



WARRIOR'S PRIDE

The Online Source for Street Fighter: The Storytelling Game

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This Issue's Credits:

Original Concept and Format: Dustin Wolfe (lancer1@webzone.net)

Editor: Chris Hoffmann (sfstg@yahoo.com)

Word Edition Editor: Niemand (hybrid_niemand@hotmail.com)

Logo Image Ripping and Edition: Niemand (hybrid_niemand@hotmail.com)

Contributing Writers:

Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

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WELCOME TO WARRIOR'S PRIDE

August, 2001

Well, better late than never I suppose. The tardiness of this issue is completely my (the editor's) fault. But enough of that. This issue is a bit more robust than the last one, with a wider variety of submissions (and this time I actually submitted as well). Finally, those of you who hang out on the Contenders mailing list may just recognize one of your own in these pages.

I would like to apologize to Niemand for not putting him in the credits last issue. Niemand made the Word Edition for issue five and was not listed in the credits in that capacity (he was listed as a translator, but not for his

efforts in converting the HTML Pride to Word format. Niemand, I am sorry and thank you for your understanding.

Which brings us to this issue's contributors. This is not a mistake, only one person besides myself contributed to this issue of Warrior's Pride. As the unanimous response to the poll asking how often Warrior's Pride should come out was every other month, the due date for submissions is pushed back to the first Sunday of October. Hopefully this will give more people time to contribute, myself included.

CONTENDERS: GENKI/TITIKO

History: Once upon a time, in the land of Nippon, a woman came to visit from beyond the western sea. Her name was Tzi Ku and her intelligence, beauty, and power were only surpassed by her cruelty. Many believed her a demon, a foul succubus that existed only to cause pain to the men she enticed. The truth was that she was merely a mortal woman, although a very powerful and depraved one. Her foul deeds were far too numerous to list in their entirety. She committed blackmail, physical and mental torture, and even murder with her twin butterfly swords, all to satiate her hunger for agony.

Word of her crimes reached the ears of the Shogun, who immediately dispatched a group of his most honorable samurai to execute her.

The battle was a long and hard one. Though the noble band had Ku outnumbered, her mastery of disciplines both martial and mystical kept them at bay for over three years.

Eventually, the tide turned and the samurai harried her until she was both wounded and trapped. With a grim and determined blow through the heart, the leader of the band ended Ku's life.

Ku's death was certain, but she had prepared for that. She cheated the Yama kings of her soul, trapping it within her butterfly swords. Greatly weakened, her spirit slept unaware of the centuries that passed since her defeat. Now fast forward about a millenia and a half, to a small pawn shop in Tokyo. Genki just spent the last of her money buying two rusted and dirty antique swords. And for the first time in fifteen hundred years, Ku is beginning to awaken...

Genki: Ugly. Stupid. Deformed. Worthless. Mistake. Everybody, from her parents to her classmates, say these things about her, so they must be true. After running away from home, and evading the farce of her parents search for her, Genki found herself alone, and with very few options. Fortunately(?), she caught the eye of a minor Bakuto Yakuza, and he began using her as a lookout and other minor jobs, giving her enough money so she didn't starve.

It is important to note that she wasn't actually a member of the Bakuto Yakuza, merely a lookout in their employ.

Eventually, Genki managed to save up enough money to buy the butterfly swords, and her life changed forever. Genki was not a very bright person, but she was frighteningly

good at two things. The first was that she had an encyclopedic knowledge of legends and folk tales about magical objects. She managed to recognize the swords as belonging to the legend and even she knew that they were worth far far more than the 10000 yen the sticker on them said. When she picked up the blades, Ku was able to read her thoughts, and her second great talent came into play: she knew everything there was to know about magical girl anime. Ku picked up on her wish to be a beautiful and powerful magical girl, and granted it. Not because she felt anything at all for Genki, but because she all ready had the beginnings of a plan.

She told Genki what she wanted to hear, she was a reincarnated princess who had been awakened to her mystical heritage to fight evil. Genki ate it up. As 'proof', Ku used her magic to create a new body for Genki, and taught her the 'transformation phrase': Die Hand Die Das Verletzt (The hand that wounds, a phrase she picked out of a passing gaijin's head).

Lo and behold, whenever Genki says that Germanic phrase she becomes Titiko, a gorgeous girl in a skimpy Chinese dress that likes to go out and hurt criminals. She quickly began to focus her attacks on Shadoloo, even going so far to help out their main Japanese rivals, the Yakuza, on several occasions.

Ku didn't care who Genki hurt. Pain is pain, no matter how good or evil the victims.

Eventually, Genki's friendship with the Yakuza caused her to begin receiving invitations to tournaments being held by the them. On occasion, they would even allow her to use one of their arenas when she received a private challenge.

Appearance: Genki's normal appearance is a rather average looking fourteen year old japanese school girl, complete with fuku. A closer look reveals that she walks with a pronounced limp caused by her club foot. Other than that, she's actually quite pretty, in

a girl-next-door sort of way. Her average appearance score stems more from a lack of self-confidence than from her actual appearance.

