MUD!)

Okay, it's that time of the year. Our parking lot has a tendency to get crowded at times and those spots off of the pavement look enticing when you're in a hurry to get in and game. During the cold months this is okay, but now the land has turned to mud. Deep mud. Car swallowing mud. Every weekend if you are up at the desk, you can join us as we listen to, then watch if it keeps up, what sounds like a monster truck rally out there where someone is trying desperately to free their vehicle.

This is not only dangerous to your car (mainly its engine), but other cars as well if you suddenly free yourself and lurch forward or spin out of control sideways. This extreme hasn't happened, but it is a viable worst case scenario.

Take your time and try to find a solid spot to park on. Yes, we are beside a bar that gets busy on the weekends as well, but the lot is larger over by them and they have spots on the side that may be open. If nothing else, a little waiting may be in order, but waiting a little to get in to our store is preferable to paying damages. Isn't it?



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## OH MY GOODNESS! LATE BREAKING NEWS!!!

Hey everybody! Rex here! This past Sunday, March 23rd, a new gamer was born. Chris and Molly Durst became the proud parents of one Owen Christopher Durst. Everyone here at the Guardtower would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to the proud parents and welcome the little guy into our protective fold.



Protective, that is, unless he finds himself facing us in a wargame and then, of course, all bets are off. But hey, that can wait. If you two start honing his Warhammer skills now, he may prove to be "The One." He who was promised in the ancient scrolls who would come along and be able to defeat Tod on a regular basis with whatever army happens to be in front of him. Is it too much to hope for?

Chris & Molly are responsible for laying out this fine e-zine you are reading, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for the wonderful job they're doing! Thanks guys! It looks like you are keeping things well in hand on your end. As the newsletter continues to grow, your family grows to match the increased workload. Cool! I, on the other hand, have two cats that, at the height of their capability, will be able to eat din-dins and make poopies (Much like a baby -Chris). I'm extremely happy for you and wish you all the best in the future!

## IT AIN'T EXACTLY PRE-ORDER...

We are taking requests (another benefit of joining the email list) for holding upcoming products. Just email us and provide your request in this format:

**Name:** Your name

**Item:** The name of the product

**Quantity:** Number of this product to hold

Then provide separate Item and Quantity headers for each different item. We will email (or call if you prefer) you to let you know when your items arrive.

## A CALL TO THE SEMI-ORGANIZED!

Are you interested in running a regular league of some kind? Do you have a league now that isn't getting a great turn out? Do you have good turn out, but you're just greedy and want more? Well, this is the place for you.

## SOUNDING BOARD

The sounding board will provide a place to get the word out on your gaming group, meet up with people you met but whose name you don't remember, etc.

## NEW STUFF!

This is a chronicle of products that have made it into the store this month, in case you have missed items while they were out. If you see something here but can't find it in the store on several occasions, let us know. We may not be ordering enough of them to meet demands!

### ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Feats for the D20 system.

### CITIZEN GAMES

Dungeoneer: Tomb of the Lich Lord a fantasy adventure game.

### COMIC IMAGES

WWE Raw Deal Velocity expansion.

### DARK PORTAL GAMES

White Robes, Black Hearts: Enigma of the Arcanexus for the D20 system.

### DECIPHER

STAR TREK: Star Fleet Operations Manual

LORD OF THE RINGS RPG: Fellowship of the Ring Sourcebook

### DEEP 7

Red Dwarf the RPG.

### DREAM POD 9

D20 Mecha Compendium for Heavy Gear, Jovian Chronicles and Gear Krieg.

### EURO GAMES

Mare Nostrum boardgame.

### FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

Game of Thrones Premium starters.

### FAR FUTURE ENTERPRISES

Twilight 2000 reprint and collection.

### FAST FORWARD ENTERTAINMENT

The Complete Monstrous Fighters Compendium (D20)

### FIERY DRAGON

Dragons Counter Pack

### GAMES WORKSHOP

WARHAMMER 40,000: Codex: Daemonhunters, Space Marine Razorback, Grey Knights in Power Armor, Inquisitor Lord Coteaz & Retinue, Daemonhost, Space Marine Baal Predator

WARHAMMER FANTASY BATTLES: Tomb Kings Tomb Guard, Tomb King Ushabti, Tomb Scorpion, Tomb Queen

LORD OF THE RINGS: Helm's Deep Terrain Piece



# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

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## GREEN RONIN PUBLISHING

Mutants & Masterminds Gamemaster Screen.

## HERO GAMES

The Ultimate Vehicle Sourcebook for the Hero System.

## KENZER & COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #76 and #77.

## LIVING IMAGINATION INCORPORATED

Streets of Silver for the D20 system.

## MALHAVOC PRESS

The Book of Hallowed Might for the D20 system.

## MAYFAIR GAMES

Settlers of the Stone Age.

## PAIZO PUBLISHING

Dragon Magazine # 306

## PALLADIUM BOOKS

Mutant Underground for Heroes Unlimited.

## PERPETRATED PRESS

Factory a D20 mechanization sourcebook.

## PINNACLE

Deadlands Epitaph #4 for all Deadlands lines.

Horrors of Weird War II for Weird Wars.

Hell Freezes Over - The Russian Front for Weird Wars.

## PRIVATEER PRESS

WARMACHINE MINIATURES: Khador Battle Group the Protectorate of Menoth Battle Group, Cygnar Battle Group and Cryx Battle Group.

## REAPER MINIATURES

DARK HEAVEN MINIATURES: Killer Frogs, "Lardgulp" Two Headed Troll, Bat Swarm, Phase Cat, Clawed Devil, "Oberon" Half-Orc, Ulric Bloodclub and Jonas Kane.

WARLORD MINIATURES: River Troll, Arnise "Female Warrior", Balthon "Evil Priest" and Halbarand "Good Priest".

## RPG OBJECTS

GM Mastery: NPC Essentials

## STEVE JACKSON GAMES

MINIATURES: Dragons Valor & Snarl

BOOKS: Ethereal Players Guide for In Nomine.

## TOY VAULT

Mothra Plush.

## WHITE WOLF

DEMON, THE FALLEN: Fear to Tread.

WEREWOLF: Dark Ages Werewolf.

VAMPIRE: Council of Primogen.

SCARRED LANDS (D20): The Penumbra Pentagon, Shelzar: City of Sins, The Grey Citadel.

## WINGNUT GAMES

Soap: The Game of Soap Opera Mayhem.

## WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT

Inquest Magazine #96.

## WIZARDS OF THE COAST

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: Arms & Equipment Guide, Races of Faerun.

## WIZKIDS

MAGE KNIGHT: Doom Blade Orc Cyclops

MECHWARRIOR CLIX: Fire for Effect expansion boosters

## UPCOMING GOODIES

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Hopefully this will shed a light on release dates for some products that are coming out in the near future. This info is compiled from Game Trade magazine and dates are subject to change.

## ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT

D20: Relics.

SPYCRAFT: Shadowforce Archer: European Commonwealth.

WARLORD CCG: Betrayal all due in May.

## BASTION PRESS

Oathbound: Wrack & Ruin for the D20 system, due in May.

## CITIZEN GAMES

Henry Hill's Mafia RPG due in April.

## FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

LEGENDS & LAIRS (D20): Citycraft and Giant Lore

BOARDGAMES: Magdar, Quicksand and Reiner Knizia's Atlanteon all due in May.

## FANTASY PRODUCTIONS

CLASSIC BATTLETECH: Technical Readout 3058 due in April.

SHADOWRUN: Sprawl Survival Guide due in April. Shadows of Europe 3rd Edition due in May.

## FAST FORWARD ENTERTAINMENT

D20 SYSTEM: Devilish Devices, Encyclopedia of Prestige Classes and Treasure Quests: Tomb of Ra all due in April. R.A. Salvatore's Demon Wars Campaign Setting, The Devil Player's Handbook and Encyclopedia of Angels all due in May.

## GAMES WORKSHOP

WARHAMER FANTASY BATTLES: Lizardmen Army Book. Lizardmen Kroxigor, Lizardmen Army Deal, Lizardmen Saurus Regiment, Lizardmen Skink Priest, Lizardmen Skink Regiment and Lizardmen Slaan Mage-Priest all due in May.

## GREEN RONIN PUBLISHING

D20: Fang & Fury: A Guidebook to Vampires, due in May.

## GUARDIANS OF ORDER

BOOKS: D20 Mecha, D20 Mecha: Centauri Knights, Silver Age Sentinels: Criminal Intent, and Silver Age Sentinels: From the Files of Matthews Gentech.

MINIS: Caliburn, Jade Naga, Janus, & Officer Prometheus due in May.

## IRON WIND METALS

BATTLETECH (AEROSPACE): Cheetah, Chippewa, Riever, Seydlitz and Stuka.

BATTLETECH (MECHS): Crimson Langur, Crusader, Hatamoto-Chi, Ostsol and Scorpion all due in April.

## MAYFAIR GAMES

Settlers of Catan: Replacement Card Set due in April. Domaine boardgame due in May.



# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

Armageddon 2089: Behind Enemy Lines, Encyclopedia Arcane: Conjuraction, Quintessential Gnome, Slayer's Guide to Derro, and Power Classes: Alchemist, Cabalist, Fool and Pirate all due in May.

## MYSTIC EYE GAMES

Marvel Universe RPG due in May.

## PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT

Shane Lacy Hensley's Savage Worlds RPG: Master Rules due in April.

## REAPER MINIATURES

CAV: Journal of Recognition II, AFV Sabre, KDM Sabretooth, Koda Works Dictator II and Ripper Missile.

DARK HEAVEN MINIATURES: "Danra" Female Druid, Demon Lord of Frogs, Female Archer, Female Barbarian, "Jaatu" Jungle Warrior, "Kurff the Swift" Male Thief, "Mohng" Formorian Giant, Owl Bear II, Stirges, "Tolan" Male Druid.

WARLORD MINIATURES: Chaos Spawn, Chaos Wizard, "Lorielle Silverrain" Female Elf Archer and Wight, all due in May.

## SABERTOOTH GAMES

WARCRY CCG: Winds of Magic expansion due in May.

## WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING

WEREWOLF: Book of Auspices

VAMPIRE: Road to Heaven (Dark Ages Vampire), Kindred of the Ebony Kingdom

DEMON: Saviors and Destroyers

HUNTER: The Infernal

MAGE: Infinite Tapestry

D20: Morricks Mansion, Mindscapes all due in May.

## WIZARDS OF THE COAST

POKEMON CCG: Skyridge expansion due in April.

FORGOTTEN REALMS: Unapproachable East

D20 MODERN: Urban Arcana due in May.

## WIZKIDS

CRIMSON SKIES: Crimson Skies Rules Pack, Aces Pack #1: East Meets West, Squadron #1: Broadway Bombers and Squadron #2: Hollywood Knights.

MECHWARRIOR: Death From Above expansion, all due in May.

## ASK OMEN

From deep within the Eye of Terror itself, I hear the thoughts of the weak calling out for answers to questions that lay trapped in their minds. Unable to take the wailing of these mortals any more, I rallied the fleets to journey to the lands of man. I searched for a world where my words could be issued to all that would listen. I looked into the void of space and sent out a call to the beings who would welcome a voice of reason.

