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Especulatório Magazine – Chapter IV: A Very Geeky Christmas, December, 2016
ISSN: 2183-8682

Owners, authors, producers, editors, designers...and everything else: Especulatório Team

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Because we recognize gender equality as a Human Right and wish to promote its achievement even in writing, where it reads "he", should read "she" as applicable, and vice-versa.

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CATARINA SANTOS

I studied Conservation Biology for love, I work a desk job by necessity, but my passions include writing, reading and all kinds of games! I am addicted to podcasts, webseries and book clubs.

Editorial - Happy Holidays!

Without any of us realising, we have reached the holiday season.

On Especulatório we believe that this holiday season is not simply a moment to exchange gifts, whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. On the contrary, it is a time for us to be with our families, blood relatives or with those we have chosen.

But that does not mean we have to leave our geeky shoes at the door! This time of the year we can spread fantasy and science fiction books and games throughout our most distrustful relatives. Believe us, by the end of Christmas Eve you will have them all playing D&D!

After 4 months of Especulatório Magazine we also want to take the opportunity this season brings to thank all who have join us in this quest, which is already on its way to two years.

This chapter is one more step in our road and, this time it is loaded with tips and suggestions for a very speculative month.

Happy holidays and thank you all!

A VERY GEEKY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL

Christmas is a very special festive season in which exuberance reigns and there is nothing odd about bright and colorful things scattered around the house. We, as good geeks we are, did not miss the opportunity to spread our magic around the house, and around family and friends and even the Christmas night itself!

Let's start with the task that is, for many of us, the hardest and also the one that is always planned to be done a month before Christmas, but in fact we only end it on the 23rd (or 24th sometimes): the Christmas gifts!

Buying a geek gift is not easy, especially if people seem to have all that they want. There is also the money factor to take into account, because often games or miniatures are not exactly cheap. And if you want to think of something original, it is not easy to find either.

Therefore, in addition to the stores we normally go to to buy the games (see the box below), we will also direct you to artisans who do real magic with their hands. Whether it's felt, wool, or embroidery, you can find things that are made with care and dedication, and that

OUR FAVORITE LOCATIONS TO BUY CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR GEEKY PEOPLE:

Games: [Devir](#), [Diver](#), [Gameplay](#), [Pythagoras](#), [Fórum de Classificados do AbreOJogo](#);

Books: [Bivar](#), [Leitura](#), [Fyodor Books](#), [Editorial Divergência](#);

Geek Arts and Crafts: [Grupo Handmade Scifi](#) that includes [Felted Fandoms](#), [Ana's Knits and Pieces](#), among other artisans. Or [Crafty Kitty Cat](#) or [Ilustrações de Ana Godinho](#).

depict today's most common geek universes (and who knows, they may also make some more specific orders).

In addition to buying, you can always make your own gifts. Besides giving gifts that are unique, they are always original and guarantee that people will never have a similar one.

Of course, it's always a lot of work, but if you get things done in time and plan well, it's always a fun thing to do, especially if you do it together with other people!

Important tips:

- Do not choose very complicated things, especially if you plan to offer them to a lot of people!

- Do not choose materials or techniques that you do not feel comfortable with, especially if you do not have much time.

- Check if the materials you need are available, to be easy to buy, and buy with a little excess, in case anything goes wrong and you have to go and buy things in a hurry.

- Try to slightly modify the gifts so that they mean something to you and the people whom you are offering it to.

- Plan the time you need and add some extra hours, things never go as we expected (own

experience).

- Have munchies around and hot tea or coffee and fill yourself with a good dose of good mood. Making gifts has its ups and downs!

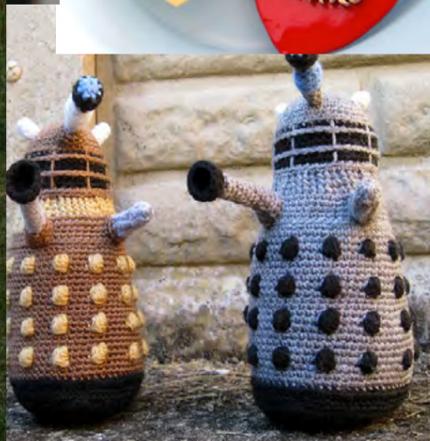
In the next page you can see several geeky ideas to distribute for Christmas! (In some images you will be directed to the pages where they explain how to make the gifts!)

Of course, on Christmas day, gifts are not the most important thing, we should get everyone together talking and getting along and having fun. For this we suggest for you to take a look at some of these games, which everyone can play, from the youngest to the oldest: **[Tsuro](#)**; **[The Game](#)**; **[Dobble](#)**; **[Forbidden Island](#)**; **[Jungle Speed](#)**; **[Lobisomens](#)**; **[Dixit](#)**

Also do not forget to take a look at the Christmas modules that Carlos mentions in the GM's corner article ([link p pagina](#))! There is nothing better on a Christmas night than having your grandmother killing a goblin who wants to steal Santa Claus, while the younger cousin does a sleep spell that gets the whole family asleep.

Finally, since Christmas is not only about

Other Speculations



Other Speculations

Other Speculations

the 24th and 25th, it is always good to imbue our homes with a bit of the holiday spirit. For this we chose some decorations that caught our attention and we also have included some recipes for food with a special geeky flavour ...

Don't forget that wherever and however, what is important is to be with your family

enjoying a fun evening. Be geek or not geek, what is important is to be together!

A very geeky christmas to you all!

Inês

A BIT OF MAGIC IN YOUR HOME AND MEALS...

Christmas Decorations:: [Golden snitch](#); [Rememberall](#); [Pokeball](#); [Star Wars Paper Snow Flakes I ou II](#); [Harry Potter Snow Flakes](#); [Super Mario Mushrooms](#); [Steam punk Decorations](#).

Recipes: [Star wars Cookies](#); [Star Wars Cake Monsters](#); [Several recipes inspired in films and books](#); [Cookies with funny formats \(Take a look at our recipe from this edition!\)](#)

BUTTER COOKIES

3 EGGS
250 GR. SUGAR
250 GR. MELTED BUTTER
600 GR. FLOUR (WITH YEAST)
ZEST FROM 1 LEMON



ROLL DELICIOUS INITIATIVES!

1. Beat the eggs with the sugar;
2. Add the melted butter and the lemon zest;
3. Add the sifted flour slowly. In the final stages you will need to mix the flour into the dough by hand;
4. Create a disc with the dough, cover in cling film and leave in the fridge for 15 to 20 minutes;
5. Take half of the dough, roll it out with the help of a rolling pin and cut the cookies in the geek format of your choice!
6. After cutting the cookies, bake them at 180°C for 10 to 15 minutes. The time will depend on the oven and the thickness of the cookies. They should end up slightly golden;
7. Decorate with store-bought frosting (optional)

GM'S CORNER: CHRISTMAS QUESTS

Have you always wanted to run a christmas themed adventure, but you never remember to prep anything until it's too late?

Have you looked around online for pre-made modules to play on christmas, but you never seem to find anything good?

Fear not!

We at Especulatório have made this search for you and now we're gonna introduce you to some christmas themed modules and mini-adventures available online!

A fair warning, this article will contain spoilers for the adventures we're gonna review.

THE DARKEST NIGHT

This simple but effective D&D 5th Edition adventure comes to us through Tribality Publishing. In this christmas adventure, the players will fight an ancient evil during the Kringlefest festivities.

The module opens up with some background about Kringlefest, a celebration named after the tinker gnome Kringle, which brought light to Iceville. This gnome spends the year in his workshop making gifts that he hands out during Kringlefest to the inhabitants of Iceville.

We are then presented with two plot hooks to start the adventure and then, finally, we get to the juicy part: the encounters.

Roll for Initiative

Fights with snow people, toy soldiers and the demonic Krampus populate this adventure, while the players look for Kringle's workshop and free it from Krampus's influence.

In general, the encounters are really interesting, albeit deadly for a level 1 group of adventurers. One of Krampus's main attacks deals an average of 9 points of damage, enough to kill a character at level 1. Coupled with a high to-hit rate, the Krampus fight will most likely end in a TPK.

So fix this, I suggest two things: tinker with the monsters to better fit with a level 1 party (a solution that is more work-heavy for the GM); or play with level 2 or 3 characters, as they can already survive a few attacks from these

monsters.

All in all, a really fun adventure to fit in the middle of your main quest or to play as a stand-alone adventure during the holidays.

KRANGEL'S WORKSHOP

This D&D 4th Edition adventure isn't much more than just a single encounter, but one that can be easily fit into your campaign or just run as a test encounter to try and convert your family to RPGs.

The module opens up with a brief introduction about the elvish town of Northcrest, which has a tradition called Feast of the Hearth. This week-long party is usually held indoors, during the snowy season, around a blazing fire and accompanied by singing,



Roll for Initiative

TWAS THE WIGHT BEFORE XMAS

This D&D 4th Edition adventure is the byproduct of a Christmas competition by Wizards of the Coast. As with the previous adventure, this one is also a single encounter.

The module begins with an introduction to Crossmas. Crossmas originally started when normal village folk realized that monsters would drop random packets of treasure when killed. A tide of madness soon ensued, when the villagers started killing anything that moved, even each other, in an attempt to get treasure.

Quickly Crossmas was instated, in which the villagers, instead of killing each other for treasure, would give gifts to one another.

In this adventure, the villagers of Tinselkompf have been abducted and incarcerated to work in the manufacture of Crossmas gifts and it is up to the players to find and free them.

The first part is easy enough, since the adventurers quickly spot a chapel painted in grotesque shades of red, green and white, from which can be heard the sounds of hammers and other tools.

When they get inside, the players find a strange elf, wearing tattered clothes adorned

dancing, and exchanging gifts.

Everyone partakes in the festivities, except for Krangel, a tinker gnome. This year, Krangel built dolls and handed them out to the elves of Northcrest, a gift that will surely ruin their festivities.

