

THE INNER KINGDOM UPDATE

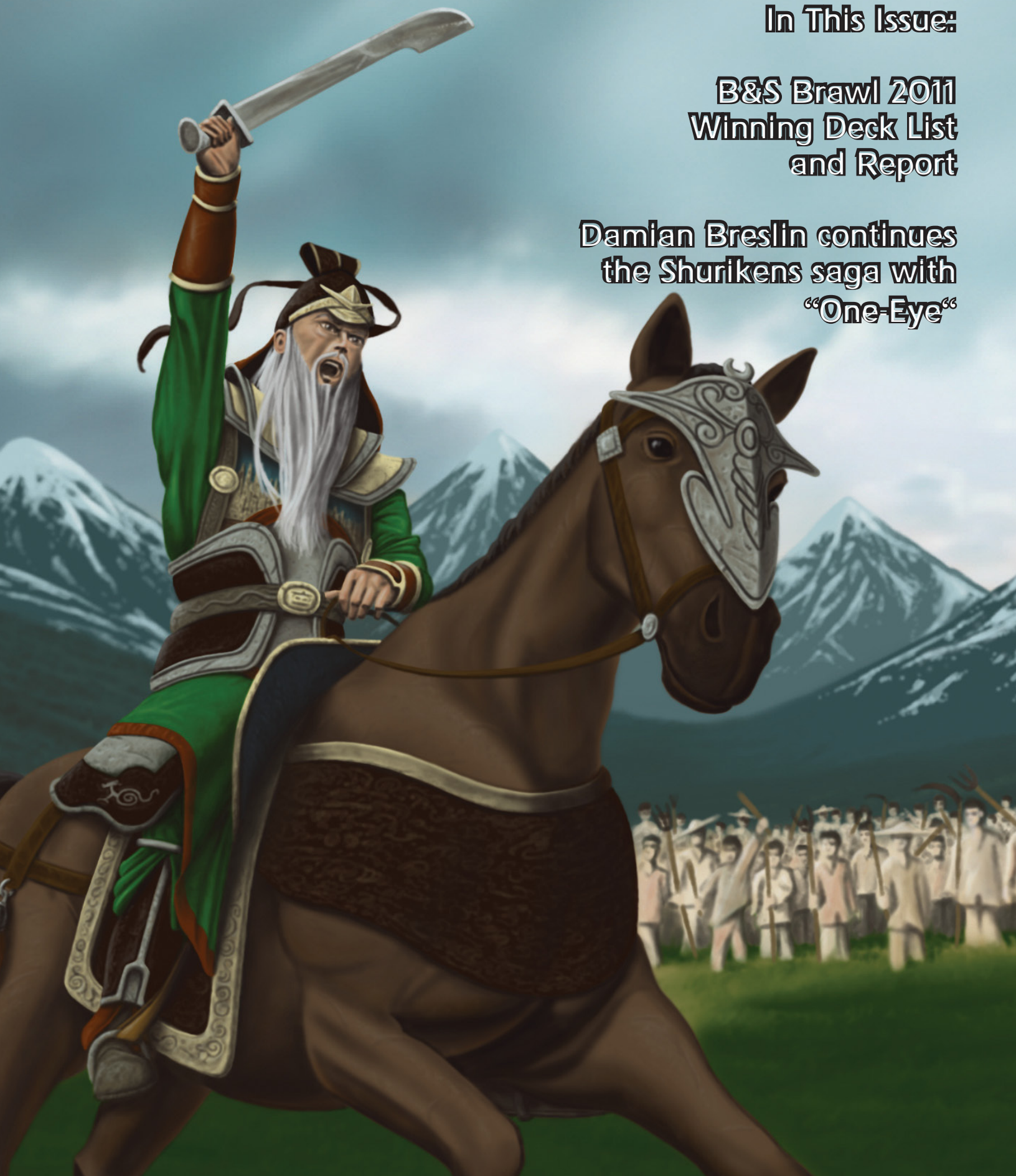
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B&S Brawl 2011, Australia National Championship. Report by Leonard King

Another epic chapter in the secret war took place in Brisbane over the weekend of September 24th as Secret Warriors flew in to take part in the inaugural B&S Brawl.