So it is with this letter to the masses that I challenge all to send me their worst or best questions on issues they wish addressed. Gaming in general, handling bad players and even game reviews. My answers will be as honest and as helpful as can be hoped for by me.

*Send all questions to either [blkomn7@lycos.com](mailto:blkomn7@lycos.com) or [GTower5886@aol.com](mailto:GTower5886@aol.com), and a minion will see to it that I receive it promptly.*

## ROGUE DESIGNS

By Don Harrison

Why design?

Shortly after the release of GTM Vol. 1, No. 2, several of us were standing around talking about columns that would start appearing in the newsletter. Someone, I think it was either Rex or Shawn (don't ask me which), mentioned a lack of true "game" material in the newsletter. Silly me, I suggested a game designer's column as a good place to start. As a result, Here I sit at my computer, typing the first of what I hope will be many columns exploring the intricate art of game design.





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Most of us should know what a game is, whether you're playing Magic, Dungeons and Dragons, or Warhammer 40K. There are games for every taste (or lack thereof), and for almost every age range (most games played at the Tower tend to leave out the under six demographic. I'll have to research why.)

In my experience, there tend to be six major groupings of games, but unfortunately, only four are mentionable here: Board, Cards, Miniatures, and Role Playing. My first love has always been RPG, but I've dabbled a bit in the other forms.

With the plethora of games, why does anybody bother to design new ones? Won't the existing ones work? The answers to these questions are as varied as the game designers. Ultimately, however it boils down to this- Have you ever looked at a system and asked, "Why did they do it like that?" Have you ever changed a rule in an RPG that you didn't like? Or, better yet, have you ever looked at a product for any game, and thought that a feces-slinging simian could have done a better job in it's sleep? Then chances are you could actually design a game for yourself. Since RPG is the form that's easiest to work on without big pictures, let's work on that one first.

Designing RPGs frequently comes in two major forms- modifying an existing game, or starting from scratch. I don't need to tell you, though, that if you're planning to publish, then designing from scratch will present far fewer legal challenges down the road. That said, let's look at modifying first.

Every system out there has flaws. Oftentimes, if you can find a system you like for most things, with a little work, you can modify a few things to smooth out the rough edges. Let's see a show of hands- Who actually understood the Attack of Opportunity rules from the Dungeons and Dragons Third Edition? I thought not. I know I certainly didn't when it came out, and after all this time, I still don't, really. More than half the 3E games I've ever seen don't bother with them (Reality check: Before coming to the Guard Tower, I'd seen exactly one session use them, to no end of arguments. That's a LOT of 3E games). Notice that in most of the other "d20" products, those rules are conspicuous primarily in their absence. They were removed as an encumbrance. Please note there are munchkins everywhere that will abuse them to their little hearts content if they get the chance. (DMs, stopping the Munchkins is over at Ask Omen.)

Should you throw out rules that you don't like? Yes, if you think you can deal with the consequences. Sometimes, it's better to modify a rule. For example, in both of my D&D3E games, Attacks of Opportunity are reserved for when the PCs or monsters are trying to disengage from an opponent. Turning your back on someone is a quick way to get a sword stuck in it. That would be a minor change.

Let's say, for example, that you see Charisma (d20 again) as a use-

less appendage that takes away from "Good" attributes (like Strength) That would be a major change, because it would essentially cripple two character classes (The Bard and Sorcerer.) Unless you have some way to fill the vacuum left by the change, it's probably not a good idea to remove it (Unless you think that Bards are pantywaists, and sorcerers are about as useful as a sharp stick in the rump. Also, any skill that requires personality goes out the window. You have been warned.)

Also, changing the way attributes are figured is a good way to unbalance a game. Take a method I used for a FASA version of the Star Trek: RPG. Normally, the stats were rolled with a base 40+3d10. Silly me, I decided that it would be better as 1d100. I wound up with one PC with 100 scores across the board, and another with scores in the middle teens. For a d100 system, this kind of inequity is unbalancing at best, and at worst, no fun for the PCs that got stuck with the low scores. Ultimately, it was even less fun for the guy with maxed out scores (People complained when he got all the Away Team missions. It was terrible. Especially when he started redshirting the Captain.)

Same thing goes for skills. Sometimes game balance takes priority. Really. If you feel the need to change more than a few things in some fairly minor ways, it might be better to try designing from scratch. Your sanity (and maybe your Players) will love you for it.

I think I've rambled enough for one month, but in future columns I'm going to give you a little lecture, then open the second half to field questions from you regarding the previous month's lecture, or maybe a question that might help one of your own designs along. Along the way, I'll start you down the design of a new system, freshly designed for this newsletter. I have no idea what to work it around, though. Suggestions?

*Messages/suggestions/questions for this column are dearly appreciated. Give Rex a handwritten message, and I'm sure he can get it to me. Better yet, if you catch me at the Tower (Friday-Sunday), You can give them to me directly.*



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### FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN: GAME REVIEWS

By Bruce Coulson

#### Exalted (White Wolf Publishing)

I have to admit, I am still bothered by some parts of this game. The HUGE number of super powers... errr... charms that characters start with, the even worse than usual index, the lack of balanced opposition (either combat takes forever or is over in a round). White Wolf has a game to replace Street Fighter; over-the-top martial arts and powers wielded by peasant heroes.



On the other hand, now that most of the background supplements are out, Exalted is also a well developed world that lacks the high level of angst present in most White Wolf games. The setting is China (thinly disguised) during the Six Dynasties period; the Scarlet Empress is gone, and it's uncertain if the Realm still has the Mandate of Heaven. (Not in those terms in the game.) Into this mix come the heroes; people chosen by the Unconquered Sun to be His champions, given vast powers that will increase in time, and sent forth to do good. (Why the Unconquered Sun couldn't also give some useful advice on how to help the world at the same time isn't clear.)

Many of the powers deal with the sort of martial arts action seen in anime and HK action pictures; impossible leaps, sword blows that cut through stone and kicking your way through armor. Sorcery actually works better as a power of the villains; slow but devastating. There are magic weapons, magic armor, artifacts, giant suits of robot armor (really!) and other standard features of oriental fantasy stories and movies.

The opposition is equally garish; corrupt nobles of the corrupt Realm with minor powers, sinister shape-changers, sly and manipulative sorcerers, those in service to demons, demons, the Fair Folk (far more dangerous and less likable than their descendants, the changelings) and rogue spirits. Add to this that since these powers are given without instructions, many of those Exalted proceed to become as bad (if not worse) than those they fight.

Keeping track of all the Charms is the most tedious part; not only do PCs start with a huge number of them, White Wolf keeps adding more with each supplement. And, of course, all of the bad guys and neutral people have their own powers, which require additional bookkeeping. Then there are all those pesky artifacts and magic items...

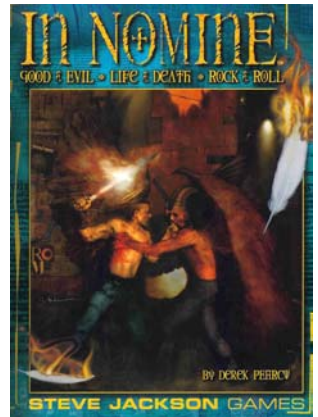
Still, in spite of all this, the game can be engaging. In one scene your heroes can be trying to save a city from rampaging barbarians; in the next, they're attending an elaborate feast, trying to make friends and influence people while dodging assassins and avoiding faux pas. White Wolf has actually created a world with

enough detail to guide a Storyteller, with enough elbowroom to allow for lots of campaign specific creations. You can use the example characters, or completely ignore them; the world (a flat one, btw) is huge. You really can duplicate the stunts and powers seen in most anime films.

This is not an easy game to learn, although the mechanics are streamlined. It helps if more than one person has studied the rules. But it can be fun, and has lots of opportunities for heroism, romance...and martial arts action!

#### In Nomine (Steve Jackson Games)

A game isn't dead if they're still releasing material for it. With the appearance of The Ethereal Players' Guide (the first new book in 3+ years) In Nomine now covers all of the major forces in the eternal war between Good and Evil.



Based on a French role-playing game, In Nomine is a game of angels vs. devils. The characters do not simply have supernatural powers; they ARE supernatural powers, created by agents of the Most High (or Most Low) to carry out His Will on Earth. They aren't high ranking angels (or demons), but they're important enough to be sent on independent missions.

Free Will aside, the characters have a lot of responsibility: to oppose the nefarious activities of the Other Side and to uphold, support, and promote the Word of their Superior. And they have to do all of this secretly; by mandates of the Most High and Low, most mortals can know nothing of the War, and causing incidents that provide proof (as opposed to faith) in the supernatural is a serious offense. And all the characters have a Boss (a high-ranking angel or demon), often not the same one for all the characters that they report to and follow orders from.

In Nomine postulates that both sides are vast beurocracy, with lots of politicking and jockeying for position. Your worst opponent might not be the demon in front of you; it could very well be one of your own angels who will look good if you look bad. (If this is the case for the angels, you can imagine what it's like for the Bad Guys.)

The characters start out as promising angels (or demons) that are being given a chance to prove themselves. They have superhuman capabilities and a few powers. Against them are all the agents of the Enemy, many of whom are far more powerful. There are also mortals; they can be valuable allies or dangerous foes. (In Nomine is one of the few games where being a 'normal' mortal gives you some advantages.)

And there are the Ethereals, those remnants of Pagan faiths. Creations of God, or powerful dreams of humanity, or both? They don't like either side, and they have some servants and power left to them; just enough to cause trouble.



# the guardtower monthly

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One of the problems In Nomine had was that their only published set of adventures led to the near end of the world. I mean, where do you go from there in a campaign? GMs will have to create their own campaigns, and ignore most of the 'official' campaign adventure, if they want to have a long-running game. SJG did print a lot of material giving story ideas and plot devices, so it shouldn't be too hard to hit the ground running.

If you can accept the premises of the game (that Heaven and Hell are just the world writ large, that being good doesn't mean being nice, and that demons can be more helpful than angels; sometimes) In Nomine is a good, if not always serious, game.

## URLAZY: WEB RESOURCES

By Chris Durst  
ash\_kamini@yahoo.com

Hey all, welcome to the first installment of URLazy: Web Resources. My intent is to provide our readership with useful online gaming stuff. That could include neat web sites that provide online gaming content, including netbooks, web enhancements, etc.

I need to know what YOU want to see. Is there something you haven't been able to find (Ice or Winter Domains for d20 system - still working on that one)? Is there something you think everyone needs to know about? Want to plug your buddy's site? Send it in.

I'm going to keep it short and sweet this month, but not entirely on topic (you'll live). See, I'm not only a gamer, but I also enjoy online comics. So direct your browser to the following site and enjoy:

**www.machall.com**

Machall is, in my opinion, a hilarious strip about college life. Most of the characters are gamers (mostly computer), art or computer science majors, and they're all quite mad. :) Look for Cthulu, the Littlest Elder God... he's too cute. Machall has a archive that lists all of the strips by name. I highly recommend you check out "Pika Hate" (for you anti-Pokemon people) and "Dorm Hulk" (for you Warhammer 40k fans.)

