

# WANTED!



FOR

# ERRATIONAL THINKING

## BOUNTY, DEAD OR ALIVE



# Contents

Emporium of Exotic Games	4
The Very Distant Generation	6
Ace Card Games	8
Tripped	10
Magic Card of the Month	12



Welcome back dear Readers.

Happy New Year and all that hoo-ha.

I suppose now, since it is the start of the new year, people have invested themselves in 'New Year's Resolutions': strange rituals involving eating less, sweating more and generally being a better person. That is, of course, until we all realise the truth behind human frailties and continue our lazy, bingeing, tyrannical rampage across the world whilst saying: 'Well, I gave it a go and realised it just isn't me.'

I, for one, didn't actually bother with a resolution this year; the best I could think up was: continue to work on building the altar that will someday bring Cthulhu into this world to rule over us all. And, let's face it, that's not the most original resolution, now is it...

Back to more serious matters: alas, this month's issue is a little sparse – I blame it on the resolutions, personally. But, we still have, as ever, another unique Magic: The Gathering Card of the Month; a little more commercially-based than usual. Liam Wright is back with another card game review, delving into his childhood to bring you a game he never actually played himself. Another new writer joins our fold, writing his Rogue Trader 40k universe into reality. We also welcome, finally, to the biographies page our wonderful graphic designer, Joseph Thomas, who works tirelessly on creating our front covers and banners, and whom I have neglected to add in until now.

Thus, Reader, resolve yourself and read on.

- Editor Emma





*By Joseph Gilbert*

Roma. City of culture, heartland of the Empire, birthplace of magic. Or rather, it is in this Alternate History RPG. Roma Imperious is a game that asks: "What if the Romans had magic?" and runs with it, exploring all the possible impacts of magic upon Roman society, and how a magic-powered Roman Empire impacted the world. The premise for the game is rather simple: during the rule of Constantine, pressed to defeat Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, he turns to a group of ambitious druids. They perform a ritual, calling on their gods to give victory to Constantine. This brings magic into the world, forever changing the course of history. Four hundred years later, magic is an everyday tool used throughout the Empire—and beyond.

With the gift of magic within their hands, the Romans studied it, progressing it far beyond the meagre rituals of the barbarian tribes, easily expanding and consolidating their power across the European continent, through the Middle East and across northern Africa. This mighty empire is the heart of the world and nothing happens in Roma without others feeling the after effects. But despite this power, or maybe because of it, Roma has many enemies.

Whilst the focus of the setting is Roma and the wider Roman Empire, it also examines the world outside of the Empire, consisting of the eastern Jade Empire, ruled by a Han Emperor who discovered the secret of immortality. These Eastern mages consider the Roman Empire to a grave threat, and have often been in conflict with them. Skandia is the home of the Norse, who, due to population pressure and the might

of the Empire to the south, have taken to their ships and gone west, forming colonies throughout the western hemisphere. They are ruled over by Odin, Thor and the other Norse gods, who walk amongst their people, granting them the power to fight the Trolld, giants and the most feared Manes Atrox. The final realm outside of Roma is Alkasas, a kingdom of evil wizard-priests, who occupy what would be modern day northern Russia. Ruled over by a king, they wage a deadly war of intrigue against the Romans.

Roma Imperious uses the Iridium System, a universal game mechanics system that can quickly be applied to any setting. The system itself can be broken down into four sections: skills, classes & levels, magic and combat. Skills are based on a curved progression, meaning that as you advance, it becomes more costly to improve for a smaller gain. These advances are split into skill levels, each with its own success rate—one skill level is 40%, two skill levels are 60%, three levels make for a 70% success rate and so forth. Each skill can also be grouped into one of six types; Fighter, Thief, Intellectual, Performer, Craft, and Movement, which align with the four classes of the game. Skills that fall into a character's Class Skills or Class Type will receive a bonus for each level of advancement.

There are four classes used by the Iridium system: Fighter, Thief, Intellectual and Craftsmen. These classes provide a starting point for characters to develop—whilst a thief need not restrict himself to thief skills, he starts with a number of initial skills from the thief skill list, and also has improved skill progression for those types of skills.

Magic in fact consists of three separate systems;



the Spell Point, Free Form and Dictated systems, allowing for full flexibility. All sentient creatures have spell points, which the Spell Point system uses points to cast spells, selected from groups called 'realms'. Should a character's spell point total dip to -10, that character dies, but each spell has a chance of regenerating these points.

