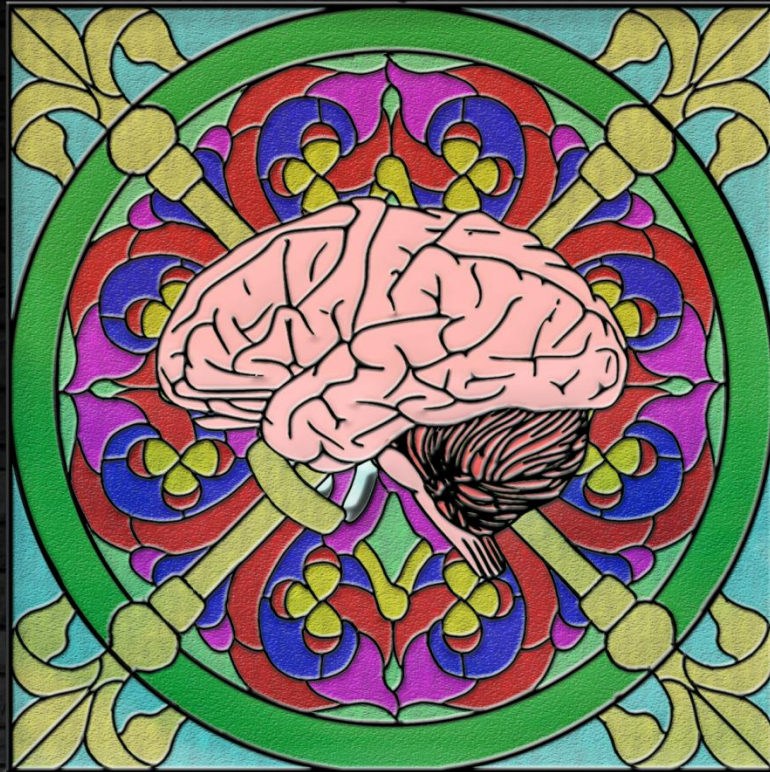


04 Issue

February 13

Emotional



Thinking



Contents

T ripped	4
m agic C ard of the m onth	6
S park of I mmortality	7
S ubmissions:	
L ove L etters	10
L ife as a B lood B owl C oach	11

Dear Readers,

Five-odd months ago when a few friends and I got together to found and create Errational Thinking Magazine we honestly had no idea how successful it would be, or even if we would be able to pull it off. It's been a lot of hard work since then, a lot of stress, far too much forgetfulness and a whole heap of crazy. But not once have I regretted starting this endeavour.

It was difficult at first to uncover our niche, but we found that, with the diversity of those writing the magazine, so followed the diversity we now embrace each edition. Pen-and-paper roleplaying games, card games, board games, fiction, you name it, we'll probably end up covering it. So that's why, by the end of each month, when I'm chasing down lazy writers who missed their deadlines, I can't stay angry at them because they always do a brilliant job.

So I think it's the most gratifying thing when, from seemingly nowhere, an email arrives saying how much someone out there enjoys reading our magazine.

By this point I'm usually thanking the writers to death (or Joey for his, increasingly magnificent covers), but this month, being February (the month of all things lovely and horrifying), I want to thank the readers who have stuck with us, just joined us, or mis-clicked on our link and upped our viewer stats. Without you lot we wouldn't be anywhere and who knows if we'd be here.

This February we bring you: Tripping, the adventure that never seems to know what's coming next; another, particularly exciting Magic: The Gathering card of the month; the continuation of 'The Spark of Immortality' with a nice, piratey twist; a review for Love Letter, a surprisingly enjoyable love-themed card game, and 'Life as a Blood Bowl Coach': sports commentary on a game of fantasy American football, but without all the annoyance of actual sports commentators.

As always,

- Editor Emma

As a quick aside: I should like to use your remaining attention, before you scamper off to the rest of the issue, to address the next issue (March). We are currently planning a special, Lovecraftian (H.P Lovecraft)-inspired theme in the wake of his death-day anniversary. Thus, any articles around Lovecraft, or his infusion into the tabletop gaming world are thoroughly welcomed along with any normal submissions.

Our guidelines can, as always, be found at www.errationalthinkingmagazine.co.uk/submit and you can keep up to date with us via Facebook (www.facebook.com/ErrationalThinking) or Twitter (@ErrationalThink).

