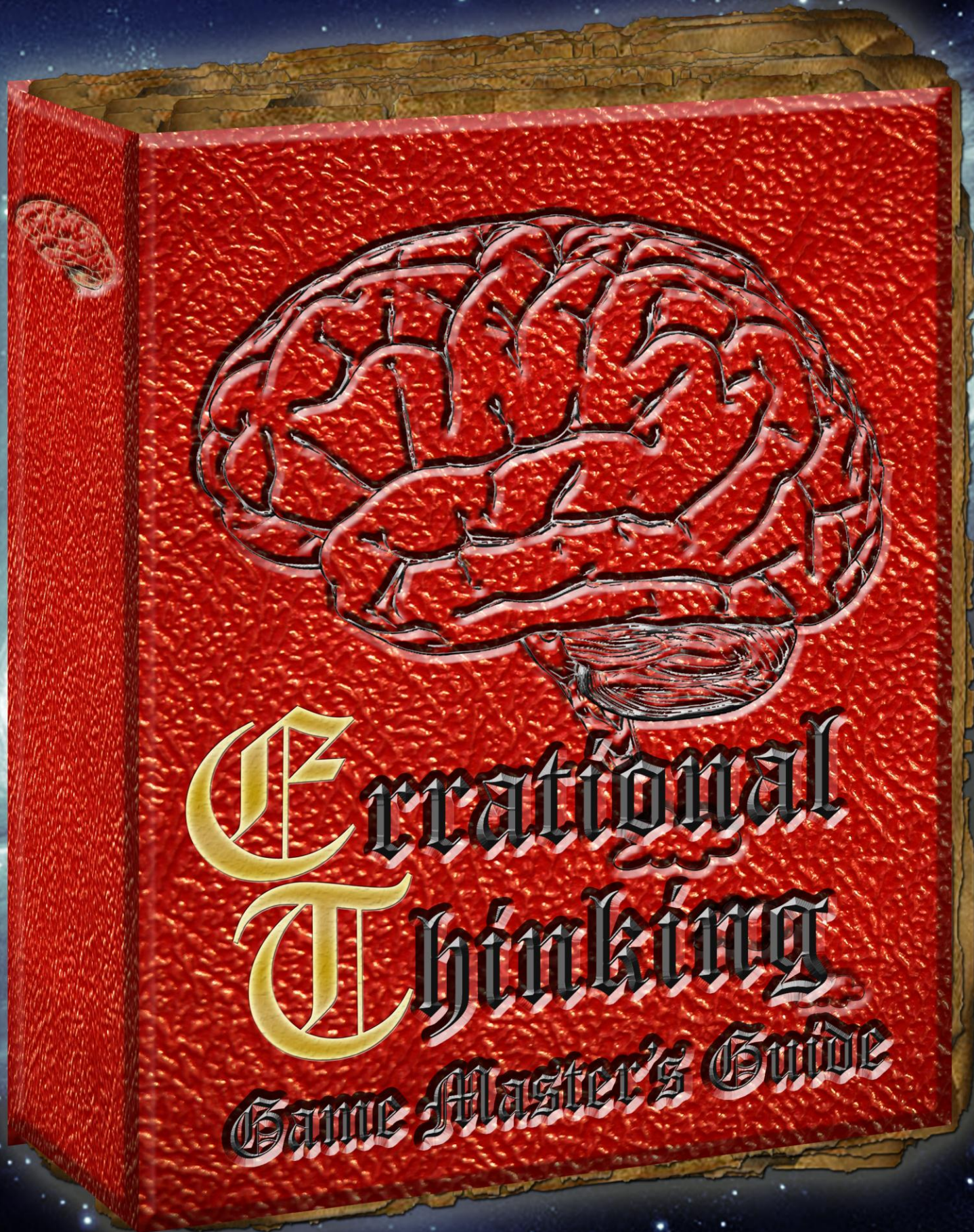


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Dear readers,

To begin, I would like to welcome you most humbly to the first of what will hopefully be many editions of Errational Thinking Magazine.

