

Summer 2010 Issue 14

MITHRAL AND GOLD

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Contents

EDITORIAL

Ring-Givers 4

LETTERS

From the Mines. 5

FEATURES

Aasimar 8

by Kolja Raven Liquette

The blood of heaven runs in these veins.

Prince of Wolves 12

by James L. Sutter

The PATHFINDER novels begin with a big, big smile.

The Ecology of the Tengu 18

by R. William Thompson with James Jacobs

Mimics, guardians, blademasters; tengu are complex creatures.

Healing Hands 26

by James Graham

New paladin powers to answer the prayers of the purest knights

Perfumes of Bourgund 32

by Stefen Styrsky

The smell of magic is surprisingly strong.

Skill Battles 35

by Matthew J. Hanson

Taking 4th Edition skill challenges into combat!

CHARACTERS

Men of Honor: 42

Alternate Paladin Codes

by Dan Voyce

How to Create Memorable Characters 60

by Ed Greenwood

Ancient Tongues 70

by Michael Kortez

The Reign of Men 80

by John Wick and Jesse Heinig

Art & Expertise. 84

by Scott A. Murray

DESIGN AND DMING

Game Theories: Dice Versus Story 46

by Monte Cook

How to Create Feats 66

by Sigfried Trent

Moral Choices That Matter 76

by Jeff Tidball

Courtly Games of the Wizard Prince. 72

by Mario Podeschi



On the Cover

Nicole Cardiff painted "The Paladin's Treasure" for the Summer issue, combining gold and glory in a picture that tells a fine story. Paladins don't really do it for the loot.

COLUMNS

Interview with Rob Heinsoo 48

by Jeremy L.C. Jones

Book Reviews 56

Ask the Kobold: Bleeding, 63

Invisibility, Suggestion

by Skip Williams

Mini-Adventure: Amber Heart 90

by Tim & Eileen Connors

Coming Next Issue. 89

Free City of Zobeck: Birdfolk of Zobeck 96

by Wolfgang Baur

TREASURE TROVE

Hoard Magic 39

by Michael Furlanetto

Paper Treasures 52

by John Baichtal

Middle Class Magic. 54

by Adam Daigle

Figurines of Wondrous Power 86

by Phillip Larwood

Editorial:

Ring-Givers

The leaders of men among the Vikings had a code to live up to. You can read some of the details in this issue's "Alternate Paladins" article (and I recommend that you do!), but for my purposes, it's enough to point out that generosity was not really optional for Viking jarls, chiefs, and leaders. If you wanted to lead a crew of bloodthirsty berserkers, you had better be what they called a ring-giver in those times: an open hand, generous to a fault, always finding a way to reward followers. Only a fool fails to reward a gang of berserks openly and often.

This description of generosity as a crucial element of leadership has stuck with me since high school, when my English teacher explained kennings, such as "the whale-road" (the ocean) and "ring-giver" (a lord, a leader). The contrast with our modern age is somewhat disappointing: say what you like about our political classes, the patronage system of rewarding your inner circle of followers is no longer regarded as honorable or noble. In fact, it's more likely to bring you a federal indictment than it is to bring you the treasure of the Nibelungen.

This is a roundabout way of getting to our theme this issue, which is treasure. As a game designer and a GM, I have a huge blind spot: I always forget to put the treasure in until right near the end of the design process, and—for some strange reason—the treasure side of things always strikes me as less compelling than it is on the player side of the screen. This issue, we're hoping to make amends for my decades of insufficient loot with a sampling of many fine and unusual treasures including paper treasures, magical perfumes, new figurines of wondrous power, dragon treasure hoards, and more.

If you have a tale of treasure, loot, and rewards (or lack of same), please send it to letters@koboldquarterly.com. I'd love to hear from you!

And remember, give out that treasure with an open hand, O Ring-Giver, lest you be torn apart by your berserk crew of gaming Vikings!

Wolfgang Baur

Kobold in Chief

