

Rising Sun

For the Next Age of Magnamund...

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Special Thanks: To everyone at magnamund.org who made the original *Rising Sun*. We only hope to live up to the proud tradition you have inspired.

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Since We Last Met...

Wow! Can you believe that it has already been two years since the last issue of *Rising Sun* was published? That's right: issue #16 was published back in June 2006! Since that date, huge things have been going on in the Lone Wolf Community, and I'll try to summarise them.

First of all, as you might have noticed, this is the first *Rising Sun* issue that I'm editing. Do I plan to do more? For now, no, but who knows? If we can gather enough material and interest (and time!) to make an 18th issue, well it might just happen.

But enough about me; this fan-made newsletter is about Lone Wolf. Let me tell you something: if you don't know what happened in the last two years regarding the series, well, you were on another planet.

The biggest news of all was, of course, the announcement made by Joe Dever himself at the Lucca Comics & Games convention in November 2006 that Mongoose Publishing was going to republish all the 28 books of the series, plus the last four adventures that were never published before. The first gamebook, *Flight from the Dark*, was published in August 2007 and has been totally rewritten. Now the adventure starts inside the Monastery as you try to escape from the attack of the Darklands' forces; several other parts of the story have also been expanded or revised, bringing the book to 550 sections!

The subsequent adventures have all seen some kind of overhaul, but not as impressive as book 1. However, starting with book 2, a bonus adventure featuring a key character of the

main story is added to the book. These mini-adventures have been written by people other than Joe Dever, which brings different writing styles to the Lone Wolf universe, a nice thing in my opinion.

As for the publication of the first of the last four books that were never published, a recent rumour mentions that book 29, entitled *The Storms of Chai*, would be out in November 2008.

There was more to this official announcement by the man himself. Indeed, Joe Dever revealed that brand new novels would be produced, featuring events not described in the gamebooks and happening 50 years after the events portrayed in *Flight from the Dark*. These novels are part of a series called *Chronicles of Magnamund* and will feature two trilogies of books. The first one, *Rise of the Agarashi*, is written by August Hahn, who brought us the first official roleplaying game based on the Lone Wolf universe. The second trilogy, *The Lencian Trilogy*, is written by Richard Ford. To know more about the latter, I'm inviting you to read the interview featured in this issue. The first book of both trilogies is scheduled for a September 2008 release.

I mentioned the Lone Wolf RPG a few moments ago. Well, Mongoose is preparing to launch a new version of it, called *The Multiplayer Gamebook*. Apart from the title, all that we know is that the rules will be close to the ones used in the main series of gamebooks. We are still waiting to know when this book will be released.

Other than that, it was also announced that a series of gamebooks featuring Banedon would be written too. However, since it was announced in fall 2006, we've had no other news of it. Has it been abandoned? Is it still in development? We need to ask Mongoose Publishing about this.

Finally, Mr. Dever also announced that a computer game featuring Lone Wolf would be made. The developing company, called Ksatria Gameworks and based in Singapore, is partly owned by the man himself. Sadly, Ksatria doesn't update its website (www.ksatria.com) very often; apart from a few screenshots, there are no details featured. We are still awaiting a release date for this game.

Ah, yes, I have to talk about one last thing. The original website of Tower of the Sun has been down ever since the database was corrupted for unknown reasons back in January 2008. Once again, as for several other elements regarding Lone Wolf, no details about when or if the site will be back are yet known.

However, as a sign that the TotS community is strong, a surrogate forum was opened on ProBoards. If you are reading this *Rising Sun*, it surely means that you've found us! Pass the word to your friends: Tower of the Sun still exists!

I won't try to summarise all the things that have happened over at Project Aon since several new documents were published. I invite you to pay a visit to their website: www.projectaon.org.

Well, that's all I have to say. I hope that you will enjoy this issue 17 of the *Rising Sun* and that it won't be the last one we see!

Richard Ford, author of *The Dragons of Lencia*
Resurrecting a childhood dream

By Francis "Black Cat" Legault

Nearly two years ago, fans all over the world discovered that their favourite gamebook series, Lone Wolf, was going to be republished after a lengthy hiatus of more than a decade. What was even more exciting was the fact that a host of brand new Lone Wolf products were also going to be published: a computer game, a new role-playing game and at least two series of original novels. Most of the fans are already familiar with the name of August Hahn, the author of the upcoming Agarashi Trilogy, because he has also written the Lone Wolf RPG; on the other hand, the name of Richard Ford is somewhat unknown to them. With the upcoming publication of the first book in the Lencian Trilogy, called *The Dragons of Lencia*, it is a good time for the aficionados of Magnamund to get to know this author who is currently living the childhood dream that he himself has resurrected in the hearts of many fans.

