

HS codex



VOLUME 2: REBIRTH

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HYGROUND

3D TERRAIN TILES

Editor's Note



Ninja Status
Editor

Heroscape has become an ever-evolving game over time. With the inspiration from many custom projects as well as its magnificent fans the strategy board game has taken new paths in both strong ideals and in new ways of thinking, and the Heroscape Codex is here to bring you up-to-date on what has happened so far and what may come in the future.

When my friend El T and I first came up with the idea to revive the Codex, we were just posting in the Hangout's "Share What Happened to You Today" thread. These were only ideas being thrown around like a baseball, back and forth. Then, I'm glad to say, more users joined in:

Heroscaper Guy, Orgsbane, Joseph Sweeney... All of these guys made it possible to take the Heroscape fandom to a new level. I'm glad to call them friends.

The Heroscape Codex Revival has taken a different turn this issue. In Issue 6, El T, MegaSilver and I decided to update our base checklist (which is usually bunched with ideas on what to add and what not to add to each issue). With this new idea, we hope to give our fans a better-organized and more official bi-monthly magazine, and we hope as a team that you enjoy it.

Everyone, Issue 6 of the Codex awaits! Happy reading!

~ NS

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/hscodex

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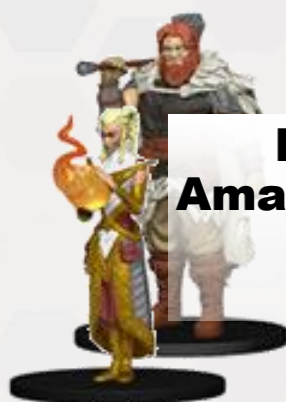
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Contents



Hyground Tiles
by Ixe
p. 10

Magic: The Board Game
by El T
p. 16



Resources for Amateur Customs
by Ixe
p. 7

Fan Art Spotlight
by Evar-Scarcerver
p. 32



Battlefield Review: <i>Fulcrum</i>	4
by dok (guest)	
Resources for Amateur Customs	7
by Ixe	
Community Watch	9
by El T	
Hyground Tiles	10
by Ixe	
HoSS Interview	14
by Heroscaper Guy	
Magic: The Gathering Board Game	16
by El T	
C3V Strategy: Ulfrid Hornwrangler	21
by Taeblewalker	
'Scaper of the Month	24
by Fi Skirata	
Heart of Vengeance: Chapter 2	26
by The Grim Reaper's Friend	
Fan Art Spotlight: Darkenlite	32
by Evar-Scarcerver	
WoV Interview: TGRF	34
by Evar-Scarcerver	

Got something cool and Heroscape-related you want to share? Want to tell us what you liked or didn't like about this issue? Send us an email at codex@heroscapers.com.

You can also tweet your Heroscape pictures to us at [@HeroscapeCodex](https://twitter.com/HeroscapeCodex), or post them to our Facebook wall at [/hscodex](https://www.facebook.com/hscodex), and we'll feature them on the Community Watch page.

Battlefield Review

Fulcrum (Map by Dignan)

By dok

In this column, I'm going to go over some of the strategy that goes into playing a game on the BoV map Fulcrum, by Dignan. This isn't really a review of the map itself; rather, it's a discussion of the choices you make when you play on the map. Hopefully these ideas will help you approach games on this map as well as other maps.

Where do I want to fight?

As with most maps, one of the first things you should ask yourself when

you sit down to play on Fulcrum is: where do I want the battle to take place?

Of course, you don't always *get* to decide. At first approximation, in Heroscape, the longer ranged army decided where the battle happens. Speed matters too, of course.

The obvious approach on Fulcrum is to make a run for the high ground in the middle of the map. Most players will make a run for the high ground on their right side. This makes a lot of sense, of

course: the central hills are the highest spot on the map and give you a strong position to move towards other spots on the map. However, remember that the highest height is not always needed. All that matters is who has height advantage on who. If your opponent is attacking up from level 1, it does not matter whether you are on level 2 or level 8. Either way it's one extra die.

With that in mind, it is often a good idea, with a ranged army, to



Photo by Dignan

start the game by reinforcing the 3-space level 3 hill on the right side of the map (right). If your opponent brings any figures into your range after you set there, then you can force your opponent to push towards that small hill through the narrow gap between the ruins, which is a strategic advantage for your army.

Another advantage that hanging back in this area affords you is the use of the ruin as cover. This is especially useful for cheerleaders - at times, the best spot for Raelin on this map is not on a perch, but rather on the inside corner of the ruin, offering her protection to figures on your end of the map without being exposed to advancing figures at all.

This is not to say that you should plan to stay in the back of the map most games, or even most games where you have a mostly-ranged army. But my default approach on this map is to build my army on the right side, and then see how the game is developing from there.

Also, there are definitely times when you *do* want to go directly for the central hills. The most obvious example is dragons like Nilfheim, who can quickly reach the middle height and attack down on the advancing figures. Additionally, in a range vs. range showdown, any figure that sits on the level 3 sub hill will probably find itself shot at by opposing range on the central hills. So range vs. range showdowns

do usually push to the center.

What's a melee army to do?

The discussion above may make it seem like a ranged army has a huge advantage against melee on Fulcrum. However, this isn't really the case (or at least, not any more so than usual in Heroscape). Fulcrum actually offers a number of tricks for a melee army to use.

First, and most obviously, the jungle terrain. With a little effort, you can ensure that every figure moving up through the center of the map is either hiding behind the ruin, or stuck next to jungle terrain. Try to be diligent about this - if you put half your approaching figures on height or next to jungle, and the

other half not, then you may as well not have any next to jungle at all, because your opponent will have plenty of exposed targets to choose from. If you can only put two or three figures in protected places in the center, then use remaining activations to move figures up from the back, or to advance around the sides of the map.

Speaking of the sides of the map, going over the top that way is a valuable strategy. Even if you need to advance to the far side of the map, the center hills can still offer your figures height advantage as they move up, increasing the odds that they survive to first contact.

Finally, if your opponent is set on hanging back,



Battlefield Review: Fulcrum (by Dignan)

then you have no reason to push forward until your opponent is actually shooting you. This is, generally speaking, one of the big lessons of playing melee against range - be patient. If your opponent is unwilling to move ranged figures forward past the back hill, then you can mass your entire army just beyond the reach of ranged figures sitting on that hill. This is a win-win for the melee army - either the ranged army will creep forward and you will have a chance to fight them

THE WATER OFFERS ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT WAYS TO GET TO THE LEVEL 4 HEIGHT.

on even ground, or you will be able to put your entire army into position without taking a single hit in the process.

That said, there are armies that can and should rush across the map and attempt to disrupt the opposing army while it is still moving out of the start zone. Fulcrum places the start zone on low ground, and a quick rush can sometimes pin your opponent back. However, this is a very risky play with many armies. If you rush hard and lose steam, you can end up in the very worst situation for a melee army: attacking with only one or two figures each turn, while you ferry other figures up from the back and your opponent never lets you get established.

How can I use the features of the map to my advantage?

I've already covered the importance of jungle terrain and height on this map, but there are other features that are important. First is the water. Many players seem to treat the water on this map as, effectively, an impassible boundary to work around. However, if you intent to move to the level 4 height, then the water on your left-hand side offers one of the most efficient ways to get there. Any 5-move single-

they can climb the height on their turn. This can be a great way to get height on figures in the middle of the map if things get clogged up there.

Speaking of clogging things up, understanding the choke points on the map is another key. If you are sitting back on the right side, then two figures (or one double-spacer) in covering the 2-space gap between the ruin and the water can screen off that side of the map; I've won several games on this map by controlling that real estate. If the game centers on controlling the center hills, then the level 3 spots steps up to the hills become the key real estate on the map; arguably more important than the level 4 height itself.

Fulcrum is a map that offers many choices to the player. Understanding those choices, and using those choices to manipulate how the battle develops, is the difference between winning and losing more often than not. 🍷

spaced figure on the front row of the left side of your start zone can reach the water on their first movement. Particularly for ranged commons, this can be a very strong opening move. Sir Gilbert also particularly benefits from dunking knights with Jandar's dispatch so



El Diabolo used Fulcrum as an example of his method of making foamcore Heroscape maps.

Photo by El Diabolo

Custom Creation

Resources for Amateur Customs

By Ixe

Creating a fully-fledged custom unit takes a lot of work. Groups like C3V take months to work on their designs before they are finally able to finish passing through the process and be released to the public. As a custom creator, this sort of process can prove daunting to face down alone. However, the Custom Units & Army Card forums is filled with valuable resources to help any creator that comes by get their designs started, polish them up, end with a beautiful custom card with accompanying figures.

One of the most crucial aspects to any custom design is having the right figures. Figures can often serve as the source of inspiration for a design or just be the crucial

factor that ties the whole thing together. Without one available, you are reduced to proxying them in with an inadequate substitute. Some customs designers are skilled crafters able to sculpt and splice their figures together from the remains of other miniatures. However, the skill, resources, and time is often out of the reach of many custom designers (myself included). Rather than being left alone to trawl the internet to try to find an adequate mini, you can instead turn to the **Figure Suggestion Thread**.

Created just this past August, this resource allows any creator with an idea to pitch it to the larger community. By tapping in to the collective experience of Heroscape custom creators, you can more easily

locate the exact miniature that you had been searching for to finally construct your custom. Even aspiring SoV applicants can ask for miniature suggestions to help find figures that not only fit their design but are more readily available to have the necessary numbers available for play by the larger community. Whatever it is you are seeking, it never hurts to ask for help and have the community help you find it.

