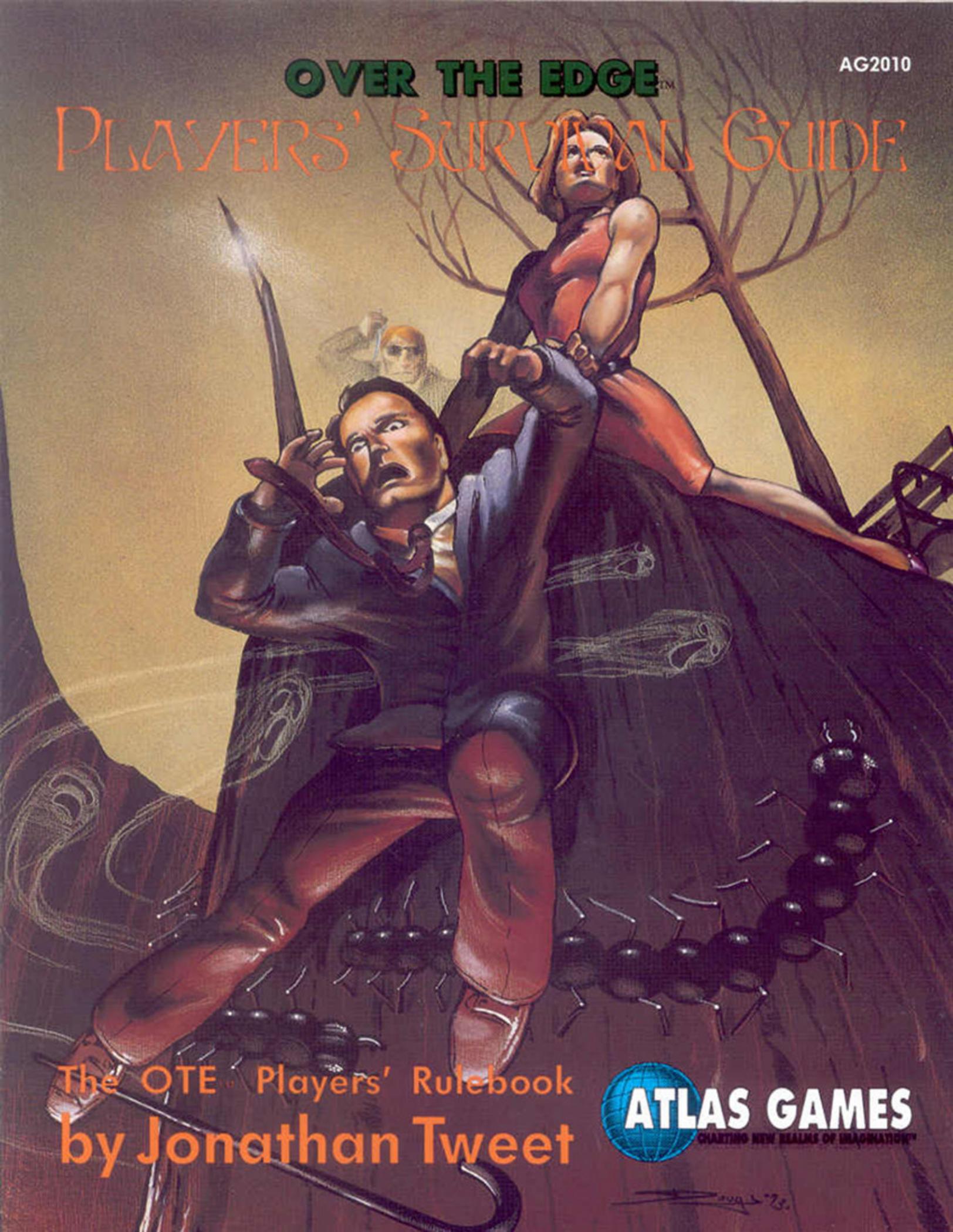


OVER THE EDGE™

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PLAYERS' SURVIVAL GUIDE



The OTE Players' Rulebook
by Jonathan Tweet

ATLAS GAMES
CHARTING NEW REALMS OF IMAGINATION™

Jonathan Tweet '10

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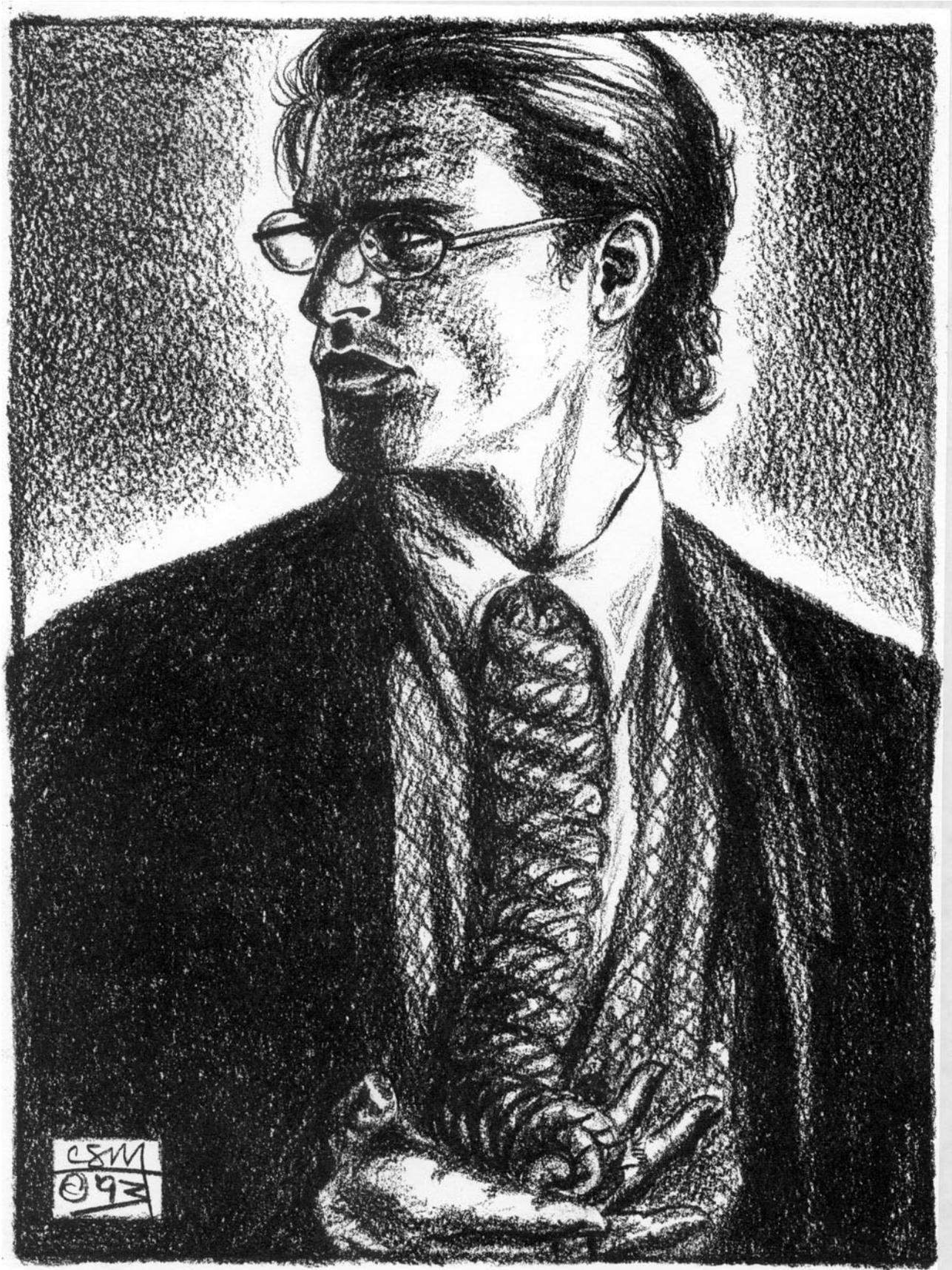
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CHAPTER ZERO

INTRODUCTION

Anything is Possible
Everything is Permitted
— William S. Burroughs

The heart of *Over the Edge*TM is the unknown. More than any other role-playing game, OTETM keeps the players guessing.

At least that's how it should be. The problem is that the carefully crafted secrets that I hid from my players during the early OTE games are now available in any game store, and players may be tempted to buy these secrets for their own edification. In order to help you resist that temptation, we decided to publish information open to players in a separate book. Now you can have your own copy of the rules (most of them, anyway) without facing the temptation to flip past page 43 and see what's *really* going down on Al Amarja.

The rules in this book offer more than you will find in OTE itself: more example concepts and traits, more advice, more ways to personalize your character, and so on. You'll also find a system for generating a character randomly, a device that some people may find useful for breaking out of ruts. And I included information for playing African PCs because too many US players are just too ignorant when it comes to that continent, and, with Al Amarja being so close, I thought I ought to rectify the situation in some small way.

My approach to the original rules was not to go into much detail about weird traits, fringe powers, and so on. My goal was to allow players' creativity free rein by giving them a blank slate. Then, during a convention game, a group of six players included a vampire, a werewolf, and a space alien with a disintegrator ray. The cliches were so thick you could cut them with a knife, so to speak. Shocked by that experience, I decided to go into a little more depth on weird traits in these rules, hoping to open players up to more possibilities. This effort will backfire, however, if you take the weird possibilities I mention as the only possibilities. Think for yourself.

