

DRAGON WARRIORS

Writers' Guidelines

v1.0

Thanks for your interest in writing for the *Dragon Warriors* game-line. We hope that these guidelines will give you an overview of the kind of material we are interested in commissioning and publishing for the game, and how you can increase your chances of having us accept your proposed work. If not, or if you have any further questions, then get in contact—the details are at the end of this document—and we'll talk.

Introduction

Dragon Warriors is a post-Gygax/Arneson fantasy RPG set in a world that culturally resembles Europe in the Middle Ages, shortly after the end of the Crusades. It is designed to be accessible to newcomers to RPGs, while still exciting for those who have been role-playing for years. It was republished in 2008 by Magnum Opus Press in collaboration with Flaming Cobra and the original writers Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson.

Magnum Opus has been reformatting and republishing the text content of the original six *Dragon Warriors* books, but will also be commissioning and publishing new material for the game. This works in two ways: either we will have an idea for a supplement and will approach a games writer we know to develop it; or a freelance writer will approach us with an idea for a book they'd like to write, and if it fits in with our plans and the writer can convince us they'll make a good job of it then we will commission them to write the project. These writers' guidelines address the second of those two possibilities.

If you want to write for *Dragon Warriors*, we assume that you have a thorough knowledge of the game, its mechanics and its background, and you can write grammatically correct English and convey ideas in a clear and interesting way. If you don't know the game then please don't ask us for freebies or pre-release copies of new books, as having a publisher laugh in your face can be offensive.

What Are We Looking For?

Dragon Warriors will have four main kinds of supplement to support it. These are:

1. **Background and world expansions.** These take an area of the world of Legend, where *Dragon Warriors* is set, and expand it in detail. When we say "world expansions" we don't just mean geographical areas. They can be social or cultural areas—the Church, for

example, or trade-guilds, or pirates—or mythological areas like the lands of Faerie. You may want to add an entirely new area to the world: we're not averse to that but it's best to check whether we'd be interested in a proposal on Goark, Land of the Toad-Lords before you put any work into developing it.

- 2. Rules expansions.** These will either take an existing area of the game and expand on them, or introduce a new section of rules altogether. This kind of thing is more likely to be part of a multi-author portmanteau title (see below) or to be commissioned directly by Magnum Opus than one proposed by a freelance author, but we're prepared to be surprised. Please note that we're not interested in supplements about psionics, martial arts, or ninjas. We're just not.
- 3. Adventures.** If you are pitching an entire supplement then we want to see either one long adventure or a series of short ones with a strong linking narrative. We might look at a collection of short adventures all set in the same area of the world if they were really good. Adventures are a good thing to pitch if you've not worked with Magnum Opus or James Wallis before, or if you haven't got prior publications in the games industry.
- 4. Portmanteau titles.** These are books by several different authors, either on a single subject or covering a variety of topics. We're not likely to commission these based on a proposal you send us; we're more likely to work out the core idea in-house and corral a bunch of authors we've worked with before or whose proposals have impressed us to each write a chapter. Sometimes we might issue an open call or a competition to write part of one of these books, so keep your eyes peeled for announcements

None of those types of book are self-contained. A world expansion would need some new rules (possibly for character classes only found in that area, or at the very least some new monsters) and short adventures; a rules expansion would need some background or context, and so on.

Books Looking For Authors/Editors

The following concepts are all looking for interesting proposals from freelancers. If any of them seem like the kind of thing you'd be interested in developing, either solo or as part of a team, then get in touch: we'll probably then ask you to flesh out your ideas for the book into a full structured outline and describe the approach you'd take to writing it.

Please note that if you haven't edited a multi-author project in the games field before, we are unlikely to hire you to edit one of ours. Editors need experience, and they also need a great contacts-book to bring in enough other writers to the project.

The open-call projects are:

- ♣ Adventures. Well, obviously. Book-length, but also diddy ones (2-10,000 words) that we can potentially use for demonstrations, tournaments, magazine articles, free downloads and anthology titles.
- ♣ Geographical sourcebooks. Countries, regions, cities. You know the form.
- ♣ Social sourcebooks. First and foremost, the Church—how it works, what it does, how faith intersects with magic, do they really burn sorcerers at the stake, and so on.