As Titiko though, she's gorgeous and she knows it. Tall, graceful, and blessed with a body that would make a super-model weep, she could easily pass for someone much older than fourteen years old. She exudes confidence, sexuality, and more than a hint of danger. Titiko wears a black silk Chinese dress that clings to and accents her voluptuous figure, and complements her dark hair and eyes.

Roleplaying: As Genki you are timid, quiet, and lonely. You never had any friends, and only recently have had anything resembling a decent parent figure in your life (Lau Gin). As such, your entire life you've either been ignored or a target for bullies. At night the magic voice (Ku) whispers that being unnoticed is not entirely a bad thing, and has many suggestions on how to get revenge from the shadows. So far, you haven't acted on this advice, but you're not sure how much longer you can, or even if it would be wrong to do so.

When transformed into Titiko though, you're entire personality changes. You're more aggressive, enjoy live, and have very little reason to be afraid. Titiko is everything Genki isn't. Beautiful, powerful, the center of attention... You like Titiko more than you like Genki.

Notes: Titiko's body is a copy of Tzi Ku's own body when she was fourteen. Five successes on a Perception+Mysteries test (Diff 9) will allow a character to recognize her from the legend. If she is using her twin butterfly swords, the number of successes needed drops to three and the character may substitute Style Lore for Mysteries if it is higher.

Stats before the slash represent Genki Stats after represent her abilities after she transforms into Titiko. Genki has no special maneuvers or combos.

WARRIOR'S PRIDE CHARACTER SHEET

Name: <i>Genki/Titiko</i>	Style: Kung Fu	Team: None
Player:	School: None	Concept: Diabolically Powered Magical Girl
Chronicle:	Stable: None	Signature: Sword Afterimages

ATTRIBUTES

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●/●●●●●	Charisma ●●	Perception ●●
Dexterity ●/●●●●●	Manipulation ●●	Intelligence ●●
Stamina ●●	Appearance ●●/●●●●●	Wits ●●

ABILITIES

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●●	Security ●●●	Arena ●●
Insight ●	Stealth ●●●	Linguistics ●
Intimidation / ●●●		[Japanese (native) / English]
Searching ●●		Mysteries ●●●●●
		Style Lore ●●●

Language(s): Japanese (native) and English

ADVANTAGES

Backgrounds
Allies ●●●
Arena ●●
Contacts ●

Techniques
Punch / ●●
Kick / ●●●
Block / ●●●
Grab / ●●
Athletics / ●●●●●
Focus / ●●●●●
Blades / ●●●●●

SPECIAL MANEUVERS

Mountain's Humbler (Buffalo Punch)¹
 Typhoon Slasher (Hyper Fist)²
 Monkey Grab Punch
 Phantom Lunge (Rekka Ken)²
 Whirlwind (Triple Strike)¹
 Rearing Horse (Backflip Kick)
 Double-Hit Kick
 Foot Sweep
 Throw
 Drunken Monkey Roll
 Jump
 Kippup
 Regeneration
 Fireball
 Improved Fireball

Combos:
 Whirlwind to Phantom Lunge to Typhoon Slasher (Dizzy)
 Rearing Horse to Improved Fireball
 Throw to Fireball (Dizzy)

Renown Glory ●●●●●●●	CHI ●●●●●●	
Honor ●●	WILLPOWER ●●●●●	
Division: Duelist Rank: 5th	HEALTH ●●●●●●●●●● ●●	
Standing Wins 24 Losses 0 Draws 0 KOs 24		

¹ Titiko can use these maneuvers with or without her Butterfly Swords

² Titiko cannot use these maneuvers without her swords

Titiko's swords add +1 Speed and +2 Damage to the appropriate maneuvers, as seen in Warrior's Pride Issue #4, Appendix I: Weapons

Allies: Lau 'Shotgun' Gin, Bakuto Hitman

Arena: Abandoned Warehouse

Contacts: Yakuza

CONTENDERS: SARAH BRADWRIGHT

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

History: Sarah Bradwright is a haunted woman, figuratively and literally. Her father was a brilliant Architect, as well as the black sheep in a proud English family. Sarah was universally shunned by all but her closest relatives and few other social misfits at her school.

Following her Father's death, she was drawn into a struggle for control of the company he had built. Her business savvy and well-honed skill quickly brought her to the top of the company, an event that she attributes to nepotism to this day.

In the course of the power struggle, she further alienated her relatives and drifted away from her few friends. After her brother committed suicide in Talwood Oregon, her mother blamed her distance for the young man's troubles. Sarah transferred to the Hong Kong branch of the company rather than risk alienating her only real living relative. She failed.

She originally began studying Kung Fu seeking some sort of inner peace, once again she failed. A pair of evil spirits became obsessed with controlling her, a struggle that continues to this day.

Following the death of a close friend, Sarah began trying to reconnect with the only group of people she has ever felt anything close to peace with. It was only through their support that she endured the news of her mother's death.

Recently she has started dating a charming sailor, unaware of his true nature. At the

current time, Sarah stands to face betrayal by the few people she trusts most. And by herself.

Appearance: Sarah is a rather plain English woman who always sees herself in the most unflattering light possible. She is a flat-chested brunette with brown eyes and a penchant for formal attire. Sarah always appears to carry herself with poise and confidence, but this is a carefully constructed lie built out of a fear of seeming vulnerable.

