

# URZA-MISHRA WAR™

VOLUME 2

THE MIGHTY  
PILGRIMAGES  
A  
MAGIC  
OF THE MOUNTAINS  
A  
MAGIC  
OF THE MOUNTAINS

On The World of  
**MAGIC**  
The Gathering™



# URZA-MISHRA WAR™

## "Blood and Sand"

As the brothers, Urza and Mishra continue down their chosen paths, the future of the world of Dominaria looks more bleak with each dawn. Caught in the wake of the war's devastation, Kroog becomes the first to fall. Mishra's forces plunder the noble city, while Urza himself delivers the unkindest cut of all—forever scarring Urza's very own son. In the shadows, seeds of betrayal are planted, loyalties are divided, and a black heart rises to claim its prize. The gauntlet is thrown one final time...and Dominaria itself will tremble.

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YOUR HOLINESS...  
WE HAVE  
RECEIVED A  
MESSAGE.

HAWWW...

WHAT  
IS IT?

IT'S FROM THE  
ARCHIMANDRITE  
HERSELF. IT SEEMS I  
HAVE BEEN INVITED TO  
ATTEND A MEETING AT  
THE *IVORY TOWER*...  
IN THREE MOONS.

THE  
IVORY TOWER?!  
NO MEMBER OF  
THE BROTHERHOOD  
HAS EVER BEEN  
INSIDE!

I THINK  
WE SHOULD  
INFORM OUR  
GUEST...HE WILL  
FIND THIS *VERY*  
INTERESTING.







HEAVEN SACRIFICED  
A PORTION OF ITS GLORY TO BRING  
THE IVORY TOWER INTO THE WORLD.  
THE TOWER GLEAMED IN THE SUN,  
WHITE AS BLEACHED BONE.  
HERE, THE ARCHMANDRITE WAS  
DETERMINED TO FIND A WAY TO HALT  
THE BATTLES OF URZA AND MISHRA.



The meeting of the council at the Ivory Tower in the western rift of Terisiare marks the first step toward understanding the interrelated forces of Mana. Ironically, if it were not for the conflict between Urza and Mishra, this first step might never have been taken.



...INTO THE OBSERVATORY.

THE ARCHIMANDRITE OF THE IVORY TOWER CONVENED A COUNCIL BUT THE DELEGATES COULD FIND NO SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE BROTHERS. SO EMISSARIES FROM THE COUNCIL WERE SENT TO THE STRONGHOLD OF MISHRA.

ABBOT, THANK YOU FOR COMING. THE IVORY TOWER IS HONORED BY YOUR PRESENCE.

THE HONOR IS OURS, ARCHIMANDRITE.

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE...

...MURKYL, REGENT FROM THE COLLEGES OF LAT-NAM. SHE HAS TRAVELED A GREAT DISTANCE TO BE WITH US, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL.

TO HER LEFT IS THE DELEGATE FROM THE YUMOK NATION, CHAYUM-ICHA OF THE INGATL TRIBE.

FINALLY, REPRESENTING THE SARDINIAN PEOPLES, WE ARE HONORED BY THE PRESENCE OF !KATH, WAR CHIEF OF THE MALPIRI CLAN.

Sources state that the council of the Ivory Tower was attended by delegates representing various political, religious and tribal affiliations present in Terisare. Each of these groups had their own unique way of explaining the world around them. The Brotherhood of Gix, for example, believed in an afterlife for mechanical artifacts, while the tribes of the Yumok nations considered all contact with artifacts anathema. The various world views represented by the delegates evolved into our present understanding of Mana and the nature of the multiverse.





NOW THAT WE KNOW EACH OTHER, LET'S BEGIN.



I HAVE ASKED EACH OF YOU HERE TO DISCUSS THE WAR BETWEEN URZA AND MISHRA.

THE CONFLICT HAS GONE ON FOR YEARS, WITH NO SIGNS OF SLOWING. IN FACT, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE CONFLICT WILL SOON SPREAD BEYOND THE REGIONS OF ARGIVE AND THE GREAT DESERT.



IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



DIM THE LIGHTS...



—AND BRING THE OBSERVATORY INTO POSITION.





WE CALL  
THIS STONE  
THE EYE OF  
THE GODS...

WITH IT,  
WE CAN SEE  
WHAT THE  
GODS SEE.



AS YOU  
CAN SEE,  
THE BROTHERS  
HAVE **STRIPPED**  
THE METALS FROM  
THE EARTH FOR  
THEIR FURNACES,  
LEAVING NOTHING  
BEHIND.

THIS IS  
THE REGION  
CONTROLLED BY  
THE BROTHERS.  
RED FOR MISHRA  
AND BLUE FOR  
URZA.

URZA AND  
MISHRA HAVE  
CREATED **WEAPONS**  
THE LIKE OF WHICH  
THE WORLD HAS  
NEVER SEEN.

THESE  
WEAPONS  
HAVE DESTROYED  
ONCE-PROUD CITIES.  
**KROOS** WAS THE  
FIRST TO  
FALL.



ALL THIS  
FOR THE  
POSSESSION  
OF TWO  
STONES.

PEACEFUL  
SARDINTH MANAGED  
TO DEFEND ITSELF,  
BUT AT A GREAT  
COST.

I BELIEVE  
THAT THE NATURE  
OF THESE STONES IS  
FAR MORE POWERFUL  
AND **DEADLY** THAN  
ANYONE YET  
UNDERSTANDS.



THE QUESTION I MUST PUT TO YOU ALL IS--WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION FROM **SPREADING?**

THE EARTH AND SKY CRY OUT. IF THE TWO BROTHERS DO NOT STOP HARMING THE HOLY MOTHER, SHE WILL **DESTROY** THEM.

ALL PRAY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH-MOTHER FOR JUDGEMENT.

JUDGEMENT... YES! ONLY FORCE CAN MEET FORCE, BUT IT SHOULD BE **WE** WHO JUDGE THE BROTHERS.

CORDON OFF ARGIVE AND GREAT DESERT. **LET** THE BROTHERS AND THEIR TROOPS KILL EACH OTHER. THEN, AFTER ALL ARE DEAD, WE MOVE IN AND DIVIDE THE SPOILS.

YES, I CONCUR WITH KATH. ONLY A GREATER, **MORE POWERFUL** TECHNOLOGY THAN THAT POSSESSED BY THE BROTHERS WILL BRING A HALT TO THE DESTRUCTION.

YOU ARE CORRECT, REGENT HURKYL! URZA AND MISHRA HAVE UNLOCKED ANCIENT SECRETS. WE SHOULD ALL **SHARE** IN THAT KNOWLEDGE.

AT **WHATEVER** THE COST.

THE WAY OF FORCE HAS MERIT, ABBOT, BUT I SUGGEST THAT WE OFFER THE BROTHERS **ONE CHANCE** TO FOLLOW THE WAY OF PEACE.

IF THEY REFUSE TO LISTEN, THEN THEY WILL FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

ABBOT OF GIX AND HURKYL, YOU SEEM TO BE IN AGREEMENT. I SUGGEST THAT YOU TWO SEND EMISSARIES TO THE COURT OF MISHRA.

WHILE EMISSARIES FROM THE YUMOK NATIONS AND THE MALPIRI TRAVEL TO URZA'S TOWER.

WE SHALL RE-CONVENE HERE IN TWO MOONS.

AND WOE TO THE BROTHERS IF THEY DO NOT TAKE THE EMPTY HAND OFFERED IN FRIENDSHIP, FOR IT WILL SURELY COME BACK TO THEM CARRYING A **SWORD**.



EMISSARIES OF THE IVORY TOWER WERE SENT TO MISHRA.

LOOK AT THAT. *INCREDIBLE*.  
MISHRA TRULY  
UNDERSTANDS THE  
SOUL OF THE  
MACHINE.

MACHINES  
HAVE NO  
SOULS. ONLY  
FUNCTION.

Identify.

ER...WE ARE  
EMISSARIES  
FROM THE IVORY  
TOWER. HERE TO  
SEE MISHRA.

follow.

IF YOU  
TRULY BELIEVE  
THAT MACHINES  
HAVE NO SOULS,  
WHAT ABOUT MAN...  
DOES *HE* HAVE  
A SOUL?

NO, OF  
COURSE NOT.  
LIKE THE MACHINE,  
MAN CAN BE EXPLAINED  
AS THE SUM-TOTAL OF HIS  
CONSTITUENT PARTS. THERE  
IS NO MYSTERY. MAN IS MERELY  
A *COMPLICATED* MACHINE.

THIS IS  
THE MOST  
*INCREDIBLE*  
ACHIEVEMENT...THE  
FUSION OF MAN  
AND MACHINE.

BUT  
IT HAS NO  
SOUL. I'LL PRAY  
FOR IT...AND  
FOR YOU.

silence.





wait.

SO MUCH RESEARCH TIME COULD BE SAVED IF ONLY WE COULD BRING SOME OF THESE ARTIFACTS BACK TO THE COLLEGE OF LAT NAM.

OR TO THE MONASTERY OF SIX FOR SANCTIFICATION.



MY GUESTS.

I AM MISHRA.

THEY ASKED MISHRA TO MEET WITH URZA IN THE IVORY TOWER, WHERE ALL DRANK FROM THE WELL OF PEACE.



