

# WARRIOR'S PRIDE

The Online Source for Street Fighter: The Storytelling Game

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## WELCOME TO WARRIOR'S PRIDE

December, 2001

This issue of Warrior's Pride, as no doubt all of you have noticed, is two months late. Though I would love to pull out the old excuse of Real Life interfering once again in my editorial duties, the simple truth is that I forgot about it for a very long time.

This Pride is different than any before it because of two things. First off, it's the first Pride without any Contenders or NPCs. Secondly this issue of Warrior's Pride has an honest to goodness article written by yours truly. As this is my first article, it is your sacred duty to berate, mock, belittle, and find enough problems with my first work that I feel I would have been better off putting my hands in a woodchipper rather than wasting everyone's time with this piece of drivel.

Other than my article, this should be a decent read for all you Fistfighters out there. We have the usual excellent crop of fictions and Hook, Line and Sinkers from Archon, so this isn't entirely a waste of bandwidth.

And now, on to the good stuff.

## ARTICLE: UNETHICAL USE OF SPECIAL MANEUVERS IN THE ARENA

OR

### CHEATING IN TOURNAMENTS

*"Okay boss, the semi-final round has been set up. You'll be fighting that big Russian guy, Zangief."*

*"Excellent. Then all is going well."*

*"Yes sir. It's just that he's really strong. I..."*

*"You do not believe that I can defeat Zangief."*

*"...no sir."*

*"You underestimate my resourcefulness. Do not worry. Shortly after this fight, Zangief will disappear and all will be as it was. He may even thank me. His legend will undoubtable grow even greater after he has left us for a better place."*

*"But sir. What have you planned."*

*"It's very simple really. Before we fight, it is traditional for us to first clasp hands..."*

Bad guys rarely play fair. It's one of the main reasons they're bad guys. It's even easier to 'cheat' in such an unregulated arena as street fighting, where often the only rule is that the last man standing wins. And of course, civilization has debated for millennia on what exactly constitutes cheating.

While there are many maneuvers that lend themselves to this kind of unorthodox abuse (particularly in The Player's Guide), for purposes of this article only maneuvers from the first two books (the SF:STG main book and

Secrets of Shadoloo) will be discussed since they are the books that most people have.

**Dim Mak**

*Well, that went well, I thought to my self. That little kung fu chippie managed to tag me a couple of times, but they didn't even hurt. A couple of judicious application of the old one-two combo and she's out like a light and I'm in the finals.*

*Another couple of minutes I'm waiting for the bell to sound off so I can nail this last guy. He looks like he's in bad shape. Keeps bringing his hand up to clench this big bruise on his side, might even have a couple of broken ribs. Feel like a bit of a bully, picking on someone who ain't a hundred percent, but that's just the luck of the draw.*

*Then the bell goes off, and I suddenly hurt all over. I don't fall over, not quite, but it's taken all my will not to scream. The guy in the other corner grins at me and pulls his fist back.*

*That's all I remember for about six hours.*

There are a couple of questions raised by Dim Mak. The first is whether you can delay the attribute loss the same way you can the damage, and for different lengths of time. One Storyteller I know said you could, but if you delayed the damage, you also delayed the attribute loss for the same duration.

Another question is what the victim feels. Looked at one way, since there is no damage, there should be little to no pain, and a devastating punch between their shoulder blades might feel no more threatening than a hearty slap on the back.

Finally, can Dim Mak be part of a dizzy combo if the damage is delayed?

Storytellers and players should work out how Dim Mak works when it becomes relevant to the campaign.

### **Energy Reflection**

*We're both down to our last, running on adrenalin and pure stubbornness more than anything else. One more good hit from either of us will probably end this fight. He knows it and he knows I know it.*

*We circle each other, looking for an opening. Then he leaps back, firing off one of those purple globes when he reaches the top of his jump. I dodge to the side, but I don't need to, his shot was way off. Damn! It's going into the stands!*

*I sneak a quick look behind me and see this old geezer catch the ball and thrown back my way. I have just enough time to think 'maybe I should duck' before I'm nailed.*

The above creates an interesting dilemma for any referee. Was that outside interference? If the old man hadn't acted, there would definitely have been injuries, perhaps even deaths, among the spectators. And there's no proof that the old man and the winner were working together.

On the other hand, if the referee is at all knowledgeable about higher level special maneuvers, there's a good chance that he would know that the old man could have thrown the fireball in

any direction, including straight up where no one would have gotten hit.

In any event, it is unlikely that a street fighter that would endanger the crowds would be invited back, even if he had won the tournament. It's bad for business.

