

The Crucible

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Daedalus Games Grabs Talislanta, Bright Future Promised

I'd like to make a few comments regarding the future of Talislanta.

As of October 2nd, Daedalus Games will be taking over the Talislanta license. We've got exciting plans for Talislanta and will be doing things with the game that haven't ever been done with it before. Talislanta fans, and gamers who have yet to play the game, can expect some exciting things for Talislanta in 1995.

Talislanta, *Black Moon Rising*, coming in June of 1995, represents a new era in Talislanta both in terms of the games setting but also of its development. Under Daedalus Games Talislanta is going to receive the state of the art presentation it has always deserved. Talislanta will have a gamebook and a line of quality support products that will carry Talislanta powerfully into the 90s. Gamers can expect both cutting edge graphics design, high quality presentation and intriguing storylines from Talislanta products in the future.

Daedalus Games is a new company and I'm sure many people are wondering what we're capable of. Well you don't have to wait until next year to find out. Our first rpg, *Nexus: The Infinite City*, will be hitting store shelves in a matter of days. We may be a new company but our graphics presentation and book design are on par with the leading companies in the industry. As to our vision, just watch us.

When we initially got word of Wotc's intent to discontinue Talislanta we looked into it. We don't consider ourselves fans of Talislanta so we were looking at it purely from a business perspective. What we saw was a terrific game setting, a lively fan following and a lot of unrealized potential, particularly in terms of writing, graphics design and overall direction. We also saw simple, elegant mechanics and a focus on a rich background (although not without room for improvement), a game for the 90s. We saw the opportunity to produce a line of top notch

products that we could be proud of and that gamers would enjoy. Its with this goal that we are working with Talislanta, not looking to the past but towards an exciting future.

Subject: Less Archetypes!

When I was deciding whether or not to take on the Talislanta license I showed a copy of the Talislanta Guidebook to a number of gamers who weren't familiar with Talislanta. The very first reaction I got was that there were a lot of archetypes to choose from but that the detail given wasn't enough to go on. And that the pictures were very small and sketchy. If they were to generate characters they would be roleplaying in a vacuum, unless they got ahold of some more information. In some cases the players weren't sure what their characters we supposed to look like, the pictures were that small.

Doing a bit more research in the matter this caveat came up over and over again. Another problem was the lack of cultural info in the main gamebook on any specific race, namely the races that players were supposed to roleplay. In light of this let me explain some of the reasoning behind the decision. We have two main reasons for the change. Firstly and most principal was making Talislanta attractive to new gamers. This is important if the game is to stay alive and be able to support a line of high quality products. Currently new gamers are presented with a huge number of archetypes with very little in the way of description. This is a non starter for many gamers. It also doesn't help that some of the pictures are very small. For example its difficult to determine based on the Talislanta Guidebook what a Kasmiran looks like! Also a number of races in Talislanta are "alien" so gamers only know what the gamebook tells them regarding these races. Gamers nowadays tend to prefer more detail on the racial and social background of their characters and for presentation purposes they shouldn't have to rifle through the main rulebook and a handful of supplements to get it. If all the information they need to play their character is right there on the sheet then its that much easier for newplayers to get into the game.

The second reason was focus. Tal4 isn't going to spread itself thin trying to do everything. It will focus on Seven Kingdoms archetypes and selected archetypes from other regions of Talislanta and it will do so in depth. Don't worry we're not cutting Talislanta in half. Everything that is "cut" will appear in a supplement and will appear in much greater depth than it ever has before. We've made this choice too keep ourselves from spreading ourselves too thin and providing too little information about too many things.

BTW this focus extends right through the book. We'll be detailing some areas of Talislanta more than others. The details that get extra attention will be detailed in depth. The areas that aren't focused will get the same amount of detail as the current Talislanta Guidebook does.