Richard Ford is what we could consider a lucky guy: the 33-year-old from Leeds, UK, never thought that he would one day write official novels about his favourite fictional character. It was a simple comment made to Matthew Sprange, the director of Mongoose Publishing, that triggered the frenzy that has been shaking the online fan-base for the last two years.

"I suggested to Matt that the company branch out into novel publishing, and that Lone Wolf spin-offs might be a good way to start," he says. "It was through the discussions we were having regarding potential spin-off novels that Joe mentioned that the right to reprint the gamebooks was up for grabs." Other than for being the author of a trio of novels, fans should probably thank Richard Ford for his original idea of publishing new Lone Wolf books; without it, who knows if the gamebooks would ever have been back in print?

But between making suggestions to the big boss of a publishing company and actually writing books for said company there is a major difference. Ford, who has a degree in Literary and Historical Studies, was previously working for a clipping company, doing fourteen graveyard shifts in a row before getting two weeks off: "a long time to sit around twiddling your thumbs," as he says. It was during those weeks off that he decided to respond to an open call that Mongoose had made for freelance proofreaders. "When the vacancy for a full-time editor came up about six months later, I was a natural choice for the job," he recalls.

Three years later, he has edited around seventy RPG and miniatures game products before leaving Mongoose in summer 2007. He has also written a few novels, the first one being *Ranger Dawning*, a Babylon 5 novel that was sadly never officially released due to the cancellation of the line. A short fiction for the *Black Library*, entitled *The Cold Hand of Betrayal*, is featured in the Warhammer anthology. When Mongoose got the OK from Joe Dever to publish the new series of novels, the choice of Richard Ford as one of the authors was obvious. "Matt knew I could write fiction after he'd read *Ranger Dawning* and some of my other work, and the rest, as they say, is history".

The Chronicles of Magnamund, the title of the series, is set 50 years after the story of the first gamebook, *Flight from the Dark*. "We decided early on that we wanted to take the Lone Wolf saga forward, and all the new novels in the series would be set after the

gamebooks,” Ford mentions. With that in mind, Dever then came to Mongoose with half a dozen ideas for potential novel trilogies. One was about the Telchoi and their “problems” with the Agarashi that August Hahn picked; another premise, the one picked by Richard Ford, was about the conflict between Lencia and the Drakkarim of Nyras.

“I knew the central subject of war between Nyras and Lencia had to be the key,” he explains. “The next part was simply to pick characters from various parts of Magnamund and to tell the story through their eyes. Once you’ve picked your characters and rounded them out, they essentially tell the story for you.” Speaking of the characters, he explains that there might be mention of them across each series of novels and that the same thing will probably happen regarding the events taking place in each trilogy, but that these stories are totally separate from each other. “They can be read independently or as part of one giant history of Magnamund circa MS 5100.”

The actual writing of the first book of the Lencian trilogy, *The Dragons of Lencia*, was pretty straightforward, as he says himself. “The initial plotting and chapter breakdown only took a week or so to produce, but the text itself was written over a period of around five months. Rewrites took a further month after Joe had cast his beady eye over the manuscript and then it was sent to an editor at Mongoose.”

Even if the creative process seems to have been simple, it was no easy task for him to write a story that was going to be faithful to the world of Magnamund as envisioned by Joe Dever. Even though he had been a fan of the Lone Wolf gamebooks since he was twelve, there were still several things about the world that he had to become familiar with. “The Lone Wolf RPG is an invaluable resource for anyone who wants to glean information on Magnamund and its history,” he indicates. “The gazetteer section in my copy of the RPG has been given more than a stern thumbing in the recent months.”

Ford draws a parallel between writing *The Dragons of Lencia* and his Babylon 5 novel. “You have to have respect for the source material and you certainly have to do your homework,” he explains. “However, with *Ranger Dawning* I was pretty much left to my own devices during the writing process, and I certainly had no contact with series creator JM Straczynski to check breaches in canon or gather suggestions on plot and background.” It was obviously different with *The Dragons of Lencia*. “Joe was on hand throughout the process of writing the novel to answer any questions I had regarding Magnamund’s history, flora and fauna. For example, I gained a great insight into the side effects of Alether, which isn’t to be used lightly, that’s for sure.” Some of you might want to reconsider using this performance-enhancing potion the next time you meet the Chaosmaster...