### **Chi Kung Healing**

*I collapse in my corner as the bell rings and Jo starts massaging my back and shoulders. I'm spent, don't think I could go another second, let alone another round in the ring.*

*But just like always, Jo works her magic and by the time the bell rings again, I'm a new man.*

*Damn, I'm lucky to have her working for me.*

Is this cheating? Even if someone figures out that Chi Kung Healing is being used, isn't it just a more effective form of ringside treatment?

Another consideration is that a boxer who never fought in the street fighting circuit probably wouldn't know that Chi Kung Healing exists, let alone being used on him between rounds.

Note: The Elemental maneuver Healing can be used in this situation also.

## **Cobra Charm**

*That's right you pathetic losers, keep on cheering that fraud of a champ. In about three minutes, you'll be cheering me.*

*I look the crowd over one last time, searching for signs of intelligent life I guess, when I spotted her in the front row. On a scale of one to ten, she was a generous six, maybe a seven in good light, pretty enough but hardly a homewrecker, but I couldn't look away. Her muddy brown eyes held me.*

*On some level I know the bell just rang and the fight's started, but until the guy actually hits me, I don't care.*

Difficult to pull off due to the ten foot limit (3 hexes), but if done just before a fight starts, you're almost guaranteed the first hit.

## **Stunning Shout**

*I look over my mountainous opponent and smile. This will be a rare treat for me. It is not often that my six foot six, two hundred seventy pound self is the smaller faster combatant. I slip into snake stance to maximize my speed edge and wait for the ref to start the match.*

*As soon as the ref lowers his hand, a yell rises up above the roar of the audience. I feel it crash through me, breaking my concentration. It didn't hurt, but I forgot where I was and why I was here for a moment and I actually turn to look and see what the big deal is.*

*One pile-driver wake-up call later and I'm back in the fight. Not sure what just happened, but I'm willing to take out my frustrations on a handy target.*

An iffy one. Everyone will know something odd just happened, even if they're not sure what or who did it.

Sometimes that's enough for the fight to be thrown out by itself.

On the other hand, Stunning Shout does have one distinct advantage over a limited range maneuver like Cobra Charm. Since no range is mentioned in Stunning Shout's description, it is up to the storyteller exactly how far away the effects can be felt.

## **Mind Control**

*Everything's going my way. Haven't taken any real bad hits in this tournament. Now it's the final round and I'm not even winded yet.*

*My 'opponent' enters the ring. Confident and dignified. The bell rings and we rush each other. I pull back for my Demon Crusher, but he's faster, ducks down and nails me in the solar plexus. I gasp and fall over and the ref counts me out. The hardest part is not to smile while I'm 'unconscious'.*

*The master is pleased.*

An advanced student of Ler Drit can do much more than rig fights with mind controlled minions. Manipulating odds, boycotting certain arenas, creating and ending rivalries, swaying public interest, there's no end to the havoc Mind Control can bring to the circuit.

Fortunately, Lord Vega is too busy dominating the world through his cartel to manipulate the circuit like this. At least too often.

## Psychic Rage

*Well, well, well, the fight I've been waiting months for. Once I take Carmen down, I'll arrest her, get her to testify against Balrog, and once I have Balrog, Vega is only a step away.*

*And it all starts here and now. It cost me damn near everything, but I'm going to take her down.*

*She climbs into the ring and smirks at me, still carrying that prissy little sword. I flash her that wide innocent smile I'd been practicing in the mirror for years and her face falters. Score one for the good guys.*

*Then the fight starts and it's my turn to loose a smile.*

*Prison? For her? She was one of Balrog's top assassins! I had evidence that she at least eight kills, not the least of which was my partner Joey. Due process is too good for her, I've got to take her down here and now.*

*My fists fly, but she dances out of the way, flicking me with that damn toy. Some small part of me knows I'm fighting stupid, using haymakers when I should be using jabs, not adjusting my balance when I miss, but it's drowned out by the roar in my ears. Her smirk is back. I hate that damn superior look she has. I suddenly realize that I always have.*

When under the berserk fury induced by Psychic Rage, a warrior will fight, quite frankly, stupidly and will almost certainly loose against even a moderately inferior opponent. Even if the fight was such a mis-match to begin with that the warrior wins despite the handicap of not being able to control themselves, the victory will have come with a price, either in reputation (honor) or in chi and willpower reserves. Of course, that may have been the real intent all along.

