

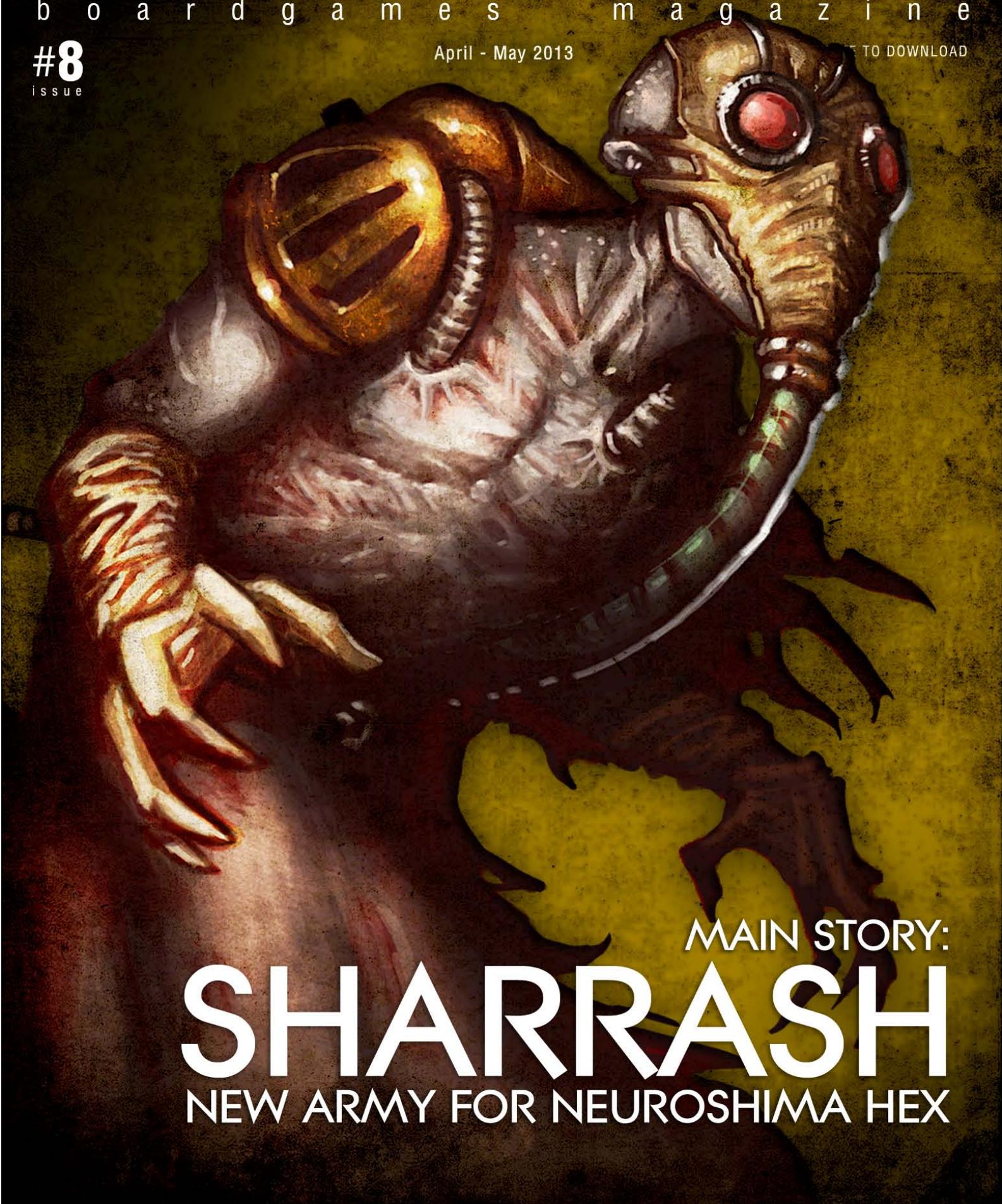
STORYonBOARD

board games magazine

#8
issue

April - May 2013

TO DOWNLOAD



MAIN STORY:

SHARRASH

NEW ARMY FOR NEUROSHIMA HEX

FEATURING: NEWS, ARTICLES, NEUROSHIMA HEX PUZZLES AND MORE...

NEW ARMIES ARE WAITING FOR YOUR ORDERS



MICHAŁ ORACZ NEUROSHIMA HEX!



SHARRASH IS A MYSTERIOUS AND WELL-ORGANIZED COMMUNITY OF MUTANT RATS LIVING IN THE UNDERGROUNDS OF DESTROYED CITIES. THEY FIERCELY DEFEND THEIR NESTS AND WILL NOT HESITATE TO GIVE THEIR LIFE FOR THE PACK. THE SHARRASH RATS ARE NOT ANIMALS, BUT MUTANTS, SMARTER THAN PEOPLE AND A LOT MORE UNPREDICTABLE.



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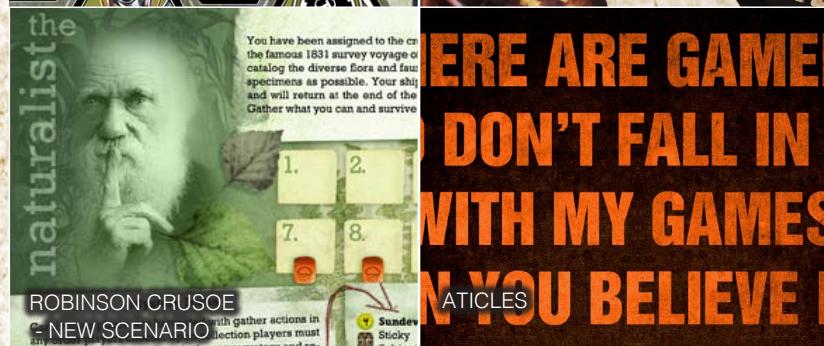
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SHARRASH MUTANT
ILLUSTRATION: MATEUSZ BIELSKI



EDITORIAL

Getting worldwide is great. We were company from Poland and in a few years we changed into more or less worldwide reknown company. This is great, we publish English fanzine, we have English website, we have fans of our games all around the world. We also began to go to foreign conventions. This is great, but this is also a huge work. For the past few weeks I made more than 9000 km visiting Gerany (twice), France, Italy and couple of places in Poland. In May I go to Lviv, Ukraine. Yeah, this part of getting worldwide, making 9000 km in less than 2 months was quite unexpected ;)

Ignacy Trzewiczek

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news

VIDEO RULEBOOKS

Good news - from now on we have a new policy – each of our new games will have a video rulebook published before the game is released. Our rulebooks sucked for years, now we not only try to make them better, but we even make a step forward – we want you learn how to play in the most easy way possible. First video rulebook (for Sharrash army) you can watch here: <https://vimeo.com/64791113>

SHARRASH ARMY

We published new army for Neuroshima Hex! Forces of mutants that look like half humans, half rats fighting with everybody else. Army was designed by Michał Oracz. You can learn about it on our website!



MAKE IT STANDARD!

We decided that from now on we have another new policy! We change size of our boxes. We will have only 3 types of boxes: small one (like Silver line from FFG) for small card games, middle one (like Race for the Galaxy) for bigger card games and square one (like Ticket to Ride) for all board games.

We hope you will appreciate that we care about order on your games shelf!

ROBINSON GOT NOMINATED

We are proud to say that Robinson received two nominations for The Dice Tower Awards! We are nominated for Best Game and for Best Theme. Thank you very much! Other game nominated are just awesome! It is great to be there!

NEW WEBSITE

We launched new website, with new domain and now we are officially PORTAL GAMES. On the new website there is a lot of free stuff and updates for our games and more is to come. Please, sign for RSS or newsletter stay in touch!

PROMOTING ROBINSON...

For the last 8 weeks Trzewik visited conventions in Poland, Germany, Italy and France, all together he made more than 8600 kilometers and this is not the end. In may you will be able to meet him and play Robinson in Lviv (Ukraine)!

telegraph

In June we will publish Polish edition of Resistance: Avalon,

Our RPG books are available at CDP.pl (only in Polish, sorry),

we are making reprint of awesome Don't Rest Your Head by Fred Hicks,

Polish second print of Robinson is in stock. Now we wait for English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Chinese... Yeah, all publishers have delays...