Burdens: Demon Magnet (Hostile paranormal beings perceive Sarah as more appealing prey than normal humans, and as a consequence are far more likely to torment her than anyone nearby.)

Complete rules for the Blessing and Burden system can be found on [The Dogs of War](#) website.

Combat: Despite her intelligence Sarah has yet to refine her combat style, relying more on a instinct and cunning than actual strategy. More than one of her opponents has quite effectively used this flaw against her, and it is likely that she will never attain lasting success in the Circuit until she overcomes this pattern.

Notes: Sarah's Honor Ranking only rates her behavior towards others. Sarah possesses little self-esteem and is plagued by doubts of her worth as a human being. Her Honor should be treated as '1' for purposes of regaining Chi and Willpower. This Character Sheet represents Sarah before the 'Oubliette' storyline.

WARRIOR'S PRIDE CHARACTER SHEET		
Name: Sarah Bradwright Player: Chronicle:	Style: Kung Fu (Eagle) School: Hsien-yuan Stable: None	Team: None Concept: Alone in the Dark Signature: Restrained Exuberance
ATTRIBUTES		
Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●● Dexterity ●●●● Stamina ●●●	Charisma ●●● Manipulation ● Appearance ●●	Perception ●●● Intelligence ●●●●● Wits ●●●
ABILITIES		
Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ● Insight ●● Manage ●● Searching ●●●	Architeturual Design ●●●●●● Blind-Fighting ● Demolitions ●● Drive ● Repair ● Security ●	Arena ●● Computer ●● Finance ●●●●● Law ●●●● Linguistics ●●●●● Mysteries ●● Science ●●●●● Style Lore ●●●
Language(s): British (native), Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Russian and Nihongo		
ADVANTAGES	SPECIAL MANEUVERS	
Backgrounds	Techniques	
Allies ●●●●● Backing ●●● Contacts ●●● Fame ● Resources ●●●●● Sifu (-2) Staff ●●●●●	Punch ●● Kick ● Block ●● Grab ●●●●● Athletics ●●●●● Focus ●●●●	Wing Slap (Monkey Grab Punch) Power Uppercut Flying Tackle Back Roll Throw Broken Wing Dance (Disengage) Broken Wing Dance (Grappling Defense) Suplex Throw Eagle Snatches Her Prey (Hair Throw) Eagle Lands with Grace (Breakfall) Jump Wing Roll (Dunken Monkey Roll) Twisting Wing Lock (Bear Hug)
Renown Glory ●● Honor ●●●●● Division: Freestyle Rank: 3rd Standing Wins 8 Losses 5 Draws 1 KOs 3	CHI ●●●● WILLPOWER ●●●●● HEALTH ●●●●●●●●●● ●●●	

Allies & Contacts: Sarah is in contact with a wide variety of Fighters and construction personnel, and can readily gather news on a wide variety of sources.

Backing, Resources, & Staff: Sarah effectively controls the Architectural firm of 'Bradwright, LeRue, Stark, Wilson, and Ziang', a position that leaves her with a great deal of personal power and responsibility. At any given time, she leads a Staff consisting of Accountants, Lawyers, Contractors, and Architects.

Fame: As a Street Fighter, Sarah is an obscure figure, known only to the Hong Kong Circuit and one Mailing List. As an Architect, Sarah is internationally accredited and respected.

Sifu: Sarah's Sifu has been quietly going insane for several years now. His interest in the young woman has become a dark obsession. By this point in time, his madness has reached a point that can only end in tragedy.

NPCS: LAU GIN

History: At ten years of age, Lau ran away from his abusive mother and drunkard father and began living on the streets. Despite being cold and hungry a lot of the time, Lau considered his new situation a vast improvement over his old one. He survived by petty thefts, pickpocketing, and other small crimes.

Unfortunately, Lau stole quite often in an area controlled by the Tekiya Yakuza family. The drunken representative they sent to Lau informed him that he could either cooperate with the Tekiya, stealing only when and from who they told him to, or they would kill him. They gave Lau twenty-four hours to decide. Lau used that time to track down the Tekiya who had threatened him and killed him with a sawed-off shotgun he had recently bought on the black market.

The Tekiya was incensed over this, and promptly put a price on the head of Lau Gin, but the Bakuto, who were the more powerful in the area, were impressed with Lau and offered him the protection of and membership in their family. Lau accepted and quickly became their number one assassin.

Lau met Genki after a shoot out between himself and a Shadoloo Theon with about ten revenants. He managed to defeat the revenants, but was severely wounded and losing blood with the Theon was about to cave in his skull when the Theon's head left it's shoulders and fell to the ground. Genki rushed Lau to the hospital, where he managed to make a full recovery.

Since then, Lau has taken an almost parental role in her life (something that both are unaccustom to), keeping her out of the less

savory activities of the Yakuza and trying to keep her naivete in check.

Lau is now in his twilight years and can feel age slowing him down. He no longer accepts contracts and instead spends his time teaching a younger generation his hard earned skills. Despite his semi-retired status, he still has made many enemies, not the least of which is Shadoloo, who were the targets of most of Lau's later contracts, and the Tekiya, who's contract on Lau still stands (and has grown into several million).