## Psychic Vise

*There is an old Greek legend that if you look into the eyes of Medusa, you will be forevermore turned to stone. But if you avoid her gaze, you would not meet this fate and you would be able to go about your business, usually running away as fast as you are able.*

*I always thought of it as a warning that some problems are best confronted indirectly, if at all, rather than head on, something that goes against my coach's rather simplistic philosophy of 'If you hit it hard enough, it will go away'.*

*That's why instead of doing the smart, but wimpy and unmacho, thing like taking this punk to court for stealing my duffle, I'm about to put him in traction in the street fight he challenged me to.*

*It has absolutely nothing to do with this headache I've had ever since I got off the plane that's been making me very short and irritable. I want to make that perfectly clear at the onset that it's just one of those coincidences.*

*I look the rest of his gang over. Mostly kids in their mid to late teens, but there's a couple of familiar looking men in black robes that look us over impassively.*

*Correction, I think to myself after I give those guys a once over, looking me over. I'm certain that they're the ones that have been tailing me for the past couple of days. But I digress.*

*The kid with my duffle makes this speech that I only understand a few words of. Bloody language barrier. I think he's saying that he wants a good clean fight and that if anyone interfears he'll beat the snot out of him. The group nods like they've heard it all before and the fight begins.*

*Right before his fist connects with my face, my headache begins to feel different. Instead of a sharp pain right between my eyes it becomes like a too small sweat band around my forehead. It doesn't really hurt anymore, but it is distracting and it takes the punk connecting with my jaw to remind me that yes someone is trying to do violence to my physical wellbeing.*

*I fight back as best as I can, all the while the invisible sweat band keeps on shrinking and shrinking, but the outcome is never really in doubt. When it comes right down to it, there's very little a normal street punk can do against even an out of sorts street fighter.*

*As soon as he's down I shoulder my duffle and get out of there as fast as possible before someone get's the bright idea to jump me. What should have been a simple task became both physically and mentally exhausting thanks to that weird metamorphing headache.*

*On the other hand nothing seems to have been damage or taken from my duffle, I got a bit of a light workout, and both versions of my headache seem to have decided that there are other poor bastards in the world to aggravate. All in all, I think I can mark down an unqualified win in the good guy's column.*

Part of what makes Lord Vega so dangerous is that the basics of his martial art style is understood by a shockingly large number of people, all of whom are fanatically loyal to Shadoloo and therefor Lord Vega. You can find a cel of The Order of Heavenly Unity Theons in every major city, and Revenants just about anywhere on the planet.

With their formidable mental prowess, it would be child's play for Theons to provide a little outside interference to those in Lord Vega's good graces. Although not as powerful as Mind Control, Psychic Vice can in the right circumstance have the same effect, particularly when used against a focus weak martial artist such as a Sanbo Wrestler or Thai Kickboxer, and has the added benefit of preparing a person to be Mind Controlled.

## **In Conclusion**

This doesn't even mention the more mundane corruption that infests any institution that generates a large amount of money. Drugs, bribes, blackmail and even simple intimidation are all a very much a part of the Street Fighting world.

With that said, not every fight promoter is a corrupt money hungry tool of Lord Vega. Not every tournament judge is in the local Shadoloo boss's pocket. And not every rival met in the ring is trying to win by dishonest means.

Fighting against the overwhelming graft in the circuit can quickly become very dull if everyone the Player Characters meet is looking to screw them over. Throw them a bone on occasion. Show them an honest enemy who is determined to triumph over the PCs in the ring with only his courage and strength. Let them see referees spit in the face of people trying to give them large amounts of money. Let them see a tournament organizer expel fighters that try to bribe their way to a win, or even refuse to let known Shadoloo fighters participate in their tournament.

After all, it's only after you've seen light that you can understand what darkness truly is.

## FORTUNES OF WAR: HIDDEN CHAINS

Contributed by [Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos](#)

Once again we come to Talwood Oregon, a town of secrets. Take a moment to familiarize yourself with our first two visits, because a lot happens this time around. This Episode ends 'Hidden Chains', our introduction to this dark tale. The next Episode begins the first major arc: Acts of Sacrifice, where very bad things begin to happen. But for now....

### Episode Three: A Taste of Mortality

*"When I was young I thought I stood  
on solid ground, well that proved  
wrong  
Everything I knew was true  
Just blew up in my face"*

-Devo, 'Spin the Wheel'

Her entire life was nothing but a hazy memory. The forest covered the mountain, and the rain rolled down in gentle waves. There were no people to disturb the tranquility of Xi's new environment. Not even Xi herself existed here.

She was the rain coming down from the clouds. She was also the clouds releasing the essence of life on the land. She was the water on the ground, too, dripping off every leaf, dancing downhill to the river. As the river, she caressed and nurtured each tiny, fragile life that moved within her. Even that was not the limit of her spirit, for she was the ocean, aloof, uncaring mother of all life. She was the blood nourishing each cell of the animals, dancing to their pulse, living their lives.