With a figure in hand and your design underway, it is time to polish it and get some feedback. While you can and should start your own custom thread where people can critique and offer pointers on your units, some more public spaces are available. One such thread is **The Pre-SoV Workshop**. While the



Dungeons and Dragons figures are among the more popular figures used by customs creators. However, customs can use practically any figurine to scale with the rest of the game.

Amateur Custom Resources

thread definitely has an SoV slant to it, it has no direct affiliation with that group and stands as a more public resource to submit designs and have some of the finest custom creators and even SoV judges help you hone your ideas. Especially if you ever intend to submit one of your customs to SoV, make sure to stop by the thread and workshop the idea there first.

Even after you polish and perfect your idea, all that can amount to nothing without proper playtesting. Any designer can tell you that playtesting is a crucial phase in the creation of any unit. Even the most thought-out ideas can prove untenable after applying it to the rigors of playtesting. This is where it is put to the test to see if it holds and can even provide crucial insight on how to improve upon the unit further. One such resource to help creators through this phase is the **Playtesting Your Units** thread. There you can post your units to get some pointers on what to look at with playtesting that particular unit. The thread also stands as a means of exchange where you post your unit for someone else to play and can even help out by playing someone else's unit in turn. Playtesting is a critical point in the testing of your unit and the resource is available in helping seeing your design through.

Even with a playtested and finely crafted unit, you may find you still need help. **Help**

With Wurdz. This often overlooked task of editing is another important step in the creation of units. Sometimes small errors can pass by you unnoticed and prove a blemish on an Army Card you create. Other times you may have the intention of your card fully realized but you are struggling to have the words put together into terms that others can easily understand. With this resource, you can have help hammering out the wording to your unique power or

product of a practically official card. This image file for the card they created can then be returned to your custom sight or even brought on to apply to SoV or to other projects.

There are resources for almost every step of custom creation available within the custom forums. From finding your figure all the way through finally having your finalized card put together, members of the community are there to offer a helping hand and help see you

EVEN THE MOST THOUGHT-OUT IDEAS CAN PROVE UNTENABLE AFTER APPLYING THEM TO THE RIGORS OF PLAYTESTING.

even just gaining another set of eyes that can critically examine your design so that you don't let a pesky typo slip past you.

With the figure in hand, the unit designed, and the wording edited, the only task that remains is to make your card. There are numerous threads available to teach you how to do just that, but some technical aspects of high quality card creation are beyond the personal abilities of some creators. That is why you can turn to the **MCC-Makers of Custom Cards-turning customs from text to card** thread. As its name might suggests, people can post the text of their card and the unit involved and have the volunteers of MCC do the rest. They go through all the processes of card creation and leave behind a finished

through. The only things that you need to provide are your ideas and enthusiasm to bring forth your design and shepherd it through the stages of development. It couldn't be easier with these resources or more rewarding once you are able to have your fully realized custom hit your table. I hope to see you on the forums soon. 🍷

You can find all of these threads and more helpful resources and discussion in the Custom Heroscape Creations forum on Heroscapers.com.

Link: [Figure Suggestion Thread](#)

Link: [The Pre-SoV Workshop](#)

Link: [Playtesting Your Units](#)

Link: [Help With Wurdz](#)

Link: [Makers of Custom Cards](#)

Community Watch

by El T

4 Threads Worth Reading



Let's Build Heroscapers 3.0 Together by Xorlof

[Link]

Xorlof created this thread as a place for discussion concerning Heroscapers' planned upgrade to a newer version of vBulletin and a complete revamping of the site's interface. He's looking for feedback on his proposals and ideas from the community.



Magic: The Gathering Strategy Board Game by Dad_Scaper

[Link]

This is one of the most interesting discussions I've seen on Heroscapers in a long time. Tons of 'scapers, including a few old-timers such as Revdyer, are buzzing about Wizards' new Heroscape look-alike. As one might imagine, differing opinions and predictions abound. Give it a read! (You can also read more about the Magic board game on page 16.)



The Average Survival (AS) of Heroscape Figures by Kroc

[Link]

Kroc explains the now-forgotten but helpful statistic of Average Survival: the amount of attacks a unit is likely to survive. He takes a relatively complex calculation and makes it practical for Heroscape. If you're interested in upping your game in terms of strategy, I recommend reading this and more from Kroc.

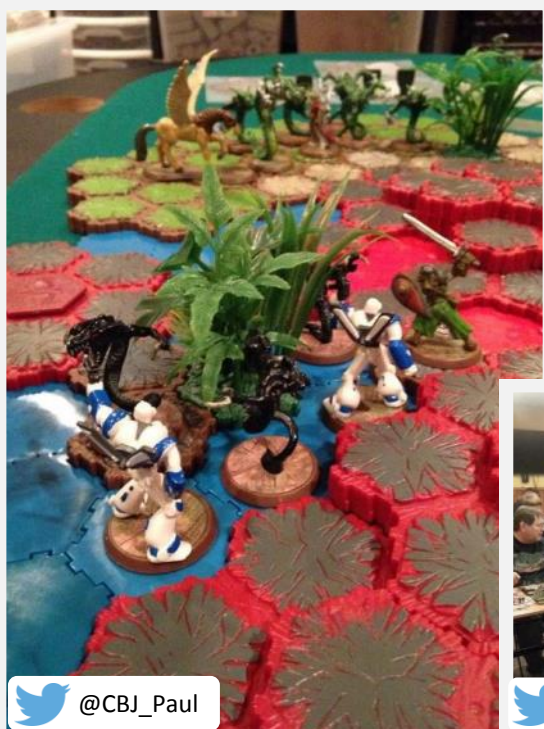


Command Cards (An Alternative to Order Markers) by jbbnbsmith

[Link]

jbbnbsmith and Malechi devised this adaptation of the Command Card system used in *Command & Colors: Ancients* as a different approach to planning movement and attacking. It'll certainly never supplant the order marker system, but it could be a fun twist to try in a casual game.

Fan Photos



@CBJ_Paul



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Hyground Tiles

What's next for Heroscape terrain

by Ixe

What is the future of Heroscape? The game has been discontinued for four years as of the month of this article's release. In that time, members have slowly and naturally stopped playing and, more crucially, the intake of new players has slowed. Lack of advertising and prohibitively inaccessible game material has made joining Heroscape a daunting prospect and has left our numbers slowly dwindling.

Hyground Tiles recognizes the gulf that has been left in the wake of Heroscape. President of Hyground Tiles, Bill Reaser, envisions the company as addressing this niche and providing the product that gamers want. With Heroscape gone, one of the only other providers for 3-D gaming tiles has been Dwarven Forge. While their product is indeed beautiful, it focuses on square tiles and can prove prohibitively expensive, charging as much as \$2 per tile. Bill Reaser then asked what if they could provide hexagonal terrain that matches the detail for a tenth of the cost. >>>

>>> The tiles in question will each be created through an injection molding process that can provide stunning detail with machine precision. Each mold design is crafted first by hand from clay before being translated into steel for the full production. Color-infused plastics are then poured into the molds to create the tiles, allowing the construction of finely detailed terrain for minimal cost. The factory for this production will be located right in America and generate jobs for American workers.

Each tile is constructed in two parts; the crown and the base. The tile base is created such that they may press flush to each other. They have indentations allowing them to securely slot on top of each other and make an interlocking terrain as they are stacked. The crowns are slotted on the top-most layer of terrain and provide the ground for figures to move on. They have the additional feature of being able to lock together adjacent terrain bases and have a board that easily stays together and doesn't slide apart. In total, a near seamless hexagonal grid of 3D terrain remains where the art of each tile extends all the way to the edges.

The benefit of the crown design does not stop there. By separating base and crown, additional features and further customization can be

provided. Crowns with opening to the base below can be placed to add further detail, giving the appearance of molten lava of a red base beneath a cracked rock crown. Additional terrain features such as tombstones, trees, and even waterfalls can slot into certain crowns and provide further customization.

While still in its early idea stage, it could be possible to take

tion to spring on your opponent during a match.

Hyground Tiles are even somewhat compatible with Heroscape Tiles. Faced with laws concerning the intellectual property of Heroscape, it is impossible to make fully compatible terrain. While the Hyground tiles are slightly larger, they are nevertheless still able to sit on top of



Members of the Hyground team sit down for a game of Heroscape with the new terrain.

advantage of the crown structure and have "smart" terrain. LEDs could be placed between the base and a crown with slits to illuminate a battlefield. It could even be possible that other electronics could be hidden within solid crowns to detect when a figure is placed on one and react accordingly. Imagine hiding traps on the battlefield during board construc-

Heroscape tiles and slot within the grooves without sliding. They can be placed out to a little more than a large hex tile before the large Hyground tiles start to lock up, although it is still possible to build upward on the placed terrain. Furthermore, a hexagonal mat could always be placed between the two sets of tiles, such as one representing a chasm, to

Hyground Tiles

allow you to literally bridge (below) between the two sets of tiles.

