

BLACK SAVANT



BULK RATE
US Postage Paid
Permit 44
Greenwich, CT 06830

Vol. 1 No.1



GLOPEDIA

VALISLANTA



FANTASY ROLE PLAYING CAMPAIGN SUPPLEMENT

BLACK SAVANT

Editor : Stephan Michael Sechi

Contributing Editors : Eric Chandler, Nick Juliusburger, and Brad Lewis

Graphics/Layout : Graphicode, SMS

BLACK SAVANT is published semi-annually by **Bard Games**, and is available free of charge to our mail order customers, retailers, and distributors. To subscribe, write to:

BLACK SAVANT
c/o BARD GAMES
P.O. Box 7729
Greenwich, CT 06830

About the Cover...

*The cover art for our first issue is by P.D. Breeding-Black (as she is now known), whose work appears once more in Bard Games' latest release, the **CYCLOPEDIA TALISLANTA**. P.D. has now produced nearly two hundred pencil, pen-and-ink, or watercolor pieces for the **TALISLANTA** game.*

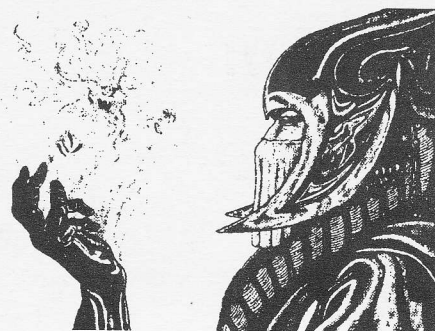
Greetings, and welcome to the premier issue of **BLACK SAVANT**, Bard Games' newsletter for the **TALISLANTA** fantasy role playing game. Those of you who received the first issue of our old newsletter, **THE CHRONICLES**, may be wondering what's going on here. The answer is simple: due to popular demand, we're expanding our newsletter format to include more information on the **TALISLANTA** game. We're also adopting a new name and masthead, as you've probably already noticed. The good news is that like the departed **CHRONICLES**, **BLACK SAVANT** will still be offered free of charge to all our customers. Hope you like it...

ABOUT THE TALISLANTA GAME...

For those who may not be familiar with the **TALISLANTA** game, a brief explanation is in order. **TALISLANTA** is a unique and colorful fantasy world, developed especially for experienced FRP gamers. It is quite literally like nothing you've ever seen before: there are no elves, dwarves, orcs, or cute little halflings in **TALISLANTA**; no generic character classes such as magic-users, fighters, etc.), and none of those complex and time-consuming game mechanics found in typical "advanced" role playing games.

If you'd like more information on the **TALISLANTA** game, you can write to us for a free catalogue or pay a visit to your local hobby store, bookstore, Waldenbooks, or B. Dalton's. If you're one of the thousands of gamers who already know about **TALISLANTA**, spread the word - there is an alternative to the traditional "elves and dwarves" - based FRP games.

Omens



NOW AVAILABLE:

Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide: The **Sorcerer's Guide** features new information on Talislantan magic, including: floor plans, course list, and faculty list for the Lyceum Arcanum (Talislanta's foremost institute of the arcane arts); over fifty rare spells and incantations, a listing of magical tomes, historical notes on the sorcerers of ancient Talislanta, lists of magic items and alchemical ingredients, Tamerlin's Guide to Extra-Dimensional Entities, a dozen new character types, and much more. Don't miss it...

Cyclopedia Talislanta : Just released, the **Cyclopedia** features much-requested detailed color maps of the Talislantan continent and surrounding environs, a comprehensive index of all map entries (including many previously-uncharted locales), new Talislantan flora & fauna (including many new monsters, insects, animals and plants), new skills, weapons, character types, conveyances, and lots more.

Favorable Omens

Thanks to **GATEWAYS** and **WHITE WOLF** magazines for publishing articles on the **Talislanta** game... both magazines also gave the game good reviews...

Gaming groups and Clubs: Interested in running a **Talislanta** campaign? Write to us for information on a special offer...

Currently in the works: a series of **Talislanta** adventure and campaign modules will be produced for Bard Games by **Jovialis**, a freelance game design house run by W.G. Armintrout (formerly of **Steve Jackson Games** fame). More on this in our next issue...

Unfavorable Omens

Due to problems too numerous to mention in this column, Bard Games was forced to revoke the license previously granted to Goldring Minatures to produce miniature figures for the **Talislanta** game. We are currently negotiating with other miniature companies in the hope of securing new arrangements for a line of **Talislanta** figures. We'll keep you updated...