"Am I dead?", some part of her vaguely wondered. "Is this some form of Nirvana?"

*No.*

Xi wasn't surprised at the voice. It came from within her as much as it came from The Tree. It was no one she knew,

and she was fairly certain that a human simply couldn't make a voice like that. Yet she was not surprised in the least to hear it. She had been waiting for that voice her whole life. It was the missing part of her soul.

She focused her attention on The Tree. It was ancient, glorious, beautiful even if it was twisted. Perhaps because it was twisted. Its leaves greedily soaked in the rain. "Who are you?", Xi lazily thought. Staring at The Tree made her (docile) feel... groggy but content.

*I am you.*

"That's not an answer."

*It is all that matters.*

"No it's not. H-how...," the thought slipped away, and was lost. She knew it had been vital, and the edge of her suspicion cut through deeper into the haze. "How did I get here?"

*Water condenses on metal surfaces.*

"Thank you," she said, and not insincerely; it reminded her of things her father had explained. She cursed herself for dismissing them as Chinese superstition.

*You're hiding your thoughts from me.*

Her weariness intensified. She felt her strength ebb. "Who is he?", she projected as she tried to flow away from whatever was draining her essence.

*What do you mean?*

"The man in my dream, the one I stab. Who are you going to make me kill?"

---

Akihito jumped from car as Masumi calmly strolled out. She sighed as she looked over the spire of rock her car had seemed to wrap itself around. Akihito was more concerned with the massive figure striding towards them.

He was a giant, nearly eight feet tall, and every inch of it was packed with muscle. His apparently hairless body was covered in dirt and dust, and it formed a great cloud as his thunderous steps carried him forward. <"Masa, I think we have a problem,"> Akihito quickly said in Japanese.

<"Yes, this is the fourth car this year you've managed to total,"> Masumi calmly reminded him. <"It's not even August. Are you trying for a new record?">

The mountainous being stopped his approach and protested. "Hey! Pay attention to me! And have the decency to speak English!"

"Quiet, you," Masumi ordered, then casually told Akihito in Japanese: <"I left my No-Dachi in the trunk. Can you distract this idiot?">

"Hai."

Akihito twisted his walking stick to separate sword from sheath as he leapt towards the brute.

"So, Firebug, who's the date?", the giant rumbled as he moved to slap Akihito. The samurai nimbly danced under the brute's arm, letting his blade taste the mountainous man's blood.

"Masa? She just came by so you wouldn't get lonely... Derrick." Akihito tried to punctuate his statement with a quick stab, but the giant's fist rapidly connected with the smaller man, who was knocked back almost fifteen feet.

"THAT NAME IS DEAD!", the brute howled. "I am Stone, now."

"No need to lose your temper," Masumi interjected, "Akihito's very understanding about these things. You just had to say the word." She closed the trunk as Stone turned to face her, and his mouth hung open as she balanced the seven foot curved blade of the sword into her stance.

"That's the biggest sword I've ever seen...", Stone said in a small voice.

"You'd be surprised how often I hear that," She cheerfully replied.

"Need any help?" Akihito asked.

"I can handle him. Go on ahead." She told him.

As Akihito sprinted out, Stone coldly appraised the woman. "I wasn't told about you."

"Maybe no one wanted to scare you." Masumi said with a smirk. She reached out with her senses toward her foe as Akihito darted into the woods. Once he was gone she locked eyes with Stone. "What are you waiting for?"

Stone took a hesitant step forward, then charged with a cry that shook the earth.

---

Robert Martin ducked under the cabin window as he passed. He glanced through the window and saw a man with platinum blonde hair and a small sword tattoo on his face. He briefly considered taking a shot at the suspect, but held back. He only had a confused witness's word that the man was anything other than a normal human at this point, and it was against regulations for Men in Black to use deadly force against normals. And if the man was 'touched, he had very little to determine type- even rune bullets might not be effective if he turned out to be something major.

As it was, the suspect didn't seem to be doing much; he was just holding a steel rod up in a full bathtub. Very weird, but nothing he could bring up as evidence. Not without a sudden hurricane. But the man's eyes had rolled back in their sockets, seeming almost pure white. The girl was nowhere to be seen.

After Agent Martin had watched him for the moment, the man suddenly snapped out of his trance. He cursed and left the room. The rod remained upright in the water. He cocked his gun and waited for the man to come around the cabin, then he heard a voice from the front of the building. "Akihito, I've been waiting for you." Robert smiled, that was the distraction he had been waiting for.

---

"Have you, now?" Akihito responded. His Katana took on a red glow as he stood ready for battle. "I didn't think you would be so eager to visit the burn ward."