Also, if you've been dying to send us an email saying how much you love the magazine, our email address is: errational.thoughts@gmail.com. We will most often reply within two weeks, but we will reply to every email regardless of how long it takes us to remember we actually have an email account.

Again: thank you very much and enjoy.



By Emma Johnson

Fall 4: Like Dominos

'I'll have you know,' Tiff struggled inside his suit of armour to rescue his underwear. 'I'm the manliest knight you'll ever set on a job. If you don't know me by the end then—'

'Yeah, what is your name?' the man gave Tiff a quizzical look, his eyebrows inferring he knew the clumsy Sir.

'Sir Tiff Eyde,' his chest swelled slightly under his breastplate, the metal already suitably enlarged to accommodate this.

'Sounds familiar. Do you uh—'

'Did I say Tiff? I meant Teff... Yes, Sir Teff Eyde, that's me,' Tiff's chest deflated as quickly as it had gone up, leaving his eyes twitching; trying to divert attention away from his name.

'Oh, oh. That's okay. There was something about a weird knight who might've been involved in something dodgy. And you look really familiar, but so do most knights. There again,' his attention turned to Kegluneq, who was polishing his sword with practiced vigour. 'You look kinda...'

'I've never been to this moon before, so...' his eyes didn't even flick from the blade, whose surface was beginning to smart somewhat with all the polishing.

'See that sword. That sword you got there... Yeah, yeah... Never mind...'

'Wanna hold it?' the sword sighed with relief as Kegluneq stopped cleaning.

'No, no I'm good thanks. I-- I wouldn't be hiring people if I could hold swords...' He cleared his throat, 'So you're all here for the job. We said that, right? Basically, what's happened is – you may or may not have noticed. We're keeping this on the hush-down—'

'You're going to have to speak up. I'm wearing armour.'

'Low-down, hush-down, up-down, sit-down. That kind of stuff. Whatever. I don't know.'

'Sounds like some kind of dance,' Ralala giggled to herself in the corner.

'Yeah, they're trying to keep it on the down-lo, that's the one. Anyway. The moon's been cut off from the main planet and, well, practically anything else. We've been trying to get some communications out for quite some time now, but apparently something's blocking it. And anyone who tries to enter the atmosphere is just getting blown to smithereens. It's quite beautiful and at the same time, horrifying,' the man's eyes flashed slightly at the memory. 'So, umm, I've been hired by the guy upstairs—'

'God?'

'No no, fox girl. I don't know his actual name. You might know him though – The Clothes Mage, that guy.'

'Yeah, his name's John,' a wry smile threatened to take over Tobi's face.

'It probably is. It probably is... But anyway—'

'Is everyone named John?!' Ralala sat forward in her seat, no one quite sure if she was joking, but hoping so.

'Anyway... 'John' has hired me to find some 'heroes' to help sort out this problem. He has an idea of who might be involved and gave me this map for you guys to use. Apparently it's been in a room for quite some time now, so it might be somewhat past its best before. It's on magical paper or something though. Might be dry clean only. You never know with that guy.' The man produced a rolled up map from behind his chair, the scroll was bound with a tattered string made of plaited yarn, frayed at the ends

and obviously often chewed by a young'un of some sort.

'So, how old was he when he drew this?'

Kitsune's tail twitched slightly as she looked over the map, the strange symbols, childishly drawn in bright colours, clearly unimpressive.

'Probably about 5. Anyway—'

'Yeah, it reflects in the artwork.'

'Is that crayon?' Tiff lifted his visor to get a better look, half tempted to see if the pictures would rub off if he touched them.

'Anyway,' the man cleared his throat.

'Here we are, this is the City of Animos. Our fair Animos City,' he felt the need to repeat the name, as if it were some kind of inside joke.

'Over here is an outlying village, I do believe they call that Tstoy, though with their rate of progression they might as well call it the dark ages,' he snorted slightly at his own joke.

'Tstoy huh, yes...' Tobi gritted his teeth slightly, the name reminding him of his traumatic childhood. When he lived in Tstoy that is. Brief flashes of torment, subjugation, being picked last for P.E class, flashed through his head.

'Anyway,' the man's whiny voice brought Tobi back to reality. 'We've been told that the 'evil wizard' in the Hexapentacle of Doom has been cutting off communications. We're not entirely certain how, but, basically, you're just to kill him.'

'Well, what's that then,' Ralala gestured to a large hexagon in the furthest corner of the map.

'That's the Hexapentacle of Doom.'