One of our first supplements for the new edition will be a players book including among other things the balance of the Tal archetypes plus several new ones. With that book and Talislanta, *Black Moon Rising*, you'll have more archetypes than the TG currently provides and in much greater detail. Plus plenty of additional material that be included in the Players Guide (not the official title).

And yes the principal archetypes will be full page. However keep in mind that the illustrations will be much larger, possibly half the page. This is important as currently there aren't really good illustrations for all the major races of Talislanta in the gamebook, something which I think is a big problem.

I agree. Having fewer archetypes is not an improvement. The opportunity to play a Jhangaran or a Vajra or an Aeriad is one of the attractions of the game. But if you are going to eliminate archetypes, then the ones to eliminate are the characters that beginning players would not normally attempt, mostly because they are too "evil," such as Na-Ku Cannibals, Chana Witchmen/women, Rajan Necromancers, etc. You might be able to consolidate the Zandu Swordmage and the Swordman/woman into one character, likewise the Nagra Shaman and the Nagra Spirit Tracker; I'm sure there are more examples.

We won't be randomly slashing the archetypes. All the popular ones will be there. The ones that do get cut will be ones that hail from remote regions of Talislanta (remember Talislanta, *Black Moon Rising* has a focus on the 7K) and archetypes that aren't popular with players for whatever reason.

Jose Garcia

President, Daedalus Games

The People of Talislanta



The Magic of Cymril's People

Cymrilians are enamored of Magic in all its myriad forms, many of which have become an integral part of their culture. Almost every Cymrilian owns at least one magical adjunct, and often more. The majority of these items are typically of limited power, and are either practical or

frivolous in nature. Young children favor magical toys, such as dolls that "speak" a few simple phrases, or miniature animal-constructs that move of their own volition. Among adolescents, enchanted boots or slippers that levitate the wearer a foot or two above the ground are very popular, as are magical enhancements used to alter the color of the skin or hair, enchanted garments that sparkle or glow in the dark, and so forth.

Adult Cymrilians also use enhancements, though generally of a more elaborate and expensive sort; substances or items that enhance the user's intelligence, memory, resistance to disease, sexual performance, or desirability are most popular. So are enchanted garments that confer protection from the elements, always appear freshly pressed and laundered, exhibit a variety of changing hues and patterns, and so forth.

Many popular forms of entertainment are also influenced by the Cymrilian love of Magic. Among those held in the highest esteem are exhibitions of enchanted art, such as animate sculpture, paintings done with magical pigments that change colors or move about the canvas, prismatic arrangements that emanate holographic images or whorls of color, and so on. Illusionist-artists are also held in high regard for the fantastic panoplies of color, sound, and imagery that they create. One of the most accomplished artists of this sort was the great Laluche, whose works incorporate three-dimensional illusory images with the music of the renowned Bodorian composer, Sola.

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Za: Blood for Blood

(excerpted in part from a rare unabridged copy of "The Chronicles of Talislanta", by the wizard Tamerlin.)

The Za are a grim and unforgiving folk who will never forget a wrong or turn their back on an insult. The offended party is expected to seek retribution, or suffer loss of face and esteem. To signify the intent to seek revenge a Za will say the words, "Blood for Blood". Among the Za this phrase is considered a solemn oath - an unbreakable pledge that the injured party will not rest until the insult has been avenged, in equal or greater kind. With these three words the Za is thereafter committed to a blood feud, which by Za law cannot be settled until blood has been spilled.

A blood feud may exist between individuals, families, or entire tribes. It may last a few moments, or may be passed down from one generation to the next, until the terms of the pledge have been fulfilled. A blood feud need not result in the death of the offending party in order to be satisfied, though this is often the case, as matters tend to get more heated the longer a feud goes on. Because the injured party is entitled by Za law to seek redress, the offender may not launch a blood feud of his or her own inresponse. Once matters have been settled, the feud is considered over and done with.