**www.somethingpositive.net**

I've been following Something Positive for a few months now and I think it is very good. If I didn't know better, I'd swear I knew some of the main characters when I was in college (most of whom are based on real people the artist knows). Choo-choo bear for president!

**www.homestarrunner.com**

The last comic I will leave you with is not really a comic. Homestar Runner is a Flash heavy site so you'll need a decent connection or high Sanity score. Otherwise you'll go mad waiting for things to load. Once you're in though, there are tons of little games, animated shorts, etc. Be sure to check out Strongbad's Emails (espe-

cially Trogdar). They made be laugh so hard it hurt.

## SHORT FICTION

Our first story is the continuation of a series of stories submitted by long-time gamer/Guardtower regular Jeremy Long. His stories are set in the RPG/TV universe, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, with characters based on some of the faces you might see here at the Guardtower. In addition to these stories that appear in the newsletter, Jeremy has written a series of longer stories involving these characters. If you see him, express your interest and just maybe he'll let you read them!

Our second story this month is written by our very own Marcus Chesnut. Many of you know Marcus from his work as a Guardtower employee and the founder/runner of our Warhammer Leagues. This story is the second installment of a larger tale set in the Warhammer Fantasy universe. Things are looking bad for the humans...

Rachel Shaw writes our third story. Rachel has been gaming for over eight years and has been Sierra Torrin, a second ed. AD&D ranger, since 1995. She has a novel being published this fall called The Necromancer's Scroll and we're proud to have her writing for us. This is the second installment of her story, which is based on the shadowy world of Vampire, the Masquerade.

Our fourth story this month comes from Don Harrison. Don recently moved here from Washington and has immersed himself into our gaming community whole-heartedly. This is the second part of his story is set in a game universe of his own design called Knights of Crisis.

The fifth story this month comes from Dave Lauck. Dave runs many games here at the Tower throughout the week and has had his hands full juggling many (sometimes too many) players at once. Somehow he has found the time to submit a story for us to read. This is the first installment of his story set in the universe of the video game Final Fantasy Tactics.

Our sixth and final story this month is submitted by Erika Henderson. Erika is a Guardtower resident gamer as well as one of our renowned local artists. She recently lent her aid on our back room mural and has chosen to favor us with some of her home-brewed fiction.

Wow, can you believe all this reader submitted short fiction? This is turning out to be a huge section of the newsletter. Just imagine it, you too could be a published author (assuming you aren't already).

Just submit your short fiction to Rex and we'll see if it is something we can use. Just remember that this is a "general audiences" sort of e-zine...Anyway, on with the stories! Enjoy...



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## *The Collective: Bless Me, Father*

By Jeremy Long

The storm clouds that have been threatening the area for weeks finally break over the great city. Lightning flashes, turning night into day for a second. A church stands defiant of the storm above, its front doors opening to emit a priest who locks the building up for the late hour. He looks out onto the street before turning back to tug on the large wooden door to make sure that it is locked. With the building secure, he shoulders his umbrella and turns back around to descend the church's wide stone steps, finding that he is no longer alone.

The figure at the base of the steps smiles up at the priest. His hands are tucked deep into the pockets of his black overcoat which is wrapped tightly around him as if to protect him from the weather. His black hair is slicked back even though no rain has fallen. Slowly, he walks up the steps toward the startled priest, his smile unflinching.

The priest jumps back, unnerved by the man's sudden appearance, and raises his umbrella, taking comfort in having something between them. He slides a hand into his pocket, looking for something to defend himself with should this man prove to be hostile. The man sees this and raises a hand from one of his pockets.

"Sorry...didn't mean to startle you. I was hoping you could help me."

The priest shakes his head slowly, his mouth moving silently, before he finds his voice to answer him. "It's... late. You should come back in the morning... I can help you then."

The figure keeps walking up the stairs toward him, sighing and shaking his head as his smile slowly leaves his face. "Father... that's what I call you, right? Well Father, I can't make it in the morning, I'm a very busy man."

The priest narrows his eyes as he gets a better look at the figure. "You're not a man at all are you?" Venom fills his voice. "You are a Demon, a... Vampire!"

His fingers close on something in his pocket that fills him with strength as he draws it out. He brandishes his cross defiantly in the man's face.

The man flinches back from the holy object, flinging his arm up to shield his eyes. When he lowers his arm again, his features have changed into those of a vampire.

"That hurt."

He lunges forward, slamming the priest forcibly in the chest with the palm of his hand, sending his over the metal railing that lines the stairs. In the confusion of his fall, the cross and umbrella are knocked from the priest's hand, both items spinning out of his reach. The priest reaches up, grabbing the railing for support, but the vampire is there before he can stand.

"I should ask you how you knew, but I don't really care." The creature grabs the priest by the front of his smock and hauls him up to look him in the eye.

"You seem to be a good shepherd to your flock, Father. You don't have that taint about you that others of your profession in the city possess." He smiles, his grin showing off his fangs. "Pity, it might

have saved you."

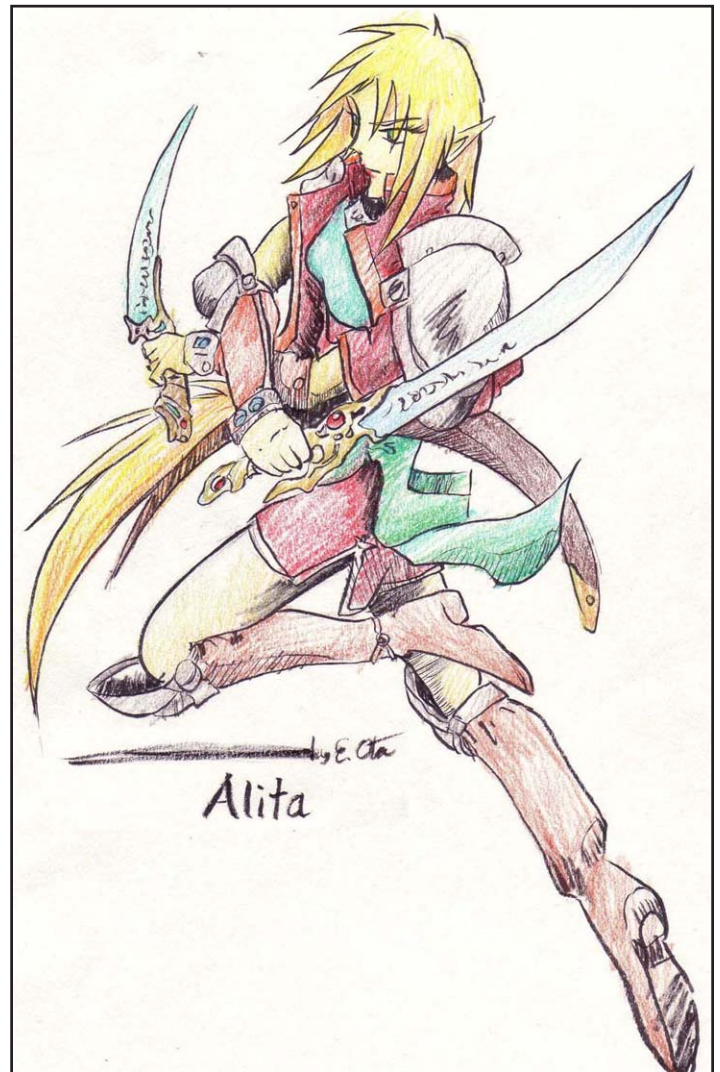
"I... I can still h... help you." The priest can't help but stare at the teeth but he forces himself to look up into the creature's yellow eyes. "I...I can still listen..."

"Sorry Father, confessing doesn't work for me. I don't have a soul." The vampire shrugs. "Still... Why not..." He drops the priest unceremoniously onto the steps. "I can always kill you later."

The creature sits down beside the shaken priest and pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his coat pocket. The demonic brow slides off of his face as he looks at the priest and offers him a smoke. "You can call me Cole, Father. Everyone else does."

The priest looks away quickly at the mention of the vampire's name, exaggerating declining the cigarette in an attempt to hide his reaction. Cole pauses, but only for a moment. "Now, where shall I start? Hmm, no better place than the beginning. This all started because of a girl named Ally..."

*To be continued...*







# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## Maraaka's Waagh, Part Two

By Marcus Chesnut

2 Km North of Blackfire Castle

Border Prince of Black Fire's Realm

22 April

In a small, forested clearing around the Border Prince of Blackfire's realm, a large army prepares its formations for a coming battle. Over the course of the last few days the troops have already fought several times. They have been fighting a delaying action, trying to prevent the enemy from reaching Blackfire Castle before its defenses are prepared.

Across the clearing another orcish army breaks the tree line and marches into the clearing. This new army is only mildly organized, their units don't have good lines and have very little discipline, but upon seeing the humans, all the warriors focus on kill-



ing the enemy. The leader of the army signals his drummer. The drummer start beating his drums then all the other musicians in the army start to play their instruments and the army begins the march forward.

"Alright men! Here they come!" Captain Arlack Weissman shouted as the orc hordes advances on his army. The captain rode his light brown charger back and forth behind his troops. His signal corps and personal guards were on foot and had to run to keep up with him. He knew his forces were tired and ragged. This would be the last battle that he would ask his men to fight this day. If they won here they would return to Blackfire Castle for rest.

Once the orcs got close enough to Captain Arlack's army, they bellowed their war cry, "Waaagh!" and surged forward. The tired human army bravely stood their ground as the enraged orcs charged in. The Captain ordered that a signal be sent to the archers who immediately loosed their arrows onto the orcs as they ran across the clearing. Then the orcs were upon them.

A few orcs broke though the lines with the momentum of their charge and ran for Captain Arlack. His guards ran forward to meet them, keeping them from their beloved captain. He spurred his horse forward toward the orcs as he drew his sword, which seemed to glow even in the light of the day. As he reach an orc that was already engaged with one of his guards he slashed his sword down and cut through the orc as easily as if it were made of paper.

Just as the orc hit the ground, Arlack heard a loud thumping coming from were the orcs had emerged from the forest. The thumping was getting closer and the trees began to shake and sway. Suddenly, the reason for the thumping burst through the trees. A giant, ugly as it was tall, hurriedly stomped out of the forest, toward the center of the battle. Immediately the captain sent a signal for the archers to shoot the giant. The archers' aim was true, but they couldn't harm the beast enough to stop it.

The giant reached the battle and swung his club, hitting one of the captain's men and two of the orcs, launching them into the woods behind the captain. A single man with a spear attacked the giant, impaling it in the gut. The giant let out a horrible yell, and began to jump up and down holding his belly. The brave man was crushed under the giant's feet as were many others, both orc and human.

The captain's men began to lose their nerve as they watched the fearsome giant jumping and screaming. Soon many of the captain's men were running by him, fleeing for their lives. The captain realized at that point there was nothing he could do. He ordered the retreat and pulled his horse around, looking back at the men that were still fighting the orcs, knowing he wouldn't see most of them again. Spurring his horse into a gallop, Captain Arlack rode into the forest away from the battle toward the relative safety of Blackfire Castle.