Beyond the tiles themselves, there is additional terrain that can be added to the game board. Hyground Tiles has galleries of designs so far, ranging from trees to tombstones to even an enormous waterfall. What's more, these terrain pieces are designed to allow figures to occupy spaces used by obstacles. Figures can fight in a line-of-sight-blocking forest without losing spaces of the battlefield to the trees. With this additional terrain, epic set pieces can accompany your battles. Heroes can duel across a wooden bridge spanning a

river of lava; archers can fire down at an advancing horde atop elevated treetop walkways; armies can square off over a desert with the enormous bones of a skeletal dragon lying between them, new bodies soon to be offered up to the sands.

ground providing products that gamers want, so with demand they could produce terrain for different genres like sci-fi or modern or expand further on the current set of designs with different tile types and new obstacles for the battlefield. With support, it could be

THESE TERRAIN PIECES ARE DESIGNED TO ALLOW FIGURES TO OCCUPY SPACES USED BY OBSTACLES.

This is just the tip of the iceberg for what Hyground Tiles is able to accomplish. With further interest and support for their tiles, additional themes could be expanded on. Bill Reaser envisions Hy-

possible to have games with Super Heroes fighting on city streets besides cars and buildings or having battles on Alpha Prime with the metallic tiles of the Soulborgs overlaying the ruins of



Hyground's 'chasm' mat allows for combination of both Heroscape and Hyground tiles in one map. It's not a seamless transition, but it's the best way to make the two compatible.

Photo by Hyground Tiles

the Mariedians.

But the 3-D terrain from Hyground is merely a byproduct of what Bill Reaser and his company have planned. Even from his early childhood, Bill has always loved games and loved designing them. He has recently found himself with the opportunity to do what he loves for the rest of his life, and hopes to do so by acting as a local company that makes products the gaming community wants. The vision is to expand beyond only making terrain and becoming a full purpose gaming company that manufactures its own games with all of the bits, makers, dice, and fully painted miniatures. The vision is to be able to provide a miniatures battle game that can fill the void that Heroscape has left behind.

At this stage, many of these ideas are still in development, but rest assured that the work is ongoing. The design for this game has been underway for the past several years and they already have artwork for miniatures. Providing colored miniatures in a cost-effective manner is always a concern but advancement in 3-D printing may make it possible to print colored plastic miniatures for a reasonable price.

Again, Bill Reaser's vision is for a company that makes products the gaming community wants. This message comes through, again and



Obstacles are first hand-sculpted then designed and printed using CAD software, allowing for both realistic texture and precision in production.

again, with their commitment to players. They acknowledge all of the investment players may have put into games like Heroscape and are prepared to provide means of having players use these very miniatures within their game. Cards could be downloaded for free from their site that could fully integrate the Izumi Samurai, for instance, into the game they are developing. If a player would prefer instead to just use all their game pieces for Heroscape, that's always an option.

These plans are not all without their expense. Hyground's first attempt at a Kickstarter campaign fell short of its goal. The goal felt high to many onlookers, but it must be considered that the injection molding process does carry upfront costs. Each steel mold costs about \$10,000 to produce, further escalating costs considering that the crown and base design

require two separate molds to for manufacturing. A second launch is in the works for February or March of 2015, most likely being scaled down in total cost and possibly including the newly designed game envisioned to fill the void of Heroscape.

What is the future of Heroscape? A company is reaching out to the community, offering a new game and product to bring on an influx of new players along with new material to invigorate the game that we love. This organization shows a dedication to gaming and its players, a yearning to provide and expand on a great game. Can we match this commitment with support, to help spread the word and allow this project to flourish? What is the future of Heroscape? ♥

HoSS Interview

Porkins

By Heroscaper Guy

Why did you join HOSS? Did you just want to contribute to a new Heroscapers project? Or did you want to see your favorite Star Wars characters on the Heroscape battlefield?

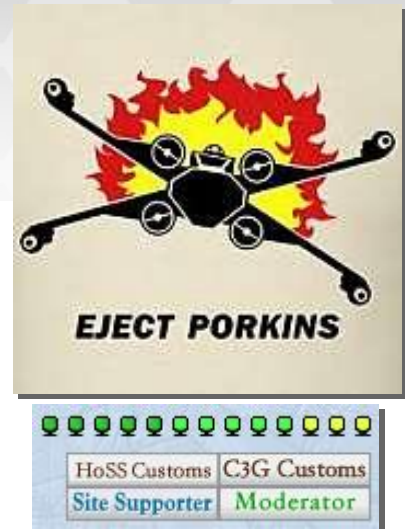
Yes and yes. I joined HoSS back in 2009, not long after I joined HS'ers. At that time I was a complete newbie to custom design, but I have a passion for all things Star Wars, so I enjoyed watching the discussion, and mostly lurking there. We had some of the custom greats working on the project at the time: Batman, Greyowl, Minivann, Necroblade, Granite-M and Balantai, among others. They laid a lot of the groundwork about how Force powers would work and so forth. Then Balantai let me design Princess Leia. This was the first time I had to really think about a character and how to convert that character into stats and powers. I remember thinking about it as I was painting a room at home. Anyway, it has been a lot of fun, and I've been contributing ever since. And now, it has gotten even better since we have gotten

so many designs playtested and released. I really am able to see my favorite characters on the battlefield. Han can shoot Greedo first all day long at my house!

Has your favorite character been released? If so what is it? Or will we not know which character it is until it's been released?

I'm not sure whether you are asking about favorite character, or favorite design, so I'll answer both! Favorite character is probably Han Solo...or maybe Darth Vader, both of which are released and both of which turned out really great. Han definitely ended up as a run and gun, never tell me the odds kind of guy, and Darth Vader is just spot on for the character.

My favorite design is a little tougher. One of my favorites that was my design is Darth Maul. He's sitting in our sanctum right now waiting for his wave to come up. He has seen a little bit of play, but will need to have more testing before he's ready. But I think that Maul/Kenobi duels will be fun. We have also talked about a Naboo Power Generator map to come out with



Darth Maul.

Another design that I really like is a mac122 design: Zam Wesell. She is sort of a dual design, because she works with Assassin Droids, which are a separate card. I just think the combination of Zam's shape-changer ability with the Droids is neat.

What responsibilities do you have in the HOSS sanctum? Designer, playtesting, editing, art, all of the above? A combination of a few of the above?

Designer and Playtester, mostly. We use a project release cycle that is very similar to what C3G/C3V do. Each member drafts characters for which they will be the Lead Designer (LD). The LD leads the discussion through a brainstorming and design phase, then an Initial Playtest which is generally (though not always) run by the LD. After that it is voted to

Public Playtest, though we have been running a lot of those tests ourselves because we aren't getting enough public support.

After reviewing the test results and if everything looks good, we move on to the Final Editing phase. Once we edit the card text, SirGalahad reviews it for us. All of the card artwork is done by mac122, then there is a vote for Release. Once a design passes that, it goes into our On Deck area until release time.

New rules (such as our Destructible Objects Occupancy rules) also go through a similar process. The rulebook artwork is done by White Knight. I think you'll agree that WK has done an incredible job on the rulebooks.

Originally this was Balantai's project and he actively moderated and directed the project. A couple years ago when he kind of left the Heroscapers community, I jumped in and took over that role. However, that responsibility has diminished greatly now because the group of us have been working together for a long time, so we don't really need a project director anymore. We do just about everything by consensus. Release structure and content is also a group consensus thing. The only "direction" I really do anymore is to run the draft thread where we consider and draft upcoming designs to LD.



Porkins created the Rebel Shield Generator destructible object to fit in with Hoth-themed HoSS maps.

Do you have a message you would like to spread about HOSS to the community at large?

PLAYTESTERS ARE AWESOME! and our only hope... for making a dent in the long list of characters we want to release. We hope you will all drop by and run a test for us now and then.

Finally, what is your favorite storyline in the Star Wars universe? It could be from the movies, books, TV shows, etc.

My absolute favorite is a hard call to make, so I'll just list some that would be in the running: The Heir to the Empire series by Timothy Zahn is really great, and HoSS has plans for some of those characters to make their appearance. I also like the Han Solo Trilogy by A.C. Crispin, which gives Han Solo's backstory up until

Ep. IV.

The Empire Strikes Back is my favorite of the movies. I think the Hoth Adventure Pack we recently released really brought that part of the movie home. And even though Ep. II was not my favorite movie, I am nonetheless excited to have a bunch of different Jedi and some Clones on my Heroscape battlefield slicing through armies of Battle Droids. We've got that plus lots more stuff in store (e.g. - Fetts, Pigs, Pits (actually, just one Pit), Demolition Charges, Crime Lords, Thugs, Teddy Bears with bows, Spies, Giant Monsters, and more). We hope you'll enjoy it! 🐾

What we know about the new

MAGIC: THE GATHERING BOARD GAME

(and what we don't)

by El T

Wizards of the Coast, the Hasbro offshoot known best by 'scapers as the company that took over production of Heroscape from fellow Hasbro subsidiary Milton Bradley in 2008, has been sitting on the Heroscape copyright since the game's discontinuation in 2010. The four years following the end of Heroscape saw no signs of a resurrection. Many 'scapers moved on, while many others stuck around to see the game through its next era.

Now, in a stunning and highly buzzed-about turn of events, Wizards of the Coast is dusting off the old hex tiles and announcing a new Heroscape spinoff, this time featuring characters and storylines from their wildly popular Magic: The Gathering franchise. Here's what we know so far...

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>>> The new game, unlike the Dungeons and Dragons line of Heroscape products, will be repackaged as an entirely distinct game, independent from both Heroscape as well as the Magic card game. At present, Wizards is calling it simply Magic: The Gathering Strategy Board Game — the official name will be released at a later date.

