

Ten Days in the Arena of Khazan

By Ken St. Andre



A Troll World Tale

Sample file

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Introduction:

In 1980 I did a long article for *Chaosium's Different Worlds* magazine issue #7 called *Ten Days in the Arena of Khazan*. The article billed itself as a campaign, but it was half fiction, and the other half a general description of Trollworld and Tunnels & Trolls practices. My plan was to educate readers about the game and the T&T world at the same time.

Forty years later I want to reconstruct the story so that modern readers can have some idea of the kind of fiction that T&T gaming easily generates. The version you're getting now is not quite the same as the version you would have gotten in 1980. Besides, it's a great hero story (grin). It also gives some idea of what T&T gaming and frp gaming in general was like 40 years ago--a lot less sophisticated in general.

You may notice that *TEN DAYS* talks about Orcs, Hobbits, and Balrogs--all fantasy beings created by master fantasist J.R.R. Tolkien (may he rest in glory!). Today those names have evolved into Uruks, Hobbs, and Balrukhs in the T&T world. I thought about changing the names for this reprinting, but decided not to. I don't believe anyone can

copyright or trademark individual words or ideas when they are being used in a general sense. I had a perfect right to use those creature types in the game in 1980, and still do, but I like the way the words evolved. *Ten Days* was set in a time period of about 1,000 A.K. (After the founding of Khazan), but today's *Deluxe Tunnels & Trolls* is set in a time period of about 1,200 A.K. Things change over time, and languages evolve, and T & T shows that.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the story.

Best,
Ken St. Andre
June 6, 2020.





The spider was about the size of a bullock, and it ran across the sand of the arena very quickly. A poisonous, pus-yellow saliva drooled from its clacking mandibles, and a thrill of horror went through the crowd as it was the first monster they had seen in several days.

The victim stood in the center of the arena, lightly swinging his flail at about knee-level. Carver of Gull was not a big man, but he was not the easy meal that the spider thought he would be. A wizard would have noted the magic emanating from him, especially from a certain emerald that Carver had placed in an iron headband that he wore to keep his long brown hair from tumbling down into his eyes.

The spider reached its quarry and pounced, and at the same moment Carver brought his flail crashing into it with a motion that was too fast to see. There

was a sickening splat that could be heard throughout the arena, and then the spider was only a lifeless hairy blob. For good measure Carver hit it several more times, until there was no chance that it could still live. Then he saluted the crowd, who were cheering him enthusiastically, and then he exited to collect his winnings.



CARVER OF GULL

The City of Gull on the Island of Phoron lies far south of Khazan and beyond the empire of Lerotra'hh, the Death Goddess. (Gull was created by Mike Stackpole as a solitaire adventure which is currently the top of the Tunnels & Trolls solitaire

line, with the finest art, the most adventures, and the highest price of all the solitaires.) Carver of Gull, a former net-master in the Arena of Gull, was used to fighting before crowds. He had slain many a man and risen to the third level of proficiency in warriorhood when he came up against the one-handed man with the emerald. That had been his toughest fight, but in the end the fellow couldn't keep his balance on the bouncing net and Carver had triumphed, claiming the emerald for his own. The jewel was enchanted — Carver had taken it to a wizard for analysis. He learned that whoever wore or carried it would be fantastically lucky in combat. The wizard offered him 1,800 gold pieces for it, but Carver refused. It occurred to him that with the help of this gem he might be able to become a champion in Khazan, and so he left the City of Terrors, taking the long sea voyage north to Khazan.



He had arrived with only 300 GP left, but when he learned that the odds against him in the first fight

were 27 to 1, he immediately wagered 200 of his 300 GP on himself. And now he was a rich man, because in addition to winning 5,400 GP, his prize had also been phenomenal: an additional 5000 GP in cash, plus a huge garnet worth 2000 GP, and twelve silver-tipped enchanted arrows. He took a luxurious apartment, had the garnet set alongside the emerald in his headband, bought a few extra weapons and got ready for his second combat.

Mitokris the Orc, a wizard-warrior of the Khazan army came into the arena knowing that the odds were 8 to 1 in his favor. His opponent: Carver of Gull, a short fellow with a flail and a dagger didn't seem like any match for him. He decided to enchant his scimitar and fight the stranger, even though the spell would leave him a bit weak. It was a great mistake.

As the tall Orc closed with the short, scarred warrior, the flail licked out with blinding speed and ripped the sword from his hand, and in the next moment a knife was buried deeply between his ribs. The Orc had not bothered to wear any armor, not having the strength for that and spell-casting at the same time.

Unconscious from the shock, he was carried off to be healed while Carver collected another rich reward. What with bets and prizes he made 21,000 GP on that one fight alone, and his reputation was well established.