The Free Form system relies on channelling an external power through a character's body, with the body working as both a capacitor and a resistor. As more power is passed through the body, which is not a perfect conductor, fatigue builds up; this needs to be cleansed with rest. Too much fatigue and the body struggles to cope; failing at the task, or even dying from the effort.

The final system, the Dictated system, is a cross between the Spell Point and the Free Form systems. It involves a single power or groups of specific powers (i.e. casting a lightning bolt) that the practitioner may cast via a dice roll. The modifier for success is fixed, as is the effect of the feat. When the modifier is as large, or larger than the statistic it is tested against then the feat can no longer be performed until the character rests.

The combat system aims for a blend of realism and simplicity. As such, certain features are oversimplified whilst others are made more complex. A character's body is split into ten areas, each of which affect the base defensive value slightly differently—the head, for example, halves it, whilst the limbs double it. An attacker must roll above the defensive value of whichever area they hit. Optional rules can simplify this to a simple hit points pool, however. Each character, in initiative order, may choose to either perform an attack, or an action, which causes no damage, but can be strategically important.

Roma Imperious is a game dedicated to its setting. The long term goal of any playgroup using this should be to explore the wonderfully detailed world that has been built from the simple idea of "Magic Romans". An easy to learn and flexible rules set that can be applied to any setting imaginable is a nice addition that should keep many gaming groups heavily entertained as well. Overall, it is an excellent example of alternate history that any fan of fantasy can enjoy. Ad gloriam!

The PDF and other information can be found here: <http://roma.hinterwelt.com/>



# THE VERY DISTANT GENERATION

By Josh Curzon

It is the 41<sup>st</sup> Millennium,  
and there is only war.

For more than a hundred centuries, the Emperor has sat immobile on the golden throne of Earth. He is master of Mankind by the will of the gods, and master of a million worlds by the might of his inexhaustible armies. He is a rotting carcass writhing invisibly with power from the Dark Age of Technology. He is the Carrion Lord of the Imperium, for whom a thousand souls a day are sacrificed every day, so that he may never truly die.

Yet in this deathless state, the Emperor continues his eternal vigilance. Mighty battle fleets cross the demon infested Warp, the only route between distant stars, their way lit by the light of the Astronomican, the psychic manifestation of the Emperor's will. Vast armies give battle in His name on uncounted worlds. The greatest amongst His soldiers are the Adeptus Astartes, the Space marines, Bio-engineered super-warriors. Their comrades-in-arms are legio: The Imperial Guard and countless Planetary Defence Forces, the ever-vigilant Inquisition and the Tech Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus, to name but a few.

But, for all their multitudes, they are barely enough to hold off the ever present threat of Aliens, Heretics, Mutants – and worse.

To be a man in such times is to be one amongst untold billions.

It is to live in the cruellest and most bloody regime imaginable.

For in the grim dark future there is only war, or death.

In these dark times travel the Rouge Traders. Privateers and explorers, sanctioned by ancient and holy Warrants of Trade, they cross the

Imperium and explore the space beyond the reach of the Astronomican's light, tasked with the most shady and dangerous of the Emperor's work. Nothing is out of bounds to a Rogue Trader, and oftentimes they find themselves on the wrong side of the Imperium's laws. Each Rouge Trader has his own Dynasty and retinue, and even the poorest Rouge Trader possess more wealth than an entire planet's nobility. Working ever for the glory of their Dynasty, and to increase their own wealth and prestige, Rouge Traders are as unpredictable as the wonders they search for just beyond the next star.

Our tale begins in the Calixis Segmentum, covering most of the Galaxy's northern side. On the fringes of the Segmentum lies a pocket of powerful warpstorms, where the fabric of reality has temporarily given way to the shifting energies of the Empyrean, the Warp. Nestled within these storms is the Koronus Expanse, a varied collection of systems on the edge of Imperial control, the Expanse is host to many races of vile Exeno, foul Heretics and the mysteries of the Universe, as well as the myriad followers of the Emperor, accessible only via a narrow corridor through the largest of the Warp Storms.

At the mouth of this passage rests the vast space station Port Wander, swarming with countless ships and filling space with a thousand languages from across the Imperium. Slowly, a long, sleek vessel slips through the void, armoured prow carving the way before its elegantly decorated hull. Curving pillars and arches, each dozens of meters in length and width, merge seamlessly with the massive spires of the ship's dorsal hull, each dwarfed in size by the great tower towards the ship's aft. Its hull is painted a subtle bronze-gold, adorned with large



Golden Aquilla icons, and the name *Gloria Aquilla* stands proudly beneath them.