Anniversary edition of Zombiaki card game (10 years anniversary) is realeased in Poland. This is second game designed by Ignacy Trzewiczek (published in 2003!),

Zman Games finally released Convoy in US!

On our website we published players aid for Convoy!



THE HAMSTERS COUNTER-ATTACK

TEXT: MICHał ORACZ

ILLUSTRATIONS: MATEUSZ BIELSKI

The very first version of Sharrash army was created in 2007, together with Gas drinkers, Ice Troglodytes, Heroes To Hire and couple of others. After six years Sharrash came to light at last, but to be honest it was nothing else but Ice Troglodytes only highly tuned throughout. But let's start from the beginning.

SHARRASH 2007

Back then testers and fans of NS Hex called it 'the hamsters' (that was because of my not quite awesome illustrations for the test version). It was an army that surely could be a pain in the ass for the opponent.

The feature of HQ was Move. Once in each turn HQ could move one space – needless to say it was nice, but it had disadvantages too – in the same turn you couldn't put the tiles out.

There were couple of instant action tiles with so called Tunnel that made it possible for HQ or whatever unit to teleport to any unoccupied hex.

Plus the whole galaxy of modules that made the opponent slower, tiles of Push Back, Pull in or Move.

Plus fast and quite loony and mobile too. Mutant Ninja Rats (e.g.

a unit with strength for 2 points, initiative 3 and 2).

The logo of Sharras for this day it is the symbol of recycling.

Nobody liked this army, although I assured the balance was to be improved.

combos together, and all of that is only 'not working' as it should.

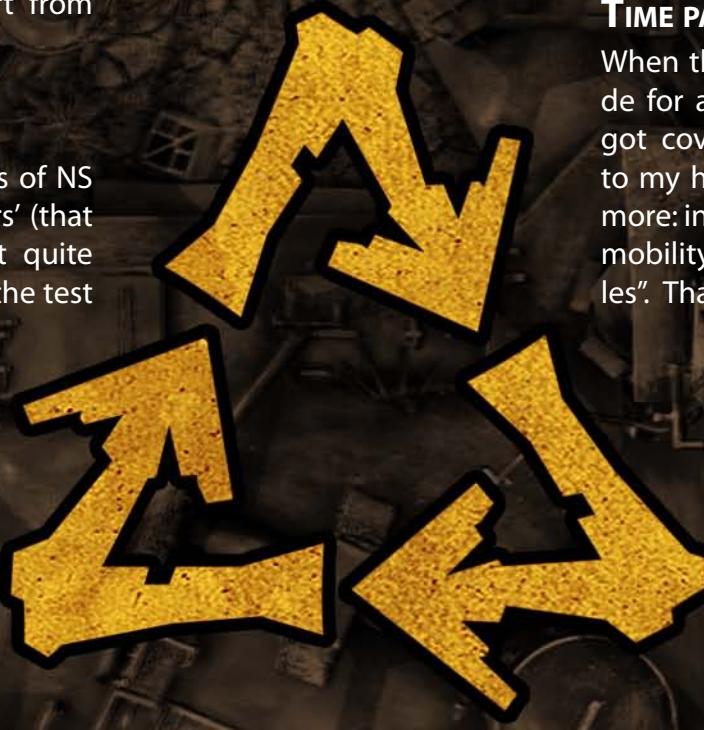
Anyway, as I said, nobody liked Sharrash 2007. I'm assuming it was not only about the illustrations.

TIME PASSES...

When the hamsters were set aside for a bigger amount of time, got covered with dust, I added to my holy hex rules a couple of more: including "Watch out for the mobility and the instant action tiles". That's because they bypass the core of game, namely a progressive building a greater working entity on the board using single tiles thereby giving the opponent some time for reaction, when we have worked a little on the structure.

The hamsters eventually rotted away in the dust, the years had elapsed, Steel Police and The Dancer made by Rustan came out in little boxes and the time came to have a look on the old projects. I have to admit that I have a certain affection for old projects.

Around that time, by the way of hex tournaments and game board conventions I had the test versions of Gas Drinkers and Ice Troglodytes with me for a small presentation. The Troglodytes captured affection. So the choice was on them.



THE RULE

While creating new armies it was always my rule that the playability is most important, then the storyline, and the balance is in third place – not because the balance was the least important, on the contrary, but because it's the last step, when everything else is set and works like a charm, the game is fun, there is a lot of thinking, choices, tension, rare tiles, playing using statistics, putting

ICE TROLOGDYTES

Ice Troglodytes, that were a part of citizens of post-apocalyptic Canada, deteriorated to the level of the primitives, living in villages and in tents among forests covered in snow.

There's a club made up of a big bone. On the illustrations something between bears, Swamp Thing and Russians from North. It's getting interesting.

The most interesting was the feature of HQ once in a turn you can draw and put out next to HQ an ADDITIONAL tile. Similar feature appeared on couple of other tiles of The Nests what made the player of Troglodytes put out even 5 tokens in each turn. That's why, every time the pile of Ice Troglodytes tiles ended, instead of The Final Battle you could just shuffle again the discarded tiles and keep on playing.

The Troglodytes didn't have a tile of battle. What for when they kept on filling in the board all the time?

Among their warriors Berserker appeared using hit-or-miss tactics, hitting both the opponent units or their own.

THE TEST FOR REAL

So The Tests For Real started. The Army, after the years of resting on the substitutes bench, was to go to press, so it was time to cut the sentimental crap on what wasn't working and so on.

The Tests For Real it was something like general overhaul where there was no time for getting sentimental, sometimes it was

about changing both the engine and the bodywork, so eventually it turns out there is nothing left of what was there in the beginning. It is has to work, end of story.

During The Tests For Real (after many struggles and searching for the right solution) the feature of The Nest was first to leave the Troglodytes. The heart of the army and the fundamental idea.. When it worked well enough it filled the board When it filled the board with good units, it was a massacre to come. When it filled the board with mediocre and weak units the army was boring. The feature apparently made the army dull. Though it seemed to be great. So it was kicked out. Maybe it'll come back in the future when it's fixed, by the way of army with a working name, zombies' or, death breath'.

When The Nests were out, it was downhill from there.

Months of tests and eventually that tweaked and working quite

well creature appeared.