Heading the design team is the one and only Craig Van Ness, the main designer of Heroscape. Van Ness is one of the biggest names in board game design, having worked on countless games for Hasbro since the mid-90s. Whether one looks at it from the standpoint of a Heroscape fan or not, Heroscape is quite arguably his greatest accomplishment to date. Magic will be the biggest game he's designed in quite a while.

Joining Van Ness on the design team is Ethan Fleischer, a Wizards of the Coast designer for the Magic: The Gathering card game. He's been on the design team of numerous Magic expansion sets, and is the lead designer of Commander 2014 Edition, set to release in early November. Fleischer obviously brings extensive experience with Magic to

the table, and Van Ness obviously brings his entire background of creating and designing Heroscape, so the final product should turn out to be an interesting mix of the two.

So far, most everything that is known about the game is quite uncertain, since the release is project-

is headed, and what one can reasonably anticipate from it.

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The board game generally follows the same basic premise of the card game, where a being known as a Planeswalker commands an army of lesser figures. In the board game, the

Planeswalker is a physical figure that begins the game on the board and summons his army. Five planeswalkers will be included in the game, one of which has yet to be revealed. The other four are Chandra Nalaar, Jace Beleren, Nissa Revane (left), and Liliana Vess, all existing characters in the card game.

The planeswalkers seem to be analogous to flagbearers in Heroscape, where each represents a certain faction (in the case of the planeswalkers, colors, or types of mana) and provide some sort of synergy with units of their respective faction. Planeswalkers,

however, are a far more integral and powerful part of an army.

Planeswalkers each come with their own deck of spell cards. These generally serve the same purpose as Magic cards and feature many of the same spells, but are adapted to fit the three-dimensional game and its mechanics. For example, the red spell card



Planeswalkers such as Nissa Revane serve as the foundation and commander of an army.

ed for Fall 2015 — optimistically, GenCon 2015. An entire year of further design and preparation is ahead, so the game released will doubtlessly look and play quite differently from what was showcased last month at the Internationale Spieltage SPIEL fair in Germany. However, what we've seen gives us a pretty good idea of where the game

Magic: The Gathering Strategy Board Game

of Dual Casting also appears in the board game, allowing the caster to replicate a certain spell's effects on another target.

As previously mentioned, the planeswalker is the base unit of a player's army. It begins the game alone on the board, and summons its supporting squads during the battle. This dynamic generally functions the same way as it does in the card game, where the player is considered to be a planeswalker that summons his

cards to the game. Iskra Esenwein and her ability to summon the Retchets of Bogdan is a handy analog from Heroscape.

The concepts of planeswalkers, spells, and summoning are what make the board game uniquely "Magic," that is, an accurate three-dimensional interpretation of the card game. However, as we're comparing this new Magic board game with its obvious archetype of Heroscape, that's about where the

dissimilarities between the two end.

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What grabs the eye right off the bat is the hexagonal tile format of the board. Even the edge shape of the original Heroscape hexes is replicated exactly. In the Magic board game, however, the base hexes are not actually individual tiles but are put together in large mats, each 6 hexes wide and 8 hexes long. The mats use a more rough interlocking system, as is visible in the image below (on the



BoardGameGeek.com tweeted this shot of Magic's setup last month at the Spiel trade fair in Essen, Germany.

mats themselves, the Heroscape-style edge shape of the hexes is purely ornamental). The mats make board setup quicker than Heroscape, while sacrificing a certain amount of customizability.

This element may suggest a decrease in the emphasis placed on figures' interactions with terrain, focusing the game more around the figures' interactions with each other. Heroscape, in contrast, finds a certain balance between the former and latter interactions with its highly customizable terrain and emphasis on terrain rules like height advantage and water movement. It'd make a lot of sense for the designers to keep the terrain's influence on the game relatively low, since their primary market is comprised of current players of Magic that are used to not having any terrain or three-dimensional character interaction at all. That said, the game will also attract fans of three-dimensional games like Heroscape and Warhammer 40k (a game that has a lesser emphasis on terrain interactions, but involves extensive three-dimensional figure interaction) because of its physical terrain and figures.

Digressions aside, further parallels between Heroscape and the Magic Strategy Game abound. Actual repainted Heroscape tiles were also included in the display at Spiel. These tiles are unable to lock into the mats like they would other Heroscape tiles, since the mats are

completely flat, but they are nevertheless employed to add elevation to the board. Initially, there was due speculation about their compatibility with original Heroscape tiles, since Wizards had re-scaled them before for a different product, but Tom Vasel of The Dice Tower tried out the game at Essen and reassures us that the tiles are fully compatible with Heroscape. "... on top of [the board] there are some Heroscape tiles," Vasel recounts in a recent Dice Tower podcast.

"That is what they are, exactly the same ... And I asked if you could use Heroscape terrain with this and the answer is 'yes, you could.'"

Also visible in the photo above are glyphs — Magic designer James D'Aloisio used the same word in an interview with BoardGameGeek.com — that presumably function in much the same way as glyphs do in Heroscape. While the actual functions of the Magic glyphs may differ from those in Heroscape, (with the potential inclusion of powers that affect mechanics like summoning, spells, et cetera) the basic premise of the glyphs will likely be the exact same: to incentivize locations on the board



Jace Beleren's army card displays the numerous elements of Heroscape cards adapted for Magic: Attack, Life, Range, Cost, Hit Zone, Size, et cetera.

and create more interesting objectives during the battle.

In terms of game mechanics, the Magic board game appears to be nearly identical to Heroscape. For starters, each squad or hero has its own army card — again, the terminology used by D'Aloisio to describe the cards — that displays its stats and special abilities.

Taking a closer look at the Magic army card (right), it seems as though it's just a Heroscape army card rearranged into a rectangular shape. Basic characteristics like the figure's name, faction (shown as a blue water drop above the life value on Jace's card), size, class, and species are all

Magic: The Gathering Strategy Board Game

present. In addition, enumerated statistics like life, attack, defense, move, and range are shown. All generally function in the same way as in Heroscape.

Jace's card, like all other Magic army cards, also displays a hit zone diagram, highlighting targetable regions in dark gray and identifying the point the figure targets from in green. It's a safe assumption that line of sight will function identically to line of sight in Heroscape.

Finally, the card includes the character's special abilities, again mirroring Heroscape cards. Jase Beleren's card, for example, even features Counter Strike, a relatively common power among Heroscape units. As with glyphs, special abilities in the new game will likely feature many similar powers to those in Heroscape, with the exception of added abilities pertaining to unique mechanics of the Magic game.

All these parallels make a lot of sense for Wizards of the Coast. They clearly want to expand the appeal of their already popular Magic franchise to board gamers, and they are still in possession of a highly adaptable board game in Heroscape. It's also a smart business move on their part to downgrade the quality of the game's parts.

However, it's a little harder to answer how the connection was drawn to begin with. Was Craig Van Ness tapped for the design team because the Wizards

execs already envisioned a Heroscape spinoff? Or did Van Ness suggest paralleling his creation after he was chosen for the team? Ultimately, the answer won't matter substantially in terms of the game's final design, but it's an interesting question about the "politics" of Heroscape.

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As one might expect, the news of the Magic game has already caused quite a stir in the Heroscapers community. Within two weeks of its posting in the forums, the thread discussing the game drew over 380 posts and nearly 13,000 views. The discussion on Boardgamegeek.com's Heroscape forum hit 80 posts over the same period of time. Other sites and social media are likewise abuzz over what Tom Vasel calls "Heroscape 2.0."

The first and most obvious reason many 'scapers are getting hyped about the union of Magic and Heroscape is, quite simply, because many are fans of both games. Magic and Heroscape are both wildly popular fantasy games, so it stands to reason that the two fan bases will overlap. A few 'scapers have already bridged the gap between the games with custom Heroscape cards for Magic characters.

Additionally, the resurrection of the good ol' hex tiles is exciting for fans of Heroscape disappointed by the game's apparent failure four years ago. It seems clear that Wizards of the Coast still thinks Heroscape is a marketable game, at least in terms

of mechanics alone. Wizards has shown in the past that it wants to "focus their business efforts on their core brands," as stated in their Q&A after discontinuing Heroscape in 2010. Thus, we have to look at their use of Heroscape not as an independent game that they no longer thought was marketable, but rather as a tool for furthering their existing brands like Dungeons & Dragons or Magic. Purists can't be happy about Wizards' handling of Heroscape in that sense, but it's a certain amount of comfort that it wasn't necessarily the game in itself that failed.

Finally, and more importantly, the release of the Magic board game means more terrain and figures ready for integration into Heroscape as customs. 'Scapers are always looking for new stuff to add to their battles, and Magic's figures and terrain are to-scale and easy to customize. There's even been talk on Heroscapers of releasing C3V's very first terrain expansion.

Now, it's imperative that I pause once more to present the cautious reminder that the projected release is just shy of a year away, and that leaves room for a lot of change. The mechanics and overall look of the game can change for the better, for the worse, or not at all. However, what we do know and what we can predict about the game is promising, or at least interesting. Indeed, only time will tell how Magic shapes the legacy of Heroscape. ♡

C3V Unit Strategy

Ulfrid Hornwrangler

By Taeblewalker

Jandar saw what Aquilla was doing and got in on the act of summoning Dwarves. He chose a tough Dwarf who can withstand massive punishment and can dish it out as well. Ulfrid's shield can block almost any attack, and his tenacity for punishing his foes with a relentless assault is legendary. But under the wrong circumstances, the tough old Dwarf can wear himself out completely. Let's take a look and see how to best employ Ulfrid in your army.