As a stand-alone Shadowfist event, not affiliated with any convention, we were able to expand the scope a little and turn it into a weekend of Fist-related activity.

Casual games got underway from 10am Saturday morning at Good Games Spring Hill, the new home of Shadowfist in the city. Despite sharing the facility with Magic players doing pre-release tournaments, a good number of arriving Fisters allowed us to fill the room that had been set aside for our use.

The first official tournament was a Brisbane special, "Try My Kung Fu!", where participants build a deck, then spend the event playing everyone else's decks, sharing them between rounds.

Still in development as a format, the game met a few hiccups but rolled on throughout the afternoon with tournament organiser Gareth Willcock taking out the combined score for player and deck.

Best player was shared between Randal Wales and Brisbane Fist icon Brad Daniels, with newcomer Kirill Radvanskiy taking the best deck and highest voted deck for his Dragons Nomad Army build.

After prizes were awarded the Brisbane Shadowfist community took a moment to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of Brad Daniels for running and promoting the game for so many years. As well as our grateful thanks he received a framed "Big Trouble in Little China" movie poster, which apparently immediately went up on the wall upon his arrival home.

After a dinner break participants kicked back to experience the Japanese action/horror awesomeness of "Versus", made all the more fun by the participation of (and occasional good-natured derisive comment from) the audience.

Sunday started early, with participants arriving for the Whirlpool of Blood draft event. Using Shurikens and Six-Guns, Critical Shift, Empire of Evil and rounded out with Boom Chaka Laka, decks were always going to be an interesting mix, and this event was no exception.

The draft was made particularly fun with the addition of generic (i.e. 7 body, no rules text) Brisbane-themed feng shui site pods handed out to players, thanks to the awesome talent of Steve Darlington. While having paper pasted to the front of cards did make it easier to know which were pod FSS and which were not, there was a certain





satisfaction in sending the Flesh Eater in to take care of Lang Park Stadium, Isis Fox guarding Toowong Cemetery or a Blasting Crew attacking the Storey Bridge. As a flavour for special events, we seriously suggest it. The winner was Matt Barker, who told me before the weekend his ambition was to finish somewhere in the top 50%, playing a mish-mash of factions that just seemed to work out for him. Congratulations also to 2nd place Kevin Lowe and 3rd place Penny Carpentier from Sydney.

Special mention must go to newcomer Mike Garvey, who had only picked up Shadowfist a few weeks before and played the draft as his first actual non-training game.

After a short lunch break it was time to kick off the big one - the 2011 Australian National Championships. After not having had a Nationals since the last GenCon Oz two years ago, participants were keen to test their skill against the best in the country in this 3 player Final Brawl event.

After three rounds of action the points were tallied and the final table was set with highest-placed player and current Queensland state champion Mitch Haggman being met by current New South Wales champ (and perennial finalist) Ben Carpentier from Sydney and Kevin Lowe, who had returned to the game recently after a long period away.

The finals were a hard-fought, but timely affair with Kevin's Jammers backed up with Battle-Matics and Thingshots taking the victory and the title.

Kevin was also awarded the special "New Recruit/Old Master" prize for highest placed player starting or returning to the game in the last year.

2nd place went to Mitch Haggman with Ben Carpentier taking out 3rd.

And so with the prizes awarded, and plane

flights awaiting, participants left the field of battle with a promise we'd have another go at it again next year.

Special thanks must go to the following people; Randal Wales for his organisational assistance, running the draft and listening to me rabbit on through countless lunchtime games over the last six months as we put the event together.

Gareth Willcock for running the "Try My Kung Fu!" tournament and staying calm in the face of scheduling turmoil.

Kevin Lowe for being the official tournament rules-monger, a role he capably took to with equal parts vigour and aplomb.

Mitch Haggman for supplying us with AV facilities for the movie. Given he was unable to actually attend the movie himself due to family commitments, he gets special points for awesome.

Steve Darlington for his inspired creation of the Brisbane FSS for the draft event.

The Sydney crew, Penny & Ben Carpentier and Dave Smith, who flew up for the weekend to play Shadowfist, and to Marselan Wignall for providing billeting.

Special thanks to Daniel Griego and the IKG team for the incredibly generous prize support.