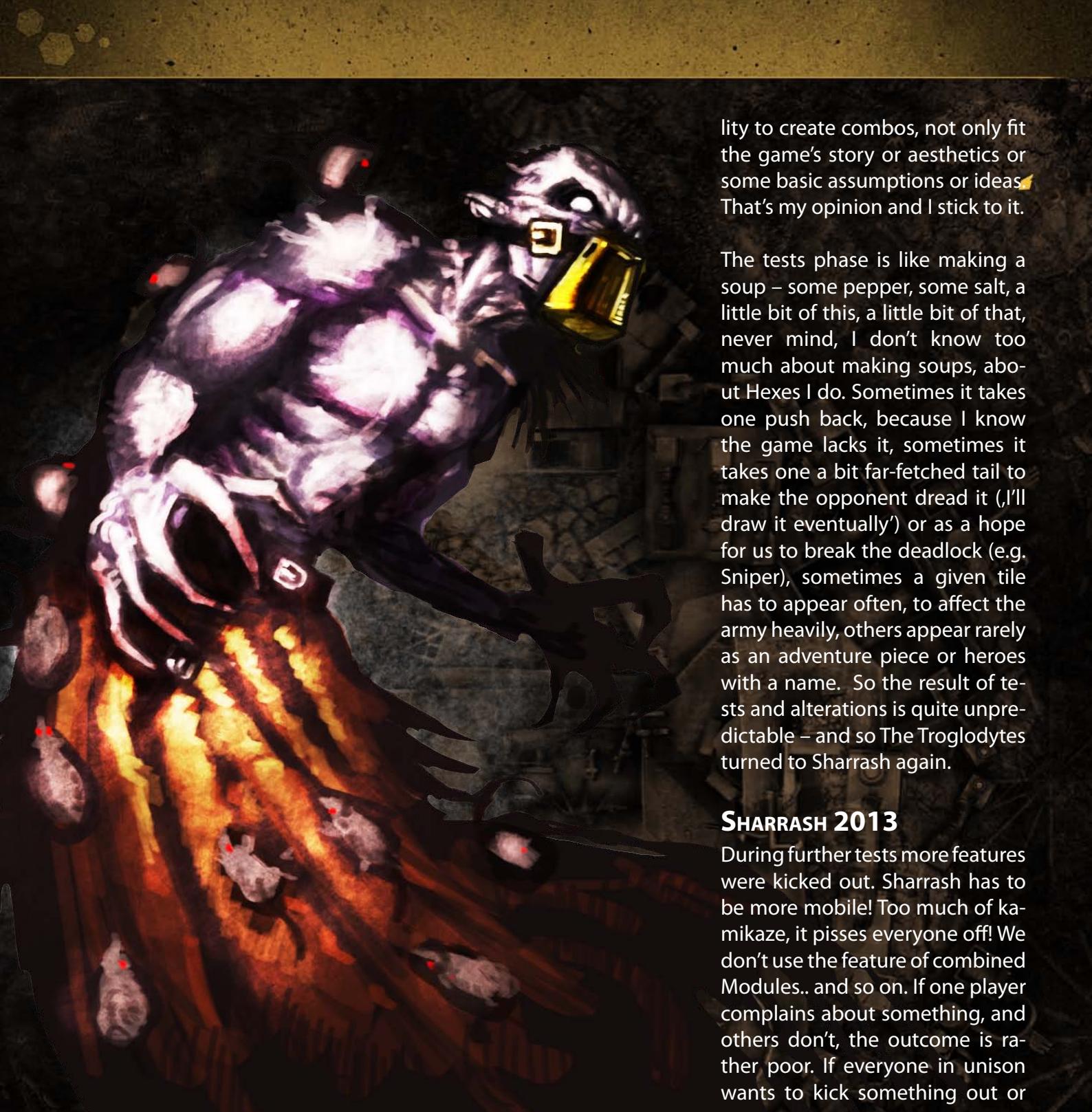
HQ with ability to push back, modules passing on (like through a cable) their features to the connected armies, The Underground that gives mobility everything around it, mortars, bane, Hole sucking in the opponent, and a lot of kamikaze warriors. It was getting obvious that during the forget-the-story-line-it-has-to-work phase the army was no longer the Ice Troglodytes, the were becoming more like... Sharrash

For the further tests they went as Sharrash.

MAKING SOUP

The playability is most important for me in game – the rest may be adjusted, the other way around it's impossible. I won't make 'flying' feature just because I'm making an army of air planes. Each feature must match the army mechanics, fill in the game mechanics gap, patch what's missing, give more choice or the abi-





lity to create combos, not only fit the game's story or aesthetics or some basic assumptions or ideas. That's my opinion and I stick to it.

The tests phase is like making a soup – some pepper, some salt, a little bit of this, a little bit of that, never mind, I don't know too much about making soups, about Hexes I do. Sometimes it takes one push back, because I know the game lacks it, sometimes it takes one a bit far-fetched tail to make the opponent dread it ('I'll draw it eventually') or as a hope for us to break the deadlock (e.g. Sniper), sometimes a given tile has to appear often, to affect the army heavily, others appear rarely as an adventure piece or heroes with a name. So the result of tests and alterations is quite unpredictable – and so The Troglodytes turned to Sharrash again.

SHARRASH 2013

During further tests more features were kicked out. Sharrash has to be more mobile! Too much of kamikaze, it pisses everyone off! We don't use the feature of combined Modules.. and so on. If one player complains about something, and others don't, the outcome is rather poor. If everyone in unison wants to kick something out or



add something or change, it's an important information. From sent to our group F version of Sharrash to printed finally J version only a half of the very first ideas remained. How it looks now everyone who's interested knows.

Last thing were the illustrations. The burden of two-legged funny hamster-like (skaven-like) rats was with us since the illustrations in the basic manual for Neuroshima rpg.

The issue got worse with Sharrash expansion pack "Kill The Rat". I'd say we were one step from turning Sharrash into comedy or pastiche but then that step we took. Now, by the way of hex Sharrash, we've got the opportunity to fix the image of mysterious post-apocalyptic anomaly, that is the evolved, still quite inhuman, yet "thinking rats". Running around in habits, two-legged creatures from "The Wind In The Willows" - it was not what I dreamt about. That's why every drawing had to be carefully thought over and together with Neuroshima-afficiados talked around - and so we decided to show the rather monstrous two-legged creatures, extremely mutated, more like monstrous super-rat from "Split

Second", and their funny faces we covered with masks and goggles. Some might have surgically shortened noses shut in armour in order to hide their oddity. Also the beasts - huge, fat rat looking more like a werewolf, or some other, bred in underground laboratories monstrosities.

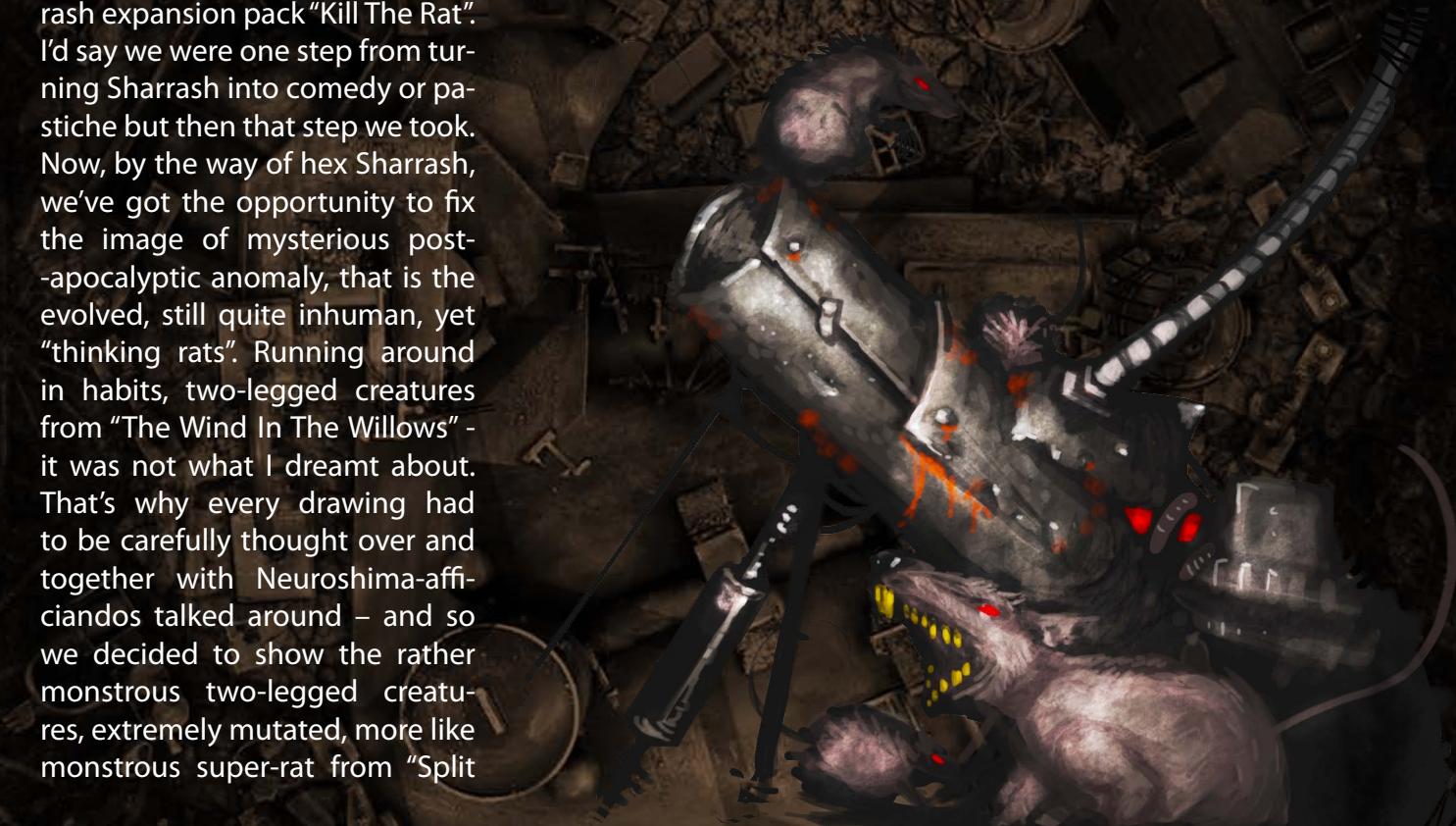
And rats. Just dirty, small rats in tremendous amounts, running on all fours. Simple rats, but yet obedient, commanded by highly evolved Sharrash, they were sent on suicidal missions. Carrying

strange devices, explosive charges, weapon simple to activate, prepared by eggheads.