The module gives us a two plot hook, which direct the players to Krangel's workshop, an eccentric combination of elvish and gnomish architecture.

In it, the players find a sea of little harmless animated dolls and their maker, Krangel, finishing up a giant machine. As they enter, Krangel climbs into the massive robot and the fight begins.

This adventure does not provide the statblocks for its creatures, which is a double-edged scimitar. On one hand it's good, since it allows us to easily fit this adventure into any system with please. On the other hand it's bad, since it doesn't provide us with a ready to run adventure.

Down the line I'll talk about a Pathfinder book that you can use to get ideas for the monsters populating Krangel's workshop. Stay tuned!

with skulls. In a throne, a huge and round undead sits and, when he sees the players, he rises with a roar and attacks.

The interesting parts of this combat are the multiple “gifts” strewn through the floor, containing hidden undead, and the ginger-dead-men, which can be eaten after they are killed.

This adventure, although it was hastily thrown together, is very well thought out and



the monsters are very well balanced.

A D&D CHRISTMAS CAROL

Inspired by Charles Dickens “A Christmas Carol”, this D&D 4th Edition adventure for two players is way more complete than the previous two.

The module takes the players through Dickens’s classic story, which is probably already known by most of you, as bodyguards for Ebenezer Scrooge, presenting challenges based on each of the three Ghosts.

The Ghost of Christmas Past lures Scrooge to an ambush, where a group of criminals try to kidnap him. It is up to the players to protect Scrooge before he is taken away by the criminals and the Ghost.



The Ghost of Christmas Present appears as a giant in Scrooge’s bedroom and quickly

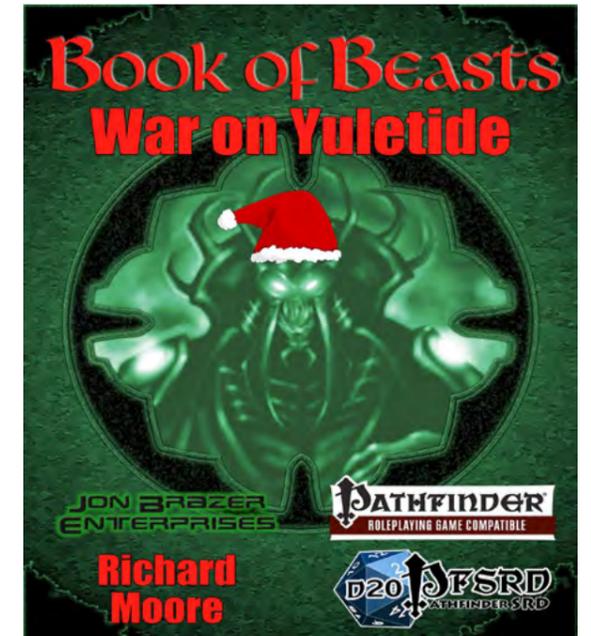
vanishes, taking Scrooge with him. The players will need to follow the Ghost through town using a wide range of skill checks.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is an evil spirit that tries to suck Scrooge into a black vortex and assimilate him. It is up to the players to keep Scrooge away from the spirit, while trying themselves to kill the evil apparition.

All in all, this adventure is very well put together, with interesting challenges, and gives the players an insight into Dickens’s classic work, if it was not already known by them. It is also very easy to adapt to other systems, since its challenges are not intrinsically connected to the creatures presented, except for the last one, although it can also be easily adapted.

BOOK OF BEASTS: WAR ON YULETIDE

Although this is not an adventure, this Pathfinder book is very useful to create our own christmas adventures or to adapt some of those presented here. With Clockwork Nutcrackers, Eggnog Puddings and Gingerbread Golems, this books presents us a huge variety of thematically appropriate monsters for a christmas adventure.



CONCLUSION

I hope that between this christmas-y monsters and adventure, you guys can have a great christmas evening, with loads of laughter and critical hits!

Carlos

AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT: BRANDON SANDERSON IN PORTUGAL!

Last month, more concretely on the 7th of November, at around 7 p.m., dozens of fans gathered at FNAC to welcome Brandon Sanderson on his first visit to Portugal.

For the few people who don't know Sanderson, he is the author of *Elantris*, the "Mistborn" trilogy (and the tetralogy that follows it) and "The Stormlight Archive" saga, amongst many other novels, novellas and short stories.

After a brief introduction by the representative of "Saida de Emergência", the publisher for the "Mistborn" trilogy in Portugal and who we must thank for this opportunity, Sanderson spoke a bit about himself and his writing mentality, describing it as a telepathic

process - he, as the writer, makes up an image which he turns into words and we, the readers, transform those words back into an image. He also mentioned having already written five more pages of the next volume of "The Stormlight Archive" during his only day in Portugal.

After that Sanderson quickly moved to questions from the audience, curious to hear what the portuguese fans had to ask.

And there were many questions, about his many books, on the recent news that he finally sold the rights to turn his work into movies and, of course, many questions about the Cosmere, some of which had to go without an answer.

In the mean time there was time to talk about his process as a writer and the Creative Writing classes he teaches at Brigham Young University, as well as tips on how to publish in the English market - yes, it is possible for portuguese authors to publish in English and Sanderson advises those interested in doing so to go to international conventions, such as EuroCon (which will be in Dortmund, Germany next year) or FantasyCon, in the UK, and contact attending editors.



@ANA MARQUES

There were also many questions from the fans of "The Wheel of Time" saga, by Robert Jordan, which Brandon Sanderson finished writing after the author's death.

Speculating Reality

Sanderson described how honored, but terrified, he felt when he was invited to finish this beloved story by Robert Jordan's widow, and how he got the most polite death threats ever by the series' fans.

We also learnt about the challenge it was being presented with piles of notes, pages of ideas and lists with the over 200 named characters of this saga, and transform it all in 3 books, with a beginning, a middle and an end.

In the end there was still time for photos and more questions while the author signed all our books.

Sanderson is no doubt an amazing writer and an incredibly open and available person, willing to speak with us, his fans.

An unforgettable evening for those present!

Catarina

Brandon Sanderson left us with his literary Top 5, if you need more reading suggestions!

DRAGONSBANE

TIGANA

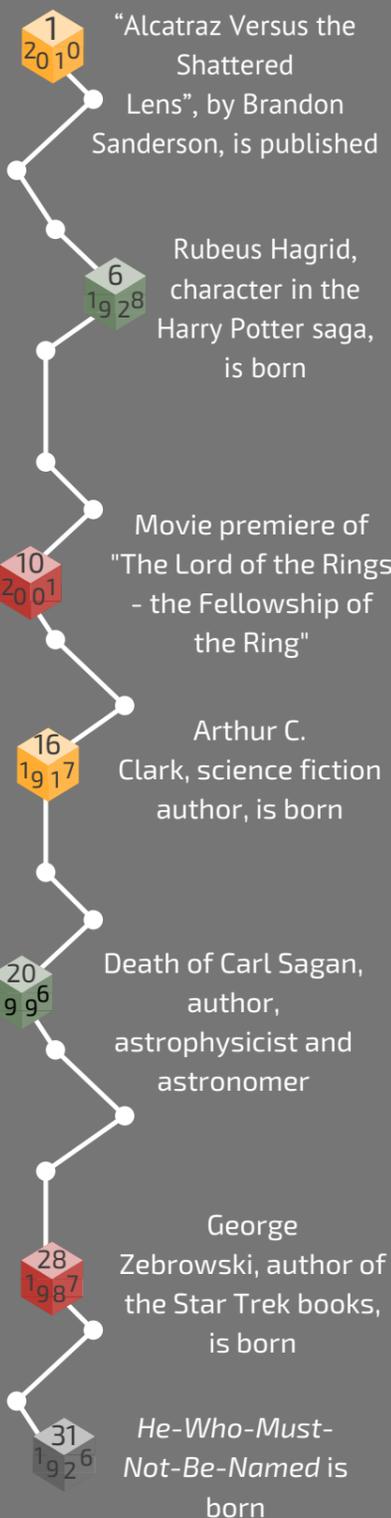
NIGHTWATCH

100 THOUSAND KINGDOMS

UPROOTED

DECEMBER

Back to the Past



Other Speculations

JOURNALS OF AN INTERNAUT LOST IN SPECULATIVE SPACE

On my mission to explore the speculative space during the last month, I came across something very interesting for me as rookie in this world of literary podcasts – o ["Speculate! The Podcast for Writers, Readers and Fans"](#).

If the name is already suggestive, the podcasts are fascinating.

As the name implies, this is a project dedicated to all fans, readers and writers of speculative fiction. It is led by three authors – [Gregory Wilson](#), [Bradley Beaulieu](#) e [Michael R. Underwood](#) – who discuss books, magazines, authors, writing techniques and much else, striving to go to the bottom of each question.

In more than 170 episodes so far (the last from the end of November) we will go on a

journey through speculative literature, exploring different issues and names.

For those just starting to listen to this podcast I leave you with one more incentive: you can count on great interviews with awesome authors such as Scott Lynch (creator of "The Lies of Lock Lamora" and many other titles) and Patrick Rothfuss (author of "The Name of the Wind", among others) and even with other podcasts' authors, like Tome Merritt from "Sword and Laser" (if you don't know this one don't forget to check it out also).

A great way to explore more in depth the world of speculative literature!

Maria Inês



A Box Full of Tokens



In this section we talk about our favourite games, explain their main mechanics and tell you what do we think about them.

WHAT ARE YOU CAPABLE OF TO SURVIVE?

-Is everyone ok? - asked Penny

Whispers of assent sounded from the stunned group, still recuperating from the explosion.

In the distance, meager fires illuminated the snow, marking the areas where small communities of people were gathering.

The snow started to fall, covering the world with its white cloak and creating a veil, isolating them from the rest of the people. Little cold goosebumps ran through the members of the group and their breathing began to create small foggy clouds in front of their mouths.