YES...WE ARE ON A MISSION OF PEACE.

YOU'VE COME FROM THE IVORY TOWER?

WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER YOU A PLACE AT THE COUNCIL TABLE.

WE HOPE THAT THE IVORY TOWER COULD BE A PLACE OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER. THE BLOODSHED COULD CEASE.



COULD YOU SHOW US THE WEAKSTONE?

THE LORD OF THE MACHINES REQUIRES IT.







EMISSARIES WERE SENT  
TO THE TOWER OF URZA.

URZA NO FOOL.  
HE UNDERSTAND *FORCE*.  
HE NOT GOING TO *DISCUSS*  
SITUATION WITH ARCHIMANDRITE  
LIKE OLD WOMEN OVER  
LAUNDRY.

YOU'VE BEEN  
HARPING ABOUT  
THIS FOR THE ENTIRE  
JOURNEY. JUST BECAUSE YOU  
DON'T ACCEPT *NEGOTIATION*  
AS AN ALTERNATIVE DOES  
NOT MEAN THAT URZA  
DOES THE SAME.

STATE YOUR  
BUSINESS.

WE  
*MUST* SEE  
URZA.

PLEASE...WHAT  
MY FORWARD COMPANION  
IS TRYING TO SAY, IS THAT WE ARE  
EMISSARIES ON BUSINESS FROM THE  
IVORY TOWER. WE WOULD LIKE AN  
AUDIENCE WITH URZA THE ARTIFICER.

REMEMBER,  
WE ARE GUESTS  
HERE. IF WE WISH TO  
ACCOMPLISH OUR  
MISSION, WE MUST  
REMEMBER  
THAT.

INDEED.

I'M ALWAYS  
GRATEFUL FOR  
GUESTS, ESPECIALLY  
FROM AS FAR AWAY  
AS THE YUMOK NATIONS.  
AND, I MIGHT SAY YOUR  
ARGVIAN IS IMPECCABLE.

THE ARCHIMANDRITE  
REQUESTS YOUR  
PRESENCE AT THE  
IVORY TOWER TO  
DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR  
SETTLING YOUR DISPUTE  
WITH YOUR  
BROTHER.

NOW,  
HOW MAY I  
BE OF SERVICE  
TO ENVOYS FROM  
THE IVORY  
TOWER.

WITHOUT  
FURTHER  
BLOODSHED.



HAS MISHRA BEEN CONTACTED?

TWO EMISSARIES ARE WITH HIM EVEN NOW.

I WISH THEM LUCK!

DADDY...DADDY!

WHAT DID YOU GET ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY?

I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING AROUND HERE FOR HARBIN, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER WHERE IT IS...

CAN YOU FIND IT?

HERE IT IS...IN YOUR POCKET!

FATHER IT'S A MECHANICAL SILENT STALKER! JUST LIKE THE STORIES...

I'M SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION, BUT I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DECLINE THE ARCHIMANDRITE'S KIND OFFER.

I THINK THERE'S LITTLE TO GAIN FROM DISCOURSE WITH MISHRA. ONLY MORE DEATH WILL SETTLE THIS MATTER.

...CAN HE REALLY TAKE OUR SOULS TO HEAVEN.

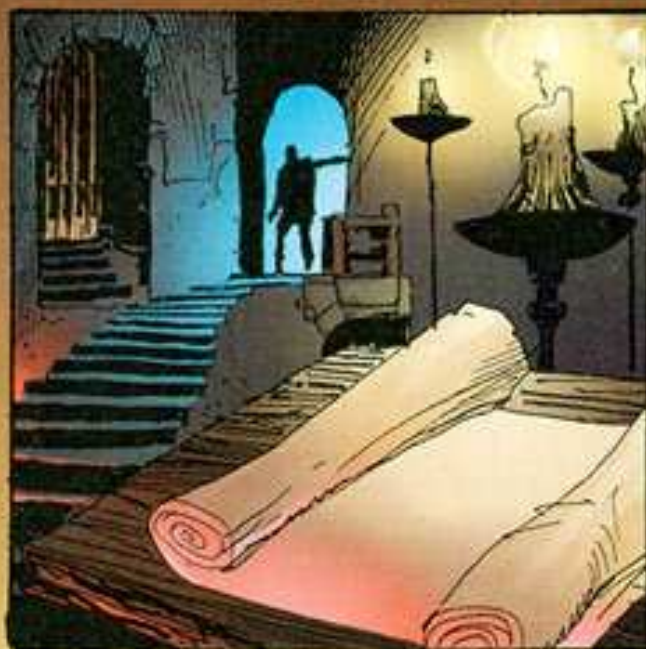
DO YOU COUNT THE LIFE OF YOUR SON AMONG THOSE YOU DISCARD SO CAVALIERLY?

TURN FROM THIS PATH, URZA. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE FORCES YOU'VE UNLEASHED. THE CRYSTALS ARE A CHANCER ON THE BODY OF THE EARTH-MOTHER...A SICKNESS THAT WILL SOON BE CLEANSED.

LIKE THE EARTH, I FIND MYSELF SUDDENLY FEELING ILL. GOOD-BYE, GENTLEMAN. MY MEN WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY OUT.

ALTHOUGH URZA WAS KINDER TO HIS GUESTS THAN HIS BROTHER, HE WOULD NOT RETURN WITH THEM TO THE COUNCIL. URZA REFUSED TO TURN FROM HIS PATH OF FATE AND HIS VOW TO DESTROY MISHRA.









YES...  
YES...NOW  
IT BEGINS  
TO MAKE  
SENSE.

SOMETHING  
THE EMISSARY  
SAID...THE CRYSTALS  
AS A SICKNESS IN  
THE BODY OF  
THE EARTH...



FROM THE  
IMAGES IN THE  
JALUM TOME, IT  
SEEMS THAT THE  
CRYSTAL SOMEHOW  
**REPRODUCED**  
ITSELF...USING  
URZA AND  
MYSELF.



BUT THESE  
GLYPHS...THEY  
DON'T SIGNIFY  
THE WORLD  
IN THIRAN...

...THEY  
SIGNIFY  
THE **WHOLE**  
OF THE  
UNIVERSE





WHEN THE MIGHTSTONE  
AND WEAKSTONE ARE  
PUT TOGETHER, THEY  
HAVE SIXTY FACETS.  
THE NUMBER OF  
**COMPLETION**  
IN THIRAN  
COSMOLOGY.



WHEN THE TWO HALVES COME  
TOGETHER, THEY CREATE A  
NEW WHOLE... A NEW  
UNIVERSE... THE VERY  
**BODY OF GOD.**



MISHRA,  
WHAT **HAVE** WE  
UNLEASHED?







NO!  
MURDER!



PLEASE,  
I'M TRYING TO  
WORK. CAN'T YOU  
KEEP HIM  
QUIET!



YOU IMBECILE!

HE WAS  
THE LAST ONE  
LEFT. NOW WE'RE  
GOING TO HAVE  
TO GET MORE!



TROUBLE,  
ASHNOD?

OH, JUST  
MORE OF THE  
SAME. THESE  
TRANSMOGRANTS  
DO NOT MAKE  
GOOD  
ASSISTANTS.



WHAT ABOUT YOU?  
WHAT BOTHERS YOU,  
MY LORD?

IVE TORTURED  
THE EMISSARIES.  
THE ONE FROM LAT-  
NAM DOESN'T KNOW  
ANYTHING, AND THE SIX  
MONK JUST PRAYS  
TO HIS MACHINE  
LORD.

POOR  
MISHRA, IVE  
GOT SOMETHING  
THAT MIGHT  
CHEER YOU  
UP.

BRING THE  
WEAKSTONE.










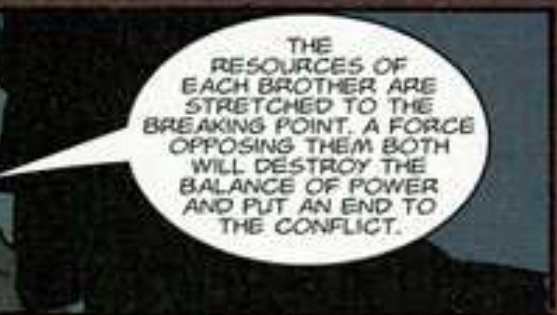
TWO MOONS PASSED BEFORE THE IVORY TOWER COUNCIL CONVENED AGAIN.







MURKYL AND I  
HAVE DISCUSSED  
OUR OPTIONS, AND  
WE BELIEVE THAT BY  
WORKING *TOGETHER*,  
WE CAN DEVELOP A  
NUMBER OF ARTIFACTS  
THAT WILL BRING AND  
END TO THE  
CONFLICT.



THE  
RESOURCES OF  
EACH BROTHER ARE  
STRETCHED TO THE  
BREAKING POINT. A FORCE  
OPPOSING THEM BOTH  
WILL DESTROY THE  
BALANCE OF POWER  
AND PUT AN END TO  
THE CONFLICT.




YOUR  
CONCLUSION  
HAS MERIT.

I WOULD  
LIKE TO KNOW  
WHAT THE OTHER  
DELEGATES THINK  
ABOUT THIS  
IDEA.



