

**ta yü**

I should have mentioned Ta Yü is published by Kosmos and Rio Grande Games for about \$40, depending on where you shop.

**dundracon**

As usual, I will be attending DunDraCon ([www.dundracon.com](http://www.dundracon.com)) in San Ramon, California on President's Day Weekend (February 16-19).<sup>1</sup>

**ignorable theme****redux****limits on pcs**

Several people brought up very valid points about how character concept X can work in campaign Y despite character limit Z. While it is *possible* to have an Asian martial-artist monk in an Scandinavian Ars Magica game, that does not make the concept *acceptable*. When players want to have characters that stretch the boundaries of the GM-defined limits, both have to compromise. No matter how plausible a concept might appear, it may still go beyond the GM's expectations of the campaign.

Too many players seem to assume that "possible" equates to "allowable." Many of these are intelligent, creative people who do not want to be restricted by the GM's limits. Try as they may, they keep coming up with a concept that stretches or exceeds the limits. On the other hand, some players only play a particular type of character<sup>2</sup> and try to fit that into every campaign. Others are just munchkins who only care about their immediate self-gratification.<sup>3</sup> Some players do it just to be contrary and obstructive.

For example, Matt Helms ran a short campaign based on *Law & Order*. The PCs were NYPD homicide detectives. In this case, Matt has a very narrowly defined limit on characters, and we accepted that. While it may have been possible to include other types of characters, such as reporters, private investigators, or members of the forensics team, this was not the focus of the campaign. These other character types would not have fit well into the story line and the players would have found themselves with less to do and have less fun.

<sup>1</sup> I predict it will rain, at least a little.

<sup>2</sup> Winged cats seem to be popular.

<sup>3</sup> Especially those who base their current character on whatever movie they last saw, whether there is any correlation to the current campaign.

**sense of wonder**

I cannot remember when I have had a sense of wonder about a game world. I have had epiphanies involving characters I have played, but I do not know if this counts. I get into characters more than settings, even "great" settings like Glorantha, Tekumel, or Jorune. Then again, I have only read these settings and have never played in an actual campaign set in these worlds. When reading a world description, I have never felt, "Wow, I want to explore this world," but I have thought, "Wow, I want to play a character here." Occasionally I have felt, "Wow, I want to run a game here," but there are much rarer and often involve one-shot games where I create the characters.

**comments****issue #305****scott bennie**

Another enjoyable rant, sir

**dayraven**

Your Fading Suns model is really just adjusting damage based on attack success. This is a feature of Fudge, OTE, and other rpgs as well. The question is granularity; would RQ's special and critical successes work better for you than Pendragon's system of critical hits? I think adding skill bonuses to damage are redundant to adding damage based on skill rolls, literally adding insult to injury.

**david durham**

I think too many people overestimate how long 100 words is. For my standard roleplaying characters, I usually write one or two pages of information, and I know others who write much more. With 100 words, you do not even have much room for a good physical, mental, or emotional description of the character. Frankly, anyone who cannot think of 100 words to say about their characters really needs to work on their writing and character development. The problem for me would be distilling the character description down to 100 words that could be highlighted and defined in game terms.<sup>4</sup>

**robert dushay**

To back-up your comments to Rene, how can anyone provide a list of rules before they know what

<sup>4</sup> Yes, that paragraph was exactly 100 words long.

the test is going to (dis)prove? The experimental conditions will depend on the nature of the feat; the requirements for telepathy are far different than telekinesis or divining, for example. In fact, only through a series of tests under a variety of conditions can you really prove such phenomena.

I stopped reading Dragon when someone in the Forum used Dragonlance as a counter-example to the argument that "D&D magic does not reflect fantasy literature." Even so, Dragonlance created its own house rules for magic. Yes, it still had spell memorization, but it also had three alignment-based mage schools and effects of the planet's three satellites, aligned by school (white, red, and black).

### lee gold

I am amused that so many people cross my name with Patrick Brady's. No apologies are necessary. The footer of my zine last issue ("brady riley") was poking fun at the phenomenon.

How do I usually start of my games? Poorly. Most of my games start painfully slowly and build to a climax. This creates a satisfying snowballing effect but makes it difficult to hook the players' interest.

### spike y jones

<chuckle> compound interest </chuckle>

At least here in Santa Clara County, there is no presidential voting option for "None of the Above." Having a write-in candidate is the equivalent to "None of the Above," I would think.

### rene a louveire jr

20<sup>th</sup> century characters coming out of suspended animation can be fun, but in *Andromeda*, the characters are not from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even the ones that had been suspended!

### paul mason

Quantum mechanics allows for objects to "travel" faster than the speed of light. It also allows getting something for nothing, being two things simultaneously, being everywhere and nowhere, and other fun contradictory concepts.

### brian misiaszek

Throwing magic into an Earth-like setting to make it into another fantasy world seems to be what sells. Players seem more comfortable with a fantasy setting than a historical one, which ties into Paul Mason's serious vs. fun question. Look at L5R, 7<sup>th</sup> Sea, Deadlands, and Shadowrun. I do not know why TORG, Bloodshadows, and Castle Falkenstein were not as successful.

### lisa padol

In the ST:TNG episode in which Picard was victimized by the vengeful ferengi, Picard actually used the non-profitability of the endeavor against the villain to convince the ferengi crew not to continue. If the motive had been economic, Picard would have had to resort to brute force or legal channels to defeat the ferengi. Neither would have made for a satisfying episode. When Picard defended Worf in his trials regarding his father's name and (falsified) dishonor, Picard acted more like a Klingon than the Klingon council. My theory, if I were to have one, is that Picard, because of his background and interest in archaeology, is exceptionally adept at adjusting and assimilating to alien cultures. Either that or sloppy script-writing. ; )

### simon reeve

The original Star Trek pilot did have Mr. Spock as science officer, but there was a different First Officer (played by none other than Majel Barrett). The Mr. Spock character was retooled for the eventual series, whereas the position of Number One did not appear until *The Next Generation*.

### eugene reynolds

I have only watched a few episodes of *Earth: Final Conflict*. It seemed okay, but not great. Then again, I may just be burned out on the genre.

### naomi rivkis

The traditional way for my atheist/agnostic family to celebrate Christmas is to "go out for Chinese food and a movie," as we did in 2000. Our complaint every year is that too many places are closed.

### patrick sweeney

Another Patrick! When can we start the coup?!? Welcome aboard, from a fan of *San Angelo*.

RAE Hall of Shame. My most shameful PC death, one which I still hang over the head of the GM, was my Invoker being drowned by a giant octopus.

### gaylord tang

Welcome to A&E.

### jonathan tweet

If you are the type of GM who would ambush the party, with diseased arrows, and use critical hits, why would you not then follow-through and kill the character? But you want an out? Give the character a nasty, diseased wound; the PC is now dying and must quest for the cure. Rather than make the PC immune from death, make the death *interesting*.