-It's all so quiet - Ben whispered to the rest of the group. -Maybe we should think about getting out of here, huh?

A Box Full of Tokens

People began to rise slowly, as if defeated by the weight of the destruction around them.

-Did we really have to destroy the hospital?- Penny asked, with an empty, distant stare.

-You know there was no other option, the zombies had flooded the place, chances are that whoever was in there was already a zombie when the explosion happened ... - Ben said as he rummaged in his suitcase. - We still got several provisions. How much did you manage to gather?

-We have three more cans of food between us, - Alex said, waving from the bottom of the group.

- We have two more gas and one food - Sam said.

- Good! That should give us more time to feed and feed the people - Ben said, trying to cheer up the group.

Alex hid the three cans of food and two more cans of gasoline inside his suitcase. At the same time, Sam hid the weapon he had arranged at the hospital and Penny the tuberculosis remedy. It was all very good to help the group, but there were things that were even more important if we were to survive in the long run ...

And you, what is your goal? Get payback from the Colony? To collect cans of gas so that you can get away with the car? Get medicine for the Colony?

In "Dead of Winter" all players have to work for the good of the Colony, otherwise they die, but they also have their personal goals that they have to achieve in order to win the game.

The scenario of this game takes place in a post-apocalyptic world, in which mankind is practically extinct and there are scores of zombies hunting for the remaining humans. The humans who still survive, join in small

colonies where they cohabit and try to survive as a group.

At the beginning of the game each player has to choose a character who represents him, and is assigned a personal objective, which may be, for example, to collect specific items or it can be to destroy the Colony. At the same time at which the individual goals are distributed,



A Box Full of Tokens



@JOSÉ SALVADO

the players randomly take a scenario describing the Colony victory conditions and the time available to obtain them.

In order to reach the goal (main or individual) players can explore and try to find objects in one of the locations near the Colony. Of course, in doing so they can always encounter zombies, or (sometimes worse) other humans. If they find friendly humans they can always bring them to the Colony as followers, but this will mean more mouths to feed, beyond the normal tasks

that have to be done inside of the Colony (such as throwing garbage out, defending the colony from zombies or building barricades).

As I said above, players will win if their objective and that of the colony are met, unless the goal is to destroy the colony, of course. This means that there may be more than one winner, actually sometimes it happens that everyone wins or loses.

Oh, I forgot to mention that every round

A Box Full of Tokens

there is a crisis in the Colony, be it too much garbage, too few food, too few barricades, etc ...

And these crises have to be solved with contributions from everyone. If that does not happen, the bad things that are written in the crisis card happen!

In addition when the players encounter a zombie they can

always fight with them ... But beware of bites!

In addition to this, there is still an "event" called a crossroads (that can happen or not) and that usually results in everyone in the group, or just the active player, making a decision that is often morally difficult and / or non-linear, leading once again to discussion and mistrust between players.

This game has very interesting dynamics, because there has to be a balance between

the individual and the global objective, and in general there is always a climate of suspicion among the players because no one knows who the traitors of the group are (if there is one).

Like "Betrayal in the House on the Hill", "Dead of Winter" also has several game scenarios, which allow you to play many times without repeating scenarios. This is further enhanced by the fact that there are many characters, each with a special ability, which make playing the same scenario with different characters and with different victory requirements, to become a completely different experience.

If you like psychological survival games and are followers of the "Walking Dead" series or if played the video-game "Last of us", I highly recommend that you play this game!

Good games!

Inês

EUROCON/BCON 2016

This section was written by our guest, Carlos Silva, one of the coordinating members of the Imaginauta project. (translated by the Especulatório team)

I am Carlos Silva, one of the mentors of the Imaginauta project, and these are some notes that I took during my participation in the EuroCon 2016.

I'm on the plane, Barcelona is in sight. Will the two days of vacations that I am spending be worth it?

But first things first, what is EuroCon? It is the annual European convention dedicated to science fiction, that is always changing place, and coinciding with a chosen national convention.

Therefore, whoever wants to host this event, just needs to have a convention in their country and run to organize the con in two years (at least). For example, at EuroCon 2016 people



will vote on where the EuroCon 2018 will be (it will be in Amiens, hosted by NemoCon), and the 2017 will be in Dortmund.

Since 1972, ESFS, the European Science Fiction Society, has been in charge of all this, and it is also them that award the European Science Fiction Prizes.

I arrive at the CCCB (Contemporary Cultural Center of Barcelona) and I stumble upon the the assembling of the different showcases in the atrium. First impression: quite a few tables, I like that! Second impression: Are they building a life-size TARDIS!?

First impressions taken, I went for a walk in Carrer de Bailèn. Okay, who am I kidding ... I'm going straight to number 8, the famous Gigamesh.

The entrance is a huge showcase that funnels and, before we know it, we are already inside the bookstore. (Later, in conversation with the founder, he said that it was on purpose, and that it had been worth every square meter sacrificed).

Inside, I feel a little overwhelmed by the huge offer. I want to take something, a souvenir written in Castilian by a Spanish author, but which? I ask around "What is the best Spanish author of SF&F?", "What do you recommend?"

Fortunately there is no lack of volunteers to ask: there is a queue that goes around the block to get Sanderson's autograph. The author

is in a small room at the back of the bookstore, right next to the books in sale, which happen to have a book from one of the authors whose name was more often repeated in answer to my questions: Emilio Bueso.

I have not read it yet, but I'm more than curious.

Day 2, programming begins. Now it's serious, yesterday was just to warm up.

As the people start arriving to the CCCB and the merchants' stalls exposing their products, I find the first difference between this and the events I usually go to. At the back of the room, flanking the bench of the Portuguese delegation (ScifiLx, Imaginauta, Divergence and Speculatory), there are stalls of future European Cons. All of them offer chocolates and colored ribbons to stick on the credentials, demonstrating our support. In the beginning I resisted, but by the end of the day I already had a tie of support ribbons.

This is not only because I would like to go to all of them, but because of the great sympathy of all the organizers. We feel like part of a big family. Undoubtedly, the one that caught more my attention was FinCon (Finland) who will host the seventh WorldCon in 2017.

I try to assist to some lectures that I thought would interest me, but whenever it was time to go, there would always be someone who wanted to know more about science fiction in Portugal, what is Imaginauta, exchange ideas, create projects. I always looked at the clock, but if I tried to go, I would be late, so instead I stayed to learn and discover a bit more about this new world. Now imagine this repeated over and over again in the next few days. In the end, with some juggling, I managed to assist to a bit of everything, but it was difficult.

In terms of the organization, it was as expected. Some points to improve: the locations were too scattered and hidden (in one of these obscure places were two of the Portuguese presentations, which did not invalidate a pleasant number of people in the assistance), lack of indications and a clearer map.

At the meeting of small publishers (which Imaginauta could not miss) I met a lot of projects and saw the enthusiasm

of the people behind them. I came with my hands full, since there was no one who did not bring a catalog, a brochure or even complete works to distribute. I even had the luck, in conversation with a Spanish publisher, to receive a copy of the proof of a book by Emilio Bueso (the one that everyone says that he is really good) that will only be published next year!

I introduced Imaginauta and I could not help but feel proud to notice that everyone liked the initiatives I was talking about and that, throughout the event, I was approached to exchange ideas about them. I got a few ideas from there that I hope that you will hear about



in a very short time.

Another thing that I have to talk about are zines. There were Zines everywhere. Many of them in English, offered to anyone who passed by, so that the speculative fiction of each European country would leave its borders and become really European.

On the last day I even received a Greek Zine, written with the characters that one would expect from its nationality.

I will not read it, for obvious reasons, but it will certainly find its place in the collection that I have created and that will provide me with reading on the upcoming times.

But a man does not live of paper alone. Going to the various lectures, I learned things, met people, started conversations that extended beyond the space and time stipulated by the organization (which tried to comply to the timetable religiously, congratulations for that). All the people that circulated around us were enthusiasts, people who are not afraid to get their hands dirty. It's a really good environment, full of creative energy.

One of the most striking people who, in his own way, pulled the Portuguese entourage was Dave Lally, the Histrionic Irishman.

The first time we saw him, he was trying to occupy a vacant table (which was eventually conquered and populated by offers) to put two hand-written sheets to promote WorldCon 2019. "You know, in 2019, Dublin will host this event, and Belfast is trying to host EuroCon in the following week and there will be a train that will take visitors from one to the other, and this train will be called Enterprise, but it's not a ship, it's really a convoy. And the pound will be down, with this whole Brexit thing, the fact is that the English visit Ireland a lot and there are always many from one country

and another on the respective cons, and it is able to lower the pound even further, you should think about going there, beer is cheap, I was in Iceland last week, it was the first Con, how cold it was..." And so on.

Later, after the panel on Portuguese SF, Dave was the one who pushed us against the Spanish Association of Fantasy, Science Fiction and Terror, and almost forced us to promise that we would be present at Hispacon 2017. Great Dave, I miss you already.

By the way, this panel was not recorded, but most of the talks and forums were. Go to Gigamesh's youtube, and you can find these videos.

I strongly recommend to all fans who have not gone, to try and go to an international Con.

Very different, and at the same time quite familiar. It is an opportunity to open horizons, to know new perspectives and cultures (and to eat sweets, omnipresent in all the stands and meeting events).



My bag came heavy with my literary loot and my wallet filled with contacts, but essentially, what came most filled was the spirit, renewed to do more and better things linked to speculative fiction.

Carlos Silva

I JUST WROTE 50.000 WORDS: NOW WHAT?

Every month we will talk about writing. No being masters on the subject, we wish only to offer inspiration and motivation for every writer who, like us, wants to put their ideas on paper.

Now that NaNoWriMo is over, whether you managed to reach (or surpass) or not your goal of 50.000 words, it's time to look at your story and ask: what now?

MAIN REVISIONS

The first revisions is the perfect time to make structural changes, identify characters that need to go, or characters that need to change because they're not exactly who you wanted them to be. Take this opportunity to chop entire chapters, if needed, and see if your ending satisfies the promises you made throughout the story.