Appearance: Lau is an older asian man with short grey hair, a wrinkly weathered face, and a grim expression. He stands about five foot eight and about a hundred and forty pounds. Despite his advancing age, he is in remarkable shape, and is more agile and strong then many men half his age. Typically he wears a slate grey trenchcoat that conceals his two custom shotguns.

Roleplaying: Cold, professional, aloof, and honorable. There are few things that will make you break your icy demeanor. You despise two things more than anything else in the world, drunks (and by extention any sort of drug addict) and bullies. You will not tolerate either one. You care for Genki/Titiko as if she were the daughter you never had, but are too reserved to show it except in small ways. You carry two sawed off shotguns with you at all times, one loaded with solid slugs and one with scattershot. You rarely use the gun loaded with scattershot, only when being pursued by more than one person and no bystanders are within your field of fire. When in doubt, you use solid slugs.

WARRIOR'S PRIDE CHARACTER SHEET

Name: Lau 'Shotgun' Gin	Style: Gun God	Team: None
Player:	School: Tokyo Streets	Concept: Bakuto Hitman
Chronicle:	Stable: None	Signature: Overturned Shot Glass

ATTRIBUTES

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●●●	Charisma ●●●●	Perception ●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●	Intelligence ●●●
Stamina ●●●●	Appearance ●●●	Wits ●●●●

ABILITIES

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●●●●	Blind-Fighting ●●●	Investigation ●●●●
Insight ●●●●●	Demolitions ●●	Law ●●
Instruction ●●	Disguise ●	Linguistics ●●●
Intimidation ●●●●●	Drive ●●●	Medicine ●●●●
Searching ●●●	Repair ●●	Mysteries ●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●●	Security ●●●●	Style Lore ●●
Subterfuge ●●●	Stealth ●●●●	
	Survival ●●	

Language(s): Japanese (native), Mandarin, Russian and English

ADVANTAGES

Backgrounds	Techniques	SPECIAL MANEUVERS
Allies ●●●●	Punch ●●	Crippling Shot
Backing ●●●	Kick ●●	Jumping Shot
Contacts ●●●●●	Block ●●●●	Moving Shot
Resources ●●●	Grab ●	Sliding Shot
	Athletics ●●●	Jump
	Focus	Kippup
	Shotgun ●●●●●●	Wall Spring
		Throw
Renown	CHI	Missile Reflection
Reputation	●	Double-Hit Kick
●●●●●●●●	WILLPOWER	Power Uppercut
Code	●●●●●●●●	
●●●●●●●●	HEALTH	
Division: n/a	●●●●●●●●	Combos:
Rank: n/a	●●●●●	Power Uppercut to Double-
Standing		Hit Kick
Wins n/a Losses n/a		
Draws n/a KOs n/a		

Complete rules for Gun Gods can be found in Warrior's Pride Issue #2 under STYLES: GUN GODS. Gun God maneuvers can be found in the same issue under APPENDIX: MANEUVERS & ABILITIES.

A brief overview of the origins of the different families of the Yakuza can be found at [Yakuza: Past and Present](#) by Adam Johnson.

Allies: Lau considers both Titiko and Genki his friends. He is aware that they are the same person, but still thinks of them as two different people. Lau also teaches a number of young Yakuza gunplay, and can rely on the aid of his students if necessary.

Backing: While no longer working as a hitman, Lau is still part of the Bakuto and can draw on a measure of their resources

Contacts: Lau has a wide variety of friends on both sides of the law that owe him a couple of favors

Resources: Lau has build up a large nest egg from his lucrative contracts over the years.

FICTION: FORTUNES OF WAR - HIDDEN CHAINS

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

Welcome back to Talwood, Oregon. In our last issue, we met a young girl named Xi, who had caught a glimpse of herself fallen under the sway of darkness. Her boyfriend, Michael, had his own vision of her fate, a vision that sent him to serious study of dark forces. Try as he might, he was only human, and all but useless when a dark stranger from Xi's vision came to claim her. But the Samurai Akihito was more than human, and leapt to her

defense. He failed. And in his failure he saw his own fiancée struck down by a bullet meant for him.

Welcome to Talwood. It's a nice place, if you don't believe in the bogeyman. Take my hand and enter...

...and leave some of the life you bring.

Episode Two: Fortunes of Earth and Metal

*"There are some secrets that do not permit themselves to be told."
— Edgar Allan Poe*

The hooded woman in red robes clumsily hobbled across the courtyard. "I miss my feet," she thought, and banished it for the crime of humanity. She approached the tree reverently. It was an old growth, with thick, strong, leafy branches. Not a single break challenged the intricate patterns grown in its bark. No bird's nest intruded its solitude. No squirrel dared to scamper on its twisted limbs. Its tenders were very careful to ensure that nothing threatened the purity of the Demon Guardian.

The woman bowed before it. "Steel has collected the girl," she rasped. "Stone has gone to meet him."

My orders were to wait. She is not ready. You endanger the Merging.