Gradually, the bright orange- yellow flames of the Ship's massive plasma drive recede into the distance, lost amidst the flurry of similar pinpricks milling around Port Wander, which dwarfs most every ship in the area.

The Gloria Aquilla is here for but one purpose, to serve the noble and beloved Van Furyon Dynasty.

Renowned for his devotion to the God Emperor and his Imperial Creed, the leading Rogue Trader, Hieronymo Van Furyon, has summoned his two eldest sons to The Expanse to follow a lead on the lost treasure ship *Righteous Path*, said to contain vast wealth stolen from the Imperium long ago.

There are, however, a few problems with this.

Firstly, both Neixou and Xanatov Van Furyon despise each other. Secondly, the older, more successful and rightful-heir, Neixou, has been forced in to a deep coma, and his body is entombed within a stasis sarcophagus aboard the *Aquilla's* bridge. His brother, in light of this predicament, has been tasked with babysitting Neixou. With Xanatov are his close friend, and fellow Verghastite, the holy Missionary Torrian Stubbs, the wise seneschal Quirilli, the powerful Navigator Veneligrath Viv and the grizzled Voidmaster Nate.

"Gloria Aquilla" the metallic voice rang out, echoing across the ornately decorated bridge, "You are cleared for docking at bay 35 Sigma. Welcome to Port Wander, m'lord."

Atop his command throne, Xanatov Van Furyon smiled to himself at the deference of the servitor over the vox, turning to Nate and uttering his orders.

"You heard him! Prepare to dock, Bay 35 Sigma!" Nate roared immediately, swatting a serf on the head as he passed on his way to the foremost control bank. Instantly the scores of servitors and serfs on the bridge set to work, and gradually the view outside the main viewports

shifted to a cluster of colossal docks set into one of Port Wander's protruding arms.

An hour later, and the *Gloria Aquilla* was drifting gracefully in to dock. Fitting snugly inside the confines of the adamantine recess, the *Aquilla* shuddered slightly as the docking ramps of the port rose up, sliding into position. Immediately servitors rushed forwards, ensuring the ramps were secure and standing ready to assist with the unloading of cargo and passengers. Along the edge of the dock, squads of Arbites – Law enforcement – held back a flood of merchants, nobles, peddlers and traders. A priest from the Ministorium, flanked by two Adapta Sororitas battle sisters stood on a raised dais, preaching to the bustling throng of human traffic along the dockside; Distantly, Thunderhawk gunships could be seen taking flight, ferrying supplies from a Space Marine Battlebarge in orbit.

At the top of the ramps, a great hissing escaped from the looming frigate as her great side hatches whirled open, unleashing a great cloud of steam and stale air. At the centre most hatch, standing proud amidst the immediate chaos of unloading supplies, Xanatov Van Furyon drank in the scene before him as his friends gathered. Now he would go forth, to bring honour and glory to the noble Dynasty of Van Furyon!



# Liam's Ace Card Games

By Liam Wright

This month I thought I would review a card game which has been around for years. It was very popular in the go's, when I was a child; almost everyone I know owned at least a booster pack of cards, but at the time none of us actually know how to play it. If you haven't guessed already, this month's review is the Pokémon Trading Card Game.

I'm fairly certain most of you owned some Pokémon TGC cards as a child. When I was a child I didn't play it, like everyone else I traded my cards to try and get that coveted Charizard everyone wanted. It was years later, when I was 13-14 years old that I actual learnt to play it, and I can say, without a doubt, it is probably one of the simplest TCG's I have ever learnt to play.

## The Game

In Pokémon there are three types of cards, Pokémon, energy and trainer cards.



The Pokémon cards are the cards you use to battle your opponent's Pokémon; you can have any number of them in your 60 card deck. When you start playing you take all the basic type Pokémon in your hand and place one up front in the battle zone and up to six on the bench. You

can evolve one Pokémon per turn, if you have its next stage evolution card in your hand; this makes your Pokémon a lot more powerful. Each of your Pokémon have attacks they can perform with different abilities and attack strengths, in order to use these attacks you must have enough of the right type of energy attached to them, which is where the energy cards come in.



Each turn you are able to attach one energy card from your hand to any one Pokémon you have on the field. There are eight energy types: grass, fire, water, electric, fighting, psychic, steel and dark.



The last types of card are the trainer cards. There are two different types of trainer cards: support and items. You can only play one support per turn and these normally play as many item cards as you like and these normal have varying effects like search your deck for certain cards, discard an energy card from any allow you to draw more



cards. You can opponents Pokémon etc. Some item cards are also Pokémon tools which can be attached to your Pokémon to give them extra effects and abilities.