The longest running and greatest blood feud on record is that between the Za and the Archaens, which is said to have begun soon after the onset of The Great Disaster. According to the Za, the call of "Blood for Blood" was spoken when the Archaens broke their promise to the Za's ancestors, who had been ceded the rights to the continent of Talislanta as part of a truce between their two peoples (in return, the Archaens were ceded the rights to the skies above Talislanta). The so-called "sub-men uprising" is the Za's response to this affront, which took place over a thousand years ago, and is now directed against the ancestors of the Archaens.

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Additional Spells for Cartomancers

by John Harper

Here's some new Cartomancy spells. These come at the request of my friend who plays a Rahastran, and feels his magical abilities are lacking...

** Bane of the Assassin **

By concentrating on the Assassin card, the Cartomancer can set up an invisible sphere of magical energy. The sphere stays where it is placed, it does not move with the caster.

This sphere works like the Invocation spell, Sanctuary.

** Cloak of the Charlatan **

This spell allows the Cartomancer to disguise his or her appearance. The possible changes include: apparent height adjustment of up to a foot; changes in hair, skin, and eye color; changes in clothing style and color (but not function); apparent weight adjustment of +/- 40 pounds.

Duration: One minute per level

Range: Touch

Resist: If the target doesn't wish to be "changed" roll vs. DEX to avoid the Cartomancer's touch.

** Eyes of the Mystic **

By drawing the Mystic card and concentrating on it, the Cartomancer gains the ability to perceive invisible beings, see through illusions, and detect the magically hidden (doors,

This spell works like the Astromancy spell Sun Sign.

** Purse of the Peddler **

This spell works like the Witchcraft spell, Safekeep

** Hands of the Rogue **

This spell allows the Cartomancer to pick mundane locks of any kind. (Perhaps by placing the card between the lock and the door and "jimmying" the lock with the card? just kidding... :). The Lockpicking skill level is equal to 1/2 the level of the spell.

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

**** Shield of the Warrior ****

By drawing the Warrior card and concentrating on it, the Cartomancer can bring into existence a shimmering, translucent shield of magical force. The shield will move to intercept any attack that is aimed at the Cartomancer. The shield works like the aura spells of other magical fields. (stops 4 points per level)

**** Staff of the Wizard ****

This powerful spell allows a Cartomancer to cast one of the spells from the field of Wizardry. This spell must be chosen at the time the Zodar deck is built by the Cartomancer. This spell is usually depicted on the Wizard card in some way. The effective level of the Wizardry spell is equal to 1/2 the level of the Cartomancy spell. For example, if the Cartomancer casts Staff of the Wizard at level 8, it could produce a level 4 levitation spell (if that was the spell in the card).

**** Way of the Wanderer ****

By concentrating on the Wanderer card, the Cartomancer gains the ability to "see" the mystical traces left by living beings. This spell works like the Aeromancy spell, Windtrack.

**** Wrath of The Warrior ****

By drawing the Warrior card and concentrating on it, the Cartomancer can call forth a translucent image of an armored knight. The knight will rush at and attack whomever the Cartomancer chooses. This effect is identical to the 'bolt' spells of other magical fields. (1d4 damage per level of the spell, resist with DEX)

**** Vial of the Alchemist ****

This spell functions as staff of the Wizard, above, but applies to the field of Alchemy.

Well, there are the spells. There's plenty of 'em. My suggestion is to allow the player to acquire these gradually... perhaps by finding an ancient text on the Zodar that has to be painstakingly translated... or by witnessing a master Cartomancer use Wrath of the Warrior on someone.... Whatever, just so they don't come by them all at once.

Alternatively (if this is too much of a change for your tastes), you could allow the Cartomancer to select one card from his deck to be the "special" card, and allow him to only cast that spell (plus the 3 basic spells, of course). I don't know, this is a major change for the Cartomancers out there... but I think if used properly, it will add some utility to an otherwise weak magic school.

John "Ace up my sleeve" Harper

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