Now is time to uncover the most important problems with your story and find their solutions.

You might need to add new characters who fulfill your plot somehow and the story you want to tell.

It might help to make an outline of your revision process, a list of everything you feel you need to change or correct, and organize it by priority.

Although most people write in chronological order, the revision process does not usually follow this order, since there are some problems, more important than others, that you should tackle first. Often, during the writing process, you might already even left notes to yourself of things you knew needed revising. Start with those!

A common advice for new writers is to turn off your inner editor while you're writing, so that you're not stopping your writing to revise something and then get stuck in the loop and stop writing new things. But if you already have some practice you can go ahead and make some changes while you're writing, specially structural problems. Use whatever technique motivates you to write more and better!

MIDDLE REVISIONS

Although it's a tough process, read your book from start to finish, as if it was written by someone else, and pay attention to your reactions as readers. Note the parts you loved, the places your were bored or confused and the pieces that seemed implausible. Try to understand the reasons behind your reactions as readers. If you have people you trust to read your story, ask them to do the same and use those reactions to determine what needs to be improved.

If you felt bored in some places you might have a problem with your pacing. It's time to pick up the pace! If you felt confused maybe you need to add some information ou detail that makes it clear exactly what is going on.

A good technique to remember what you need to correct or alter, be it about a character or a place, is to use your text processor to find and replace the name of what you need to revise to be between parenthesis or quotation marks. That way, whenever you go by a reference to that name in parentheses you'll be reminded you need to change something related to that character or place.

Another good idea is using colours to identify different characters' dialogue (especially if you have a lot of them) so you can have a visual impression of the distribution of dialogue. You might conclude that one of your characters is talking too much and some of that dialogue should go to someone else!

FINAL REVISIONS

Although it's not usually advisable to make structural changes in your final revisions, since it will probably create some errors in other places of your story, it might be necessary! Don't be afraid to add new scenes (as long as they're short) if they are needed to correct something you changed in previous revisions, like, for example, if you improved your ending and now need some new scenes to make that ending have as much impact as possible.

remember that repeating something might be a good method to eliminate ambiguity or stress a specific idea. As always, all rules are made to be broken, as long as you're aware that you're doing it.

Review your descriptions taking into account we do have more than one sense - describe the sounds, textures and smells of your story.

Another detail to pay attention to is if your characters have certain repeated gestures to demonstrate emotions throughout the story - like lifting an eyebrow or a certain kind of breathing. Try to describe your character's reactions in different ways.

Lastly, another improvement you might try is to replace abstract words - like dog or wood

- with more concrete words - like pine wood or hound dog.

Make use of December to revise and improve all your hard work from NaNoWrimo!

Catarina

Final revisions are also a good place to review your language, improve your dialogues and make your descriptions magical.

Identify the purpose of each of your scenes and, once you know exactly what you want to say and do with them, tweak the descriptions and dialogues to better attain your goal.

Take special attention to repetitions - you don't want to say what a character is feeling and then show what they're feeling, again. It's normal to repeat the same ideias sometimes but now is the time to clean up those repetitions.

Read your text out loud and try to understand if the words are flowing as you'd like, or if you've got too many repeated words (we all have words or expressions we love). But do



NARRATIVE GAMES VS LINEAR NARRATIVES: PART TWO

This section is written by our guest, Sérgio Mascarenhas, coordinating member of the Lisbon's Roleplayers' Group, and he will be discussing dramaturgy and role-playing games. (translated by the Especulatório Team)

I concluded the first article of this segment asking how narrative games compare with linear dramatic productions.

In the present and following articles we are going to explore the similarities and differences between the two, keeping in mind that typical narrative games (if that even exists) are almost always an amateur activity (a group of friends around a table) achieved with few resources (the table is usually in the kitchen of our home or in a free public space!). Consequently, the specialization of tasks is limited.

Let's see things from the perspective of any group dedicated to a character game where, in most cases, we have a game master and several players with characters.

Today we will speculate about production, dramatic writing and interpretation.

PRODUCTION

The game takes place in a (real or virtual) location, on a specific time and with specific logistics. We can distinguish three phases. In pre-production it is established who (what players?), where (we are playing), when (day, hour, duration), what (game?). Apparently easy, a lot of players face unsurpassed difficulties in this phase.

The production phase is related with game logistics: if there is need for transportation and who deals with the transports? How do players organise in the game space? Are

there food and beverages available and who is responsible for them? Who takes charge for the game materials?

And finally we have post-production: who cleans the game space? By the end of the game, do the players go separate ways or do we extend the session with a different kind of gathering?

DRAMATIC WRITING

Dramatic writing for narrative games can be divided in three central components: descriptive writing, which details the context, the universe (the real world or a fictional world) where the action of the game takes place; narrative writing, that establishes the big plot lines which the characters will be involved with and that can be more or less complex, giving space for sets, adventures, campaigns, etc.; improve "writing", the events that take place during the game.

Writing the game universe can be a creation of the players themselves, but it is common for them to resort to commercial products, often inspired by other Media's creations. The same can be said for plots, although in this case it is common to have a combination of personal creations and ready-to-play packages.

However, either the game universe description or the plot can be improvised on the spot, when the players have the talent and like doing it.

Evidently, the improvisation component can only happen during the game, and therefore is totally the result of the players' creativity.

In a conventional game the usual is having the game master assume the responsibility for the management of the descriptions of the game universe and of the plots. The improvisation of events is shared by all. But it is possible for character players to contribute with different inputs for the definition of the universe and plot lines.

INTERPRETATION

It's divided, in a conventional narrative game, between the protagonists' players, the player characters (personagens de jogador?) and the game master for all other characters, including antagonists, secondary characters and extras.

However, the players can also play secondary characters or extras that are in the service of their protagonists.

Here we are discussing interpretation in a broad sense, where there is much more to

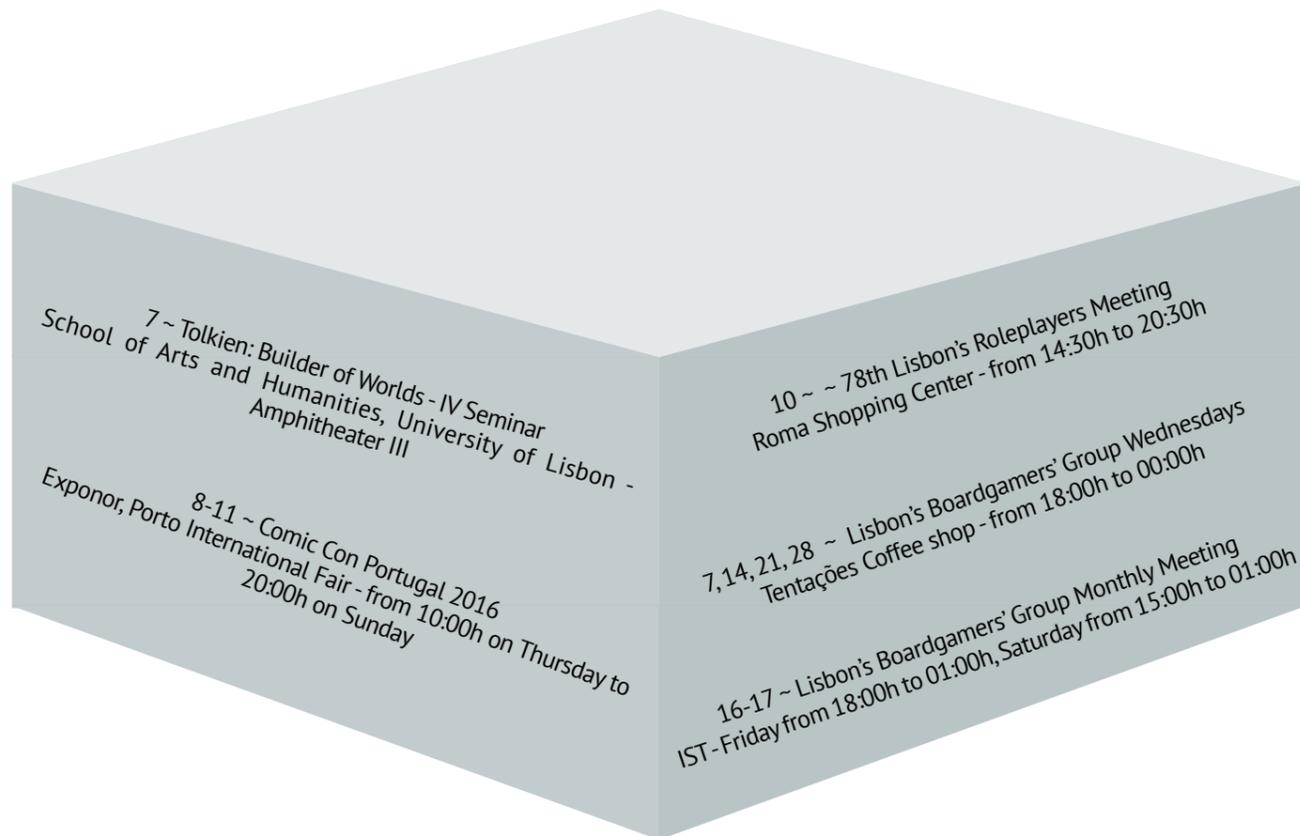
accomplish than give sensible voice to a pre-defined script.

Before, the players had to divide themselves permanently between two tasks: the script definition, in part improvised, in part based on the character description, in part moderated by the game system; and the interpretation itself, in a more conventional sense of the dramatic arts.