ANALYSIS

Each unit is complex, and must be well analyzed to be truly understood. We'll begin with their cost. By cost, we refer mostly to the value in points, but also to its importance in your army. To simplify analysis, we'll use Agatagary's chess piece nomenclature.

CLASS

Ulfrid Hornwrangler is a Knight Class unit. He is best used to take out a higher cost hero with his special attack. Ulfrid should be protected until he can be used for this purpose. If played right, he can

take out more than his points in a single turn. But if he is lost, the game is not necessarily over, since you will likely have another 400 or so points in your army (depending on army size) with which to try to win the game.

To examine Ulfrid Hornwrangler's core stats, we will break them up into two categories – offensive ability and survivability.

OFFENSE

Ulfrid's normal attack is average. He fits in with the Axegrinders of Burning Forge with which he bonds, giving them a fifth attack of 3 per

order marker. His threat range is normal for a melee hero. However, if you can pit him against a high cost hero, he can do massive damage with his special attack. Used this way, he is a great offensive secret weapon that can demolish many different heroes, even if he knocks himself down to one or two Life in the process.

SURVIVABILITY

Shields of Valor gives him a decent chance to survive long enough to bring his special attack to bear. If you bond with the Axegrinders, you can set them up as a

Ulfrid Hornwrangler

screen that will let Ulfrid work his way around enemy swarming units and eventually lock horns with his intended target. His survivability is generally good unless you let him get tied down by cheap squad figures which can whittle him away in spite of his defensive bonus. Try to keep him mobile and on target for his intended victim.

GENERAL STRATEGY

Ulfrid Hornwrangler is best paired up with the Axegrinders of Burning Forge. He bonds with them, and you can take best advantage of your order markers this way. But how you do it is important. One strategy is to simply use Ulfrid as a fifth activation, using his normal attack to bring the number of attacks per order marker to five. If you are dealing primarily with a squad army, then this can work as well as any such combination (Knights of Weston plus a Human Champion, Ninth Roman Legion plus a Warlord, etc.). The bonding gambit allows you to match your opponent's swarming army and hopefully take them out as quickly as they come.

Ulfrid's survivability makes him a better choice for this tactic than, say, Darrak Ambershard. However, for only ten points more, you can use this same strategy with Migol Ironwill, who gets an effective Attack of 4 without risking his life in the process. Ulfrid's Grim

Determination Special Attack does let him get that Attack of 4, but it places him at risk of not destroying the squad figure and thus losing a life (though he gets to attack again).

If you are using Ulfrid in this anti-squad gambit, then save the special attack for really important targets. You might, for example, use it

this case, using the special attack might be in order. An example would be if a high Defense squad figure is on height and blocking the advance of your army toward an important target like Raelin the Kyrie Warrior of Kato Katsuro. As long as you think you have a decent chance of taking that squad figure out with



Ulfrid Hornwrangler works best in an army of Axegrinders, and is most effective at targeting your opponent's important heroes.

against a fairly expensive and high defense squad figure like a Minion of Utgar, one who, if left alive, can do serious damage with Deadly Strike. Other times you might find a particular squad figure is blocking the way with really good battlefield positioning, and you want to have the best chance of taking that figure out. In

one or two rolls of the dice, then go for it, and move on ahead afterward toward your more important target.

This last point brings us to what Ulfrid is best at - taking out high priority unique heroes. You can set up a screen of Dwarves to let Ulfrid sneak his way around enemy squads and get to a juicy target, or you can

throw him into the mix as described above and let him fight his way through. Either way, you should throw Ulfrid at high priced targets at the earliest opportunity, and let them have it with Grim Determination Special Attack. Raelin is an excellent choice for this tactic, since taking her out weakens your opponent's defenses significantly. Other cheerleading units like Kato Katsuro, Venoc Warlord, Sir Gilbert and Spartacus are likewise good targets for this

attack multiple figures at once, throwing Ulfrid at him can save you army from a devastating turn.

Lone heroes can still pose a threat. Moltenclaw, Eltahale, Major Q9, Major Q10 and Kaemon Awa are all examples of heroes that can operate just fine without any bonding. They can each do major damage to your army. If you can send in Ulfrid to pound them into oblivion with his special attack, you will have taken out a major threat and killed

Theracus. Then, drop him near your opponent's start zone and have him take on a prime target early in the game. It will cost you 140 points, but if you can get the drop on Spartacus, Venoc Warlord or a similarly juicy target right in the beginning, it will be worth it, especially if Ulfrid manages to kill his target. He will likely be killed himself shortly thereafter, being in the midst of the enemy, but he might just last long enough to take another turn or two, attacking someone else and further weakening your opponent before he even has a chance to mobilize his army.

PRIME TARGETS FOR GRIM DETERMINATION ARE IMPORTANT BONDING HEROES.

tactic, especially since they take up so many points in your opponent's army. Taking them out early means significantly lowering your opponent's offensive capabilities, which will give you an edge for the rest of the game.

Other prime targets for Grim Determination are important bonding heroes that come forward to wreak havoc on your army. After weakening Krug with your Axegrinders, you can move in and finish him off with Ulfrid. Mimring might be leading the charge instead in your opponent's Arrow Grut army, and he has the same poor defense as Krug with less life. Send in Ulfrid to smash him into oblivion before he has a chance to Fireline your army to ashes. Against a different sort of Orc, you might be facing the powerful Ogre Warhulk. Since he can

more than Ulfrid's points to boot.

There is the possibility that Ulfrid will kill himself once he starts using Grim Determination. He might whiff on the dice and keep taking wounds as he attacks again and again. But chances are, even if he doesn't actually destroy his target, he will seriously weaken it before he dies himself. Thus his sacrifice will not be in vain, as his 100 point loss might cost your opponent more than 100 points in wounds to his beloved hero. Send in the Axegrinders to finish what Ulfrid started.

OPTIONAL STRATEGIES

Theracus: Even if you draft Ulfrid without the Axegrinders or want to send him far ahead early in the game, he can be effective. Spend an order marker or two carrying Ulfrid with

UNITS TO AVOID

Ranged squads: If you are going to put Ulfrid in harm's way against these squads, you need to move him in quickly before they can cut him down. His Shields of Valor will protect him for a while, but the best way to move past such a force is with the Theracus gambit described above. Don't let Ulfrid get pincushioned by 4th Massachusetts Line or frenzying Aubrien Archers. 🗡️

For more information, read the Book of Ulfrid Hornwrangler on Heroscapers.com.

Link: [The Book of Ulfrid Hornwrangler](#)

'Scaper of the Month

November 2014: Flame Gryphon

By Fi Skirata

PROFILE

Who are you, really?
Ben Ellis.

How old are you?

18.

What is your occupation?

College student - Computer engineering, with a focus on biomedical applications.

What other interests do you have?

Fencing, music, hikes, any horror movies/games/shows, and pretty much anything else that involves me making something.

What's another board game you enjoy and why?

So, so very many... Probably Arkham Horror and Smash Up are two of the ones I play the most.

Who, or what, is your avatar, and how did you come up with your username?

From back in ye olden days, when I was even younger than I am now, my dad was setting up my first email. I wanted "flamedragon"

because I was a little obsessed, but it obviously wasn't available, so I went with the next best thing. Really not an amazing story, I know. :p My current avatar is a firefighting smurf.



HEROSCAPE

When and how did you get into Heroscape?

I randomly saw the first Master Set in a Target one day, and I've been hooked ever since.

What is your favorite aspect of Heroscape?

The different themes and worlds all these characters are from.

To whom is your allegiance and why?

Probably Einar or Vydar now, although it's been a while and I remember being a huge fan of Ullar back in the day.

Who is your favorite Unique Squad and why?

It's been a loooooong time since I've played Classic, but in C3G I would probably say the Elite League Assassins.

When and how did you get involved with C3G?

After an unfortunate incident with a CoN game, I took a pretty long hiatus from Heroscapers. When I came back, C3G had already started up. I heard good things about it, and eventually ended up getting caught up in it, and started playtesting.

Who is your favorite C3G hero and why?

Hawkman. Because it's a blast to hawk-nuke an enemy figure who harmed Hawkgirl and is a distance away.

What part of C3G do you like the most and why?

Their willingness to put up with my busy lazy a**.:p

What is your favorite special ability and why?

"It's All a Joke" on Comedian. And because it brings across the entire feel of the character, as well as the Watchmen in general.

What is your favorite map and why?

Sewer Labyrinth, and because I can actually make the bloody thing with what few map parts I have.

COMMUNITY

What do you enjoy most about Heroscapers.com?

The sense of community, and the drive to improve on what was there before.

Describe your favorite Heroscape moment.

Introducing friends to it, or whenever I get to use figures I've designed.

Is there any member of Heroscapers.com you'd really like to play against?

A3n. Because, frankly, after the amount of time it's taken me to get cards in due to college, I get the feeling there's some well-deserved pent-up frustration there on his part. :p

All joking aside, a match with japes, A3n, Tickle, and Scape-mage would be awesome.

LIE DETECTOR

1. My original college plan was to get a Masters in interpretive dance.
2. I was an extra on a Marvel studios movie.
3. I totally have an uncle whose friend totally has a nephew that works at Atari for real guys
4. I almost got in major trouble when I accidentally leaked a power for a C3G character I had never seen.