And to the crew at Good Games Spring Hill, particularly Corey and Cassie, who let us take over a room and let us run our little event over what was one of their busiest weekends ever, gave us \$50 store credit to use as a prize, and basically provided a home for our game in Brisbane since opening earlier in the year.

Congratulations to all the winners, and to those who missed out. We look forward to Qld State Titles early next year, another "Ride of the Flying Monkey Squad" hopefully sometime soon, and seeing people return for B&S Brawl in 2012.

B&S Brawl 2011 Winning Decklist

“Outlaw Express” by Kevin Lowe

Foundations (10):

- 5 Mad Scientist (RW)
- 2 Street Gang (BCL)
- 1 Kamikaze Cosmonauts (CS)
- 2 Rebel Without a Cause (CS)

Characters (8):

- 4 Outlaw Bikers (BCL)
- 3 Jack of All Trades (DF)
- 1 Tunnel King (EoE)

Power Generation (9):

- 5 Scrounging (TW)
- 2 Genocide Lounge (TW)
- 1 Potlatch (S&S)
- 1 Jury-Rigged Dynamo (DF)

States (20):

- 5 Battle-Matic (DF)
- 5 BoBo Splitter (RW)
- 4 Shurikens (S&S)
- 1 Single-Action Devolver (S&S)
- 5 Thingshot (EoE)

Events (4):

- 4 Who's the Monkey Now? (TW)

Feng Shui Sites (11):

- 2 Bountiful Fields (S&S)
- 1 Coral Reef (DF)
- 1 Endless Corridor (EoE)
- 1 Festival Circle (N1)
- 1 Hall of Portals (N2)
- 1 Martyr's Tomb (EoE)
- 1 Ring of Gates (N1)
- 1 Temple of the Angry Spirits (TW)
- 2 Whirlpool of Blood (N1)

Kevin Lowe discusses “Outlaw Express”

This deck runs deliberately and dangerously low on foundations and FSS, and mostly gets away with it because all of its characters are dirt cheap and nearly a quarter of the deck is made up of Shurikens, BoBo Splitters and Thingshots that you can almost always play immediately, so you cycle cards very rapidly.

Bountiful Fields and Coral Reef are strong in this deck because their power is proportional to the number of cards they see, and being able to churn through seven or eight cards per turn instead of six means your Battlematics are a vital few points of fighting better than they otherwise would be by the mid-game. Hall of Portals gives pseudo-Mobility to Mad Scientists, Kamikaze Cosmonauts and Jacks of All Trades, and Mobility is very strong in this deck because head-on fights almost always favour you.

It never came into play but Genocide Lounge plus Endless Corridor seems like it should be very strong. Martyr’s Tomb is there as a defence against decking, since you can recur Outlaw Bikers who, in turn, recur Battlematics, but the potential is there to reload Jack of All Trades if you need more state cycling.

I only recently realised, after the tournament, that I’ve been underplaying the Outlaw Bikers, since I didn’t consciously realise that you can play a new state on them every Main Shot. I was just using them to replay Battle-Matics on the turn I played them. So for example I could have pulled

Shurikens out of the smoked pile, used them, and then sacrificed them with a Thingshot for three free damage. Or if I needed mass ping I could have replayed and then sacrificed BoBo Splitters. Or if I needed to monkeyfy an annoying character I could have pulled the Single-Action Devolver out of the smoked pile to do the job.

There is no protection against character theft because basically you just don’t care: people who steal your 10 Fighting Outlaw Bikers with Toughness: they get a 2 Fighting Outlaw biker with Toughness: 1, since Battle-Matic keys off the controller’s smoked pile.

I should probably put the Buffalo Soldier I pulled out back in this deck too, since Events caused me more trouble than anything else. -KL



“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

The sun beat down upon the cracked earth, sapping away what little humidity remained therein. After the sandstorm had settled, the heat seemed as if it were trying to make up for lost time, making life in the desert unbearable. As waves of heat rippled up from the ground, a vague mirage of two horses with riders danced curiously in the distance.

“You sure this is the way, hun?” A woman’s voice chimed through the silence. “I can’t see why anyone would live quite so far out of town.”