"HIS wards are breaking down, you told us that!", she impulsively snapped. "We have no choice. The Outsider is getting closer. His emissary is nearly ready to pierce the walls. We cannot ignore the Mandate of Heaven! It is our divine obligation to slay the Outsider!"

Her psyche has grown too strong. Her soul is untested, but also undamaged. She was to be weakened first, her ties to the mortal world severed, her will broken, her body reshaped, her power awakened. You drive it all too quickly, you would rush us all headlong into oblivion.

The woman backed away from the tree as its branches quivered in the still air. "She is Rain, she can no more resist Steel than the mountains could get up and walk."

I have seen mountains 'get up and walk'. You forget your lessons. You only think of one cycle. I have foreseen a meddler. His sword burns with fire, his eyes burn with passion, his heart burns with fury. He would see Steel melted to slag for his woman's loss. And he is not alone.

"I will deal with him."

No. I have use for him. Besides, pain is a marvelous teacher, and Steel must grasp that he is not yet invincible. You will remain here, I have a task for you. Bare your hand to me.

She eagerly stepped forward and pulled the sleeve up her arm, away from her wrist, and reached out her crimson, pebble-scaled hand to the tree. Her three black-taloned fingers stretched open. A piece of the flawless bark curled open, allowing a hungry root to emerge. She moaned in ecstasy as it pierced her hand.

Xi began to wake up when the car hit a pothole. She shifted uneasily in her seat. The car seemed to rattle at every little bump. "Not Michael's," she realized, and tried to think back. Her head felt fuzzy. Smoke... Michael choking... her grogginess shattered like glass. She sat and looked to the driver. "You..." she hissed, and fury marred her pretty face. Moisture formed on the windows despite the dry heat of the day.

The man with platinum-blond hair looked over to his passenger. "Good afternoon, Sleepyhead," he greeted in a cheerful tone. The car swerved when she punched him. "Don't do that again! Crazy #@%#! Are you trying to get us both killed?"

"Yes," Xi said in a curt tone, "I hate being kidnapped. And if you think I'm going to sit still for this-

"You WILL sit still for this," he interrupted. "We are the same, you and I."

"Really? I didn't know I was a psycho-hypnotist. Tell me more, sifu." Frost formed on the windows as she spoke the last word.

"I should have brought a bucket," the man thought, and quickly lashed out, placing his hand over her face. After a moment, he pulled back. She was taking shallow breathes and staring blankly ahead.

"Thank you," he uttered as he flipped off the air-conditioning. "Don't try to fight, Rain. It can be so beautiful, or it can be hell. Your choice."

She replied in a small voice, less than a whisper, "my name is Xi."

"Not for long."

Akihito slowly backed away from the door as the detective took his arm. The Emergency Room of Hague Memorial was bustling with activity, but Akihito barely noticed any of it. He vaguely remembered calling 911. He didn't remember sheathing his sword, but no one had commented on his walking stick, so he must have. He was led into a small, quiet room.

The boy (Mickey?) was in critical condition. Akihito thought he had heard something about a torn artery. Kiyomi was worse. The paramedics had been surprised she was even alive. He could still sense her heat, even through the wall, it was fading. There were so many people around her. His fault. He had sensed the bullet's trail, but hadn't bothered to feel for anything in its path.

He tried to describe the man, but it was hard to think. And every time he pictured the man's face everything turned red. His Katana whispered its thirst for the man's blood. The detective was asking him why he had left his car. He had to think for a moment, he had barely remembered the argument. Someone was whispering behind him, he thought he heard the word 'shock'.

Someone was arguing with the doctor. The detective had just walked out of the room. The doctor was leaving too. Akihito looked up and saw a man in a neat, but rather unimaginative, black suit. Black shoes, black socks, black tie, black shades. He sat in front of Akihito and removed his glasses. Without them, he seemed so utterly plain. His hair was some non-descript shade that might have been a relative of brown, and his tired eyes were a faded blue.

"I brought you some coffee, Aki."

He took the cup, and heard his voice reply "Don't call me Aki." There was no emotion behind the reflexive reply. "You took the case, Rob?"

"Don't call me Rob. And yes." He sipped his own coffee. "If anyone brings you in, even for a weapons charge, it's going to be me."

"I'm not the mood for this."

"Fair. I'll put your perp in B.A.I.'s network. The kid said he popped a blade out of his arm, so I think he's under our jurisdiction. If he has any priors, I'll let you know. Do you know the girl?"

"No, Kiyomi did. From the 'Muse. Can't remember her name." His eyes widened. "Whatever the gas was, it didn't seem to bother her. It didn't bother me or the perp either, but Kiyomi and the boy took it hard. Wasn't flammable."

"Alright, that might help. Aki-"

"Don't you dare warn me off this one," Akihito replied coldly.

"You know, I probably should - my car's still in the shop from that werewolf - But I'm not. I know if someone hurt Helen...." He shuddered involuntarily. "You can have the creep. Just try to leave something for us to blame."

"Thanks." There was an long period of silence, Akihito eventually broke it. "Don't you have to file this?"

"I don't think you should be left alone. Call Masumi, I'll go away once she gets here."

"Oh, so I'm on suicide watch?"

"Should you be?"

