

Out of Character

Issue 3 2019



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Cover Art by Aeneas Jolly

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Contact us

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Borrowing Games or Game Requests: quartermaster@saga.org.nz

Membership/Monetary Questions: treasurer@saga.org.nz

Queries about Conventions: phoenix@saga.org.nz or bucketsofdice@saga.org.nz

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Well, I'm glad you asked.

SAGA inc. is a UC club that provides a safe and friendly environment for people to play games together and meet others with the same interests.

In our constitution it is stated that the aim of SAGA is “to encourage the hobby of gaming, including but not limited to Role-playing Games, Wargames, Board Games, and Card Games, and to aid its members in the pursuit of these hobbies.”.

We meet twice each week to catch up and play games.

The length and scope of the RPG can vary depending on what you're looking for, be it a fun one-off game or a campaign that takes a year or two to complete.

The board games vary from 30 minutes or less to all night games.

We are also hoping to offer moreLARPs this year, both during the normal weekly meetings, and outside the standard meeting times, such as during MiniCons.

In addition to our regular, twice weekly meetings, we have MiniCons and other events throughout the year such as our largest gaming weekend, Buckets of Dice, and our LARP convention Phoenix.

If you require more information about anything stated here, you are more than welcome to email any of the committee members or visit one of our various sites that hold tomes of knowledge. These can all be found on the final page of this OoC under “Handy Links”.



2019 ଚକ୍ରାନ୍ତକାଳ

18 th February	Semester 1 Begins
8 th April	Mid Semester Break
20 th – 21 st April	Minicon I
26 th April	Lectures Resume S1
31 st May	S1 Exam Break
31 st May – 3 rd June	Buckets of Dice
24 th June	Semester 1 Ends
20 th – 21 st July	Minicon II
15 th July	Semester 2 Begins
23 rd August	Mid Semester Break
23 rd – 25 th August	Phoenix LARP Con
6 th September	Lectures Resume S2
18 th October	S2 Exam Break
19 th – 20 th October	Minicon III
9 th November	Semester 2 Ends
7 th – 8 th December	Minicon IV



PHOENIX 2019

SAGA's Annual LARP Convention!

LARP - Live Action Role Play

This is an event where many people from the LARPing community around New Zealand get together and act out stories based on what they have read about their character. We are very lucky to have some of our very own LARP writers in NZ who come along to this event! Keep an eye out on our Facebook page and Website for updates about the event!

This year we are very lucky to have been able to hire a van for this event! The van travels to and from the camp grounds each day which means that you can come in for part of the con if you busy one of the days!

There are still spots available in all of our rounds, but they are limited! So, make sure you sign-up to secure a spot in a game you are interested in!

The Flagship for this year is **Welcome to the Neighbourhood** by Lee Patrick.

Phoenix: Dawn Command review

By Ciarán Searle

I have long thought that board games and roleplaying games have a lot to learn from each other. I love a very story focused and rules light game, but there's also something to be said for challenging mechanical decisions. In a way, I almost feel as though Dungeons and Dragons sits in an unhappy medium. The storytelling aspect of D&D is not usually well supported by the rules, but the gameplay is also not always a tactically interesting experience (Come at me).

My hope, going into Phoenix: Dawn Command was for a game that did both well.

To give you an overview, P:DC is a game that uses a proprietary card system rather than dice. In many ways, it is akin to a deckbuilding card game like Dominion or Star Realms. Your character traits are defined by a special deck of cards which you create and then draw through many times. As you gain in ranks, your deck is improved to include more powerful cards, and you gain access to new "Lessons" which allow you to use those cards in different ways.

One of the things I like most about the game is the way that it tempts players to push for the best possible result in every situation. While you can succeed at something without too much trouble, working their way to a legendary success felt really rewarding for my players. You can really test the characters to the limits because... and I can't believe I haven't brought this up already...

Dying is how you level up.

Every PC is a "Phoenix", a strange and powerful figure who has returned from death to protect the world. They get seven lives, and with each new life they come back stronger than before. Spending "sparks" may mean they burn out quicker, but they also get to do cooler stuff. The other important thing here is that the way a character died informs the kind of Phoenix they come back as. Did they die for duty? They return as a Durant. Did that Durant go on to later die because of a secret? They take cards from the Shrouded school.

I think the schools feel very different, but still work together well. Similarly, it doesn't seem like a disadvantage to multiclass a bit, especially if your two schools have some things in common.

