

THE INNER KINGDOM UPDATE

JANUARY 2011

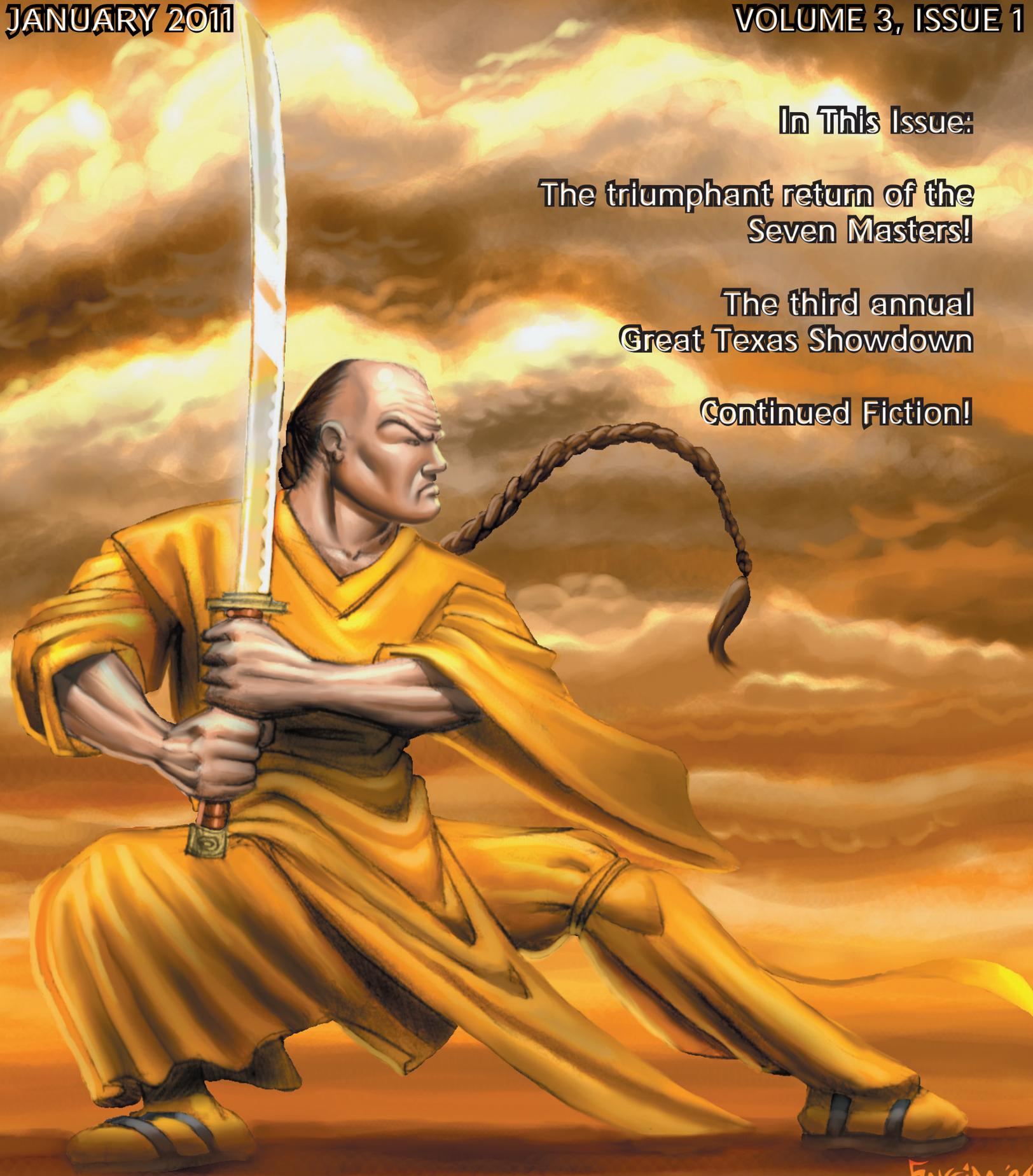
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

In This Issue:

The triumphant return of the
Seven Masters!

