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Issue #9



Epic Scenes, Large Landscapes

An Interview with Artist Matt Stawicki

by Miranda Horner

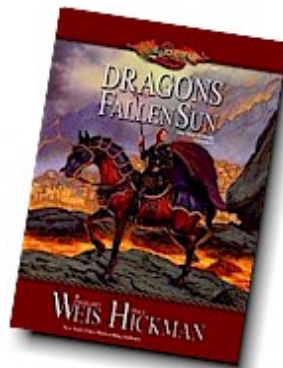
Matt Stawicki, whose art graces many **Dragonlance** covers, including [Dragons of a Fallen Sun](#) and the new art for the Chronicles and Legends series, has become one of the hottest new artists for the **Dragonlance** setting. He graduated from the Pennsylvania School of Art and Design in 1991, and he has been working as an artist professionally for around ten years. When he isn't working on new cover illustrations, he likes to play the guitar and collect action figures, but he admits that these both have gotten dusty recently! We took him away from both his projects and his dusty guitar recently to ask him a few questions.

Legends of the Lance: First of all, when did you decide to become an artist?

Matt Stawicki: I always drew as a child, and my interest for art only grew as I got older. The choice to make it a career seemed like a good one since I seemed to spend most of my spare time drawing anyway.

Legends: What projects have you worked on in your professional career?

Matt: I've illustrated book covers for Tor, Avon, Penguin, HarperCollins, Doubleday, and Bantam, to name a few. I also have done work with the Franklin Mint, which includes collector's plates and the soon to be released "Lord of the Rings" fantasy pocketknife. I have also done video game covers for Valu-Soft and GT Interactive.



Legends: When you received your first assignment for the **Dragonlance** setting, what did you do to prepare yourself?

Matt: The deadlines for the first three [Chronicles] covers were pretty tight, so I had to rely more on my art directors for story content. I was able to read the stories for the next three covers.

Legends: In general, what do you have to keep in mind when working on **Dragonlance** art? How does it differ from other work you've done?

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Matt: I have to see how the characters have been depicted in other art. The art itself tends to be more epic scenes and larger landscapes.

Legends: Of the other art for the setting, which piece or artist is your favorite?

Matt: There are so many artists to choose from, but if I had to pick out a few I would choose Keith Parkinson's depiction of the draconians in "What do you mean we're lost?". The rendering and composition are beautiful. It also has great value control shown in the landscape. I also really enjoy Todd Lockwood's painting "[The Dragonlance](#)." I like the subtle color and soft feel in the background. The dragon is--what can I say? It rocks! I like the way he focuses the detail on the head and upper body and leaves the wings more painterly.

Legends: Now that you've worked on several projects, can you tell us what you think is the most challenging thing about working in the **Dragonlance** setting?

Matt: As with all covers, the trick is to tell the story and establish character relationships and mood through color, lighting, and composition. I wouldn't say this is as much a challenge as it is a plus with **Dragonlance**. There are many environments and interesting characters from which to choose.

Legends: Since you've brought up environments and characters, what environment or character would you find most interesting to portray?

Matt: I would like to do a draconian subject. Except for their brief appearance on the cover of [Dragons of a Lost Star](#) [the second book in the War of Souls trilogy], I haven't had a chance to really showcase one of these guys.

Legends: Of the pieces you've done for the setting, which is your favorite and why?

Matt: Of the work I've done for the **Dragonlance** setting, my favorite is the new illustration for [Time of the Twins](#). I like this piece for its more natural quality. The color is inspired by N.C. Wyeth. It takes advantage of a more natural late day sunlight. The 'romantic' light also helps convey the relationship between the two main characters, Raistlin and Crysania. I also like [Dragons of a Fallen Sun](#). In contrast, this piece has a very dark and gritty feeling. It uses the lava as a light source from below, which helps to create a dramatic presence for both the city, Sanction, and the main character, Mina.

Legends: What are you currently working on?

Matt: I am currently working on an ulcer. Just kidding. I am working on [my website](#), which includes prints and older originals for sale. I am also working on a few **Magic** ads and a horror cover for Avon Books. I am also starting work on [a new **Dragonlance** book]. I am reading the manuscript now . . . see, I do read them!

Legends: Before we let you go, what advice would you give to an aspiring artist?

Matt: Work with subjects you like. . . make sure you love it. Art can be a lot of work. Also: Promotion! Promotion! Promotion!

Check out Matt's work in our Online Product Library!

- [Dragons of Autumn Twilight](#)
- [Dragons of Winter Night](#)
- [Dragons of Spring Dawning](#)
- [Time of the Twins](#)
- [Test of the Twins](#)
- [War of the Twins](#)
- [Dragons of a Fallen Sun](#)
- [Dragons of a Lost Star](#)





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Issue #9



An Evening in Blöten

By Miranda Horner

If you need a break from your regular **Dragonlance** campaign, here's your opportunity! Allow the players to create half-ogre characters, discuss how the characters know each other, then put them directly into the thick of things! As with any adventure hook, Dungeon Masters and Narrators will need to spend some time fleshing out "An Evening in Blöten" to suit their liking.