It's been a long, hard slog this past month fraught with missed deadlines, sleep deprivation and drying my tears with yet another bottle of wine.

However, somehow, some way, through sheer determination (and a lot of threats) I can proudly launch the proverbial boat that is this magazine.

My hope is, dear readers, that you will gain some glimmer of entertainment or enjoyment from the articles that lie within – we've all worked marvellously hard on them, regardless of how late they were appearing in my inbox and, I must say, I'm incredibly proud of those who have contributed to this, our greatest hurdle.

In fact, I don't think we would have made it this far without the help of a few wonderful people, namely: the technical monkey, Liam, who worked tirelessly (when I gave him deadlines) to set-up the website and wade through the tasks I kept flinging at him; our resident artist, Joe, who, from my half-backwards, half-ridiculous, 100% unworkable ideas produced beautiful banners and the first of our front-covers, and all the people who had to spackle over the walls once I'd finished banging my head against them. So, thanks guys, you're all stars and once you finish reading this you should get to work making the next edition just as superb.

Thus, dear readers, I leave you to leaf through the pages of our magazine, tripping heroically across the recountings of our RPG sessions, intriguing card games, vengeful veggies and all the other ridiculous, splendiferous things that await you.

Yours ever.

- Editor Emma





By Emma Johnson

## Fall One: The Start of a Tumble

Yularia was both the first and the last of the moons to be colonised. When humans developed magic for use in space travel, they chose the most convenient moon to begin with - one that was small, but fertile. However, as technology developed beyond the rudimentary mechanics Yularia could support, it became abandoned, populated by the few who wished it to remain as it was.

The moon now is a haven for those who wish to get away from the busyness of the main planet and the advances that are still being made. As such, the citizens have remained trapped in a mindset befitting old customs and prejudices, with only the City of Animos remaining a hub of tolerance for the races that inhabit the planetary system.

Animos City is also renowned for its many mercenary guilds, which regularly post missions or requests for aid, for each of the moons and, on occasion, the main planet.

A recent post on the Guild of Shadows notice board called for a group of heroes to fulfil a dangerous mission, at a high reward. The notice had no information besides the address of the patron and the meeting time, but, regardless, it was attractive enough for a few hapless adventurers to find themselves outside the unassuming, unattractive house that was 21 Pentacle Street.

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'Hmph, poser,' a gruff voice echoed from the inside of a battle-hardened suit of armour. 'Smoking doesn't make you cool. It just makes you less of a man.'

A gentle puff of cigarette smoke drifted from the mouth of a tired Nephilim, who simply sighed

at the comment.

'Are we going to knock, or do you wish to continue this elsewhere?' more smoke drifted from between his canine teeth, the air slightly swirling it around his horns before it dissipated.

'Since I'm the only one manly enough here, I guess I'll have to do it.' The tin man's words were slightly quieter than before, only just managing to slip between the gaps in his visor. He knocked consciously on the door, the abrasive thud disappearing into the house.

The small group shuffled awkwardly amongst themselves, each a stranger to the other and thoroughly perturbed from any further conversation.

A bolt pulled across the door from the inside and it opened to reveal a hunched old lady.

'Hell-'

Before the elderly woman could speak an entire word, the masculine knight pushed himself to the front and stuck out his hand.

'Hello! We're looking for work!'

'Ohhh... You must be here about the job advert. Please, come inside,' her voice shook as much as her body, as she doddered away from the door. 'Would anyone like any tea?'

At the mention of tea, a feminine voice erupted from the group.

'I do!' A pretty young woman threw back her hood, her eyes glistening in expectation; her previous shyness thrown away like a used tea bag.

The knight, who was forced to duck under the doorframe to fit his manliness through, entered behind the excitable woman.

'Do you have any beer?' the tin suit echoed.

From behind, a young boy, of no more than about 16, dressed in full-body black leather, also put forward his request: 'Soda?'