Masumi meditated in her little garden. She focused on the soil she sat cross-legged on. "Earth, mother of all life, please accept you humble daughter," she thought. Slowly, she began to sink into the soil. Her kimono remained behind.

(Honey?)

The roots of her plants tickled her.

(Masa!)

The ground water lapped at her toes.

(Dear, you have a phone call.)

The Earth gently raised her to the surface.

Masumi stood up. She was a tall woman, just under six and a half feet. Although she was muscular, she gave an impression of being slender. Her black hair tumbled down, almost to her knees. She walked through her garden, her large, dark eyes on the small redheaded woman standing in the doorway with the cordless phone.

"Alright, she's here." The redhead handed Masumi the phone with one hand and clasped the other in the larger woman's hand. "It's Akihito, he sounds gloomy."

"Ok," she said, and quickly stole a kiss on the smaller woman's forehead before raising the phone to her ear. "Doshi, what's wrong?" She went pale as she listened. "Gods...," she breathed.

"What's wrong?"

Masumi leaned the phone away from herself. "Kiyomi's in the hospital. She's in the Emergency Room."

"God..." she pleadingly whispered. "Well, tell him we're coming over."

"Megan and I are coming over, is anyone else there? Agent Martin!? What the #@%* happened!?"

No, don't tell me now, we'll be right over." She disconnected the phone. "Megan, get ready, I'll start the car-

"No, I'll start the car, you get dressed."

Masumi winced as she blushed. "Yes, of course, thank you."

Xi tried not to look at the knife, but her eyes and body conspired against her. She walked slowly, following the knife. Her kidnapper had taken the knife out after the car stopped at a cabin in the woods. It was an ordinary kitchen knife, but in his hand it seemed to pulse with power. It was the focus to some chain that linked her mind to his. Her left hand was still loyal to her, though the rest of the arm was a traitor. She managed to slip her hand into her pocket. It was difficult, her thoughts were broken, almost shattered.

She closed her hand around a key. It pressed into her palm, and her thoughts crystallized around the pain. Her toes finally wiggled at her command. Her enemy made her step into a bathtub. That was alright, she knew he was not planning anything so mundane as murder. He put the drain plug in and faced her.

"It is time to begin your education, Rain." He sheathed the knife, and the spell weakened.

"Great. Can we start with escapes?"

"This is not a game child. I can tell you what you are."

"Who the #@%* are you to decide that!"

"You may call me Steel. And you are Rain."

"Stop calling me that! My name is Xi! Let me guess, everyone gets a new name in your little club?"

"We leave our human names behind, and take the names of our souls. Xi is not real. She's only a barrier they made to keep the truth from you."

"They?"

"The men who pretend to be your Father and Grandfather. Your 'Grandfather' cast a spell on you before you were even born. He tried to rob you of your true power, your rightful destiny."

"Well, it didn't work. I met Michael anyway."

"Stop being dense. We are the fragments of a greater whole-

"You lost me."

"Tell me, 'ZEE', how much do you think about your past?"

"Well, when you put it that way I feel so old you must be telling the truth."

"You've never been sick a day in your life."

"I take care of myself." Her gaze on him became cold, uneasy. It was an odd thing to know.

"Your mother died in childbirth."

"Ok, you are crossing the line."

"You've never really felt like part of the crowd. You could never articulate it, but there is a gulf between you and your friends that only a handful of them have ever crossed. Sometimes you've felt as though you were a species apart from humanity."

"Shut up," Xi snapped.

"Whenever you're around a large body of water, you've felt drawn to it. Sometimes you feel a compulsion to go out to the dock and just look out at the ocean, an listen to the sea call out to you. You've always dreamt of swimming, you feel so confident around water, as though you were born to be among the waves. But your 'Father' never let you take lessons, and he used that to make you promise to keep away from the water."

Xi closed her eyes in a futile gesture to keep from crying. Weeping, she turned away from him.

"Stop it," she begged. She felt his hands on her, caressing her neck, her shoulders, her hips, her... front. Her body betrayed her by enjoying this intruder's touch more than Michael's.

"You've always felt an emptiness inside you. A longing you could never explain. How did you try to fill the emptiness? Your Piano? The Ballet? School work? Boys? Did Michael fill the emptiness? Did he make you feel as good as I do?"

She spun and brought her fist across his jaw with a loud crack. Her hand began to bleed, it felt like she had slapped a bulldozer. The key was now firmly embedded in her palm. He quickly, but gently laid his hand on her forehead. Every cell in her body tingled, and she was no longer flesh and blood. She became a standing pillar of water, locked in a vaguely human shape. She lost cohesion, and collapsed into the tub. She screamed, but it was silent; she had no mouth.

Steel leaned over the tub and ran his fingers through her. "This is what you really are, Rain. You can do more, you know. We can teach you. We need you, Rain. You complete us. I'll give you sometime to think, then I'll help you pull yourself together. It's so beautiful, Rain. Let go of Xi." He left her. She kept silently screaming.

"And she's still in surgery," Akihito told Masumi, who had thrown on a simple outfit. "They've had to take out parts of her because of the damage. They... they don't know if she'll ever wake up. We... we were fighting when it started. It was meant for me. The shot should have taken me, not her." Masumi draped her arm around Akihito. "Don't talk like that. You did everything you could. This had to have been planned."