"I don't think you're going to burn anything today."

"Why not?"

"It's been a rather dry summer here, hasn't it?" The man leaned down and picked up a handful of dry leaves. "How does that go? 'Only you can prevent forest fires'?"

Akihito cursed under his breath as the glow of his sword faded. He then silently cursed his opponent's smirking face, and his own failure to anticipate. "So, what do they call you, Blake?"

The man winced involuntarily. "I am Steel."

"Do you pick your names, or there a theme here I'm missing?"

Steel answered by stretching out his hand to the ground. A chain leapt from the soil into his waiting palm, twisting as it freed it's full length from the ground. Akihito barely rolled out of the way as the chain tore out the ground he had been standing on.

'Next time, I pick the battleground,' Akihito promised himself as he fended off the next chain strike with a vicious slash.

---

Robert froze for a second with his gun drawn, but no one seemed to have heard the window breaking. He vaulted into the bathroom, and looked it over. Nothing but the rod seemed out of place, but that was enough. The rod was standing straight in the water, but very little of it was IN the water. It barely went an inch deep. He passed his hand through the water, and staggered back as if it had been electrified.

It had screamed at him. The water had actually yelled at him. 'GET ME OUT OF HERE!'

"This job is getting weirder everyday," he complained as he started checking the rest of the cabin- only a formality, he knew he wouldn't find anything.

---

*It does not matter who.*

The Tree's statement was cold and commanding. It would not be argued with.

*You will kill anything I order you to.*

"But why?" Xi coldly questioned.  
"Why are you doing this?"

*I was created to. I am as old as the barriers that separate this world from what lies beyond. We are one of those created to watch those barriers. You are part of me that was separated, and it is time to return.*

"Why?"

*An Outsider has entered my perceptions. It tries to enter OUR world. I cannot allow that.*

A squirrel playfully skipped onto a low branch, and was flayed alive by a dozen new thorns.

"What, is it worse than you?"

*You have no idea how dangerous Outsiders can be.*

"Show me."

The Tree was silent for a long time, then spoke again, and Xi thought she sensed a smirk behind its voice.

*Very well. You will see.*

Xi considered the words for a moment, then felt... something passing through her dissolved body. For a moment, something touched her mind. She cried out to it, "GET ME OUT OF HERE!", then it was gone.

*Did you think anyone would find you?  
Did you think you could escape if I did not allow it?*

"You can't control everything."

*No, only the things that matter. When the time comes, you will embrace me willingly.*

"Never."

*'Never' does not exist. You cannot turn aside fate. Not even death can change your destiny.*

---

The rest of the cabin had been empty. Agent Martin stood over the bathtub for a moment before pulling the rod out. When nothing happened for a moment, he grimly pulled out a small rod. He pressed a slender button and a small spark of electricity danced along the point. "This may hurt..." he consoled as he touched the point to the water.

The water recoiled with a shriek, forming into a young Chinese girl, curled at one end of the tub as if trying to fend off an attack.

"Your name is Xi?"

"Yes... that HURT! Thank you."

"Sorry, it was all I could think of. Look at the bright side: most 'shifters don't stay dressed."

Xi stood, looking over her clothes.  
"Where are my shoes?"

"Mostly dressed then. Let's go, I don't know if anyone's going to check back here."

"Just who are you?"

"Special Agent Robert Martin, Bureau of Arcane Investigations." He showed her his real badge.

"You have to be kidding."

"Why?"

Xi sighed and followed the officer out.

---

Akihito gripped the chain wrapped around his arm, and tried to pull Steel closer, but a link snapped. As Steel stepped back, a dozen new links grew on the chain. He favored his left side, only a few seconds ago Akihito had managed to pierce his thigh with a lucky stab.

A series of chains lashed at Akihito, he skipped away with only a hard blow to his ankle. He saw Xi and Robert come out through the corner of his eye. Steel's eyes shifted, and his chains burst into a swirling storm of sharpened links between him and Akihito. He turned to glance at Xi.

"You're not leaving, Rain."

"MY NAME IS XI!" she screamed at him as Agent Martin drew his gun.

"You are not leaving here. You belong to us!" More chains formed in his hand as he spoke. He didn't notice Akihito scooping up a handful of leaves.

Agent Martin calmly issued an order:  
"Stop. Hands up, you're under arrest."

Steel began spinning a length of chain, and took a step forward. "You have no idea what you've gotten into, little man."

The air screamed as Agent Martin fired a shot at Steel, only to watch it crumble to dust in mid-air. Before Steel could strike, a thrown stone hit his shoulder from behind. As he turned to face Akihito, a cluster of burning leaves stuck the side of his face.