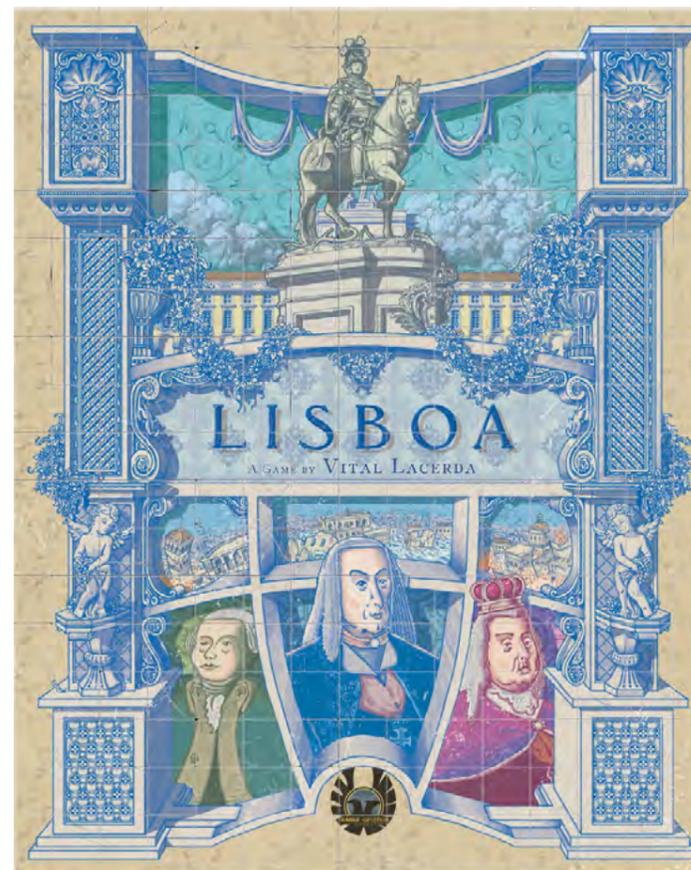
Now, the pleasure of the game is a product of what the players do in one or other component, and a player's lack of dramatic skills can be hugely compensated by the creativity of situations they create for the game.

Sérgio Mascarenhas

EVENTS CALENDAR



MONTHLY KICKSTARTER: LISBOA



This month we will talk to you about a kickstarter game that is dedicated to Lisbon!

To be more precise, it focuses on the reconstruction of Lisbon by the Marquis of Pombal after the earthquake of 1755. This game was created by a Portuguese, Vital Lacerda, known for other games such as "Vinhos" and "Gallerist".

As I told you, the aim of the game is to help rebuild Lisbon after the earthquake. For that the player become representatives of various noble families, and will use their influence

to affect which shops will remain in what stress, and who will be the shop owners that will be able to sell in those stores. In order to accomplish this, they influence either the Royal Architect, the Marquis or the King, to decide how Lisbon will be rebuilt.

But, the ultimate goal of the players is actually to get ... Wigs! Because, back in the day, only a really rich family could own more than a wig. And the game score is basically the number of wigs that players have in the end of the game.

This game made me very curious (partly because of the wigs), since it depicts a topic that is very dear (after all I live in Lisbon), but also because the mechanics seem extraordinarily interesting.

The Kickstarter is open until December 19th and if you are interested in acquiring the game, but do not want to pay a fortune in shipping, you can see the links at the bottom of the kickstarter page for partners in Europe that allow a discount on shipping costs!

Good games!

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “MESSENGERS FROM THE STARS - EPISODE IV”

This November was definitely a great month for all fans of speculative fiction.

Not only did we have a visit from Brandon Sanderson (check our article on page 14), we also had the “Science Fiction and Fantasy International Conference “Messengers from the Stars - Episode IV”, at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon.

Three days filled with lectures and talks with academics from all over the place.

Unfortunately the Especulatório team could only be present for a few of these lectures, but we leave you with the abstract book if you'd like to know more!

On the conference's first day we attended the session “SF Literature I”, chaired by the Portuguese author Luís Filipe Silva.

The first lecture of this session, “The War of the Modes: Martian Fiction in Theory and Practice”, by Juraj Bakos of the University of Palacky, Czech Republic, taught us a bit about the birth of Martian fiction at the end of the nineteenth century, stemming from the observations of this planet by Giovanni Schiaparelli, in 1877, and by Percival Lowell, in 1906.

He then summarized the literary theory of modes (if you'd like to know more) which classifies literary works into five modes (Mythic, Romantic, High Mimetic, Low Mimetic

and Ironic) and which Bakos applied to Martian fiction.

According to his analysis, in Mythic mode we have the greek and roman classics in which Mars is the God of War. In the Romantic Mode we have the stories in which the hero saves the martian princess (“Across the Zodiac” (1880), by Percy Greg, or “A Princess of Mars” (1912) by Edgar R. Burroughs) while the Mimetic modes are inspired by the dissolution after the First Great War (“The Martian Chronicles” (1950), by Ray Bradbury, or “Stranger in a Strange Land” (1961), by Robert Heinlein).

Lastly, in the Ironic mode, which starts with novels from the 70's, Mars is seen as a place for a better world, heavily influenced by the space era (“Red Mars” (1992), by Kim S. Robinson, or “White Mars” (1999), by Brian Aldiss).

This analysis by Juraj Bakos aimed to also demonstrate the evolution of female archetypes in martian fiction, starting with the typical “damsel in distress” in the Romantic mode, and evolving until we have female characters who are scientists and leaders (and even rescue their male partners, as in “The Martian” (2011), by Andy Weir).

The next lecture, called “Historical Adventure of Science Fiction in Turkish Literature and “Mo'nun Gizemi” (The Mystery of Mo) by Gulden Dayioglu” was by Ülfet Dag Ilhan, from the University of Seljuk, Turkey, and tried to summarize the historical processes that influenced turkish literature. It also focused on the influence the French Science Fiction translations had on this genre, specially on the novel “Mo'nun Gizemi” (2001) by Gulden Dayioglu.

This session then closed with the lecture “The Future in Nuclear: Energy Issues in Isaac Asimov's “Foundation”” by Matús Misik and Nada Kujundzic from the University of Alberta, Canada.

Starting with a brief description of the book “Foundation”, the first volume from the trilogy

with the same name, they then introduced the concept of “Energy Humanities”, a field that aims to establish dialogue between human and social sciences, and the paradox inherent to our need for energy to survive, since our great energy consumption is what most threatens our planet and our ability to survive.

In this presentation these two researchers analysed Asimov’s work from the point of view of the Nuclear Energy used, not as a literal weapon, but as a political and economical weapon, or power, over the other planets.

In “Foundation”, Terminus, the planet of the Foundation, is the only one with nuclear power, although they have no other resources.

Through the creation of “mini-nuclear generators”, used as power, shields and medical equipment, the Foundation has the ability to control the other planets economically (making others dependent on them), religiously (nuclear technology is so advanced to other planets that it is almost as magic or myth) and politically (threatening to raise prices or cut supply of energy when the other nations got against

the wishes of the Foundation).

This analysis, not only interesting from the literary point of view, has also great parallels with the real world which makes it even more relevant.

On the second day of the conference we had the opportunity to attend the session “Modern Fantasy Literature”, moderated by Paula Róldan.

The first guest was Diana Marques, from the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon (FLUL/ULICES), who presented “The Mistborn Trilogy: Who is the hero after all?”.

As a Brandon Sanderson fan it was particularly interesting to see a detailed analysis of the various heroes of this saga and how the different facets of the classic Hero are represented in the different characters who inhabit this trilogy.

Each one of the “Mistborn” main characters - Vin, Elend, Kelsier, Sazed - represent a piece of the puzzle in these stories and show how no single person could take on the responsibility of being the Hero on their own.



Afterwards, Iolanda Zôrro (ULICES) presented us with the lecture “And so it begins - Creation and Belief” where she spoke of the various creation myths in “Hogfather”, by Terry Pratchett, “On Fairy Stories”, by J. R. R. Tolkien, and “The Neverending Story”, by Michael Ende.

It was mentioned how the creation of secondary worlds shouldn’t be interrupted by the disbelief of the readers or the art of

creating these imaginary worlds fails (Tolkien), and how creation is connected with belief and humanity can only create if it believes in something (Ende).

Lastly, it was demonstrated how, in “Hogfather”, and various other “Discworld” books, the belief in something magical is what makes the magic real - the concept of induced magic.

This session ended with the lecture from Tânia Azevedo, from the University of Minho/CEHUM, “Imagining: The Hero and the “Other””.

This researcher started with noting the importance of Gilbert Durand and René Girard for the literature of the imaginary. An analysis followed, based on the theories of these two authors, of two completely different works - the comic book “A Night in Gotham City” and “Sellic Spell”, a folk tale by J.R.R. Tolkien - in which we can find the same concepts created by Girard and Durand.

We started the last day of this conference with a conversation with Ken Macleod, a scottish writer, author of fifteen sci-fi books. For those of you who haven't heard of him he suggested you start with “Intrusion” or “Learning the World: a Scientific Romance”.

Mcleod spoke a bit of his experience in Zoology and Biomechanics and how he became a published author. In the midst of many interesting questions he spoke about the interaction between the academic world and writers of science fiction, the stigma of being a Sci-Fi writer, which happens as much

in the UK as in Portugal, and also the gender division in speculative genres - since Science Fiction it is generally seen as for boys and Fantasy for girl - which the author believes is balancing out these days, at least in terms of readers, if not writers.

Our last session was “Nature and Place in Tolkien's Middle Earth”, chaired by Angélica Varandas, which had four researchers from the University of the Basque Country as guests.

The first lecture, “Trees in “The Silmarillion”: An Ecocritical Interpretation”, by Martin Simonson, focused on the mythological foundation of stewardship and its relation with the trees of Middle Earth, specially Telperion and Laurelin, the first beings created by the song of Ilúvatar, when the world was made.

A presentation where much was said about the spirituality of the natural world and which concluded that, in Tolkien's works, the natural world is not only the background for the action but the reason for the fight. Middle Earth is a gift to preserve and not something to possess.

Next was Maddi Mujika's lecture, “The Importance and Presence of Mountains and

Subterranean Spaces in J.R.R. Tolkien's “The Hobbit””.

