

## Free Union Creations Newsletter Issue #1

### Jack's Ramblings

Today is a sad, sad day for the 3d art community. Well, actually, the sad news came about a week ago, with a letter from the creator of Truespace. Anyway, here's the story. Caligari, producer of Truespace, was bought by Microsoft in early 2008. Microsoft apparently did this in order to improve Google Earth, the free earth simulation tool, with some 3d models of famous buildings. To this end, Truespace 7.6 was released for free in July of 2008. Now, in hard economic times, Microsoft has basically said "Sorry, pals. We shouldn't have bought you, because now we have to lay you all off. Never mind that Truespace is one of the best free modeling tools out there. Never mind that you have a thriving community who would keep you alive. You're gone." and told them they have a few days left to shut down the website. Is it just me, or does this seem like it was planned? First Microsoft releases the new version for free, and now they say that, because it's for free, they can't afford to keep it running. Hmmph.

Anyway, if you are going to download the Truespace installer, NOW would be a good time to do it. If you have missed the deadline, give me an email and I'll get you a copy.

Some good news: the Truespace forums are home to many great artists and people who are very sad that Caligari will soon be gone. They have pulled together to create several, privately hosted forums. You can find a list of them here: [http://www.caligari.com/store/trueSpace/forums\\_external.asp?Cate=Forums](http://www.caligari.com/store/trueSpace/forums_external.asp?Cate=Forums)  
In the meantime, I might as well get into the meat of this first issue: the Two Worlds game.

### A Tale of Two Worlds

For those of you who I discussed the Two Worlds game with, there have been some dramatic changes since you last heard about it. For one, I have got rid of Tobin as the player's character. For those of you who liked Tobin, don't worry, he will still be a pivotal character the game. But you will no longer be controlling him.

Why? The most important reason is that it was too confining to be playing Tobin. It seemed like a good idea at first, but it soon became apparent to me that it wasn't going to be that much fun. Tobin is an important, well-protected character, and thus would be spending most of his time surrounded by guards and making decisions with the advice of his regent. Yeah, pretty boring stuff for an adventure game.

So who is the main character now? Quite simply, you are. When playing Episode One, you will start a character who is a minor noble in one of the many (I haven't decided how many yet) houses in the game. This character will be able to choose a few starting skills that will define how he or she works. There will probably be some kind of archetype system, with a few named classes to pick from. Right now, I am starting with the Knight, a melee character who has access to a variety of regional weapons, but there will be more in the future.

When you start, you have a relatively low position in the pecking order of your house, but you can change that by earning renown within your house for particularly amazing deeds or by doing favors and missions for the house members above you (and doing them well, of course!). As your renown goes up, you will gain access to new missions, rise in position within the house, and unlock new skills for you character.

Don't think that you exist in a static universe! Around the city, other houses are plotting against your house and yours against theirs. A high-ranking noble may ask you to steal, bribe or spy on members of another house. Doing this well will, again, earn you renown within the house, but failing could land you in jail and lead to a drop in renown as other members of your house don't want to be seen with you.

While this is going on, Tobin is struggling to rule his scheming subjects, and the threat of the Skadis (viscous men of the north) looms as reports of burning villages along the border come to the city. You

may be what stands between your city and utter doom.

This doesn't mean you have to fight, although some characters will be more geared towards that. However, some classes will exist for those players who like the story of the world. These players will find that their bonuses to NPC interaction will open up new dialogue trees and reveal information that may put a different light on the situation.

Time will tell how these classes and the game will work, and remember that everything in this newsletter is subject to change. Also, feel free to email me advice and tell me what you think so far by emailing me at [fire Drake23@freeunionschoolhouse.com](mailto:fire Drake23@freeunionschoolhouse.com).

With that said, on to this issue's spotlight, the design and development of the setting of Two Worlds Episode One.

## **Design and Development: Two Worlds Setting**

I was going to do an article on the knight for this month's issue, but I really didn't have enough information on that class to justify writing a column on it. Instead, I would like to present the setting of Two World's least familiar setting (hint: you know the other one very well), Avron. For one moment, picture the earth as it was before the industrial revolution. From high above, there are no lights, no great structures, no sign of civilization. On the ground, people still settle their disputes through a local town hall, or if things get really bad, with weapons. There is no real overarching government, and the only order is that which the various lords can enforce over their lands. Add in creatures out of our world's mythologies, that stalk the night and plot against humanity, and you have the setting of Avron.

Why is Avron so far behind its twin, Earth, scientifically? There is a good reason, and it is that there is no reason for the people of Avron to evolve their technology as quickly as ours. Their weapons that they carry serve them well enough to justify not improving them drastically. In some places, a Renaissance may be starting and the refinement of technology speeding up, but for the most part, the world is still in the middle ages.

Another reason: in Avron, raw power and energy bubbles up from the core of its being in the form of raw "magic", if you will. In the universe that Avron exists in, magic is an element, and a very real one. Although that energy is seen as dangerous and is banned in most of society, most monsters and some humans still, subconsciously or consciously, use it as a tool and a weapon. Why should technology advance when magic will do just as well?

Magic bubbles up from the ground like lava and pools in certain areas across the globe, forming lakes and sometimes even seas of the stuff. While some portions of the world are devoid of this energy, most feel its power in some form or another. Where a large concentration of magic is pooled, the laws of physics are broken and, among other effects, chunks of the ground can spontaneously take off and hover in the air.

Magic can change the local animal and plant life, also, spawning things that could not survive out of magic-intensive areas (think of the life around deep-sea vents) and other, more hardy monsters that can survive almost anywhere. It is thought that the race of giants were once humans who were slowly exposed to magic and grew larger than before. In fact, most of the monstrous life in the world was probably birthed in the infancy of Avron, when magic ran wild.

The only exception to this rule are the humans. They are not only distinctly un-magical, but are of a slightly different genetic build to anything in this world. I won't make any promises, but you may know more about that by the end of Episode One.

Next time we'll look a little bit more in detail at the starting setting of Episode One, set deep in the northern wilderness. This city of Oberson, which has guarded the wall between the Skadis and "civilization" for centuries, has now fallen on hard times.

## **The Music of Two Worlds**

Attached to this email are three songs I have composed for the upcoming Two Worlds game. They were written in a free program called Anvil Studio, which I encourage you to try out. Although Funeral Song is quite long, listen all the way to the end, as it gets best towards the finish. Please send comments on what you think of them, and I will pick it up when I get back from vacation. Should I go somewhere else with my style? Or do you like it the way it is? Let me know.

## **Design Contest**

In the write-up on the two world's game, I mentioned areas of magic that were so unstable that they created creatures that could not survive elsewhere. To enter this issue's contest, send a picture or description of what you think these magic-dependent creatures might look like, along with your name and email. The winning entry will become an actual creature in the Two Worlds game!

That's all for this newsletter, I'm afraid. Check back in next time for:

**Design and Development: The City of Oberson**  
**More on the story and development of Two Worlds**  
**The opening of the Free Union Creations website!**

Please send advice, critiques, and art to [fire Drake23@freeunionschoolhouse.com](mailto:fire Drake23@freeunionschoolhouse.com). Just keep it constructive and clean. See you there!