TO USE  
TECHNOLOGY IS  
UNNATURAL AND  
REPELLENT, BUT  
FAILURE TO TAKE  
ACTION WILL ONLY  
MEAN MORE  
DAMAGE TO  
EARTH-  
MOTHER.

IF WE CAN  
FIND A WAY TO  
STOP THE CONFLICT  
BETWEEN THE BROTHERS,  
THAT ALSO *HEALS* THE WOUNDS  
CAUSED TO THE EARTH-MOTHER,  
THEN THE ABBOT'S IS AN  
ACCEPTABLE PLAN  
TO THE YUMOK  
NATIONS.



SINCE WE  
ARE ALREADY  
AWARE OF KATH'S  
POSITION, WE  
ARE ALL IN  
AGREEMENT.

THE WAR  
BETWEEN THE  
BROTHERS WILL  
SOON BE  
OVER.



...AND I  
PRAY THAT  
OUR GODS WILL  
FORGIVE US FOR  
WHAT WE ARE  
ABOUT TO  
DO.

SINCE THE BROTHERS WOULD NOT  
LISTEN TO THE OFFER OF THE COUNCIL,  
THE COUNCIL DECIDED THAT THERE WAS  
NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE  
THE LIVES OF URZA AND MISHRA.





THIS IS HURKYL, REGENT OF THE COLLEGES OF LAT-NAM.

WE HAVE AGREED TO FIND A NEW TECHNOLOGY TO USE AGAINST URZA AND MISHRA.

LORD OF THE MACHINE, WE HAVE RETURNED FROM THE IVORY TOWER.

...AND WE HAVE MADE NEW ALLIES.

I can HELP...for a price.

And I know where these toys can be found...

...In the cave of Kollas.

When the brothers are destroyed, I want the Mightstone and the Weckstone. In exchange for the stones, I'll provide my CHILDREN with some new TOYS.






THE COUNCIL OF THE  
IVORY TOWER DECIDED  
TO TRAVEL TO THE CAVE  
OF KOLOS TO FIND  
A WAY TO STOP THE  
BROTHERS.












I'LL RETURN SOON  
FROM MY WORLD, AND I'LL  
HAVE YOUR NEW TOYS. DON'T  
FOLLOW ME THROUGH THE  
GATEWAY...YOU WON'T LIKE  
WHAT YOU FIND.

IN THE MEANTIME,  
OCCUPY YOURSELF WITH  
THESE TRIFLES...I THINK  
YOU'LL FIND THEM  
AMUSING.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS, THE  
BROTHERHOOD OF QIX OPENED A  
DOORWAY TO ANOTHER WORLD  
WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF  
THE ARCHMANDRITE OF THE  
IVORY TOWER.



HAVE YOU EVER  
SEEN *ANYTHING*  
LIKE THIS?

NEVER.  
IT'S BEYOND  
BELIEF.

**GZZRRRR**



WHA--?













STRAIGHT  
TO COISHRA'S  
STRONGHOLD.

WE NEED TO  
GET A MESSAGE TO  
COISHRA. IF THEY  
CONTINUE ON THIS PATH  
THEY'LL RUN AFOUL OF  
TA'WARIL CHASO.

IF WE RIDE  
WITHOUT STOPPING,  
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO  
BEAT THEM TO THE  
STRONGHOLD IF WE  
TURN SOUTH AND  
THEN WEST.



IS THE  
WARLORD IN  
HIS TENT?

IT IS URGENT  
THAT WE SPEAK  
WITH HIM!
















WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE IVORY TOWER, HARBIN, THE SON OF URZA, GREW TO MANHOOD.



YOUR SON ENTERED THE BELLY OF THE EARTH A CHILD.



NINE DAYS IN THE DARKNESS OF A SECOND WOMB.




THE CHILD IS BORN AGAIN AS A MAN.



NOW, THE MAN MUST PROVE HIMSELF A WARRIOR.



IT IS TIME.



THE SOUL OF THE WARRIOR IS HIS SWORD.

FORGED IN THE FIRES OF DEATH, THE SWORD MUST BE COOLED IN THE WATERS OF LIFE.



THE WARRIOR'S SOUL MUST MAKE THE JOURNEY FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE SECOND SOUL OF STEEL?

YES.

HARBIN WENT THROUGH THE INITIATION OF DARKNESS AND FIRE AND BECAME A WARRIOR PRIEST FOR AGRIVE DURING THE WAR BETWEEN URZA AND MISHRA




The text refers to the complicated initiation rite of the rylvian warrior-priests, codified in the Nakara scrolls. After successful completion of the initiation ordeal, the young men were given swords, which represented their newly-forged souls, and were then trained in the use of the blades—a training of both body and spirit. If we look at the symbolic meaning of this stanza, we learn that the individual must pass through darkness and fire in order to temper the soul. Only a soul so prepared is ready to wield the stone of power from the inner world.









WE DON'T  
KNOW FOR SURE,  
BUT I WOULD GUESS  
THE ARCHIMANDRITE OF  
THE IVORY TOWER IS  
INVOLVED.

SHE  
SEEMS TO  
HAVE BALKED  
AT A DECLINED  
INVITATION.

HARBIN WILL  
BE SORRY...

HE'LL MISS  
HIS FIRST CHANCE  
FOR BATTLE.





THE COUNCIL OF THE IVORY TOWER  
FOUGHT WITH MISHRA IN THE GREAT  
DESERT.

THERE ARE LESS  
OF THEM THEN WE  
ANTICIPATED, ASHNOO.  
WE MAY YET CARRY  
THIS DAY.

AND THERE'S  
A FAMILIAR  
FACE...

ONE I HAVEN'T  
SEEN SINCE OUR  
LAST TRIP TO THE  
CAVE OF KOILOS.











COME TO  
ME, MISHRA!  
THERE IS  
NOWHERE YOU  
CAN HIDE!



WHAT?



FLYERS...  
SO THE OTHER  
BROTHER HASTENS TO  
MEET HIS DOOM  
AS WELL...



KA-BOOM



WHEN URZA AND HIS ORNTHOPTERS JOINED THE BATTLE, MANY WERE KILLED AND NO ONE DRANK FROM THE WELL.



I'M HIT!  
I'VE LOST  
CONTROL!








THU-FUMP



UHHH.



YOU'RE TAWNOS, AREN'T YOU? YOU'RE A VERY LONG WAY FROM HOME.



THE SAND IS VERY THIRSTY, ACCORDING TO THE FALLAJI YOUR BLOOD WOULD SLAKE ITS THIRST, AND THE DESERT WOULD BESTOW A BLESSING UPON ME.



WHEN YOU WANT TO REPAY ME, COME TO THE STRONGHOLD IN THE KHER RIDGES.

SHOW THE SCARF ON YOUR ORNITHOPTER AND YOU'LL HAVE SAFE PASSAGE, OTHERWISE YOU'LL BE SHOT DOWN LIKE SO MANY OTHERS.

I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR NEXT MEETING.

BUT, PERHAPS IT ALREADY HAS.

I GIVE YOU YOUR LIFE, TAWNOS, AND ANOTHER GIFT.













THE PATH OF FATE WAS KINDER TO URZA THAN TO MISHRA.

Although the text does not give many details about the battle in the desert with the black heart, it is believed that the brothers struggled with a Phyrexian demon that might have entered Terisiare through the gateway in the cave of Koilos. The text of this stanza specifically states that the combined power of the mightstone and weakstone from which it came; so, Urza and Mishra must have worked together to accomplish a common goal the actual nature of that goal may never be known however, the last line of the stanza foreshadows what is to come.





URZA, BACK FROM THE DESERT, CELEBRATED THE DEFEAT OF THE BLACK HEART AND HARBIN'S INITIATION. BUT NOT ALL WERE THANKFUL FOR THEIR VICTORIES THAT NIGHT



TAWNOS...



WHAT HAVE YOU THERE?

NOTHING... IT'S NOTHING.



KAYLA, I NEED...



NO, TAWNOS, WE CAN'T... YOU KNOW THAT.





WHEN WILL IT BE MY TURN, KAYLA. I'VE WAITED... FOR SO LONG...

WE HAD SOMETHING ONCE, BUT WE'LL NEVER HAVE IT AGAIN...URZA IS MY HUSBAND. CAN'T YOU LEAVE IT IN THE PAST?



NOW, COME BACK TO THE PARTY...HARBIN'S ASKING FOR YOU.

NO... I'VE GOT SOMEPLACE I HAVE TO BE...



CAN I HELP YOU TAWNOS?

I'M GOING TO TAKE A FLIGHT IN THE MOONLIGHT...I NEED SOME AIR.



A QUIET VOICE TOLD TAWNOS TO TURN FROM HIS PATH OF JEALOUSY BUT HE WOULD NOT LISTEN.

Here, Kayla Bin-Kroog makes a cutting comment about Tawnos given Kayla's relationship with him. One might expect Kayla to make allowances for Tawnos' jealousy. Such uncompromising honesty, as well as the deplorable state of current Argvian literature, makes one wish that Kayla Bin-Kroog were still alive and writing today. We could certainly use her gifts.





WE  
NEED TO  
TALK.

OF COURSE  
WE DO, I DIDN'T  
THINK YOU CAME  
ALL THIS WAY  
TO RETURN MY  
SCARF.

LEAVE  
US.



I THINK  
WE HAVE  
A LOT IN  
COMMON,  
YOU AND  
I.