'Sorry. The what?'

'The Hexapentacle of Doom.'

'Hexapentacle of Doom?'

'That's right. A Hexapentacle is a six-sided pentacle,' the man nodded as he spoke, clearly convinced of his own deduction.

'Yep, of course it is,' Tobi sighed once again, getting quite twitchy without his cigarettes in hand, maybe he really ought to cut down; they were probably going to be there for quite some time yet.

MAGIC

The Gathering

Card of the Month

By Sally Brown

Released in the new Gatecrash set in February, Unexpected Results is a card that has brought so much excitement to my recent games of Magic the Gathering.

Unexpected Results is a rare sorcery card for two colourless mana, a forest and an island.



The reason why this card brings so much excitement to a game of Magic is the ability of the card. The card's ability shuffles your library and then you reveal the top card from your library. If the top card is a non-land card you can play it without paying

its mana cost. However, if the card is a land card you place that land onto the battlefield and return Unexpected Results to your hand.

Playing Unexpected Results means you never know what card you may produce from your deck. If Unexpected Results produces a land card you can replay it whenever you can play a sorcery; with the added bonus of having an extra mana at your disposal. However, if Unexpected Results produces a non-land card you can play that card without paying its mana cost and Unexpected Results goes to your graveyard. However, if this ability produces a card like Platinum Angel, which prevents your opponent from winning the game and you from losing the game, or a card like Worldspine Wurm, which is a

15/15 for 11 mana, then you would be at a great advantage over your opponents. If Unexpected Results works to your advantage then it has the potential to produce cards which could potentially be game winning if they are produced so early on within the game.

As I previously said, Unexpected Results comes from the new Gatecrash set of cards only released at the beginning of February 2013. Unexpected results comes from the Simic guild of Gatecrash and works brilliantly within a purely Simic deck. This is because the main ability of the Simic guild is to evolve, which means that you get a +1/+1 counter on any card with this ability if a card with greater power or toughness comes into play. Combine the evolve ability with the ability of Unexpected Results; if the card that is played is of either greater power or toughness than any creature you have on the battlefield with the evolve ability; you can power all those creatures up by one.

Overall, Unexpected Results has provided me with so much fun and enjoyment when playing my Simic deck. I have had situations where Unexpected Results has produced land when I have needed it, or other situations it has revealed cards like Urban Evolution that mean you draw three cards and can play an extra land that turn.

This has brought a lot of enjoyment because whenever I have played Unexpected Results my opponents are always on edge due to the effect of the card; they also see the thrill in conceivably turning the game around. Therefore I recommend Unexpected Results for any Simic player due to the enjoyment this card can bring.



THE SPARK OF IMMORTALITY

By Patrick McNeany

Now as we know not all worlds find magic to be a natural power. The strength of men is considered to be the way to gain what one desires. However it is not only magic that can be used by those with ill intentions. The power of man, on certain planes, has a long history of being used to torment and to terrorize.

ooo

"Cap'n, Jill!"

"What is it Sue?"

"There's a storm a'commin'! Fast!"

Captain Gillian Redd, an infamous woman and pirate of renowned skill and knowledge who took the ship, The Jolly Roger, from the equally-famous captain James Hook. She had contacts from the highest of society to the lowest thieves and lost children of ports across the world.

In the years since acquiring the ship she had trained and populated it with some of the

smartest, skilled and surly girls and women her informant, Peter Bird, could find. One such girl, Suzie Green, was the crewman and first mate, assigned to the birds nest on this fateful day.

"Alright girls!" Jill called at the top of her lungs, "You heard Sue, take up the sails, drop the anchor and get below! You've prepared for this, you know what to do!" At the call the ship began to buzz with activity.

The clouds that the first mate had seen were approaching fast as the last of the crew scuttled under-deck. Sue had lashed herself to the mast as was required of the crewmember on watch, even in storms. There was a caller pipe to the captain's cabin so that anything unusual could be reported. However, as the clouds overtook the ship and the water became more aggravated only a gentle westward wind passed over the first mate, ruffling her dirty blonde locks.

"Cap'n, there... ain't no storm."

"What do you mean girl, the clouds are roiling the waters churning like the devil's broth." Jill called back down the pipe.

"I know cap'n and I can hear you fine, there's no need to yell." Sue replied, "There's noth.... No wait, there's a man. There's a man riding the wind!"

"Don't be foolish girl, that's impossible."