This researcher presented the evolution of meaning of mountains and underground spaces throughout human history, comparing it with the connotations assigned in “The Hobbit”.

In Tolkien's book mountains are something sublime, but also dangerous, while underground spaces, like caves and caverns, (with the exception of hobbit holes) have a negative meaning but serve the purpose of provoking change in our hero, Bilbo, who becomes a stronger hobbit through his journey through the darkest places of Middle Earth.

The third presentation by Andoni Cossio, “The Old Forest and Mirkwood, Hearts of Darkness in Middle-Earth”, focused on the forests of Middle Earth as cultural thresholds and compared the relative gloom of the forests of Trollshaws and Fangorn with the total darkness of the Old Forest and Mirkwood, where the first two represent ambivalent places, where evil comes from outside, and the last two represent malice and the corruption by evil.

To end this session we attended “Tolkien's Battle between Nature and Industry in the “The Lord of the Rings””, by Jon Alkorta, who spoke mainly of how Tolkien's views and opinions, about industry and its eternal battle with nature, reflect on his works, especially in certain characters and events, demonstrating his concern with the natural world.

Beyond all these, and many other, lectures this event had the presence of Sci-Fi Lx, which had an amazing stand throughout the whole event, and also organized, with Imaginauta, a meeting of “Devoradores de Livros”.

Definitely a spectacular event. We can't wait for next year's!

Catarina

HOGFATHER: AN OUT OF THE BOX CHRISTMAS

Now that the holiday season has finally arrived I started to wonder: what speculative fiction books fits this time of the year? The truth was that I didn't know of any that dealt with this theme specifically... And then someone introduced me to a title...well...out of the ordinary.

This month I dedicated myself to reading Terry Pratchett's Hogfather and...well...I think I am still trying to make sense of what happened on this book.

I admit, I am still a rookie in my dealings with Terry Pratchett, having only read "The Colour of Magic" before. Thus I cannot claim to be totally into the World he created.

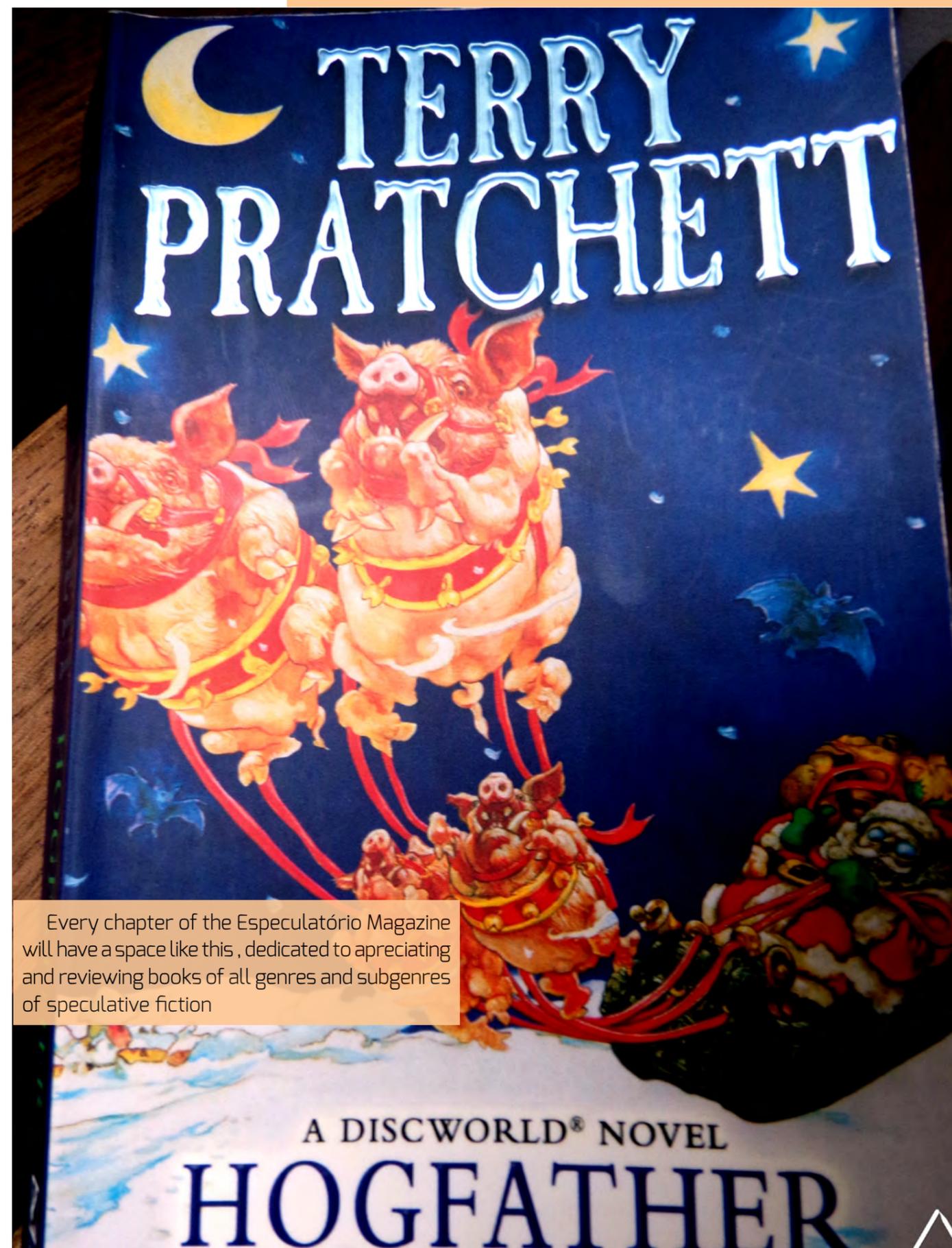
Maybe it was for that reason that I was unable to get fully into "Hogfather", with its

many and weird characters and its mind-boggling speed, moving constantly from one character to the next without letting us fully catch on.

I truly believe that, as a reader, one must embrace Terry Pratchett with an open mind and maybe I was not successful on that front this time. If it is true that this book is full of out of the box characters, it is exactly for that reason that we must become out of the box readers.

We should accept the fact that Death decides to stand in for Father Christmas (or the equivalent in Discworld), complete with a fake beard and a pillow as a belly.

We must believe it is possible to rescue the real Father Christmas and ensure every child and adult in the World truly believe in the



Every chapter of the Especulatório Magazine will have a space like this, dedicated to appreciating and reviewing books of all genres and subgenres of speculative fiction

A DISCWORLD® NOVEL
HOGFATHER

magic of this time of year.

It does not seem like a useless task in the current times... It is fundamental that we all believe once more on the good of things, on the ability that each of us has to be a real agent of change and transformation and that we all have a part to play on that road.

Although I couldn't travel very deeply through the World showed in these pages, I cannot end without recognising its fantastic elements of comedy.

My favourites: the Auditors. Beings for whom the individual is unthinkable, or should I say, impossible, as in they disappear as soon as they start thinking in terms of "me" instead of "we".

To make your holiday season more jolly, I leave you with an excerpt of one of their conversations:

So, I am sure I will come back and embrace the out of the box madness of Terry Pratchett. My gift for you? The invitation for you to do the same.

Happy holidays!

Maria Inês



« Well, said one, we are frankly impressed. Indeed, said another. We would never have thought of doing it this way. He is certainly a resourceful human, said a third. The beauty of it all, said the first - or it may have been the second, because, absolutely nothing distinguished the robes - is that there is so much else we will control. Quite, said another. It is really amazing how they think. A sort of... illogical logic. Children, said another. Who would have thought it? But today the children, tomorrow the world. Give me a child until he is seven and he's mine for life, said another.

There was a dreadful pause. The consensus beings that called themselves the Auditors did not believe in anything, except possibly immortality. And the way to be immortal, they knew, was to avoid living. Most of all they did not believe in personality. To be a personality was to be a creature with a beginning and an end. And since they reasoned that in an infinite universe any life was by comparison unimaginably short, they died instantly. There was a flaw in their logic, of course, but by the time they found this out it was always too late. In the meantime, they scrupulously avoided any comment, action or experience that set them apart... You said 'me', said one. Ah. Yes. But, you see, we were quoting, said the other one hurriedly. Some religious person said that. About educating children. And so would logically say 'me'. But I wouldn't use that term of myself, of - damn! The robe vanished in a little puff of smoke.»

This section was written by our guest, Carlos Silva, one of the coordinating members of the Imaginauta project. (translated by the Especulatório team)

FRIKI BARCELONA GUIDEBOOK

Friki: Spanish word for: freak, weirdo, geek, nerd, guru, otaku, mangaka, comic book lover, bookworm, video game player, movie lover.

Barcelona is famous for the Sagrada Familia cathedral, the Ramblas, the Casa Batló, but for those that get out at the Arc de Triomf metro station, there is a new kind of city to be discovered by lovers of the sub-culture geek.

Legend has it that it all began with Norma, a store dedicated to comics that opened in

number 9 of Passeig de Sant Joan. The space is so huge, so big that by the middle of the shop I thought "I'll have to turn everything back, what a bummer" (in case you want to know, there is a second door on the other end). Along the way, we find BDs from American superheroes, passing by Mangas and ending in author BDs. This is because Norma is also a publisher.



