



R. HYRUM SAVAGE AND DAVE WEBB

PLAYTESTERS:

[ORIGINS '01] Trent Slabaugh, Daniel Saylor, Donn Green, Larry Carlson, Todd Barton, Mathew Winger, Eric Frederick, Ben Snyder, Chad Schaeffer, Shari Hill, Anne Merritt, Joe Connor. [GENCON '01] Chris Kuchta, Rick Melvin, Mykel Alvis, Dustin Gilbert, Paul Baker, Kevin "Dr. Squeak" Freeman, Doug Herring, Andrew Thompson, C. David "Big Dave" Ross, Brian Higgins. [DUNDRACON '02] Mary Payton, Bernard Samp, Craig Randall, Alexis "Mean Maxine" Ezzell-Hale, James Walker and the mighty Chris Pramas!

Thank you one and all for your input and insight.

# FORBIDDEN KINGDOMS

Two-Fisted d20 Pulp Action!

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Dave Webb and R. Hyrum Savage

## WRITTEN BY

R. Hyrum Savage and Dave Webb

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY

Jennifer Wick, Johanna Mead, Rob Holmes and Ken Hood

## EDITED BY

Janice Sellers

## ART DIRECTION

Kieran Yanner

## LAYOUT & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Kieran Yanner

## LINE DEVELOPER

Dave Webb

## INTERIOR ARTISTS

D. M. Foster, Derek Stevens, Marcio Fiorito,

Jason Narvaez, Steve Miller, Titus, Tom Floyd, Quinn Davlaeminck, and Kieran Yanner.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Dave Webb:

There are many people that I need to thank for making this endeavor a reality and not a dream. First and foremost is my business partner, Hyrum, for without whom I'd still be a guy with a bunch of notes jotted down somewhere. Next are MY Extraordinary Delphians: Mykel Alvis, Mac Saxon, Alex Baker, Wayne Ligon and Bruce Whitney, each a hero in his own right as well as a teacher (especially you last three). Finally there are three very important people that deserve special attention. The first two are my extended family James Walker and Laurel Atherton who have given me the strength and support I needed to see this project through and for that I thank you. The last person is my Mom, Jane, for without her I would not be here and for always saying that what I did was great and that she was proud of me being a geek. This book is dedicated to each of you and to all those out there that have ever dreamed of being a hero. Wasabi!

### R. Hyrum Savage:

First off I need to thank my wonderful wife Anne, without whom none of this would have happened. Then I need to thank Dave, for both his incredible work and wonderful friendship. 'Mano, Fk exists because of you. Thanks also go out to Chris, and Cathy, and Rob, and James, affectionately known as the Cleveland Crew. I also need to thank the guys in the Thursday night games: Matt, George, Owen, Christian, and Ross. I owe all of you a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you. Mom, I love you. And finally, I need to thank my father, Robert. You've always been my Hero dad. Thanks for everything.

Published by:

OtherWorld Creations

1424 12th St. Suite #B

Santa Monica, CA 90401

www.otherworlds.cx

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LORD STRANGE VS. THE VOIDMEN, Episode VII, THE INTELLECT ATOMIZER! Copyright John Wick, 2001

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# LORD STRANGE VS. THE VOIDMEN

## Episode VII

### THE INTELLECT ATOMIZER!

© John Wick

When last we saw Lord Strange, he was in Voidspace, a region somewhere between Time and Space, captured by the villainous Doctor Zen...

Lord Strange watched helplessly as the master villain moved the switch from 4 up to 5. Electricity crackled through the air from the machine on the Doctor's side of the room to where he lay helpless, strapped between the two gigantic coils that shot the lightning into his brain.

"Scream, Lord Strange! Scream for the agony that courses through your brain as I drain every ounce of your intellect!"

But Strange made no sound. His eyes burned with fury as he watched the nefarious Doctor move the lever from 5 to 6.

"And then you can beg! Beg for mercy as you watch my Voidmen invade your beloved Earth, enslaving all of mankind to do my bidding!"