Steel fell, screaming and clutching at his face. The chain links fell to the ground like poisoned bugs.

"You forgot something." Akihito said, marching toward the fallen man. Before he could do more, the land steel was on convulsed, and tendrils of soil pulled him under.

"What was that?" Xi said.

"That would be Masumi's opponent," Akihito concluded, "I have to check on her."

---

"...then he just dove into the ground," Masumi explained as she walked with Akihito to Robert's car, "I don't know why, nothing I managed to get off could have been more than superficial."

"He knew what was happening," Xi said, looking off into the distance, "that's why he was here."

"How do you know?" Akihito asked.

"I just do," was the only answer she could give him.

## -Epilogue-

Michael stared blankly at the man in black. "I know what I saw."

"I'm sure you do," Agent Martin countered, "but if you insist on telling the doctors that, they will start to think you need more than physical help." He removed his glasses and looked Michael in the eye. "If you want to go to Ocean Crest, feel free to tell the doctors that you saw the man GROW a blade out of his arm. Then there will be one less person to help Xi WHEN he comes after her again. How safe do you want her to be?"

Michael winced. "There was- a lot of smoke... I couldn't see clearly. He was wearing a jacket." Agent Martin nodded.

---

Akihito softly held Kiyomi's hand as the machines connected to her steadily beeped. Her eyes fluttered open briefly. "Aki-" she started before he hushed her.

<"Don't try to speak,"> he softly told her. <"You've been in surgery. You need rest.">

<"...so tired..."> she murmured before slipping away from him again.

'When I catch that bastard again...'  
Akihito thought darkly, then dismissed it. Controlling the next encounter would mean controlling himself first.

---

Xi lay in bed, not trying to sleep. He father was still up, and the house echoed with his movements. He had seemed somehow shamed and relieved when he had been talking to the police earlier. Something about his manner just felt... wrong. As she lay back, she heard him pick up the phone and dial. He started speaking in Cantonese, she had thought he didn't know Cantonese. She had studied it on her own, but had never heard her father speak anything but Mandarin and English.

The words he said chilled her.  
"They've broken the pact."

The rest of the conversation was lost. First to her shock, then to her tortured dreams.

---

The Outsider grazed its talons against the frail membrane at the edge of the world. It whispered blasphemies in a lover's soft tone. Three in Talwood heard those words. The first was the Demon Guardian, who mutely listened, as a general hearing the enemy's communications. The second was Xi, who writhed under fevered nightmares as she slept without rest, without peace. The third... the third was Hollow.

Next: The Acts of Sacrifice begin, with:  
Closing In...

Plus: Shadows over Talwood

## FICTION: SPECIAL EXTRA-LATE HALLOWEEN LEGENDS OF THE CIRCUIT

Contributed by [Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos](#)

The night is dark, and will grow darker still. The wind howls like a demon outside my window. I hear a pattering sound. Most likely it's just leaves, but I like to think something is trying to get in. I love the Halloween season. I love the costumes. The decorations. The mood. The atmosphere. And if you've been a constant reader you probably know, I love the stories.

I'm sure you know how this works; I paint you a scene and present you with a Character, who serves as a mask I tell you a story from behind. Not this time. This time I will turn out my light, set a candle to burn, and tell you my story without the masks. I'm playing a CD labeled 'Horror Sounds', and only a candle and my screen give me light. I heard something at my window. Maybe it's just a squirrel, or maybe something is trying to get in. I love this time of year.

### Will o'Wisp

*I don't know where I first thought of lost cars, but it was probably during a summer trip. When you're on a long road, and haven't seen another car in hours, sometimes you start thinking about bad things. If you went off one of these country roads, would you ever be found? How would you feel to die lost and alone just a few yards from 'civilization'?*

*I suppose these were the things Johnny was thinking of, if not before he found the car then certainly after. He had been driving down one of those nearly serpentine Kentucky roads at the time. He had good reflexes, so he wasn't concerned by the sharp curves, even though he had less than fifteen feet of visibility. He was taking the long way to the Lexington tournament. He told his friends it was a warm-up exercise, but that was just an excuse. He simply liked these old roads.*

*The fog was thick that night, so he barely saw the girl before his car was bearing down on her. It was too late to stop, so he swerved left, into the tall country grass. He left his car, furious, and marched back to the road, leaving his car running. She was standing by the road when he got there, a pretty girl in bellbottoms and a tie-dyed shirt. Before he could yell at her, she begged him for help; her friend's van had gone off the road and hit something, now it wouldn't start. Johnny reluctantly agreed to look at it, and before he could go check on his own car she darted off.*

