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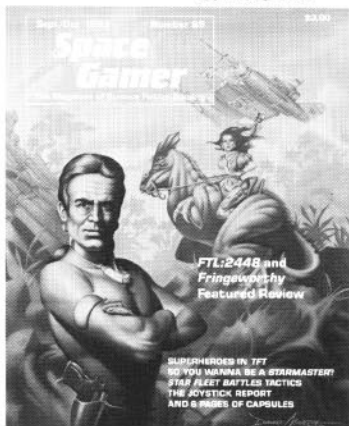
**FTL:2448 and  
Fringeworthy  
Featured Review**

**SUPERHEROES IN TFT  
SO YOU WANNA BE A STARMASTER?  
STAR FLEET BATTLES TACTICS  
THE JOYSTICK REPORT  
AND 6 PAGES OF CAPSULES**

DAVID MARTIN  
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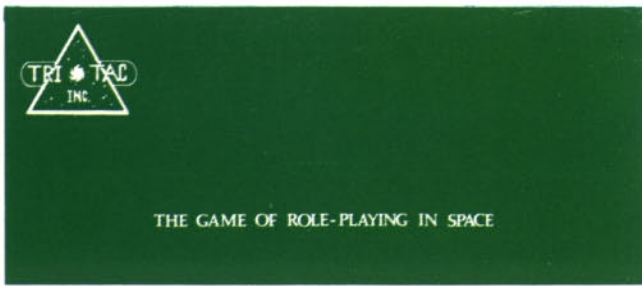
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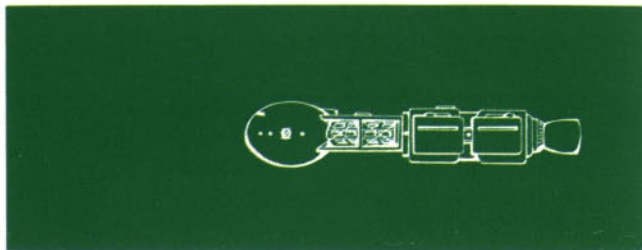
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With Metagaming's loss and the delay of *In the Name of Justice*, we're not likely to see TFT superheroes soon right? Wrong — try page 19...





**FTL: 2448**



## Featured Review:

**Diamond  
in the  
Rough?**

# **FTL:2448 and Fringeworthy**

by  
**William A.  
Barton**

Most gamers I know enjoy playing several different role-playing systems from time to time. Unfortunately, most RPGs use such different systems that new characters have to be generated for each campaign. Except for Chaosium with their interlocking *Basic Role Playing/RuneQuest*-based games, Hero Games with the *Champions / Espionage* system and, to some extent, FGU with the *Aftermath / Bushido / Daredevils* RPGs, most game companies seem to overlook this cross-over tendency on the part of gamers.

Enter Tri-Tac, Inc. "Who?" you might say, if you're not from the Midwest area and thus have never heard of Tri-Tac).

To enlighten those not in the know, Tri-Tac, Inc., is a small Michigan game company founded by Richard Tucholka, one of the designers of the excellent *Morrow Project* after-the-holocaust RPG.

Tri-Tac has produced a line of inexpensive, off-the-wall games with names such as *Escape from Westerville State*, *Geriatric Wars* and *Pteroducktyl*. These are games that are simple, wacky, and fun. No frills, no apologies, just a half-hour or so of crazy enjoyment each, usually costing \$1.50 or less. Tri-Tac doesn't have big budgets, flashy production techniques or worldwide distribution. It only has gamers (the company is manned completely by gamers, not slick businessmen or PR hypes, etc.) – gamers who know what makes a good game and can produce items that companies such as TSR or GDW don't find profitable. They've got a sense of humor, which spills over into their games. Best of all, the folks at Tri-Tac, being gamers, have a pretty good handle on what gamers will like and find useful – such as RPGs that use the same basic systems, so that one doesn't have to waste a whole lot of time

learning a whole new system when he wants to play another type of game.

Over the past year, Tri-Tac has released RPGs which use the same basic systems for character generation, combat and other overlapping areas: *Fringeworthy* and *FTL: 2448* (a third, *Stalking the Night Fantastic*, geared to finding and stopping monsters in modern times, is due for release before this review sees print). *Fringeworthy* and *FTL* are notable in that they make use of the same game systems for ease of play and interplay, though each one should be considered a major new RPG.

Since they do share so much in common, however, they will both be covered in this review, with discussions of their joint systems and the differences due to the themes of each. To briefly note their subjects:

*FTL: 2448* is a science fiction game of star travel, exploration and discovery of

enable him to use any knowledge Talent at +1 IQ for the subsequent minute.