Rather than hog the whole show, I invited some friends to share some gaming wisdom with you, specifically, how to approach OTE so as to enjoy it the most. I don't necessarily agree with everything they say; judge for yourself the value of this advice.

Finally there are some tidbits from Al Amarjan life: encounters your character might have on Al Amarja, a flier about the island that your character may find, and so on. (This spot is a good place to remind you that the opinions expressed by characters on Al Amarja do not necessarily represent those of the author; these are fictional characters, and if they say things that force you to question cherished beliefs, laugh it off.) Now, strictly speaking, you ought not be looking at these people and props until your GM tells you that your PC has run across them; but I don't think it's any big deal, do you?

So here it is: everything a player needs to know to enjoy a good game of OTE, and more. Open your mind, surprise yourself, and have a good time!

Your GM and This Book

Ideally, your GM should give you all the information you ever get about the game and the setting. If your GM is like me, however, she's human. This book gives your GM a break by showing you the rules, advising you on character design, and introducing you to the setting so that you can slip easily into play. Looked at this way: This book is your GM's servant, not the players'. That means it takes orders from her.

Your GM has the right to make house rules for her series. These rules take precedence over those found in this book, so be sure that you're clear on how she runs her game.

The GM may ask you not to read or refer to certain sections at first. If she wants the pleasure (and hassle) of introducing you to Al Amarja on her own, then reading some of the material in this book can spoil the fun both for you and for her.

The GM may change her Al Amarja so that some of the material herein is obsolete or even danger-

ously misleading. If so, she is under no obligation to tell her players about these changes until the PCs themselves find out.

Things That Will Come in Handy

Over the Edge uses only six-sided dice; you might want as many as six of them. Those dice with the skulls in place of the 1's are handy because if you roll all 1's when attempting to accomplish something, you screw up (an optional rule).

Paper and pencil are also necessary. As a player, you will want to write down names, clues, addresses, phone numbers, quotes, and other tidbits that will help you sort out the secrets of Al Amarja. Honestly, keep good records. I can't tell you how many important clues slipped through my players' fingers because they didn't write them down.

Photocopies of game material are also valuable, including character sheets, character logs, and facsimiles of material that the characters find when they travel to Al Amarja (Atlas Games permits you and your GM to make copies of such things for personal use only).

Inspirational text and video can stimulate the imagination of both the players and the GM. Depending on your bent, you might look into the writings of William S. Burroughs and Philip K. Dick, or some of the stranger movies that Hollywood has offered us, or you might prefer the offerings of supermarket tabloids.

Miniatures can aid in marking out where characters are in relation to each other, but their use is strictly a matter of taste. By the way, good luck finding modern miniatures without firearms.

Disclaimer

"All references to vices and to the supernatural contained in this game are for entertainment purposes only. *Over the Edge*™ does not promote satanism, belief in magic, drug use, violence, sexual deviation, body piercing, cynical attitudes toward the government, freedom of expression, or any other action or belief not condoned by the authorities."

Before every game of OTE™, you and all the players should strip naked and intone the above disclaimer while each holding a single white candle in a darkened room.

Glossary of Game Terms

Bonus Die — An extra die rolled with the normal dice for an attempted action when the character has some advantage. Drop out the lowest die before tallying the total for the roll.

Experience Pool — The number of dice that a character can use as bonus dice each game. They double as a measure of experience and can be "spent" to improve or develop traits.

Fringe Powers — Powers not readily recognized as possible by the mundane world, including abilities that could be classified as psychic or magical.

Game Moderator (GM) — The person who coordinates the series, referred to in the text as "she" to differentiate the GM from the players.

GMC — Game Moderator Character (= NPC, or non-player-character), a character run by the game moderator.

Hit Points — A measure of a character's ability to take damage and punishment. If reduced to 0 hit points, you're down and out of the fight. A character deep in the negatives is either dead or will die without medical care.

Round — In combat, or other intense encounters, a unit of time in which a character can generally take one action. Represents about 3 seconds of time in the game world.

Penalty Die — An extra die rolled with the normal dice when the character has some disadvantage. Drop out the highest die before totalling the roll.

PC — Player character, a character run by one of the players. Referred to as "he" to differentiate the PC from the GM.

Psychic Pool — Represents how many times per day a character can use psychic or fringe powers.

Series — A string of related game sessions, a "campaign."

Trait — A feature of a character, representing a skill, personal characteristic, fringe power, talent, or aspect of one's background. Traits are usually good, but some (called "flaws") are bad.