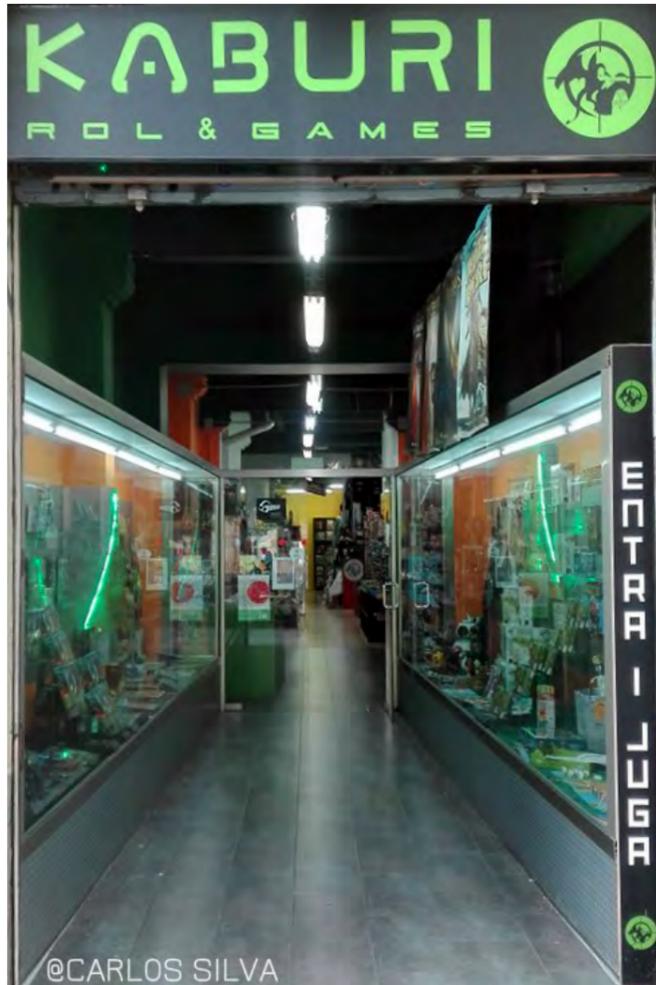
@CARLOS SILVA

After Normal, it was time for a second store to open on the side street. Gigamesh, the SF & F Mecca. To give an idea of the offer that Alejo Cuervo (the founder of the bookstore) has for you, I want you to know that there are supermarket trolleys for customers. There are board games, RPGs, foreign books, a book zone with books in Spanish (which can makes us cry, when we think of FNAC's half shelf here in Portugal).

By the way, it was Gigamesh who translated Game of Thrones into Spanish, as this store also has a publisher!

After these two giants, the fate of the area was traced. Any geek shop had to find its way there.

It is not surprising that Alejo Cuervo is one of the main characters (villain) of the bizarre saga in BD "Fanhunter", where the author parodies the world of Spanish geeks, making several references to the subculture and the city of



Barcelona.

Moving through the neighborhood we bump into Freaks. Three stores in a row, each one with its concept. We have one dedicated to terror (especially movies), another one to BD and another to exotic books of obscure themes.

All of them a curiosity cabinet where we can take whatever we want home.

But there is much more! Do not think I'm done. If games is more your thing, then you have to go to Kaburi. From all kinds of Roleplay to board games we had never heard of and to make everything better, we can eat a toast at Kaburi Cafe and try out some games before

buying them.

There are many more, but I wanted to leave an additional recommendation: Madame Chocolat. The oasis of those who live in an

alternative 21st century, populated by steam and cogwheels.

So I hope you have got an idea that is well worth a visit to Barcelona if your heart beats strong for the geeky side.

And you know the best? People.

There are new, old, teenagers, couples with

their children, all enthusiastic, all enjoying life. There, being a geek is not bad, it's just another cultural movement like any other that has conquered its place in the sun. And the proof of this, is that even in the so-called generalist bookstores, like La Central de Raval (built inside of an old church), you can always find a good section of SF & F.

Carlos Silva





In this section we pull apart how to build board games to help all that want to start building games.



Following last month's topic on NaNoWriMo and the importance of writing in a geek's life, this month we'll talk about how, and why it's important, to build a background story when we're creating a board game.

Anyone who enjoys board games knows that sometimes we choose a game not because of the mechanics, but only due to the fact that the story draws our attention. I can tell you without any shame that I do not think much before buying a game if the theme or story is related to evolution.

It is very common to see the same mechanic in several games, or even games with the same goals, however most of the times we consider them to be different games... why is that?

Because, ultimately, the flavor is different, the ingredients can be more or less the same, but the way they are put together and the extra spices (sugar and spice and everything nice) make the experience completely different.

That is why it's necessary to be aware that during the creation of a board game, the story behind it becomes the thread that unifies the goals, mechanics and design of your game.

BACKGROUND STORIES: THE GLUE THAT KEEPS GAMES TOGETHER

It is obvious that these building blocks (objective, mechanics and design) can be "dressed" differently, but there has to be some consistency between the three. The goal of the game cannot be to get as many mushrooms as you can, if you are an elephant hunter and live in a city... I mean... You can, but be honest, you would not buy a game with this story, would you?

So how can we create a consistent story with beginning, middle and end, that makes sense with the mechanics, objectives and design of the game?

Here are some tips:

1- Identify actions in real life that can be performed with the mechanics you are using in the game.

For example: using a meeple to perform an action to acquire a resource can either be a worker bee that is going to fetch nectar from a flower, a cook that has to cut an ingredient for a dish, a builder who is trying to acquire building material or a magician who went to get an ingredient for a magic potion.

2- After identifying possible actions, now you have to define why the player is doing it? Write down what are the reasons for players to do this action. Two important points emerge from this identification: you can extract a

beginning for your story and you can perceive the potential goals for the players.

3- Briefly describe the world or scenario where the action of your game is happening. You don't have to go into great detail, but you should tell whether the story is about a bee hive, a 13th-century medieval castle, a well-known restaurant or a futuristic town. Making a small paragraph with this kind of description helps people to get into the story and sets the actions as realistic and contextualizes them so that it does not seem weird for the player to do that action.

4 - "Don't tell everything!" This is very important, you should administer small doses of information. Most people do not read the book if they already know the end (at least the first time), so avoid telling too much.

5- Finally, to me this is perhaps the most difficult task, the size of the story. The story can not be too short, and have no information, but it also can't be too extensive, because after all people want to play the game and not read a book.

If you manage to explain the rules and add

a touch of background story, it's perfect. This is because you'll be able to add little bits of information, slowly building the images in the players' heads. And you know, the deeper you are into the game, the bigger the fun!

Don't worry if the mechanics, rules or objectives are still being built. Despite the fact that the story is a pivotal element in the game, it is curiously an element that can be added quite easily. So, if you are building the game and you think, for example, "this looks like the story of an ant keeping food for the coming winter", this is a good prompt for you to begin to develop the story for your game!

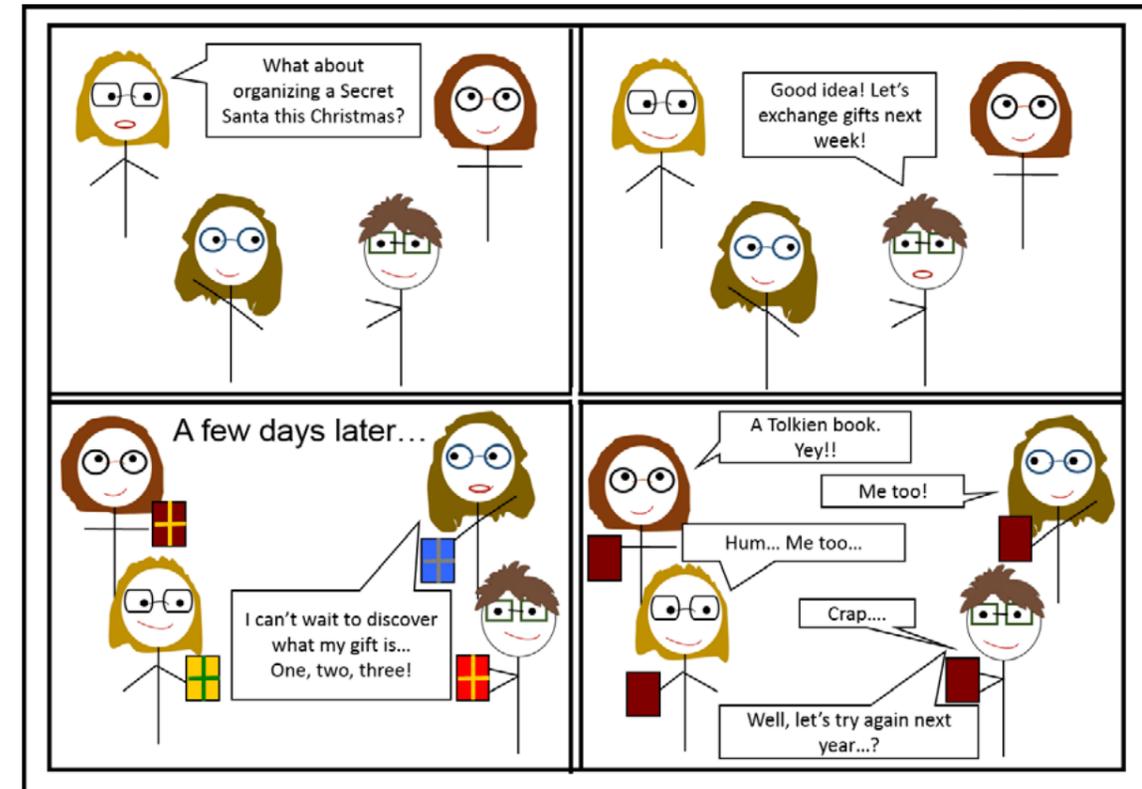
Of course the graphic design will also help create the environment, so if you know how the game illustrations will be, but you are still unsure of the story, use the graphic design as the stepping stone for your story.

Don't forget! If you know more tips, share them with to us through our website!

Good assembling!

Inês

SECRET SANTA



Fictional Conversation Guide - Gift

High Valyrian	Irudy [i'ɾudy]
Dothraki	Azho: [aʒo]
Sindarin	Ant ['ant]
Quenya	Anna['anna]
Klingon	Nob [nób]
Ewokese	Ehshtee [eh-shh-ti]
Goa'uld	Tahk'lan [tak-laen]

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES

CHAPTER IV - WATER MAGES

In Fantastic Adventures, we follow Irwer's adventures, but it is you who decide our next steps! To do that, just vote on the option that you like more and, next month, you'll see the result of your choice.

