

HBGAMES

The Ezine

www.aRPGMaker.com

Issue #3 Q4 2006

TUTORIALS

HOW TO DRAW ANIME
PHOTOSHOP EDITING
MAPPING IN RMXF

ALSO FEATURING:
Magic Part 2
Near Fantastica

PLUS...
Arshes Gone Bad

AKASHA SEAL



DESPAIN PRESENTS

GEREDRETH SERAPH

"DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD? WHEN IT RAINED, AND YOU BELIEVED THAT GOD WAS CRYING?

"NOW, THOUGH, WE ARE ADULTS. AND WE KNOW THAT SUCH A CONCEPT IS FOOLISH. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS A SCIENCE BEHIND THE RAIN. EVAPORATION, CONDENSATION, PRECIPITATION...IT IS NOT THE TEARS OF GOD.

EXISTENCE, LIKE THE RAIN, IS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD. MANKIND REMAINS TODAY IN ITS CHILDHOOD STAGE, AND BLINDLY GIVES THE CREDIT OF EXISTENCE TO A HIGHER POWER.

AS HUMANS, WE ALWAYS OVERLOOK THE SCIENCE."



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...OVER FIFTEEN ORIGINAL PLAYABLE CHARACTERS.

A UNIQUE ONE-ON-ONE "DYNAMIC COMBAT" SYSTEM.

100% ORIGINAL GRAPHICS

ISSUE 2

Welcome to Issue 2 of HBGames the eZine (RMXP.net at time of press).

This issue of the eZine was edited by Ellie in 2022. As the least downloaded issue yet the longest, but also the issue without a custom cover page, she felt it deserved a little spruce up to make it stand out more amongst the other issues.

Inside the Mag

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On the Cover

This issue's cover features the main character from *Akasha Seal*, an episodical game made in RPG Maker XP.

Original Pressing

The original pressing of this issue is still available to download at aRPGMaker.com.



Check it Out!

Rmxp.net's Hot Topics

RMXP.net News Update

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=31392>
The RMXP.net administrators are urging all member to backup their threads and to spread the word that a secondary forum at RMXP.org is being set up.

Your Favorite RPG Maker Game?

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=31636>
GnarlyOcelot is taking names and links for your favorite games created on any of the programs in the RPG Maker Series. Post your favorite game today!

Internet Relations

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=31105>
"How many have done it?" "What do you think of it?" are the questions that owenthelostboy asks in this Symposium Topic using the internet as a medium for meeting significant others.

Best Avatar

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=31653>
Who do you think has the best avatar on RMXP.net? Nightt and the rest of RMXP.net wants to know, so be sure to check this thread out.

New Template Alert!

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=29059>
7th Sense's Kaeru-Sama, has released a new addition to the score of medium sized templates on RMXP.net .

compiled by Lene



Written by: Lene

Well it seems that past two months have been more eventful than usual. As the year 2005 wraps up, lets take a look back and give the year some closure.

There have been several new promotions in the forum and site staff, the biggest being ccoa's promotion from Global Moderator to Administrator. Other members who received promotions were Dark Zero, Huitzilopochtli , and Lene.

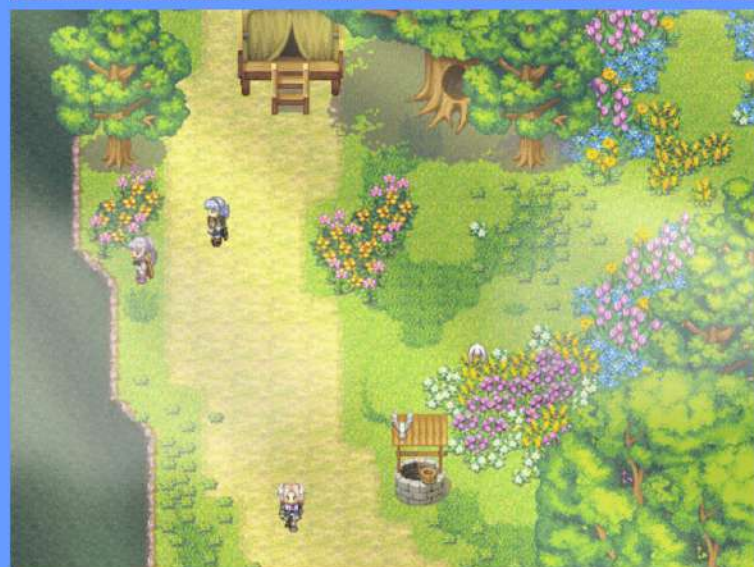
While we're on the subject of staff, the two RMXP.net Administrators made several attempts to contact RMXP.net's missing founder **Lord_Gradient**. There has been word that Lord_Gradient has come into contact with some members and has been sighted online on the forums but, there has been no official word from the missing man himself. Add that to the fact that RMXP.net is on a failing server that seems to be getting worse with time, the admins deemed it necessary to backup the forum at all costs. They have bought the **RMXP.org** domain name and have instructed all members to make sure threads important to them are backup sufficiently in case of any catastrophic server failure. At the moment the backup forums at RMXP.org are down for a forum upgrade to vBulletin.

On a lighter note, the first completely for-profit English RMX game has been released. The game is called Aveyond and a 10 hour demo is available on the production's site. Another item of note, is birth of the Fantasy Chapters Production (FCP) group, which affiliates different games with one another to promote awareness for all games under FCP's wing. They have recently acquired Big Billy's **Sacri-lege** and ViviCrevase's **Life of Glass**.

This is only a glimpse into what has happened over the past two months at RMXP.net. It seems as we enter into the year 2006, big changes are being made the community. I guess the only thing that we as a community can do is sit back and watch what happens.



RMXP.net E-zine's Character of the Issue Goes to Calisto from Scriptkitty's AKASHA SEAL!



Calisto's Nomination

"Nomination Reason: This character is one feisty woman, she burns with a rage of pure revenge in desperation to get her son back from the clutches of evil. She endures a lot of pain during the game and has to cope with a hell of a lot, if anyone deserves a break it's Calisto!"

-Nominated by Hydrolic

Calisto from the Author

"Calisto was much fun to write, though you've barely seen the surface of her character...I'm in love with her uncaring and slightly sadistic attitude too."

-Scriptkitty

Calisto's Fans

"Well, enjoying the character is what it's all about, my vote goes to Calisto, I just love the sarcastic woman."

-The Cry of Fallen Angels

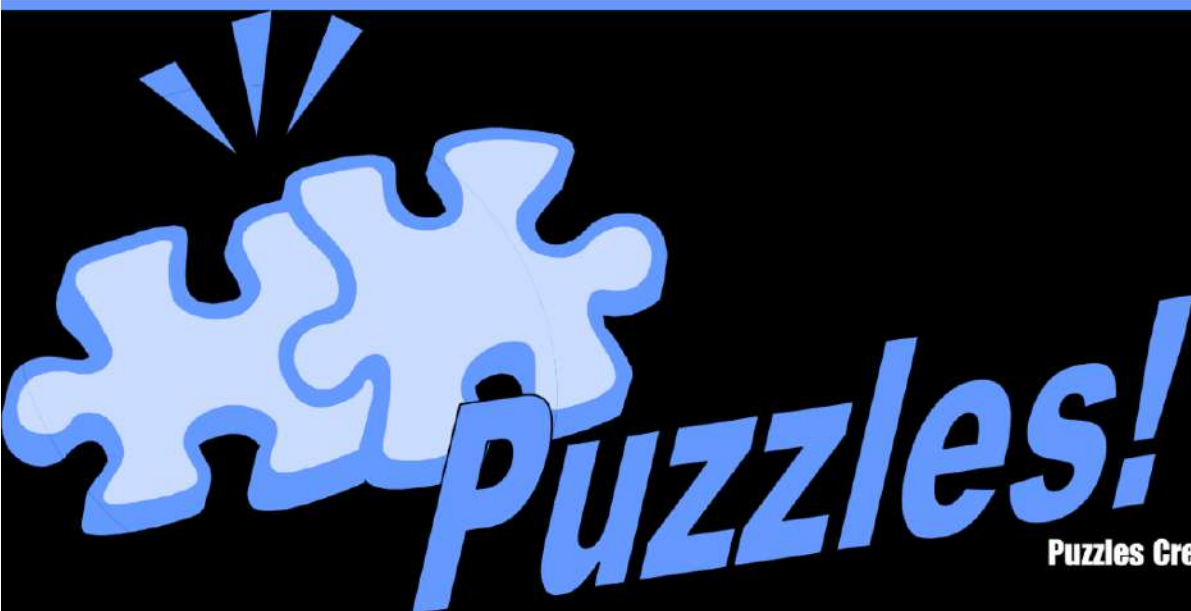
"Well, I guess my favorite character...has to be Calisto. She is just badass. "

-Nin10dork64

Be Sure to visit Akasha Seal's project topic in the Project Discussion and Recruitment Forum at this link:

<http://www.rmxp.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=24921>

Keep watch on the E-zine forum for more information on the next nomination and voting process for the RMXP.net E-zine's Character of the Month. Who knows, your character can be next!