The third annual
Great Texas Showdown

Continued Fiction!



SAXSIDA '04



SEVEN MASTERS VERSUS THE
UNDERWORD IS ON ITS WAY TO
YOU RIGHT NOW!

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR
PATIENCE AND SUPPORT AS
INNER KINGDOM GAMES
WORKED TO BRING BACK THIS
GREAT EXPANSION SET! KEEP
AN EYE ON YOUR MAILBOXES
THIS WEEK FOR YOUR ORDER
TO ARRIVE IN THE MAIL!

So Seven Masters is finally re-released. Now what?

Now that the award-winning set of mountain masters defending the world against evil ancient sorcerers is back in the hands of players everywhere, the big question on everyone's mind is: Now what?

Well, I'm glad you asked!

Seven Masters Versus the Underworld is one of the best sets to come out of the Z-Man era and we're proud to bring it back in all its splendid glory. We were so psyched, in fact, that we made this great set even better by swapping out many of the underused reprints of the original run with high-demand counterparts for which players have been clamoring for years.

Cards you won't find in this release include Curtain of Fullness, Killing Rain, Monkeywrenching, Netherflitter, Wall of a Thousand Eyes, Baptism of Fire, Cry of the Forgotten Ancestor, Wandering Monk, Tranquil Persuader, Feast of Souls and Blanket of Darkness.

Their replacements are Mad Scientist, IKTV Special Report, Mathemagician, Chi Sucker, "Is that all you got?", Stand Together, Secret Pact, Never Surrender, Street Riot, Temple of Celestial Mercy and Plains of Ash.

What does all this mean to you? Well, for starters, the Jammer tech deck is back in play thanks to Mad Scientist, and further enhanced by IKTV Special Report. For those looking for some oomph in their Shui, look no further than the much sought-after Temple to make that Damon Winter deck positively ridiculous or the Plains to make your site-healing deck unstoppable.

Naturally, we can't forget about the title faction of this eponymous set, the only faction to date with easy access to both Chi and Magic. Finally, you can use those Jade Willows and Bridges of Birds that have been collecting dust for so long. The mysterious faction that new players have heard rumors

about but never actually seen in person is back in the mix and will likely see some solid play in the 2012 convention circuit.

Another fun perk of rereleasing Seven Masters is that a new generation of players can now incorporate these classic cards into the newer sets to revive otherwise overlooked cards. For example, with Critical Shift's Hydroponic Garden and Empire of Evil's Hanging Gardens, Shaolin Defender is a much more potent character than he was five years ago. Expect to see Deep-Cover Rebels bring back Johnny Amok and Haunted Forest alongside The Great Wall.

Finally, my favorite reason to celebrate the return of the Seven Masters: Drafting!

"But Daniel, you can't draft a set that's so prominently weighted toward a single faction!"

You say.