THREE FUN FAVORITES

Favorite Book:

Too many to mention. Recently I've been reading the Foundation trilogy by Isaac Asimov for the first time,

but I'm not sure I could name a *favorite* book.

Favorite Superhero:

So, so many questions... I would probably say Superman, or Flycatcher from Fables. Both for the same reason, one of my biggest problems with most forms of media these days is they tend to go for the "gritty for no reason" route - Even Fables annoys me with that, even though I love it to death. Both of these characters tend to just be plain ol' good. No dark twisted past, nothing like that. They're just good, and they help people because they like to help people. :shrug:

Favorite Movie:

Evil Dead 2. Perfect blend of the dark twistedness of Evil Dead 1, and the campy glory that was Army of Darkness.

CLOSING

What message do you have for the 'Scaper community?

If a C3G wave is late and it's already past playtesting, chances are it's my fault and I am so very sorry. ;)

Whom do you pick for the next 'Scaper of the Month?

Hmm... let's say japes.

Thanks again for your time! ☺



Flame Gryphon took the lead on C3G's Yellow Lantern, among others.

Heart of Vengeance

Chapter 2 of 5: Vengeance of the Father

By The Grim Reaper's Friend

Grut, third year of the Third Age

Much had changed since Grimnak had come to power. No longer was Ragnak a small rebel, determined to make Grimnak pay for the death of his father. No longer was his village beaten, silently paying what Grimnak demanded. And no longer was Ragnak a young orc, easily ignored by those with power.

Grimnak still ruled. His armies still threatened and raided villages. He still slew any who stood in his way. But Grimnak was a tyrant, a tyrant with enemies. And as with any tyrant, one of those enemies would someday rise up and strike him down.

"Noool!" Ragnak's bloodcurdling cry echoed throughout the village, wrenching many an orc from sleep.

Ragnak leapt from his bed, his hand convulsively finding the haft of an axe. His eyes frantically searched the darkness for his foe. His breath came in short gasps, his heart hammering frantically against his ribs. He had been so sure that time, so sure that Grimnak was near, within reach of his blade.

Ragnak collapsed onto the ground, the memory of his dream still imprinted painfully on his mind. He could see it clearly, as if its events had happened but a minute ago. His father, gasping his last, blood pooling beneath him. Ragnak shuddered. His fury slipped from him, leaving him shaking, cold, frightened by what he had seen. A cold sweat began to drench him. Nearly every night he awoke thus, haunted by his father, Grimnak mocking him from the shadows.

"Ragnak?" Aderra's voice floated questioningly out of the darkness. Her hand found his shoulder, its warmth spreading to him, soothing his tense muscles, slowing his rapid breathing. "It's all right, Ragnak. I'm here. I'm with you."

Aderra. She had been kind to him. She had understood. Ragnak put a hand over hers. He could not have chosen a better wife. She was the companion that he needed.

He felt Aderra slide to the ground beside him. Her presence was comforting. "Your father again?" she asked quietly.

Ragnak nodded silently, forgetting that Aderra could not see him in the darkness. "I see him every night," he whispered, staring straight in front of him. Silence surrounded them.

Aderra moved closer, but said nothing. She didn't need to. She calmed Ragnak simply by being near him.

"Grimnak will pay," said Ragnak quietly. "For over two years my father has haunted my dreams. I will avenge his death. I will not stop until Grimnak is dead, no matter what he may throw in my path."

"Ragnak," Aderra said, her voice quavering with worry as it always did when he talked of his quest, "Grimnak is powerful. He could kill you."

Ragnak touched her shoulder. Her skin had gone cold. He could just make out her eyes through the

darkness, filled with concern and fear. The burning fury against Grimnak that had filled him but a moment ago melted away. He had frightened her again. “Don’t worry, Aderra,” he said, drawing her closer, his voice softening. “Grimnak cannot harm me. I will kill him easily and quickly when the time comes. My Heart will see to that.”

Aderra stretched out a hand and rested it against the demon Heart on Ragnak’s chest. Her hand looked small and pale against its feverish red glow. “I pray that this Heart will keep you safe. I pray that it will return you to me at the end of each day, whole and uninjured.”

The Heart brightened slightly under her touch, as if acknowledging her words. “It will,” murmured Ragnak. “It will heal me from any injury. By its power, I will slay Grimnak.”

Aderra looked up at him. “When the time comes, Ragnak,” she whispered, searching his face, “when you must face Grimnak... stay safe.”

Ragnak held her tightly. “I will,” he whispered. “I will.”

As sleep slowly found Ragnak again that night, he knew that he would confront Grimnak soon. In fact, they both knew it. The slaying of a demon does not go unnoticed on Grut. Grimnak knew perfectly well that Ragnak now possessed the demon Heart. That was why he was reluctant to challenge him. The owner of such an item was nigh invincible.

Ragnak’s village had not paid Grimnak for months. Sooner or later, he would have to march in with his army, and when he did, Ragnak would be ready, waiting for him, prepared to finally avenge the death of his father. The entire village was counting on Ragnak to defend them. If he failed, they would all suffer, his family more so than most.

But Ragnak would not fail. He had fashioned two deadly axes from the legs of the demon he had slain. Their heads were wide and sharp, and the hafts tapered down to wicked points, making the weapons serve as both axe and sword. Armor, made from the bones of the demon and nearly indestructible, would cover Ragnak, reaching as far as his eyes. And if Grimnak did manage to wound him, Ragnak’s Heart would heal his injury, fueling his strength.

Ragnak would not fail.

Not far away, similar thoughts ran through Grimnak’s mind. Accompanied by a massive army, he lay encamped five miles from Ragnak’s village. They would strike the next day, and Grimnak knew that Ragnak would be waiting for him. He would have but one chance to defeat him, one chance to take the Heart as his own. If he failed, Ragnak would kill him, and all would be lost. Grimnak did not intend to fail either.

The next day dawned hot and clear, though clouds of red smoke drifted across the sky, blown about by the ever-present volcanoes. Ragnak’s village awoke. It was another normal day. No fiends had attacked them since Ragnak had slain the demon, and marauding orcs gave them a wide berth, knowing full well what would await them if they attacked.

Though the village had no need of a leader, the orcs all respected and looked up to Ragnak as the natural chief. The one in charge was usually the orc who had won the most fights, and slaying a demon counted for a lot. Chief or not, however, Ragnak still had to fight to survive, just like any other orc. He and Aderra both had to find enough food to feed themselves and their small daughter, Kira. If they did not, they would starve.

Unfortunately, Kira, being not even a year old, could not be left by herself in a village full

Vengeance of the Father

of orcs. No one was quite stupid enough to harm the daughter of Ragnak, but she would have no defense if Grimnak or other orcs came.

Therefore, Ragnak had arranged for a young orc by the name of Berog to watch over her during his absences. In return, he would be given a share of food. Berog would not be much use against Grimnak, but he could hide Kira, which would be all that was needed.

Ragnak and Aderra went further from the village than usual that day. The 'saur and other animals had learned that they did not survive long too close to the village, and so kept moving further and further away. Unfortunately, as Ragnak contented himself with smaller game, Grimnak's army drew steadily nearer his daughter.

They arrived by midday. Grimnak had changed since the last time Ragnak had dueled him. He had found and trained a terrible 'saur which stood on two feet and possessed a maw capable of devouring an orc in a single bite. Now possessing a bow and an axe to add to his collection of weapons, Grimnak was more dangerous than ever.

Most of his army was mounted on raptors, the fastest and most common 'saur on Grut. They ranged from dull green to gray to dull blue, and each could gut an orc with a single swipe from the terrible talons on their feet. To increase the danger, each carried an orc, fitted with full armor and carrying a sword and shield. Most of the swords were so thick that they easily doubled as axes, and the edges of the shields were so sharp that they could easily cut flesh. Grimnak's army was not one accustomed to losing.

Grimnak's terrible 'saur – a *Beberon* as the orcs called it, being unfamiliar with the names bestowed by other worlds – easily kicked in the main gate to Ragnak's village. His army poured in without resistance. The village was helpless when Ragnak wasn't there to defend it.

Grimnak set his soldiers collecting debts, preferably in the most violent way possible. He then tortured the location of Ragnak's house out of several orcs, and collecting a guard of ten soldiers, kicked down its door and went inside.

All was quiet in the dark house. Feeling certain that Ragnak was not here, Grimnak ordered his soldiers to set fire to the place, confident that the smoke would draw Ragnak to him. What he did not expect as he looked in the last of the rooms, however, was to be struck in the face with a club.

Berog rushed past him, frantically trying to escape the house before the soldiers caught him, Kira clutched tightly to his chest like his most prized possession. She remained completely silent, as if she sensed the urgency of the situation. Most unfortunately, Grimnak, used to such blows, caught Berog around the middle and flung him back down to the ground.

"What is this?" he hissed, spotting Kira in his arms. He knelt on Berog, thus effectively holding him in place, and carefully pried Kira from his grasp. She let loose a wail as she felt his unfamiliar grasp, a wail that was heard by every orc outside the house as well as in.

The cry was also heard by Ragnak, who, unknown to Grimnak, had come back early and had just finished dispatching every soldier he met on his way to the house.

A maniacal light kindled in Grimnak's eyes as he looked down on Kira. Perhaps he would not have to fight Ragnak at all. He had lost his father; surely he would not sacrifice his daughter as well? He had just decided that the battle was already won, when a cry from one of his soldiers outside alerted him.