LIKE  
WHAT?

WE BOTH  
SERVE THE  
BROTHERS, AND  
WE BOTH WANT  
MORE.

WE'RE  
IN A POSITION  
TO HELP EACH  
OTHER.

WOULD YOU  
LIKE TO HEAR HOW  
YOUR DREAMS CAN  
COME TRUE?



I'M  
LISTENING...



GOOD.

I THINK  
YOU'LL LIKE  
WHAT YOU  
HEAR...

Thus was born an alliance which  
would alter the course of the Urza-Mishra  
war—one deserved of a volume all its own  
— *Tayir of Rabih*



# A TURN OF THE WHEEL



JEFF GOMEZ  
ARMADA LINE EDITOR

Alas! With this second volume of **Urza-Mishra War**, the Magic: The Gathering line of prestige format comics comes to a close. This summer's crop of Magic books (**Alliances**, **Prelude to War**, and **Planeswalker War**) have ceased production, and there are no current plans to bring them out. A brief and shining era of some of the finest fantasy comic book work in recent memory has come to a close. Sadly, it seems that millions of Magic: The Gathering fans would simply rather play the game than read the comics. That's the bad news, but stick with me loyal readers—there's still plenty to cheer about!

First, let's take a quick look at the past:

Under its Armada imprint, Acclaim Comics has published fifteen Magic: The Gathering miniseries and one-shots, selling over a million copies in sixteen months. For those of you who've written in with requests for a complete listing, they are: **The Shadow Mage**, **Ice Age**, **Fallen Empires**, **Nightmare**, **Antiquities War**, **Wayfarer**, **Arabian Nights**, **Convocations**, **Homelands**, **Jedit Ojanen**, **Shandalar**, **Elder Dragons**, **Fallen Angel**, **Dakkon Blackblade**, **Serra Angel**, and **Urza-Mishra War**.

For you continuity buffs, the titles in chronological order (including the ones whose plots have been completed), according to Wizards of the Coast's official History of Dominaria, are: **Elder Dragons**, **Fallen Angel**, **Dakkon Blackblade**, **Arabian Nights**, **Antiquities War**, **Urza-Mishra War**, **Fallen Empires**, **Ice Age**, **Shandalar**, **Alliances**, **Jedit Ojanen**, **Serra Angel**, **Homelands**, **The Shadow Mage**, **Nightmare**, **Wayfarer**, **Prelude to War**, and **Planeswalker War**.

So what was the Magic that could have been?

Well, **Alliances** was to have been an adaptation of the events surrounding the enchanted forest of Yavimaya, as depicted in the new **Alliances** expansion set for Magic: The Gathering. The story saw Jaehrl Carthalion (who first appeared in **Ice Age** #4) into adulthood, having conceived a child with the Ley Druid girl Kaysa, and facing a crisis born of the legacy of the World Spell. Art Holcomb's exciting plot set the stage for the mixing of the Carthalion lineage with that of the Elder Druids of Dominaria. In the current Magic continuity, Jared Carthalion bears Kaysa's crescent-shaped birthmark of the Elder Druids on his right cheek. It is a fated mark, representing Jared's pivotal role in the turning of Dominaria's "Wheel" of destiny.

Some of you have been puzzled by the fact that our Magic books have come out in no apparent order, fraught with complex plots and varying art styles. But many more of you have written letters to us praising the eclectic array of artwork. You've been detailing the connections between the books, and cheering our efforts to create an epic sort of continuity for the line. Even as I first pulled together the plot to **The Shadow Mage** #1 with the editors and continuity folk at Wizards of the Coast, I had an inkling that Acclaim Entertainment (Armada's parent company) might have some big plans for Magic: The Gathering. I wanted access to the entire timeline in order to tell the best stories possible. I also wanted to start building toward a big event, a major confrontation that would shake Dominaria to its core. So here's the good news: That event is coming soon!

**Magic: The Gathering—Planeswalker War** (working title), the Acclaim Entertainment home video game is now in production! It's scheduled for release before the end of this year. Now, don't confuse this product with the more-or-less direct adaptation of the Magic trading card game coming soon from Microprose. The Acclaim video game will be a 32-bit action-strategy adventure designed for the Sony Playstation, Sega Saturn and Windows 95. It contains a Dueling mode that pits animated wizards





Jaeuhl Carthalion and friends,  
from *Alliances on the World of  
Magic: The Gathering*  
by Doug Wheatley.



against one another so you can actually see creatures, spells and artifacts being summoned and hurled against your opponent. You'll even be able to play this thing over the Internet! If Magic fans would rather play the game—then let them play!

What's extra special about this game to me is that its campaign component picks up where the saga of Jared Carthallion left off. The Shadow Mage's odyssey to become a planeswalker and confront his arch-enemy Ravidel for one final duel. Players will be able to portray Jared, or any one of several other planeswalkers drawn to Dominaria by the Mox Beacon launched by Ravidel at the end of *Wayfarer*. Hence, *Prelude to War* and *Planeswalker War* will gain new life, not as comics, but as the storyline behind one of the hottest home video games of 1996. When the devil closes a door, the good Lord opens a window!

I've been asked a lot about what those people at Wizards of the Coast (WotC) have been like to work with. The honest truth is, they've been great. As licensors, they've been both fiercely protective and concerned. They've allowed my artists an enormous amount of creative space, and they've had strong opinions about how the universe of Magic works, and where our characters and stories take place within it. WotC cared enough about our comics to fly in D.G. Chichester and Rebecca Guay for *Homelands*, Bill Sienkiewicz and Jerry Prosser for *Urza-Mishra*, and myself on numerous occasions—just to get the continuity right, and give us a feel for what Magic is really about. The art and continuity departments at WotC consistently broke records in turning around story and art approvals, and they proudly displayed our comics at some of the biggest conventions of the past two years.

Best of all, Pete Venters, Scott Hungerford and Skaff Elias invited me to submit our stories and ideas, and have them become a part of the official gospel of the Magic: The Gathering universe. Corondor, a continent I had developed over the last decade in my fantasy roleplaying campaign, was lifted from my world and placed gently (and retroactively) into the world of Dominaria. In addition to the dozens of characters and

places I created for it, we learned that Dakkon Blackblade battled Geyadrone Dihada on Corondor. The Fallen Angel stalked its Darkling Plains, and Sol'Kanar the Swamp King lurks in its Great Salt Marshes. WotC allowed me to contribute a great deal to its newborn mythology, and that's been terrifically exciting. Watching my portion of that mythos move into different mediums, in the form of video games and the cards themselves, has been even wilder!

What have been the highlights for me?

- Breaking the Diamond and Capital City "Top 20" with the premiere issues of *Shadow Mage* and *Ice Age*—the first comics I ever wrote!

- Getting Anson Maddocks to do covers for the *Fallen Empires* miniseries I wrote with WotC's Kevin Maples—and discovering Alex Maleev for the pencil interiors.

- Landing a Diamond "Gem of the Month" for *Arabian Nights*, written by one of my closest friends, Susan Wright, and my most trusted assistant, Jeof Vita.

- Premiering the gorgeous Rebecca Guay artwork for *Homelands* at WotC's "Gathering I" in New York City last October—and then having the prestige format book go on to sell nearly 150,000 copies.

- Being asked to help write and coordinate Acclaim Entertainment's multimedia Magic: The Gathering effort, and bouncing between WotC and Realtime Associates headquarters in Seattle to make the dream come to life.

- Getting accused of being a stowaway and chased across Seattle Sea-Tac Airport by police in the middle of the night, when Skaff Elias's credit card petered out before I could board a plane bound for JFK. (I gave them the slip and bought a ticket at another airline; WotC straightened out the whole mess the next day.)

- Teaming with Steve Conard to tie together the origins of *Dakkon Blackblade* and the Carthallion family lineage, producing one of the most gorgeous comics in the company's history.



- Feeling like George Lucas the day I opened up a package from the Unicorn Publishing House and found a painting of Ravidel in front of the Mox Beacon by Greg Hildebrandt.

- Watching Jeof Vita take the Editor's mantle and wrangle Jerry Prosser, Bill Sienkiewicz and Tom Mandrake to produce the great book you're holding!

Of course, there were many more. And there were some tough times, too. But all in all, it's been a real pleasure. In addition to thanking all the people listed on the inside front cover of this volume, I'd like to express a deep appreciation for Chrysoula Artemis, James Perham, Brian Dresner, Jeff Zapata and Alex Glass here at Acclaim Comics; Amy Smith-Boylan, Travis Williams and Marty Bradt at Acclaim Interactive; Pete Venters, Scott Hungerford, Kij Johnson, Karen Kapschady and Maria Cabardo at WotC; and finally, some of the people who helped along the way: Ken Gold and Mark Thienvanich, formerly of Acclaim, and Ronnie Nolze, John Tynes and Kathy Ice, formerly of WotC. Each of these people took a lot of time and enormous effort to make the Magic comics as special as they've been. Thanks people!