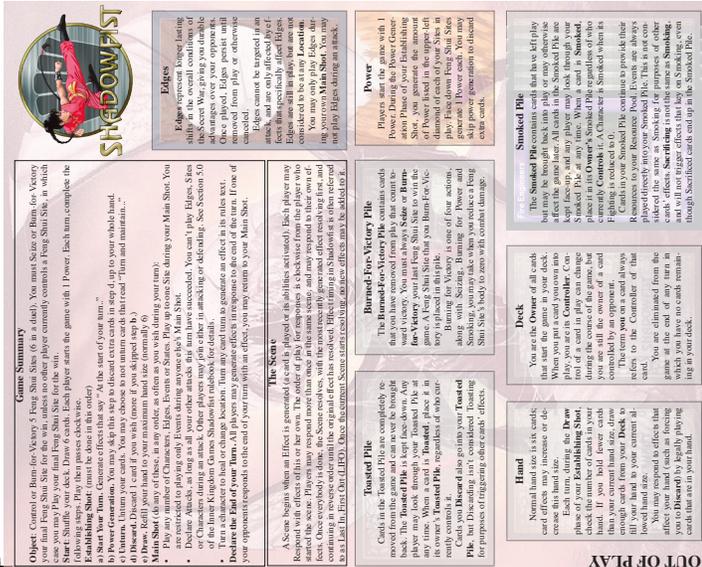
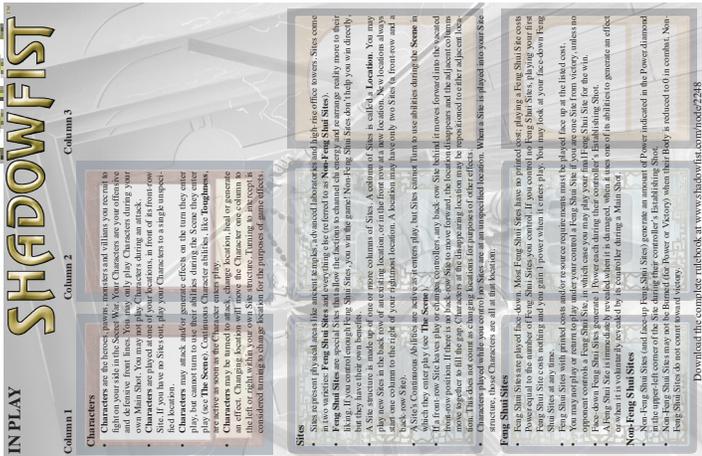
The Austin playgroup is looking to draft an experimental format of expansion sets specifically weighted toward certain factions. For this "block" variant, our eyes are on Throne War, Dark Future and Seven Masters, with the possibility of throwing in either Netherworld or Netherworld 2.

We welcome any other playgroup to do the same and share their results!

As you all receive your Seven Masters boxes in the coming days, drop Inner Kingdom Games a line and tell us how you're using them to new and interesting ends!



Inner Kingdom Games wants to develop your playgroup!
 Invite new players into your Secret War with the official Shadowfist poster and playmat from IKG!
 Display the poster at



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Visit www.shadowfist.com to download rules and purchase cards!

your local game store and teach new players with the help of the playmat!
 Ask your store to contact Daniel Griego at icediadem@yahoo.com to get a supply of these great resources for your playgroup.

OUT OF PLAY



Inner Kingdom Games is proud to return Shadowfist to your computer!

Many thanks for the playtesters who are helping us bring Shadowfist back to LackeyCCG! We still have a couple more weeks of work before the final plugin is ready for mass public consumption, but we'll keep you updated each step of the way!



“Old Soul” by Damian Breslin

The sun beat down upon the lonely figure of Swift Eagle, oppressing his every step, carrying his thoughts through the realms of heartache and despair. A brave of his clan rarely left without cause, and usually ceremoniously, by marriage or by death. He thought back to his childhood and the stories his elders told him during late night fires, when he was finally old enough to attend them. The heat of the midday sun surrounded him, and as he closed his eyes, he could hear the roar of the flame, and feel himself bathed in the luminescent warmth of the campfire. Through the dancing flames, he could see his father, a strong and bold figure, staring through the fire and into his heart.

“My son,” his father’s voice echoed through his heart as wisps of flame lapped the night sky, “this life will lead you to many paths. Only you can choose the correct one to follow.”

