

The Bats



of Mercille

by Mark Rein•Hagen

**Start to play your first
game of Ars Magica in
half an hour, using this
Jump Start kit!**

(after the Storyguide has read Ars Magica itself)

This Jump-Start Kit includes:

- a complete, easy-to-run adventure, one that explores the role-playing & adventure possibilities inherent in Ars Magica.
- eight characters, including two magi, with detailed personalities, histories and relationships .
- Four different one-page game briefings that quickly and simply introduce players to Ars Magica.

Credits

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*Digital Reproduction of the
1989 Convention
Exclusive!*



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A Note from the Publisher

A physical copy of *The Bats of Mercille* is probably the rarest and most collectible of **Ars Magica**[™] publications. Two editions exist, prior to this electronic reanimation: One was the original jump start kit; 100 copies were made and sold at the 1988 Gen Con/Origins (the conventions were combined that year) by Lion Rampant. The following year, another edition was released at Gen Con, featuring some editorial changes and updates to the newly released 2nd edition of the game. My recollection is that several hundred copies were made, and perhaps 100 were sold at the convention. I remember there being a box full of copies, with their bright yellow cover pages, left behind in Minnesota when Lion Rampant moved to Georgia in 1990. I presume those copies were at some point thrown away (probably by the new owners of the house where most of Lion Rampant's staff had lived). Thus there are perhaps 200 or 300 copies of both printed editions in circulation. And when I say "printed," I should perhaps clarify that they were photocopied at the college print shop and hand-collated at the last minute in order to be on sale at the convention.

This digital edition reproduces the 1989 version, complete with Darin "Woody" Eblom's hand-written entries on the character sheets. The adventure proper is an 8 page booklet that came stapled. The other pages were loose, and it was all sold together in a plastic baggie.

For the **Ars Magica** enthusiasts and completists who have long wanted to take a look at this adventure, or maybe even work it into their own sagas, it's our pleasure at Atlas Games to make it available to the world once more.

*John Nephew
Duluth, Minnesota
January 12, 2016*

The Bats of Mercille

Introduction

This is a Jump-Start Kit for *Ars Magica*™. In its original form it was the first Jump-Start kit; we made 100 copies and sold them all at the 1988 GEN CON/Ori-gins® convention. Since we had so much fun writing and selling that special supplement (exclusive to the convention), we decided to do it again. Besides doing something completely new, the *Stormrider*™ Jump-Start Kit, we decided to continue the tradition of an inexpensive, limited-edition kit for the conventions.

The basic adventure in this revision of *The Bats of Mercille* is the same as last year, but it has been edited and expanded, and updated to conform to the second edition of *Ars Magica*. If you also own our "other" *Ars Magica* Jump-Start Kit, *The Stormrider*, you may find that some sections of that kit have some semblances to this kit — in particular, the village scene. This is of course no accident. At the time I wrote *The Stormrider*, I didn't realize this little story would ever see the light of day again, so I decided to "reuse" one or two ideas. If you plan to role-play through both stories you may wish to change a few details (for instance, there are three oaks in the middle of *Stormrider's* village, Javielle, as well as in Mercille). Otherwise you could leave these details in, and perhaps speak mysteriously of synchronicity.

Even with the editing and development we've done to it, this kit is less polished and less sophisticated than you might expect from Lion Rampant. In it are displayed the genesis of many of the ideas that have since surfaced in our other products (and will continue to do so). It is in this light that I hope you judge this kit.

These convention supplements are not intended to be anything more than old-fashioned adventuring frivolity — a dab of role-playing here, a dab of adventure there, a dab of hard core combat here. If they continue to be successful, we'd like to have a new one at each convention in the future. But don't expect that our regular products are going to resemble this one; these convention specials will be the lighter side of Lion Rampant, a vacation from our "serious role-playing agenda".

This supplement is dedicated to Woody Eblom, whose search for fun in role-playing has kept me from becoming too pretentious — thank you, Woody.

Now let the games begin!

Understanding this Supplement

In case you're not familiar with the Jump-Start Kit presentation, let me explain a few things to you. A Jump-Start Kit provides you with pre-made characters and a story specifically designed with those characters in mind — we do the work for you so your first adventure can be run quickly and easily. With this kit, even a group of complete novices can role-play a satisfying game of *Ars Magica* with only half an hour of preparation time.

To properly storyguide (gamemaster) this story, you must have read a few chapters of *Ars Magica* and have skimmed the others. Read the Introduction to *Ars Magica* carefully; it gives an overview of the game system and background. Be sure to also have a firm grasp on the Combat and Magic chapters because those rules will frequently come into play. Finally, read the Saga chapter to understand the setting in which this story takes place.

You will need to read this entire kit, from start to finish, before you attempt to storyguide it. Additionally, before you read the main text of the kit, you should skim the eight characters included in the kit, as well as the Briefings you will later pass out to the characters. Go and read them now, and then come back here to finish reading the story itself.

Story Outline

The characters journey to a distant village on the basis of a rumor, and find it largely burned and devoid of life. A few people can be found hidden in some of the houses and in the church, but strangely, everyone else is gone. The survivors talk madly of swarms of deformed bats coming out from a cave every night, bringing with them a horrible black terror. After investigating the town, and perhaps fighting with the bats, the characters find the tunnel that is called The Ear of Lucifer. After a short exploration they will find a large serpent, the lord of the bats, who has lain there for nearly 650 years, since the day the Velorindin Forest lay across this land like a great quilt. This serpent goes by the name Shilth-grin, and can trace its lineage far back, farther back than the characters might imagine. A fight is likely to break out with the serpent in a climatic battle of magic and brawn in the serpent's strange, magical lair.