Jack’s ever-slippery prey Katie Kinkaid rode high in the saddle, an obvious pro. She rode a Palomino whose blond hide reflected and seemed to scoff at the rays of light that deigned touch it.

“Well, from the description you gave me, I’m pretty certain this is the guy you’re lookin’ for.”

Hoosegow shaded his eyes with one hand and squinted at the distant horizon. “He’s a hermit, but since we ain’t got squat for mountains, he hides in the middle of the desert. Almost as hard to get to but for the horses.”

He lowered his hand from his eyes and gave his horse a stiff pat on its neck. Dust billowed around his hand and left a slightly cleaner patch after it was removed.

“Nice horse ya’ got there, hun.” Katie chortled. “Guess you got the short end of the stick with that one.”

“He’s not a thoroughbred, but I hardly think he’s crowbait.” Hoosegow stared and the impression he left in the horse’s dark red hide as his mind drifted to other subjects. He wiped the dirt from his hand on his leg and pulled out his pocket watch. “Shouldn’t be much farther.”

Katie leaned over to look at the pocket

watch. “You look at that timepiece an awful lot. You expecting something to happen?” She leaned back in her saddle, her curious expression still affixed to her flawless face.

“That lawman.” Hoosegow slid the watch back into his pocket.

“Jack, that snake-in-the-grass. I can’t have done anything bad enough to deserve his constant attention.” She bowed her head, deep in thought. “He chases after me like his life depends on it. Thought you said you’d post guards in case that serpent showed his ugly face.” She looked up at Hoosegow with anger glinting in her eyes.

Hoosegow stared at the horizon, avoiding Katie’s scornful stare. “I have no doubt he’ll cross paths with one or two of my guards somewhere. I know I’m going to lose a few men, but their loss is worth it if I can



“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

Continued

keep certain things away from the public eye.”

“So you really think-” Katie was cut short by Hoosegow’s sudden halt and raised hand. “What’s wrong, hun?”

He pointed to a small, dark spot on the horizon. “Someone’s coming.”

They stared at the figure as it slowly grew into the shape of a man. He was approaching them, although hesitantly.

“Is that?” Katie hesitated, not knowing what to say.

“It’s one of the mesa tribe reds. Something seems off about him, though. He seems to be alone and without any weapons.” Hoosegow signaled his horse to start walking to the lone Indian.

Katie stayed put, hands hovering over her pistols. She was raring for a fight, should something happen. The Indian stopped still in his tracks as Hoosegow approached.

“You lost, friend?” Hoosegow looked past his nose at the frightened man.

“Lost? No. Any direction that is not toward my back is the route I am to take.” The Indian reached out his hand and touched the nose of Jackson’s horse. “My name is Swift Eagle. I have lost my tribe, but they have not lost me.”

Hoosegow gave a puzzled look. “I don’t quite grasp ya there.”

Swift Eagle walked up beside Jackson and his horse. “This is a beautiful animal. He has an old soul.” He paused in contemplation. “There is a town of white men nearby, I believe. Could you do me a great service, and point the way?”

Hoosegow was taken aback by the nature of this young man. “I wouldn’t say it’s nearby, but yes, there’s one northeast of here. You’re from the mesa tribe, right? The town is just

north of the northern end of that chain.”

Swift Eagle looked in the direction Jackson was pointing. “Thank you.”

With a sullen look, he turned toward his new direction. He glanced back at Hoosegow after taking a few steps. “That old soul is lucky to have found such an understanding rider.” He continued on his way until he was yet again, a lonely figure on the horizon.

Katie kicked her horse forward to meet up with Jackson’s. “What was that about?”

“We should be on our way too. You begged me to take you here and I’m not one for wasting time chatting.” Hoosegow tried to hide his curiosity. So many things were changing around him, he couldn’t help but wonder if each little incident mattered on a larger scale.



“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

Continued

Katie gawked at the nerve her traveling companion had in saying that, but brushed it off and was soon following in step with Hoosegow.

The two of them continued silently, taking in the scenery or the lack thereof in this case. They came to an area with a bit more green in the landscape. They could hear running water and an odd ‘thunk’ sound echoing around them with a strange consistency.