What happens next? Tons! I'm helping the Acclaim Comics team launch its Valiant Heroes line under new Editor-in-Chief Fabian Nicieza. Fabian's allowed Jeof Vita and I to do some world building for the revamped Valiant Universe, and we'll be editing *Simple*, *Shogun*, and *Street Warriors*. The Armada line will be merged into the company's new Science Fiction imprint, where we'll be continuing our



Planeswalker War #1  
Cover by Rags Morales

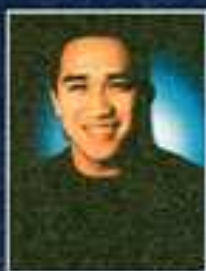
*Shogun* specials, and adding *Quantum Leap* and *Wonderworld* to the roster. In addition to continuing work on Acclaim's Magic video game, I'll also be working on a few other PC CD-ROM projects coming from Acclaim later this year. Watch for 'em!

So, this is less a good-bye than an invitation. Get ready to go cyber, and join me on Level One. The medium may change, but the Wheel turns...and the road goes ever on.

Jeff Gumez  
jeffgumez@acclaim.com



# A FAREWELL TO THREE



JEFF VITA  
EDITOR

Our journey into the mists of Dominaria began a little over a year ago, and back then, we promised to work with Wizards of the Coast to bring the fables to life, and fully realize the majesty of the ever-changing world of Magic: The Gathering.

In that time, we lived our lives alongside an orphaned rag-boy who challenged his mind and body on a quest for revenge against a dark serpent who stole his soul. We ran through fields of ice and snow as a kingdom teetered on the edge of destruction at the hands of an evil lord who wanted only silence. Entire empires were annihilated because of a brother's grief over the loss of his sister. We followed legends about warriors and students, witches and warlocks, angels and devils, always allowing ourselves to be drawn into the wonder of Dominaria. Along with the glory, we have experienced pain and suffering as two brothers fought for supremacy, destroying an entire continent, and dooming the world to an age of ice...

It certainly has been a wild ride hasn't it? Then again, "wild" might be an understatement to the denizens of Terisiare. The saga of the Antiquities War chronicled the lives of the brothers Urza and Mishra from their early days as students in the school of Tocasia. We followed them through their travels into the caves of Koilos, their discoveries of the ancient powerstones, and into their adult lives where their rivalry boiled over into a bitter war.

At the center of this war, two ancient stones granted their owners a dark and forgotten power which eventually forced us to wonder, did the masters control the stones or vice versa? From these stones, Urza and Mishra learned a clockwork magic that drove them further and further


apart. While the brothers squabbled, a demon rose from the depths to try and capitalize on their rivalry. And even in the face of doom itself, a continent came together to realize more about its world and its magic. Urza and his Mightstone, protected the cities of Kroog and Yotia from the greed of his brother Mishra. Mishra's Weakstone harnessed power for the nomads of the Fallaji Tribe as they raided the surrounding lands for treasure and resources.

The one similarity between the brothers was their use of artifacts, soulless, mechanical beasts, to fight their battles. Mishra's Dragon Engines, Urza's Yotian Soldiers, abominations of brass and steel forged with revenge and anger. In the wings, families and friends are torn apart under the strain of war. And for what?

This second volume of the proposed **Antiquities War Trilogy** uncovered a lot more than even the brothers bargained for. Betrayal and treachery marked the adult lives of our siblings. Apparently, bloodlines counted for nothing as Mishra threatened to murder his own nephew in order to catch Urza off guard. Meanwhile, the brothers' lieutenants also plotted their own advancements, though it may cost their captains dearly. Mishra's second, Ashnod, constructs hideous beasts, fused from man and machine and devoid of soul. Urza's lieutenant, Tawnos, forges alliances under cover of darkness and hides much behind his eyes. The one to pay the price for this foolishness...the continent of Argoth.

The story we have recounted thus far took shape over the last few years. It began in some back room, within the minds of some dedicated game players who went by the name of Wizards of the Coast. People like Richard Garfield, Skaff Elias and the East Coast Design Team came together with a vision of a new world. This world would be alive and complex with creatures, heroes and villains that had character. Imagine that! From there, Wizards of the Coast went on to create





Ravidel and the Mox Beacon  
Cover to *Prelude to War*  
by Greg Hildebrandt

GREG HILDEBRANDT





Planeswalker War #2  
Cover by Rags Morales

Magic: The Gathering, a card game that challenged its players to not only think about strategy, but to dream up stories behind each card. With the help of people like Shawn Carnes, Pete Venters, Maria Cabardo, Kevin Maples, Karen Kapschady and countless others, WotC was off and running with the expressed intent to capture the imagination of game enthusiasts and fantasy fans everywhere. With that in mind, in we stepped with a promise to bring these stories to life.

We strove to continue in WotC's proud new tradition. We brought together the finest talent in the industry to open up the many worlds of Magic: The Gathering. *The Antiquities War* was graced by such. My thanks to Jerry Prosser who penned this epic tale. Jerry's grasp of the history of Magic and his unique take on the brothers' struggle wove a moving and complex story that drew us into the brothers' very minds. Other artists who recreated the timeless war included the one and only Paul Smith, whose work continues to please the eye, even as it sets standards for the industry; Phil Hester, who sets the perfect mood with just a few lines; and J. Dekker who completed the series with his own inimitable style. All three of these pencillers were blessed with veteran Tom Ryder on inks, finishing the work with his own deft touch. To you gentlemen, my thanks.

Our second volume brought two comics powerhouses together in Tom Mandrake and Bill Sienkiewicz, a super-team if I do say so myself. Tom and Bill came together and put a wonderful vision to pen and ink. Their tale was a mixture of subtle power and intense beauty as they followed our heroes into the fray. Thank you gents for a fantastic run.

Our colorists, Michael Tuccinard, Chrysoula Artemis-Gomez, Andrew Covalt, and Atomic Paintbrush, all deserve a hand for their contributions to this production. Rich colors for a rich story. Adam Niedzwiecki and Kenny Martinez should take a bow for their lettering on each page while a nod of appreciation goes to Sharon Claire-Mitchell who helped out in too



many ways to count. Finally, a thank you to Line Editor Jeff Gomez who watched over every little detail and made sure that everything made sense in the end.

But to all things good and bad, there must come an end. And so my friends, here we are ...

Although these comics are ending, rest assured that we are not saying good-bye to Dominia, only "until next time." In fact, so long as you, the fans, are playing the game, reading and re-reading our stories, and dreaming up fantastic voyages of your own, the tales will never really end. With a little help and some imagination, the fantasy of Magic: The Gathering will continue to grow before your very eyes. In case you're wondering, we'll be right there with you. Check out Jeff Gomez's column for the tantalizing details!

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, the fans, for giving me the chance to share the fantasy with you. It has been an honor and a privilege to help mold this universe and guide its direction. From the beginning of this endeavor, I promised to put 150% of my effort into making these comics the best that they could be. I wanted every page to come to life as the characters grew up around us and the world itself shifted time and again under our feet. I hope I've done you right.

I've become quite attached to a number of these characters, as I hope you have. If I could make the line continue on by sheer force of will, then I would never have to write this farewell. Alas, I am just a man with no real magic of my own. But I can't look back sadly, because on the whole, I am extremely satisfied with the way things turned out. And if just one of you feels the same way, then I think I did all right. Onward then, as they say. But I won't forget. I will continue to keep the magic alive...will you? Thank you, once more, for everything.

Jeff Vita  
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# SEER ANALYSIS SHAWN CARNES

Hello Planeswalkers and welcome to this, the final installment of Seer Analysis.

As always, my name is Shawn Carnes, a tried and tested rules maven here at Wizards of the Coast. Before we tackle this epic tale, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jeff Gomez, Jeof Vita and the entire Armada Team at Acclaim Comics for the wonderful job that they have done with Magic: The Gathering comics. From the first book, Magic: The Gathering—The Shadow Mage, through to this very book, Urza-Mishra War, the Armada crew has done its best to honestly and accurately portray the splendor and beauty of our humble universe of Dominia.

My thanks as well to Jeff and Jeof for giving me the chance to contribute to each series as the official "seer." I've had a blast reading all of the stories that crossed my desk and even more fun picking apart the magic and explaining its function in each book. Every Magic comic challenged me to learn and re-learn the complexities of Magic: The Gathering and in doing so, really deepened my love for the game itself.

Onward then to the action of The Urza-Mishra War, a fitting end to a wonderful run of Magic: The Gathering comics. Never say that we don't go out with a bang!

Our story opens up with a pivotal event in Dominaria's history. A council has been called at the Ivory Tower in the neutral

city-state of Korliss. The Archimandrite of the Tower is concerned about the growing threat of the Brothers' War and seeks help from delegates from across the lands of Terisiare. These delegates represent the various philosophies of Magic on Dominaria. At this point in time, the concept of Magic is not entirely understood. This meeting consolidates the differing ideas and thus, the Council of the Five Colors is born, and with it, the foundations of what is now the color system of Magic on Dominaria.

Magic players will recognize the Ivory Tower as the artifact that costs one mana to cast and provides its controller with one life point for every card over four held in hand during the upkeep phase. This is a fitting view of the Tower since the council is called to preserve the life of Terisiare which is threatened by the escalating conflict.