*She ran down the road ahead of him for almost ten minutes before veering off into grass taller than she was. He followed her, trying desperately to keep up. If she had gotten only five feet ahead of, he would have lost her for good. But he kept close, and finally saw the van. It was an old model, made in the sixties- and Johnny guessed it hadn't been painted since then. He saw the girl hop in the door, and relaxed as he walked up to it.*

*He went up to the van, and looked in- and screamed to wake the dead. The driver was a long mummified corpse whose cracked skull rested on the steering wheel. The skeleton wearing the girl's clothes lolled in the passenger seat. Two other long dead bodies lay tumbled in the back- and a still rotting corpse sat with them, one skeleton curling an arm around the recently dead man's chest. Johnny turned and ran, and the wind whispered protests, begging him to stay. As he ran, something gripped his ankle, and he fell forward. His head hit a rock, and he blacked out.*

*He woke up in the morning, laying in the van, the mummified body from the passenger seat curled up next to him, entwining him in a lover's embrace. He nearly tore off the door of the van getting out. He tore through the field, running any way he could until he couldn't make himself run anymore. After*

*some time, he gathered his wits and found his way back to the road, and from there to his car.*

*His car had died sometime during the night, so he was left to standing by the road waiting for someone to come. But no one came, and it started to grow dark. Soon after sundown, he saw HER, walking down the road towards him. She asked him to join them; they were very lonely. He ran down to road, away from her. She chased him, and he saw (or thought he saw) four others with her. His strength faded as he ran, until he saw lights. He dashed to the lights, barely getting out of the truck's way.*

*He convinced the driver to give him a ride to town, and not to stop for anything. Johnny never takes the back roads anymore; he told his friends that she's still out there, looking for him. Waiting for him to die alone.*

## STORIES/ADVENTURES: HOOK, LINE, SINKERS

### Out of Sight, Out of Body

Contributed by [Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos](#)

**Hook:** One of the PCs (preferably one more in tune with mysteries/Focus) begins to see things, a figure that seems to be lurking at the edge of perception. As time passes, the visions become more frequent and clearer. Eventually, a distinct human face can be made out.

**Line:** The PCs can find the apparition's identity by going through newspaper photos, or by asking people who keep up with rumors in the circuit: the ghost is a comatose Kabaddi stylist, whose Mentor left the area sometime after the student fell into the coma. It is also possible to communicate with the spirit by such means as a seance, an Ouija board, automatic writing or other such methods, but the apparition can only manage to send simple messages.

**Sinker:** The Student pushed too far, too fast, into the higher mystic abilities of the style. While trying to attain a Ghost Form, they became separated from their body. The Master, out of guilt, isolated themselves to meditate on a form of atonement. No longer truly alive, but kept from dying by machines, the Student is imprisoned in a strange form of limbo.

If the body dies, the spirit will pass on, but there is another way to end this. If the Master can be found, and convinced of the Student's plight, they can try to guide the spirit back to the body. But the longer it takes to begin, the harder it will be to unite body and soul.

### A Legend of the Circuit

Contributed by [Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos](#)

**Hook:** While the PCs are doing something suitably honorable (or simply impressive), a stranger stops to help them, or compliment them if they don't need (or want) help. After all is said and done, the stranger introduces himself to the PCs and offers to take them to a bar (or other place to relax and talk). After a few hours of friendly carousing, the NPC offers to teach the PCs a few of his moves later.

Sometime before they meet again, the PCs hear of a famous fighter that just came out of retirement- by defeating a World Warrior! The fighter is none other than their new friend.

**Line:** The PCs have made a powerful new ally, let them bask in the glow of a powerful friend and capable mentor for a few stories. After they have learned enough to carry his teachings on, the NPC maneuvers (or tricks) one PC into accepting a challenge to fight him. Once the challenge is made, he adds a final term: the fight will be to the death.

**Sinker:** The warrior is dying. He has been for a long time, and has exhausted every chance at a cure he could find. His comeback was intended to be his swansong, but as his health deteriorates it becomes meaningless to him. He is not afraid of death, but the thought of lying helpless in a hospital bed as his life runs out terrifies him. His challenge to the PC is his final wish: to die in battle, as warriors of old did. Even if the PCs learn this before his last will and testament is read, they cannot save him. All that can be changed now is what meaning his death will have.

**Nerve, Part 1: A Family Matter**  
Contributed by [Arkon, Dark Lord of Chaos](#)

'Nerve' is a series of adventure outlines that can be added to a Chronicle or used as the basis for a new Chronicle. Comments would be greatly appreciated, particularly on how different teams came through each part. I will attempt to take into account as many possibilities as possible in this outline.