“Well, I am riding off to Trenkell. I suppose I can escort you.” Irwer says, after a moment of contemplation.

The group quickly gathers all the provisions they can, while Willem fills up the gas tank on of their jeeps. With everything ready, the group meets up outside with Irwer.

“We'll drive north for two hours and then we will take the Ceunant canyon and, if everything goes ok, we will reach Trenkell shortly before Vutha's zentih.” he says, looking east, seeing Vutha's dark shape starting to rise on the horizon. He murmurs something unintelligible under his breath and climbs atop his solar bike, bringing it side by side with the jeep. “Use channel 27 for comms, it's usually free.” he says, before riding north.

The rest of the group follows him, keeping the jeep a few meters behind and to the side of the solar bike, so as to not get hit with it's dust cloud.

“So... you guys are mages.” Irwer's voice sounds off in the jeep's comms. “Any order I might know?”

“We're Water Mages.” Caleb answers.

“Well, that explain why I didn't see any magic during the fight at the station. Being in the desert is not healthy for a Water Mage. Why are you venturing into Morne?” Irwer asks.

“We had to leave our temple in Seabridge. Unfortunately, the Great West Lake is drying out. Without the Lake to fuel our powers, we were unable to do magic.” Caleb says, sighing, a hint of nostalgia in his voice. “Our order has split up, looking for the few remaining bodies of water that still exist in Sikstai, trying to find a place to form a new temple. We heard rumors that Orilon still had some surface water.”

“But Orion's lake has been dry for years...” Irwer says.

“That is exactly what we found.” Willem says “In Orilon they told us that Trenkell had a river that still flowed to the Eastern Sea. We thought that, until we can get to the Eastern Sea, we could set up a temporary temple, maybe recruit new apprentices, and contact our brothers scattered throughout the continent.”

“And you, Irwer, what brings you to the desert?” Valgoria asks.

“Well, I am an entrepreneur in the business of search and recovery of objects and materials that have been discarded or abandoned.” Irwer answers, his voice full with pride.

A few seconds later, Valgoria asks “So, you're some sort of garbage man?” which elicits a burst of laughter from the jeep's occupants.

“Shut up.” Irwer says, bluntly.

“Calm down, elf, we're just teasing you.” Caleb says.

“Seariously, shut up!” Irwer insists, his bike slowing down to join up with the jeep “Stop the car.”

Both vehicles stop mere meters from... a huge expanse of dirt equal to all they had been traversing.

“Why are we stopping, elf?” Willem asks.

“Sharks.” Irwer answers, pointing to the desert in front. In the distance, small, barely perceptible clouds of dust traverse the desert in several different directions and disappear, only to reappear moving in the opposite direction.

“So? A few land sharks should be no problem to us.” Valgoria scoffs, picking up a pair of binoculars to study the shark's movements.

“Clearly you've never faced Morne's land sharks.” Irwer says “We might be able to dash through them, but they are awfully fast.”

“You're the guide, Irwer. What is our move?” asks Caleb.

WHAT WILL IRWER DO? WILL HE TRY TO MOVE FASTER THAN THE SHARKS, DASHING THROUGH THEIR TERRITORY, OR WILL HE TRY TO CIRCLE THE LAND SHARK'S HUNTING GROUNDS, LOSING PRECIOUS TIME AND GETTING EVER SO CLOSER TO VUTHA'S ZENITH?

JUST FILL THIS SMALL FORM AND CHOOSE WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT. THE OPTION WITH MORE VOTES WILL BE THE WINNER!

BUT HURRY UP! YOU ONLY HAVE UNTIL 28TH DECEMBER TO VOTE.

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DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH...

Well, it's true, 2016 is coming to an end and we at Especulatório Magazine have already started planning for next year.

And, of course, with J.R.R. Tolkien's birthday in the beginning of January of 2017, our focus had to be... Fantasy!

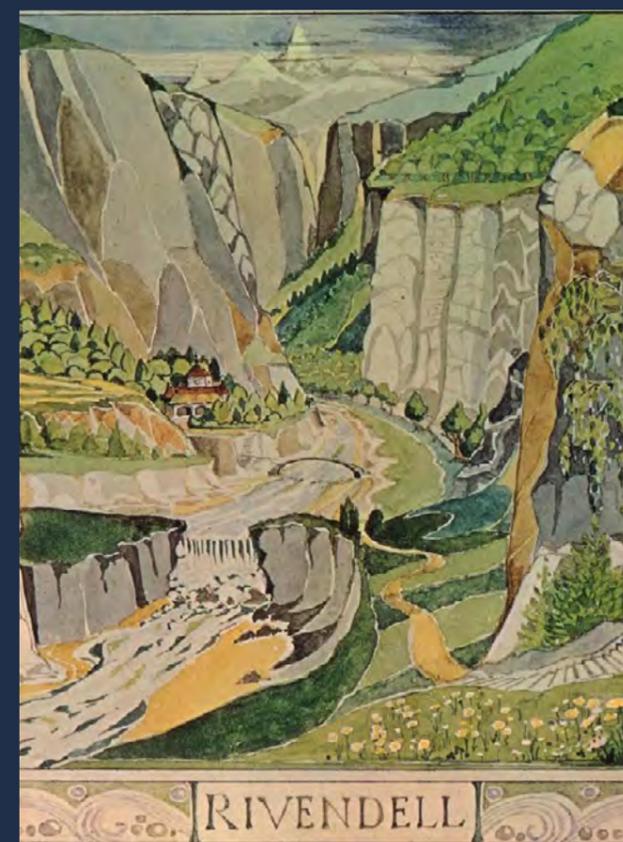
Tolkien is for all of us (and for a many speculative fiction authors) a great source of inspiration so be prepared for a lot about Lord of the Rings and other titles.

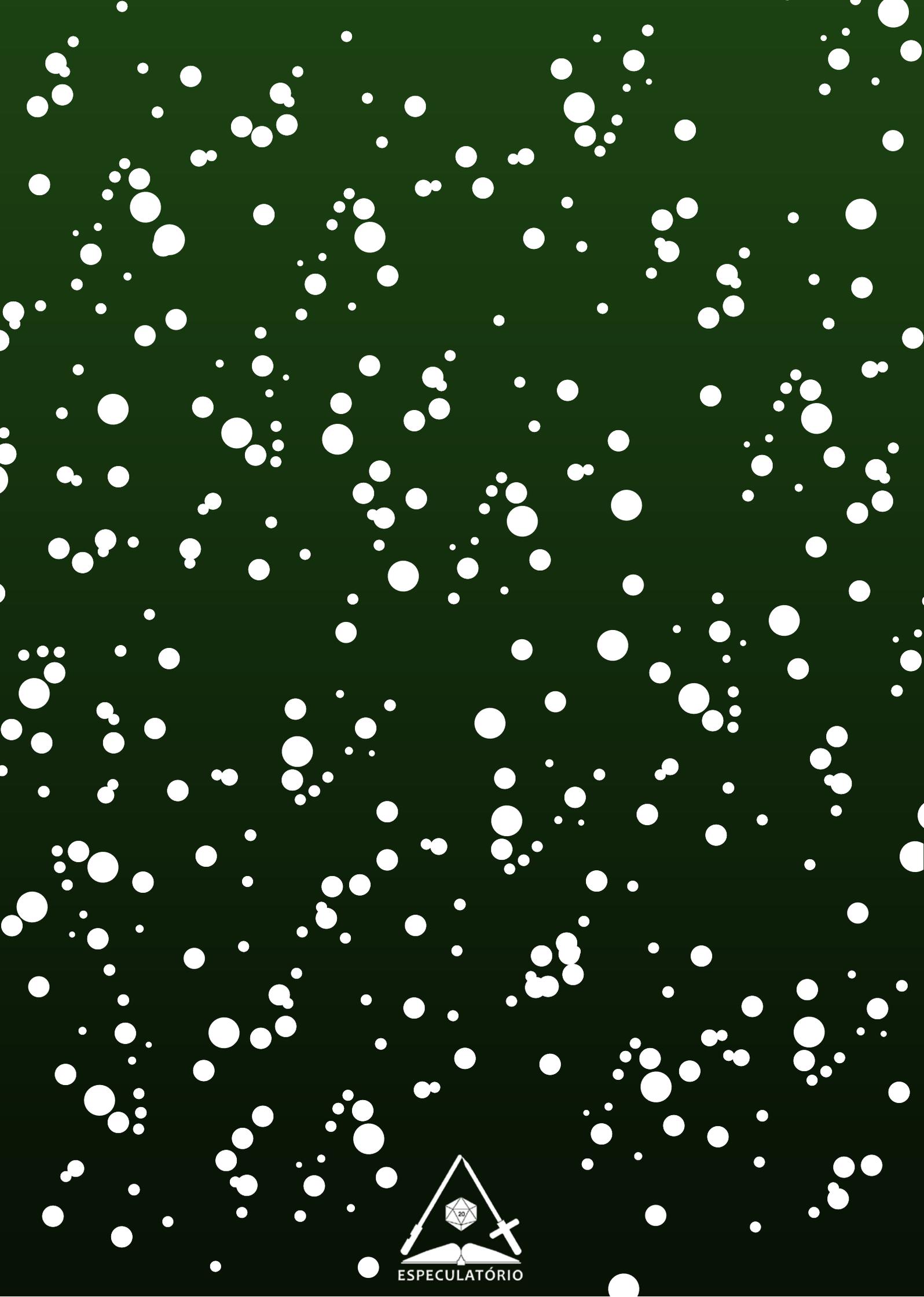
After all, Tolkien is not called the father of fantasy for nothing!

However, you can also expect our account of Comic-Con Portugal 2016 and other events, more articles from our guest authors and all the other issues you have

grown accustomed to in Especulatório Magazine.

Until then, keep travelling to new worlds through old Media!





ESPECULATÓRIO