The pre-written campaign that comes as part of the book is... mostly pretty good. There's some fantastic and horrifying descriptions of the monsters and otherworldly foes that your characters face, but there's also some less than stellar treatment of a fictional tribal group that we weren't fans of. I stuck to the script at first, but also ran a session that I designed myself, and it turned out to be a lot easier than I expected. You are pretty well supported to do your own thing if you'd rather, but I'd recommend trying the first couple of missions from the book to get a feel for things.

I think, overall, I got what I wanted with this game. It can be tactically interesting and has some great methods of linking mechanics to story. Your "trait" cards improve your results, but only if they are relevant. Trying to incorporate a card like "Deathwish" can lead to some incredible descriptions of a character's action. The game also rewards you for using environmental elements, which are established at the beginning of each fight. The game is very focused on telling a grim, fantasy war story, with demigod-like player characters.

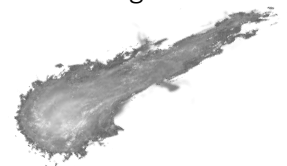
I really appreciate a system that tries to tell one kind of story well. Some of my favourite games are razor focused on an incredibly specific kind of scenario. If you want a game that is a bit more versatile, there are definitely better options, but if the details you've heard about this game sound interesting, I think you should give it a try.



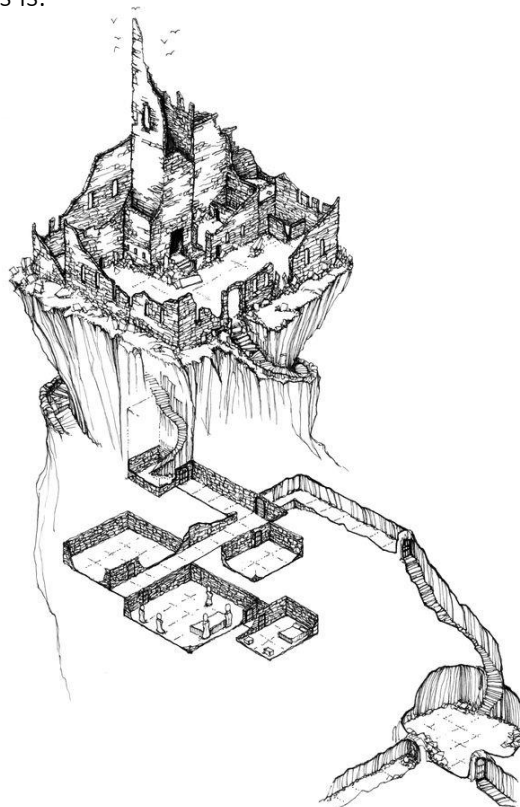
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By Robert Vincent

- Send the PCs into a wizard tower, and then roll that tower down a hill.
- Describe the villain as having a cloak, and then reveal that cloak as a cloaker monster.
- Describe a pair of boots found in the dungeon that give off transmutation magic, they are a pair of small mimics.
- Describe a door in a hallway, oh it's another mimic.
- Create dungeon/cavern chambers where the ceiling is only 2ft high so the PCs have to crawl, then populate that area with short enemies.
- Put traps in a chamber where there will be a combat encounter, PCs don't check for traps in combat.
- The night watch at camp fails their perception check, instead of having a combat encounter have the GERBLIN sneak in and poison the PCs' food supplies.
- Give a PC a fiend familiar that can speak, it loves to see their master take damage.
- PC casts fireball, actually make the area catch fire.
- Give the PC a cool magic weapon, some NPC is prepared to kill for it.
- The PCs have to cross a narrow walkway, there are gibbering moutthers underneath. Actually record the gibbering on your phone and play it as they try to cross.
- Give giants a thick leather bag, during fights it tries to stuff PCs in it (they're restrained and blind inside).
- Wizard wants to cast their area of effect spell with the area at a complex angle, make them roll for it.
- The Druid failed their shape shifting roll, they now believe they are a bird.