Puzzles Created by MonsterFamer

Puzzle Instructions

There are 8 numbers, and each number is given three letters (except 6 and 8 as they possess 4 numbers). You are given a row of numbers wherein the correct letter of three associated with the number spells out a word. Each puzzle will have a hint:

- 1 - ABC
- 2 - DEF
- 3 - GHI
- 4 - JKL
- 5 - MNO
- 6 - PQRS
- 7 - TUV
- 8 - WXYZ

An Example:

6718
HINT: A type of jewel

Puzzle #1

2152 2251
HINT: Famous Comedic Character

Puzzle #2

657175 6114
HINT: Carrying Device

Puzzle #3

1165477248 21174576
HINT: UK Comedy

Puzzle #4

4562 36123257
HINT: RMXP.net Admin

Puzzle #5

23514 2157168
HINT: Famous RPG Series

ANSWER: Ruby

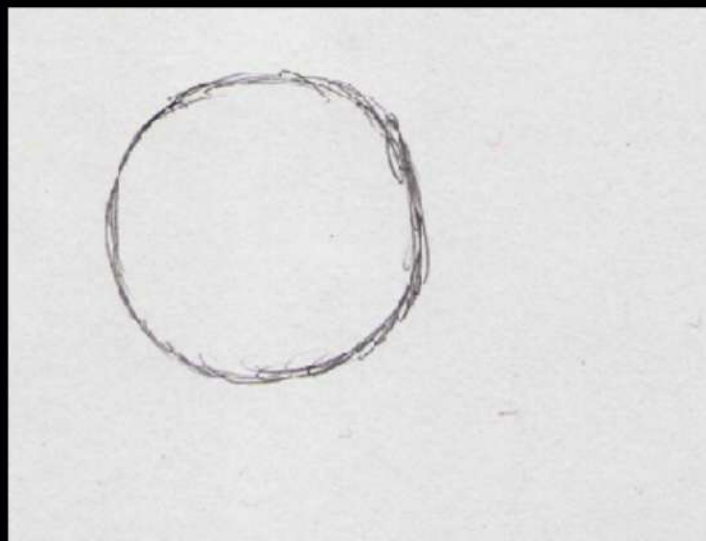
(Answers on Page 35)

How to Draw Anime

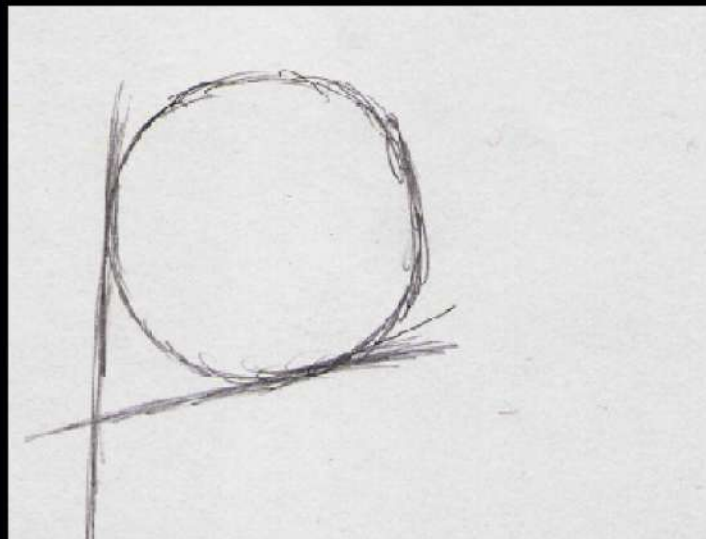
By: Veridianedge

1.2 - The Profile

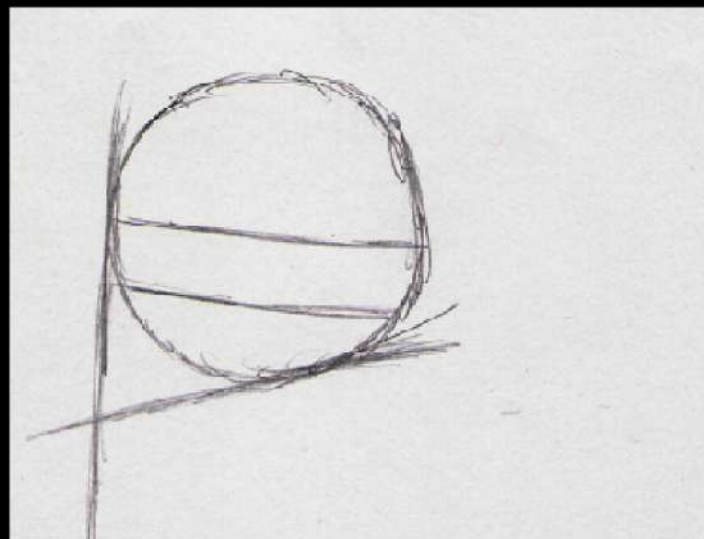
Step 1 - As before, we start by drawing a circle. Simple enough.



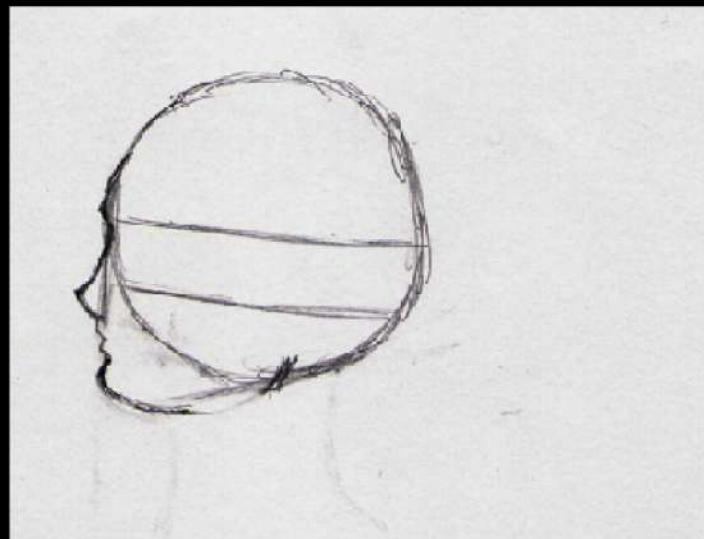
Step 2 - Now we add the tangent lines. Because we're doing a profile, one of these lines will be parallel to what will be the front of the face, and thus will be almost vertical. Keep in mind, however, that this is not actually the front of the face... it's simply a guide to show where we will build the face from.



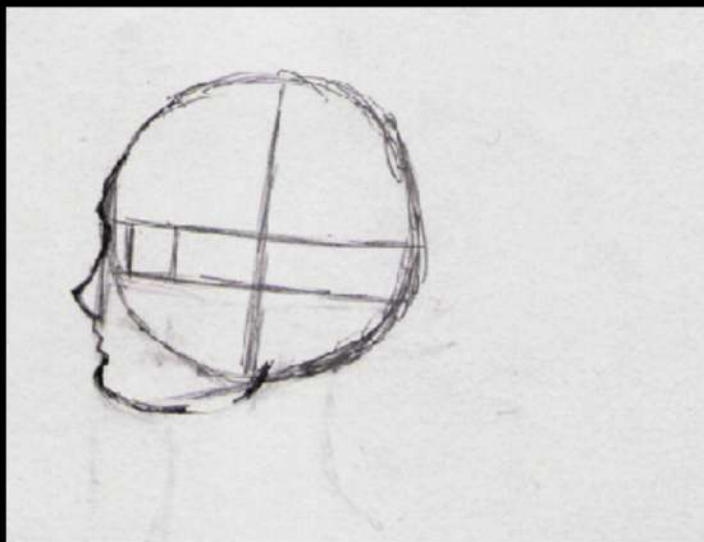
Step 3 - Because we're working with only one side of the face, there's no need to add a center guide line. The next step, then, is to simply place the top and bottom eye guides.



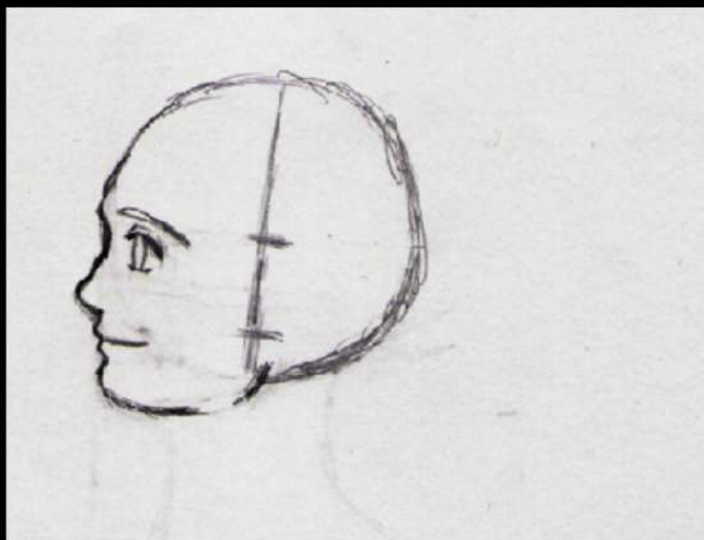
Step 4 - In my opinion, the profile is the most difficult of the facial views, and this step is the reason: the initial fleshing-out process is the most complex. In any other view, the outer line of the face is simply a series of smooth curves, but in this view, the nose and mouth have to actually be defined early. Notice how, among the facial features, the chin, upper lip, and brow ridge are all pretty much vertically aligned. Also note that the bridge of the nose starts just a little bit below the brow ridge, and that the lower lip is a bit recessed compared to the upper. These qualities may vary from face to face, and from style to style.