Probably including a big sample monastery or abbey (unless that'd make a good separate supplement and I think it might, with a couple of juicy adventures).

- ♣ Book of organisations (guilds, knightly orders, secret societies). This will probably be a portmanteau title, unless you have an idea for an approach that's crying out for a single author.
- ♣ A book of 60-80 interesting one- and two-page NPCs, from all regions and levels of Legend society, with adventure-seeds for each one and ideas for making them interesting recurring characters in your campaign. This would probably also benefit from a section on the care, feeding and correct use of NPCs. We are not looking for a proposal for the whole thing, but when we announce this one we'll want submissions for individual characters.

Supplements you shouldn't pitch

- ♣ Racial sourcebooks, specifically Elves and Dwarves. These races, being creatures of faerie origins, will be incorporated in the Lands of the Fey book (see below).
- ♣ Woodsmen, Robin Hood, life in the forests. Already in development.
- ♣ Lands of the Fey. The fairy realms and their inhabitants, before the Victorians got their hands on them. Probably based quite hard on Celtic/Irish folkloric origins. We really want to do this book, but we're already talking to a small clutch of writers about
- ♣ Adaptations of the *Bloodsword* or *Chronicles of the Magi* books. We may do these at some point, but the job will almost certainly go to a writer who's already worked with us on another project.
- ♣ New skill systems, or any new rules that replace existing sections of the rulebook.
- ♣ Collections of new character professions.
- ♣ Collections of new monsters, new spells or new magic items. This is not *D&D*.
- ♣ Psionics, martial arts or ninjas.

We're also reaching the stage where Ellesland is a bit played-out as a setting. As I write Magnum Opus Press already has two campaigns set there, with a third due out shortly and a fourth book in the works. That's not to say we'll never do anything else with Ellesland, but we'd like to explore the rest of the world too.

What We Need From You

An initial proposal for a *Dragon Warriors* supplement will go through three stages. First of all, drop us a line asking whether we are interested in the kind of thing you're thinking about. Pitch the book to us in no more than a paragraph; in fact if the idea's quite simple then condense it into a sentence: "Would you like to see a proposal for a book on squires?" Adventures will obviously need a little more detail, but we really don't need depth at this point. Include a little information about yourself, particularly any previous print credits you have. A short pitch means you'll get a quick answer back from us; it saves everyone time and effort.

If we respond positively, then we'll ask you to write a full proposal, breaking down and describing the structure and content of what would go into the book, plus a short sample of your games writing. And if we like that, we'll commission you to write the supplement itself, and sign a contract with you for it.

You may be afraid that we will steal your brilliant idea and get one of our mates to author it. We won't. First of all, if you've had an idea good enough for us to develop then why would we go to someone else to write it? And secondly James Wallis, Magnum Opus's director, has been publishing games since 1994, which means you can go to any online forum for games companies or freelancers and ask about his reputation for straight-dealing and if he's the type of guy who'll rip anyone off. We're pretty sure you'll be happy with the answers you get.

Having said that, it's possible your pitch will overlap with a project we're already developing. It happens: there's only so many different types of book that can be published for a fantasy RPG. Back at Hogshead Publishing we used to get a proposal for a *Warhammer FRP* magic book roughly once every two months, even though our website and writers' guidelines clearly said we already had one in development. At Magnum Opus Press we received three proposals for a supplement based on Robin Hood in a month—two of them set in the same area of the world, with the same title. So if you send us something and we tell you that it overlaps with a book we have in production, it doesn't mean we're ripping off your idea, just that you've hit on a good idea that someone else has already had.

Payment

Payment rates vary from project to project, though they are in line with the games industry norms for paying freelancers. Most likely we'll propose a fee based on the projected word-length of the book, though on major projects we're happy to talk about royalty-based deals. For regular book-length projects we pay the fee in three chunks: on signing the deal; on acceptance of your manuscript; and on publication. Short pieces are paid per-word, on publication.

How to Submit

Your initial proposal should come in a regular email. Anything after that, please use Microsoft Word-compatible files (.doc or .rtf), JPEGs for rough graphics and TIFFs for print-quality graphics. If we commission your proposal, we will also send you a copy of the *Dragon Warriors* style guidelines.

Send your emails to james@magnumopuspress.com

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

James Wallis
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8th May 2009

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