Introduction

The heroes of the adventure reside in Blöten, a city of ogres. This evening is a particularly festive night for the city, though nobody seems to know why. The heroes themselves are wandering through the Courts of Victory, where the party is at its loudest, when the hook sinks in. Enterprising Dungeon Masters can use the map of Blöten in *Rise of the Titans* (reproduced here) if they so desire. Describe the Courts of Victory as a complex of open pavilions and towers.

The Hook

The heroes bump into an elderly blind ogre shaman, who is sputtering and foaming with wrath. It appears that someone has given the old shaman too much alcohol. As the shaman grumbles about the terrible doings of evil blue beings and elf blood, another ogre sinks a dagger into the shaman's back and takes off. The heroes have several options: Get the shaman to a healer (or heal him themselves), chase the one who attacked him, or ignore it.

The Insidious Plot (for the Dungeon Master's eyes only)

In actuality, the shaman – named Mornag -- isn't drunk. Someone tried to poison him, and he barely survived the experience. After leaving his tower to seek aid from his fellow ogres (who hold him in esteem), the would-be assassin followed the shaman, hoping for an opportunity to move in for the kill. Unfortunately, she chose a bad time to do it!

Even deeper than this, though, is the fact that the inept female ogre assassin, named Graan, was sent by the ogre titans

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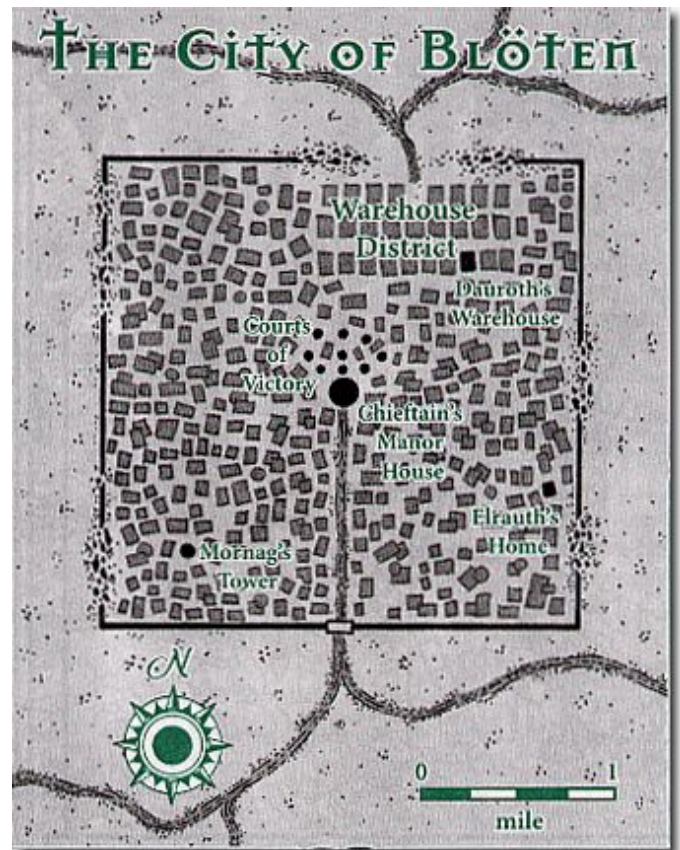
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to kill Mornag. (Ogre titans are former ogres who changed into towering, blue-skinned beings due to a magical transformation.) The shaman hates the titans, and while he lives, the citizens of Blöten will not give the titans the respect the titans feel they deserve. Since the titans have need of the city and its population to assist them in their evil plans, they need to get Mornag out of the way.

Even worse, Mornag recently learned the weakness of the ogre titans: If they do not take a monthly dose of a magical elixir, they degenerate into terrible beings. Mornag has already mentioned this information within the hearing of a few ogre titan supporters, and now Anangon, a recently transformed ogre titan, fears that the shaman's big mouth could lead even more ogres to resist the titan rule!

Finally, if the heroes want to discover why there's a big party in Blöten that evening, allow them to track down the chieftain's stand-in in the manor house and ask him. The heroes find out that the party started simply because a large shipment of food, ale, and spirits arrived in Blöten for no apparent reason. That's all it takes to cause a celebration in the land of the ogres!



The End Game

If the heroes discover the vile plot, they have a choice in front of them: Do they kill the assassin, do they let her go, or do they help her finish the job? All of these can lead into more adventures for the half-ogre heroes!

Recommended Resources

- [Rise of the Titans](#) by Richard Dakan
- [Dragonlance: Fifth Age](#) Dramatic Adventure Game
- Third Edition D&D [Player's Handbook](#)



About the Author

Miranda Horner, editor of Rise of the Titans and many other Dragonlance game products, also compiles the Legends of the Lance online newsletter. By day, she is the web producer for the [Pokémon Trading Card Game](#) official website.



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