- Make a lovable NPC that the PCs spend time with, and then kill them as the inciting incident of the campaign.
- Have a powerful creature “teleport” the PCs to the final dungeon where they will TPK, they then wake up realising that it was only a vision of their death given to them.
- Have an entire Druid Circle all cast polymorph on the party in enough volume that they will fail, they all wake up scattered after having lived an hour of their life as different animals.
- If someone fireballs another PC have them not say how they’re doing, and describe smoke from the fireball obscuring the seen.
- Make a lever in the dungeon next to a gate, yes it’s another mimic.
- Make five levers that appear to all need to be pulled simultaneously, all but one is a mimic.
- Have an evil wizard steal and NPC ally and then use mind control magic to be allowed to cast warding bond on the NPC, then when the PCs fight the wizard they hurt their ally with every attack.
- Roll a dice behind the screen for no reason and then ask a PC what their passive perception/armour class is.



asset list

For any asset queries, including borrowing items, contact: quartermaster@saga.org.nz

Board Games

- 7 Wonders
- Agricola
- Android: Infiltration
- Apples to Apples
- Arkham Horror
- Atlantis Rising
- Battlestar Galactica
- Betrayal at Baldurs' Gate
- Bingo/Housie
- Brass
- Camel Up
- Carcassonne
- Ca\$h n Gun\$
- Ca\$h n Gun\$ - Yakuza
- Castles of the Mad King Ludwig
- Catan – Cities and Knights
- Chez Cthulu
- Chinatown
- Chrononauts
- City of Horror
- Colosseum
- Colt Express
- Cosmic Encounter
- DC Comics Deck Building Game
- Descent
- Diplomacy
- Dominion
- Dominion – Alchemy
- Dominion – Dark Ages
- Dominion – Prosperity
- Dominion – Seaside
- Doom
- Dungeon of Fortune
- Dungeon Fighter
- Egizia
- Elysium
- Family Business
- Finca
- Fluxx
- Gang of Four
- Ghost Stories
- Ghost Stories – White Moon
- Hanabi
- Incan Gold
- Jamacia
- Junta
- Junta: Viva el Presidente
- Kitten Casualty
- King of Tokyo
- King of Tokyo – Halloween
- King of Tokyo – Power Up
- Kingsburg
- Kingsburg – To Forge a Realm
- Lanterns
- Libertalia
- Lord of the Rings
- Lord of the Rings – Sauron
- Lords of Waterdeep
- Love Letter
- Munchkin
- Munchkin – Cthulu
- Munchkin – Bites
- Munchkin – Booty
- Munchkin – Axe Cop
- Magic Maze
- Middle Kingdom
- Once Upon A Time
- Pandemic
- Power Grid
- Princes of Florence
- Race for the Galaxy
- Race for the Galaxy – The Gathering Storm
- Race for the Galaxy – Rebel vs. Imperium
- Race for the Galaxy – The Brink of War
- Rococo
- Roll for the Galaxy
- Saga
- Scythe
- Sentinels of the Multiverse
- Smash Up
- Splendor
- Star Craft: The Board Game
- Steam
- Suburbia
- Summoner Wars
- Talisman
- The Red Dragon Inn
- The Red Dragon Inn 2
- The Seafarers of Catan
- The Settlers of Catan
- Ticket to Ride
- Tobago
- Trax
- Treehouse
- Tsuru
- Transylvania
- Viceroy

RPGs

- 13th Age
- Battlemats
- D&D DMG 3rd Ed.
- D&D Psionics Handbook
- D&D 4th Ed.
- Dungeon Crawl Classics
- Dungeon Tiles
- Dresden Files
- Edgerunners
- Fiasco
- Fudge Dice
- Gamemastering Secrets
- GURPS Basic Set
- King of Chicago
- Knights Adventurous
- Pacific Rim
- Paranoia
- Pendragon
- Star Wars
- Space 1889
- Spycraft
- The Boy King
- The Floating Vagabond
- Toon

LARP

- LARPs from the Factory
- Laws of Ascension
- Laws of the Hunt
- Nexus
- Passion Play

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Find us online!

Website: <http://saga.org.nz>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sagainc

Trello: <https://trello.com/b/zs9KCAIE/the-saga-bag>

Slack: <https://sagainc.slack.com>

Looking for Group: If you want to organise a game or see who is going to be at SAGA on a specific evening, search “SAGA Inc. – Looking for Group” on Facebook. It is great for organising both one-off games and long-term campaigns, as well as grabbing people for larger board games that require some organisation.

Rooms: Our regular meetings for games are currently on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6pm – 10pm on Level 2 of Jack Erskine on the main University of Canterbury Campus. Come along and check us out!