PRODUCTS IN THE TALISLANTA SERIES

The Chronicles of Talislanta (sourcebook): \$12.00

The Talislantan Handbook (players/GM'S guide): \$9.95

A Naturalist's Guide to Talislanta (bestiary): \$12.00

The Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide (more magic): \$12.00

The Cyclopedia Talislanta (campaign aid): \$14.00

Arkon's Logbook

(excerpted from the folios of the renowned sorcerer of ancient times, Arkon)



"Long trips have always been a problem for me. Not because of the packing, as I have adequate means of containing even the most oddly shaped items within the folds of my cloak. No, it's the physical aspect of the whole thing that keeps me from taking to the road. At least, up until now. What I have managed to concoct from a few well known, but not easily found, substances is a useful mixture which has the ability to temporarily enhance one's physical attributes.

The manufacture is fairly simple. First, using a mortar and pestle, grind separately into a fine powder these four items: Shell of Zaratan, Horn of Ogront, Horn of a Winged Ape, and the tusk of a Werebeast. Then mix into one as per the following ratios:

- 2 drams - Zaratan Shell
- 2 drams - Horn of Ogront
- 1 dram - Winged Ape Horn
- 1 dram - Werebeast Tusk

Sift these through a fine mesh fabric into a small crucible, add to this:

- 2 drams - Araq's Blood

Mix well, until the ingredients yield a thick paste. Roll this out into a thin cake (approx. 1/4 inch thick), and cut into small lozenges. These should be placed in open sunlight and left to dry for two hours. The above mixture will yield ten glistening black lozenges, or tablets.

The tablets have a most edifying effect, serving to relieve drowsiness and fatigue, and enhancing one's overall mood. A single tablet confers benefits lasting for up to one hour, or two hours, if the dosage is doubled. In my personal experience, I have found it unwise to take more than two tablets at a time, or more than six tablets within a twenty-four hour period. It is likewise advisable to refrain from the use of intoxicants in conjunction with this substance."

Gamemaster's Notes on Arkon's Panacea: The renowned sorcerer, Arkon, developed these stimulating lozenges for the purpose of relieving fatigue, drowsiness, or ennui. A single capsule increases the individual's Perception, Strength, Constitution and Speed Ratings by +1. Duration of effect is one hour per capsule.

As mentioned in the **SORCERER'S GUIDE**, Arkon was known for the reckless disregard which he had for his own personal well-being. His Panacea is a case in point: though the tablets do indeed yield the desired effect, the substance is not devoid of certain, unwanted side-effects. These include nervousness (-1 Dexterity), irritability (-1 Charisma), and impaired judgement (-1 Will). Once the effects have worn off, the individual will feel extremely tired, and in need of sleep (or more tablets). Furthermore, continued use of **ARKON'S PANACEA** may lead to addiction, a condition which Arkon himself is known to have experienced.

Thystram's Collectanea

(From the catalogues of the noted Phaedran naturalist and savant, Thystram)

The Danelek tribes are among the many Talislantan peoples displaced as a result of The Great Disaster. Adaptation to the inhospitable environment of the Barrens has created a cruel, sun-blackened race existing in a harsh eco-culture.

The various Danelek tribes mine salt, herd land and mangonel lizards, and gather gemstones and rock urchins from the hill caverns in order to survive. During designated trading periods, they barter with Orgovian traders and Djaffir merchant tribes, receiving metal weapons, tools and foodstuffs in exchange for their wares. Food, goods and weaponry may also be obtained by theft, or as spoils taken in inter-tribal conflicts.

Although of a single culture, The Danelek are sharply divided into tribal units, resulting in lethal hostility whenever rival bands collide. Each tribe, in turn, is divided into castes.

The Warrior caste rests at the top of the pecking order. Position and prestige is determined by the number of enemies a warrior has killed. Anyone outside of the immediate tribe is, except under trading circumstances, considered a foe. Prowess is indicated by the number of ornaments worn, generally one for each kill. These may be feathers, ear and neck rings, bones and daubs or stripes of colored paints.

(Lest the reader conjure forth an image of the noble savage, it must be pointed out that a kill need not be made in a "fair" manner. Stealth, ambush or a stab in the back are all permissible under their code of conduct. Unblooded warriors cannot hope to marry as no self-respecting Danelek female would wed one without caste status. Travelers are advised to keep this fact in mind when in Danelek territories.)

The Drudge caste are essentially slave labor. Most of the year they harvest salt, hewing foot thick, ten foot square sections from the surface of the salt flats with adzes and levers. These slabs are then cut into smaller blocks and baled for easier transportation. Some are used to construct the salt huts that house the Danelek for most of the year.