And the humans - also mutated and obedient to rat mutant telepaths, slaves working involuntarily for the glory of recycling symbol.

About the refreshed, more gloomy Sharrash we will write in another add-on for Neuroshima.

For the time being I hope it will work out in action on Hex board.



A GDYBY ZOMBIAKI ILLUSTRÓWAL... PIOTR FOKSONICZ



IGNACY TRZEWICZEK
ZOMBIAKI
WYDANIE JUBILEUSZOWE

Z PORTALEM OD 2010 ROKU

ILLUSTROWAŁ M. IN.



NEUROSHIMA HEX

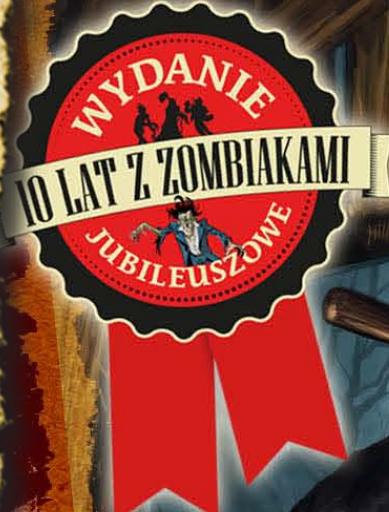


KONWÓJ

51. STAN



A GDYBY ZOMBIAKI ILUSTROWAŁ... MARIUSZ GANDZEL



IGNACY TRZEWICZEK

ZOMBIAKI

WYDANIE JUBILEUSZOWE

Z PORTALEM OD 2001 ROKU

ILUSTROWAŁ M. IN.



NEUROSHIMA



51. STAN



STRONGHOLD



SHARRASH GALLERY



beast



explosive



mortar



mutant



rats



plague

MICHAL HERDA NEUROSHIMA HEX PUZZLES

#003



NEW YORK: 5
MOLOCH: 8

THE SIEGE

THEY SURROUNDED US. DEVIL'S TINS. THEY PUSH US FROM EACH SIDE.
BUT WE DO NOT GIVE UP. WE SHOWED THEM THAT NEW YORK IS LIKE A FORTRESS, REBUILT FROM THE
RUINS, AND NOW WE SHOULD BEND IN FRONT OF A PILE OF SCRAP METAL?
MOLOCH WON'T SPIT IN OUR FACE.
REGROUP. PUSH THEM TO THE SUBURBS. WE WILL SHOW THEM.

MICHAL HERDA NEUROSHIMA HEX PUZZLES

#004



NEW YORK: 1
NEOJUNGLE: 3

GREEN PLAGUE

LETTUCE SHOULD BE LYING ON THE PLATE, NOT CUTTING PEOPLE INTO SLICES.

WE HAVE TO PULL OUT THE HEAVIEST ARTILLERY TO FIGHT WITH LEAVES AND WORMS.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS WORLD?

THERE ARE GAMERS WHO DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH MY GAMES. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT!?

TEXT: IGNACY TRZEWICZEK

Last weekend I spent in Bremen, demoing my games during Bremer Spiele Tage. I think it is a good moment to chat about people playing my games on cons...

CATEGORY I

He comes to my stand. I explain rules. He plays. After the game is finished he gets up from the table, says '*Thank you!*' and walks away.

I can't believe it really happens. I want to scream!

Hey! You've just played my game! My great game! How it is possible you didn't fall in love with it? Why didn't you buy a copy? Don't you want to have it in your games collection? Are you kidding me? '*Thank you!*' That's it? You just walk away!?

Category II

He comes to my stand. I explain rules. He plays. He likes it. He asks: '*Are you the author?*'

I say: '*Yes, I am.*' He says: '*It is very good game, congratulations.*'

I say '*Thank you!*' and I am in heaven.

He says: '*I think I will take one.*'

Heaven it is.

CATEGORY III

He comes to my stand. I explain rules. He plays. He loves it. He buys. Sometimes he asks for signed copy. He congratulates me. He walks away.

Next day of convention I see him coming back. He comes with friends. He explains them the game. He recommends it. They buy the game. I say thank you.

Heaven? No, not heaven. It is paradise...

Bremer Spiele Tage

So I was in Bremen this weekend. There were players who didn't fall in love with my games

(can you believe it?!). There were players who played my games, liked them and bought them. There were 'Category III' players too. Played Robinson and came next day with friends and talk - in German! - about the game. I don't speak German, but I believe they didn't bring their friends just to show them Robinson and say it sucks, right?

There were even guys who tried to bribe me and buy my last demo copy of Robinson - my last and incomplete! English copy of Robinson. (greetings to Engoduuun and '*You suck!*' guys)

Thank you for meeting all of you. Each con is a great compilation of mini events and meetings that on one hand are boosting my ego and keep me in heaven and on the other hand let me maintain a little bit of humility...

But seriously... How it is possible you didn't fall in love with my...

IGNACY TRZEWICZEK

ROBINSON CRUSOE

ADVENTURE ON THE CURSED ISLAND

PRIZES:



9/10

8/10

8,13/10

5/5

9/10

5/5

Świat gier
planszowych

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ADVENTURE
IS WAITING



ADVENTURE
CO-OP GAME

The Portal Times

GLIWICE, MONDAY, 6TH OF MAY, 1871

THE STORY, THIS IS !

Last Friday I sent to play-testers one of the next scenarios for Robinson Crusoe. As you who played this board game know, Robinson Crusoe is some sort of portal to different adventures – each of them very deeply inspired by classic adventure stories created by Julius Verne or his followers. From Castaways scenario till Robinson Family, each scenario was inspired by one of great books or movies of this great genre.

8th scenario goes further. It tells an amazing and what is most important true story of doctor Livingstone. And I would die, if I don't tell you this story...

David Livingstone (born 19 March 1813) was a Scottish medical missionary and an explorer in Africa. He run a couple successful expeditions, he was kind a though bastard with a passion in his heart. You can learn more about him and his expeditions reading history books, but for now just take it for granted – he was the Explorer.

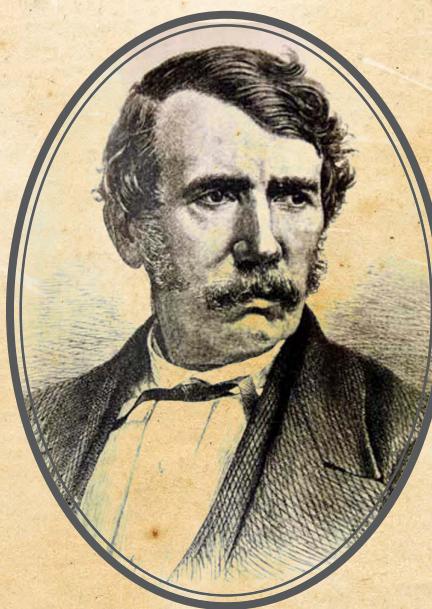
And as you can guess, one day he got into troubles. He got lost.

Livingstone completely lost contact with the outside world for six years. Only one of his 44 letter dispatches made it to Zanzibar. One surviving letter to Horace Waller, made available to the public in 2010 by its owner Peter Beard, reads: „I am terribly knocked up but this is for your own eye only, ... Doubtful if I live to see you again ...”

This one letter arrived. Was frightening. And had potential of a good story. That's where New York Herald and young journalist Henry Morton Stanley come up...

New York Herald announces that is sending expedition to find and rescue doctor Livingstone. And it is going to go live...