Strange bit his tongue, feeling the hatred and revulsion and pain twist in his gut. But the only sound he made was to curse the villain before him. "You may have captured me, Zen. But your plan will never work!"

The evil Doctor took his hand off the lever of his baneful machine and picked up a small ring from the ornately carved table before him. "And tell me, Lord Strange—tell me how my plan will fail. Only you know of the imminent invasion. Only you know how to close the gate between Realspace and Voidspace. But here you are: trapped inside my Intellect Atomizer. And I have your precious Orichalcum Ring... so there will be no escape for you this time, Lord Strange!"

The sinister Doctor clutched the ring triumphantly as he turned the lever from 6 to 7. But suddenly! From the shadows! A figure struck the Doctor behind his left ear, and he fell to the cold, steel floor with a loud—clang!

The shadowed figure stepped forward, dropping the heavy wrench next to Doctor Zen. Then a gloved hand turned the lever from 7, down to 6, down to 5, all the way back to 4, and one step more to where the meter read "Rescue."

As the cloaked figure released Strange from his shackles, he fell into its arms. He looked up, his eyes suddenly filling with recognition.

"Lady Fate?"

She threw back the hood to her cloak, her beautiful eyes shining in the dim light. "My beloved! I never thought I'd see you again!"

"I thought you were killed on Planet X!"

She shook her head, her blonde tresses falling before her crystal blue eyes. "No! I escaped! If it weren't for the Shadow People, I would have certainly died! But they are here with me, beloved! And they want to help!"

From the shadows another figure stepped, this time, it seemed, from the shadow itself. **We meet again, Lord Strange**, the figure said.

"It's good to see you, Prince Zero. It seems I owe you a favor."

**Two favors, Strange. For I saved not only you, but your love as well. But I am only repaying you for rescuing my son from this foul creature.**

The Shadow Prince's ever-flowing form kicked the still body of Doctor Zen.

Lady Fate pulled a heavy weapon from her cloak. "Take this lightning gun, my love. We'll need it."

Strange took the gun, then grabbed his ring from the unconscious villain's hand. "My great-grandfather's ring," he whispered. "Given to him by John Dee all those years ago. Held by every Lord Strange since then, the only remaining pure source of orichalcum in the world. I thought I had lost it forever." Then he turned

to the beautiful woman beside him. "Just as I had lost you forever."

"Oh, Strange!"

Their kiss was passionate, but brief. Both knew they had little time to act. They raced down the corridors of Doctor Zen's Voidship toward the waiting warcarriers of the Shadow People. But as they exited the room, a stern voice called from behind them.

"Halt! In the name of the Void!"

They turned to see a tall, black-haired human standing with a squadron of Voidmen, their eyes burning with dark flame.

"Baron Ajax!" Lady Fate cried out. "You traitor!"

The tall, dark man laughed. "Better a traitor than a fool! And that's what you are, Lady Fate! A fool! A fool for that man standing beside you! I could have given you money, fame, and power, but you turned it all away! And for what? Him?"

Strange leapt across the room, his shoulder slamming into the Baron's belly, knocking both men to the floor. Strange's fists found Ajax's face and beat against it mercilessly.

The Baron kicked Strange off and was on his feet before the hero could recover, striking him under the chin with a wicked side-kick.

"You're weak, Strange!" the Baron cried. "That's why you'll never save Earth!" Another kick sent Strange reeling across the floor.

"And when I'm the Emperor of America, your beloved Lady Fate will be my slave!"

Ajax kicked at Strange again, but this time the Man of Mystery caught the villain's leg by the ankle. "I don't think so, Ajax!" He twisted and the villain flipped to the floor, his jaw striking the steel hard.

Strange leapt on his fallen foe, but the squadron of Voidmen stepped in, their lightning guns aimed at Strange's head. Lord Strange stepped away from the bleeding Baron, his hands high.

Ajax got to his feet, wiping the blood off his broken lip. "I've got plans for you, Strange. And your pretty companion as well!"