Step 5 - There isn't that much to do in this step... since the nose and mouth have already been placed, there's no need to place guides for them. Instead, I've opted for an ear guideline by drawing a line down the center of the circle, just as if I was adding a center guideline. This is because the ear is pretty much in the center of the head from the side view. You may also notice that I moved the back of the jaw forward slightly. Another thing to note is that the eye is not flush with the front of the face, but rather set back about half an eye-width.



Step 6 - Whew... finally, it's starting to get easier. In this step I added the eye, brow, and the mouth. You may also see that I've refined the front of the face a bit with a slight change to the shape of the nose, and added a notch along the ear guideline along the base of the nose. This line defines the bottom of the ear, while what used to be the top eye guide is now the top ear guide.



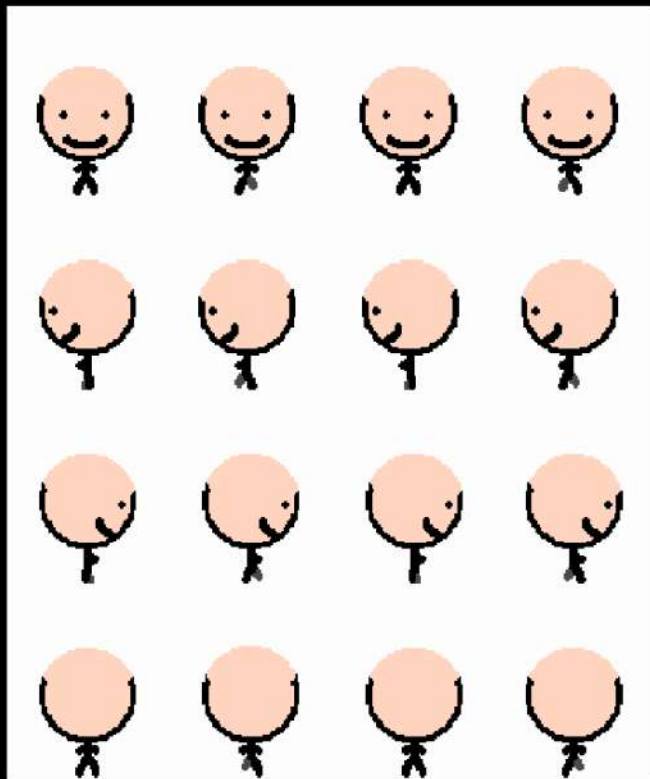
Step 7 - Now that the worst is behind us, it seems like we're breezing through the detailing, doesn't it? Here, I've added on the ear, hair, neck, and chest, and re-redefined the nose. Don't worry, you may find yourself doing lots of revisions to previously-finished parts, and that's okay, because you can never make the picture look too good, right?



Step 8 - ...okay, I'll admit, this picture kinda sucks. For some reason, Flea from Chrono Trigger comes to mind... but regardless, you should hopefully get the gist of things. I finished her (his?) hair, and gave the character a choker and earrings. Well... at least I tried.



Well, that profile was a disaster, but hopefully you at least understand the mechanics behind it. Next issue, I'll move onto the 3/4 view tutorial.



Guide to "Pickyturizing" a Fictional Character Written by Chubby

Ever wanted to have your very own "pickyturized" charaset? Ever wonder how I do my work? Look no further than this guide. I am skilled with paint! (Ok, I'm not like, overly skilled, I just know everything thing there is to know about the basic paint program.)

Try it yourself if you want to sharpen your skills or just get adjusted to paint.

Step 1 - Get the Template

This is the template. Although it looks a little weird, the hair will cover it all up.

Step 2: Get Your Fictional Character and a Couple of Resources

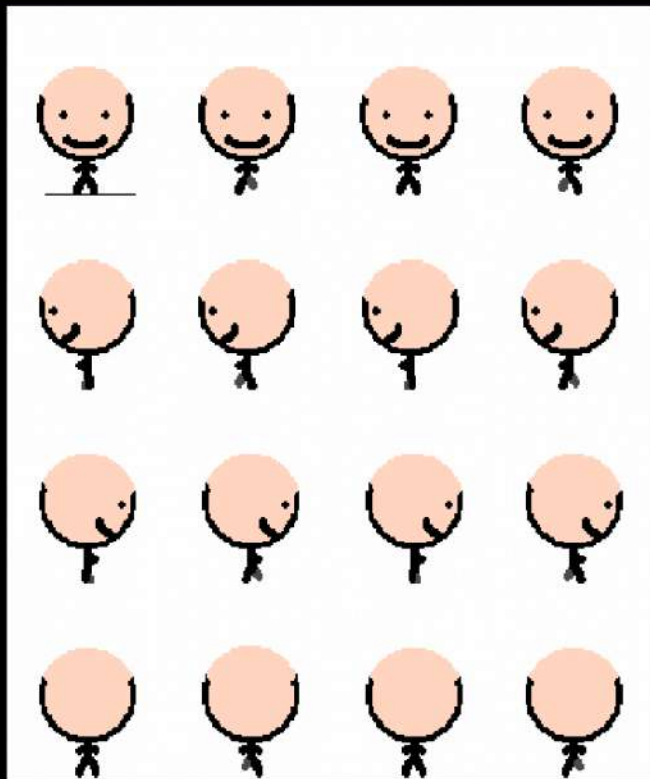


Step 2 - Get Your Fictional Character and a Couple of Resources

For this tutorial I am going to make a Sephiroth template. Now, don't get all excited. I haven't done this before.

I will use this for a resource. Of course, this will be a weaponless sprite.

Step 3: Getting Set Up to Make the Body



Note: (All names are probably not correct, but you get the picture)

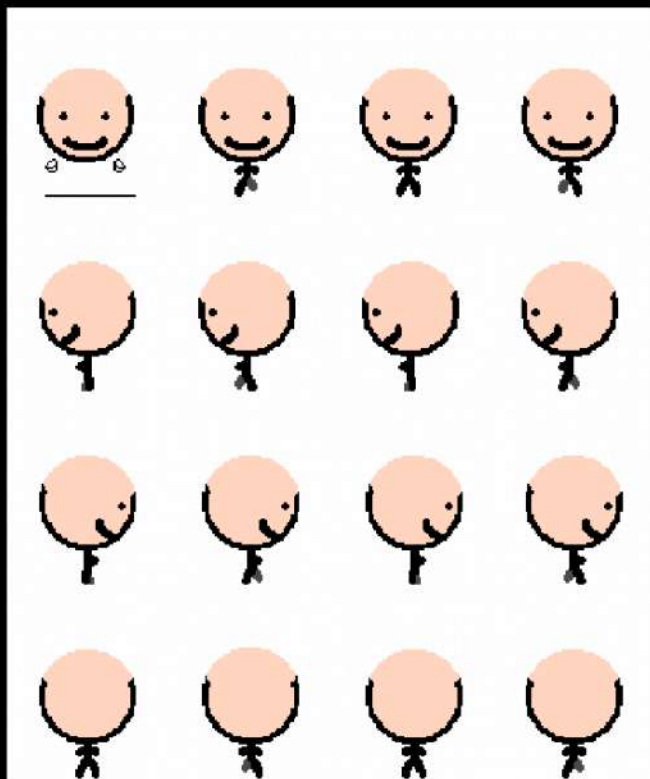
Zoom in x8 by using the Magnify tool in the side bar.

Take the straight line tool and make it the thinnest line (1 Pixel Line).

Draw a black line across the bottom of the first foot. Make sure you strike through as shown in the picture to the left.

Next, take the erase tool and whiteout the body, but leave the line to keep your place.

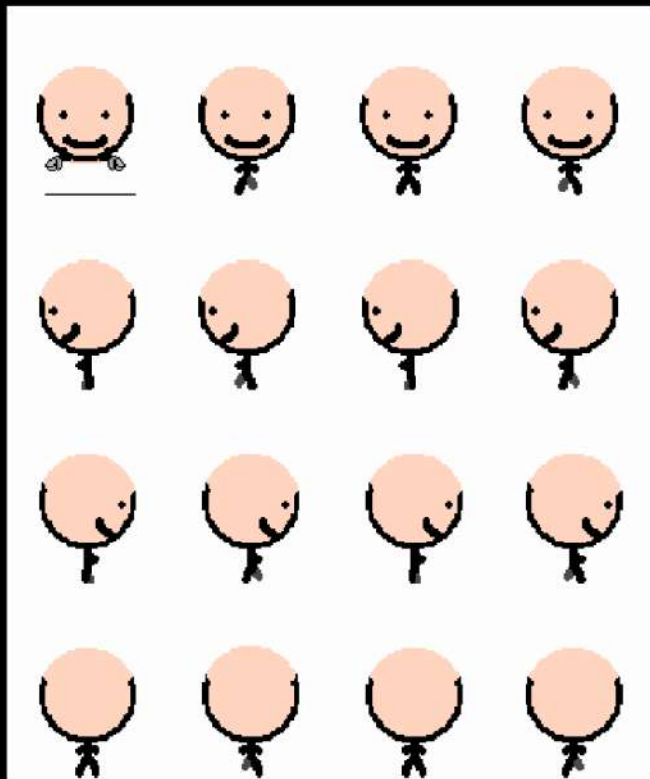
Step 4: Making the Body



Take the one pixel paintbrush tool (looks like a fat paint brush). Make sure it's the one right by the two circles.