"Captain, I'm not joking, there's a man in the air"

It was only Sue's return to the inflection her mother had drummed into her since she could talk that convinced Jill that she was not confused.

Jill ascended the stairs from her cabin to the deck to find a gentle breeze circling the ship and the ominous shadow of the man that Sue had seen approaching. The young man was slight of build and was in possession of vibrantly orange hair. He appeared to dance and glide across the air currents as though they were as solid as the deck beneath the captain's feet.

Jill was entranced by the strange man capable of feats unheard of. So enamoured with the occurrence she had forgotten the turbulent state of the sea around her, the ship pitched alarmingly as the phenomenon caused the waters to turn against the bow.

"You! Boy!" Jill yelled at the passing figure as she steadied herself against the mast. "What are you doing to my ship?!"

The airborne man span around as he fell to the deck. Both Jill and Sue winced as the young man crashed down.

"What's your problem?!" the man snarled as he picked himself up, "Can't you see I was concentrating, It'll take weeks to get that kind of flight pattern up and running again."

"What are you?"

"Typical. Not so much as a, 'how are you'," the young man rolled his eyes as he dusted himself

off. "And I'm a zephyr thank you very much. Ever considered cleaning this place? It's filthy."

"What on earth is a zephyr?" Jill asked, and then realized what the man had just said, "You did not just insult my ship."

"Actually I'm a zephyr mage; I'm apprenticed to Kriemhild, Mogul of the Monsoon."

"Sir, you crashed onto my ship, insulted my crew member, and are now making so little sense I swear to God I will throw you to the sharks or whatever is swimming around underneath us right now. Convince me not to run you through, please."

"Woah girl, I don't want to hurt you." He whistled with piercing volume and an unearthly hum, calling a streak of green and blue feathers to descend from the darkened sky, "But that's not to say I can't if I need to."

"We are in open waters and this is my vessel. You will therefore either leave, or show more respect, as I won't hesitate to throw you overboard." She drew her cutlass, which gleamed dully in the darkened afternoon. "You haven't exactly endeared yourself to me."

"Like I told you, *Captain*, it will take me time to form an adequate trance to fly for any extended period of time. So if you'll be so kind, I'll be requiring lodgings, and probably food, seeing as it's your fault we're stuck with each other." Jill stepped forward, "That's it, you infuriating little runt! If I can't have you leave I will leave you here."

She raised her weapon to strike; as the blow descended, the young mage nimbly ducked away, the summoned falcon resting on his arm, screeching indignantly and quickly taking flight disorienting Jill long enough for his master to dance away across the deck.

"Captain I did not want it to come to this. However you have left me with little choice," the mage started to clap rhythmically. The storm clouds above them began to surge and boil, like ink on water. A deep funnel began to form its sides crackling with angry electricity. There was barely enough time for Jill to look upward with trepidation as the bolt of lightning

struck her. The blast shook the ship but left no mark on it. Jill however was nowhere to be seen.

ooo

Sue had been in the crow's nest for almost five days, there had been a small supply of food and fresh water for the watch during storms. That had run out two days ago. The man who had murdered her captain was still sitting on the main deck of the ship muttering to himself. Sue couldn't remember the last time she had been so pained. She had lost her captain and best friend to some stranger, she was dehydrated and hungry. The other girls still hadn't come out of the bowels of the ship. They were under orders from their captain. Fighting off unconsciousness was one of the lessons Jill had drilled into each of her girls; it was coming into use now holding back the blackness gathering at the corners of her eyes. She could still hear the man below her and his incomprehensible speech.

The voice appeared to be coming closer. Sue opened her eyes to see the man who had killed her captain rise past her; away from the ship. As she watched him leave a warmth spread through her chest. She could feel her insides stretching, burning. With an almighty crash she was thrown from the crow's nest. Suzie Green was filled with new strength to rival that of even her prior captain and she knew what she was going to do with it. She knew how to use it.

Marching over to the deck bell she rang it. "Girls!" at the sound of the toll they spilled from the under decks, spreading across the deck. "Girls, the Cap'n's dead. There's nothing we can do now, but she'd want us to avenge her, right?" There were murmurs and worry emanating from the crowd. "We're gonna avenge her and that's our bearing!"

Sue turned and waved her hand toward the horizon. The sea not too far away began to rise up, slowly at first but as it grew it gained momentum until it was impossibly tall. The new column of water began to freeze and crack, shattering into a dark arch that displayed the constellations of a new world.