Today we have all types of reality shows, from Big Brother, Real Housewives of Miami to MTV's True live. In 1871 they had their own – Tracking doctor Livingstone. Every single week New York Herald was



publishing report written by Henry Morton Stanley sent right from Africa with description of his adventures and progress of expedition. They had the story.

Reading biography of Julius Verne I found an interesting part. Story of tracking doctor Livingstone was so popular those times and New York Herald got so much attention and higher sells, that editor of magazine ordered Stanley to not find Livingstone too soon. So Stanley was visiting different parts of region, writing dreadful stories of his journey and was keeping the story alive for many months.

Awesome, isn't it?

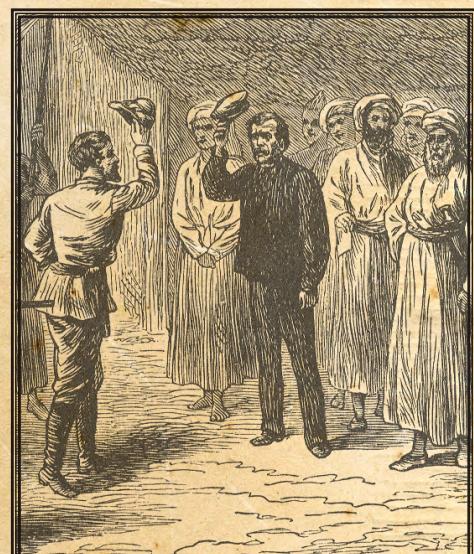
Finally he found doctor Livingstone...

So you can imagine. You are in a heart of Africa. You found a village. There is a white man there. Only one white man in this region, and saying this region I mean thousands of miles around you. It is the town of Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, 10 November 1871. Clearly this is the end of expedition. Clearly Stanley's found Livingstone. So what does he do? He approaches Livingstone and says words that will become one of the most famous quotes of journalism. He says: „Dr. Livingstone, I presume?“

It is always good to remember about etiquette, right?

One of the next scenarios for Robinson tells this story. You are taking expedition to find doctor Livingstone. Keep this story in mind when you will play it. Let us honor this two great explorers of XIX century!

Ignacy Trzewiczek



I CHANGED NICE WEEKEND INTO HARD WORK WEEKEND AND STILL I AM HAPPY AS A KID...

In 2012 I was invited to Play Festival in Modena. I got an honor to be a special guest along with such guys like Martin Wallace or Mac Gerdts. Quite a thing, isn't it?

How I spent convention?

I spent it doing interviews on Friday afternoon for Italian boardgames services. It was live stream, it was cool, I met couple of Italian geeks from different sites and clubs.

I spent it going for a party to Italian pub on Friday evening. I spent whole evening with Martin Wallace and his family at one table, surrounded by some about one hundred Italian geeks, who were making a tremendous noise, who were shouting, laughing, drinking, singing and making very loud applause every few minutes for no single reason. For me - great night to be remembered for ever.

I spent it presenting prototype of Convoy to Italian geeks during special event dedicated to new games. Table next to me Martin Wallace was presenting new variant of A Few Acres of Snow and P.I.

I spent it having workshops with young Italian game designers (I was assigned to Erik Burigo who is not very young but about whom you will



hear sooner or later because he has 'the prototype' in his drawer!).

I spent it visiting Venice too...

As you can see, it was quite a fun. I liked Play Festival very much. I like it so much that I decided to come to Modena again, this time with Portal Games booth. How I spent convention this year?

I didn't do any interviews because on Friday afternoon I had to carry boxes with games to my booth, arrange booth and prepare for next day show...

I didn't go for a party on Friday, because I had to go to bed early so I can work hard for whole Saturday and Sunday...

I didn't have workshops with authors because I was stuck on booth presenting Robinson (6 demo games in a row)...

I didn't visit Venice because right after fair I had to go to Germany (and because my GPS got crazy and we were lost for a quite a time)...

Yeah, that is how I manage to change 2012 FunPlay Festival into 2013 HardWorkPlay Festival. That is what I do. I take things I love and change them into my day time work.

Did regret it?

Not at all.

Boardgames are about people. This is social hobby. You meet people and you play with them. This year I managed to meet 50 times more people than last year. They were coming to our stand and play our games, they discovered Neuroshima Hex or Zombiaki, they played Robinson, talked with me, took autograph or photo with me, asked about our Essen releases...

Next year I go to Modena again. With a booth again. And I hope to meet those all Italian geeks again. And I strongly recommend you to go to Modena too.

PYRKONI

22-24 marzec 2013

Poland, Poznań

Photos: Marcin Pflanz, Katarzyna Nowacka, Łukasz Piechaczek



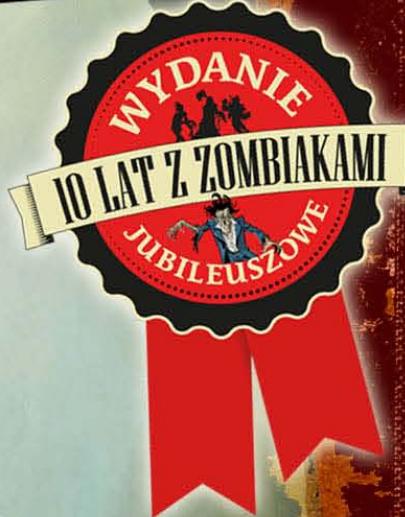
Królestwo Grojkonu

2013

Poland, Bielsko-Biala



A GDYBY ZOMBIAKI ILUSTROWAŁ...
TOMASZ "MORANO" JĘDRUSZEK



IGNACY TRZEWICZEK
ZOMBIAKI
WYDANIE JUBILEUSZOWE

Z PORTALEM OD 2000 ROKU

ILUSTROWAŁ M. IN.



MONASTYR



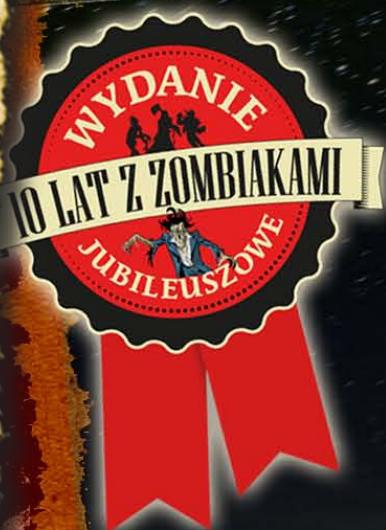
SI. STAN



PRET-A-PORTER



A GDYBY ZOMBIACKI ILLUSTRÓWAL... MICHAŁ "ZIELU" ZIELIŃSKI



IGNACY TRZEWICZEK
ZOMBIACKI
WYDANIE JUBILEUSZOWE

Z PORTALEM OD 2000 ROKU

ILLUSTROWAŁ M. IN.



ROBINSON CRUSOE



MONASTYR



NEUROSHIMA



The Naturalist Scenario

TEXT: ROBERT MASSON (BOTANYBOB)

BIOGRAPHY:

My Name is Robert Masson, botanybob on the Board Game Geek website. I live in North Carolina USA, and work in government agricultural research, where I breed new kinds of soybeans for the public. In my free time I play with my twin 5 year olds, work on my masters thesis, go to local burning man festivals, listen to EDM, and enjoy playing and helping designers create board games. My 'game design resume' includes a couple fan made expansions for 7 Wonders I helped Shima, the great game designer from Switzerland, translate and edit. You can find our PnP More Wonders and Myths expansions on the Board Game Geek website.



WHY I LOVE ROBINSON:

Several months before Christmas of 2012 I realized I needed a good cooperative game for my collection. I had Pandemic, but it wasn't everything I needed it to be. I had to work really hard to avoid being the 'Alpha player' that would see the one or two 'correct' moves and instruct the other players how to place their pieces to make my master plan work. If my plan worked and we saved the world all was good, but more often than not my plan didn't work, resulting in humanity's extinction and a bunch of grumpy players. I searched Board Game Geek for a new cooperative game and found Robinson Crusoe: Adventure on the Cursed Island, and pretty soon found myself obsessing over every piece of information I could find on this game. I'm still not entirely certain why I wanted to play it so much, but I do know it had a lot to do with a certain voluptuous one eyed woman, and a general lack of political correctness (what kind of game gives you tobacco to smoke, a flask of rum to drink, and diarrhea when you eat a rotten goat).