*To be continued...*



# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## Strawberry Shadows, Part Two

(c)2003 Sierra Torrin (Rachel S. Shaw)  
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It seemed to be the music that drove her to the black double doors and the line that extended from it some weeks later. Strawberry heard the electronic beat in the middle of downtown, near the gallery district, dancing along to the speed of the lights blinking from inside. She shoved her lunchbox and teddy bear inside the satchel and calmly walked across the street. Strawberry stood in the line, surrounded by tall thin twenty-somethings. She was eye-level with a My Little Pony - Firefly, Strawberry remembered - flying on the white shirt in front of her, bright red cuffs at the wrists and neck, shining in the light from the club. A simple bright glittery blue lightning bolt stood behind the pink pegasus, a larger image of the bolt on its rump. Two long black ponytails, just like hers, fell across the shirt in two thick lines. It took Strawberry a moment to realize she was staring at the front of this woman, and that this woman was staring back. "Kid, you can't be here. Eighteen and older only."

Her hands were resting on her hips, and there was an annoyed look in her eyes, as if Strawberry was there only to piss her off. She shrugged, unfazed. "I am eighteen," she said to Firefly, and she took a silver wallet out of her satchel with Rainbow Brite's face seeming to glow from the middle of the metallic cloth.

The woman continued to look at her, but now her expression turned to confusion. Strawberry showed the woman a thin plastic card tucked into a clear compartment. "'Birth date,'" the woman read, "'November 17, 1985.' Fake ID, huh? Some people'll do anything to get into the Lunar Dragon. So, kid, what's your name?"

"It's not fake," she replied, looking bewildered at the concept, "I'm Strawberry."

The woman continued looking at the I.D. card issued to everyone at birth, the picture changed every three years by the B.M.V still thrust in her face and smiled. "Your club name, huh, Kendall Griffin Meckler?"

Strawberry's eyes narrowed, and her mouth contorted into a growl that wiped the smile from the woman's face. "My name is Strawberry," she glowered, her eyes returning to a familiar flame, "Don't ever call me Kendall."

She snatched the wallet back and shoved it back in her bag, her arms now tightly crossed over Strawberry Shortcake and a few thin red stripes. Strawberry continued to glare at the woman, daring her with the flames in her eyes to call her by the name not given to her by her brother. The woman stayed a few feet away from the kid behind her until the line finally drew to the large man stationed at the large double doors. Suddenly, the anger in Strawberry's eyes left, the music and the dancing colored lights drawing out her hostility. She barely heard the woman state, "Zoe Edison. And she's 18. Don't mess with her."

Strawberry noticed the hand gesture, a thumb pointing back at her, before Zoe grabbed her arm and pulled Strawberry into the lights

through the black double doors.

As much as she had tried to peer into the club, Strawberry now shielded her eyes with her other arm and strained to see through the brightness. Colored lights filled the large room, dancing and weaving to the electric sounds. People crowded onto the dance floor, arms waving, bodies swaying, eyes closed to the live music. Strawberry ducked and weaved through the tangled mass of bodies wearing baggy pants and brightly colored shirts, yet Zoe seemed to flow right through as if the people were only droplets of water. She stopped right before the live band and began to dance, encouraging Strawberry with her gyrations. Strawberry glanced at the low stage, just above chest height to her, and tried to move like the blue-haired man singing into the microphone, his mouth appearing to swallow the instrument whole. She closed her eyes and let the music wash over her and move her to the beat. The same feelings of excitement and curiosity that had overwhelmed Strawberry before set in again, and she smiled. Strawberry felt Zoe put a friendly arm around her shoulder, and both continued to dance.

An odd sensation came over Strawberry, most of the way through the song. It took her a minute to decipher it, but she became certain there were others like her here. She directed her thoughts toward Zoe, but pretended to be staring at a bright pink plastic pacifier on a long yellow ribbon bouncing up and down on a woman's chest next to them. No, Strawberry decided, she is not Kith, a vampire like me. She let her thoughts stray around the room, scanning through a means she knew little about. She only knew it seemed to work after her brother explained the ability to her. Strawberry sensed the undead signature in many around her. She was even fairly certain that the blue-haired man, singing through tightly closed eyes as though he was in pain, was Kith.

Strawberry continued to dance, oblivious to the concept of tiring. It was Zoe who finally pulled the girl to a group of chairs around a small table near the right side of the stage, catching her breath. Zoe leaned heavily on her arms before speaking bluntly to Strawberry. "You're a vampire, aren't you?"

"Yes," she answered matter-of-factly, "And you aren't."

Zoe smiled and shook her head. "No, I'm not. And I assume you already figured out that this is a club for mostly





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

vampires? But, I've never seen you here before."

"I've been Kith for six months," Strawberry replied happily, like a child telling a parent that she got an A on a major test, "Have you seen my brother?"

"I don't know," Zoe countered, unfazed, "What's he look like?"

Strawberry smiled. She definitely liked this mortal. "He's really tall, has a long black trench, medium-length black hair, and pale skin."

Zoe shook her head, knowing that she had probably seen thirty people in recent memory that fit that exact description. "Nope. Sorry. Never seen him. But, I'll keep an eye out for someone who looks like that."

"I'm hungry." Strawberry sounded like a six-year-old on the verge of crying.

Zoe glanced around her at the people still dancing, now to piped-in music while the band rested backstage. "I know a few kids willing to let you feed," she said softly, "If you don't go overboard."

"Overboard?"

"Don't kill 'em, Strawberry. You have to be careful."

She thought guiltily about the man in a suit, wondering if he ever got up. "Okay."

*To be continued...*



## *Dream Angels, Part 2*

By Don Harrison

Space and Time stretched and distorted as the jump began, their surroundings blurring as they stretched onward into infinity. Ashley's impossibly long body snapped back into a short, compact woman, quickly turning seemingly younger and older at the same time. Mere instants later, Ashley pulled herself together again, only to flatten out to the size and shape of a dinner plate. Now, a low thrumming sound could be heard, as everything snapped back to normal.

Wren recovered first. "Ashley, position check."

Ashley checked her panel. "Core Jump Buoy Seven. All reporting Jump stations secure. Drop tanks operating at full capacity, Jump Core reports charging. We can be ready to jump again in an hour."

"Core Control, Dream Angel."

"Dream Angel, Core Control. Where are you bound?"

"Melnar via Discovery."

"Dream Angel, your flight plan says Pacifica."

"Too many politicians, not enough fuel."

"Confirmed, Dream Angel. It's your funeral. Time to Jump?"

Ashley checked the mission clock. "Ready for Jump from 0540."

"Can you make that 0530?"

Wren shook her head as Ashley replied. "Negative, Core Control, We're on Drops. Zero Five Forty hours is the earliest."

"Let's make it snappy, Dream Angel. Clearance granted Buoy Seven at 0540 hours. Jump at that time."

"Thanks a bundle, Core Control." Ashley said sweetly. "Maybe we can stop in next time."

"Maybe sometime, Dream Angel. Core Control out."

Ashley turned to Wren. "So, partner, what's for breakfast?"

"I dunno. Why don't you go check? They sure got rid of us in a hurry. Maybe they thought we'd have less chance to blow things up?"

Ashley unbuckled herself, and floated towards the rear of the cockpit. She opened the door leading to the habitation area, and pushed through. Moments later, a frustrated scream echoed from the small rec. room.

Wren switched on the FTL Comm, and placed a call.

The StarNet operator appeared onscreen. "How may I help you?"

"StarNet Control, Dream Angel. Worlds Welfare Defense Association Chief Administrator Brian J. Greebly, please."

The man's face never changed. "One moment, please..."

Greebly's face appeared immediately. "What do you want?"

"Administrator Greebly, Troubleshooter Wren. There seem to have been a few oversights pre-mission."

Greebly's look was priceless. "What would those be?"

"The lack of food, and denial of service on Mezuril JB4. Nothing major."

Greebly's face went from anger to utter shock. "What! Where



# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

are you?"

"Core JB7. We're recharging before we Jump to Discovery. Fleet, per your orders."

"I didn't order you Dream Angels to Discovery."

"You DID, however, order us to stay away from Pacifica."

"Why would you be going anywhere near there?"

"Because Mezuril Control was kind enough to reroute us to Core. Our original course would have sent us to New Junalt."

"That means you need an extra jump."

"That's affirmative, sir. From Core, it's either Discovery or Pacifica. Since Pacifica is right out, that leaves Discovery."

"You're going to need food and Jump fuel, right?"

"Plus a couple of fresh plasma pistol power packs. They did remember to pack our bikes and armor, right?"

"Yes, that's what they tell me, anyway. Spare power packs..."

"Can you arrange things?"

"If you insist."

Wren smiled sweetly. "I'm afraid I'll have to. I'm out of options."

Greebly sighed heavily. "Whatever. Greebly out." The screen went black.

Ashley climbed back into her chair as her stomach growled loudly. "This sucks," she stated sullenly.

"I just got off the FTL with Greebly. He's authorized fuel and supplies when we get to Discovery. Not like I gave him much of a choice."

"I thought he said we were ready to go?"

"Apparently, we weren't. Oh, well. Half-hour to Jump?"

"Right about."

## *Discovery Fleet, 0645 hours*

Dream Angel emerged from Jump into the middle of an enormous fleet of starships, the least of which easily dwarfed Dream Angel. They noticed Dream Angel quickly, and several of them moved to intercept her as others began to deploy starfighters. In moments, Dream Angel was completely surrounded.

"Unidentified Starship, Identify yourself."

"Discovery Control, Dream Angel 2WDA46212. Requesting docking clearance for fuel and supplies on our way to Melnar IV."

Dream Angel, clearance granted for Discovery docking bay two. Someone will meet you there."

"Affirmative, Discovery Control. Coming along to your port side. Dream Angel out." Ashley swept the microphone away from her face.

"You think you can handle that, Wren?"

Wren's glare was withering. "Sure thing, Your Highness," she said stoically.

Dream Angel's main engines fired, and she shot forward at high speed. Near Discovery's stern, Wren hauled the yoke hard over. Dream Angel pivoted on her starboard wingtip, and barreled down Discovery's port side at full power, leaving fighters in her wake. She made it nearly to docking bay two before the tractor beam caught Dream Angel, stopping her dead in her tracks. Wren hurriedly cut

power as the fighter 'escorts' caught up.

"Fun and games are over, Dream Angel. We're bringing you in now."

The tractor beam pulled Dream Angel forward a short way as a colossal panel pulled away from Discovery's side on mechanical arms, revealing a vast, yawning cavern within. Dream Angel lurched, and began to move sideways, up to the docking port. A rumble resounded through Dream Angel as they connected. Mooring cables latched on, as space suited technicians started hooking up umbilicals.

Wren detached herself from her chair, ignoring a fresh round of complaints from Ashley's stomach. Stepping out the cockpit door, she took a few steps, and unlatched the pressure door leading to Airlock One. The light above the door turned green just as Ashley came around to join her. "We all shut down in there?"

"Everything except Life Support. Batteries at low power."

"Good."

The airlock door cycled open as pressures stabilized. The pair stepped into the airlock, and Wren closed the inner door behind them, locking it securely before nodding to Ashley to open the outer.