### The Good

The first point in Pokémon's favour is its simplicity to learn and play. When I first picked it up it only took me about 15 minutes to learn, as almost everything you need to know is on the cards; any extra rules are conveniently located on the play mat you get with the deck.

The second point in Pokémon's favour is the huge number of customisation options the games allow for deck building. There are over 600 different Pokémon with which to build your deck around (and that's not including the different variants of most Pokémon). There are also no restrictions on what proportion of the deck is each card type, so you could build a deck with a higher ratio of trainer cards, you could build one with few energy cards, lots of Pokémon and a few trainer cards that all focus on getting energy out of the deck.

### The Bad

So I have now raved about the good points, but what about the bad points.

Pokémon TCG only really has one thing wrong with it, but it's a pretty big problem in my opinion. There's a huge power balance problem in the form of legendary Pokémon. These are all very powerful, basic Pokémon cards. The problem with them being basic is that you can play from the start and wipe the floor with your opponent, if they can't get their basics evolved. Normally I would expect cards like this to have some sort of limit on them, like 'only four per deck', or some other rule, but they do not. They are meant to be hard to get hold of, but that really isn't the case: I have played a number of games where my opponent has built a deck of almost exclusively legendary Pokémon and my

deck do have a chance of winning because I have none.

### The Final Verdict

As a whole, Pokémon TCG is a good, enjoyable game, if it had some sort of ruling in place to limit the use of legendary Pokémon it would be near perfect.

Because of the severe power balance issue, and the amount of time Pokémon TCG has had to perfect itself and sort this problem out, I award an average score of 2.5 card suits of four.







# TRIPPED!

By Emma Johnson

## Fall 3: Over Their Own Feet

Bravely ignoring the accusation, Tiff moved onwards: 'You'll see... Young one - I'll prove my manliness!'

'You're right, he does sound familiar,' the soft tinkle of the fox-eared girl's voice brought Tiff's attention back.

'Wait, what? I'm just a bland generic knight, see...' he stumbled over his deflating ego and briefly over the leg of the coffee table.

'Did you say "blind"?' Tobi's eyebrow twitched upwards, getting lost in his fringe; not bothering to stop and ask for directions.

'Bland. Bland,' Tiff stood back up again. 'But I don't know; this helmet can disrupt my vision a bit.'

'Okay...' Tobi cleared his disbelieving throat. 'How 'bout you, Soda Guy?'

'That better not become my nickname... Kegluneq.'

A spray of tea directed itself across the room, from the puppeteer woman's mouth, to shower the peculiarly named boy. 'Sorry, what?'

'Bless you.' Tiff offered his handkerchief to him, the maille mop doing little to soak up the residue.

'Kegluneq. Keg-la-knack.'

'I think Soda Guy was a better name...' Tobi's mouth twitched a small, sly smile that quickly vanished.

Surprisingly aware of the growing animosity in the room, Tiff clapped his hands together sending vibrations through his suit that turned him to jelly and, shakily, he addressed the two women: 'How 'bout you, young maidens? What might your names be?'

'Kitsune, of course,' the fox-eared girl flipped her hair slightly, getting her fingers caught briefly in surprise tangles.

'I'm Ralala.'

'Ralala?'

'Ralala,' the puppeteer nodded.

'Ralala?' Tobi, feeling left out, also questioned her name.

'Ralala,' she nodded again.

'And, uhh, what might your lovely puppets be called?'

'Fe and Fo,' she drew them closer to her chest, eying up the Nephilim carefully.

'How's it going, Fe and Fo?' Tobi extended a hand towards them for a well-meaning handshake, but it was ruthlessly slapped away by Ralala, who hissed ever so slightly under her breath, her eyes twitching like those of cat clock on the wall.

'Where's Fi and Fum?' the fox-eared girl giggled nervously in the hush of the room, but she was hastily ignored.

The tense elastic-band silence stretched even further; before snapping at the slam of a door in the upper regions of the house, followed by the galumphing of footsteps down the stairs.

'It's not me,' Tiff's helmet echoed nervously.

'I think we can work that one out, thanks Tiff,' Tobi sighed, a weak air spirit left in his lungs expelled to drift around the room.

A particularly stout, round-bellied, middle-aged, overly-hyphenated man stepped into the room. He bore a similar resemblance to the old woman, his nose portraying the same slightly crooked edge and squinting eyes that peered over the rim of his glasses.