“Set sail girls, we’ve got hunting to do!” Suzie yelled at her new charges. “We’ll show them what piracy Green-eyed Sue and The Jolly Roger can do!”

SUBMISSIONS

Love Letter Review

By Thomas Rycroft

It's February. That means Valentine's day. Love is in the air. There's very little for us, jaded gamers. But never fear! It's possible to get into the seasonal spirit, while mitigating the inevitable problem of messy and time-consuming relationships.

Send a bunch of love letters to a princess.

Love letter is a small box card game in which 2-4 players vie for the love of a fair maiden, the princess Annette. Players do this by manipulating members of the royal household into delivering their love letter to the princess. Every player has a love letter to deliver and must thwart other player's deliveries while ensuring their own reaches the princess. At the end of the game, the player who got the most letters to the princess wins her heart and her hand. Just like in real life.

This game is the fourth in the *Tempest Shared World* series of games from AEG. Chronologically this game appears after the sneaky *Dominaire* and before the clever trading of *Mercante*. *Love Letter* continues the story of the bustling city of *Tempest* mainly through a (rather terrible) extremely short story at the start of its rulebook, which explains the dethroning and arresting of Queen Marianna and sheds light on the plot of backstabbing and usurping to be expected from the historical fantasy setting. Quite a lot for such a small bag of cards and red cubes.

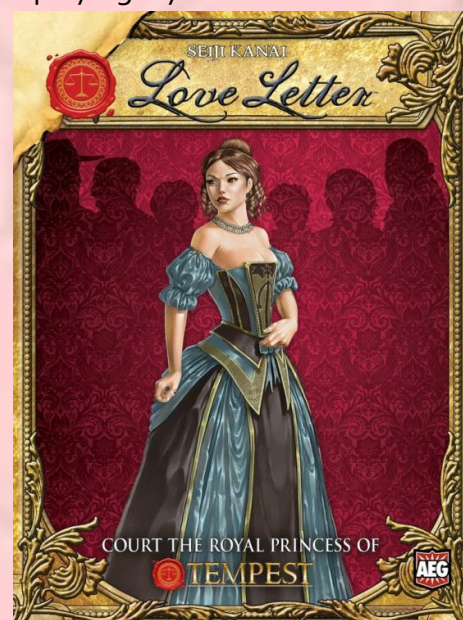
Speaking of the components, they are very limited here. This game is made of a deck of sixteen cards and fourteen red cubes. That's it. No bells. No whistles. Although, it does come in quite a nice little red velvet bag. The cards are pretty things to behold, mind you. The quality of

the art is definitely at a high level. That is, as long as you get the western release, the Japanese release boasts some rather unsightly cartoon forms of the former's lovely characters.

Considering this is such a tiny game, and is designed for up to four players, there is a surprising amount of depth and strategic fun to be had. The main strategy of the game is to try to work out (by their playing style and some novice-level card counting) what your opponents are holding and to try and exploit this. Think of it like an extremely low-stakes form of poker. The game's simplicity opens it up to be different on each play through because, like poker, the game acts more like a tool to play players than a game to be played by players. I hope that's not confusing.

What I'm getting at here is that *Love Letter* is a very smart, very nice little game. But really there's nothing else to it. This is not a game you would want to play, then instantly shuffle the deck and play again. Nor is it as nail-bitingly tense as other small player-motivation-working-out games such as *The Resistance*.

But games don't always have to change your life or be amazing. Sometimes just a quick little game that allows you to laugh at your friends can be the exactly what you're after. If it is, give *Love Letter* a try. Four cheaply-made red cubes out of five.



Life as a Blood Bowl Coach

By Liam Wright

Blood Bowl is a miniatures game set in a fantasy world where a game very much like American football, only much more violent and deadly, is played by the numerous races of the world. You field a team of players belonging one of the races of this world including Elves, Orc, Undead etc.



A couple of months ago I was approached by my friend about joining a blood bowl league his house mate was running. I had heard of Blood bowl before but had never really looked into it. I decided to take him up on his offer and look into buying myself a team, I researched the multitude of teams the game had and, in the end, settled on the Necromantic team. The Necromantic's are a team of Undead consisting of zombies, wights, ghouls, flesh golems and werewolves. I picked this team because of their unique play style which meant, unlike other teams, each player type has a very specific role on the team; unlike other races that have player which can be used in multiple positions. The other reason was because of their unique race abilities, the first being they could all regenerate

(barring the ghouls) from their injuries on a high enough roll, other ability being that if they kill an opponent's player it can be resurrected as a zombie on my side of the field for me to use.

