PRINCES IN THE TOWER

Welcome to Princes in the Tower, just a 'zine about gaming. If you aren't familiar with my previous 'zines, be sure to check them out. In this one, I'll be covering some of the RPG campaigns that I've been interested in running (or have run).

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

You're probably wondering why I chose Princes in the Tower for the name of this 'zine, when there are plenty of good names out there, like Bear in Ballard or Et by Circus Folk or Ninja Poodle (all 'zines I plan on giving a try in the future). Well, I was wandering through wikipedia and found an article on Edward V of England and his younger brother Richard of Shrewsbury, 1st Duke of York.

Both of these princes of England were the children of Edward IV, the late king who won one round of the War of the Roses. Both were under the age of 13 when they were placed in the Tower of London by their uncle, Richard, who shortly thereafter became Richard III and they "disappeared," with no trace by September of 1483. Richard himself was deposed in 1485 by Henry Tudor, 2nd Earl of Richmond, who became Henry VII. If Richard did them in, he died with the secret.

Some bones of what many believe are the princes were found in 1674 during renovations to the White Tower but no one really knows. What happened to the princes is a mystery. And such a mystery is part and parcel to gaming.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Well, this 'zine is about gaming. RPGs, in fact. Role-playing games. And I've spent a while playing these games and also writing about them in 'zines. I started gaming in the 1970s, when the concept of RPGs were very new. Now, 30 years on, I've been exposed to quite a few of them.

Gaming to me is a great sport. I get to use my imagination to explore new worlds, try out cultures both old and familiar as well as new and shocking, and learn about different points of view and beliefs. Best of all, I get to do it with my friends.

So this 'zine may wander about a bit, checking into this campaign here or talking about that rule there, in a variety of systems or I may just stick with one, over—arching campaign. It all depends on what I've got rolling around in my head. I hope that you enjoy it and be sure to let me know what you think!

FIRST CAMPAIGN

For a couple of issues (or more), I'm going to be talking about a campaign I'm planning on running for my group, the Corvis Monkey Troupe (CMT).

FRINGEWORTHY

Recently, the CMT decided to try a "common" campaign for the GMs in the group to run with. After some discussion one night, we came up with Fringeworthy by Tri Tac Games (recently out in D20 Modern). If you aren't familiar with this game, it deals with special people who can travel to alternate Earths and across space and time through gates made by an alien race. Yes, it's similar to Stargate but was first written in 1981, at least a decade before the movie (and successful T.V. show) came out.
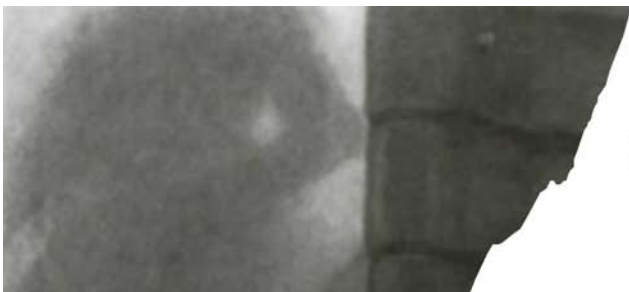
The advantage of each of us running a Fringeworthy game was that we could do whatever we wanted (space, fantasy, WWII, whatever) because somewhere out there is a planet or universe that has those things and there is a gate that leads to it. It gives the GM plenty of leeway and (one point we agreed on) it gives the players the opportunity to continue characters through different GMs.

SAVAGE WORLDS

We also agreed on the system to use. As some of you may realize from my past 'zines, I'm a fan of Savage Worlds by Pinnacle and so are the rest of the CMT. Using a common system for this common GMs playground simplifies matters. Everyone knows how to do stuff and the PCs don't have to be converted between games.

PLAYER GOALS

Another discussion that night had to do with sandbox games vs. more goal−oriented games. I'd been reading some threads on the RPG.net forums and there were a couple of things I was interested in trying out, pushing our games toward more of a sandbox feel but well thought−out goals from the players POV. A major concern was that, since we're busy professionals in our 30s and 40s, we don't have time to waste on a game with no direction, hence the usual games in our group detail a goal outlined by the GM. It's worked for us in the past, but I wanted to include more player input in the game. We talked it over and I guess I'll see how it turns out, whether we'll reach that point or not. But as long as we're having fun, that's the most important thing.