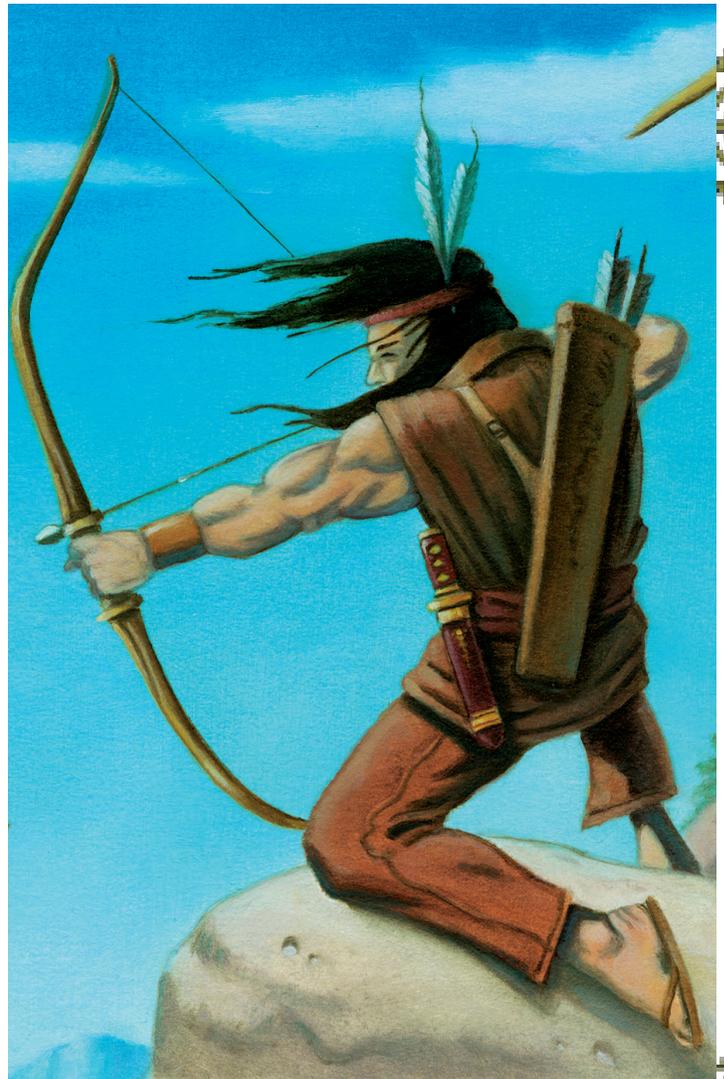
As he opened his eyes, squinting through the waves of heat that bathed the ground, a rider on an old horse approached him. It was Hoosegow Jackson, on his way to see old One-eye, the hermit. Their exchange was brief, but meaningful, like the reassuring words given from parent to child. He saw something like his father in the horse that stringently bore its rider, ignoring the knobby knees and stiff joints that told of time’s betrayal.

“This horse has an old soul,” Swift Eagle remarked as his mind strayed back to the night fire and a story his father had told him. The story of how horses came to be.

A young brave of our tribe sought the hand of the chief’s daughter, but he was not the swiftest of hunters or the strongest of warriors, so it was not to be. Still he wanted her for his mate no matter the cost. He pleaded with the gods of the land and sky to help him find a way, but they did not answer him.

One night, an old man appeared to him in his dream. He told him if he wanted to gain the chief’s blessing, he would have to do something for the tribe that no one else could do. The brave asked Old Man what he could do, for he did not yet understand his own strength. Old Man shook his head and told the young brave that when he found the strength he had within him, he should go to the lake, and they would meet again.

The brave woke the next morning in tears, thinking he would never gain the hand of the chief’s daughter. He sat on the grass thinking of how lovely she was, and what he could do to be worthy of her. In his mind, he saw her and the children they could have together, and how



“Old Soul” by Damian Breslin, continued

her beautifully braided hair would grey over time, and to him she would still be the most beautiful. He looked down and realized that he had been braiding strands of grass while he thought of her. A small rope lay in his hands, a rope he made with his hands, and his heart. In those tightly woven strands of grass, he found his strength.

That night, the young brave excitedly ran to the lake and stopped just at the waters edge. He looked for the old man, the rope still clenched tightly in his hand. A voice told him that Old Man was not here, above the water's surface, but deep within the calmest waters of the lake. The brave looked around to find where the voice came from, but saw no one. The voice told him that if he wanted to see the old man, he had to swim to the bottom of the lake. When there, Old Man would reward him with an offering of one of his creatures. The voice told him to ask only for the oldest catfish in the lake and its offspring.