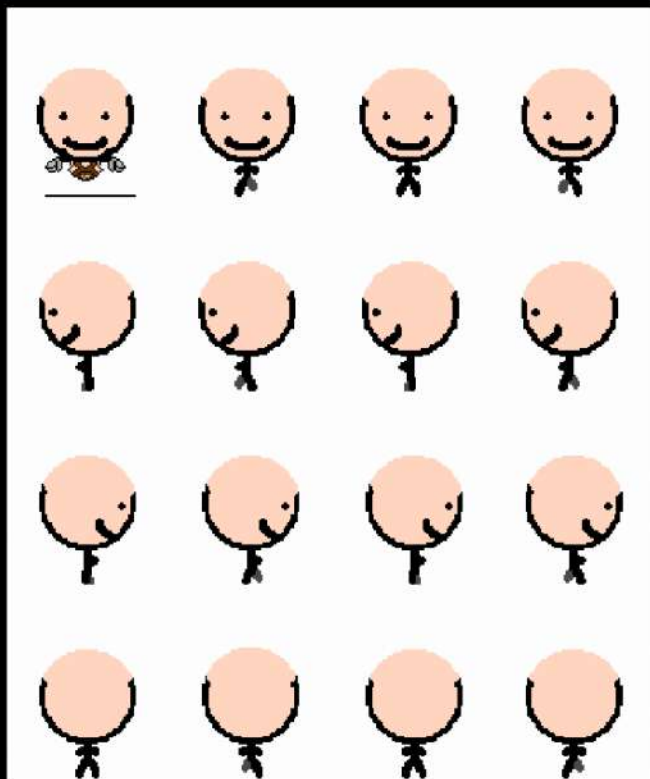
Now outline the shoulders, or in my case, shoulder pads.

Step 4 (cont.): Making the Body



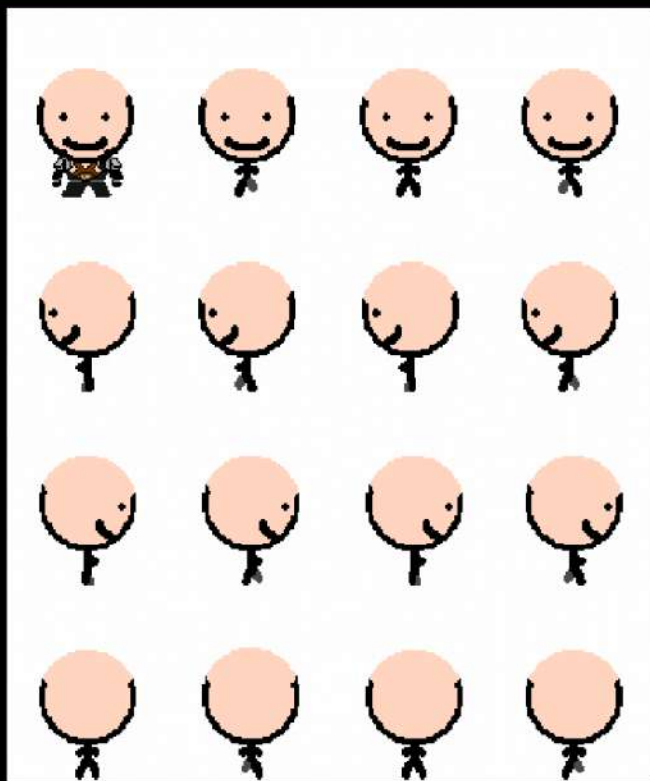
Next, you'll want to colour the shoulders and add the neck and some minor cloth additions to it.

Step 4 (cont.): Making the Body



I know it doesn't look like much yet, but with a little torso addition...

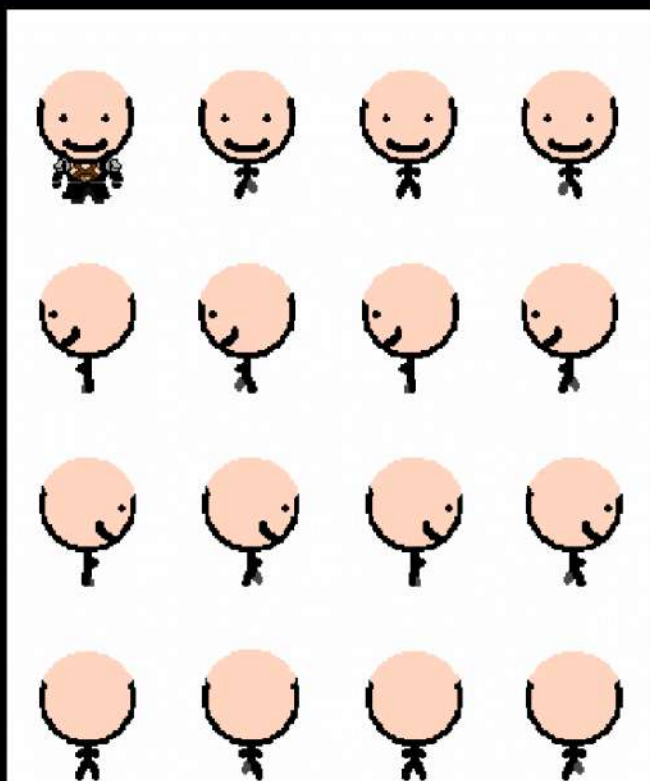
Step 4 (cont.): Making the Body



Now, add some more clothes around the torso. If your clothes reach the bottom, you can easily make a mental note and take off the line.

Starting to see it yet? As you might have noticed, I've moved the shoulders in more because they were too far out.

Step 4 (Final): Making the Body



Okay, now we add the legs.

Be sure to watch out for the rest of this tutorial in the next issue!

Andy6000's Spriting Tutorial

This tutorial is strictly dealing with spriting from a template, and does not give much enlightenment as to the definition of folds or freeform spriting. Also, I used Photoshop 7.0 in this tutorial, and while most of the tutorial is easily usable using other programs (Gimp, MSPaint, etc.), some of it is restricted to Photoshop (i.e. the camouflage part uses blending effects). Also, I will be detailing hotkeys and where to find things, these apply only to Photoshop, and may not apply to earlier versions.



1. Start with a blank slate. It's always good to have your inspiration next to it, so you have something to work off of.

Step 1. Having your inspiration right next to your work makes it easier, and lessens the annoyance of having to constantly click a couple times to see the source material. In this case, the completed sprite I made is placed on the left, for me to replicate as I go through this tutorial. Reference pictures usually are concept art, and aren't always necessary, but are good to have if you don't have the exact specifications of your character thought out completely prior to spriting him/her.

Step 2. The outline is perhaps the most important piece of spriting, because it defines where exactly the piece of clothing or accessory is on the character, and basically provides you a shape, so you can 'color inside the lines'. Something I did in this step is not making the outline a completely solid line. Don't be afraid to leave gaps in your outline, the more randomized it looks, the closer to realistic it will look. Also, note that the outline is a little outside the leg's outline, these pants are a little baggy.



2. Starting with the pants, we do an outline in our darkest shade, remember, you don't have to make the outline solid.



3. The second darkest shade completes the outline, and adds a little bit of roundness to the pants.

Step 3. In this step, we mostly complete the outline, and add a little bit of depth to the pants with the slightly lighter shade of green. Note the lack of this shade on the right side of the sprite, I'm attempting to make this side brighter, and leaving more room for the lighter shades, because it's outstretched towards the viewer.

Step 4. These two lighter shades define the folds in the pants, which are directly related to the bagginess I mentioned earlier. The more baggy the clothing article, the more defined and numerous the folds will be. These pants aren't that baggy, so I merely defined the key folds (The knee areas, the fold of the pants on the right side, and the groin area) using the darker shade of this spectrum of color. Also important to note here, is that the shading on the legs should be used as a guide when shading the pants, the darker parts of the legs define where a natural fold might occur, so you should follow them. Again, this relates to the bagginess, the more baggy the clothes, the less you should let the leg shading define the pants shading.



4. Next comes the 2 lighter shades, which define the folds of the pants, and leave only the base color left to fill.



5. The lightest shade completes the pants, giving them a solid feel.

Step 5. The lightest shade is the center of the pants, and is used the most used, because these pants aren't exactly shiny (they're rather dull), so don't get a highlight layer. When doing pants with material like leather, then you should definitely have a highlight layer, probably including two shades of color.



6. The difference here between the pants is that the shirt tucks into the pants, meaning you should not have a hard edge there.

Step 6. Moving on to the shirt, we see here I just combined the first two steps of the pants, because we've already covered the process, the thing to note here is the lack of a definitive solid outline at the transition area from the shirt to the pants, this is because the shirt tucks into the pants, and thus uses the pants outline in that area.

Step 7. As stated in the overview, the difference here is how tight the shirt is, it's not loose at all, so we pay special attention to the curves of the body, almost following the template's shading exactly (you could even just colorize this area if you wanted). It takes a little experimentation to get the coloring and the tone right). Again, randomize a little bit, the shirt isn't just the skin turned blue.



7. Same process as the pants, only this time taking more note of the body shape, since the shirt is tighter.



8. The kind of shoes I'm doing have a hard edge, just draw an almost black outline, around them.

Step 8. Here, we see an example of a non-cloth accessory, the shoe. This is extremely solid and not really movable, so we have a solid outline of almost black (it's never really good to use complete black).

Step 9. Here we fill in most the rest of the area using two shades of black, only slightly lighter than the outline, to draw attention to the contrasting highlight of the shoe.



9. Now fill in a dark underborder layer, taking most the space up, note the barely contrasted difference between the border.