Pretty soon I found myself watching every video review and volunteering to be on the King Kong playtesting group (even though I didn't own a copy of the game).

My wife ensured that I had the most epic Christmas ever and the very last gift of the day ended up being a copy of the extremely hard to find Robinson Crusoe. She wrapped it in several different boxes and yards of wrapping paper and tape. It was hilarious to unwrap. But there it was, my very own copy. I played game after game after game, most of the time solo, but plenty of times with gamers and non gamers alike. I even convinced my mom to play with us at our family New Years Eve party. She thought the game was fun, even though she was not a gamer at all. Great game indeed! Because there are always multiple paths to victory and not just a couple 'correct' ways to win like Pandemic, I was able to control my Alpha

player instincts better and focus on pointing out the long and short term repercussions for actions the group suggested, instead of dominate the planning discussion. Another dynamic I loved was how the modular scenarios add just enough variation from game to game to keep it from becoming stagnant. Cannibal Island scenario encourages players to try and get high weapon strength, while Volcano Island encourages exploration, and Robinson Family encourages construction. Variation keeps me coming back for more!

THE JOURNEY BEGINS:

A couple months ago Ignacy and the Portal team released a special treat, they made a blank scenario sheet for public download and encouraged everyone to create a scenario of their own. So many ideas filled my head, but I found it difficult to put pen to paper and write out my thoughts. Then the idea of working together with others to create a community backed scenario came to my mind. This was a cooperative game, so why not work cooperatively to create a scenario? I made a thread on the Board Game Geek website <http://goo.gl/tzywc> to see who else might be interested in joining in on the fun. To my surprise there were several people who also felt the very same way.

BRAINSTORMING:

We called our project 'The BGG Community Created Scenario for Robinson Crusoe' and organized it into phases that had a rotating 'first player' position, very similar to the game. First phase was about all about brainstorming. People posted

their scenario ideas to the forum, along with a brief description of the theme and rules. We had so many great ideas: Zombies, Polynesian Island Settlement, Lord of the Flies, Jurassic Park, Pirate Adventure, and many more. These were some very exciting times! This was the first time I had used an internet forum for something constructive like this. Normally all I see is flame wars and trolls. We decided to keep the brainstorming round open for a few days and when it was closed we had 14 different entries.

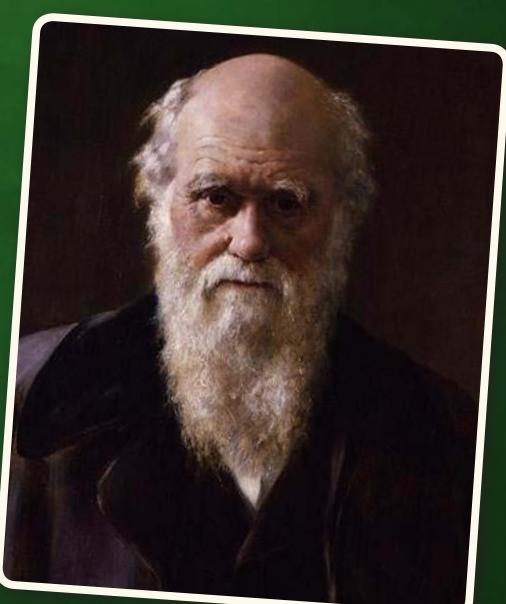
We took advantage of the 'poll' function on the website and conducted two separate rounds of voting to select the theme we all desired most. It was a difficult decision for us to make. Would it be Robinson of Catan, Search for the Cure, or Cthulhu? I really wanted DuMon's idea of a semi-cooperative Lord of the Flies scenario to win; it did get a lot of votes, but unfortunately didn't make the cut.

The winning scenario ended up being my submission of a Charles Darwin themed scenario we called 'The Naturalist'. Players would be members of the HMS Beagle and participate in the famous 1831 survey mission of discovery. They would help Charles Darwin collect as many native species as possible from the Cursed Island and bring them back to England for further study.

CHARLES DARWIN:

As an agricultural scientist I was really pleased by this decision. People in my profession love Charles Darwin for his work on natural selection and

domestication of crops and animals. He showed that organisms adapt over time to better fit their surroundings. Natural mutations in physical structure (he calls these mutations 'monstrosities') occur all the time, if these changes are favored by the environment then individuals with this mutation might have more babies than others and potentially become the dominant species in the region. For example, on Darwin's voyage to the Galapagos Islands he encountered finches with different beak shapes. He theorized that beak shape changed over time to allow for specialization of eating the different types of food available on each island. If a mutation in beak shape allowed for more insects to be caught on an island with a lot of insects then that shape might eventually become the dominant beak shape of the finches found on the island. A similar change in beak shape was thought to have happened on islands with more nuts, berries, or cacti. "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." –Charles Darwin





My research advisor for school made it mandatory for his students to read 'On the Origins of Species' to celebrate Darwin's accomplishments. But my favorite work by Darwin is a book I found deep within depths of our school library called 'Insectivorous Plants'. This book describes in great detail, meticulous observations on carnivorous plants like the venus flytrap and sundew, which grow wild in my home state of North Carolina. While reading this book I felt like I was standing next to Charles Darwin while he examined these plants in his greenhouse for hours at end. Were they alive like animals? Did they sleep? Could they tell the difference between insects and pieces of meat? If you want a plant geek-gasm read this book!

ROUGH DRAFT:

After the brainstorming phase of the project was concluded we entered the rough draft phase. We put our heads together to create thematic elements that also had mechanics we thought were new to Robin-

son. We didn't want a rethemed King Kong, or Rescue Jenny. I think we did a good job of coming up with some new mechanics that filled a couple niches that weren't really exploited to the fullest in the other Robinson Scenarios.

This scenario would showcase the gathering action. The goal of the scenario is to collect as much wildlife as possible from the island, to do this successfully players would have to take as many gathering actions as possible. This is unlike Castaways, which has a finite amount of wood that may be placed on the wood pile.

The goal of this scenario would not primarily be a pass/fail like all the others. Look at the goals for the other scenarios: Destroy the Cannibal City, explore temples and build boat, Rescue Jenny and build boat, build all inventions, etc., all of which are pass/fail. Yes, they may be played for victory points as well, but the victory points are not directly linked to the goal itself, and feels a bit 'tacked on' to me. In 'The Naturalist' scenario the primary goal is to maximize 'Knowledge Points' (KP) earned from gathering the different types native life and survive.

To help come up with some more ideas for game mechanics I found a really good website that taught the basics of game theory for free <http://gametheory101.com/> and posted it to our forum. I wanted us to capture one or more of the basic elements of game theory in this scenario. I really fell in love with the concept of the Stag Hunt, which is the dyna-

mic of working together to get something of high value (Stag), or working separately to get several smaller things of lesser value (hares).

At the end of the rough draft phase we had the beginnings of a nice scenario put together. There were 3 different ways to earn Knowledge Points:

Collect complete sets of unique tree, fish, and bird resources, which are only produced on Book Icon rounds.

Use cages to capture beasts from the hunting deck, or monsters from the mystery deck, with a special hunting action. Harvest man eating carnivorous plants (mystery icons) that have disastrous consequences, but are worth a lot of victory points.

The next phase of our project was playtesting and was run by Marion, or 'Maho' on BGG, from Germany.

PLAYTESTING:

Hello everyone my name is Marion Heuser, from Germany. I was the 'first player' in charge of the playtesting round.

It was clear right from the start that being part of the creation process was not only a duty, but a pleasure as well. I felt compelled to playtest this wonderful scenario as often as I possibly could! Robert made a google spread sheet <http://goo.gl/JmcaZ> and we logged our playtesting information into it.

At first, we tested the three ways to collect Knowledge Points separately, to find the ma-

ximum amount of each item we could expect to gain in a game. For example a playtester would play a game and only try to only collect carnivorous plants, to see how many they could get, and also figure out how difficult this was to do. Later on, we removed this restriction and allowed the playtesters to try to maximize Knowledge Points by collecting whatever they wanted.