**Firefighting (2);** only (1) if the character also has Climbing Talent. The character, given access to sand, water, chemicals, etc., can extinguish a megahex of fire or less per melee round on 3d6 vs. IQ.

### IQ 11 Talents

**Gambling (2):** The character knows both cheating techniques and odds at games of chance. The skill allows +1 on any sort of dice roll used to determine outcome of a gamble.

**Detective (2):** The character can use principles of criminology and observation, on 3d6 vs. IQ, to identify suspicious or contraband items, similarities or ambiguities of physical evidence associated with a suspect, etc. It's similar to the *TFT* Naturalist Talent, but for use on people.

### IQ 12 Talents

**Gadgets (2);** only (1) if the character has Mechanician Talent. This skill allows use of specific weapon or "gadget" which is not commercially available, on 3d6 vs. IQ; it does not confer the ability to fix or modify the object.

**Cryptography (3):** This is the ability to decode secret writings, ciphers, etc. on 3d6 vs. IQ.

**Escape Artist (2);** Prereq: Sleight of Hand: The character can escape ropes on 3d6 vs. DX. Escaping handcuffs, jail cells etc. requires 5d6 vs. DX+IQ.

### IQ 13 Talents

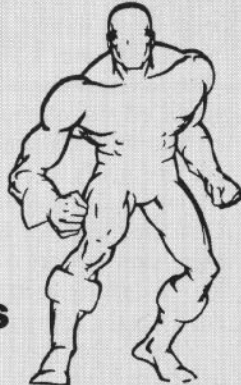
**Lawyer (3):** When the legality of a character's activities is called into question, or when he is confronted by hostile law enforcement officials, a character with this Talent can avoid the confrontation by recourse to legal knowledge and a convincing speech on 3d6 vs. IQ.

**Eidetic Memory (3):** On 3d6 vs. IQ, character will remember anything he has read or been told. He must have made the effort to commit the info to memory; it is not automatic. However, the memory is permanent thereafter.

### IQ 14 Talents

**Interrogation (3):** If the character has an uninterrupted 12 turns to question someone who is not inclined to answer a question, and makes a 3d6 vs. IQ roll, he will obtain the answer by techniques of interrogation (subtlety, misdirection, deceit — not torture). The victim may save vs. his own IQ, as per resisting a Control Spell; however, the interrogator may continue the questioning another 12 turns.

**Ambush/Assassination (2);** Prereq: Silent Movement and Tracking, or Disguise. When striking from ambush, with victim unaware he is under attack, a character with this talent is +4DX and does 2 additional pips of damage with any weapon or U.C. Talent he has.



## V. Powers

There are three categories of superpowers: Personal, Ranged, and Enhancement.

The superhero uses *personal* powers when exercising paranormal abilities which do not expel some sort of energy over distance. Such powers include Healing, Flying, and Shapechanging. Each personal power costs six Creation Points to buy; allotment of an additional six "doubles" the power, as explained for each individual power. To use a personal power, a superhero activates the power in the Movement Phase of a combat round, either in lieu of or together with actual movement (depending on the power). To activate the power entails rolling 3d6 vs. the relevant characteristic specified for the power.

Personal powers may be continued indefinitely, without loss of ST, by rolling against the relevant characteristic in the same phase as wizards renew their spells. If the attempt fails, the superhero may then attempt to renew the power in the Movement Phase of the same round. If a power such as Flight "fails", does not activate, it does not mean that the flier suddenly drops like a stone, but rather that he cannot fly in any specific direction until he regains control.

If a referee wishes to limit the capacities of personal powers, he may specify that they can only be used a number of times per day equal to the relevant characteristic.

**Ranged Powers** are those which allow superheroes to hurl energy across distances. They operate similarly to *TFT* Missile spells, except that they do not deplete the superheroes' ST. They require a 3d6 roll vs. the relevant characteristic to activate; the roll occurs in the Action Phase, when the character uses the power. If a referee wishes to limit the use of ranged powers, he may require an expen-

diture of 1 ST each time the Ranged Power is used; the ST would be recovered at the same rate as the Wizard's ST lost in spellcasting, and excessive power use would have the same damaging effects as ST lost through spellcasting. If the activation roll fails the power does not activate this round. Purchase of a Ranged power requires the allotment of eight Creation Points.

Enhancement powers do not need to be activated; they usually multiply the effectiveness of a hero's characteristics. Each enhancement requires the allotment of 12 Creation Points; they may have increased effects through the allotment of additional Creation Points, depending on the individual power.

