

Winter 2008-09 Issue 8

NEW SPELLS AND MONSTERS

KOBOLD

Quarterly

A Magazine of Kobolds & Dragons

Medieval
MEDICINE

Interview with
R.A. SALVATORE

Deadly
GLYPHS

Superior
SWORDS
Legends of the
GOLEM
Extradimensional
HORRORS!

Better Barroom Brawls / The Frostrift Oracle / 100 Warlord Battle Cries
Indestructible New PC Race / Flagellant Prestige Class / Book Reviews

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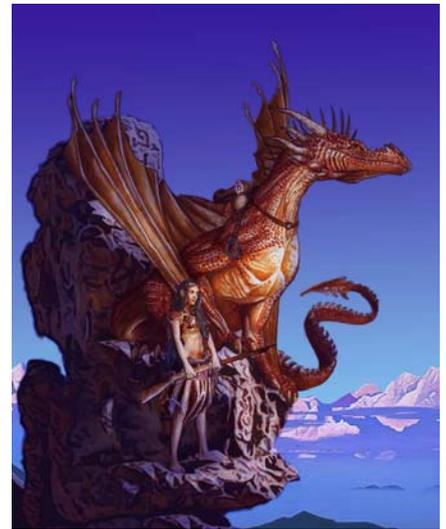
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New Voices



For the second time, I'm judging the RPG SUPERSTAR contest with the Paizo folks. It's a wonderful gig, but it reminds me as well that there's always room for new talent and for new voices. The RPG SUPERSTAR contest is open to anyone who isn't a previous winner or a published game designer, so all sorts show up, from the wildly creative to the number-crunching madmen. The field is open to all comers, and it shows, with the full range of experience, talent, and drive on display.

And yet, the material submitted does follow Sturgeon's Law, which says that 90% of any given field is junk (and that's why editors have jobs). The Superstar slush pile in Round 1 is so brutal (it inspired me to write "How Not to Design a Magic Item" for the *KOBOLD Guide to Game Design, Volume 2*). There's so many ways to go wrong...

But that's why it's so much fun to watch a new or unknown designer succeed. The judges have no names or information about the contestants when we're going through the entries, and yet I see that the most talented contestants pack a lot of personality into of 200 words of Wondrous Items.

The key word, to me, is Wondrous. Magic weapons and armor are functional, scrolls and potions (and wands and staves) are just containers for existing effects, but the wondrous item category is a great one for showing off both imagination and mechanical skill. The designers with imagination seem to rise above the rest of the pack. Their items nail something so well that you want to see what else they might do in future rounds. I want a spotlight on those folks.

Frankly, I want them to submit queries and articles to KQ, because much as I love printing articles by big-name designers, it's also exciting to hear from new names.

Designers come and go from the RPG hobby over time, and I'm happy to see both variety and stability in who we hear from. Not sure I want to list all my favorite game designers here (though it is no secret that kobold diplomats have interviewed several of them). But I'm curious to hear what names on an adventure make you say "Yeah, it must be mine!" And if you don't mind sharing your loathing with fellow readers, I'd be happy to hear which designers have made you groan.

In any case, in the interests of keeping things lively, this time out we have a few of those new names on the old table of contents. I promise we'll have a few more next time. Mario Podeschi and Steven Robert are new to these pages, and so is John Ling, though you'll certainly be familiar with his excellent work on the Monday Monsters series on the koboldquarterly.com site. Give their work a read and see how you like it. Better still, give us your feedback with a letter or a forum post.

And I'll also note something that isn't in this issue: the Ecology article is back as a 3rd Edition piece, and may stay that way for a little while. As of this writing, the current number of 4th Edition article submissions is pretty close to zero.

As always, direct your protests, goons, goblins, treasure fleets, couriers, courtesans, *message* spells, sealed letters, *explosive runes*, songbirds, and email to letters@koboldquarterly.com or to Kobold Letters, PO Box 2811, Kirkland, WA 98083.

Wolfgang Baur
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