Unsure of how to answer and perhaps too tired to even try, the old woman hobbled away, calling 'I'll check,' over her shoulder.

The haphazard group excused themselves into a well-lit living room, furnished with things that



probably should have been thrown away at the end of the last century. A fireplace roared in the corner, the lion's mouth archway expectantly awaiting fuel.

Excited by the prospect of tea, the young woman seated herself hyperactively on the edge of a sofa, glancing around every so often for the glint of a silver tea tray.

The others also sat: the boy in a lone seat by the fireplace, the Nephilim on the same sofa as the woman and the, still-cloaked woman, alone, across the table. Only the knight still stood, having tested the flexibility of his armour and found it inadequate for sitting.

An uncomfortable silence stretched out over the comfortable seating, the group each looking anywhere but the eyes of their newfound companions. The knight eyed the Nephilim from the safety of his helmet, not quite liking the strange half-breed; the tea-obsessed woman did the same, though not nearly as intently.

As a small clock chimed 42 minutes past, the old woman came back, a tray wobbling precariously in her hands.

She placed down cups of tea in front of each of the adventurers, apart from the boy, to whom she handed a bottle of unbranded soda.

'No beer I'm afraid, but there was a bottle of soda in the pantry, not too sure how it got there though...' she drifted off for a while, the group simply staring at her. 'Ah, yes,' she jumped a little at her own reanimation. 'Young master should be down shortly. Please wait here,' she shuffled away before anyone could reply, leaving the room quiet, save for the ticking of an ominous-looking cat clock and the slurping of tea from the young woman's cup.



# Liam's Ace Card Games

By Liam Wright

I have always enjoyed playing card games and currently play a lot of the more common ones on the market, like Magic: The Gathering, Pokémon and Yu-Gi-Oh, but I thought it might be interesting to showcase some of the lesser-known ones that I have also tried out.

*Cardfight!! Vanguard* is a Trading Card Game (TCG) that hails from Japan. It is based on a TV series of the same name; in the series they play the card game in exactly the same way as it is played in the real world.

The card game differs from many other TCGs in the fact that there is only one type of card. Normally in a TCG your deck is made up of numerous different types of cards such as creatures, spells, equipment and so on. In *Cardfight!! Vanguard* there are only creatures cards.

## How is it Played?

The game is fairly simple to play and, although I won't teach you how to play, I will give you a brief overview. Symbol

The main objective of the game is to deal damage to your opponent's Vanguard; once you have dealt 6 damage, your opponent loses the game.



Play Mat

The blue circle in the centre of the top row is where you play your Vanguard creature; this is your main creature on the field. If this card is attacked, and the damage goes through, you take damage equal to the critical value of the attacking creature.

The yellow circles are your Rearguard creatures. The Rearguards on the front row; along with your Vanguard, can be used to attack your opponent's front row Rearguards and Vanguard.

The Rearguards on the back row can be used to boost the attack power of those in front of them on the front row, if they have the Boost ability.

The green semi-circle is the Guardian circle; when your cards are attacked you can place cards into this space to add their defence value to the card that is being attacked, this will bring its power above the attacking value. When Vanguards attack other Vanguards a drive check is done. A drive check is where you reveal the top card of your library and, if it is a trigger card; on a Grade 0 the trigger effect resolves.

## The Good

As I mentioned before, the card game is fairly simple to play and is also very easy to learn. There are starter decks to help you create your first deck. The 'trigger check' system for when your vanguard attacks, or is attacked, is quite interesting as it adds an element of mystery to combat. If you, like myself, enjoy the artwork on cards, then you will adore the full-panel art style used in *Cardfight!! Vanguard*.

## The Bad

One bad thing about *Cardfight!! Vanguard* is that, even though there are many different clans with which to build your deck, there are starter decks



for only four of them. In order to build one for a different clan you would have to buy booster packs, which only contain five cards each, so it would take a long time and a lot of money. Another problem with *Cardfight!! Vanguard* is there are few UK suppliers at the moment, so it can be problematic finding places to buy starter decks and boosters from.