10. Now add a highlight layer of color, making a contrast with the dark, to make a sheen on the shoe.

Step 10. This step is the highlight layer of the shoe, note the extreme contrast between this and the rest of the shoe, producing a sheen effect. (The darker shade of these two gives the shoe a round appearance)



T1. Now we're going to transform the shirt into leather. Start by desaturating the shirt layer.

Trick 1. Desaturation in Photoshop can be done in two simple ways. A. Hold Shift and Ctrl and press U. A different way is to just press ctrl + U and slide the saturation slider all the way to the left. Both accomplish the same thing.

Trick 2. The Levels tool can be reached in Photoshop by pressing ctrl + L, here you will want to take the middle slider and move it to the right until you get the desired amount of darkness.



T2. Next, use levels to darken the shirt.



T3. Then add a brighter highlight color to create a sheen effect.

Trick 3. Adding a highlight layer creates the same effect we saw on the shoe, where the highlight stands out, pronouncing a sheen.

Trick 4. Use the blur filter to smooth the highlights out, adding a bit of roundness to the area, making it more realistic.



T4. Use the blur filter to smooth the sheen a little bit, making it look more rounded.

Trick 5. Making a new layer is accomplished by finding the 'New Layer' button on the layers window (under the default configuration, the layers window is on the bottom right) and the New Layer button is two squares, one smaller than the other (The second from the right). Just make sure this new layer is dragged above whatever layer(s) your pants are on.



T5. Make a new layer above your pants layer and set it's blending mode to Hard Light.



T6. Find a color you want the camo to be, and just make a pattern on the clothing, the folds will define themselves.

Trick 6. Find a darker brown color, and make a pattern, with the blending mode, the shading will determine itself, and you'll have a nice camo pattern, feel free to find different colors to use, experimentation is the key here.

Trick Final. And this is our final result, showing the sprite we created in the normal tutorial on the left, and the effects of the tricks on the right. I hope you've found this tutorial useful for your spriting.



TF. This is what we end up with after our tricks applied to the clothing.

Looking to Spice up your Boring Images

Tutorial Written by: g_man450

Here are some nifty effects you can use to enhance your pictures. This tutorial explores various effects that can be done with Photoshop, but many can be done in other programs as well (GIMP, Paint Pro, etc.).

First, let's cover the basics:



Got an image that is pixilated?

Go to **Filter->Blur->Gaussian Blur** and adjust to your liking.



Or Use the Median filter by going to **Filter->Noise->Median**



(This works great on old, gritty chipsets, but be careful, because the tiles can bleed into other areas [i.e. a 32x32 tile could invade one of its neighbors])

Next, ever wanted to use a scenic picture in your game, but it just didn't fit? Try applying an artistic filter to stylize the picture. This picture was altered using the **Filter->Artistic->Cutout** function.



Set your filter to the following:

No. of levels = 8, Edge Simplicity = 0, Edge Fidelity = 3



To further alter the picture, go to **Image->Adjustments->Hue/Saturation**. Click the "Colorize" box, and adjust the Hue, Saturation and Lightness to your liking, and you'll end up with something like this:



Ever wanted to add a little drama to an image? Try the following:
First, add some "action" lines to your image using the brush (and whatever brush style you like), with **Opacity =80** and a **Flow =80**. Use a "lighter" color. You will end up with something like this:



Next, go to **Filter->Blur->Radial Blur->** and set it to Zoom. Use the grid to select which area of the picture you want the zoom to focus in on. The effect below was done with an **Amount of 25**, **Blur Method: Zoom**, and **Quality: Best**.



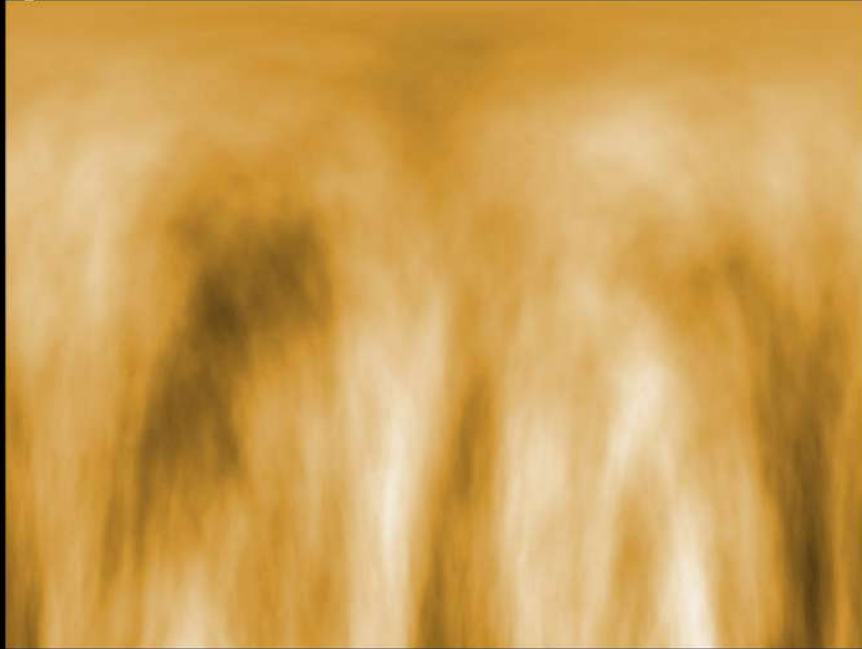
For our final trick, let's make some original flames.

First, create a new image, and go to **Filter->Render->Clouds**.

Next go to **Filter->Distort->Polar Coordinates->** and select Polar to Rectangular.

Next, go to **Image->Adjustments->Hue/Saturation** and click the colorize box, then select your color.

You should now have something like this.



Now, go to **Layer->Duplicate Layer**

Then, go to **Edit->Transform-> Flip Horizontal**

Now, go to **Layer->Layer Style->Blending Options** and set the Blend Mode to Color Burn. Your final product should look something like this.



To further the effect, use the Smudge tool and do vertical, curved strokes with varying brush sizes. You may want to Duplicate the Layer again and use a different Blend Mode. This will make the flames look something like this:



Hope some of these intermediate tricks can help you better your photo projects. And remember, practice, practice, practice!

Disclaimer - None of these images are original. They were found using the Google Image Search, and are the property of their respective owners. They were merely used as examples of possible stylizations, and are not the property of g_man_450 or RMXP.net.



WORLD OF AXYZ

MAZA'S REVENGE

THE WORLD WILL BE CREATED 2006

RATING PENDING

RP

CONTENT RATED BY
RMXP

NOT RATED BY ESRB

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DREAMS STUDIO

Arshes Gone Bad
Written by eternal_magus and Erk
Compiled by Darthcourt



Chapter One: The Beginning

It's been years since Arshes' days adventuring with Fighter-04 and Lancer-01 -- long, hard years. After being lynched by a group of Arshes-hating fanatics (led by Erk tongue.gif), he decided to change course. No more mister nice-Arshes. No more stupid expression of surprise. No more crappy red bandanas. No more ugly orange haircut. It was time for his revenge; revenge on Alex for being liked more than him, revenge on Mimesong for lynching him, and revenge on Enterbrain for creating him....I give you:

ARSHES GONE BAD!!!



Chapter Two: He's Back...

But the incredibly godlike Erk was angered by the return of his old enemy, and released his wrath until he bled Arshes to death, pixel by pixel, and finally left him for dead impaled on a stake.

His skull had been pierced by a wooden stake. He had been sliced by the blades of thousands of his foes...He was almost dead. Yet somehow, as he was about to die, he thought, "No, I must get revenge on my enemies. I must defeat that evil Erk and burn his Arabian Bazaar tileset! I shall be triumphant. I've met undead before...Why not join them?" And so, slowly wriggling off the pole he had been impaled on, his skin long since decomposed, Arshes stood up. He looked into the distance: "I will get you Erk, I will get you Alex! I will get you Enterbrain!"

Then he slowly shuffled off towards his destiny.
I give you, ARSHES GONE BAD: UNDEAD EDITION!!!



Chapter Three: You Can't Keep a Bad Guy Down

But Erk noticed Arshes' presence still in the plane of the living, so he took actions to dispose of Arshes. This time, he called the holy fire of the -- Erk Heavens? -- down upon Arshes and rendered him into nothing but a pile of ash:



But Arshes was filled with hatred, rage, and a strong mind set on revenge...When someone is on such a path of desperation, it takes more than badly drawn fire (just kidding sorry Erk) to deal with him!:

Out of the ashes...rose Arshes! There's something funny about that sentence...argh, now I've ruined the dramatic effect! Anyway, up rose Arshes, the raging turmoil deep inside of him was enough to create storms off the coast of 005: Seaside Road. His body was only kept together by the raging anger within...His eyes opened, and gleamed green in the moonlight. Arshes would stop at nothing to destroy Erk...and Alex. He was angry enough to turn to the Dark side in a second, but he's never heard of it, of course...
I give you, Arshes Gone Bad: SPECTRE EDITION!!!



So, now he goes on his journey to kill Erk, Alex, and the members of Enterbrain...

Chapter Four: Why Doesn't He Just Die?!



Arshes had been trapped in the crystal...He watched as Erk used his elemental GIMP powers to erase each pixel in his body. He had died, but Erk overlooked one thing: the afterlife.

Arshes was sent straight to hell...All the bad deeds he had done in the last few days were enough to give him a life sentence. He had even written a multilanguage dictionary only in languages wherein the name Erk referred to a sexual organ or other crude body part. It was short, but it's the thought that counts...