In response to the war, the Council decides to attempt to reason with the Brothers, hoping to sway them from their destructive paths. Emissaries are sent to both camps with a plea for peace. An envoy for the blue mage, Hurkyl of Lat-Nam and a representative for the Abbot of Gix are sent to Mishra's court while envoys for Chayum-Icha, the green mage, and !Kath, war chief and red mage, go off to Urza's base. The expressed intent is to either offer peace or prepare for war. Unfortunately for all involved, Mishra's patience is tried too heavily. He has the envoys killed for daring to forge a reconciliation between him and his brother. Envoys sent to Urza fared much better but had just as much luck persuading him to consider peace.





Meanwhile, back at Mishra's compound, Ashnod has been busy designing new devices to further the cause. In her laboratory, we are introduced to a cabinet that protects anything inside from being affected by spells. Mishra's Weakstone has no effect on the Transmogrator while it is inside the cabinet. What do you think this cabinet might be? In function, it is very much like the artifact, Tawnos' Coffin, an artifact which, for a three mana activation cost and four mana casting, takes a creature out of play as long as the Coffin remains tapped. That creature cannot be the target of spells, effects, cannot receive damage, use special powers or defend. Might this be an indication of things to come between Ashnod and Tawnos?

Upon news of both parties' refusal of peace, the Council decides to fight fire with fire. Their first recruit is the Yawgmoth Demon himself. The Demon has proven to be a constant thorn throughout our story, always looking for the next opportunity to wrest the stones from Urza and Mishra to use for his own dark purposes. Taking the council to the caves of Koilos, the Demon unveils the gateway to Phyrexia, the artifact abyss from which Mishra first learned of the mighty Dragon Engines. In fact, these very Dragon Engines are what the Demon goes into Phyrexia to retrieve. It seems that the counterstrike has begun in earnest.

Upon reports of army movement, both Urza and Mishra deploy forces to meet the threat. In the ensuing battle, Mishra is forced to confront his own "black heart" in the form of the Yawgmoth Demon. The Demon's

purpose is clear—take the Powerstones from the brothers. Mishra's Dragon Engines battles with the Council forces which were in turn joined by Urza's Ornithopter sorties. The turning point in the battle comes when Mishra is beaten by the Demon, who takes his stone from him. As the Demon rears up to deliver the killing blow, he is attacked from behind by Urza, using the power of the Mightstone. Urza and Mishra, at least for one moment, worked together towards a common goal.

And what do the brothers hold in store for the future? If you are familiar with the game, then you know the tragedy that awaits, and the repercussion that it has on the world.

The war continues to escalate and betrayals on both sides create problems all around. Eventually, battle after battle takes its toll on the land, and an entire continent pays the price. The once peaceful land of Argoth disappears into the oceans, never to be seen again. As for our brothers, legend has it that neither were ever to be seen again. Some say that Mishra perished and Urza survived. Some say that both perished. Still others say that both were spirited off to another distant plane to continue their fighting for eternity. Their legacy—a sweeping Ice Age that covers the entire world.

And with that, I bid you all a fond farewell from the shores of imagination. Thank you one and all for letting us be a part of your world. And until next time, may the magic be yours forever.





# PROSSER'S ODYSSEY

## A COMIC BOOK SCRIBE CREATES AN EPIC TONE POEM



As he completed his practicum (the internship that every MSW candidate has to complete to pick up some practical experience in his or her chosen field), he found a job as an editor at Dark Horse Comics. "I ended up working there because I knew the publisher," Jerry notes. "I was there while finishing up my practicum, and I was just sort of sucked in. I've never gotten out!" he laughs.

Jerry's training as a social worker has surely affected his writing. "I think that the kind of training you get in a social work situation maybe sensitized me to certain kinds of things. That's just as a degree in *anything* would sensitize you to whatever it is that you've studied. I think a good writer goes to those areas to which he is sensitive."

Although he once had plans to move on to social work after his schooling, Jerry's left those far behind. "I guess at this point I've become such a misanthrope that I might not be any good as a social worker!" he says.

**I**n many ways, the darkest, most devastating aspect of the Urza-Mishra War has yet to be illustrated. Entire land masses are completely annihilated as a result of this petty sibling rivalry!"

Jerry Prosser, the writer of the epic that you're holding, came into comics from a different angle. Many writers may tell you that they scoured convention after convention, showing their stuff to dozens of companies and editors before being rejected. Jerry kind of fell into it.

Several years back, Jerry was working on his Master's degree in social work.

As a writer, Jerry has no formal training, but he's obviously got a real talent for it. "It's something I've always wanted to do. I've always been interested in comics and writing. It's something I kind of learned on the job at Dark Horse rather than having any sort of specialized background."

As an editor at Dark Horse Comics, Jerry found breaking into writing comics fairly simple. "I was an editor first, and then I ended up writing some stuff there. That seems to be a pretty common career track for comic writers," he laughs. "A lot of them start out as editors."



Jerry's written a lot of different things, including a well-respected stint on *Animal Man* for DC Comics. Like most writers, though, he certainly has his favorites. "I think my favorite things that I've written thus far would have to be a book called *Exquisite Corpse* [an adults-only book declared obscene in several countries across the globe] and another book called *Cyberantics*, both for Dark Horse."

Some of Jerry's ideas may soon even make it to the silver screen. "I worked on a book called *Skin Graft*, which has apparently been optioned for a film. I know very little about it," he laughs, "but it seems that Oliver Stone bought the rights. It's extremely flattering."

When it comes to other writers that he admires, Jerry's even more eclectic and difficult to pin down. "I've got a lot of people that I really like, but a lot of the people that I find most influential aren't comics writers. To list them all would be too much work and probably sound really pretentious! I'm influenced by everything from blaxploitation films and spaghetti westerns to art history and philosophy."

"I'm very Catholic in my tastes. Not literally, but in the adverbial sense that my tastes are all-inclusive. I like way too much!" he laughs.

Like most writers, Jerry seems to have many irons in the fire at a time. "Of course, I'm working on the *Urza-Mishra War*. I'm also working on a *Crow* series for Kitchen Sink Press. I've got a couple of other things in the pipeline, but none of them are definite enough yet for me to say anything about."

He was willing to part with his plans for one long-awaited project, though. "It's called *Oracle*, and it's in some ways the culmination of a lot of the kinds of things that I enjoy. I would like to be able to get that off the ground, but I haven't been successful thus far. I may end up publishing it myself."

For the present, though, Jerry's happy to be working on *Magic: The Gathering* comic books for Acclaim. How he got involved with Acclaim is a bit of a roundabout story.

"I ended up doing a *Geomancer* fill-in book for them. I met one of the guys who was at the company back when it was still Valiant and told him that I wanted to do some work for them. I ended up writing this story for them, but that book got canceled. So I had to rewrite the story for another character, *The Eternal Warrior*. It was a long, protracted process, but it got my foot in the door with Acclaim. The story just came out *Eternal Warrior: Fist & Steel*, a two-issue mini-series."

Strange as this might seem, Jerry rose directly to the occasion. "In some ways, it's actually kind of fun. I like weird challenges like that, and besides being fun, it came off okay."





Of course, this odd beginning wasn't the end for Jerry's accomplishments with Acclaim. After he finished up **Eternal Warrior: Fist & Steel**, he was looking around for other ways to work with the same publisher.

"Then this **Urza-Mishra War** thing came up, and I said I'd do it. I was a little familiar with Magic: The Gathering, and I wanted to learn more. This provided me with an interesting opportunity."

At the time, Jerry had never played Magic: The Gathering, but it had piqued his interest. "I had been aware of it as a phenomenon in the marketplace. It had obviously generated a lot of attention for itself."

Since then, Jerry's had enough time to crack open a few starters and boosters for himself. "I've played it a bit, and I think it's pretty incredible. I'm doing my best not to buy a whole bunch of cards and go bankrupt right now. Unfortunately, it's totally geared to people like me who collect and buy too much stuff. So I gotta watch my pennies," he laughs.

With that as his only difficulty with the game, Jerry's in good company it would seem. "Fighting for those cards with everybody is a real treat," he points out with only a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

At this point, Jerry only considers himself a dabbler in the game, hardly ready to leap to the forefront of a professional tour. "I don't have any particular kind of deck that I like to play. I'm not so adept that I would even want to embarrass myself by getting into the mechanics. I've just been a kind of a horse-around player. I like to play around with it a bit, but I'm not nearly as serious about it as some of the other players that I know."

In general, Jerry doesn't consider himself a gamer, although he does tinker around with some gaming ideas from time to time. "The Oracle project that I mentioned earlier is kind of a cross between a game and a book. I've been

working on that for a while. I'm mostly interested in game theory and what it is that makes games work, almost more than the particular games themselves."

Messing around with game theory can be even more challenging than picking at the actual mechanics of the game. "I agree with that in some ways. I'm fascinated by figuring out ways to use some of those rules that you use to make games as rules for making stories."

"The *Exquisite Corpse* project that I mentioned was really my first attempt at something like this. It was a three-issue series, and all the issues came out at the same time. None of them were numbered, and you can read them in any order."

"Of course, the order in which you read them—to a certain extent—determines your experience with the story. Depending on which issue you read, you're presented with certain information first, and you make associations from that."







"What I've tried to do with certain kinds of my writing is set things up to make the reader more important than the writer. I've tried to create circumstances in which that can happen."

Odd as such a project might seem to the traditional super-hero comic book reader, this experiment turned out fairly well. "I'm certainly happy with it myself," claims Jerry.