Ragnak bounded into the house, his blades dripping blue orc blood, just as Grimnak whirled around, his sword in one hand, Kira clutched tightly in the other. She let out another wail.

“Stop now, Ragnak,” Grimnak rumbled, holding the sword threateningly close to Kira. “Lay down your weapons, and give the demon Heart to me, or I kill your daughter. And I can assure you it will be painful.”

Ragnak had not chosen Berog lightly. He was quite young, but he was strong and fast for his age, and he improvised well. He would be able to get out of most tight situations. That was why Ragnak glanced at him as Grimnak held a sword to his daughter’s throat. Berog, unseen by Grimnak, nodded silently.

Ragnak threw back his head and laughed.

Grimnak faltered. This was not what he had been expecting.

“My daughter?” said Ragnak, his apparent mirth subsiding. “You really think that I would leave my daughter alone for you to find, Grimnak? This is not even my home. This village is loyal to me. They will never give you true information. You will never find my family.”

Grimnak’s brow furrowed. “This is not your daughter?” he hissed, his visage darkening. “Very well. I will kill as many as I have to in order to get to you.” And with that he swung the sword at Kira’s head.

Berog leapt up in an instant and latched onto Grimnak’s arm with all the eagerness of an oversized leech. The sword stroke missed, due to Berog’s weight, and Ragnak, springing forward, slammed his fist into Grimnak, knocking him off balance. He swung his other arm into the one holding Kira, loosing her, and deftly caught her before she had fallen three inches. Berog whipped away from Grimnak, and, Ragnak delivering Kira to him, dashed out the door before anyone could stop him. Then the battle began.

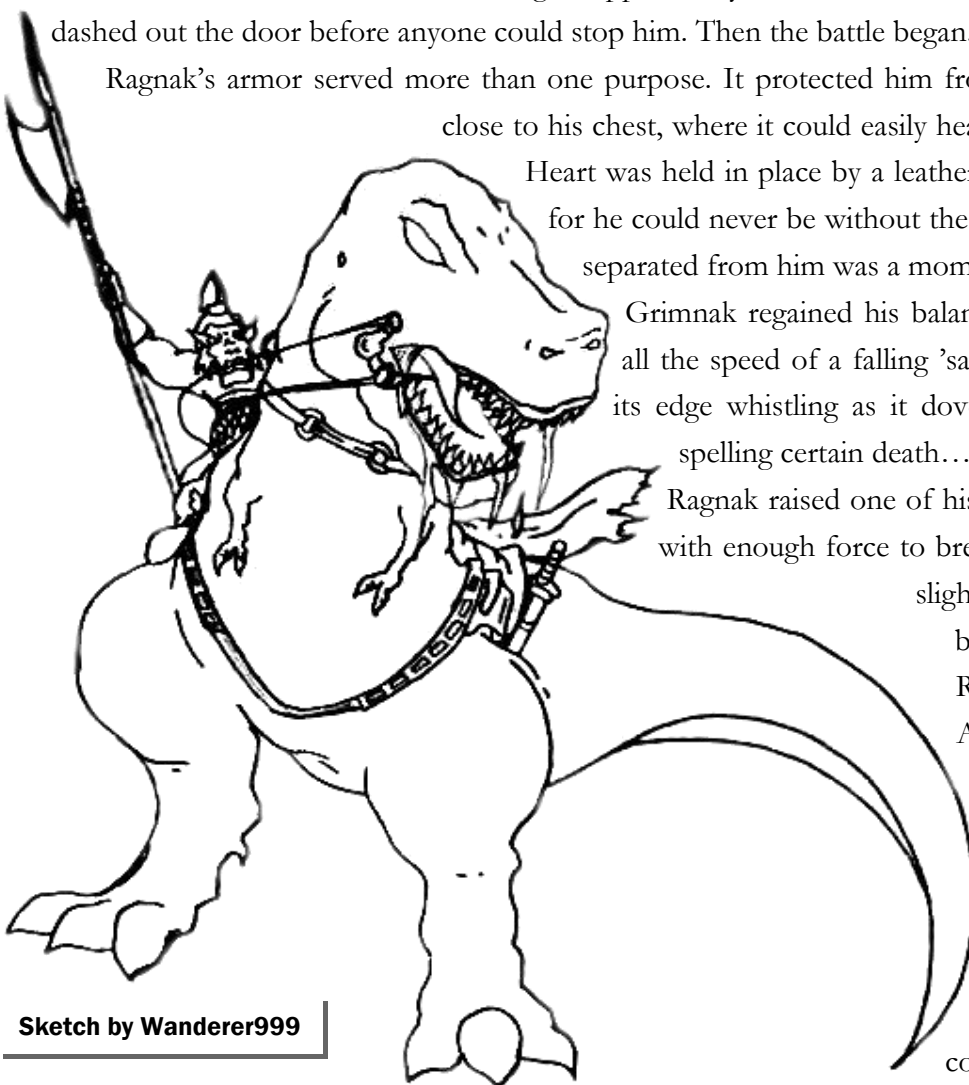
Ragnak’s armor served more than one purpose. It protected him from injury, but it also held the Heart close to his chest, where it could easily heal him should he ever need it to. The Heart was held in place by a leather strap that Ragnak wore at all times, for he could never be without the Heart. Every moment the Heart was separated from him was a moment he was vulnerable.

Grimnak regained his balance and surged towards Ragnak with all the speed of a falling ’saur. His sword sliced through the air, its edge whistling as it dove down towards him, its keen edge spelling certain death...

Ragnak raised one of his axes. The sword struck the weapon with enough force to break a stone, and bounced off, dented slightly. Grimnak staggered backwards, but quickly recovered. He swung at Ragnak from the side.

Another axe met his blow. This time the sword let loose a terrible hollow clang as it rebounded off of the bone. Another blow like that and it would snap in two.

Grimnak hissed, his face murderous, which was appropriate. Since he could not cleave



Sketch by Wanderer999

Vengeance of the Father

Ragnak from head to foot, he satisfied himself with suddenly leaping forward, and kicking Ragnak to the ground.

At least such was his plan. All that he actually accomplished was to severely bruise his foot against Ragnak's armor and lose his balance again. However, the true fight was yet to begin.

With a roar worthy of Grimnak's expression, the *Beheron* burst through the wall, trampling it into the ground. Ragnak tried to get out of the way, but he wasn't quite fast enough. The 'saur's head lunged forward and slammed into him, knocking him through the next wall into a pile of five soldiers.

They set on him immediately, woefully ignorant of who they were attacking. By the time they were dead, however, Grimnak was atop his mount, and was already seeking Ragnak out with his monstrous spear.

Ragnak waited until the spear came close enough, and then grabbed it. Grimnak tried to jerk it back, which was exactly what Ragnak had been hoping for. He allowed himself to be lifted off of the floor, leaping towards Grimnak.

The sudden weight on the spear caused Grimnak to fall forwards. He let go of the spear, but remained in the saddle, Ragnak's axe just barely missing him. The *Beheron's* jaws snapped shut inches from Ragnak's head, and he had to dive to one side to avoid being kicked by one of its legs. Unfortunately, he got up a little too soon, and the 'saur's massive tail slammed into him, throwing him through another wall.

Ragnak came up in a pile of three more soldiers, who attacked him instantly, raining blows down upon his armor. He got up beneath their ferocious attack, beheading them as he did so. One was observant enough to strike at his head, but missed. Ragnak decapitated him half a second later.

The *Beheron* joined in the fight once again, kicking Ragnak against the wall, which broke, allowing daylight into the darkened room. Grimnak sank his long axe into Ragnak, searching desperately for a weak spot in the armor. There was none.

Ragnak grabbed the axe and deftly snapped it in two against one of his weapons. He leapt at Grimnak, but the *Beheron* turned and slammed into him with its side, knocking him cleanly out of the house.

Ragnak rolled as he landed, coming up in the dust on his feet. "You can't win," Grimnak!" he bellowed as the 'saur lunged after him. "You killed my father, and now you must suffer his vengeance!"

Grimnak shot an arrow at him. The arrow bounced off of Ragnak's armor, leaving no impression whatsoever. Ragnak avoided another kick from the *Beheron*, and then sank his axe into its hide, pulling himself up by it. The 'saur roared in pain and staggered forwards.

"I killed your father," roared Grimnak, swinging his sword at Ragnak's unprotected head, "and I'll kill you as I killed him – slowly and painfully!" And then he lunged forwards, his fingers scrabbling madly against the demon Heart, which was only half covered by the armor.

It was at the moment that the Heart slipped, at the moment when Grimnak loosed it from its place, that Ragnak suddenly realized how much he relied on it. Grimnak was the more skilled. Without the Heart, Ragnak would be dead in a matter of minutes. The Heart was his life.

Ragnak seized Grimnak's arms and twisted them. The fingers temporarily stopped grasping at the Heart, and Ragnak took the opportunity to fall forward, forcing it back into its place against the hide of the 'saur.

Grimnak wrenched his arms free of Ragnak and punched him in the head. Ragnak's vision flickered. Grimnak punched him again. Ragnak swayed dangerously upon the 'saur. However, as Grimnak prepared to strike a third time, a single drop of blood appeared on Ragnak's brow.

Instantly, the Heart exploded into a display of black and red magic, its arcane arms whipping about, focus-

ing on Ragnak's head, restoring his vision. Grimnak, distracted by the magic, was not prepared when Ragnak, fully restored, slammed his own fist into him. Grimnak lost his balance and fell from the saddle, where his stumbling *Beheron* promptly stepped on him. A good deal of Grimnak's bones cracked.