Of course, working with Joe Dever is something that many Lone Wolf fans would like to do. It was no different for Richard Ford, who considers this experience to be the culmination of a lifelong ambition. “However, once the hard work starts, the rose-tinted specs have to come off. Let me tell you a little secret – Joe is no easy taskmaster! The guy hasn’t sold nine million copies of his books for nothing and his standards are exacting to say the least.” I guess the author of these lines won’t try to submit a manuscript to Dever after all...

The Dragons of Lencia is scheduled for release this September. The fans that are going to be most eager to read the book are probably those visiting the website *Tower of the Sun*, an online community of which Richard Ford is a member. “It’s obviously a little daunting knowing that there is an entire community out there waiting to read my book, many of whom will know much more about the Lone Wolf universe than me and will be only too

willing to point out any guffs or flaws,” he guilelessly admits. “I can only take any comments and criticisms – both good and bad – and try to improve on what I’m doing. The internet in general, and arenas such as *The Tower of the Sun* are great for writers like me as you receive instant feedback, and for writers to ignore what is basically an open forum for their fan-base is reckless indeed.”

Fully aware that expectations are high for his first Lone Wolf novel, he won’t, however, really have time to savour his triumph if the book is as commercially successful as expected, since he is already working on the second part of the trilogy called *The Shadow & the Skull*. “It will basically contain more of the same Drakkarim-bashing fun, though with a somewhat thinned down cast from the first book.” Indeed, contrary to certain rumours, Richard Ford will write all three books of the Lencian trilogy, even though he left Mongoose. “Ooh, the internet and its rumours, don’t you just love them! As far as I’m aware (and from what my contract says) I’ll be writing all three.”

Now a freelance writer, Richard Ford is currently working, apart from the Lone Wolf novels, on top-secret projects for Wizards of the Coast. He is also hoping to secure another novel deal very soon. However, should the opportunity present itself again, he wouldn’t say ‘no’ to another series of Lone Wolf novels. Mongoose doesn’t have any solid plans for a third trilogy, but if the current novels do well, they might consider publishing more. “There are tumultuous events taking place in Sommerlund that run concurrently with the events in Lencia and Telchos, so this is possibly where a third trilogy will take place, but I guess you’ll just have to wait and see...”

In the meantime, we’ll wait for your novel to hit the stores, Mr. Ford.

Q&A With Joe Dever and Giulio Lughì

By Yuri «ShadowCrow» Molino

In 2006, Joe Dever shocked the world when he announced at the Lucca Comics & Games that the Lone Wolf series was going to be republished by Mongoose Publishing. A year later, at the same convention, he took the time to answer the questions from the crowd regarding the development of the various new projects concerning Lone Wolf. He was in company of Giulio Lughì, president of E.L. Publishing, the Italian editor of the Lone Wolf gamebooks. Here’s the transcript of this meeting.

The conference begins with *Sultans of Swing* by Dire Straits and a little bit of trivia. The announcer says that in 1975 there was a band named Café Racers, in which a young Joe Dever played the bass.

Some time afterwards, Joe began to write a story about the last of the Kai and the band changed its name to Dire Straits.

By the way, word to the master.

Joe Dever: Hi all and thanks for the kind welcome here. The republication of the Lone Wolf gamebooks just keeps going from strength to strength. I’ve totally fulfilled the promise I made last year to the previous edition of Lucca Comics with the republication of the first book, *Flight from the Dark*, which will soon be available in bookshops - it was already available here but it sold out on the first of the four days of Lucca comics!

Now, the same process of rewriting and expanding will be applied to all the other books, which will be followed by the four concluding volumes, from 29 to 32. I do not intend to add 200 sections to every book, but something like 30 to 50 sections with a mini-adventure in each book, involving a minor character.

In about 3-4 years we plan to release all of the Lone Wolf books and I will regularly attend to Lucca Comics during these years. Last year I was also here to find a new artist for the cover illustrations of the books. And found one - Alberto del Lago, who was present at the conference.

Announcer: What will be added to the new version of the Lone Wolf books?

Joe Dever: There is mainly a necessity to renew what was just written and played. I'm personally taking care of every aspect of the production, not only the books.