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

A gangplank had been set up against Dream Angel's hull, linking her physically to Discovery. Ashley pulled the outer door towards her and off to one side as Wren checked her sidearm. Satisfied, Wren she reholstered it with a flourish. "All set?"

Ashley made sure her own plasma pistol was in its holster. She nodded. Wren led the way up the gangplank, emerging to the sight of the century.

A Hegemony Stellar Fleet officer stood there in a pristine dress uniform, black coat proudly displaying a spare handful of service ribbons as well as a brand-new gold bar on his tightly closed collar. Blood red piping trimmed it neatly, as well as a single red stripe running the length of his right trouser leg. Standing next to him was a three-meter stack of paperwork, complete with a pair of shapely legs peeking out from under it, holding the entire stack a little less than a meter off the floor. The officer smiled warmly at them as they emerged.



"Welcome to Discovery, ladies. I'm Ensign Freely. We have everything you might need. All that's missing is the proper paperwork. If you two will just fill this out," he nodded to the perfectly groomed stack next to him. "My people will get started."

The legs under the stack began to tremble, and finally collapsed, sending paper flying everywhere as the poor personnelman who'd been holding it up finally succumbed.

Ashley leapt into action, knocking paper flying as she caught the woman, barely preventing her from splitting her skull on the metal deck plate.

Ensign Freely watched in abject horror as his carefully considered work was scattered randomly across the docking bay. He reached for the personnelman, grabbing the woman by the front of her uniform jacket. Ashley immediately whipped out her plasma pistol. When he reared back, the back of his head connected with the barrel of Wren's weapon. Wren reached down and relieved him of his sidearm, and when he opened his mouth to protest, she gagged him with her pistol.

Wren snatched a piece of paper out of the air as it fluttered by. Her eyes narrowed as she scanned it. "Describe the mission for which this materiel is requisitioned. You're definitely not getting THAT information. The way I see it, you owe PN3 MacDougal here a week off, and Ashley and I breakfast, at bare minimum. I'd also like to see Commodore Elliot, at her earliest convenience."

"He could always be breakfast." Ashley growled. She grabbed her left earring. "Discovery Control, Troubleshooter Ashley. Medical emergency in Docking Bay Two, Respond."

The response was immediate. "Acknowledged, DB2. Medics en route. Commodore Elliot is requesting you."

"Thank you. If you'd be kind enough to send her down with a couple of security officers, we can complete this arrest."

"Confirm arrest, and charges, Troubleshooter."

"Charges include Assault Second, and Attempted Murder First, with Depraved indifference. Subject Ensign. . . What is your name, Ensign?" She removed the barrel of her gun at the last second.

"Freely, Ignacious Paul." His winning smile gone, he looked utterly dejected.

Wren went down in peals of laughter as Ashley shook her head solemnly. "Freely, Ignacious P. My guess is that his mother didn't like him much."

"That's been the bet here, Troubleshooter. Medical ETA two minutes. Commodore Elliot is two minutes behind that. Charges filed for Ensign Freely, I.P. That take care of everything?"

"Yep, I think that'll do it, Discovery Control."

"Affirmative, Troubleshooter Ashley. By the way, can you two settle a bet?"

"Shoot, Control."

"Which one of you was it that was doing the fancy flying out there?"

Wren tapped her earring. "Discovery Control, Troubleshooter Wren. That would be me."

"Confirmed, Troubleshooter Wren. They owe me now. You free for dinner?"

"Depends on how long it takes to load up. But I don't see why



# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

not. Troubleshooter Wren out.”

Several medics ran into the bay, a short, well-built woman in a housecoat and slippers hot on their heels. A single gold star was embroidered on the pocket over her left breast. The medics immediately bent to their tasks as the woman approached.

She looked at Freely, held at bay between the Dream Angels plasma pistols. “What may I ask is going on here?”

Wren considered it for a long moment. “Your PN3 is in that condition because she was standing stationary under three meters of paper. At nearly thirty kilos per meter, she’s way over her weight limit. This could’ve waited until we were already ensconced in a cubby somewhere with a cup of coffee, Commodore. As for the paperwork,” Wren indicated the paper scattered everywhere. “There is probably rather a lot of it we’re not authorized to fill out anyway. The details of the mission form, for example, you’ll have to ask Administrator Greebly about. Maybe he’s allowed to tell you.”

“He gave us a very short list of people to whom we were allowed to talk to, Commodore.” Ashley piped in.

“I realize I’m not on the list, Troubleshooters. Also, if I’m not on the list, I can rest assured that he’s not.” She waved a dismissive hand at Ensign Freely. She looked back at the medics, who busied themselves covering PN3 MacDougal with a white sheet.

“How is she?”

The man in charge of the crew looked at Commodore Elliot. “She’s dead, Kristin. Aneurysm. She was dead before she hit the floor. From the compression on her joints, she was standing more than an hour holding up at least eighty kilos. She just couldn’t take it anymore.”

“A good woman. Can you get an engram?”

“Yes, Commodore.”

“Do it. Fix the problem, Doctor, unless you have patient orders to the contrary.”

“I’ll take the engram, and go check on the rest.”

“Then you have work to do, Doctor. She’s priority, now. We owe her that much.”

The Doctor snapped off a salute. “Yes, Ma’am.” PN3 MacDougal’s body was collected on a stretcher, and carted away as Wren cuffed Freely.

“Ignacious Paul Freely, You are under arrest for Manslaughter in the First Degree in the death of Personnelman Third Class MacDougal. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say from this point forward will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to legal counsel. If you cannot afford counsel, it will be appointed. Do you understand?”

Ashley forced the man to his knees. He went down hard, whimpering a moment before replying.

“Yes, I understand. You’ll never make it stick, Troubleshooter. I’m well connected.”

Wren smiled. “Yes, but I’m not your run of the mill Ground Pounder, either. We’re 2WDA, and as a result, a little more free from outside political influence. That’s why people call us, you see. I can make it stick. All I have to do is prove you ordered her to pick up the stack in the first place. How deep do you want me to dig?”

Freely clamped his jaws shut. “Good boy,” Wren cooed as the security officers showed up. “Charges amended to Manslaughter First, one count, officers. When you get him stowed, I’d like my handcuffs back. They were a present.”

*To be continued...*





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## *Behind the Lion War*

By D. S. Lauck

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### *Prologue: Restless Spirit*

Sheets of rain bombarded the uneven, rocky plateau, bleeding streams of crimson mud flowing into a nearby shallow lake. Much of the exposed granite has been smoothed over many hundreds of years by frequent storms, like this one, that plague the region. Blended throughout the bleached granite, small deposits of glistening quartz peek out of the outcroppings. Despite the constant punishment sustained by this rocky terrain, stubborn patches of grass still manage to cling to the surface defying the tormenting elements.

Rolls of thunder race through the hellish green maelstrom brewing above. Chaotic swirls within this hell-spawned storm slow its advance across the horizon, augmenting its strength. Emerging unscathed from the pandemonium above, a large black bird swoops down, spying a group of small upright slabs near the edge of the now blood-red lake. It lands on one of these stones, anchoring its talons to resist the billowing gusts of wind and rain. Pecking thrice upon the unnatural stone slab, the bird cocks its head as if pondering. Then as quickly as it came, the black fowl takes to the air, cawing.

The earth beside the former perch of the raven begins to stir, slowly at first but becoming more desperate as if something was attempting to flee the churning maelstrom. Finally, a skeletal hand breaks the surface with bits of leathery skin and red mud adorning the bone, and then a second skeletal hand joins the first. Together, the bony hands start pushing away handfuls of the wet clay to widen the hole, while the elements try to fill the gap as quickly as it widens, as if the very earth refuses to give up its prey. A supernatural creature pokes its muddy skull through the fissure it made, half covered by a white shroud with small clumps of hair clinging to its scalp.

“Uuuuuuu..... Raaaauuu.... sssaaaaaaa!!!,” utters the animated corpse in wheezing tones as it tries to free itself from the shallow grave. Suddenly, two large chunks of clay spring in opposite directions as the dead thing’s arms and torso are liberated from the restraining earth that was its grave. Now dragging the rest of itself out of the mud soaked pit, rain melts away layers of clay mud coating the undead, half-mummified body. Dark saucers form on once sightless eyes glowing a dim shade of red.

“Gggg... gaaa... I... I... caaan... seeeee...,” the creature states as it stands leaning on its own headstone. Viewing its surroundings, the creature walks toward the lake slowly and unevenly. “Wherrrr... amm I.??? Howww??” Looking down, it notices its hands. Bones becoming stronger and whiter. Blood vessels spreading across the bone as a vine would on a tree trunk. New muscle, sinew and skin form and enclose around the newly arisen thing that shouldn’t be. The creature observes its own transformation, fascinated.

“I... remm.. berrr... I.. re... mem.. ber.. my.. nname... My name is....”

### *Part One: Following Clues*

#### *Chapter One: Rumors*

“Aaaaaaahhhh!!!” the blond haired man shouts as he bolts up from his slumber. Trembling, he takes in his surroundings and realizes that he is safe. Easing himself off of a sweat-soaked straw mattress, Ramza looks through the window and notices a red glow highlighting Warjilis’s skyline and the sea beyond. Clad in a white night-shirt, the young knight lights a brass lantern and walks back to the window.

Almost morning. What could have terrified me so? A nightmare? Why can’t I remember it? Do I want to remember it? Well, might as well get dressed; no use in trying to sleep.





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

Just before Ramza pulled off his nightshirt, a sharp knocking sounded on his door.

“Ramza!?! You all right?”

“Mustadio? Yes, I’m fine.”

“What happened?”

“Bad dream.”

“Another one?”

“Yes.”

“Need to talk?”

“No, thank you.”

“All right, get your rest.”

Ramza heard Mustadio walk back to his room. Then the young knight stripped off his nightshirt and started to dress himself for the new day. Beginning to don his armor starting with an under tunic and a chain jerkin and then moving to the individual metal plates starting with a steel grieve to protect the knees and shins, Ramza reflects on Mustadio’s advice.

Rest. If only I could.

The small dining room of the Minotaur’s Horn made due as an impromptu conference room, after bribing the innkeeper to keep the room closed to the public. As Ramza Beoulve eased himself into a lightly padded chair, the rest of his troupe followed suit. This assembled group of men and women who serve Ramza are trying to stop the shadowy plot of the Lucavi. The otherworldly creatures’ attempt to take over Invalice during its current state of civil war is spreading chaos in their wake.

The young knight’s thoughts drift as he looks across the long oak table at his companions. All of them coming from a variety of backgrounds, they joined Ramza for different reasons but are united nonetheless.

On Ramza’s right sat Agrias Oaks, a lady holy knight. As a paragon of virtue and military discipline, the paladin sat with her back perfectly straight and her long blonde hair in a single French braid that extended past her waist. A light rosy fragrance masked the immaculate, well-oiled plate mail the woman wore. Integrated with Agrias’ armor, her midnight blue overcoat with golden cuffs was just as well kept as the rest of her ensemble. Her deep blue eyes concentrate their focus on Ramza with nothing escaping her notice.

