

SHADOW SWORD & SPELL



BASIC

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SPELL

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RICHARD IORIO II



CHICAGO

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C **HAPTER**

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PRIMER



SHADOW, **SWORD & SPELL** is a humanistic, pulp fantasy game that draws its inspiration from the stories of pulp fantasy writers who wrote between 1930 and 1960 – Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Gardner Fox, Jack Vance, Fletcher Pratt, L. Sprague de Camp, and their contemporaries. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** provides you with the tools you need to create your own vision of the sword-and-sorcery genre.

WHAT IS HUMANISTIC, PULP FANTASY?

Humanistic fantasy is a fantasy genre in which humans take the center stage. It is fantasy largely without the races that are familiar to fantasy readers today – elves, dwarves, and the like.

Of course, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is more than just humanistic fantasy; it is also pulp fantasy. Pulp fantasy, to put it simply, is a genre of fantasy that is low in magic, high in adventure, and big with ideas. It is grittier, as often you cannot tell the difference between the hero and the villain, and the drama is more internal and personal. You are given the options of playing pulp fantasy inspired by not only Robert E. Howard, but Clark Ashton Smith and H.P. Lovecraft. This is not to say this is a “Conan Game” or a “Dreamlands Game.” This is a game about tone and feeling. Horror and discovery. Secrets and mystery. It is about larger than life characters, vile villains, vast vistas, and nubile men and women in distress. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is your game.

Everything you need to know as a player or Gamemaster can be found in this book. This chapter – the Primer – tells you what to expect from the game, and explains its core mechanics and how these are used in the game.

After all the rules and options, little room is spent telling you what a game should not only feel like, but what you should do with it. As a player, you should know after reading this chapter what to expect from the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. As a Gamemaster, you will have an idea of what you can do with the game, and know about the type of games you are able to run. This Primer is your amuse-bouche, if you will. This one bite sets the table for what is to come. So without further ado, here is **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**.

SETTING

SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL is set in a world laden with mysteries, magic, and plots. This is a world in which the characters are born and in which they must survive if they are to make a name for themselves. This setting is filled with a smörgåsbord of cultures waxing and waning in power. Various kingdoms, city-states, and regions exist that offer numerous challenges. Drawing inspiration from the writers that

ADVENTURE AWAITS!

You hail from a world awash in conflict, danger, and threats. You might be a thief due to your knack for picking the pockets of rich merchants in Gravinia while evading the blades of the competition. You might be a raider selling your sword to the highest bidder and fight for any or all as long as the silver flows. You might even hail from mysterious Cal'athar and have an affinity for arcane forces, using them to work spells outside the realm of Man.

In **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL: BASIC**, you create a character embarking on an adventuring career. Some event or desire, drives you to thumb your nose at your lot in life and seek out a destiny of your choosing. Society holds no bounds for you and you choose the life you want to live. Why should the only wealthy be wealthy? Why should only the baron own his own land? You want that — and more — and by Azathoth's Radiance, you will!

In **BASIC**, your character adventures and grows, becoming not only stronger, but more influential. Over time, a character can acquire not only wealth but power. Your influence and fame enables you to command armies, rule a kingdom, influence society — but let's not get ahead of ourselves. **BASIC** gets you to this point, if you survive it...

Powered by 12°, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** has everything you need to run games inspired by the greatest pulp writers of our time.



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