“This looks like the place. The man that lives here is quite the odd one, but I’m almost positive he’s the man you’re looking for.” Hoosegow said as horse stopped to nibble at some foliage. He slid off his saddle and passed the reins to Katie.

In front of them, an aged house slept amongst the green-patched earth. The house was of a strong build, small with an unusually large porch for its size. It had an overhang decorated with glass chimes that would tinker under the smallest gust of wind. In the middle of the porch creaked a well-used rocking chair. The sounds around them wouldn’t suggest they were in the middle of the desert.

Hoosegow left Katie and the horses to investigate. He walked up to the porch and looked in the windows, but couldn’t see anyone.

“Is he there?” Katie questioned as she tied Jackson’s horse to her own.

“Not sure. Let me check ‘round back.” He rounded the left of the house to find a deer-scare built next to a small water tower and a pump. He neared the odd device as a shadow leapt out in front of him. Instantly realizing it wasn’t his, Jackson jumped backward, narrowly missing his assailant’s attack.

Before him crouched an unarmed man, dressed in red clothes. He was of Asian

decent, but Hoosegow couldn’t tell which. All he knew was that his attacker was fast enough and quiet enough to get the drop on him. Had he not seen his shadow, he’d have been done for.

Hoosegow backed up as his opponent stared him down, waiting for the right moment. He wondered if Katie would be okay, but he had a more pressing issue to address.

“Who the hell are you?! I’m not trying to rob the place and you’re not the guy who lives here!”

Hoosegow wondered if this man was the reason no one was home and considered looting the house after dispatching with the odd fellow before him.

Without responding to Hoosegow’s query, the man in red leapt into the air, and came down on Jackson with a fist like a hammer. Jackson fell to the ground, his left cheek now throbbing in pain.

“Son of a...” Jackson wiped the blood off his lip and glared at the man with new resolve.

In front of the house, the horses whinnied and stamped as gunshots boomed over the serene sounds with which they were welcomed. Katie had both pistols drawn and was almost standing on her horse. She held both strong and hard, pointing to the roof of the house.

“Don’t think you can pull a fast one on me! I see you up there and I seen the glint of your gun, hun. It ain’t polite to treat a lady in such a manner.” Her horse stood true under her, despite the other horse’s attempts to get away. “If you were a real gent, you’d come on down from your perch there and introduce yourself.”

The man walked out on the overhang,

“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

Continued

but stopped short of jumping down. He poked a finger through a smoking hole in the brim of his hat.

Katie’s brow furrowed as rage built inside her. “Hey sugar, I’m a damn good shot, so you best be glad I didn’t aim to kill.” She stood on her horse and with one hand cocked sideways over the other, took aim and the gunman before her.

His only response was the tip of his hat, and before it could fall back into place, he drew his pistols and opened fire. He was aiming to kill.

Katie jumped off her horse and to the side, evading his fire completely, her guns blazing all the while. The gunman ran sideways down the overhang away from the direction she was headed, and continued his fire at the corner of the house where Hoosegow’s fight started. Katie threw her arms out to the side and arched her back while still in air. She swung her feet from above her as she joined her pistols together again. Shots rang out as she landed lightly on her feet, aiming just under the gunman. The beam underneath him buckled and the over-

hang fell, the gunman in tow.