In the spring months, the Wilderlands regions experience heavy rains, which render salt harvesting impossible. During this time, activity shifts to the caverns and tunnels of the hill areas. Here are found rock urchins and the gemstones excreted by earth demons

Through experience, the Danelek know that these formidable creatures have a strong aversion to wind and water. When the torrential rains have driven the earth demons deeper into their subterranean haunts, the Danelek proceed into their abandoned caves and begin to gather gems and rock urchins. As they do so, some make noises like rushing wind, believing that this helps keep the earth demons away (the tactic may be of some use in this regard, though some naturalists feel that such noises may also serve to attract Enim, a cavern-dwelling race of giant devils who exhibit a fondness for manflesh).

When the rains cease and the waters recede, one observes that the salt huts, and the great scars wrought in the surface of the salt flats by the harvest, have been washed away and made smooth for the cycle to begin anew.





Shaladin's Compendium

(Being a practical/technical guide to the finer points of the most notable designs for traps, tricks, and mechanisms, as compiled by the famed Kashmir trapezoid, Shaladin...)

Room of Many Ways:

This circular room has five doors, evenly spaced around the walls, and is accessible by means of a vertical stair, spiral staircase, trap-door, or common passageway. It is constructed in such a way that only one door can be opened at a time. Opening any door causes the circular room to rotate approximately 72° (one-fifth of a full circle) in a clockwise fashion. The latter effect can be timed to occur up to two minutes after any door is opened.

Each of the five doors leads to a corresponding terminus, of the designer's choice. Options include a hallway or passage, a room, stairway, dead end, pit, or whatever seems appropriate. The relationship between any given door and its terminus changes each time a door is opened and the circular room revolves. Five such revolutions will cause the circular room to revolve full-cycle, and return to its original position (unless specified otherwise in the design; see OPTIONAL ADDITIONS).

The purpose of the Room of Many Ways is to confuse individuals who seek to gain access to a place without the owner's authorization. This mechanism is most effective when arranged in a series with other rooms of the same sort, creating an ever-changing maze of passageways.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS:

a) At the designer's discretion, some or all of the seven doors may be booby-trapped. Coded symbols may be engraved or painted upon the doors and/or floor of the circular room, enabling the owner of the premises (and his/her authorized representatives) to use the facilities without being subjected to danger.

b) A Room of Many Ways may be designed to revolve according to a less-predictable pattern; say, one counter-clockwise turn per every three clockwise revolutions. Other options include double-revolutions, triple-revolutions, or a pre-set sequence which causes the room to revolve continuously.

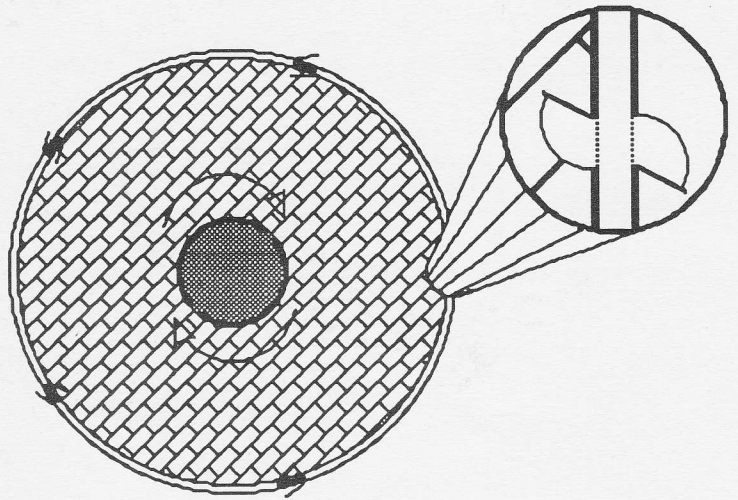
c) Revolving outer rings may be arranged in concentric circles around a Room of Many Ways, creating further complications for trespassers.

d) Combine option "c" with a number of rooms arranged in a series, and it is conceivable that an intruder could remain lost within this revolving maze forever...

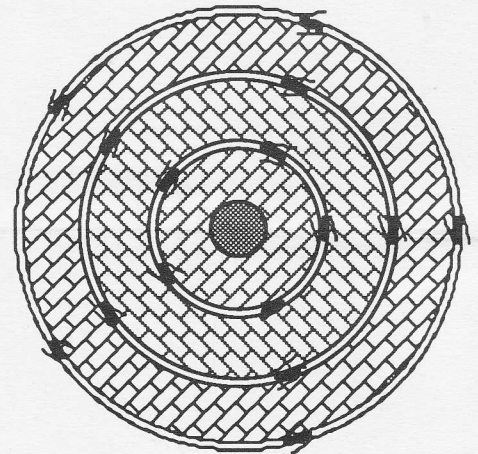
NEXT ISSUE:

More from The Sages of Past Ages, the latest **Omens**, and a few surprises....

Room of Many Ways



Option
"c"



Option
"d"