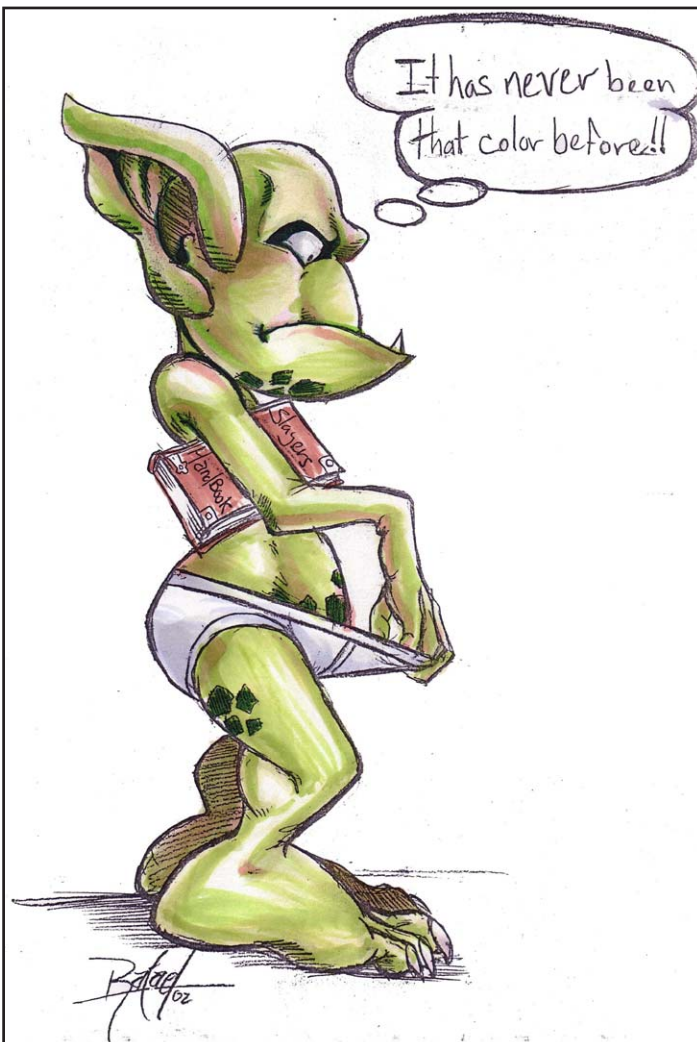
“Good morning, Ramza,” her eyes seemed to grin at him. Ramza nods back to Agrias.

Beside her was Mustadio Bunanza, an engineer from Goug. In contrast to Agrias, Mustadio was much more relaxed. He wore a fine yellow silk shirt with blue trousers and had his blond hair pulled tight in a ponytail. Usually the fair-haired engineer wore dingy work clothes, but he dressed differently on a whim. Mustadio sat leaning back in his chair with his gloved hands folded across his chest and his right foot resting on his left knee.

Next to Mustadio was the team’s mediator, Glenda Mauric. The strawberry blonde wore an ornate mauve robe adorned with beige tassels and silver embroidery. Missing was the unusual head-dress which matched her outfit, a piece of headgear that reminded Ramza of a tasseled pillow. Someone must have made a comment to her about it. Glenda has always been conscious of her appearance. Covering her mouth with a cupped hand, Glenda whispered something conspiratorially to Mustadio to which he simply arches an eyebrow.

Meliadoul Tingel was next along the table. Her countenance was predominated by the emerald green tunic and hooded cloak she wore over her armor. The young knight always dressed modestly especially compared to Mustadio and Glenda. The divine knight even concealed her rich dark hair. Despite her hood hiding her mane of brunette hair, Ramza could still see the resemblance between Meliadoul and her late brother Izlude. Of late, it seemed that the young knight has grown a bit more moody.

To Meliadoul’s right was Lavian Marquand, formerly a knight in the service of Princess Ovelia along with Agrias. Unlike Agrias’ unshakable faith and devotion, Lavian’s seemed to have fallen by the wayside. She has since donned a simple earthen tone tunic extending just past mid-thigh. In keeping with the codes of the







# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

geomancer, Lavian let her sandy brown hair hang free and untamed, giving her a tousled look. Her new druidic outlook has given Lavian a sense of peace, which is quite evident on her fair features, that was unknown to her previously. She looks to Meliadoul and smacks her on the arm. The lady knights turns sharply, and then Lavian sticks her tongue out at Meliadoul who snickers in spite of herself.

At the end of the table sat Kyoko Taksai, a summoner of powerful creatures from the nether realm. She sat wearing a dark green dress with her hands folded in front of her, and her black hair perfectly coifed with a beautifully crafted golden hairpin holding it all in place. Her flawless, exotic features marking her from the Far East; Ramza found her hard to read. The young knight had to admit to himself that he knew next to nothing of the culture that bore Kyoko; however, the sorceress' loyalty and her mastery of magic were above question.

It just occurred to Ramza that most of the women in his group are sitting on one side of the table. The blue-eyed warrior doubted that it was intentional. In fact, Ramza noticed that Kyoko had tried to sit on the other side — someone else took the seat beside her beloved who was seated on Ramza's left. Without causing a stir, the lady summoner took a seat on the far side of the table.

Turning to his left, Ramza looked toward Masakazu Yoshikawa, a noble samurai from the same region as Kyoko. The Eastern warrior wears the Genji samurai armor originally donned by the Marquis Elmdor and won from him after that noble's possession by the Lucavi Zalera, the Angel of Death. The beautifully crafted oriental armor of crimson red and midnight black was a worthy reward for the honorable warrior, particularly for his role in defeating that demon lord. With dark eyes and short black hair, no emotion was present on his face as he respectfully paid attention to the man whom he had sworn his allegiance. Ramza deeply respects this eastern warrior and the strict code he follows; Bushido which translates literally as "The Way of the Warrior."

Masakazu acknowledges Ramza with a curt nod, "Ramza-San."  
"Good morning, Masakazu."

Next was Count Cidolfas Orlandu, former leader of the Nanten Knights based at Zeltennia Castle. This celebrated veteran of nearly forty years of combat experience during the Fifty-Year War wore his well-worn plate armor covered with a simple brown hooded cloak, functional and practical. His distinguished features were framed by snow-white hair and beard, trimmed and neat. Those gray eyes, having seen so much and shining with years of wisdom, gazed kindly upon Ramza as if looking upon a favored son.

Beside him was Malak Galthana, former member of the elite assassin guild the Kamyuja. That fell group was formed by the late Prince Barinten who recruited Malak and his sister after their parents were killed. Born originally across the Great Western Sea, Malak's heritage is evident in his dark complexion. He wears his black hair very short, especially along the sides of his head. Piercing brown eyes that seem to look through a man, as if he were insignificant. Despite the dark warrior's enigmatic nature, Malak wore a white tunic with a bright red sash, a badge of station from

his former association, for a belt over brown trousers. As usual, it seemed that Malak woke up on the wrong side of bed.

On Malak's left was his younger sister Rafa, also a former member of the same infamous organization to which Malak used to belong. In contrast to her complexion, Rafa wore a white blouse and pantaloons, and like her brother wore a similar sash around her waist. She kept her shoulder-length brunette hair covered by a white cotton haik, a headdress folded in a triangle and kept in place by a red ribbon encircling the crown of her head. It was hard for Ramza to believe that a trained assassin and powerful mage such as Rafa could have such an innocent face and a quiet, gentle manner.

Beside Rafa was the temple knight Beowulf Kadmus. This sandy haired warrior wore his hair in a ponytail like Mustadio; however, his mane was curly and kept the ponytail's bindings relatively loose. Branded a heretic like Ramza but for different reasons, the young knight was trusted by Ramza for his honor and courage. Beowulf sat wearing a white silk shirt, blue trousers, white leggings, forest green petticoat, and a sandy colored cloak. In addition, the dashing gentleman had a ruff, a frill of folded linen, hanging from his collar.





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

With her hand clasped in Beowulf's, Reis Dular sat at the end of the oaken table. The gentleman's fiancée wore a light tan blouse and a long red skirt, long golden hair framing her fair features hanging loose. Her sky blue eyes gazing on her love fondly. It was on her account that Beowulf was branded a heretic; a jealous priest named Buremonda had desired her and attempted to discredit her beloved. Until just recently, Reis was polymorphed into a purple drake. Using one of the Zodiac Stones, Beowulf had reversed the awful curse that was incurred by the same priest who had made the accusations of blasphemy against Reis' intended. Beowulf fondly raised Reis' clasped hand to his lips, "Good morning, Darling."

Reis smiled gently, "Good morning, my sweet."

Despite the desperate situation they all shared, Ramza's mind was only on his sister's abduction by the Lucavi. Worry about her consumed him. Ramza wasn't even paying attention while several of his comrades started to argue, absorbed in his own thoughts. Only when one of his companions called his name was Ramza snapped out of his reverie.

"I beg your pardon?"

Malak now bored his gaze in Ramza's direction to address him, "I don't know why you didn't send me to talk to this informant."

"Malak, no offense, but your skin color would stand out and

draw attention — attention we don't need," interjects the snow-maned Orlandu.

Malak started to stand, turning his attention toward the Count.

Ramza cleared his throat to gain everyone's attention, and twelve pairs of eyes concentrated their attention toward the blond knight at the head of the long oak table, "Malak, Victor is from this city, and he still has several contacts. He and Tandra should be able to find out what we need to know about Vormav's activities here."

The dark skinned warrior stroked his chin thoughtfully, "You're assuming again."

"Brother!" Rafa chided her older sibling.

"I would have found this man and already got everything we need by now. And no one would have seen me," Malak glares at Orlandu.

The green cloaked Meliadoul leans forward, "I empathize with you, Malak. If anyone here should interrogate this man about my... father, it should be me. However, all of us — yourself included — have prices on our heads..."

"You think I don't know that?" Malak points toward himself.

Ramza interjects, "Malak, please. Be patient. It shouldn't be much longer."

"Pah!" the former assassin sits down once more.

Then, a faint knock sounds.

At last!

Ramza opens the door to admit Victor Stastny and Tandra Kenin. Both walk over to stand at the other end of the oak table to address everyone, while Ramza sits once more.

Victor, a man with a wiry build, brushes his straight, black shoulder-length hair away from his eyes and leans forward with gloved hands supporting him. The thin man wore a loose fitting white shirt, black trousers, and dark blue overcoat. A former member of the anti-aristocrat Death Corps, Ramza had spared his life when Victor was captured at one of the Corps' strongholds. Since that time, Victor served Ramza providing valuable information from dealings with the shadier side.

The team chemist spoke, "I met with my old friend about Vormav. He said that he asked a lot of questions at one of the taverns in the Dock Ward. Vormav asked about an old mage by the name of Elidibs. Apparently, this mage, who was a master of summoning and black magic, had played a pivotal role during the Fifty-Year War. He is credited with almost single handedly holding back the Romanda Army at the Siege of Lionel Castle. After the war, Elidibs went into seclusion on an island about a day's voyage east of Warjilis."

Victor looks in Tandra's direction to find her now leaning against the wall with her arms crossed, blending with the shadows. The auburn haired beauty was clad in a black bodysuit covered by a dark cloak. Her slim athletic build evident by her current attire; it was known by the entire team that she is a master of disguises and can change her appearance in many ways. Working with Ramza since their days at the academy, the two have seen much during the last few years. Where Ramza became a master swordsman, Tandra





# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

mastered the art of information gathering and espionage. Trained in the same manner as shadow warriors, the green-eyed female would not use her skills as an assassin.