The brave looked to the rope in his hand and jumped in the lake. He reached the bottom and found Old Man waiting for him. The brave held out his hand and showed the rope he'd made. Old Man nodded and asked him to sit next to him. He told the brave, as a reward for his courage, he would offer one of his creatures to him, and asked which one he would like. The brave remembered what the voice at the lake's edge had said, and asked for the oldest catfish and its offspring. Old Man shook his head and told the brave that wouldn't do, for it was old and could not move very well. He asked the brave if there were any other creatures he would choose, but the brave asked only for the oldest catfish. Old Man sighed and asked the brave for the rope in his hands. He then told the brave to face away from him, and not to look back until dawn had come, and Old Man

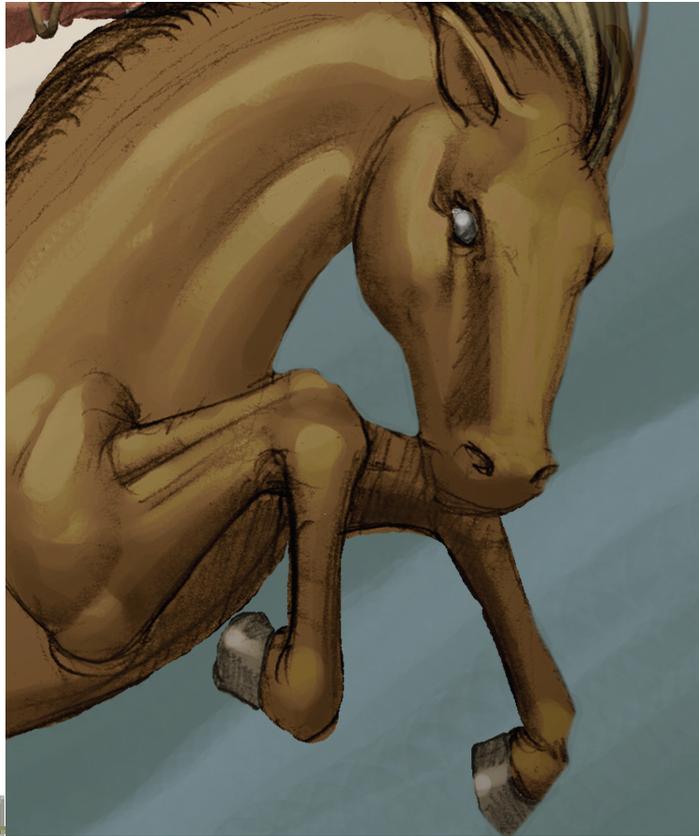
placed the rope back into his hand.

The brave swam for the water's edge clutching the rope in his hand. He walked out of the water and toward his village, looking forward the whole time. Behind him, he heard flopping sounds, but as they continued onward and the night sky began to turn pale, those sounds changed into the drumming sound of a large beast walking upon the earth. The sun rose and the brave turned around to see what was tied to the end of his rope. To his surprise, a large beast stood before him. It was built like an elk, but had ears and eyes like a dog. The rope in his hands was now a tanned leather strap that formed a bridal. The beast lowered its head and the brave hopped on its back. He cried tears of joy as the beast ran toward the village, and as they went, more of the elk-dogs joined in.

When he reached the village, the chief met him and was at first frightened of the large herd. The brave told the chief there was nothing to fear, for he brought these animals to help the people of the village. They could run fast with the buffalo to make hunting easier, and they were strong and could carry heavy loads for them. The chief was pleased and welcomed the new animals. The brave gained the chief's blessing and continued to teach his people the ways of the elk-dog. To this day, horses have always held a place in the heart and lives of our people. We honor and thank our ancestors for bringing them to us by telling the stories of how they came to be.

His father's voice drifted off as Swift Eagle's mind returned to him. The wind brushed by him gently as the air cooled to a bearable temperature. He realized at once that during his trip to the past, he somehow made it to his destination. As he gazed through the break in the fence-line that surrounded the town, he

“Old Soul” by Damian Breslin, continued



thought about the similarities between himself and the brave in the story, and wondered to what lengths he must go to seek his own strength and bring happiness to his people.