"How could it have been planned? It was only a coincidence that I was even there. That wasn't even my normal route."

"Why did you take that route?"

"I didn't want to take Pine Road curve until I get someone to look at my brakes."

"When did you start having troubles?"

Akihito's face took on a contemplative air. "This morning."

"Now this is where I start to get paranoid. Do you have any idea what this guy was?"

"No, I-" he was interrupted by his phone. "One second. Moshi-Moshi? Hello Rob. No, but tell me anyway. So he dyed his hair, it's hardly evidence of evil powers. Maybe, Stockholm Syndrome? Ok, now I'm convinced. Melted? Was she kidnapped too? Well where is the cabin? Ok, thanks. I owe you one."

"News?"

"I'll tell you on the way. Megan? Could you...."

Megan quickly nodded. "Don't worry, I'll keep the home fires burning here."

"Thanks."

The robed woman flawlessly vaulted over the high garden wall at the secluded house. Her cloven hooves dug into the soil as she looked over Masumi's garden. For a brief moment, felt an impulse to reduce the meddler's sanctuary to ashes. But she restrained herself.

She opened one of her twisted inhuman hands, and dug into her palm with black talons. The soil her blood dripped on quickly scorched. She dug a bloated seed from her palm. "The firebrand should never have gotten you involved in our business, 'Samurai-ko'," she rasped. "You could have lived through this." She dropped the warped seed into the ashes her blood had left. It twisted of it's own accord, burying itself deep within the garden.

"Enjoy the master's embrace." she said, then vanished in a blaze of fire.

Masumi's car bounced violently as she turned on Logger's Trail 7. "So after Karen Tabat just dropped off the face of the earth for a year," Masumi questioned, "she breaks a man she's never known out of prison, melting the bars to do it."

"Yes," Akihito confirmed.

"A few months later, the con, Derrick Hein, punches through a wall to grab a small-time runner for Falcove's syndicate. Not that Falcove cares at the time, because they picked the day he was fighting US."

"Makes you feel warm inside, doesn't it?"

"Yeah, I'm about to erupt. So the illustrious Blake McKinley wanted you there to rub your nose in this. Now, how does the girl fit in?"

"I have no idea. But Blake has a cabin near this trail, and Rob's hunch was right; they came this way - no one else has left a heat-trail on this road for a long time. Not since the High School kids got bored doing 'Blair Witch' knockoffs. Speed up."

"I doubt they can brainwash her in a few hours."

"You didn't see her going to him. She wasn't picked at random. She seemed... drawn towards him." Masumi hit the brakes hard. As the car skidded, a spire of rock erupted from the ground in front, mauling the car as it hit.

A deep, booming voice, like a giant's called out to them. "Well, well, well. I was wondering when you'd show up. Dear me, I do hope you've kept your insurance paid up."

"Doshi," Masumi scolded, "no offense, but I am NEVER letting you pick the route AGAIN!"

Next: A Taste of Mortality.

FICTION: LEGENDS OF THE CIRCUIT

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

As we tour the SF Circuit together through story, those of you who do read this may have noted that I often drift away from the topic at hand: Street Fighters. This is partly because I am drawn to the mystic, and partly because of my chosen format. Many of the stories thus far have been told by Fighters trying to relieve tension, or to sway opinions. Today's story, Dearest Reader, is quite relevant to Fighting itself, for it deals with one of the most important things in a Street Fighter's life: the Challenge, and how it drives some of the Warriors on the Circuit.

This tale of the Challenge comes from Phoebe MacCabe, a member of the 'Red Branch' Stable, as she and her friend Sarah Bradwright reminisce over their own fights.

The Mummer's Dance

"Beckett once told me about something that happened to him in Cornwall. He had just finished a fight. It was a disappointment, he didn't even break a sweat. Everyone was congratulating him, which made things worse because he felt like a bit of a bully. Beckett's one to speak his mind, and he got into one of his tirades. He ended by saying, loudly, that he would give anything for a challenge."

"Now, it so happened that there was a troupe of mummers in the town, and one of them (he never found out who) had a ticket to their performance sent to him. He was interested, but he's not really into it, but sometime during the show he gets passed a note. It tells him to be at a certain road at midnight. Now, Beckett has never let good sense interfere with his curiosity, so he's there."

"He doesn't have to wait long. A motorcycle pulls up, he looks the rider over. He guesses it was a girl, probably young. Her outfit's made of rags, and she's wearing a straw mask, like a mummer. He asks what this is all about, and the girl looks at him and says 'catch me'."

"Before Beckett can say a word, the girl tumbles off the bike and starts scampering away from him. He starts racing after her, but she's a FAST one. He chases her for the better part of an hour. She runs him through the woods, over a river, all the way to a cliff. He takes a breath then, thinking this is just about over, but she springs onto the cliff and starts crawling up like it was nothing."

"Beckett paces to the edge of the cliff and calls up the girl, asking just what kind of game she's playing. She stops and looks down at him, and says in a sad voice 'I thought you wanted a challenge'. That does for Beckett, he goes up that cliff like it was an escalator, cursing like a drunken sailor along the way. He nearly falls off, but he finally makes it. She's already at the top, walking away from the edge."