Ragnak landed on the ground, feeling the magic from the Heart racing in his veins. It empowered him against fatigue, urging him ever onwards, giving him the power to exact his vengeance.

He casually struck the back of the *Beheron's* foot with an axe. The beast let loose a terrible cry, took a few stumbling steps, and then fell sideways, directly on top of Grimnak. Only his head and shoulders were visible.

Having a *Beheron* fall on you is not good for your health. Grimnak's eyes bulged as he struggled to draw air against the great mass pressing down on him, but he could not. More than his lungs were crushed. Ragnak approached him slowly, holding his axes ready. Very soon now, his father would be avenged.

Grimnak, knowing the end had come, ceased struggling. He watched him approach silently. Ragnak stopped a foot away from Grimnak's beaten body, and looked down at him. For a long time the two of them were silent, observing each other.

"You killed my father," said Ragnak finally, his voice very quiet.

"I've killed many orcs," Grimnak coughed. "Your father was but one. I was better than him."

"Then you've made many enemies," said Ragnak. "You should have known that one would eventually end you. That one would be better."

Grimnak forced his mouth into a hideous imitation of a grin. "I knew that one would eventually try, and I was sure any who did would fail."

"You were wrong," said Ragnak, still in that deadly quiet voice. "I swore I would have my revenge." He suddenly raised his voice. "By my father's name, I strike you down!"

Ragnak raised his weapons over his head. Grimnak watched, unflinching.

"You will never be better than me," he hissed.

Ragnak laughed. "Die in that knowledge, champion," he spat. The axes descended. Blood coated everything.

It was a few moments before Ragnak realized what he had done. Grimnak was dead. He had freed over twenty villages from his tyranny. But more than that, he had avenged his father. No more would he wake each night in terror, his father's face haunting his dreams. No more would Aderra fear for his safety. No more would the threat of Grimnak hang over their lives. No more.

Ragnak looked down at the grisly corpse at his feet. "My journey is complete," he said to himself. "Vengeance has been mine. At last, peace shall again be in my life."

How wrong he was. ☹

Vengeance of the Father is the first chapter in a series of five. To comment on *The Heart of Vengeance*, you can visit TGRF's thread in the Fan Art and Fiction forum on Heroscapers.com.

Link: [The Heart of Vengeance](#)

Fan Art Spotlight

Darkenlite's Heroscape Deathstalkers

By Evar-Scarcerver

So this issue, we're trying something new! Yay! Ahem. This issue, we are going to try and mix together my From the Desk of a Frostrager thing and the Fan Art Spotlight, which I think was a very good idea on El T's part, because I can usually only manage to write about one paragraph about a given piece of art and one paragraph of any random ramblings that come to mind off the top of my head when it's time to submit my From the Desk of a Frostrager. If we mix them together, that's like, at least two paragraphs together, which looks a lot better than two random paragraphs splayed out over the page in my opinion.

Well! Enough about whatever it was I was just writing about! We have a piece of art to look at! This issue's Fan Art Spotlight is on DeviantART user **Darkenlite's Heroscape Deathstalkers**.

The first thing you might notice about this piece of art

is that it has Deathstalkers in it. You might have even guessed that before looking at it, due to the appropriate title.

The second thing you might notice is that I have no idea what I'm talking about, and am prone to just type out anything that comes to mind just to fill up space.

But seriously folks, this piece of art is masterfully laid out in a way where all three Deathstalker sculptures make an appearance without making the drawing feel crowded. The monotonous colors gives off a robotic feel, and makes the animal bright red eyes pop. The entire composition's style is very tight and well-fitting of Utgar's soulborg forces.

Darkenlite's other Heroscape art includes a sketch of Dünd, a drawing of the Nakita Agents, a piece of art featuring the Werewolf Lord, and several figure mods/repaints. Darkenlite also has an Inked Dragon print that you can buy through DeviantART, and is well worth checking

out.

Speaking of the Deathstalkers, where do they go shopping? Well, if they have enough skulls, they go to the "Maul". Otherwise, they only "Whiff" they could! Get it? "Maul"? "Whiff"? Huh. Tough crowd.

Continuing on! As you may have noticed, those new shiny modern page designs I've been talking about for who knows how many months are finally finished. El T has done a great job on making the HS Codex look even more amazing, and he deserves a round of applause!

On a completely different subject, my life is about to get really busy. I plan on participating in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) this November, and

Continued on page 35 >>>

These Deathstalkers by DeviantART user Darkenlite showcase all three of the great miniatures in the squad, and while it only has a few base colors, its great use of texturing really gives the drawing personality.

>>>



Writings of Valhalla

Interview

The Grim Reaper's Friend

By Evar-Scarcerver

This issue, we're interviewing our own The Grim Reaper's Friend, where we'll ask him about the Writings of Valhalla, how it works, and his participation in the project.

What is the WoV?

WoV, or Writings of Valhalla, is a community made fan fiction. Originally founded by Joseph Sweeney to thank the admins for their tireless work on this site, it focuses on the admins and their endless struggle to keep Valhalla alive against the wishes of the evil WotC.

How does it work?

We have a writer's guild that follow a story line created by us (the judges). They ensure that WoV is going somewhere. The majority of the chapters, though, will be written by the community, anyone who wants to.

What are the best ways to participate in WoV?

The best way to participate in WoV would be to supply entries, or chapters, for it. The chap-

ters can be about anything, as long as they work along the premise of the admins battling WotC. We greatly welcome any entries you have, but please be aware of the rules and guidelines covered in the WoV thread (found in the Fan Art & Fiction forum).

If you want to join the writer's guild that follows the WoV story line, please send a PM to one of the judges, and we will give you further details.

How exactly is the WoV story formatted?

WoV is written like a 'TV series'. Each chapter, or 'episode' has its own beginning, middle, *and end*. We made it this way so that writers won't have to pick up where someone else left off - it frees them up to write whatever they want.

The Writer's Guild supplies those 'episodes' that further the story of WoV as a whole; the community supplies those episodes that make WoV what it is - the meat on the bones. The two chapters we've released so far could be considered a series premiere, a setting up for the tales waiting to be told by the com-



munity.

Can you give more detail on the process of creating the story line?

BiggaBullfrog and I came up with the story line for WoV. We took turns whacking away at it until we came up with what would work best. We wanted something that was fairly open and would appeal to everyone, but was still tight enough so that it would go in one direction. Once we were done, the other judges gave it the once over and tweaked a few things. At that point we got the writer's guild on board and showed it to them.

What is your favorite thing about WoV?

Personally, I like the entire theme of it. The admins fighting WotC on the battlefields of Valhalla can provide for some very amusing scenes, as the characters of HS learn about dice rolls and the like. But what I also like

is the openness. You don't have to write about the admins, you could write about a HS character, or even yourself, for that matter. We're all users in this mystical land of HSers, we're all part of the battle to keep HeroScape alive.

Are there any plans for WoV after this story line is complete?

That's one of the things we looked for when we made the story line. It's open-ended. Even we don't know how it will end, or even if it will end. If there's interest in the project, we'd like to keep it going as long as possible. We have a base that the writers can start from, but what they write will determine where we go from there.

What's your favorite portrayal of an admin in WoV so far?

Well, most of the portrayals so far have been made by the judges, but the other writers are welcome to add to them. Though it hasn't been seen in WoV yet, my favorite portrayal is of IAmBatman, whose primary weapon is the custom gun. It fires custom cards, which spawn custom units when they strike the ground.

I noticed you're planning to stop writing HeroScape fan fiction after you finish your *Code 4114* story. What does that mean for your participation in WoV?

I will not be leaving HSers. The Fan Art & Fiction community helped me to start writing in the first place. I will still be around, helping with the Codex, keeping the fiction index updated, and so on. I intend to be around for WoV as long as I can be useful.

When can we expect the next chapter?

The next chapter is scheduled to go out with the next issue of the Codex. We currently have no submissions, which is the primary reason we're doing this interview instead of a chapter. One of the judges will likely supply an entry if we need to, but this project is meant to be community-made.

Any closing words for our readers?

In closing, I'd like to again encourage anyone who is interested to visit the WoV thread in the Fan Art & Fiction forum. That thread will give you details on how to enter, and specifics on what we're looking for. Remember, the tale of WoV is up to you now. Send

Darkenlite's Heroscape Deathstalkers (cont.)

By Evar-Scarcarver

>>> that's going to take a huge chunk of my time, and I'm also thinking about doing a season of debate through Stoa. Plus there's my normal school, and my family is trying to move to new house across town before Christmas. Does that mean that I'm going to have to step down from writing and doing art in the Codex?

No, of course not! I plan to stick around at least until I'm old enough to say: "Back in my day, we used to have to turn in our articles three weeks before the deadline or we'd get in trouble! And we liked it!"

Does it mean that I'm going to be turning things in after deadline, getting my editors mad at me, and generally being an unhelpful staff member?

Maybe — probably, even.

Would I miss it for the world?

Well, it depends, are we talking about general control over the world? or a specific— No, the Codex is possibly one of the coolest community projects I've been a part of.

But why not? It started on Heroscapers.

~ Evar-Scarcarver 🐉



The Heroscape Codex is proudly
produced on a volunteer basis by
members of the Heroscape fan site,
Heroscapers.com.