Jerry has taken a lot of the experience he's gathered over his years as a writer and applied it directly to the *Urza-Mishra War*. Of course, this project had a few different twists of its own. "I was given a substantial backstory for this series before I even started. Because of the cards and because of the Antiquities War expansion set for *Magic: The Gathering*, there was quite a lot already there. I had to come up with a way to make telling that story interesting for me.

"What I tried to do was attack the storytelling itself from a different direction. I used a kind of narrative trick that I had fun with to help me take the whole thing to a different level.

"There are some different levels of interpretation in this particular story. First, you've got the straight-ahead action of the plot that pretty much conforms to the backstory of the card set. Then I created an apocryphal document that works as a counterpoint to the plot.

"This is a piece of text—kind of like a poem—that's written by one of the characters. This works in the form of the captions that run throughout all of the issues. Then there's a third level which appears as a series of footnotes that are written about the text by a character that never appears in the book but is actually present in some other *Magic: The Gathering* comic books."

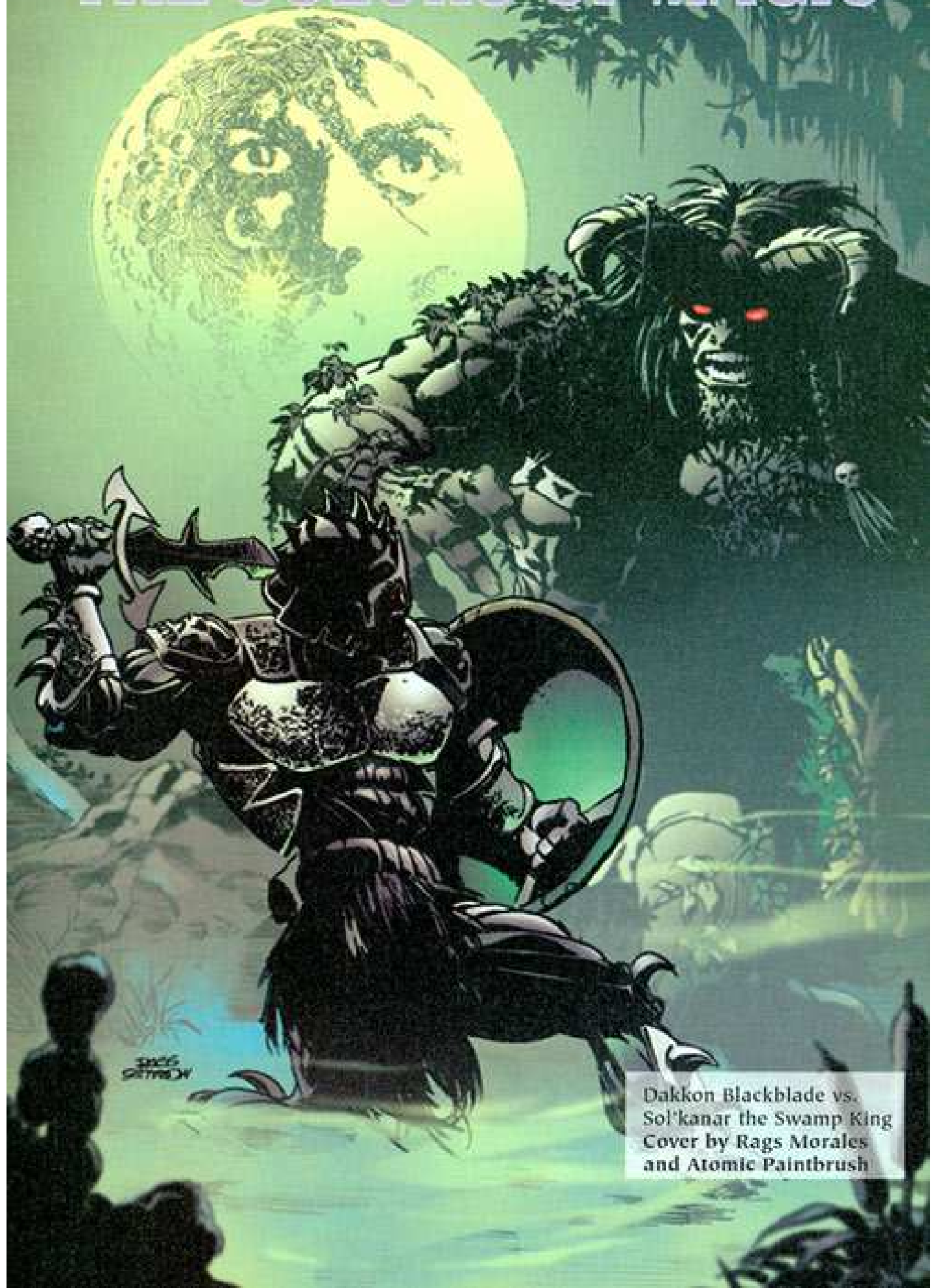
Long-time followers of Acclaim's *Magic: The Gathering* comics may recall this character and his exploits as chronicled thus far. "His name is Taysir (Tay-seer) of Rabiah. He's sort of a scholar, so the reader gets a chance to see the events of the plot, compare them against this poem and then see how Taysir manages to interpret the poem from a position of hundreds and hundreds of years after the events take place."

Of course, it's not as simple as all of that. "Sometimes, Taysir gets things wrong, so there's this tension between the text and what the plot is doing on the pages as it unfolds in front of you.

"Whenever I can, I like to set myself up these kind of constraints, these ways of telling the story that are a little bit different than just going through it from A to Z," said Prosser, whose complete comic book manuscript covers the entire Antiquities War, including the final, apocalyptic third of the conflict, which is as yet unproduced. "Trying to do something like that was what I had a good time with. Hopefully it'll interest the reader!"



# THE COLORS OF MAGIC



Dakkon Blackblade vs.  
Sol'kanar the Swamp King  
Cover by Rags Morales  
and Atomic Paintbrush



# ATOMIC PAINTBRUSH TAPS HIGH-TECH COMPUTERS TO BRING DOMINARIA TO LIFE

Atomic Paintbrush is one of the hottest computer coloring houses in comic books today. Started in 1994 by Dennis Calero and Kristin Sorra, the company currently employs eight full-time artists coloring comic books directly on computers using Adobe Photoshop. Atomic Paintbrush's work has graced the pages of dozens of comics for several of the industry's top publishers. You're holding an example of the studio's work in your hands right now.

Dennis was working as a traditional artist when he saw the writing on the wall. "I was doing airbrush color for about a year—to help myself through college—when I realized that computer coloring was the way of the future." Dennis talked it over with his then-fiancée, now-wife Kristin, and they went to her father for the money for a computer capable of handling the coloring tasks they had in mind.

"I worked for a small coloring firm in Manhattan," Dennis explains, "but that didn't last too long, so I just started doing work on my own. Eventually Kristin joined me in doing it, and soon we had so much work we had to bring in other people to help."

Dennis has taken great pains to develop Atomic Paintbrush's name as a force in the industry. Paintbrush's Colin Wanderlei, and Erica worked on *The Urza-Mishra War*, while Dennis acted as the project's color director. "To get everything straight on every major project that we work on, whether it's a book or a long graphic novel like *The Urza-Mishra War*, there's one person in charge of the look of the book.

"Especially in a case like this in which there was very little set except for the hair and eye color of some of the major characters, we really had a lot of room to create. The good guys are mostly in shades of blue, silver, gray and green—the cooler colors—while Mishra and his people were in reds, golds and coppers. That way, when there are so many characters running around and nobody's wearing a big, red S or something equally

obvious, you can figure out who the heroes and villains are by their colors."

Atomic Paintbrush has an unusual method by which they color their books. Many other studios take photocopies of the inked artwork and have a professional colorist paint these pages of the book. The computer operators then use these pages as a guide in their own work, leaving them less room for creative efforts. Atomic Paintbrush has their own way.

"We scan in the pages in, and then we color them," Dennis states flatly. "We don't work with color guides. I go through the pages and staple a copy of the plot page to a photocopy of the inked art. I also add any notes, like whether it's day or night or if certain colors have already been established. This kind of control by a color director is really important, especially in the case of *The Urza-Mishra War*, in which we're getting pages completely out of order."

At Atomic Paintbrush, all of the computer colorists are artists as well. "As we bring on more people, I'm looking for people with color experience, whether with airbrush or handcoloring, and then teaching them the software. It's easier to teach them the software than it is to teach someone who knows the software how to color. You can't give someone a color sense. That only comes with experience."

The artists work on Macintoshes and Pentium PCs, using Adobe Photoshop as their software. "Originally, the standard was a program created by one of the other coloring studios, but with version 3.0, Photoshop can pretty much handle it all.



It's now pretty much the standard. I'm trying to build Atomic Paintbrush's name little by little, project by project. No matter which of us is working on your project, it's going to be good.

"That's why we don't have individual credits on the books we do. I don't want a situation in which an editor asks for a particular colorist. The studio works on it, and it should be good no matter which of us actually does the work."

This policy seems to have served Atomic Paintbrush well so far. Their client list includes not only Acclaim, but also Marvel, DC, Continuity and Tekno Comics. "I also have my eye on the independents. *Hate*, for instance, just went to color, and that's a great-looking book. I think that would be a really neat little niche for someone to fill, whether it's us or somebody else.