The microphone is passed to Giulio Lughi, president of E.L. Publishing, the Italian editor of the Lone Wolf gamebooks, for the past series (they published all the series of gamebooks) and also for the new release.

Giulio Lughi: Hi all, I am often referred to as "the author of the madness" for many people when talking about Lone Wolf - myself included. It was 1985 and I was co-operating with E.L. Publishing while teaching at university. Lone Wolf came like a gust of wind, bringing a great innovation to the Italian market in just one year. From what I know, in the period Lone Wolf was on sale, theft at bookshops re-emerged as a recurring problem. Gamebooks were the beginning of the interactivity age for such a great number of teenagers. People at university exams recognised me and asked if I was the publisher of the famous Lone Wolf books.

Now we have a new generation of readers, often built of brothers, sisters and sons of the former readers of the gamebooks. With this new release we hope to leave behind the stale period following the development of videogames. During these years we assisted with a general decrease of shoot-em-up games in favour of adventure games. And now that the time has come, we do not intend to present to people a small product, but are working to repeat the success it had all that time ago.

Announcer: But alongside the books there will be plenty of other stuff. What should we expect?

Joe Dever: First of all, we'll have a whole series of videogames following the path of the gamebooks. The first one will be on sale roughly by October-November 2008 for PC, PS3 and X-box 360. We're currently adding new skills and add-ons. A mobile game will be available prior to the platform ones in summer 2008.

An entire stock of miniatures will be ready although I wish there could be the thousands of different types. They will actually be the pre-painted miniature type.

A jewellery line from the books will be made, alongside a weapons line. Mongoose Publishing is taking care of the projects. In a short time we will also see a Trading Card Game.

Regarding the two new trilogies of novels, I'm strictly observing the work and in the next year we will see the publication of the first one, *The Dragons of Lencia*.

Giulio Lugh: We are currently studying a service of print-on-demand to avoid stock related problems in the release of the novels and the gamebooks.

Announcer: Okay, and now we have some time for some questions from the people here.

Question 1: What has been the role of Project Aon in the republication of the books? Will it be possible to publish online?

Joe Dever: I've added new material to the books also to make it possible to maintain Project Aon online and active, but mainly for the pleasure of re-reading something old and new at the same time. I want to give people a good reason to buy my books again. I've kept my works alive.

And, you know, it's different to read from a monitor or from a book. You can't carry the laptop to the bathroom after all!

Question 2: In the past we suffered from some incoherence in the translations. This time will there be more attention paid to them?

Member of Armenia Editor: In the past we suffered from a general lack of fantasy culture and English terminology. Some time ago a book named *The Dagger and the Staff* was translated as *Il Pugnale e la Cricca* (being "Cricca", the Italian word for "staff", but intending a group of people rather than the weapon.).

However, since some terms are now fixed in the readers' minds, not all of them will be corrected - we'll stick to Ramas rather than Kai.

Question 3: How long will we have to wait for books 29-32?

Giulio Lugh: This is yet to be confirmed.

Joe Dever: I have to say that E.L. Editions is working very quickly. We plan to maintain very little distance between the English release and the Italian one, and they're working with a lot of attention to detail.

Question 4: Will books 29-32 be published only after book 28? After all, they're already written.

Giulio Lugh: We have no detailed projection about that yet.

Question 5: Will there be the same graphical style for all the Lone Wolf related products?

Joe Dever: The Italian cover art will follow the English art and we plan to give the same look to all our products.

Question 6: With regard to the weapon production, will Mongoose supervise only the concept art or the whole production? Is there a particular source of inspiration?

Joe Dever: Mongoose will follow all the production processes and my sketches. It will certainly be an expensive production; probably even I could not afford to buy all of them!

Question 7: This is something I'm worried about. In the 80s, the first reader of Lone Wolf was the NERD stereotype who sought some antagonism in these books. In the introduction to *Flight from the Dark*, Lone Wolf fulfilled the characteristic they searched for. He was punished and sent into the woods with an axe (and we hoped for a 6 to have +1 CS from the beginning!), and so the distracted one got saved while the diligent students, brave fighters and the Masters got slaughtered. In the new release this changed. What kind of new public does it try to attract?

Joe Dever: A thousand "thank you"s for the question. First of all, the punishment of Lone Wolf is no longer searching for firewood, but some extra duties at the Monastery, to remove the luck factor and to not let it seem that he survived through mere good fortune. Now he's not a wimp. He's one of the best in the physical disciplines, but not so good in the most scholarly ones.