"He goes after her, but they're both worn out, so it's a really slow chase. After a moment, she starts to speed up, and Beckett realizes that if he lets her catch her second wind he'll never see her again. He puts everything he's got in one burst of speed, and jumps into a tackle. She kicks him off, and she's laughing like a kid on Christmas."

"He knows then what she wanted, he saw it in her stance. She had been spoiling for a fight, and everything before it was to test him, to make sure he could challenge her. He doesn't know her style then (he still doesn't know what she was practicing), but it doesn't matter. Beckett's not a real technical fighter, but he flows into the scrap with every bit of heart he has."

"The way he tells it, they fought till dawn. She used the land like her own arena, she trips him on roots, swings on a branch to kick him, she takes him through the roughest terrain she can. Mind you Beckett's dense, but he's wily in a fight, and he's been hit with just about every trick, so nothing she does surprises him. He ends it by slamming her against a oak. He looks at her lying there, in that mask, and he wants nothing more than to take her mask off."

"He told me why he didn't take it off, but I still don't get him on that. He said it had been too close, that he didn't feel like he'd earned the right to know what she looked like. He waited for her to wake up, and walked her to her bike."

"Beckett's telling everyone he knows the story, because he wants to find her again. You see, he's pining for another challenge."

STORIES/ADVENTURES: HOOK, LINE, SINKERS

The Mummy Walks!

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

Hook: The PCs are contacted by an old associate concerning the disappearance of a valuable Egyptian Mummy from a museum. The NPC is concerned at the rest of the director's seeming apathy towards the crime, and turns to his old friends to help expose the criminal.

Line: The museum director acts very suspicious, actively opposing the investigation. If confronted, he will claim 'other forces are at work!'. One night, the PCs witness the director looked in combat with the mummy. After driving off the walking dead, the director tells the PCs the horrid truth he

had feared no one would believe: a murderous Egyptian sorcerer walks the world again!

Sinker: The Mummy does walk... but not as a shambling corpse. Upon awaking, the mummy possessed the body of the director, and trapped the innocent man in it's own decaying form. Even if the PCs can cut through the web of lies built around them, they must face a cunning and powerful sorcerer who has full access to the knowledge of its host. And should the PCs survive the confrontation, they must one day face... THE SEQUEL!

The Long, Dark Night

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

Hook: A fighter the PCs know and respect is nearly killed in the ring. The move that brings him down is nothing more than a common suplex. The near-fatal injury is nothing more than an accident.

Line: As the Fighter recovers from his injury, he begins to realize just how close to death some of his other fights have been. The man who injured him is soon racked by guilt, and given a wide berth by other Fighters.

Sinker: Unless they can prevent it the PCs are set to witness two careers end, but

should they? The injured man's concerns are nothing abnormal, and are really quite rational. If he chooses to lead the circuit, he could become a decent mentor - but that shred of fear and doubt will always keep him from becoming a true master. The man who injured the NPC is about to drop out of the circuit, always haunted by what could have happened. What will the PCs do? What CAN they do? If your PCs aren't concerned about deep questions, put them in one of the above rolls and see where they take it.

No Way to Run a Tournament

Contributed by Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos (ArkonDLoC@hotmail.com)

Hook: The PCs' manager begins berating them for signing a contract without him to look it over. The PCs have no idea what he's talking about, but he shows them a program to a tournament they never heard of - and they are listed in the main event!

Line: The PCs are victims of an unscrupulous promoter, who is using the

names of popular fighters to draw large crowds all across the country. The fighters take a hit to their reputations when they don't show, but the promoter is gone with the money by the time any of them even hear of their alleged match. If they don't stop him, he'll drag their names, and all of Street Fighting through the mud.

Sinker: How can they stop him? They have no legal recourse, and if threatened he'll only stop using the PC's names - other popular fighters will still have their reputations ruined.

But sooner or later the promoter must pay the piper. Will the PCs protect him when his promotions anger a Shadoloo team?

IN CLOSING

Next issue we'll have an article on how GMs can give an edge to dishonorable tournament

fighters (they cheat). Also, a young boy who knows far more than he should.

Questions, Comments, Submissions, or Suggestions should be sent to the editor at sfstg@yahoo.com.

Submission Guidelines:

All nongraphic files should be in .txt, .rtf, .html, or .doc formats. Graphics files should be in either .jpg or .gif formats.

maneuver, in that format. Beyond running it through a spell checker, I will not modify the text of your maneuver. I will never change the modifiers or any effect that the maneuver has.

Characters: Characters should have each section (including Skills, Talents, and Knowledges) separate so as to make the transition easier. In addition, try to list notes for backgrounds and any languages known. Also if your character uses home made rules, such as styles, maneuvers, or weapons, please send them along with your character or provide a link to them on the internet.

Any other submissions can be sent in any format you wish.

Maneuvers: If you are sending in details of a maneuver, follow the format used in White Wolf books, and the format used in Warrior's Pride. Please send in all details of the

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***This Issue is to pay homage to you Dustin for bringing us this awesome prideful spirit!
— Niemand***