"As the independents earn more money, they're able to afford more high-quality computer coloring. And we can even help them in black and white. We're doing black-and-white graytones for someone right now, and it looks great. Some of the responses have been that this book actually looks like it wasn't just that the publishers couldn't afford color, but that they made a conscious decision to make the book look that way. It's the highest compliment that we could get."

Dennis does more than just run Atomic Paintbrush with Kristin, of course. His paintings have graced the pages of the *Wayfarer* and *Fallen Angel* comics for Acclaim's *Magic: The Gathering* comic line. Also, when Acclaim launches its comic based on the *Sliders* television show, you'll see Dennis' work on the cover.

With any luck, you might also see his art in a *Sliders* graphic novel. "There are no specific plans, but there's talk in the wind. I had an opportunity to meet *Sliders* star, Jerry O'Connell and talk about the work I've done so far. I'm looking forward to his story and he's happy with the stuff I'm doing so things look pretty good."

"I really liked working on *Fallen Angel*, and hopefully that will lead to another graphic novel from Acclaim (nudge, nudge). And you can quote me on that!"

Dennis believes that Atomic Paintbrush's New York location helps them land jobs, too. After all, Acclaim, DC and Marvel are each only a short drive away. "The companies really like the fact that we're local. As far as I know, we're the closest coloring studio. I think the second closest is in New Jersey. Digital Chameleon, they're the big guys, the ones to beat, and they're in Canada, so we've got a big advantage over them in terms of handling corrections and so on.

"These things always happen. No matter who's doing the work, there's always a last-minute emergency. Before, when things were harder to change, I think the editors said, 'Well, no one's going to notice his eyes are blue instead of blue-green.' Now, since everything is so 'easily changeable,' you get a lot more requests for changes."

Dennis manages to be philosophic about the whole matter—even cheerful. "It's good because it gives the editor better control. We're going to be the last people to complain. A lot of other studios lose work because they're complaining about every little change."

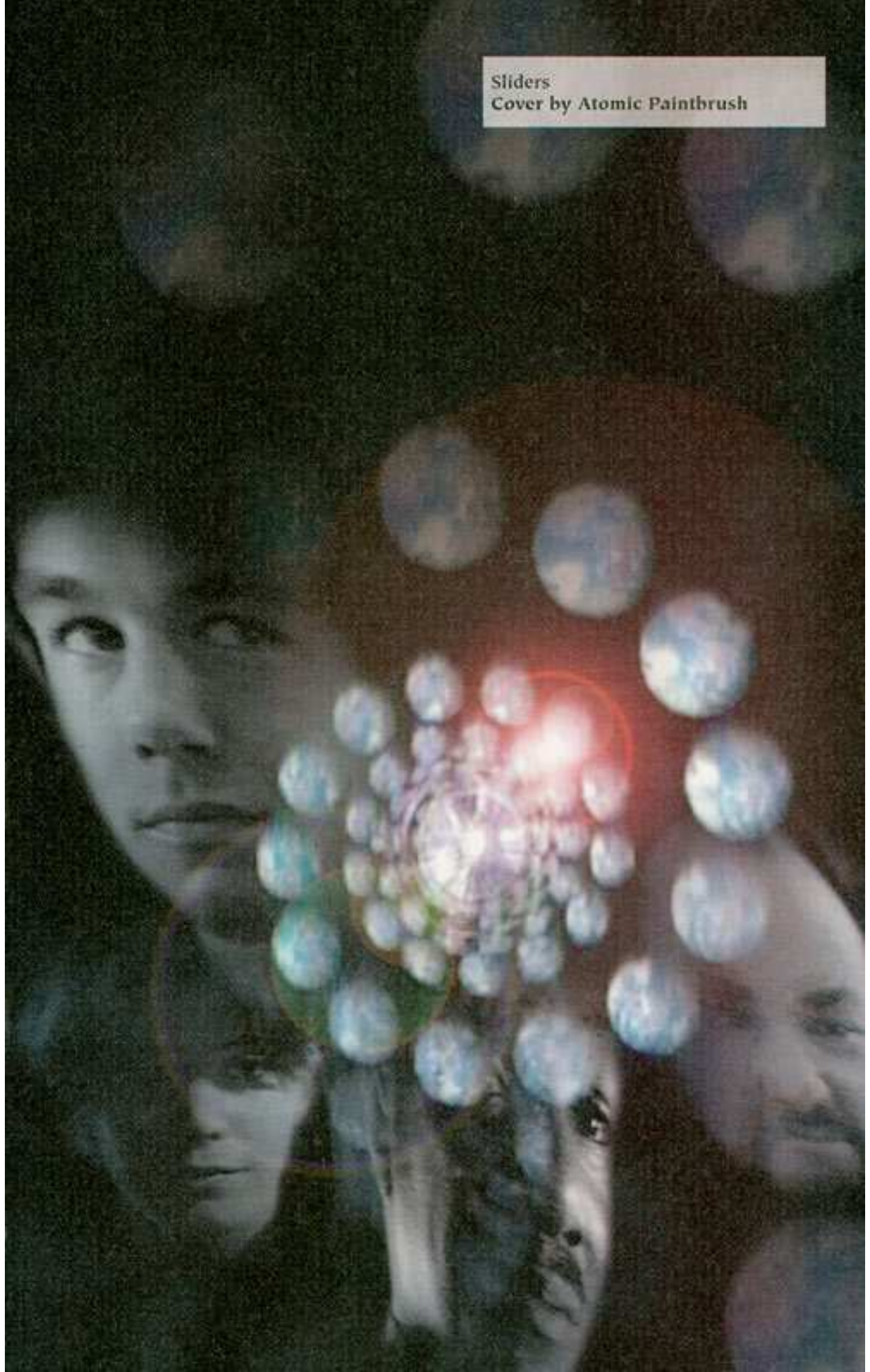
That's hardly the policy at Atomic Paintbrush. "We just did these DC cards, and I can't tell you how many changes we had to go through. Literally every day, there was a change, and we just smiled and did it. If that means that we're going to get the work, so much the better."

As for *Magic: The Gathering*, Dennis has two words: "It sucks!"

Then he laughs, "No, I'm only joking! Honest answer? It's been fantastic and I think it's an intriguing property. As the comics are concentrating more on the stories, and with people like Bill Sienkiewicz doing the art, I think people will stop buying them just for the cards. You have to have the cards with the books so the readers don't feel like they've been gypped, but if you can have a great comic along with the card, what more could you ask for?"



Sliders  
Cover by Atomic Paintbrush







From left to right: Acclaim Comics artist Bernard Chang; Atomic Paintbrush's Dennis Calero; Armada Line Editor Jeff Gomez; *Sliders* star Jerry O'Connell; Asst. Editor Jeofrey Vita.

"Property books lately, seem to come off as sub-par books. When I was a kid, movie adaptations were *it*. When you saw *The Empire Strikes Back* or *Return of the Jedi*, you saw the movie, you got the toys, and you read the comic books. Some of those comics were amazing. They gave the property books to the top talents. Now it seems they give them to 'second string' talents who happen to be walking the hallway.

"I really have to give that to Acclaim. They're really making a new effort with *Magic: The Gathering* and *Sliders* to come up with some great comics. Their dedication to putting out strong titles that can stand on thier own is evident in the books that they've produced thus far."

After *The Urza-Mishra War*, Atomic Paintbrush is moving on to coloring a large *Magic: The Gathering* anthology book for Acclaim. "There are eight or nine different stories, each with its own artist. That's going to be really interesting because everybody is going to have their own style. I want people to look at this book and be amazed that one group is coloring the whole book.

"Electric Crayon is really good at the airbrushy stuff, and Top Cow is great at the banding. I want to show that we can do it all. Some of the stories will have scanned-in textures and weird artsy stuff; others will be more straightforward, airbrushy and minimalist; and others will be very strange with some different color choices. It's going to be a really interesting book."

Dennis has got some ambitious plans for the future. "If things keep going well, I'd like to open up an office in Manhattan in a year or so and basically crush all other coloring houses. I'll use that on my way to taking over the world. Coloring?" he laughs.

*Editors note: Although the Magic anthology had been taken off-schedule, a few short weeks after this interview, Dennis Calero's Atomic Paintbrush was chosen to be the coloring house to take on Acclaim Comics' newly relaunched Valiant Heroes line of comic books. The choice was based largely on Calero's superb Magic: The Gathering color work. The Armada editors tip their hats to Dennis, Kristen and the gang, who we're certain will live happily ever after!*





## BETRAYAL AND CLOCKWORK MAGIC

As the Brothers' War devastates the continent of Terisiare, a summit is called in the city of Korliss. Within the walls of the Ivory Tower, the Council of Five Colors is born, united against their common enemies: Urza and Mishra. Elsewhere, the midst of the carnage, the insidious Yawgmoth Demon makes one final attempt to wrest the Power Stones from the warring brothers. And in the dark of night...the brothers' lieutenants, Ashnod and Tawnos, come together and form an uneasy alliance.

Witness the rise of the color system of Magic on the world of Dominaria, even as the Urza and Mishra implement their clockwork magic to plunder their world of its resources—and slaughter one another's armies in this, the second of two volumes based on the phenomenally popular Antiquities War expansion set of the Magic: The Gathering trading card game.

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