As soon as he got to hell, he was placed in his worst nightmare...His hair returned to its old, ugly, orange self. He screamed in agony as they tied the bandana back around his head. He wept as they returned his ugly, orange armour. They threw him into pits of lava until his skin was blackened with sulfur...He thought it couldn't get worse...Then suddenly, he was whisked from his stone seat in 042: Demon's lair interior, and lifted into the sky. Apparently, Enterbrain had reserved a seat for him in heaven, and didn't want to lose their money. But, upon reaching heaven, they changed his body to that of an angel...a FEMALE angel, and kept his head...

He was brought before the Gaurdian Angel (3 guesses as to who) who declared, "He doesn't deserve to be up here. Send him back there where he can be eradicated by Erk again!"

And so, Arshes was hurled back to the realm of the living...Only thoughts of revenge pulsed through his mind, pausing only to get angrier over the fact that he no longer looked cool -- at all.

Chapter Five: The Homo Squad

But it goes further than that...Arshes knew that, alone, Erk would just destroy him again...He needed someone to help him. He would live a little longer that way. So he called upon an old friend: Fighter-04.

But, over the years, things changed. Fighter-04 certainly had. He never wanted to be a man...His dream had always been otherwise, and he had fulfilled that dream long ago on his own. He never liked killing. Before the sex change, he started to refuse to be in games unless they were dating sims.



So, they get ready to destroy Erk forever!

Chapter Six: The Betrayal

Overheard in a bar:

MIME: "Little one...so lost, so unfashionable. Surely you cannot mean to face me?"

F04: "I do not face you alone, vile Spriter! Leave this PC and go back to the hells which spawned you!"

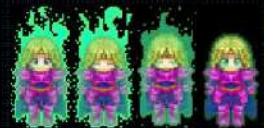
MIME: "My child, I am not your enemy. Those who dressed you are your enemy. Let me show you the light."

F04: "I... I look so much nicer! So much sharper! It cannot be! I was taught that you were a daemon, not a natty dresser!"

MIME: "You are small, and digital, and can be forgiven your weakness. My friend, I am a Mime, and a singing one at that. Could you believe for an instant I was not versed in the holy words of Queer Eye for the Straight Guy?"

F04: "I have been so wrong to oppose you! How can I serve?"

MIME: "I bid you, recall a time when you served me before. You were once a paladin in my own game! Rise to that task again. Feel the Song of the Mime!"





And so, Fighter04 -- the Paladin of the Mime -- now commands a Holy Army of my Silent Sailors against Arshes' pathetic forces. Their first victory lead to the image I posted earlier. Perhaps s/he shan't last long against whatever form Arshes chooses next, but when s/he falls it will be with honour. Technicolour honour.

Chapter Seven: The Cliffhanger...

Arshes had been pinned to a wall, had his wings ripped off, been cut in many places...and had bled so much he could barely move. He was almost dead, but then he thought, "Fighter-04 betrayed me! That bastard betrayed me! For a guy who's killed me many times before, I can't just let her/him live after doing that!"

So, Arshes tried to stand. When a fallen angel is killed and then gets back up, he becomes a demon. Arshes started to feel strange inside: his arms were growing longer, his angel body was disappearing...and in its place was the body of a full-fledged demon. Arshes felt angry again, and the pulse of power that followed his anger was incredible. He was powerful now...He didn't need Fighter-04 or anybody else. He could take on Erk; he would eradicate him!

I give you, ARSHES FROM HELL:



But first, Arshes needed to destroy that cursed Fighter-04; destroy until there was no hope of resurrection or even becoming un-dead. So, Arshes went to try his new powers...

Conversation between Fighter-04 and Arshes:



Fighter04: Arshes, sorry I made you sad, but Erk is much nicer! He fixed my contrast! Come to the mime side of the force!

Arshes: I SERVE ONLY ONE MASTER, FOOL. YOU HAVE LOST MY TRUST. YOU MUST BE ERADICATED.

Fighter04: But, Arshes...how can you do this? I taught you Cross Cut -- doesn't that mean anything to you! No...No! Nooooooooooooooooooooo!

Anyway, Arshes sets off once more to defeat Erk, Alex, and Enterbrain (no, he didn't forget Alex and Enterbrain)!

Delusions by Psgels**Chapter two: The Bystanders**

The main street of Rivershore was given the name of St. Patrick's Street by the residents. St. Patrick was supposedly someone who lived many centuries ago and did many good deeds in the village, so he got his own street named after him. The people of Rivershore know almost nothing about him, though. With the passage of time, St Patrick turned into just a name, nothing more. Nobody minds the name, and nobody pays attention to it.

At 81 St. Patrick's Street, there lives a family with one daughter. They run a small shop, and live above it, like a couple of other families do as well. The father has a bit of a tall, slim posture. He dresses mostly in casual clothes, mostly a grey T-shirt and some half-worn-out jeans. The mother is very small, 1.60 metres at most. She mostly wears self-made clothing. She loves making clothing, and so she made that into her hobby. Her favourite is a flowery blouse with some blackish pants. The family runs a traveling shop, offering all kinds of services for travelers, like first-aid kits, maps, hiking tools, and etcetera. It's been fairly successful, as the shop recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary.

The daughter had been an adventurous person for almost all her life. She loved exploring the woods surrounding Rivershore. It didn't take long before she found some friends with the same hobbies as her, and, as the years progressed, the girl and her two friends grew up together; spending a lot of time together. Now we are here, at the fateful night. The last couple of months, the three had become obsessed with the forest. Almost every night they would meet around dinner time -- eat and chat a bit -- and then set off to the woods. Then they would walk for hours, play some games, and have a good time with each other. Today was no different.

There they sat in the daughter's bedroom, chatting a bit. The dusk was falling. The daughter was small, a bit bigger than her mother and had tall, dark hair. She also preferred to dress in black clothes either made by her mother, or just bought from a store. The first friend had medium, long, dark hair, and liked to dress as casually as possible. Today, it would include a plain blue vest and t-shirt, and dark, pale green pants. The second friend had an obsession with black hats. His favourite was a combination of a medium high hat, and a bowler. Furthermore, he had short, brown hair, a black t-shirt with his favourite band on it, and some old-looking jeans. The first friend walked towards the window.

"Hey, look at that...", he said to the others.

The girl walked to the window. There she saw three characters, obviously trying not to be seen. She then spoke.

"You've got good eyes, you know that?" the girl replied.

Now, the second friend also stood up and he walked to the window. "Yeah, looks like the first two are forcing the third one to move on... He seems to be tied down...and, whoa... he is even blindfolded," he muttered.

"You know what," the girl said, "I recognize that person from somewhere...What was his name again?"

"Now that you mention it...I think I recognize him. We were in the same class this year," the first friend mumbled, "His name is Toby, I think. Nice kid, although extremely shy and timid. He looked very lonely back then."

The two guys were indeed forcing the boy -- who apparently was named Toby -- to cooperate. They looked quite a few times around to see if anyone was watching them, but still they didn't notice the threesome behind the window. After a few minutes, they apparently convinced themselves that the coast was clear, and crossed the openness of the main street. Our threesome, meanwhile, didn't just stand in front of the window, but was very busy grabbing their coats and making other preparations, while one of them stood guard.

"Okay, it looks like they're about to move...Quickly, before we lose them. I want to know what they're planning to do with Toby," the second friend whispered.

"I think all of us do," answered the girl.

The door opened silently, and three characters emerged from the house, trying to move as silently as possible. They just saw the figures of Toby's kidnappers and ran in that direction, not knowing that a tragic fate was about to befall them.

Dialogue

Written by psgels.

In the following months I'll be writing a series of articles based on dialogue. Dialogue is actually a more important point than you think. It determines character interaction, character development, and even the outcome of a story. This month, I'll give some general tips about dialogue. In the following months I'll be going into detail about the different aspects of it. After all, we don't want all conversations consisting of "hi" and "bye." Characters should be able to express their feelings, even though it's terribly hard to accomplish in RMXP.

One thing that to remember is that the main goal of the game (saving the princess from the demon of darkness, finding the sacred treasure, etc.) isn't the only topic that the characters can be talking about. The weather, for instance, can also be an interesting matter of conversation. Or you could bring your characters in a nostalgic mood, have them remember the first time they played tag with each other, or something similar. The point is, that there are millions of things your characters can talk about. Why not make use of them?

Also, try to keep the discussion natural. When the main villain has just killed the main hero's best friend, the hero should be shocked, sad, angry or something that goes in that direction (be creative). He should not be making dull sarcastic comments. Another example of unnatural dialogue would be if the main party has just discovered the main villain's evil plan, and the main hero suddenly starts talking about an interesting squirrel he saw on one of their travels. Of course, the examples I just gave are heavily exaggerated; but be careful, because unnatural dialogue happens more often than one might think.

When you create characters, you give them certain roles, characteristics and personality traits. For most of the time, those characters should be acting according to their personality. A shy character should keep silent and introverted. An enthusiastic character should be talking most of the time. A bossy

character should be bossy.

'All of the time,' you ask? No, there should be certain times or events at which the person in question acts opposed to their design. This is where the character learns and develops. The shy character finally finds the courage to express his or her feelings. The enthusiastic character learns that the world isn't granted. The bossy character learns that he or she isn't the center of the universe. When introducing these kinds of scenes, you should remember that the dialogue still has to feel natural. Try to bring it either very gradually, so that the player won't even notice and develops along with the player, or sudden, so that the player doesn't have time to think, and goes along with the character's decision.