I was given 100,000 gold with which to build my starting team roster. My final roster consists of:

- 5 zombies, called Frank, Derek, Roy, henry and Holio, as fodder for the frontline.
 - 2 Wights, called Harry and Larry, as my ball carriers and blockers
 - 2 werewolves, called Apollo and Soyuz, to attack as my fast chasers and blitzing blockers
 - 2 flesh golems, called Creation 1064 & Creation 1065, to attack as my impassable blockers.
- I decided to call my team 'Grave Consequences' and my head coach Frank Stein

My first game of the league was against the Chaos Dwarves

'Khuntzinhatz'. The Chaos Dwarfs are famous for their high armour values of 9, luckily my werewolves ignore armour on a rolls of 8 or higher, which means their high armour values were useless. Their team roster consisted of Dwarfs, Hobgoblins and Centaurs. My play style that game was to try and kill everything; I managed to kill one hobgoblin and seriously injure another. Using my special ability I was able to get a free zombie. Now my friend plays as wood elf (which I hate) and, in his first game, one of his players died, so the Chaos Dwarf coach and I came to a deal. I would take the elf instead of his hobgoblin, adding to my team roster Zombie Bastard Hands (original name being Monkey Bastard Hands). In the end the final score was Grave Consequences 0 vs. Khuntzinhatz 2.

My next game I was against the Orc team 'Da Monsters'. In this game I actually tried to score and I got Harry two spaces always from the end zone twice, but the Orcs managed tackled him both times! In the end I tried to go for my first tactic and to try and kill as many Orcs as I could, but again this tactic failed. My defence was a lot better in this game and the Orcs only managed to score once.

The final score was Grave Consequences 0 vs. Da Monsturs 1.

After these two games I was at the bottom of the league due to my lack of touchdowns. I resolved to train and edit my tactics to turn this slump around. I hired new players with the money I got from my first two matches, a ghoul called Burk. Ghouls are very good at picking the ball up, dodging and throwing it up the field. My next game was against the Lizard Men team 'Reptile Dysfunction', these guys have a spilt of really strong Sauruses and tiny weak runners known as Skinks. Using my new tactics I started with a defence heavy front line with the ghoul far back on my half to receive the kicked ball. Unfortunately my line got broken and the Skinks ran through to pick up the ball and run to score a touchdown. On the turnover, the ball landed on

Apollo, who ran with Harry to the end line to attempt to score a touchdown, true to current form though, a Saurus came up behind them and tackled Apollo to the ground causing him to drop the ball. The Saurus took the ball, handed it to a Skink who ran it to the touchdown line to score a second point. The tackle managed to badly hurt Apollo and he failed to regenerate from it so he had to miss the rest of the game. For the second half Soyuz was on a rampage; trying to kill as many Lizard Men to avenge Apollo's defeat, causing me to forget about scoring; unfortunately I was unable to kill any failing in both goals.

So my current experience of Blood Bowl has been one of enjoyment but also disappointment since I'm at the bottom of the league and I have yet to score a touchdown.

If you would like to read more about my experiences on the Blood Bowl field then please tell me on the Errational Thinking Facebook page, or on Twitter and I'll see if I can write up any of my other matches. I also write about my Blood Bowl experiences on:

<http://grave-consquences.tumblr.com>

Where I write from Frank Stein's perspective.

Biographies

Sally Brown - Flaily, excitable, bouncy and often found baking Companion Cubes. Sally Brown enjoys playing Magic the Gathering, Pokémon and losing herself in a good electronic RPG.

Emma Johnson – Writer, crochetier, student; decided to go for a normal-sounding bio so she'd stand out.

Patrick McDeany - Patrick is mostly the gamer who watches and waits for the perfect moment to display how insane he really is. He prefers to play in games rather than run them, keeping a good balance of crazy and on track. He will try any game once whether it's card games, board games or RPG's.

Joey Thomas – Joey Thomas wants to be the very best, like no-one ever was. To sketch them is his real test; to paint them is his cause.

Liam Wright – Liam Wright originally hails from Norfolk and, as such, constant gets abuse for his supposed 'farmer upbringing', even though no one in his family owns or works on a farm.