I wanted to give the opportunity to "live" in the Monastery and there are about 100 sections about it. It was certainly a thoughtful decision. The mentor of Lone Wolf (Brave Sword if my memory doesn't fail me) spins a coin to choose which punishment Lone Wolf must undergo. The spinning of the coin represents this new series of events in place of the old one.

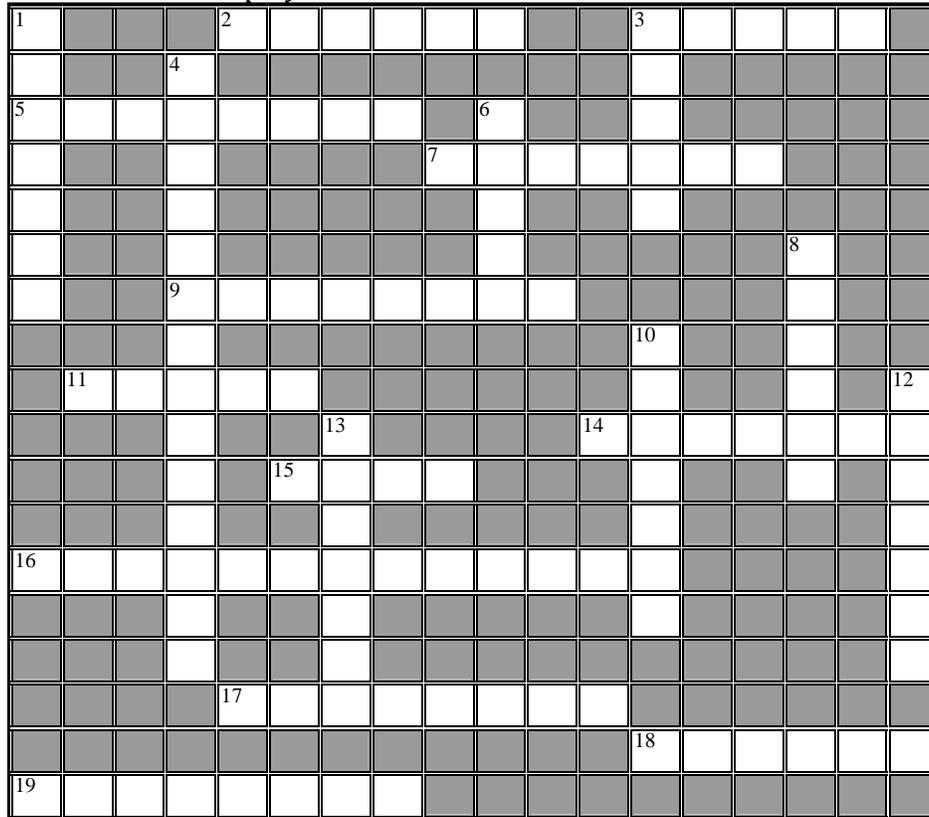
Giulio Lugh: And maybe the school world changed in these years; the social interactions changed, so marginalised people do not need to take shelter in a book anymore.

This was the last question. After this final answer, both men left while the fans went back to their homes, happy to have seen the man himself.



Lone Wolf-themed Crossword

And now, to conclude this new issue of the Rising Sun, here is something fun for you all. It's a Lone Wolf-themed crossword with question regarding several aspects of our favorite fictional character, including the website Tower of the Sun. On the last page of this issue, you'll find the answers. I hope you'll like it!



ACROSS

2. He kidnapped Rimoah in Kadan
3. A warrior that Lone Wolf meets in Kazan-Oud
5. Second character used by Winterhawk at TotS
7. Fourth Darklord slain by Lone Wolf
9. Last name of the artist making the inner artwork of the new editions of the gamebooks
11. Lord of Gourizaga
14. Age of Magnamund set between 10148 MS and 9000 MS
15. First city on the mainland of Magnamund
16. Desert Lynx
17. Broadsword that inflicts extra damage against fire-emitting enemies
18. High Wizard of the Shianti
19. Thomas Wolmer's name on TotS

DOWN

1. Dever's video game company
3. He was the Baron of that city before founding the Order of the Kai
4. He has won a decathlon
6. First name of that city that gave its name to both a Doomstone and a Lorestone
8. Shianti are also known by this name
10. Often considered as a Mary Sue
12. First leader the Sage class at TotS
13. Killed at the core of Magnamund

Answers

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