'Uhh, uhh, you here about the job?' his voice was a mix of nerves and a peculiar foreign accent that no one quite cared to place. A



welcoming grin was plastered over his face, making no one feel welcome.

'Yeah,' Tobi eyed the man, his mouth stretching a somewhat wary smile in reply.

'He's here for the beer,' Soda Guy laughed at his own joke, the rest of the room silent and avoiding looking in his direction.

'Well, that's great. Great,' their presumed employer let out a disappointed sigh. 'Umm. Yeah, so, what are you all? You look like...' his eyes glanced around the collective of people in his living room, his sighs growing heavier with his surmounting worries. 'Yeah... I was hoping for heroes.'

The ball dropped and the elastic on Tiff's boxers snapped, leaving everyone suitably shocked and the room silent once again.



# MAGIC

## The Gathering

# Card of the Month

By Tom Copping

It's easy to overlook the economic structure of the many planes in Magic: the Gathering, when Planeswalkers are flinging spells in every direction. Yet the mundane, everyday lives of citizens without mystical powers are captured magnificently in this month's card: Trading Post.



Rare, for just 4 colourless mana, Trading Post captures all the flavour in its own rules text. Each ability is another busy transaction in the bustling city. Turn 4 is normally when the bigger

threats start to hit the field, however, while merchants and wholesalers might not be able to discourage your opponent's unfriendly Baloth from tearing you a new one, its strengths lie in its utilities.

You get four options from this card alone, with an investment of one mana and differing requirements. When you're receiving a pounding each turn and that extra land in your hand isn't providing much help, 4 life from 1 mana is usually just about sufficient to last that extra turn.

Or perhaps you've ended up with 2 life and their hulking 6/6 creature is charging straight at you.

A single life investment will net you a surprise goat as a blocker to divert whatever threat they have and save you from that lethal blow, provided they don't have trample or can otherwise evade it.

If your opponent is more of the destructive type, and has been picking off your artifacts with removal spells, the goat makes a nice trade to gain you access to that one valuable artifact which got destroyed too early.

Or perhaps you just really need to search through your deck as fast as possible. You can sell off the artifact and play the odds of being able to draw something you need. And if that doesn't work, you can repeat it all over again!

A common misconception from people seeing this card is that, in 4 turns, activating each of the abilities in order will only get you 3 life and a red looting ability for a 4 mana and 4 turn investment; it seems hardly profitable in the long run. However, there is no obligation to use all of these abilities in a certain order. You simply use whatever ability the situation calls for. Small profits throughout the game can greatly assist in getting the advantage.

Now the question is: what can you do to better improve productivity? You'd normally only be able to use this once per turn, though artifact-untapping cards such as Clock of Omens, or Voltaic Key will allow two uses during your turn, or leave transactions open during your opponent's turn. And there are many options in the Scars of Mirrodin block which work wonders with this card. How about a Myrsmith, netting you a 1/1 Myr with each artifact you play for another 1 mana investment? That Myr can get you graveyard access, or can be sacrificed as an



artifact for another card. An Ichor Wellspring can net you 3 more cards from interacting with Trading Post, and a Solemn Simulacrum fits the best of both worlds!

Overall it makes for a great utility card, especially in artifact-heavy decks. But even in decks stronger in colours, over artifacts, one or two abilities will often help with nearly any deck. Whatever you're in the market for, there's bound to be a deal for you at the Trading Post.



# Biographies

*Tom Copping* - Tom is an aspiring slacker who has found a way to stay 12 years old forever, despite his passport saying otherwise. But good luck prying the secret of eternal youth from him.

*Josh Urzon* - Devilishly handsome and utterly sophisticated, Josh is the resident demi-Lore master for all things relating to the grim and distant future of mankind. New to running campaigns, this evil genius none the less has many dark surprises hidden under his cloak of darkness (+10 concealment)

*Joseph Gilbert* - Some say Joseph Gilbert is a Scion of Cthulhu, heralding the end times. Others say that he is a time-traveling superspy seeking to cause and prevent certain events for his cyborg masters. A few even whisper that he is a regular geek who lives through the internet from his parent's basement.

*Emma Johnson* – Editor, writer, crotcheter and nocturnal student. Currently hoping to return to some semblance of normal sleeping, but currently failing.

*Joey Thomas* -The graphic designer, Joey likes long walks under starry skies, carefree conversation, and poking dead things with sticks. A gaming newbie, he spends more time trying to understand the tabletop-terminology written in his design notes than he does actually drawing!

*Liam Wright* - Liam Wright enjoys spending his little free time playing and testing table top RPG's, board games and Trading card games.