A more technical aspect of dialogue is accomplishing to show the difference between what a character says and what a character thinks. Most people put the character's thoughts between round hooks, in comic books it is written in thought bubbles, but you can also lower the opacity for the text, or change the colour. When the character is alone, you can make him schizophrenic by making him talk to himself. Be creative.

If, after reading this, you still have no clue about how to write good dialogue (most likely), then you could also take a look at the experts. Try reading some books, novels, comics, read anything TREG has written etc. You'll probably get some brilliant ideas from it. Also, don't be afraid to try something out. If it doesn't work, you can always do it again, and learn a good lesson from it.



Characterization

Written by: Andy6000

Cardboard stand-ups of Darth Vader do not make good conversation. Trust me, I've tried. This is exactly what I see so much in games today, not just only in amateur, but in professional video games as well. So I'm going to attempt to tell you how to characterize a little bit and how to make a believable person. This applies in main to the protagonist/antagonist and their respective teams, but it also applies to designing NPCs.

The one most important rule to keep in mind is that everyone carries out their actions for a reason- there's always a motivation. You see that kid kicking the ball in the street? He's doing that because he's bored of sitting around watching TV, or maybe because he's escaping his mother's tedious list of chores by going outside. The thing he says should reflect this. Say he's just out there because he's bored; he might tell you, "This ball is kinda fun, maybe I should do this more often," thus reflecting that the ball is a new activity, and he's doing it as an alternative to some other recreational pursuit. Now if he was escaping his mother, he might say something along the lines of, "Man, I hate laundry. Why do I have to clean Dad's underwear? It's not like I wear them or anything." This boy is obviously escaping from that activity; the kicking of the ball is merely an excuse. So we find here that dialogue reflects the motivations of characters- but what about development? Let's take a look at an example. I'm going to go totally cliché here and use Final Fantasy VII.

To begin with, Cloud is the stereotypical badass 20-something mercenary, but what's important is that the game develops his character into something different- something more. The game does this through situational effects on the motivations of the character. However, there's obviously a difference in Cloud's speech and Tifa's speech, despite them having the same motivation? What makes this difference? Personality- the natural behavioral tendencies of characters- is the other variable to the person. We see that Cloud has a loner personality, while Tifa is rather clingy. Personality is defined through events (just like motivations are), but the personality is a more permanent fixture that changes slowly; let's take Cloud again. He moves throughout the game, beginning as a loner stereotypical badass merc, but slowly changes into a team leader who can count on others instead of

just himself.

So we know that personality changes slowly (based on the person in question), and motivations can change relatively quickly, but *how* do these change? Situations are the key here. If Cloud is on a quest to pick up the mystical pizza for his friend Magical Bill, that is Cloud's motivation. However, when Cloud returns with the pizza, he might see Magical Bill mercilessly killed by an evil government; his motivation just changed. Now Cloud doesn't care about the pizza anymore- he cares about revenge. His personality might change there too; if Cloud is extremely traumatized by the experience, he might become a very cold, distant individual. Everything is situational. If Cloud had successfully delivered the pizza, he might just gain a hint of confidence in his pizza gathering abilities; if he continually succeeds at delivering pizza, Cloud would become a very confident pizza man, and perhaps become a tad arrogant.

In summary, we have two driving factors of the common person- motivation and personality. Motivation is what the character is trying to do; this can be as simple and frivolous as building a doll house, or as serious as saving the world. Personality is the character's defining aspect- what makes them act how they do. Personality dictates why they're different than the other people in the world; this can be something like being light hearted, or something like having inexplicable murderous tendencies. Next we have how these two driving factors are developed- a situation. A situation can be serious, such as having the hero see his village burned down. This would effect his motivation, giving him a thirst for revenge, and his personality, granting him a cold streak and a deep hatred of anyone associated with the destruction of the town. The situation can also be rather frivolous, such as in the pizza boy outline; that affects the person's personality slightly, and gives a simple motivation. These are the keys of characterization. What you use to make a character with background, goals, and personality while crafting your world's denizens is important to create a believable atmosphere- which is an extremely valuable thing to a game today.



Magic: Part Two

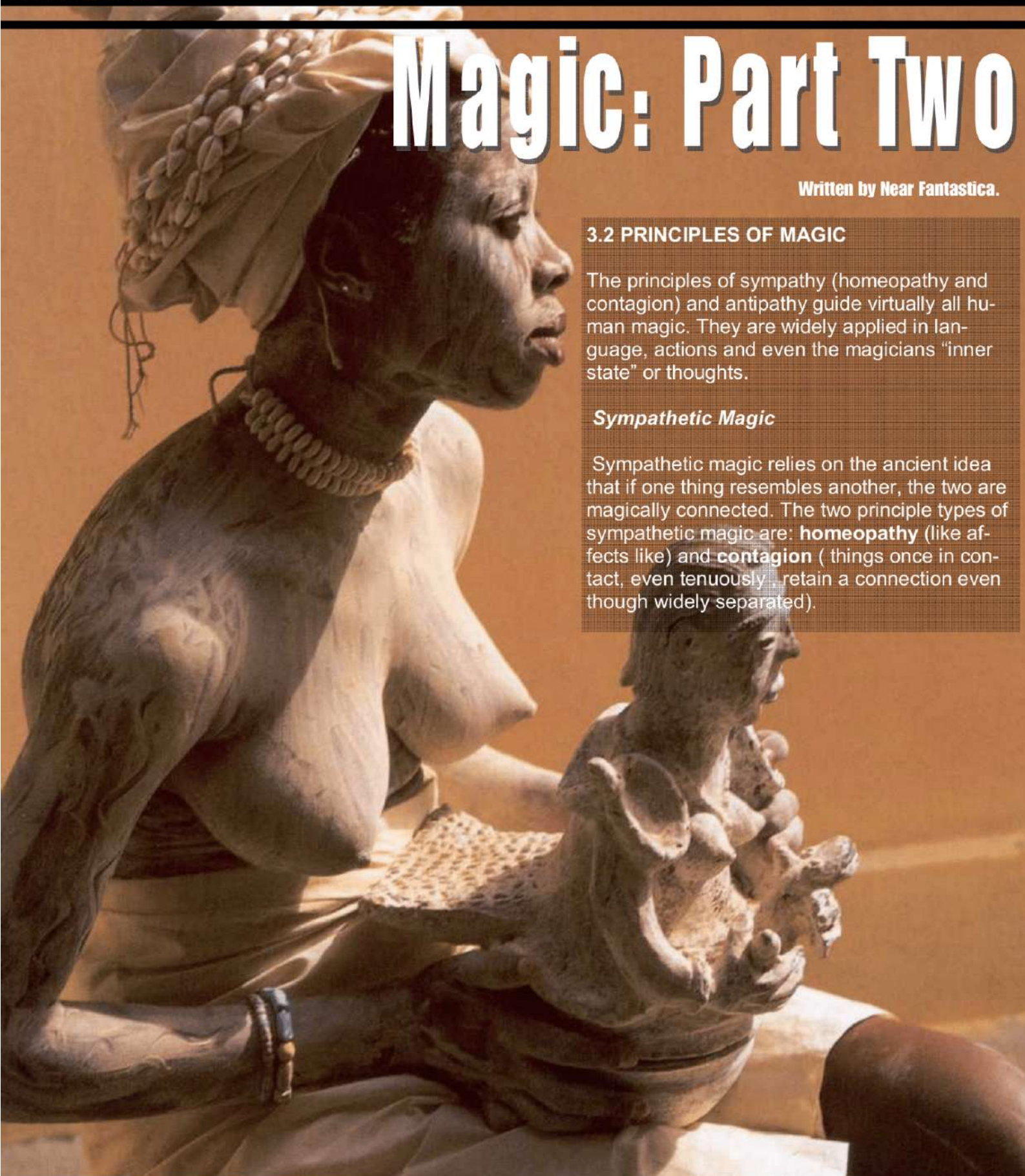
Written by Near Fantastica.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

The principles of sympathy (homeopathy and contagion) and antipathy guide virtually all human magic. They are widely applied in language, actions and even the magicians "inner state" or thoughts.

Sympathetic Magic

Sympathetic magic relies on the ancient idea that if one thing resembles another, the two are magically connected. The two principle types of sympathetic magic are: **homeopathy** (like affects like) and **contagion** (things once in contact, even tenuously, retain a connection even though widely separated).



Sympathetic principles affect all aspects of magic. Words of a spell draw upon this principle. Strong things are mentioned to impart strength; fast things are cited to impart speed. To make a household sleep like the dead, the magician used grace dirt or the bones of the dead, placing them on the roof or in the home of intended victims. The magician cures "yellow" jaundice by banishing yellow. He paints the patient yellow then washes the color away. He brings in yellow birds then shoos them away. Antipathy is also used. Other colors drive out the yellow; the patient drinks water mixed with the hair of a red bull and sits on the skin of a red bull.

Imitation of successful hunts, fishing expeditions and harvests form the basis of many primitive rituals. African tribal and American Indian dances mimic the animal and the hunter and their interplay. Prehistoric cave paintings in Ariège, France, show a man clothed in a stag's skin with antlers on his head. A prehistoric Egyptian carved slate shows a man disguised as a jackal. Shamans, wizards, and magicians throughout time have relied upon animal familiars, vision quest guides and totems. In planting societies, dancers poked the ground with sticks imitating real planting, a movement you still see some in European country dancing. Ritual movement and dancing played multiple roles in magic ranging from tribal celebrations and occasions to solo dances by shamans.