### Personal Powers

**Shadow:** Allows the superhero to duplicate the ability of the legendary radio show character of that name. If the superhero has one combat round to concentrate (in other words, a round when no one attacks him), and succeeds in his 3d6 roll vs. the relevant characteristic, he can move unseen as if using the *TFT* Invisibility spell. Doubling this power confers actual invisibility, usable against animals or mechanical light sensors as well as people. IQ is the relevant characteristic.

**Light:** The character can glow, as per a *TFT* lantern. Doubling confers the equivalent of a Dazzle spell for each turn the power is activated. ST is the relevant characteristic.



# Where We're Going by Steve Jackson



Curse me. Revile me. Put dead bats on my head.

A few issues back I swore solemnly that we would have certain things as Origins releases — including the very-long-awaited *Ogre/G.E.V.* supplement. Well, guess what isn't out yet.

The reasons are simple: SJG is suffering from growing pains. It's harder to keep a 30-employee company organized than it is a 10-employee company. And I'm spending more time managing and less time designing. I'm not our only designer. I'm not even our only *in-house* designer. But I'm still the prime source of design and development work — and when I'm too busy to play games, new releases get delayed.

In the long run, what I have to do is find someone who has management talent, understands games and the game business, and is *interested* enough in this business to work for (face it!) a lower salary than he could command from Uncle Sam or the oil companies. When I find that person, I'll go back to full-time game design. In the meantime, things will move more slowly than they did last year.

We did have three "pre-Origins" releases. *Cardboard Heroes* Fantasy Set 11 was another Denis Loubet set of "generic" player characters. Fantasy Set



12 was painted by Robert Charrette and comprised 36 assorted Japanese figures. Not much use if you don't want to run an Oriental adventure — invaluable if you do. Finally, *Car Wars* Expansion Set 2 included duplicate sets of the *Car Wars/Truck Stop/Sunday Drivers* counters, plus a turning key. These are all \$3.00 items.

Our actual Origins releases number only two, but they're both major works. The *Car Wars* Reference Screen is self-explanatory. It's cardboard, with three 8½" x 11" panels, and includes a copiable set of large-sized vehicle and pedestrian record sheets. It sells for \$5.00.

The other release is something of a coup — a combination supplement for both *Car Wars* and Hero Games' *Champions*. You want autoduelling in the world of superheroes? You want super-powered characters in your *Car Wars* campaign? You've got 'em.

As far as I know, *Autoduel Champions* is the first supplement ever produced to *seriously* combine two different game systems, from two different publishers, in two different genres . . . and it even works! It's in two sections; you do *not* have to have *both Car Wars* and *Champions* to use *Autoduel Champions*, because it works with *either*. It includes a large-sized double-sided map and an 11" x 17" bind-in sheet of full-color counters in both *Car Wars* and *Champions* scales.

I'm really pleased with this booklet; Aaron Allston did a good job on the rules (carefully watched over by the Hero Games folks and myself to insure that everything stayed true to the parent systems) and Denis Loubet did his usual great job on the cover and counters. I know — I'm waxing a bit enthusiastic. Hype, Stevie, hype. But this one really is a lot of fun. Let me know what you think about it.

## Probably the Last Word on *The Fantasy Trip*

Last month in *Fantasy Gamer* I mentioned that, knuckling under to popular demand, I had contacted Metagaming about a repurchase of the *TFT* copyright. I didn't want to see the *TFT* system die, and a lot of you didn't, either.

Unfortunately, it appears that their asking price is a lot higher — a *whole* lot higher — than anything I could justify as a reasonable offering price. (And if I *did* have a quarter of a million dollars to spare, I might find something else to spend it on . . .) At this point, I'm afraid republication of *TFT* is unlikely.

However, your letters have impelled me to get back to work on a new RPG system — the one I've been mentioning here for the last year or so. In my copious free time, I'll see what I can do. I might be able to get the character generation and basic combat rules ready before too much longer, if all goes well. (Ha!)

## Computers Again

Some time ago, we gave up on the idea of producing computer games ourselves, and began semi-covert talks with a number of larger computer companies. Object: license *them* the games. Twice, these talks got as far as contract drafts before breaking down. (In both cases, the company's stock plummeted shortly afterwards. This is only coincidence . . . I think.) Anyway, we are now working on a deal with a new software company: "new" as in "not operating yet," and "software" as in "they don't sell computers, only programs." This one looks pretty good; I'll talk more about it when it's final, but it's just barely possible that you could see *Car Wars* and *Ogre* for the Apple, Commodore(s), and/or IBM by Christmas.