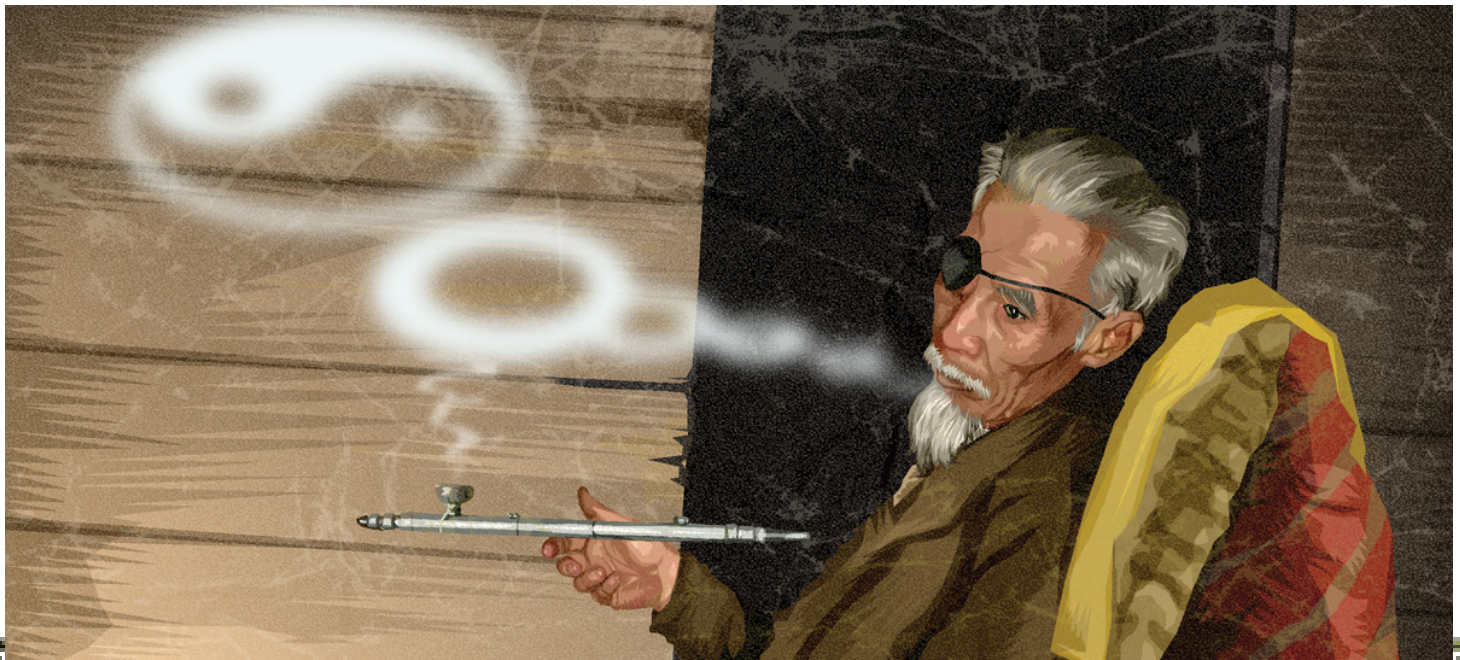
Katie aimed at the rising dust and the pile of debris she had a hand in making. “A real woman can do it in boots! But if you made me scuff them, so help me you will not be leaving here with your life!”

Katie braced herself, waiting for the gunman to move. She dropped her stance and heeled her weapons as an old man exited the house, clapping as he walked. He was of Chinese descent with a long white beard and a patch over his right eye. He sat in the chair and rocked slowly as he produced a pipe and began to pack it.

Katie ran up to the old man as the gunman struggled to get up. “Chan! That’s no way to welcome a lady!”

“If there were a lady here, I might have had something a bit more delicate planned.” The old man chuckled and coughed as lit the contents of the pipe. “How have you been, my dear?”

Katie stiffened as the gunman finally rose to his feet and began dusting himself off. Chan rose one hand and without a word the



“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

Continued

gunman turned to Katie, bowed, and went inside. She watched him until the door closed behind him. She could hear the sounds of fighting in the distance, but understood they were in no real danger and let it be.

“I think you know why I’m here, hun. I got some questions you may already have the answers for.” The beam behind her groaned as Katie leaned against it. “But first, who was that guy? My companion out there isn’t gonna’ lose his life, is he?”

Chan blew out a ring of smoke resembling a mythical Chinese water dragon. “No, no. I may take my time in calling my other young apprentice back as payment for destroying my house.”

Katie blushed as she looked at the rubble.

“I have two monks under my care.” Chan continued. “One is from the homeland and the other was from these parts. One exiled and very eager, the other doesn’t have anything of a past but is a calm and quick learner.

With the coming events, it wouldn’t hurt to have a few more able bodied fighters around.”

Katie tapped her heel to the floor. “The coming events, huh? So the Thunder King really is trying to regain his hold here? How is he planning to do that?”

Chan’s dismayed look was unmistakable behind his bushy white brow. “He’s using the hatred housed in the hearts of the natives here to start a battle. He’s giving them weapons more advanced than most of the settlers carry, and pushing the idea of how horrible the white man is on them. The only thing to feed this oncoming storm is fear, and that’s more than enough.”