The team's ninja and resident martial artist nodded in approval of Victor's statement, and she continued from there. "Vormav seems to have a particular interest about one of Elidibs' possessions — a particularly large emerald gemstone with silver and gold snakes entwined around it. This stone was referred to as Serpentarius, or as one of the Zodiac Stones."

A couple of gasps were heard as the assembled party began to murmur amongst themselves.

"A thirteenth Zodiac Stone!?"

"What significance does it have?"

"Another Lucavi to deal with!?"

Tandra held up her hand, "If you please..."

The murmur died down, as everyone's attention was once again riveted to the dark cloaked female, "I don't think we can ignore the possibility that Vormav has recruited another ally. Ramza, I believe we should go to this island without delay."

"My sister wouldn't be there," reasoned Ramza, his brow furrowed in thought.

"True. But I think it would be better if we deal with Elidibs here rather than with Vormav and his allies. Conversely, this mage might not be involved with Vormav. I just don't think we can take that chance."

Agrias holds up her hand, "Wait a moment. You mean that we are not sure whether or not this Elidibs has joined forces with the Lucavi?"

"No, we aren't sure. Which is why we need to go to that island...?"

"...And find out for sure which is the truth of this wizard," Ramza finished Tandra's comment, "Better to find him now than to leave a possible enemy behind us... And taking another Zodiac Stone from the Lucavi cannot hurt. But can Alma afford our delay?"

"There again, I can't answer that. We may even find more clues about the Lucavi and find another lead on Alma's whereabouts," the ninja shrugs.

Orlandu spoke up, "What is known about this island?"

Victor pulls out a map and unfolds it out on the table. Everyone leans forward to get a better look. As Victor points to the island in question, he continues the report, "The Isle of Agony has been referred to by treasure hunters as The Deep Dungeon. Many adventurers, fugitives, thieves, bandits, and monsters reside in the extensive caverns. So far, no one has ever reported finding the end of these caverns."

"Wonderful," their leader groaned.

The chemist shrugs at Ramza and gets back to the business at hand, "It should be relatively easy to charter a ship to take us to the isle, since there are frequent trips out to it. We can simply pass our group off as another party of treasure hunters without drawing too much attention from the authorities. Simple as that. Now Mustadio, we need to find a way that we can smuggle that steel giant onboard a ship."

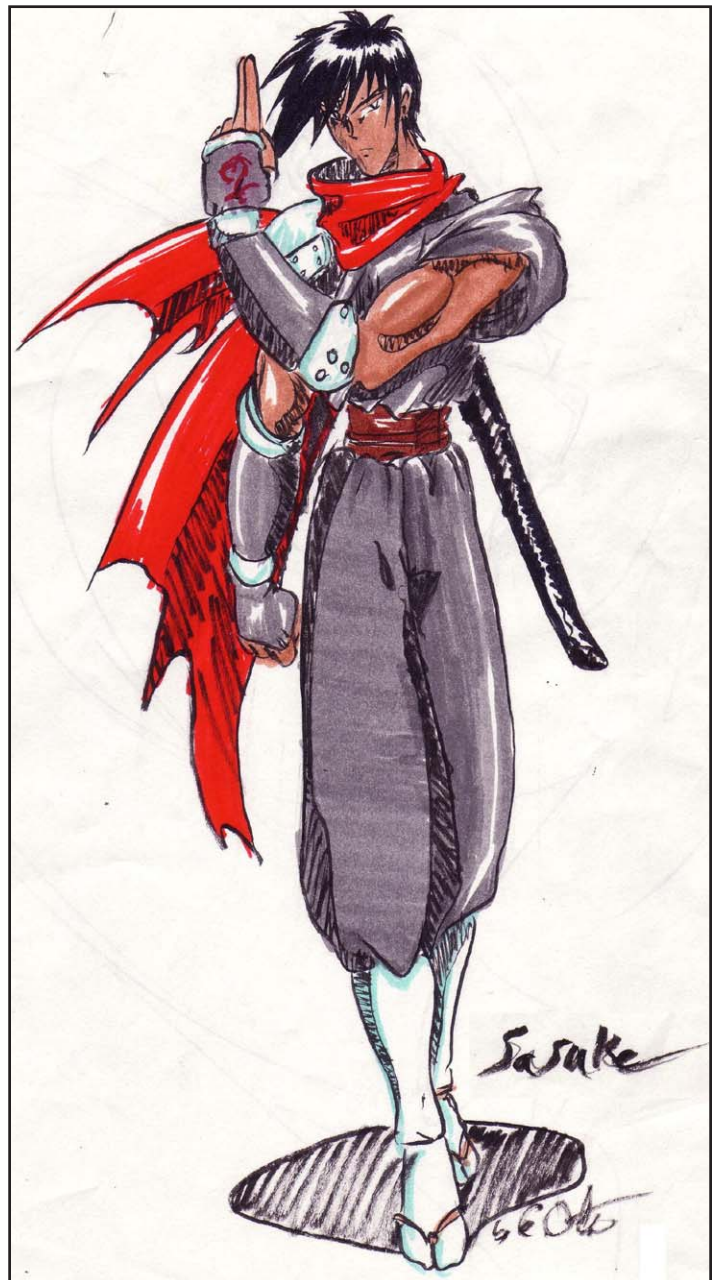
Mustadio strokes his chin thoughtfully, "I think I have a plan...."

## Quarinne

By Erika Henderson

The rain fell above the trees and below their branches. It had been raining for three months now and it seemed as if there was no letting up. Under the sky-bound arbors, leaning against a massive tree, was a woman. She wore a brown leather overcoat and a wide-brimmed felt hat with a feather that had gone quite limp.

Quarinne Razan was not used to such weather. She pulled her



*To be continued...*



# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

coat around her a bit tighter, little good that did, and tried to get some sleep.

Some fifty paces away, a rather dry elf chuckled to himself at the scene. These city humans couldn't find shelter in the forest if it were right in front of their eyes!

It wasn't until one hour before sunrise that Quarinne sensed something out of place. She was now soaked and chilled to the bone. The rain had not ceased, and it seemed to be coming down harder, if that were possible. She looked down at her feet and saw her feather lying in front of them like a wet rat.

She was seriously taking up the idea of going back home, giving up this silly quest to prove herself equal to her brothers. She was just about to turn back, walk right out of the forest and make the day's journey home when an arrow whistled past her head and into a tree directly in front of her.

"Not thinking of leaving already are you?" a melodic voice called out.

Quarinne stopped in her tracks and turned around, hands raised slightly. That voice sounded like an elf's if she had ever heard one.

She had only met a few elves in her lifetime and cared less to meet any others after them. They were arrogant and snobbish, and this one sounded the same.

"Tree's got your tongue?" the voice challenged.

"My journey is over," Quarinne said.

The elf laughed out whole-heartedly. "That was some quest!" he laughed. "Usually they make it at least a day into the forest before they run home with their tails between their legs. You're right you should probably leave."

Quarinne became quite red at that. "You are quite the bold one," she returned, "yet you hide yourself very well. Why don't you show yourself?"

There came no reply.

"Just as if figured," she said and started to walk back out of the forest. She was stopped right in her tracks when the elf landed, seemingly from the sky itself, right in front of her. He straightened himself and appeared as if he was just beginning to get wet.

His hair was straight and black like the rocks from a lava bed. He wore very simple clothes: leathers and a cotton tunic, which looked handcrafted and worn. His face was fair and his violet eyes sparkled like morning dew.

"Since you have given up on your quest, then it seems only appropriate that you join me on mine...you can be my servant."

Quarinne's face flushed red again, her eyes narrowing in one movement. She pulled her cloak off, revealing a fine indigo silk shirt with embroidered designs, a sleeveless white leathery vest which went half way down her thighs, black pants, and boots that went past her knees. Strapped around her waist and strapped across her chest on her back was a well-crafted longsword.

The elf was taken aback by the beauty of this woman. Her hair was by far the equal of many elves he knew. Her long silvery blonde locks reminded him of the moonlight. Her skin was smooth as flower petals and her eyes were like the sea...a rather stormy sea, right now.

With one quick movement, Quarinne's sword was in her hands, its silver tongue waiting for a drink. She swung low, with a deft cut that would have left many a man on the ground. The elf jumped up and back, a surprised look on his face. He instantly composed himself, drawing a blade that was long and slightly curved. Quarinne knew it to be an Elven katana, an exotic weapon not so common around these parts.

A smile came across his face, "Let's play, shall we?"

They went into a series of movements of attacks and parries. Both were very much the equal of the other. The elf was surprised at how well this woman wielded her sword. A few moments passed with neither having the advantage. Both stepped back, swords ready.

"Perhaps I misjudged you," the elf said. "Instead of being my servant, you may be my squire."

Quarinne brought the attack on anew. They exchanged swings and stabs, yet neither got through the other's defenses. Then Quarinne attacked with a high swing; the elf's blade was there to meet hers. At the same moment, she kneed him in the gut and body slammed him backwards. He tried to get his footing, but one foot got caught in the trunk of the tree and the rest of him ended up in





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

the mud.

It was now Quarinne's turn to laugh. The elf sat up, a smile spread upon his face. Quarinne helped him up and put her sword away.

"The name's Quarinne Razan, a pleasure to meet you."

"I am called Korryl Dhoethyl. Would you like to join me in my travels as my partner?"

"As your partner, yes," Quarinne replied.

"I am very much honored. Come, I know a place where we can get out of the rain and get dried off. It's a cave belonging to a friend of mine a few hours journey into the forest." He paused, putting his katana back into its sheath. "Where'd you learn to fight like that?"

"My father and brothers taught me," she said. "I guess they realized that I would never make a good housewife and did their best to train me with the sword."

"And the knee," the elf said, rubbing the side of his abdomen.

"I'm sor—" she began, but then saw the repressed grin on his face. She shoved him lightly, seeing his over exaggeration.

He bent down and picked up her coat and hat and handed them to her.

Quarinne accepted them graciously.

"After you my good sir," she said in a snobby regal accent, accentuating it with a slight bow.

They both laughed at that and began their journey.

An hour later a large massive form caught the faint scent of something that might satisfy its hunger and began its hunt.