Part 1 only requires the PCs to have a strong connection to a Sensei, but the nature of that connection is unimportant. For my convenience, certain names are assigned to Characters mentioned herein. These names will carry over until the end, but unless otherwise noted the actual names used are unimportant.

**Hook:** The honorable sensei Satoshi contacts the PCs with a personal problem that must be handled discreetly. Satoshi had been, in his youth, a more reckless man than the PCs have known him to be. One result of that recklessness was his illegitimate son, David. David is now a young man, and Satoshi has concerns about the company he now keeps. He has joined the 'Hard-Line' a relatively new stable with a reputation for dishonorable tactics.

Satoshi would rather see David in his own Dojo, or under the tutelage of another honorable sensei. He asks the PCs to handle this delicate matter. If they refuse, he respects their decision and recognizes that he must deal with this matter himself. A month later, his body will be discovered either in a large body of water or in a shallow grave outside of town.

The news of Satoshi's past adultery, if it came out, could ruin his reputation and marriage. If that happens, Satoshi may be driven to Seppuku.

**Line:** If the PCs decide to investigate the Hard-Line, they will find out some of the fighters in it (perhaps an old rival or two has joined), and a few staff members. Not much about the stable stands out, they have no apparent connection to Shadoloo, there aren't many rumors about them, none of the fighters are very flashy. Some of their tactics are frowned upon, they will throw sand in the eyes of their opponents, they take advantage of dizzied foes, and they have been known to use maneuvers such as 'Ear Pop' to deal with other teams. But nothing about them is much different than other independent Special Forces stables. Two personalities that stand out when the PCs are gathering information are coach Benjamin Dumas (affectionately known as 'Coach Doom' to his fighters), and Doctor Thaddeus Shepherd.

Coach Doom is the manager and founder of the stable. He's a former marine, and a Vietnam veteran. He keeps the stable well-disciplined and hard at training. He is more interested in keeping discipline and respect than in teaching honor. Although at times a harsh man, he will respect PCs who stand up for what they believe, and might even be willing to get into philosophical debates if they seem determined to make him an honorable man. If combat becomes an issue, he can be treated as Rank 9 Special Forces stylist with two interesting tricks: he can cloud his mind from mental powers such as Psychic Rage, Mind Reading, Blind, and Mind Control by spending a Willpower, and he knows a variant of Shrouded Moon that lasts until he takes direct action

against someone, but cannot be activated if he is being observed.

Dr. Shepard is the ring doctor, and takes the health of the fighters in the stable very seriously. He knows nothing about anything unusual, and if one of the PCs attempts to use Mind Reading, they find that his thoughts are so utterly bland and normal that they cannot help but pity the man ('Nice guy, but no imagination'). He left more conventional practice following an incident when a psychotic patient nearly killed him.

**Sinker:** Getting David out of Hard-Line is easier said than done. The PCs can't find anything tangible to use against the stable, and everyone their made their choice. In any event, David refuses to go to his father's dojo. He has no conscious wish to hurt his father, but feels somewhat bitter about being Satoshi's 'dark secret'. He claims to like the stable, or maybe it's just the view...

David really joined Hard-Line for one reason: Christine. Christine is a daredevil Special Forces stylist with a crooked grin and infectious laugh.

Anyone (except Christine) who sees David around her will soon realize his infatuation with her. So long as she's in Hard-Line, he'll stay there. If the full story comes out, Christine will graciously help the PCs reconcile David with his father (of course, if they tell her, they may lose Honor), otherwise they'll have to use less conventional methods.

Christine has a weakness for gambling, which the PCs might be able to use. It's possible for the PCs to make a wager on their skills vs. hers to get her out of the stable. Such a wager would have to involve dangerous sports, and personal risk to both her and at least one PC. Of course if she gets herself killed, David would be a broken man and the PCs would lose honor for allowing the situation to reach that point.

If Christine stays in Hard-Line for another month, she will be murdered, and her body hidden in a shallow grave or dumped in the water. Those possibilities are covered more in Part 2.

Next: Cold Blood

## Next Issue

All I know for certain is that we'll be treated to the next part of Arkon's ongoing serial novel, Closing In, and the second part of his ongoing Nerve adventure, Cold Blood. Other than that, what's in the next issue is up to you readers.

Questions, Comments, Submissions, or Suggestions should be sent to the editor at [sfstg@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

**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.

### Links

Chris Hoffmann's Street Fighter Alpha Conversions (<http://staredown.8m.net>)

Street Fighter Central (<http://home.sprynet.com/~skarsten>)

Street Fighter: The Dogs of War (<http://www2.tsixroads.com/~sfighter/dogsofwar>)

Street Fighter Ultra (<http://www.mecha.com/~conkle/sfighter>)

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