The sympathetic principle governs performance of rites. If a wizard intends to magically harm a person with his wand or staff by "pointing" in the direction of his enemy, he must emotionally and even intellectually believe and feel he is thrusting the wand as a sword into the enemy's belly and twisting it. He must "act" as if performing an actual stabbing. The similarity of one's actions in a magical rite to the same actions in real life is an important part of making magic work. Thus, sympathetic relations may involve color, sound, meaning, physical resemblance and the state of the magicians' mind and attitude.

Homeopathy. The most common type of sympathetic magic is homeopathy. Homeopathy means like affects like. Some call it imitation magic. A magician might administer a potion that includes animal liver to a patient with liver pain. Homeopathy is the basis for making an image of an enemy and sticking pins in it to cause him or her pain, discomfort or death, one of the most widely practiced forms of magic. One of the earliest records of this charm is in the trial of women and officers of the harem of Rameses 111 in Egypt in 11000 B.C. – they made images of the Pharaoh with magical incantations. Familiar to us in the form of the voodoo doll, the practice of making stone, wood, cloth or wax images and puppets in the likeness of enemies was practiced by the ancient Greeks, who inherited much of their magic from the Egyptians and other Middle Eastern regions.

North American Indians draw figures of a person in sand, ashes, or clay, then poke the image with a sharp stick, shoot an arrow into it or run a needle through its head or heart. Peruvian Indians mixed fat with grain to form images of people they wanted to harm, and then burned the effigy on a road the victim traveled. A Malay version includes nail parings, hair, eyebrows, spittle – enough pieces of the intended

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victim to represent the whole body – and combines them with bee’s comb wax in a figure scorched over a fire for seven nights while saying: “It is not wax that I am scorching it is the liver, heart and spleen of (victims name) that I scorch” (from Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*).

Making images can work for good as well as evil. In Sumatra, a barren woman holds a wooden doll of a child in her lap to encourage one to grow in her womb. In some cases, the father of a large family recites spells while the woman holds a cotton doll to her breast; in others, a wizard enacts a mock birth with a large stone tied to his stomach.

Homeopathy magic resembles the pretend games of children, often right down to the sincerity of the pretending, which is necessary to make the magic work. Magicians sometimes resort to “tricks” intended to convince others of their power, the belief necessary to working their “real” image.

Contagion is the concept that anything once in contact with something else retains a magically useful connection to that thing even if the two become widely separated. Often contagion combines with imitative and homeopathic principles in spells and rites. A wizard making image of an enemy would want items once in physical contact with the person: nail clippings, hair, teeth, and clothing. Today, superstitious (or careful) people still guard their hair and nail clippings, pulled teeth and intimate apparel. One occult author recalls from her mother “keeping a jar full of my nail clippings from infancy on.”

Contagion can work to the good of the practitioner, too. Placing an extracted tooth where a mouse or rat could get it would impart the strength of

the rodents teeth to its former owner when gnawed. In many parts of the world, the umbilical cord and the after-birth are thought to retain such a powerful connection to the child even after removal that what happens to them may determine the child’s entire fate. If properly preserved – buried in the sand, for example – the child will be prosperous; if not, he will be doomed. Or to make a child a good climber or hunter, the umbilical cord might be hung from a tree.

Frazer notes the “relation... believed to exist between a wounded man and the agent of the wound.” Melanesians, for example, keep an arrow that wounded a warrior in cool leaves to combat inflammation. His enemy, meanwhile, knowing he inflicted the wound, drinks hot, burning juices and chews irritating leaves to inflame it. He twangs his taut bow string to pain the wounded enemy. This belief led to the widespread idea that to keep a human or animal wound from a blade or puncture from becoming infected, one must clean and oil the knife, scythe, or nail that caused the harm. This idea is based on the notion that blood on the weapon continues a connection with blood in the body.

In the New Hebrides, obtaining a cloth someone used to mop his sweat gave the wizard the power of death over the hapless victim. The magician would wrap the cloth with leaves and twigs of a specific tree and burn them. In Prussia, it was thought that if you couldn’t catch a thief, you could snatch a piece of his clothing and make him sick by beating it.

Less tangible connections also offer magicians the power of contagion. In Mecklenburg, Germany, it is believed that driving a nail into a man’s

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footprint will make him lame. A German hunter might drive a coffin nail into an animal's footprint, believing it will hobble the quarry. Many American Indian and African tribes follow similar customs, throwing dirt from an animal's track in the air to bring the quarry down, or placing charms on the tracks to magically slow or cripple the beast.

In France, a witch hunter might follow a suspect and drive a knife into her footprint, thinking that if she is a witch, she will not be able to move until the knife is withdrawn. In Bohemia, a peasant girl might plant a marigold in earth she dug from the footprints of a man she loved, hoping love will bloom with the flower. The ancient Greek Pythagoreans recommended smoothing away the impression of your body when you rise from bed as a precaution against magic, so even the most tenuous connection could be magically useful.

Antipathetic Magic

Antipathy is what some anthropologists call benevolent charms or the white magic that overcomes black. Holy water drives away devils, for example. A sounding bell does the same. A silver bullet slays a werewolf and a vampire cannot see himself in the mirror because of his silver backing. Red berries or thread, because of their bloody color, counter witchcraft. Garlic repels vampires. Making the sign of the cross or other protective gestures drive off demons, as do protective talismans. These examples act antipathy, or counter evil or black magic.

Taboos. Taboos prevent magical contamination. Magic, particularly among primitive peoples, whether Af-

rican, Polynesian (such as the Maori of the pervious chapter) or American Indian, is a highly practical affair. Generally, they are protection against the unknown. Taboos with restricted contact between the taboo person (a king, a women during child birth, warrior before first battle) and others. They require purification or protective rights, bathing, shaving the heads, marking of the body by the magician, incense, fire or water.

Touching a king, his clothes or his food, is often Taboo among primitive people. Warriors going to their first battle (or several) battles are taboo. Often in the same manner as menstrual women are taboo. Rules for both include unapproachable seclusion, Taboos against scratching the head or any other part of the body with fingers, sexual assistance, minimal handling of food and their containers. The seclusion sometimes requires the man to build a separate hunt for childbirth.

Taboos surround contact with strangers, with both sides performing obligatory rights; fire and incense greet them to drive away evil spirits; the visitor may carry lighted sticks for the same purpose; on returning home, the traveling must bathe and visit the shaman/magician for cleansing, which frequently includes receiving a visible mark on the forehead or otherwise highly visible spot.

Taboos on eating and drinking may be particularly rough on kings, who take extraordinary precautions. The mouth might be a door to the soul and food which comes in contact with preparers and may not be completely consumed, may be easily magically (or actually) acted upon. Taboos force eating food behind lock doors to prevent the souls' escape and hidden from view, even in public, where, in some primitive societies, a cloth is held up to shield a king taking his meal. Since, by sympathetic contagion,

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the leftover food one leaves or the dishes which one eats from contain a connection to the consumer, leftovers (even bones) are burned, buried or thrown in the sea to prevent a sorcerer from pertaining them. A sorcerer keep his eyes open for such refuse, particularly bones from birds, animals, or fish consumed by people. He can concoct deadly charms with them. A primitive might eat many animals or plants in order to share in their qualities, for example; eating a rabbit to gain speed or an elk to gain strength, but he must not eat others so as not to share them. Sympathetic and homeopathic principles govern many taboos: boys fishing tribes are forbidden to plat cat's cradle lest they entangle their hands in fishing nets as adults; warrior's may not eat a cock that died while fighting, lest the same happen to them. Women at

home during the hunt often face many Taboos, such as being forbidden to kill any male animal while the warrior is gone or he may die. Mourners or others who have contact with: the dead; people leaving and entering houses; women at child-birth as well as menstruation; those who kill another person; hunter and fishers, who must propitiate the animal spirits just as warriors must propitiate the ghosts of their dead enemies, are all heavily tabooed.

Do You Believe in Magic?



"Believing is always nice. I've had enough Chemical and Physical education to know that magic defies all laws of them, but trying to believe that they exist never hurts. It's really handy when thinking up stories."



"I've seen someone cast a spell and collapse an entire LAN, so yes, I do believe in magic, although it is too dangerous to trifle with, what with the Law of Return and all."



"Honestly, no. I used to practice Macharomancy (Divination of/with swords), but to no difference in the end."



"No, throwing a nice fire-ball doesn't exist, the placebo effect is what I'd call today's magic."

Welcome Wagon



KUIDOU

"As for me I think that the world was created by Fire, Water, Earth and Wind elementals. and I think that humans I the past could have been using magic but the chosen the path of war instead of intellect (I think I've been playing/making too much RPGs...)"



"I really don't believe that people can start willingly throw around giant masses of energy (which somehow don't hurt the user), but I believe in deeper, unseen magic. Celtic magic is a good example! I believe in that. I also believe that it's a very risky thing that one can get into, if you use magic for the wrong things."

"GOD YES! I've even done the Aerokinesis around school and home. It was like I had a higher knowledge of the world and how it worked before it faded 12 seconds after."

~montblac



"I have an over-active imagination though I know magic is simply impossible. It would be awesome if it were real though. But yeah, way over-active imagination. When I was a kid, my stuffed animals would turn their heads to look at me while I tried to go to sleep..."

All answers were taken from the "Do you Believe in Magic" thread at <http://www.rmXP.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=27061>

giant robots...

alien parasites...

school life...

...heaven help him.



steel hearts

summer 2006