### To Sum Up

*Cardfight!! Vanguard* is one of those card games that, despite its problems, is still surprisingly good and it is a shame that it has little support in the UK at the moment. I think that, if they make building decks for other Clans more accessible, the game may become more popular in the future.



Final Rating: 3.5/4  
Suits

### The Card Explained

#### Grade

This is the Grade of the unit; these range from 0-3, with each Grade giving a slightly different ability. The symbol underneath indicates the card's Grade Ability; the one on this card is Boost, which is found on Grade 0 and 1 units. Grade 2s have the ability Intercept, which allows cards on the front rear guard to add their defence score to your Vanguards. Grade 3s have Twin Drive, which allows them to do two drive checks when attacking instead of one.

#### Defence


The defensive strength that a card can add when used to defend. This is only found on Grade 0 to 2 creatures.

#### Trigger Effect

The 'trigger effect', is only found on some Grade 0 cards and is used to affect a card by adding 5000 to its attack strength. There are also four different trigger effects. The 'Heal' trigger allows the player to heal one damage if their damage is equal to, or more than, their opponent's. The 'Stand' Trigger allows the player to stand one of their rested units. The 'Critical' trigger adds an extra critical to the unit's attack. 'Draw' allows the player to draw a card.

#### Ability

Some cards have unique abilities. The flavour text adds characterisation to the cards.



#### Attack

This is on all creatures ranging from 4000 to more than 20000.

#### Critical

The card's critical is the amount of damage a card does to an opponent.

#### Clan

There are a number of clans from which to build deck. This section indicates which one the card belongs to.





By Lauren Jones







By Joseph Gilbert

In most role playing games, the player takes on the role of a wise wizard, a fierce fighter, a stealthy scout, or any other of the hundreds of traditional archetypes. Not so in this month's game. Because, in *The Veggie Patch*, you play as vegetables.

Yes, vegetables.

Magical vegetables that think, move and talk, admittedly, but still vegetables. Vegetables that get into a lot of trouble.

The premise of the game is that you play as an animated vegetable that lives in the 'Vegetable Patch', which you must defend from the savage Weed Tribes and the evil Brassica Collective.

Yes, Brussel Sprouts are evil.

Despite the inherent humour in the premise and rulebook, don't go mistaking it for a light hearted game - the extensive background lore is very dark. Mere hours after the vegetables became self-aware, they were attacked by the Weeds, who killed— yes, killed— dozens of veggies before they could mount a resistance. The Brassica Collective, who live in the neighbouring field, practices torture and slavery, believing themselves to be superior to other species of plants, with a near-religious devotion. As far as the characters within the game are concerned, everyday life is serious business.

There are a large number of vegetables for players to choose from – 15 in fact, from no-nonsense Carrots to daredevil Tomatoes, each with their own identity and characteristics. Leeks follow the motto of 'work hard, play hard', whilst Onions are a bunch of cry-babies, prone to burst

into tears at a moment's notice. The rules system is also easy to adapt,

Allowing you to play any variety of vegetable that isn't mentioned.

On the other side of the hedge, you have the vegetables of the Brassica Collective, the tyrannical Broccoli, the brutish Brussel Sprouts and the zealous Cauliflowers, amongst others, who provide a real and tangible threat to the inhabitants of the patch, as well as the Weed Tribes – savage Daisies, Dandelions and Thistles.

When it comes to the rules system, it is very simple, each character having five traits- interaction, manipulation, move, smarts and strength, along with health, defence and compost (which acts as a currency). In order to do something in the game, you take a value from whichever trait is appropriate for the task and add it to 2d6. If the resulting number is higher than the difficulty score (set by the gamemaster), you pass, otherwise, you fail.

PC-NPC interaction and world exploration is the main focus of the game, although the violent nature of the setting does mean that combat is likely. Indeed, in combat, the number your dice roll has to exceed is the defender's defence value, rather than an arbitrary number supplied by the gamemaster. There is no experience point system in place, instead at the end of a session you choose to increase either one of your traits or your health.