One thing I noticed about this scenario that was similar to all the other scenarios was that sometimes the player doesn't even come close to accomplishing the goal of the scenario, while other times they succeed easily. Some games fighting against the events and struggling to survive is all they can hope to achieve. What makes 'The Naturalist' different is that there is always a chance to take an action that earns you Knowledge Points, so you constantly have to make the decision to either focus your actions on survival, or earning Knowledge Points. The temptation to get greedy and sacrifice health for Knowledge Points is always there and can sometimes cause your downfall.

I am a solitaire gamer, but I love playing multiplayer solitaire games, so I was sure to playtest the scenario with 1, 2, 3, and 4 players, both with and without Friday and the Dog to try and break the rules of the scenario any way I could. Officially I playtested 12 games, but I actually played a lot more, probably around 25.

During the playtesting a lot of questions came up that needed to be clarified: Could beasts and monsters originating from

event cards be captured if players had an empty cage? How many of each carnivorous plant type could be harvested? Were players allowed to collect extra resources for Knowledge Points using certain items, cards, or discovery tokens? Playtesting really helped us realize where the problems were, so we could fix them before we went into full production.

The forum was boiling at this time. One post chased another, more questions and suggestions. One point returned constantly: what abilities and skills should Darwin have? In the original version Darwin was a non player character, similar to Friday, but could only gather during the action phase, and would need to be housed and fed during the weather and night phases. In the early rounds he pretty much just gathered food to feed himself, which turned out to be rather unsatisfying. Slowly we allowed him to do more actions, like rest and arrange camp. I really liked the way we handled this problematic situation. I made a poll on the forum listing several different formulations of the Darwin character and the community voted on the Darwin they liked the best. We settled on Darwin being like a normal player, but the only thing he couldn't do was build, or explore. Democracy in action!

What I tell you now is the truth, at least two times during playtesting I found myself dreaming of being on a deserted island and fighting the elements. The first time I really felt like an Explorer hacking my way



1. *Geospiza magnirostris*
2. *Geospiza fortis*
3. *Geospiza parvula*

4. *Certhidea olivacea*

through the jungle, the second time I was the soldier ready to capture a wild beast. Ha, ha, what a great experience, I am proud to call myself a dedicated playtester and am really proud of what we made as a community.

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Hello everyone, Robert again, After Marion led us through the playtesting and rules cleanup phase we entered a really challenging part of the project, we had to take the text document and fit it onto the scenario template. We called the next part of our project the art phase. This part of the project ended up being a huge challenge for us and took the most time. Marion and I didn't have access to any fancy art software. The playtesting sheet we used was something I put together in MS paint and it looked very rough. Lucky for us we had someone from our group step forward and become the 'first player' for the art phase. Alexandra Logan, loganbreath on BGG, volunteered to lend a hand and got right to work on the herculean task of making a scenario sheet we could all be proud of. Unfortunately, our Australian friend had a stroke of bad luck and had a computer melt down right in the middle of the project. She was able to salvage



her work, and was able to repair her computer, but as the days went on I could tell that this was a much bigger project than I had initially thought. In my mind I thought the art phase would be something simple, but in reality it was much harder than that. She had to generate icons and squeeze text into tight places. I really felt bad that she had to do this all on her own, so I took a chance and asked for help from the one person I knew could solve this problem, the man who created the original game, Mr. Ignacy Trzewiczek, himself.

I sent Ignacy an email outlining the details of our community driven project, along with a copy of Alexandra's scenario sheet, and a link to our google document containing the rules text. I told him how hard we had worked together to make this scenario and asked him for his help to make our scenario beautiful. I figured that he had access to all the original artwork and icons, and his design team at Portal Publishing could make a polished and professional looking document in a fraction of the time we could. We were so close to finishing, yet so very far away.

and this profitless project would only result in a drain of his resources. I could practically see the smile spreading across his face, when I read the text of his reply message, "Thanks! It is really not a big deal to help you with artwork, this is pleasure to support fans of game, really!".

LAST MINUTE CHANGES:

What I'm about to write here has been top secret until now. Only a select few people know about these last minute changes I made to the scenario. Sorry for the big secret, but I figured sometimes surprises add a little spice to life.

Before I submitted our document to Ignacy I wanted to be 100% certain I was happy with the way it looked, so I reviewed it very carefully. We had 3 different ways to collect Knowledge Points, this was great, but in the back of my mind I kept thinking about the lessons I learned watching those game theory videos. I wanted the Stag Hunt in all its glory! After several emails with Marion and some rapid small scale playtesting, we decided to add 2 new ways to earn Knowledge Points.

I was really surprised that Ignacy took time out of his busy day to answer my email, after all he has a game publishing company to run Fossils can be gathered with the shovel item from a hill or mountain terrain tile. Multiple fossil gathering actions may be taken on the same terrain tile each round and each successful action yields one fossil resource. Items that grant extra resources while gathering may be used to increase number of fossils acquired. End of source cards exhaust fossil resource on tile as well as terrain type for construction purposes.

Fossils represent the easy to obtain, but low value 'hare', which counterbalances the difficult to obtain, but high value carnivorous plant 'Stag'.

Diversity points given for each set of the 4 different types of resources collected for Knowledge Points.

Diversity points are put in place to counterbalance the infrastructure investment cost of having to build so many structures to support a strategy based on collecting a diverse range of resources. Now the player must consider if it is best to collect a little of everything, or focus on collecting a lot of a single thing. Decisions, decisions...

At this time I also looked really close at the Knowledge Point values assigned to each specimen. This was really difficult, how do I create a level of balance in the scoring? If this is done incorrectly then a player might always choose to collect one specimen type over another, because it is the most efficient decision. Was collecting unique resources easier than capturing beasts and monsters? If it was it should be worth less,

but does the benefits of building corral offset the Knowledge Point value? AHHHH!!! I was pulling my hair out trying to come up with the right numerical values for each specimen. Time will tell if I made the correct decisions.

A HAPPY ENDING:

After I worked out these last minute changes I submitted our work to Ignacy and he forwarded it to his artwork manager Maciej Mutwil, who did an amazing job turning our rough draft into a pristine work of art that it is today. He was able to capture my vision for the project and make a scenario sheet we could all be proud of. We really couldn't have done it without you Portal Team. Thank you so very much. You happily helped the gaming community in our time of need and didn't ask for anything in return.

I really want to thank everyone who was a part of this project. To me this was much more than just simply making a scenario for a game, this represents something much larger. We had people from all over the world working together on one project, language barriers overcome, cultural differences set aside, all opinions heard. We live in an age where we can use democratic computer polls to select one idea out of many, instantaneously, and voice our opinions with the click of a mouse. We conquered the alpha problem that might have plagued our group, before it even started, by shifting 'first player' leader position between us and agreeing to value each other's thoughts. If we can work together like this to make a game, not connected to any

kind of profit think of the possibilities of other tasks we could achieve. This could be a new form of lawmaking that empowers the voices of the masses. Neo-democracy, ha, Techno-democracy at its finest. Thank you everyone! Please enjoy the 'The Naturalist' scenario as much as I have.

Robert Masson

These are items to put in the 'Sidebar' of the magazine if you want. I pulled these off the forum from different people that participated.

Dumon: It was fascinating to watch how such a thing could grow within a community. And it is always easier and far better to have others to bounce ideas off of.