*To be continued...*

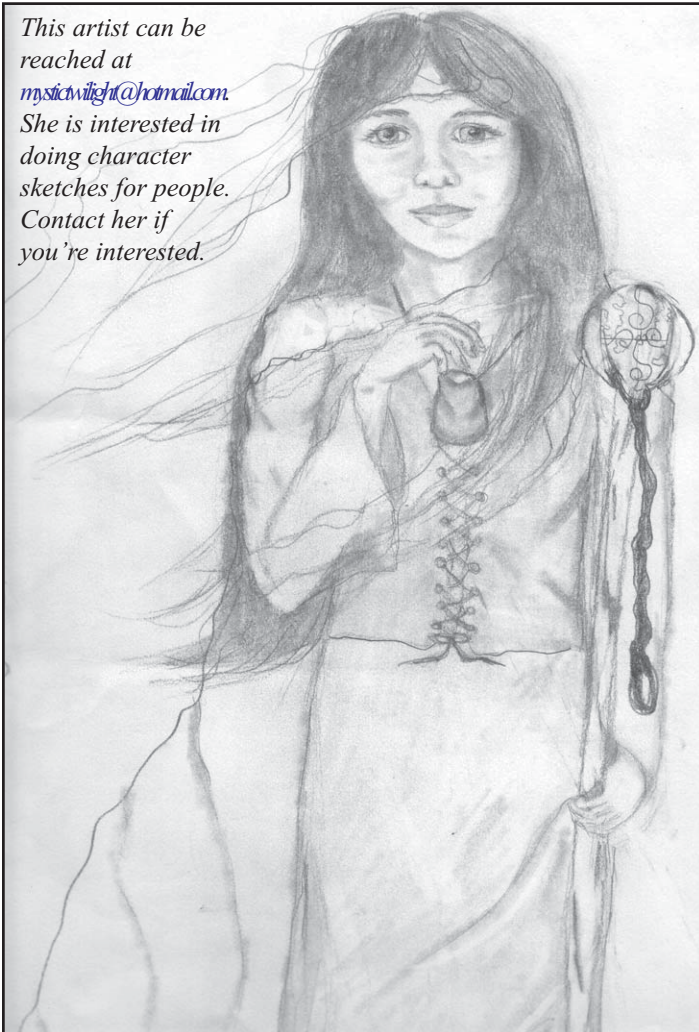
## FROM (Y)OUR SKETCHBOOKS

One of the things you learn when you take on a new project is that you need to be willing to make adjustments to your usual methods in some cases.

This month we're trying something a little different. Rather than have all of this great reader submitted artwork crammed into one or two pages, we've decided to mix it in with our reader submitted short fiction.

What does that mean for our art contributors? Well, not much really. This section of the newsletter has, since issue one, been an "as-space-is-available-sort-of-thing" and probably will continue to be. That's okay though, because unless we have to keep it below a certain number of pages, we should be able to make room. Our current limit is about 24 pages. Anything more than that and only folks with cable modems will be willing to download this thing. So don't panic if you don't see your stuff appear right away. Everything is right with the world and we haven't forgotten you.

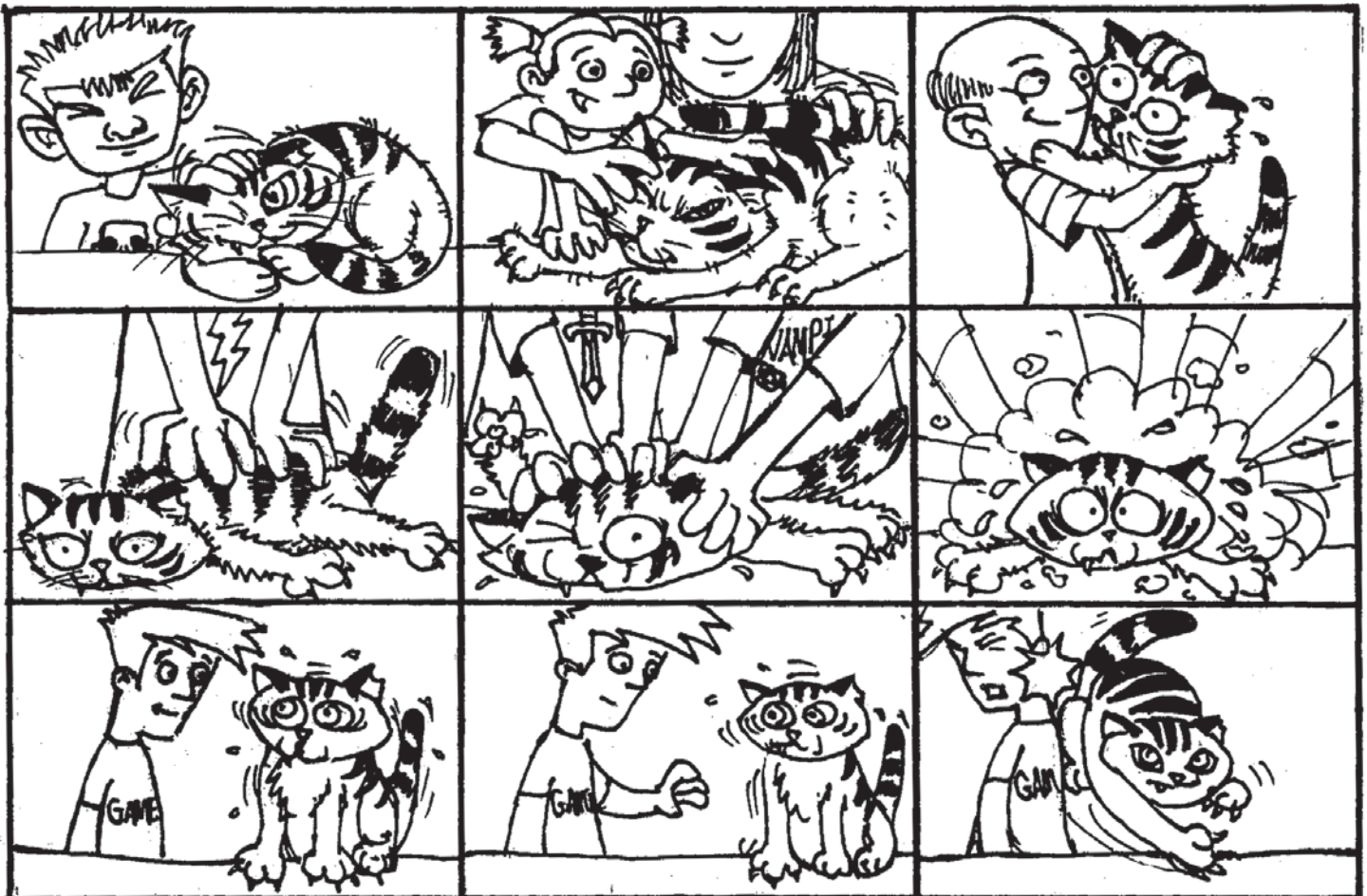
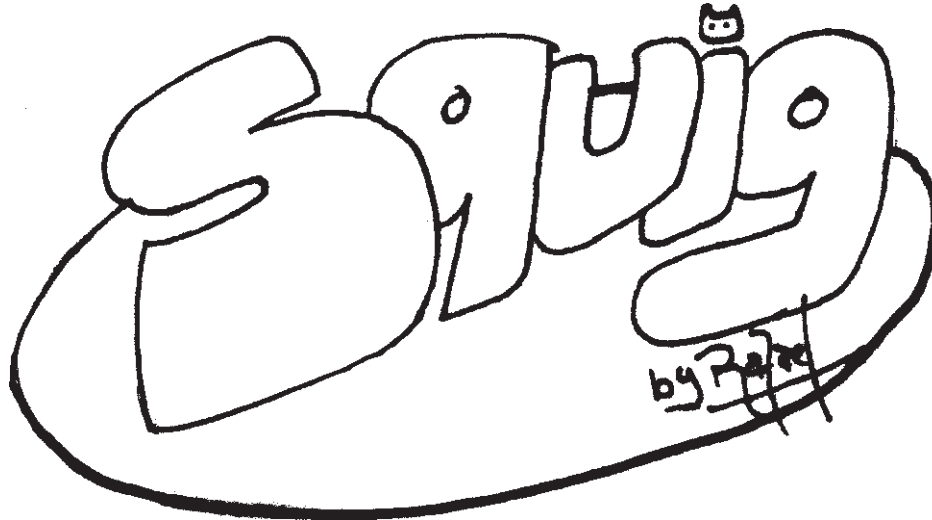
*This artist can be reached at [mysticwilight@hotmail.com](mailto:mysticwilight@hotmail.com). She is interested in doing character sketches for people. Contact her if you're interested.*





# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003





# the guardtower monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## THE NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOUR INPUT!

As this publication grows and we (both contributors and staff) gain more experience with the needs of our readers, we will be making some adjustments. Layout, fonts, colors, regular columns, and artwork are all subject to change.

Now this is where our readers come in. We need feedback so that we know what we're doing right, and what we're botching our rolls on. Seriously, is there something that you need or want to see, something that offended you, something you think we probably haven't thought of? Let us know. We'll take a look everything you have to say and see if it is a change that we can make.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Those of You who have been with us since the beginning will remember a thank you that we gave to some of our local artists for their help redecorating the back room.

Well, we finally have a photo for you folks who are out of towners (or too lazy to walk back to the back room -Chris) to look at. Take a look. Enjoy it. Come see the real thing if you're in town for Origins, Marcon, or any of the other gaming conventions we have here in Columbus. If you're really determined, stop by on your way to GenCon this year.

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## LEGAL MUMBO-JUMBO

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# the GUARDTOWER monthly

Issue #3 • Criterion Edition • March 2003

## THE GUARDTOWER MONTHLY EVENTS CALENDAR

As you all may know, the Guardtower has a large open gaming room at the rear of the store. Just inside the door is a wall dedicated to event postings such as game masters looking for players, players looking for games, items for sale and events occurring

around town.

One feature on this wall is a schedule of games and tournaments (compiled by Rex) that are played in the store. This calendar is reproduced here for your convenience. If you would like to schedule a game or don't see a game listed that is regularly played, let me know and I'll update the schedule accordingly.

## APRIL 2003 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 Dragonstorm	2 Vampire: TES CCG	3 Pokemon Magi Nation MechwarriorClix	4 Game of Thrones CCG Magic CCG Knights of Crisis	5 Warhammer Warhammer 40,000 Warhammer CCG Dungeons & Dragons D20 Modern	6 Pokemon Magi Nation HeroClix Dragonstorm Torg Dungeons&Dragons
7 Marvel Super Heroes Star Wars CCG Dungeons&Dragons	8 Dragonstorm	9 Vampire: TES CCG	10 Pokemon Magi Nation MechwarriorClix	11 Game of Thrones CCG Magic CCG Tenchi Muyo	12 Battletech Dungeons & Dragons D20 Modern	13 Pokemon Magi Nation HeroClix Dragonstorm WEG Star Wars Dungeons&Dragons
14 Marvel Super Heroes Star Wars CCG Dungeons&Dragons	15 Dragonstorm	16 Vampire: TES CCG	17 Pokemon Magi Nation MechwarriorClix	18 Game of Thrones CCG Magic CCG Knights of Crisis	19 Warhammer Warhammer 40,000 Warhammer CCG Dungeons & Dragons D20 Modern	20 Pokemon Magi Nation HeroClix Dragonstorm Torg Dungeons&Dragons
21 Marvel Super Heroes Star Wars CCG Dungeons&Dragons	22 Dragonstorm	23 Vampire: TES CCG	24 Pokemon Magi Nation MechwarriorClix	25 Game of Thrones CCG Magic CCG Tenchi Muyo	26 Battletech Dungeons & Dragons D20 Modern	27 Pokemon Magi Nation HeroClix Dragonstorm WEG Star Wars Dungeons&Dragons
28 Marvel Super Heroes Star Wars CCG Dungeons&Dragons	29 Dragonstorm	30 Vampire: TES CCG				