Overall, *The Veggie Patch* combines a lighthearted premise and an easy to pick up rules system with a dark and violent world, making it an excellent choice for both silly one-shots and longer, more serious campaigns (or vice versa). Some players may be let down by the simplicity of



the rules system, but I feel it works in its favour, allowing a group to quickly pick it up and play without having to spend hours learning the rules, leaving more time to enjoy the nutrient-rich setting.



# MAGIC

The Gathering

## Card of the Month

By Emma Johnson

### Battle of Wits

Recently re-released in the M13 set of Magic: The Gathering, Battle of Wits is a card that, I feel, truly defines insanity.



Earth would you even have 200 or more cards in your library at the beginning of your upkeep?

It's ridiculous, insane and I've actually made a deck to cater for it.

Thinking logically, in order to have 200 cards in your library when this takes effect, you would have to have a minimum of about 250 in there to begin with, since you would have to take land, other spells and defending your life total into consideration.

At the same time, your deck would have to be littered with search cards as Diabolical Tutor, which allows you to look for any card in your deck, and cards like Terramorphic Expanse and Evolving Wilds, so you get the right type of land.

But, what if the impossible happens – you're 100 cards into your deck, you still haven't found a search card, or Battle of Wits, you're

The enchantment is, for its effect, fairly cheap to cast and, unless an opponent can quickly counter or destroy it, victory is virtually assured.

However, given that a standard deck is 60 cards and, in most situations you wouldn't build a deck much larger than that, how on

down to your last smidgen of health and then, when all perceivable hope is lost, you find it!

Then what? Your library would only have 150 cards in it, so the effect wouldn't happen. What you then need are cards like Elixir of Immortality or Quest for Ancient Secrets to shuffle your graveyard back into your library.

So, at what point does it end? I would think around 375 cards, if not more, seems reasonable – there's enough leeway to throw in every single colour, enough land-search and card-search cards as possible, damage negation, health regain, damage-dealing, creature-killing and graveyard-to-library shuffling cards as could ever conceivably be needed. Along with, of course, four copies of Battle of Wits.

Now, I know what you're thinking. There's only one question on your mind – 'does it actually work?'

Well of course not. The idea of building a deck that large is preposterous. I had to carry the thing around in a Fat Pack deck box just to fit it in my bag. Not to mention the fact that every time I had to shuffle my library it was like splitting the Red Sea. The only joy I got from a Battle of Wits deck was the sheer, unadulterated horror on the face of my opponent as I opened the lid of my deck box and they realised there were no separators in there at all.

Having said all that though, I think the card is absolutely marvellous and deserves the title of being our first Magic Card of the Month card, simply because it's





absolutely ridiculous. I think the one qualm I have with Battle of Wits, or at least the M13 one, is that it's missing the wonderful flavour text from the original: 'The wizard who reads a thousand books is powerful. The wizard who memorizes a thousand books is insane,' which I feel is far more befitting.

All in all, it's a quirky little card, with the same standard of superb quality artwork as most other MTG cards, and would be amusing to play in a friendly game amongst friends, but, in terms of practicality, there is absolutely none and, unless you're willing to buy four copies, you'd probably have to buy a lot of boosters to get enough for a feasible deck. Or trade your soul, whichever.



# Biographies

*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* - Emma Johnson is and will always be useless at most things, but writing she can occasionally get write. Presently being hunted for the avocation of bad puns (and just puns in general), in Britain.

*Lauren Jones* - Lauren Jones, aspiring Game Designer, Creative Writer, Gamer and fierce advocate of the 'Don't you dare use Cancel' Policy. Currently Ormskirk based.

*Liam Wright* - Liam is an avid fan of card games, board games, RPGs and other geeky things. There are many rumours as to who he really is and what is his true objective in life is, perhaps he wants to prefect time travel, build the perfect nation or maybe he just want to lead a normal and peaceful life.