Katie and Chan stopped as a thumping sound came from the roof. The other monk jumped off the roof, over the wrecked part of the building and crouched, listening for Hoosegow’s approach.

Chan motioned to Katie and whispered in her ear. “He’s a feisty one. I’ve never seen him quite so winded or focused before. What kind of fighter is your companion?”

“Well, he’s-” Just as Katie began to whisper back, Hoosegow charged at the monk from the side.

The monk evaded the attack, but was tiring. He ran past Chan and Katie to a cane resting at the side of Chan’s chair. He picked it up, turned toward Chan, bowed, and ran off toward Hoosegow before any of them could manage to let out more than a grunt.

“Ah, so weapons are allowed now?” Sweat poured down Jackson’s face as he grabbed a sizable hunk of wood from the pile that once was part of the old man’s house. “I do believe mine is a bit bigger!” He grinned as he heaved it to his shoulder.



“One-Eye” by Damian Breslin

Continued

The monk made no expression. They both set up to resume their fight, now with a second wind holding them up. The monk held the smaller of the two sticks out in front of him, perpendicular to the ground. Hoosegow held his chunk of wood out to the side like it was a giant baseball bat and braced himself.

The two stared each other down, Katie and Chan watching intensely from the porch. “Bring it!” Hoosegow shouted, ready to swing.

The monk closed his eyes and exhaled slowly. As he opened his eyes to meet those of his enemy, he pulled his hands apart, revealing a long thin sword.

Hoosegow dropped his oversized stick to the ground with a thud and let out a deep sigh. The monk maintained his pose, but couldn’t hide his confusion as Hoosegow strode quickly toward him. The monk held still, waiting for an attack, still baffled by what was happening.

Suddenly, Jackson’s eyes darted up as he gasped and pointed. Startled and confused, the monk turned to see what it was. In the blink of an eye, Hoosegow’s hand was in his pocket. He pulled out his watch and behind it, trailed a gold chain. By the time the monk realized he’d been tricked, the gold chain was around his throat, growing increasingly tighter.

“Drop it.” Hoosegow breathed heavy in the monk’s ear. The sword hit the dirt with hardly a sound.

Katie let out a long sigh as Chan chuckled. “You want to know what kind of fighter he is? He’s not. The instant he sees an opening he uses it to gain the advantage, even if it is underhanded.”

Hoosegow shrugged at Katie as he

loosed the bonds around the defeated monk’s neck. “So, s’he the guy you were lookin’ for?” He did his best to catch his breath as he climbed over the rubble and back onto the porch.

“Yup, got what I needed, hun. We’d best be off, but we’ll keep in touch.” She winked at Chan. “I’m going to gather supplies and look into this a little further. We don’t want that nasty storm sneaking up and overtaking us now.”

Chan nodded as he stared off into the distance.

Hoosegow looked puzzled and opened his mouth to say something, but stopped when Katie pressed her finger to his lips and coyly shook her head.

“Later, Chan.” Katie grabbed Hoosegow by the arm and dragged him to the horses. They untied the horses from each other and mounted up.

Hoosegow glanced back at the old man sitting in his chair, an apprentice now standing at either side. “We just got here and now we’re going? What-”

“Save it for later, hun. We’re heading back to town.” Katie clicked and started her horse back to town. “I’m going to need a new pair of boots after that. He got them all scuffed up! He’s damn lucky to have Chan with him or he’d be in a pine box right now.” Hoosegow looked at the chain to his watch. He sighed as he saw its poor condition. “Either I got bamboozled with a cheap duplicate, or people are built stronger over there.” Chan watched them leave as he puffed his pipe. “Looks like rain.”

His battered apprentices looked out past the overhang and back at each other confused. There wasn’t a cloud in the sky.



Thank you for reading this month's issue of
The Inner Kingdom Update.
Contact us at icediadem@yahoo.com with feedback
and suggestions on how to better service the
Shadowfist community.

*Inner Kingdom Games, Inc. is Daniel Griego of
Austin, Texas and Braz King of Toronto, Ontario*