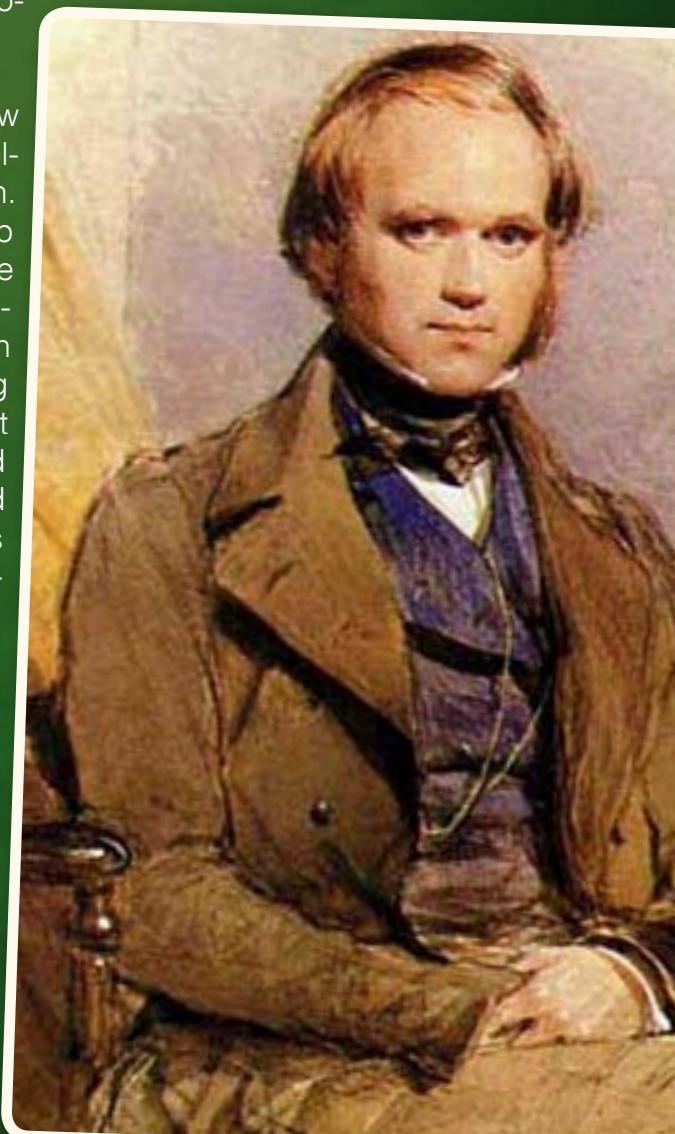
Loganbreath: I liked how there really felt like collaboration in the design. I ended up getting help with how to play the game overall. I also liked reporting back on my experiences during playtesting. It is the first thing I have playtested and I really enjoyed seeing other people's experiences and adding my own... Definitely would like to help make another scenario, but only as a group.

Mikecl: The collaboration was a great idea well executed. I can't think of a better way to do it.

Maho: The best part of the process was the process itself! I mean being a part of it and

seeing how it evolved into this beautiful scenario

Oldmanriver: I'm new to the thread and the game. I got to play test this with Robert and I had a blast. I'd never played the game before but I had a really fun time with this scenario. It seemed to fit right into the component and theme structure of the base game. After reading through the thread and seeing how it came together I am even more impressed that it was produced collaboratively. Everyone who worked on it should be congratulated for adding something unique and wonderful to the hobby. Well done.



the naturalist

Scenario 8

You have been assigned to the crew of the scout ship HMS Beagle and will participate in the famous 1831 survey voyage of discovery. Help the ship's naturalist, Charles Darwin, catalog the diverse flora and fauna of the cursed island, by gathering as many wildlife specimens as possible. Your ship has departed to restock provisions on the mainland and will return at the end of the 12th round to transport you and your findings home. Gather what you can and survive to tell your tale.



Mystery Icons

Carnivorous plants are harvested with gather actions in any order players choose. Upon collection players must immediately transplant them in the conservatory and resolve negative effects. Only 1 of each carnivorous plant type may be collected.

1 Black Lotus

Black flowers produce pungent perfume that attracts and paralyzes the minds of victims. Subjects lay their heads against the soft velvet petals and slip into a fatal forgetful sleep. Discard 4 inventions/items

2 Pitcher Plant

Modified leaves overlap to form below ground wells of highly corrosive acid. Subjects that mistakes the tranquil pools as watering holes slide down the slick outer leaves to their doom. -4 Weapon Strength

3 Tremor Root

Subterranean tubers produce roots strong enough to pierce solid rock. Vibrating tendrils cause the ground to shake and tear cavernous rifts into the earth. Upon collection destroy constructed and natural shelters on your camp tile, lose all levels of roof and palisade. Exhaust natural shelter with black cube. Shelter may be rebuilt at usual cost.

4 Sundew

Sticky glue exudes from glands lining the leaves. Subjects are ensnared and encapsulated with resinous liquid and slowly digested by the leaves themselves. Gather action requires more labor. Place 1/2/3/4 (-1 worker tokens) in a 1/2/3/4 player game, under the #4 token on island tile.

5 Piranha Plant

Modified corolla consisting of a massive hinged jaw and razor sharp teeth. Ravenous appetite and aggressive behaviour forces this plant to devour anything that approaches too close. Lead gatherer receives 4 wounds.

Remains of a Wild Boar	Fisherman's Net	Large Leaves	Bamboo Grove

1 +1 Ignore 1 2



Can be built multiple times.



Knowledge points

Knowledge Points (KP) are earned for specimens collected from the cursed island.

1 KP for each fossil (white cube) gathered with the shovel item from a hill or mountain terrain tile. Multiple fossil gathering actions may be taken on the same terrain tile each round and each successful action yields one fossil resource. Items that grant extra resources while gathering may be used to increase number of fossils acquired. End of source cards exhaust fossil resource on tile as well as terrain type for construction purposes.

3 KP for each complete set of 3 different unique tree, fish, and bird resources acquired on book icon rounds and housed in appropriate structures.

4 KP for each caged monster and beast.

5 KP for each carnivorous plant variety harvested from mystery icon tiles and stored in the conservatory.

2 KP diversity bonus for each complete set of the 4 different specimen types listed above.

Knowledge point achievements

Help Charles Darwin earn knowledge points, so he can use them to publish his scientific research.

10 KP: Retire to country estate and forgotten by time

16 KP: 'The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs'

22 KP: 'Geological Observations on South America'

28 KP: Awarded Royal Medal for achievements in natural history

34 KP: Awarded Wollaston Medal for achievements in geology

40 KP: 'On the Origins of Species'

46 KP: Awarded Copley Medal for geology, zoology, and botanical physiology

52 KP: 'The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants'

58 KP: 'The Variation of Plants and Animals Under Domestication'

64 KP: 'The Descent of Man'

70 KP: 'Insectivorous Plants'

76 KP: 'Theory of Ethical Selection'

82 KP: 'Theory of Communal Evolution'

Setup Changes

1. Corral must be one of the five random inventions available at the beginning of the game.
2. Dam: If dam is constructed on a book icon round the players decide if 2 unique fish or 2 preserved food is produced. Other unique fish resources acquired the same round as dam is constructed may not be stored in dam.
3. Consider Darwin as a player, identical to Jenny, except he may use 1 action token to: gather, arrange camp, address threats, conduct adventures, rest. And may use 2 determination tokens to conduct "searching talent" skill (identical to Cook).
4. Proxy resource cubes may be used if all are currently in play

Caged Beasts & Monsters:

A special hunting action may be taken to capture beasts and monsters and place them in empty cages (1 beast or monster per cage). Players must have at least one empty cage located in camp before special hunting action may be conducted.

1. Capture Beast: Conduct normal hunting action, resolve damage, reduce weapon and palisade, and resolve text as usual, but ignore food and fur gains. Remove beast card from hunting deck and place an empty cage (blue cube) on top of card to signify the beast is captured. Note: Beasts in adventure and event decks may also be captured.

2. Capture Monster: Conduct hunting action by placing action tokens on a monster's lair (beast icon) located on an island tile, instead of the hunting deck. Draw mystery cards until a monster is found, ignoring all traps and treasures. Resolve ALL effects on card immediately (even if it states shuffle into event deck), ignoring any food or fur gains. Place empty cage (blue cube) on top of card to signify the monster is captured. Exhaust monster's lair after one successful hunt by placing a black cube on island tile beast icon.

Favorable Conditions

On Book Icon rounds, unique resources are produced by resource icons on island tiles instead of regular resources. Unique trees/fish/birds may be stored in conservatory/dam/corral to earn knowledge points, or used as regular resources. Extra resources produced by items directly linked to resource icons may be considered unique resources. All wood and food originating from sources other than resource icons are not unique resources. The following objects may never produce unique resources: cards (event, adventure, mystery), discovery tokens, food from hunting, skills (grandma's recipe), snare, hatchet, pit. Resources earned in previous rounds may not be used as unique resources in current round.