Swift Eagle gathered his courage and resolved himself to seek help from the white man. He knew of no other way to defeat this new threat than with the help of an old enemy. He hesitantly walked through town, looking for signs of life; but aside from a rat or an insect scampering in the shadows, he found none. As he closed in on the center of town, he could hear a man speaking loudly, halting after every few words.

He crept up beside an outhouse and peered out at a platform surrounded by silent, gawking people. On the platform stood three men, one of which seemed to be pleading desperately to the sky to whisk him away to anywhere but where he was. The other two men were standing to either side of the poor fellow,

one holding a black bag and rope, the other reading aloud from a parchment. Whispers and murmurs spread through the gathering like a disease, and every time the speaker paused, gasps from the exasperated crowd filled the air.

Swift Eagle didn't quite understand what was happening, but his heart leapt into his throat none-the-less. He watched intently as sweat beaded on the man's face. He looked fairly young, wearing all black and a daintily curled mustache of the ones the white man would call a 'gent'. Their eyes met briefly before the speaker halted and a long silence fell upon them. The speaker made a gesture and the second man stepped forward bowing his head. The speaker bowed his head in kind and before leaving the platform, uttered something Swift Eagle knew to be something he'd heard long ago. "May God have mercy upon your soul."

His blood ran cold as the sting of those words settled into his heart. Tears welled up as his eyes sought those of the mustached man on the platform. Before his mind could fully come to terms with what was happening, a lever was pulled and the man plummeted through the platform. His body halted abruptly and his legs twitched violently before, like the cries of the onlookers, he faded from existence.

Swift Eagle's mind screamed silently in shock as the crowd began to disperse.

"That'll teach that no-good, petty thief to cheat me at poker!" barked a robed man with white hair. He sauntered into a white building not far from the platform, a group of men following him like a pack of hungry dogs.

"Nothin' gets by you, does it Judge?" the men chuckled, smiles permanently affixed to their faces.

Swift Eagle backed himself to the wall of a cottage, his resolve quickly fading as more

“Old Soul” by Damian Breslin, continued

of the white man spilled past him, callously throwing comments of justice and retribution like feed to a hen. In seeking a new path for his people, would he have to sell his soul to these men? He grabbed his pack and headed back the way he came, asking that question repeatedly in his mind. He stopped short and turned to face the spot where they had taken the life of one of their own and did his best to push the sorrow from his heart.

The wind lifted as a door near him creaked open. The voice of his father was carried to him again by the breeze, and though this was his first time hearing them, he instantly understood.

“My son, always remember that if the sun has set and the stars hide behind the clouds, the

light of the moon will always shine through to guide you.” Breathless yet strikingly powerful, his father’s words entered his heart and eased its pain.

Swift Eagle turned to the open doorway, which now revealed several people, and as he stared at mostly bewildered faces, his gaze settled upon the short man in the center. He could see the man’s lips move, but his words were swept away with the wind before they had a chance to meet his ears. Swift Eagle grabbed his pack from the ground and looked to the sky, his heart carried still higher by the remembrance of his father’s words. His eyes returned to the crowd in the doorway and he smiled softly at them, for he found what he had sought and a new path opened before him.



PRESENTING:
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The time has come once again for the secret warriors of the Lone Star State to converge in Austin for a battle of wits and braun. The Final Brawl begins at noon, January 14, 2012 at 408 Saint Stephens School Road, Austin, Texas 78746-3101. Contact Daniel Griego at icediadem@yahoo.com for more information.

Editors note on the Seven Masters Reprint!

Several errors have already been found on the new Seven Masters release:

1. “Secret Pact” has a lowercase “t” in front of its title that should not be there.
2. “Is that all you got?” is printed on a State background, rather than an Event background.
3. “We Need Bigger Guns!” is printed on an Event background, rather than a State background.
4. Some packs open with the rare in the front, rather than as the last card.
5. “200 Guys with Hatchets and Ladders” is missing the last 2 words of its text: “Character’s cost.”

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