Moments later, they all stood together, but Strange, Lady Fate, and their shadowy companions were all without weapons.

"I see you brought the Ethernaught with you, Strange."

"I never traverse the dimensions without it," Strange quipped.

Just then, Doctor Zen stepped into the picture. "You mean you can't traverse the dimensions without it," he said with a sinister grin. He turned to his companion. "Baron Ajax... throw Strange in his famous device, would you?"

The Baron followed his instructions, and Strange was soon followed by Prince Zero and his five Shadow People warriors.

"This is goodbye, Strange," Doctor Zen said, twirling his twisted moustache. "But don't worry about Lady Fate. She's in more than capable hands..."

The Doctor turned, allowing Strange to see his love twisting in the evil Baron's clutches. "You'll never win, Zen!" Strange shouted, just as the doors shut.

The Doctor laughed. "Funny. It looks as if I already have."

He turned to one of his Voidmen engineers. "Have you depleted the Ethernaught of its fuel?"

The Voidman nodded. "Yes, Doctor Zen."

"Very good. Eject it into Voidspace. The ether shall carry them off into one of the nearby suns, and that will be the end of the famous Lord Strange!"

The Ethernaught dropped from Doctor Zen's massive Void Cruiser and the ether winds caught it, pulling it away from that massive sight. Inside, Strange and his fellows scrambled with the controls, hoping against hope they could evade their inevitable doom. But even as they worked, the Ethernaught slipped closer and closer toward the mighty blue sun of Planet X!

Will Strange and his allies find their destinies at the heart of a sun?

If so, who will stop the nefarious Doctor Zen and his cohort, Baron Ajax?

There's only one way to find out...

Tune in next week for the explosive conclusion of...

**LORD STRANGE VS. THE VOIDMEN!!!**



# AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

It wasn't that long ago that Hyrum and I were talking about putting Forbidden Kingdoms together. I remember it quite clearly, as a matter of fact. We were having our usual weekly meeting and I brought the subject up of a game that had been kicking around in my skull for some time and wanted to know what he thought. The thing is, he liked it. Thus began our harrowing adventure on getting this book to print!

What you hold in your hands is what I like to refer to as a "What if" book. "What if" is a game I like to play, an internal game of speculation and extrapolation. Heck, you're a gamer, so you know what I'm talking about: the quintessential "If we had guns back in the Roman era."

See what I mean?

I took some ideas, wrote them down, and began researching. Now here's where I put in the author caveat. What I want to convey is that Forbidden Kingdoms is a book of Alternate Reality, Alternate History, and Speculation. Events have occurred that took place in our timeline, while others have been changed because... well... because we thought it would be cool to do so. Caveat coming up, you ready??

**YOU ARE IN NO WAY OBLIGED TO FOLLOW EITHER THE TIMELINE OR THE EVENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED!!!!!!**

End caveat.

I ask that you take some time and explore what's inside, get to know the world a little bit, and then extrapolate upon what is written here. It's all about creativity. Isn't that why we started gaming in the first place?

Now I know some of you out there will be saying, "Ummmm... Mr. Webb... you have no concept of history or events... blahblahblah." To which I must reply, "I do so!!!" and put my hands on my hips while poking out my lip. It's a GAME. We change things in games because we CAN. If I want to say that Napoleon had a penchant for riding his horse butt naked all across Europe, guess what? In this world there's a little nude general on a horse somewhere doing just that.

The big trick is to have fun. As grown-ups we tend to lose sight of that, thinking instead that it's all about the money, or making the car payment, or that the kids need money for (fill in the blank). It's actually about FUN and hanging out with your friends, kicking back with a six-pack of Mt. Dew and some pork rinds, only to get thrown out of Jimmy's basement because those damn pork rinds always give you gas... oops. Outside voice again, wasn't it?

Truth is I love my job. I love this industry and I dig the people who play games. We rock and don't let anyone tell you different.

Uncork.

Unclench.

Unwind and check out what's inside.

Be good,

Dave Webb

February 20, 2002